

The Way of Truth

Vol. 78 "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." No. 7

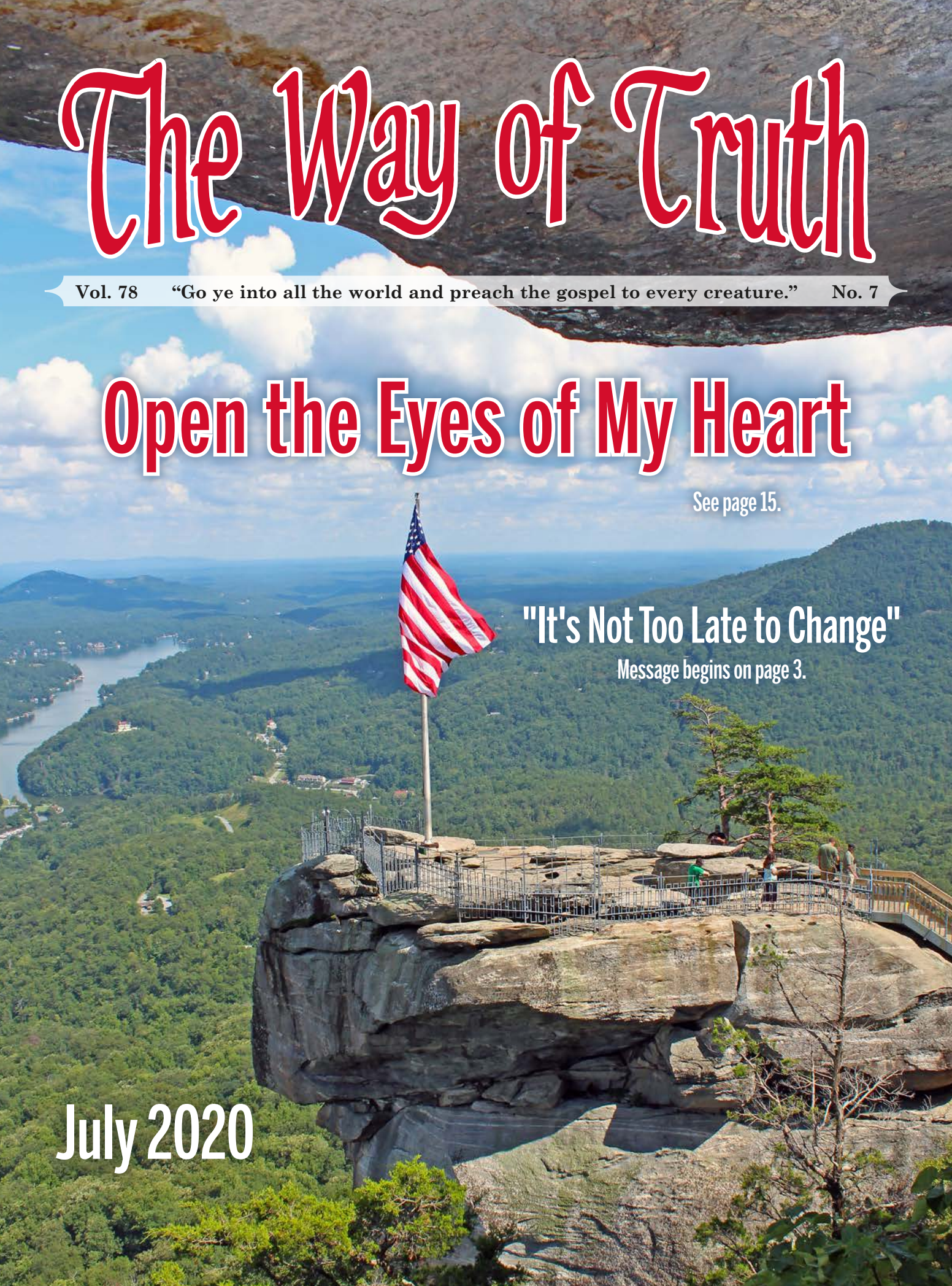
Open the Eyes of My Heart

See page 15.

"It's Not Too Late to Change"

Message begins on page 3.

July 2020



ONE DAY AT A TIME

WE ARE ALL familiar with the old adage “living life one day at a time.” Never has it been more applicable than this present hour. Jesus said in Matthew 6:34, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

That doesn’t mean we are not to plan for the future. But we shouldn’t let the unknowns of the future keep us from being what we ought to be today. Don’t cross bridges before you get to them!

A summer visitor was asking a local farmer how to get off Southport Island in Maine and find his way back to Boothbay Harbor. The farmer began to explain how to find the road back to the bridge. The visitor insisted, “But I didn’t cross any bridge to get here.” The farmer looked at him skeptically and replied, “Well, now, if you didn’t cross any bridge, then you ain’t here in the first place, so you got nothing to worry about.”

The only bridge you have to cross for sure is the one that leads to tomorrow—today!

The world conditions could make one become bitter, disillusioned, frightful. The headlines all seem to be negative. What does the future hold?

This is why we as Christians should focus on one day at a time and leave the future to God and hold His hand. Jesus emphasized this vital principle for Christian living in His sermon on the mount. Matthew 6:25-34, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

If any of us make heaven our home, we’ll do it just that way—one day—not a week or a month or a year or a lifetime—but just one day at a time. Some of my thoughts here are inspired by a recitation by Sis. Ann Davis which I heard many years ago.

Many times we wonder about tomorrow. We think it would be exciting to know what is in store for us, but

God in His infinite wisdom chose to unfold our lives just one day at a time.

Think about trials and difficulties. The person who lives even the very smoothest life, if he could see all of the trials of his lifetime in one glance, he would consider them totally insurmountable—more than any human could bear. If Joseph would have seen all that he would face in his future, he doubtless would have been overwhelmed. But the Lord’s grace appeared with each temptation gradually as they came over time. It enabled Joseph to keep pressing on, though he was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, jailed unjustly, and forgotten and left for years by the butler who promised to remember him. So if we knew what all the future has in store for us, we could not deal with it. But God graciously has promised to never allow more than we can bear. So the trials come one at a time.

The temptations I will face today will only be those that God knows I have enough grace to resist. The devil can’t touch me without God’s permission.

How about our labor in the Lord? The work of our lifetime is filled with many hard and strenuous hours, but when allotted one day at a time, we have just strength enough. Strength comes from grace and grace comes with a daily portion.

Moody said, “A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God’s store of grace from day to day as we need it.”

Remember the widow of Zarephath? She had just enough meal in her barrel for her son and herself, and then they were resigned to die. But when the prophet told her to make him a cake too, she obeyed. The next day she was surprised to find just enough meal in the barrel for one more day of food. That kept being supplied one day at a time. So it is with grace.

How about all of the grief of my lifetime? Oh, if I had to bear it all at once, it would cause me to die of a broken heart! But how merciful God is to allow grief to come one day at a time and thus mellow me into a person who can understand and comfort others who are engulfed in grief. II Corinthians 1:3, 4, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

Then when I think of all the many opportunities that will be mine in my entire life, and if they all knocked at once, the challenge would be so great that I would see myself as being too small to meet them, and therefore close the door and leave them all unanswered. But our opportunities come one day at a time so that we are able to meet each opportunity as it presents itself.

ABOUT THE COVER

The breathtaking view on our cover is of Chimney Rock, a 315-foot granite monolith in Chimney Rock State Park near the village of Chimney Rock, North Carolina, located 25 miles southeast of Asheville.

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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When it comes to measuring to God's Word, all truth is not presented at once, else we would doubtless be discouraged by the sheer volume of principles. Rather, God's Word is revealed gradually over time so we can grasp each blessed precept. We then are able to walk in the light one day at a time. II Peter 3:18 proclaims, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." Growing takes time!

All the people that I will meet along life's way would more than fill the largest auditorium in the world and would cause the most accomplished orator to tremble, but if I witness to them each day as my life touches theirs, my harvest of souls could surpass the greatest revival meeting.

Considering the joy we experience, all those wonderful joys of my lifetime could not be contained in this limited body of clay if experienced all at once. So even in this, we see the wisdom of God in scattering them all through life, like rays of sunshine, and giving us time to savor each one—one day at a time.

When it comes to failures, if I had to face all the failures of my lifetime at once, it would completely defeat me—sap all my confidence and faith. My afflictions and sicknesses all at once would kill me; all of my disappointments would make me bitter and untrusting. But here, too, these things happen as we take one day at a time, giving us time to adjust and deal with them.

If I experienced all my successes at once, it would make me proud; my victories would make me overconfident; my rewards and riches of a lifetime would make me careless and wasteful. Here again, success comes one day at a time.

In closing this editorial, let me emphasize that we are not to fret about tomorrow, but rather trust God today. Live for God today. Be saved today.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. And it is completed by continually taking one step at a time. Living the gospel one day at a time.

If we live the Christian life one day at a time, then one day we will experience the ultimate success—heaven!

Yes, I'm so glad it's just that way—one day at a time—for each day has just enough grace for itself, and God is surely wiser than us and He chose to let us live only one day—one day at a time.

*One day at a time, sweet Jesus,
That's all I'm asking from You,
Just give me the strength to do every day
What I have to do,
Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus,
And tomorrow may never be mine,
Lord, help me today, show me the way
One day at a time. †*

JULY 4

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Poetry Page	Page 2
<i>Expressions in rhythmic form</i>	
It's Not Too Late to Change	Page 3
<i>Full-length sermon by Doug Shenberger</i>	
Bible Lesson of the Month	Page 7
<i>"The Crucified Life"</i>	
Sanctification and the Infilling of the Holy Spirit	Page 9
<i>By Richard Lehman (Part I)</i>	
Winning a Crown	Page 12
<i>Part XXIII of the book by the late C. W. Naylor</i>	
The Children's Corner	Page 13
<i>"Appetite," by Rebecca Bland</i>	
Open the Eyes of My Heart	Page 15
<i>Full-length message by G. E. Tyler</i>	
Looking Beyond Our Difficulties	Page 18
<i>Radio message by James Arch</i>	
Young People's Page	Page 19
<i>Sermonette by Alan Richards</i>	
An Open Letter	Page 21
<i>Challenging exhortation by Marc Slate</i>	

**THE
POETRY
PAGE**

A LIFE GARDEN

Mabel Earle

A garden-plot of sunny hours
God gives me when I wake,
And I can make it bright with flowers
All day for His dear sake.

Red roses, if my heart is sweet
With love for all my own;
And heart's-ease springing at my feet
For every kindness shown.

And shining, sunny marigold,
If I am brave and bright;
Ald lilies, for the thoughts that hold
My heart all pure and white.

Sweet violets, hiding in their leaves,
For truth and modesty;
And balsams if a soul that grieves
Finds comforting in me.

And poppies, if my toil brings rest
To hands grown tired with care;
And always—first and last and best—
Forget-me-nots of prayer.

THINKING, LORD OF THEE

Charles E. Orr

Alone in some secure retreat,
The sky o'ershadows me;
All nature smiles so soft and sweet:
I'm thinking, Lord, of Thee.

I see Thee in the lonely mount
In silent prayer for me,
Thy tears all night a flowing fount:
I'm thinking, Lord, of Thee.

I hear Thy deep and mournful sigh
In sad Gethsemane;
I see Thee on the reeking cross:
I'm thinking, Lord, of Thee.

Awaking from the silent tomb,
Thy risen form I see;
Thy saints awaiting Thee to come,
I'm thinking, Lord, of Thee.

Thinking of Thee, O Lord, of Thee,
Musing on things above,
Till every chord within my soul
Is tuned with heavenly love.

CHEER UP

Celia Thaxter

Up from the east another day
Shall chase the bitter dark away;
What though thine eyes with tears be wet,
The sunrise never failed us yet.

Another dawn may yet restore
Our faith and hope and joy once more;
Sad soul, take comfort, nor forget
That sunrise never failed us yet.

A GOODLY HERITAGE

John Greenleaf Whittier

A life of beauty lends to all it sees
The beauty of its thought,
And fairest forms and sweetest harmonies
Make glad its way unsought.

In sweet accordancy of praise and love,
The singing waters run,
And sunset mountains wear in light above
The smile of duty done.

Sure stands the promise—ever to the meek
A heritage is given;
Nor lose they earth who, single-hearted, seek
The righteousness of heaven.

DAILY STRENGTH

Frances Ridley Havergal

"As thy days thy strength shall be!"
This should be enough for thee;
He who knows thy frame will spare
Burdens more than thou canst bear.

When thy days are veiled in night,
Christ shall give thee heavenly light;
Seem they wearisome and long,
Yet in Him thou shalt be strong.

Cold and wintry though they prove
Thine the sunshine of His love;
Or, with fervid heat oppressed,
In His shadow thou shalt rest.

When thy days on Earth are past,
Christ shall call thee home at last,
His redeeming love to praise,
Who hath strengthened all thy days. †

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Doug Shenberger

WE ARE CERTAINLY glad to be in the Cayman Islands. It has been a blessing and an encouragement to us. We appreciate your hospitality and generosity. I was thinking about all the provision that has been made for us.

As most of you know, I am here with my wife and six children. That's a wonderful thing; but in spite of all our efforts, if we were going to eat all the food that has been prepared for us, we probably should've had six more. So thank you all.

We thank the Lord for the song service tonight. The song that Valerie sang, "Broken and Spilled Out," is indeed a beautiful song, because it's so rich with meaning, and it expresses so clearly what God has done for us and what we need to do for Him. Truly, that was a beautiful, beautiful song. We appreciate the other inspiring and beautiful songs this evening. It has been said many times that Christianity is a singing religion. We have proven that so far this week. It inspires us, challenges us, lifts us up, and draws us together. Truly, it is an important part of our ministry and our service to God.

As we endeavor to speak this evening, it is certainly our special desire that we would have God's anointing upon us. We need that so very much. Indeed, we're not able to stand here and endeavor to speak the beautiful gospel without God's help.

I would like to draw your attention to the book of II Chronicles to begin with this evening. I don't know if you remember this, but on Wednesday night I mentioned that there are happy, uplifting stories and also sad stories in the Bible. We talked about the rich young ruler, and of course, we know that is a sad story in many ways.

This story that I'd like to spend a little time on this evening, you might say is a happy story, or at least somewhere in the middle. II Chronicles, chapter 33, starting with verse 1: "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God,

of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon."

Now, you might be thinking, "Well, Bro. Doug, you just said that this is a happy story. That story doesn't sound very happy. It's not a happy story. It's a very distressing and sad passage of scripture to read."

I don't know a tremendous amount about Manasseh, but he was the son of Hezekiah. Manasseh had a father who endeavored to serve the Lord. We don't know what happened to Manasseh, but he began to reign at a very young age before he would have had proper understanding. We don't know what kind of influences and counselors he may have had, but regardless of that, the Bible tells us that he did that which was evil, and the passage continues to go through an awful lot of detail. As you read through the passage of scripture of what Manasseh did, you'd think at different times that maybe, it's almost as bad as it could get. He built altars and reared up altars for Baalim. He made groves and started worshiping all the host of heaven. He was worshiping and serving and looking to everything but the true and living God. You see here that Manasseh was worshiping the creation rather than the Creator. That's happening across our land today. People are worshiping the creation rather than the Creator.

We also see a downward progression in Manasseh's life. Sin tends to bring down people. There's a downward progression. We also read of how Manasseh caused his children to pass through the fire. He began to use enchantments and witchcraft—devilish worship. He set up an idol right there in the house of God. The Bible tells us that he was worse than the heathen. Here's a man who had a godly father that was supposed to be king of God's people, and he was worse than the heathen that never knew God, and didn't understand nor have the Ten Commandments. The heathen didn't have the instruction that Manasseh had. We see what he did, even when God tried to tell him. Regardless if he had bad influences, or whatever he may have had, in verse



10 of our text, we read where the Lord spoke to him. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people. What did He tell them? He said, "You're wrong. You need to change. You need to go a different way," but they would not hearken. They didn't want to hear those words. They were going their way, but God was angry. God was offended at that. Just in that day, and even so today, sin offends God. Evil offends God. He's a holy God. He cannot abide evil. There's no evil that dwells in His presence.

REBELLION AGAINST GOD IS SERIOUS

The Bible tells us that rebellion and refusing to hear God is as the sin of witchcraft. It's a serious thing. The Bible says that stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. You see here how Manasseh not only caused much evil for himself, but he had a position of authority. He had a position of responsibility. He was the king and his influence affected the whole nation. His people were affected. As the Lord tried to persuade those people, He sent His prophets and teachers. The Lord had people that He endeavored to use to call them from their evil ways. This has happened throughout the Old and New Testaments, and it's still going on today. Bro. James said, "God will always have His church." He will always have His people that He calls to give the gospel message. There's a place where the Bible says, "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear," there's still the gospel message. As I said earlier, they would not hearken. Think about the lost opportunities, the missed chances that Manasseh had as he went down this path.

It came to the place where, in verse 11 of our text, that the Lord actively fought against Manasseh. The Lord had enough. He decided that He was not going to allow this evil to continue. The Lord sent people to attack Manasseh and his people. Verse 11 says that Manasseh was bound with fetters, and carried away into Babylon. Think about when God decides to fight against you. When God decides to fight against you, you are in a serious place. People go on through their lives and think they can do what they want to do, go the way they want to go, and be what they want to be. They need to remember that God is not mocked, and it proved so here. Manasseh was bound with fetters, and carried away into captivity. Think about this proud man. He thought he knew what he was doing, and he thought he was in control, but now he's bound. He didn't have any authority anymore. He didn't have any rites anymore. He no longer had the opportunity to tell people what to do.

In verse 12 of our text (II Chronicles 33), we read, "And when he [Manasseh] was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." He didn't call for the enchantments, for the witches and the wizards. He didn't call for a familiar spirit. He didn't call upon the idol that he had set up. "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God." What a wonderful thing! What does the Bible say there? Did God say, "I'm sorry it's too late, look what you've done, look who you are, look what you've done to my people"? That's what a lot of people would say, but that's not the God we serve. That's what's in our natural tendency to think. That

would be just and right, but that's not what God said. "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication."

TWO CRITICAL THINGS

Manasseh did two very critical things: *sought God* and *humbled himself greatly*. He went to the One who could help him. He sought God. Manasseh would not have gotten the answer and the help that he needed if he had just said, "God, help me; I'm in trouble here." But he humbled himself greatly. You see something here that he wasn't willing to do this whole time. There was no humility. Manasseh couldn't be entreated. God tried to talk to him. His prophets and people tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't hear. He was too proud and lifted up. He was too sure of himself, but now he humbled himself greatly.

What does it mean to you to "humble yourself greatly"? Does it mean just to bow your head a little bit and say, "I'm sorry about that, Lord; I was wrong"? I think Manasseh was broken. I think he fell on his knees. I think he just totally surrendered. He humbled himself greatly. Manasseh put himself in the place that he should have been in relation to almighty God. We need to see that. People need to humble themselves. We tend to get too lifted up. We tend to get too confident in ourselves. It causes us trouble. So even when Manasseh had done all the wrong that he had done, he called upon God. When he humbled himself greatly, God heard him. God didn't just hear his prayer, but He was entreated of him. God answered. God "heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." That is why I said that this is a happy story, because it has a good ending. It has a good resolve. When things seemed hopeless, when it seemed like there was no future, when it seemed like his story was written and told, there was still another chance. There aren't many people that we read about in the Bible that went the path Manasseh went and were able to turn back, or were able to have another chance.

When we read through the Old Testament, we read of a number of instances where it starts out with the words, "[So-and-so] became king, and he did that which was evil in the sight of God." We don't see a lot of them that have the ending that Manasseh had. It's a story that could have been recorded with a sad and hopeless end, but it has a beautiful ending.

When Manasseh was restored to his kingdom, he went and did some things. I'm not going to read all through the other verses of the text, but he built a wall to protect the city and set up captains. Manasseh did things to protect his country and its people. He took away those strange gods and that idol out of the house of the Lord and threw it away. He repaired the altar of the Lord. He put the Lord back in the place He should have had. He sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings, and he commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel.

In verse 19 of our text, II Chronicles 33, it says, "His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he

built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.” This is Manasseh’s legacy, a testimony of who he was and what he did. It changed his life when he humbled himself and called upon God.

Now, Manasseh’s story is still not a great story. It’s not what I would recommend for anybody to do. It’s not an inspiring story to think that he did all those evil things. It doesn’t just make us think, “Well, I just want to be like him,” but it does tell us so much about the love of God. It tells us so much about God’s mercy. It tells us about the possibility. It gives us so much hope for those who are in a similar situation, those who have made wrong decisions and taken the wrong path, because we can see here what God can do for someone who looked hopeless.

As I said earlier, we don’t see a lot of people who are in Manasseh’s situation that find forgiveness and restitution. Many people are so set in their ways once they go that far. They’re so determined. They’ve been going that way for so long and have become proud. You know, human beings are so prone to being proud, even when we don’t have something to really be proud of. It’s a very strong and dangerous thing. People are set in their pride and ways.

I realize that we here tonight don’t like to think that in any way we would resemble Manasseh. We’re not evil like he was. We’re not killing our children. We’re not practicing witchcraft. I said earlier, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry.” It’s the same thing. In reality, when we rebel, when we refuse God, whether it’s in the ways that Manasseh did, or in the ways that people all around us are doing today, the responsibility is the same.

God didn’t look at Manasseh and say that he was so evil there was no hope. He doesn’t look at anyone and say that this man is not quite so evil so he doesn’t need help. Everyone is responsible for his sin and the wrong. Regardless of whether we’re a king or just a common man, we all stand before God, and we all have the same opportunity when we hear the Word. The Lord endeavors to speak to each one of us, but do we hearken? As you read the story and think about the Lord speaking to Manasseh, you’d think, “Well, he’s a bad person. He didn’t pay attention.” What’s the difference today when the Lord speaks and you don’t hear? You’re just as responsible. The responsibility is just the same.

When you think about it, Manasseh had a tremendous blessing, in that the Lord fought against him, and helped to put him in a place where he was able to see his need. So many people today don’t come to that place. They don’t come to the place where they see themselves with the needs that they have. They don’t see the reality, and they don’t have the opportunity, or may be the encouragement to humble themselves as Manasseh did.

SEEING YOUR NEED OF GOD

If you’re without the Lord tonight, one of the best things that could happen to you is, if you would come to the place where you’re able to see your need of God.

July 2020

I’m not wishing anything bad on any person here, but it would give you a greater opportunity, because whenever we’re so independent and self-righteous and self-confident, it’s hard for us to humble ourselves.

One of the realities of God is that He will never accept us or help us on our terms and our timing. That might sound harsh, but I believe that is true. God’s not going to accept you on your terms. You’re not going to be able to go and negotiate with Him, and say, “Well, Lord, this is what I’m going to do. I think you should accept that from me.” You can’t do it on your timing. You can’t say, “Lord, I’m going to call on you one day when I’m ready.”

The only reason Manasseh was able to call on the Lord and have his prayer answered was because he greatly humbled himself. When you greatly humble yourself, you’re not setting terms. You’re not setting a timing. You’re putting yourself where you need to be. You’re putting God where He needs to be, and that is in the position of authority, in a position of power. You’re just asking for mercy. When you do that, it’s not about your timing. It’s about your need, your dependency.

A PERTINENT PARABLE

I’d like to turn to Matthew, chapter 20, and read a few verses starting with verse 1: “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.”

That passage of scripture started out with, “For the kingdom of heaven is like ...” Those are Jesus’ own words. He said, “For the kingdom of heaven is like ...” and He went on to illustrate what it’s like. Jesus was saying there that there’s work for us to do. He doesn’t call one time and that’s our only opportunity. This householder went out early in the morning and hired some people to work for him. They went and worked in his vineyard. He agreed with them what he was going to pay them. Several hours later, he went out and there were more people available. He called them to come and work, too. “Come on, I have work for you to do.” They came and went to work. The scripture I just read said that he went out the sixth and ninth hour, and even clear down to the eleventh hour. You know, when you hear the term, “eleventh hour,” that’s right before the end. That’s the last moment, as it were. People who wait till the eleventh hour to do things, we don’t always think of them very positively, but that’s near the end. Almost the very end of the day, but he still called them.

Jesus will accept people at any point in their lives. He will accept us in our youth, in our early days of

strength, ambition, enthusiasm, and in everything youth has to offer. Jesus is calling people. He's calling adults in the middle of their busy lives with family, with jobs, and everything that they are involved in as they go along. He's calling older people, although they don't have quite as much energy, but maybe they have more wisdom, experience, and knowledge. He's calling people to work for Him; and even down to the eleventh hour when there's not much life left, He still has a work for people to do. He still calls for us.

If you'll read on in Matthew, chapter 20, you'll find that when it came time to pay, they all got paid the same amount. Some of them complained about that and said, "Well, that's not fair." Verse 15: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" Jesus was giving an explanation, an understanding of what the kingdom of heaven is like. The reward for service is the same for everyone. You'll get to go to heaven. Everyone can be forgiven and have eternal life, if we're willing to come to Christ.

As we think about the example I gave there from the Old Testament, and about this passage of scripture in Matthew 20, one of the realities that came to my mind is that it's not too late. It's not too late! It's not past the opportunity. There are some here who are near the beginning of their lives, and their lives are mostly a blank slate—a story yet to be told, a story unwritten, undetermined, or maybe dreams of great accomplishments, great achievements, great inventions, or a great work that they want to do. There may be dreams of a legacy of great service of influence, of a testimony. There's so much opportunity for a young person. It's all there. They have the time, the energy, the opportunity to do things for God and to answer His call.

There are some people here who are probably more in the third or the sixth hour of their lives. They're a little farther along, and there are some regrets that maybe they have for the things they have done. There's some lost opportunity. There are some addictions, some problems, some pain, regret and failure, but from God's point of view there's still a lot of opportunity. There's still so much that can be done. There's still a lot of time. It's amazing what God can do when He's given something to work with. It's amazing when He's given a human heart and a human life to work with. God specializes in new beginnings. He specializes in rewriting stories. He gives beauty for ashes. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." That's what He's offering people. That's what He's calling people to.

MANASSEH'S LEGACY

What about the ninth hour? I wonder if there's anyone here that would look at his or her life tonight and say, "It's the ninth hour. It's getting late." I think about Manasseh. I would put him in this area. He was in the ninth hour. He was running out of opportunity. He lived his life without God for far too long. He withstood God. He rejected God. He refused the message of the gospel. He didn't just refuse to hear, but he went the opposite way. Manasseh worshiped that which was evil and did that which was wrong, but God brought him to a place where He could deal with his heart, and he saw himself and humbled himself before God.

Look at the story of Manasseh and the legacy that he left. It didn't have to be a legacy of just a wasted life. He still had a chance to change. He still had a chance to go a different way. We have the testimony that he humbled himself greatly and called upon God and He heard him. God changed his life. Manasseh had time left that he could go and undo some of the wrong that he had done and some of the people he had hurt. He had a chance to undo the legacy that was there. He had a chance to write a different story. He took that opportunity and God helped him to have an ending that he could be proud of. What a wonderful testimony!

If you haven't made a change in your life, you're in a place of danger. The reality is: there's only one way back. The same path Manasseh traveled, you too, must be willing to do two things: you have to be willing to *call on God*. "God, I need help." You have to be willing to *humble yourself*.

Here's a quote by Rudyard Kipling—
*The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.*

The Bible tells us, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." That's the wonderful promise of the gospel. A broken and a contrite heart is not despised by God, regardless of the past, regardless of what's been done, and regardless of what the situation is. Whether you think it is hopeless or not, whether you're bound in fetters, whether you're out there in Babylon and no one will pay attention to your need and you can't escape, you can still humble your heart and call upon God. God still has a work for you to do. He still wants to give you beauty for ashes. He still wants to give you something better. He wants to give you a testimony of a life that has been changed.

The person at the eleventh hour just speaks of the mercy of God. That person is clear down to the end of his life. If you're at the eleventh hour, you're almost gone. You've rejected God. It's beyond your understanding, but the mercy of God is still there. While there's life, there's hope. Wherever you are, God wants to save you. He wants to change your story. He wants to show Himself strong and He's full of mercy.

WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

I'd like for us to think a few moments about our legacy. When we're young, we don't think a lot about legacy. We're just living life and enjoying life. We want to do things we want to do. As people get older, they tend to think more about their legacy, because they're getting closer to when they know they're not going to be here. They start to think a little more about, "How are people going to remember me? Are people going to remember me? Does anybody really care and know that I live? What is history going to say about me?" A lot of times presidents, kings, and queens worry a lot about those things; but actually, it affects all of us as we get older. We start to think about that.

I'd just like to ask you, How do you want to be remembered by your families and friends for time and eternity? Maybe our names might not be in any history

books, but we will be remembered for a while, at least, by our families and friends. We'll be remembered eternally by God. How do we want to be remembered? What is our legacy going to be? Where are you in your life now? What's your situation? What's your need?

Manasseh was very close to having nothing but evil for his legacy, but at the last moment when he had time and opportunity, he was able to escape that evil and have a different record. The legacy he had was important, but the really important thing was, he didn't have to suffer eternally the consequences of all the evil that he had done. He was able to escape that. He was pardoned. Whether Manasseh was at the ninth hour, the eleventh hour, or wherever he was, he was pardoned. He found God. He instructed his people to serve God. He tried to work to undo the wrongs that he had done.

Now, we have a lot of people we know that have an incredible legacy. We think of Bro. James. The years of service, the years of ministry, the years of teaching, the years of working for the souls of men. You know, with his ability, he could have done anything he wanted to do, but what a legacy! We have Bro. Alvin that we looked to as an incredible example. The legacy he left behind. We have others. Those legacies are more valuable than any mentioned in history books. They're a legacy of changed lives, a legacy of witness, a legacy of service. They're a legacy of other people who made it to heaven because they lived.

Are you living in a way that's going to bring other people to heaven? Are you going to win your children, your spouse, your grandchildren? What's your legacy? What influence are you having on the world around you? God is calling us all to do a work for Him. He's calling us to a life of service. He's calling us to something more and something better.

CONCLUSION

It's only by the mercy of God that any of us can change our story. You can't just decide, "Well, you're right, Bro. Doug, I'd like to have a better story. I'll go ahead and change that." The only way you can do that is by coming to God, by humbling yourself before Him, and getting His help. You can't do it in yourself. It's by the mercy of God who sent His only Son to bleed and die for us that we can change our story.

There's a song we sing that I would imagine you know: "Mercy Rewrote My Life." I wonder if we could sing a part of it—

*Mercy rewrote my life,
Mercy rewrote my life,
I could have fallen; my soul cast down,
But mercy rewrote my life.*

I have to believe that there are some people here who need Mercy to rewrite their lives. I don't know whether you're to the first hour, the third, the sixth, the ninth, or to the eleventh hour, but wherever you are in life, Mercy is there. He can rewrite your life. You need to grab that opportunity. We all want a better story. We can have it because of the mercy of God.

I just challenge you and call on you to remember what Manasseh experienced and did. You don't have to
July 2020

believe that you're a good person and that you're worthy. Not one of us is worthy. It's not about being good or making ourselves good. It's about coming to God and humbly calling on Him. A broken and a contrite heart, He will not deny.

If would you like to change your story, if you would like to rewrite it, if you would like to have a beautiful ending, the opportunity is here for you. If you're down to the eleventh hour, O don't risk it any longer. It's not worth it. You can still make heaven your home. Don't believe the devil's lies that you can't change and there's no hope. There was hope for Manasseh. There's hope for you. I believe the Holy Spirit is here and ready to meet your need if you'll call upon Him. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SANCTIFICATION

THE CRUCIFIED LIFE

Scriptures: Romans 12:1; John 14:16, 17; Galatians 3:14; Acts 26:18; Romans 5:5; Acts 1:13, 14; 2:4.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Acts 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Memory Verse: How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

—Luke 11:13b.

Aim: To show how the experience of sanctification is obtained.

INTRODUCTION

Crucifixion was the cruelest form of punishment in early days and ended in the annihilation of the victim. Christ was subjected to this great indignity, but the

process failed to accomplish the aim of His persecutors, for the Spirit of God raised Him from the dead, and, behold, He is alive forevermore. Amen! Thank God, by this miracle of miracles we, too, live today and have the hope of eternal life. Every soul who takes the name of Jesus in truth and makes His Word the sole rule of his life must, too, taste of crucifixion, not in the corporal sense, but in the spiritual sense. Selfish human ambitions must be separated from the human heart and the heart become the throne of God. Paul declared that they who be Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. Of course, it is understood that the things the Word of God permits for the flesh are permissible, but it is the misuse of the flesh in an effort to derive more pleasure from that source than was intended that is forbidden.

MEDITATIONS

LIVING A SACRIFICED LIFE—Romans 12:1—Living sacrifice—Under the law the animals sacrificed were killed outright, and their blood fully spilled; but in the Christian race we are requested to present ourselves a living sacrifice to live the gospel out in our lives every day according to His will. We are never again to appropriate any effort to selfish advantage. If we seek to please ourselves, we have ceased to be a living sacrifice. To the carnal mind this seems very hard and impossible, but the peace and joy that flows from such a sacrifice can be known only by those who have experienced it.

YIELDING TO DIVINE CONTROL—John 14:16—Abide with you—It is only in a crucified life that the Holy Spirit will abide. He will not abide in the heart that refuses to submit to Him, for He will not take second place. He cannot accomplish His purpose when another rules the human heart. **Verse 17—Shall be in you**—The work of regeneration had already been wrought by the Holy Ghost in the heart of the disciples, and the Spirit was with them, but He had not yet taken up His abode in a crucified life. This was the end toward which the Spirit was working. The "shall be in you" was fulfilled as they waited in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost.

THE CRUCIFIED LIFE FOR ALL—Galatians 3:14—Promise of the Spirit—Abraham had many experiences with God and lived a life of faith. Such a life was to be the heritage of the Gentiles who previous to this time were aliens to the commonwealth of God. The promise was the Spirit of God through faith. But note the sacrifice Abraham had to make when God said, "Arise and get thee out of this country unto a land which I will show thee." He had to forsake his old associates and travel to a land he knew not. "If we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Acts 26:18—Inheritance—It is only they who have turned their backs on the world and yielded their lives to Christ who are going to receive of the inheritance. Paul was called to preach the crucified life to the Gentiles, and this he did faithfully. The gospel was the same for the Gentiles as for the Jews, and when both had yielded themselves fully to God, there existed no enmity between them.

A LIFE OF HOPE—Romans 5:5—Love of God—Even though a crucified life separates our souls from the vain things of this world and alienates many of our old friends from our company, we should not be ashamed nor hang our heads. In Christ and the hope we have in Him we have made a greater gain by far than our loss has been. We are not ashamed of the humility of the Christian life, but we dwell in hope of the life that now is and the one to come.

EXAMPLES OF SACRIFICE—Acts 1:13—They were come in—These men were all active in the business of life; some were fishermen, some, tax collectors, etc. Trained for these things and gaining a good livelihood, they now were launching out on a life of faith which might separate them from home and definite income. But such is the consecration every man and woman must make if the blessing of Holy Ghost control is to be a reality. There is a difference in laboring for the meat which perisheth and that which endureth unto eternal life.

Acts 1:14—In prayer—Prayer is communion with God. The sacrifice loses its load when close contact is kept with God. A prayerless people is a powerless people. Prayers read from a book are of little value when it comes to meeting temptation or surrendering to Christ. This group of saints were praying from the heart in the Spirit, and they received power as a result.

FULL SURRENDER BRINGS VICTORY—Acts 2:4—Were all filled—Continued prayer had brought the disciples to the place where they were willing to make the complete sacrifice and the flesh had been crucified. Thus, they were ready for the Spirit when He came. No one was ever refused the Spirit who was as earnest as these people.

CONCLUSION

The title of this lesson, no doubt, is repulsive to the carnal mind, or the soul who has not been redeemed from the sin of his life. But to the soul who delights in the will of God, and has drunk of the river of life, and eaten of the tree of life, it is sweet music. He can truly sing, "Goodbye, Old World, I'm Through." The trouble is that too many are posing as disciples of Christ and making a feeble attempt at witnessing, while they are still living in sin. Such know nothing of the life of crucifixion, and their labors are tiresome, yielding none of the rich fruits of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. We trust this lesson will bring light to some sin-sick soul and inspire him to take the cure.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is a crucified life in the Bible sense?
2. What are the advantages of a crucified life?
3. Under what condition will the Comforter take up His eternal abode in the heart?
4. To whom is the Comforter offered?
5. How was the promise of the Spirit made possible to the Gentiles?
6. Need we be ashamed of the crucified life? Why?
7. What did Abraham sacrifice for God? †

Sanctification

and the Infilling of the Holy Spirit

By Bro. Richard Lehman

(Part I)

WEBSTER defines the word *sanctify* as: (1) “to make sacred or holy; to set apart to a sacred office or to religious use or observance; to consecrate by appropriate rites”; (2) “to make free from sin; to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution; to purify.”

In the New Testament, sanctification is part of the great plan of redemption purchased for us through Jesus’ blood, and enabling us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So important is sanctification, that Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified, and He died to make that experience possible.

“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”—John 17:14-23.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”—Hebrews 13:12.

Even in the Old Testament, one could be forgiven. But the notion of “to sanctify” was different in the Old Testament compared to the New Testament. “To sanctify” was more ritual in the Old Testament, and it pertained to the physical designation of: people, places, or things that were set aside to be used only for God’s purpose. But to sanctify a person for a particular office did not change the nature of that person’s heart desires.

In the New Testament, sanctification is a work that takes place in the heart. Sanctification is definitely a New Testament doctrine. It was the sacrifice that Jesus gave that enables true Christians today to be sanctified. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”—Ephesians 5:25.

It is the personal spirit of the individual that must be sanctified to be able to fully obey the will of the heavenly Father. “Elect according to the foreknowledge

of God and the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”—I Peter 1:2.

In the New Testament, sanctification denotes completeness. A thorough change in the individual spirit because the will of the individual is crucified so that the will of the Holy Spirit may fill the individual. Then the individual is able to be preserved from the many corruptions of the world’s temptations. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”—I Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

The power of the Holy Spirit reigning within will empower the individual to withstand the temptations of Satan. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, today mankind cannot only be forgiven, but also be made holy, so that he or she can enter right into the presence of God Himself. By the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross, mankind can now receive and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification finds its type in the Old Testament under mosaic law. This Old Testament type helps us understand what Christ can do for us today. The Old Testament tabernacle consisted of two compartments surrounded by an outer court. The two compartments of the tabernacle were known as the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place contained the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant containing the tables of stone, along with other sacred items. The two sections were separated by a very costly veil. The priests ministered in the Holy Place, but into the Holy of Holies the high priest entered alone once a year (Atonement Day). The Holy of Holies was where the presence of God Himself was. If the High Priest had not properly prepared and cleansed himself of any trace of sin, he would die when he entered into the presence of God.

When Jesus died, the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was torn open from the top all the way to the bottom. This signified that through Jesus’ sacrifice that we can now enter into the presence of almighty God. We can be made holy, being sanctified by the blood of Jesus. “And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top, to the bottom.”—Mark 15:37, 38.

Christ did not forgive us so that we would be weak and fall back into sin. Jesus did a complete work. He provided a way whereby we can be made holy within, and be able to enjoy the very presence of God’s Holy Spirit within our hearts. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”—Hebrews 10:19-22.

While the priests could not minister in the Holy of Holies, the death of Christ made it possible for the veil to be spiritually rent completely in two and for man to enjoy a twofold experience. So mankind could spiritually be in the presence of God Himself. Sanctification spiritually admits one into the New Testament Holy of Holies where the laws of God are written on the heart. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."—Hebrews 10:14-16.

Today, God does not dwell in a physical tabernacle, temple, or sanctuary, but in the hearts of His sanctified saints. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—I Corinthians 3:16, 17.

The spiritual nature of man will soon be corrupted with sin, if the Holy Spirit is not in control. Man only has a fleshly nature without the Holy Spirit within. So through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we can now have the divine nature of the Holy Spirit within us. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—II Peter 1:4. Lust is that fleshly craving that will eventually prevail, if we have not in love, from the depths of our hearts, completely surrendered our hearts to the will of God's Holy Spirit.

Mankind without the Spirit of God is carnal or fleshly; even though he may be religious. "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 1:18-21.

The spirit that a sinner has is a fleshly one. A spirit that is contrary to the Spirit of God. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."—Ephesians 2:2, 3.

But where did we get that "children of wrath" nature from? It was passed on to us from all the way back to Adam and Eve, because they were the first to corrupt their spirit. Adam and Eve were created holy, because when God created Adam, He made him a living soul. God breathed into Adam the breath of life, directly from Himself. And then later God created Eve from a rib from Adam. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."—Genesis 1:27.

God is a Spirit, so the image that was like God's image was the spirit that God gave Adam and Eve.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Genesis 2:7. Adam started as a living soul because of God's Spirit within him. Eve was also the creation of God, created from Adam. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."—Genesis 2:21, 22. So the woman that God created from Adam was also in the image of God. They both were living souls because of the Holy Spirit of God that they had within them. The same image that God first breathed into Adam.

But when Adam and Eve sinned, their soul spiritually died. The Holy Spirit of God could no longer dwell within them, because of their sin. God warned them this would happen. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."—Genesis 2:17. And when they ate of the forbidden tree, they did not physically die, but their soul died and the Spirit of God left them. They were separated from the presence of God because sin cannot be in God's presence. God "with them" was their "life." But now they were unworthy of God's presence. Therefore, they were cast out of the Garden and away from the presence of God.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."—Romans 5:12-14.

Later, we see that the children of Adam and Eve had the same fallen nature of Adam and Eve, because they did not have the Holy Spirit within them either. Mankind has had the same fallen nature ever since. So later we read it described in scripture specifically: how that a child from Adam and Eve did not have the image of God, but rather the image of fallen Adam (even though Adam originally started with the image of God). Adam's fallen nature of "no Spirit of the living God," was now being passed on to every generation.

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."—Genesis 5:1-3.

So we see that this scripture repeats what was already said in Genesis chapter 1, to emphasize the difference between the way Adam was created, and then after the fall how his offspring were born. So a hundred and thirty years later, Adam is fallen, and no longer has the image of God. His soul is dead because of sin. And the nature he has is fleshly and carnal, because of the absence of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, now his children are also born with the same fallen nature. So they don't have the Holy Spirit within, either.

Man without God is fallen. His nature is not very different from an animal (or beast), although his reasoning capability of course is much higher. But his nature is still fleshly. And so it has been ever since. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."—Psalm 58:3.

King David recognized this nature that he also received when he was born. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and sin did my mother conceive me."—Psalm 51:5.

The twofold nature of sin makes a second definite work of grace necessary. Man needs to not only be forgiven. He also needs to have his very nature changed by being once again filled with God's Holy Spirit. This is why later in Psalm 51 David prophesied about this as he desired a change in his spirit. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—Psalm 51:10. Our spirit must be changed if we are going to continue to live holy and without sin. Our old fleshly spirit does not have the ability to maintain holiness!

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."—Romans 7:5, 6. The apostle Paul described this sinful nature in a very detailed way, as he showed that before being saved and receiving the Holy Spirit, he would wrestle with his own sinful nature.

The following text is from Romans the 7th chapter, and continues into the 8th chapter (next paragraph). I leave the numbered references to the scriptures so you can verify this text yourself, starting in Romans 7:14 and ending with verse 25: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to preform that which is good I find it not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Then the apostle Paul goes on to explain what being filled with the Holy Spirit does for the individual: how it changes their nature. Romans 8:1-9: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The full plan of God is for us again to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we can live to the Spirit of God, and not to the flesh.

(1) This inherent sin may be summed up by calling it the sin of selfhood. When man fell into sin he was promised that he would die. In a true sense, this happened when it caused God to abdicate the throne of man's heart and self became the ruler.

(2) Here is a divided affection, a divided allegiance that the Holy Spirit must purge and correct. When man fell in the Garden, he became a god to himself, as his own personal fleshly motivated spirit became his guide and ruler. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—Genesis 3:4, 5.

And so ever since, mankind has chosen to create his own gods and his own religions to guide him in his fleshly motivations. The disciples of Christ were saved men, yet they still needed the experience of sanctification and the infilling of the Holy Ghost, or else they also would be led of fleshly motivations. Jesus testified that His disciples were saved men. "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fell from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, *because your names are written in heaven.*"—Luke 10:17-20.

Yet, there were several occasions that proved they had a fleshly nature and that they needed a second work of grace. "And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest."—Mark 9:33, 34. They had a desire to promote themselves, and so they carnally argued about who should be the greatest. They did not even recognize how their fleshly thinking could corrupt even their understanding of how to rightly divide the teaching of the scriptures. †

(To be continued)

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXIII

Human Fellowship

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (I John 1:7). Fellowship does not mean the acknowledgment of others as being Christians or the approving of their conduct. Sometimes we hear it said, “I just cannot fellowship that person.” By this the speaker means that he cannot approve the person’s conduct or feel that he is a true Christian. This is not, however, the true meaning of the word “fellowship.” Acknowledgment or approval is not fellowship at all. Fellowship is an internal, not an external, thing. It is the harmonious blending of kindred spirits. Fellowship can exist only among those who stand upon common ground, or those who are of a similar spirit. Fellowship can exist only where there is a likeness, a similarity, where the same elements exist in the different persons.

We can have fellowship with people in anything where there is a common tie or common interest; for example, those engaged in the same work, members of the same organization, or persons interested in the same cause, etc. Wherever these common interests exist, people will be drawn together and will have a fellow-feeling for each other. Good people find each other and seek each other’s society. Evil men do the same. One sportsman is attracted toward another; one business man to another man engaged in the same business. A member of an organization is drawn to other members of it whether it be a political, religious, business, social, or other form of organization. All this is fellowship.

There are many kinds of fellowship, but we are interested here only in spiritual fellowship, or fellowship in the spiritual life. When Christians are associated in a church, they have two kinds of fellowship. There is, first, associational fellowship, or the fellowship that comes from being associated in the same organization. This tie of association that binds them together is often mistaken for the fellowship of the Spirit. It is not, however, this fellowship, but something quite distinct from it. Spiritual fellowship is the blending of kindred spirits, whether these be good or bad. Christian fellowship is the blending of the Spirit of God in the hearts of God’s people. It is the heart-tie that unites them one to another. It has its origin in God. It cannot be made; it cannot be forced. It is spontaneous. It is the affinity of like elements. We cannot make ourselves have fellowship with someone. If it exists at all, it exists naturally, simply because both parties are possessed of the same spirit.

Sometimes a congregation will seem to be in fellowship with one another, and each will have confidence in all the others. A stranger may come in and may discern at once that some of those in the congregation do not really possess the Spirit of Christ; in fact, they

may possess quite a different spirit. The congregation has fellowship with them, but it is associational fellowship, not fellowship of the Spirit. The one coming in from the outside does not have this associational fellowship, and so he can readily recognize that no spiritual fellowship exists. Sometimes the mistaking of this associational fellowship for spiritual fellowship allows things in a congregation to come to a bad state before the members are aware. A pastor will often detect in certain members of his congregation things that the body of the congregation cannot discern. Such cases are very hard to deal with, because the congregation or a part of it are liable to mistake the associational fellowship they have with those members for real spiritual fellowship, and to think that such persons are all right and that the pastor is wrong in his judgment. They are likely, therefore, to take a stand against the pastor and for the individuals with whom he would deal, for whose souls he labors.

Fellowship is not always a safe test of the spiritual condition of others. They may be all right, and they may not be all right. If we are right and have spiritual fellowship with them, then, of course, they have the Spirit of God; but we may have associational fellowship with them, and yet they may not possess the Spirit at all. Let us, therefore, make our judgments carefully. Let us not render our decision in haste. Let us prove all things.

Again, there may come among us persons who are real Christians and with whom we would have fellowship in the Spirit were it not that we realize that we have not this associational fellowship; but, realizing that we have not such fellowship, we are apt entirely to overlook the spiritual phase. This may prevent us from giving acknowledgment to some of those who are really God’s people. We ought, therefore, to be careful to distinguish between these two different kinds of fellowship.

Fellowship is something that is very sensitive and easily influenced by circumstances. A number of different things will prevent us from having fellowship with people, even if both we and they have the Spirit of Christ. Fellowship cannot exist where there is a lack of confidence. No matter what the cause of that lack of confidence, it will prevent the operation of fellowship. Whatever destroys our confidence in people destroys our fellowship with them. If our confidence is based upon fellowship and anything happens to hinder that fellowship, then our confidence in the person is immediately weakened; after confidence is weakened, fellowship is still more decreased; and as fellowship is decreased, it still further weakens confidence. Thus, the two things react upon one another to the destruction of both.

Suspicion will destroy fellowship. As soon as we begin to question a person, at once fellowship begins to decline. Any wrong attitude that we may hold toward a fellow Christian will hinder fellowship with him, no matter what that attitude may involve. If we find fault with and criticize others, it will break our fellowship with them. If we in any way do them a wrong, the fellowship is broken. Let us beware, therefore, how we judge people from the standpoint of fellowship alone.

Fellowship is a tender plant. It will grow nowhere but in the sunshine; therefore, anything that casts a shade will destroy it. The thing that causes the shadow may be a real thing, or it may be only a thing of the imagination or supposition, but the result is the same in both cases.

How sweet is true Christian fellowship! How glorious to have our hearts bound together by its ties! How we should cherish and nourish it! With what care we should protect it from harm! We can have this fellowship with people that we have never seen, yes, even with those in the remotest part of the globe. Our love goes out to our brethren and sisters in the heathen lands. Those of another race and another color and another language than ours become very dear to our hearts. The Christian ties become stronger than the ties of relationship. Our brethren in the Lord become dearer to us than our flesh and blood kin. The ties that bind us are sweeter and stronger. How precious is the communion of saints when we all drink in of one Spirit, when fellowship flows from heart to heart and God is in all and through all! Let us treasure it, therefore, and watch it carefully lest harm come to this tender plant. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Sirs,

Thank you so much for your *Way of Truth* magazine you send us. We love it. Thank you so much for your ministry. ... God bless you all.

—M. & L. S., Virginia

Dear Saints,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Christ Jesus. *The Way of Truth* magazine is received each month with gladness! I'm 93 years old and unable to attend church. All your writing is such a blessing to my heart. ... Enclosed is an offering to your lovely ministry.

—A. M., Maine

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I continue with my prayers for your continuing *Way of Truth* outreach. At this time in our lives, it is so important to reach out to our world. I keep up with the Hagerstown services. Thank God for you all. Please use this donation for postage and costs of publication.

—S. M., Indiana

Dear Saints of God,

Thanks so much for *The Way of Truth* I get each month. It is still being a great help to me. I was saved 68 years ago, and not long after, I was sanctified. I'm glad I know what being sanctified is. I don't hear it preached on much anymore.

I am sending a donation to be used wherever you see fit. God has been so good to me. I am now 91 years old and still love the truth.

—J. H., Kentucky †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



APPETITE

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"I think I'll pull over by the fence and park the car," said my dad as he turned off the road at our little house. "That way our company can park in the driveway." He drove over near the fence that kept our milk cows from getting out of their pasture, and my two younger sisters and I jumped out of the back seat. Two other cars pulled into our little driveway, and the visiting families got out. Soon the yard was full of talk and laughter.

My mother and her two friends headed for the house to get Sunday dinner on the table. My father and the other two fathers walked around my father's car, looking it over and making comments about it.

"What year is that Studebaker?" asked one of the men. "Looks like maybe a '48."

"Yes," said my father. "It's a 1948 Champion, and it's seen better days. It runs, and that's about all." He pointed to a ragged tear in the canvas top and grinned. "Even with the top up, you can feel the wind in your hair when you drive down the highway."

The men laughed and walked away, still talking about cars. My sisters and I ran to the house to change out of our church clothes. Soon we were playing on the swing set with our friends. Now and then, the beautiful smells of roast beef, corn, and mashed potatoes wafted out through the open windows of our house.

"I'm so hungry I could eat the whole house!" said my four-year-old sister, Twila.

"You can't eat a house," I said. I was two years older than Twila and thought I was considerably wiser.

"She just means she has a big appetite," said Sherry, one of our friends, who was older than both Twila and me and knew bigger words than we did.

"What's *appetite*?" asked Twila.

"Appetite is what you have inside that makes you hungry," said Sherry.

"What does it look like?" Twila wanted to know.

Sherry laughed. "It doesn't look like anything," she said. "It's a feeling."

Before long, our mother called us into the house for dinner. How good everything smelled!

"I have a big appetite!" Twila announced as we seated ourselves around the table. The adults laughed. My sister was such a little girl to be using such a big word.

After my father said grace, we all loaded our plates and ate until we could eat no more. I thought about how strange it was that my appetite—so strong before dinner, had now disappeared. "I think eating takes your appetite away," I said to my mother.

She nodded. "Yes, but it'll be back around supper-time."

I thought about that as I went outside with my friends. Appetite was an interesting thing, and I wondered where it came from. I usually noticed it the most when I smelled food cooking. I wondered if appetite was in the food. My thoughts were interrupted by Sherry, who said, "I'm tired of playing on the swings. What else can we do?"

"We can go look at the cows," I told her. I was used to the cows, but Sherry lived in the city, and so I knew she might like to see them close up.

Sure enough, Sherry wanted to look at the cows, and so we ran to the pasture. To our surprise, the cows were not busily eating grass, but were clustered at the fence next to our car. One cow had a large piece of dark fabric dangling from her mouth.

"What is that cow eating?" Sherry wanted to know.

When we got closer, we saw the awful truth. The cows had grabbed hold of the torn place in the convertible top and had ripped big pieces of fabric from it. Finding that it was not good to eat, they had dropped the fabric in the mud and stepped on it.

After another horrified look at the scene, we flew to the house, screaming for my dad. He and the other dads came running to see what we were so upset about.

In no time at all, my father had driven the cows away from the fence and had pulled the car out of harm's way. He and his friends walked around the old convertible, surveying the damage.

"You're going to feel a lot more wind in your hair now, Paul," chuckled one of my dad's friends.

My dad shook his head. "I never thought twice about parking by the fence," he said. "I know cows are awful curious, but who would've thought they would be so interested in a car?"

"Maybe they had an appetite for it," I said.

My dad laughed. "I doubt it," he said. "A convertible top can't possibly taste as good to a cow as grass does."

"Then why did they even want to try it?" I persisted.

My dad sighed. "Curiosity killed the cat," he said.

Now I was even more puzzled. "What does that mean?" I asked.

Dad sighed again. "It means that sometimes animals ... and people ... try something just to see what it is like. And that's a bad thing if they are trying something harmful."

I walked away soberly. It was hard to understand. Not only had the cows ruined part of the roof of our car, but they had not gotten any benefit to themselves in the process.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 4:26, which says, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." To "ponder" means to think hard about something. We can't expect animals to think hard about decisions they make. Animals are influenced by instinct and curiosity.

It is different with people. God has given us minds that are able to think and understand. That's why it is so important for us to "ponder" the path we take in life. The word "path" in this verse doesn't refer to a trail in the woods or the road to our friend's house. It refers to the decisions we make in our lives.

Your life is a journey. Each day, you "walk" a little farther on your life's journey. Sometimes you will come to a place where the road divides. You can either walk one way or the other. That is why it is important to ask Jesus each day to be your Guide. He will help you ponder the path of your feet and make the right decision. When you follow Jesus, your ways will be "established." That means your life will be full of joy and contentment.

Activity

Another word for "ponder" is "consider." There are several verses in the Bible that tell us things we should "consider." Use the clues to fill in the blanks and see what they are.

1. "**Consider** it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in _____ above, and upon the _____ beneath ..."
2. "Only fear the _____, and serve him in truth with all your _____: for **consider** how great _____ he hath done for you."
3. "Go to the _____, thou sluggard; **consider** her ways, and be _____."
4. "**Consider** the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and _____ feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the _____?"
5. "And let us **consider** one another to provoke unto _____ and to good _____."

Answer to Last Month's Activity

Grandparents of well-known Bible characters:

1. Jacob's grandparents—Abraham and Sarah
2. Joseph's grandparents—Isaac and Rebekah
3. King David's great-grandparents—Boaz and Ruth
4. King Solomon's grandfather—Jesse
5. Timothy's grandmother—Lois †

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!

Open the Eyes of My Heart

Message by Bro. G. E. Tyler, delivered 12/31/17



OUR TEXT this morning comes from Ephesians, chapter 1, beginning with verse 15: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 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." That's reading down through 19. The New International Version says verse 18 as, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you."

The title of the message is, "Open the Eyes of My Heart." We know that's a symbolic usage. We're not talking about the literal heart that pumps, nor the literal eyes to see, but when we speak about opening the eyes of my heart, we're speaking of opening the understanding of our soul, the inner man, that we might see and understand the God whom we serve.

The eyes of many hearts have been closed in the world in which we live. They cannot see; they cannot understand. This is caused sometimes by heartache, by disappointments, by bad experiences, by lost love, by sin, by backsliding, by the loss of a loved one, and by neglect. Even deteriorating health can cause the inner man to close his eyes and not be aware of what is going on around him. It grieves me to know that most people have their spiritual eyes closed.

Let's go to II Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 4. Paul says, "In whom the god of this world [Satan who is in control] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." So their minds are blinded. Their eyes are shut.

Paul puts it this way in Romans 1:21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Think of it! People are walking around in this world without any spiritual understanding or knowledge of God. It's considered blindness of the heart. Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." I believe that Christ came not only to open the eyes of the blind in a literal or physical way, but He came to open the eyes of the blind in a spiritual way. So many hearts have been blinded by the experiences of sin. They need to come to their understanding of God. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know."

As I was considering this thought for this morning's service, I don't think this message is just for the unsaved. Through the cares of life, the eyes of our own heart could be darkened so that we can't see and understand clearly. "Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, to see your glory." I want to see Him. I want to have a better understanding of Him. He's glorious in His majesty. He's all-powerful. From everlasting to everlasting, God is. "Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, to see your glory."

The prophet Isaiah says in chapter 40, verse 26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." God is among us. He is real. God is Omnipresent—always with us. He's all-powerful, all-knowing, but we don't really see Him, I'm afraid, as He really is. He's a glorious God.

My Beloved Ones, if we really saw with our eyes, the eyes of our heart, we would praise Him more, we would glorify Him more, we would be beside ourselves at the presence of the almighty God. We could not keep silent. We could not keep our mouth closed. Think of this: if Christ Himself were here standing before us, what would we do? We'd all fall on our knees, saved and unsaved alike, and acknowledge Him as the Son of God. "Lord, open the eyes of my heart that I might see your glory."

Let us turn to II Kings, chapter 6. We'll begin with verse 8: "Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And



Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Once his eyes were open, he saw something that he did not see before.

We sing the chorus, "There's more with us than be with them," but do we understand how real it is? Surrounding us now are angels in the Spirit realm. God is with us and we need to see Him. "Lord, open our eyes that we may see you, that we may comprehend you in a greater way."

Let's turn to Isaiah, chapter 6, beginning with verse 1: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." I say this morning, the whole earth is full of the glory of God today. We might not see it and understand it, but if we have our spiritual eyes open, we'd see something. We'd see God high and lifted up. We'd see the angels singing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." He is holy. He is pure and righteous. He is altogether lovely. Oh, that we might see what Isaiah saw! "Open our eyes, Lord, that we might see you in a greater way."

Isaiah 6:5-8, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

When the eyes of our heart are open and we see God in His glory, we're able to hear His voice more clearly and it would cause us to answer Him in a positive way. God is still saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The older generation is getting older. Soon we'll be passing from the scene of action. There needs to be young people coming up in the midst with a vision of the truth and with the glory of God within them, and answering, "Here am I, Lord; send me." Open the eyes of my heart to see His glory. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." I want to see Him. Because of my affliction, sometimes I feel that the eyes of my heart have been somewhat dimmed. Struggling from day to day with certain situations, but I want my eyes to be wide open that I might clearly see God in all His glory.

"Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, to see myself as God sees me." We all have different opinions of ourselves and people have different opinions of us, but the only opinion that matters is God's opinion. The only One that's important is God. May it be the cry of our heart, "Lord, let me see myself as you see me." The Psalmist cried out, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try

me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Is that our cry this morning? "Search me, Lord; try me, and show me if there's something out of order in my life. I want to know what it is." There are going to be millions at the judgment that are going to arrive, thinking that they are all right and they're not going to be right in the sight of God. They're going to ask, "Lord, haven't we done this and that in your name?" He's going to say, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you." I don't want to be among that crowd. I want to be among the crowd to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But in order to be in that position, we have to see ourselves as God sees us.

Turn to Revelation, chapter 3, beginning with verse 14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works [God knows our works. Whether we're saved or unsaved, God knows everything about us.], that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." There really isn't any such thing as a lukewarm Christian. If you reach the point of lukewarmness, you'll be spued out of the mouth of God. "God, keep us hot; keep us on fire; keep us enthused." Don't let our vision and experience wane.

Revelation 3:17-19, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked [If we say that we're rich, and we don't need anything, we're blind, wretched, poor, and miserable. Everyone of us need something from God. None of us has reached the apex, the pinnacle. We're striving, but we need help from God. Never come to the place where you'll say, 'I need nothing.' All of us have needs. We need God, but He says to those who might be falling that He has a remedy for us]: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." If you're rebuked and chastened by the Lord, that's something to rejoice about. That's a sign of God loving you.

Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." God wants to dwell within us. He wants to have His way with us, but we have to open the eyes of our heart to receive Him. God wants to open the eyes of our heart. God wants us to see, but we have to be willing for Him to show us. "Lord, open the eyes of my heart to see others; not only my needs, not only my problems, not only my difficulties, or my families, but the needs of others." We're surrounded by people who have needs. Bro. Ralph sings this song from time to time: "If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain."

Jude 1:20-23, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." God wants us to build ourselves. God wants us to put into practice the principles we're taught and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Son of God. There are forces trying to drive us out of the love of God and into hatred and malice toward one another. "Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, that I might have compassion on others." Jesus Christ was full of compassion. God is full of compassion and plenteous in mercy. "He shall not always chide," the Bible says. We're surrounded by people who are forlorn and homeless and have needs. I know we can't help everyone, but I believe if the eyes of our heart are open, we're going to have compassion on others. I think if we allow God to open the eyes of our heart, we're going to be compassionate to our fellow man. Christ gives us a heart of compassion and love for our fellow man. In spite of someone doing wrong, and he might deserve where he's found himself, is that any reason for us to shut up our bowels of compassion towards him? But for the grace of God, there go we.

Let's turn to Luke, chapter 10. We'll begin with verse 30: "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [We don't know what kind of man this was. He probably did wrong, but he was taken among thieves and beaten and stripped. No one deserves that.] And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [The priest saw him with his eyes, but the eyes of his heart were darkened. He really didn't see him. He saw the physical man, but he didn't have compassion on him. If the eyes of his heart had been open, he would have done something to help this man.] And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. [He, too, looked with his eyes, but not with the eyes of his heart. The eyes of his heart were darkened. He had no concern for his fellow man.] But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him [Though the Samaritan was hated by the Jews, he saw him, not only with his literal eyes, but he saw him with the eyes of his heart. He had compassion on him. Look what he did.], And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [He did what he could to help the man. He didn't know who he was. He was a perfect stranger. It didn't matter. There was a fellow man in need, and the eyes of his heart were open to him.] And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" Of course, it was the Samaritan. "Lord, open

up the eyes of my heart that I might see the needs of others. Let me have compassion on my fellow man." God wants us to love and care for one another.

"Lord, open the eyes of my heart to see a lost and dying world." So many times we're so concerned with making money and involved with material things and with our own problems that the eyes of our heart are dimmed when it comes to seeking the lost. John, chapter 4, beginning with verse 35: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes [not your literal eyes, but your spiritual eyes], and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." There is a lost and dying world out there. We need to be not only concerned and compassionate toward their physical or temporal needs, but concerned about their spiritual needs. "Lord, open the eyes of my heart. Help me to see that white flock that Jesus was talking about. Help me to have a burden for the souls of men."

Jesus met a woman at a well. As Jesus was going through Samaria, He stopped and ministered to her. She was an ill-famed woman, but He saw her need and ministered to her. She was saved as a result of it. Others were saved after hearing her testimony.

We think of the man of Gadara. He was demon-possessed. He was breaking his chains. He was crying out night and day in pain. It was scary. No doubt, people would say, "Stay away from that man. He's evil. He's rotten to the core." Be careful how we make judgments of people by looking at them. Whatever their situation is, they have a soul. That soul needs God.

We are God's witnesses, His people, His church. We need to do more than just satisfying ourselves with sitting on the benches and being preached to from Sunday to Sunday. It is wonderful to worship the Lord, and I believe that every saint of God should be at their post of duty whenever it's possible, but we're called to do much more than that. We're called to win a gainsaying world. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." May God help us. "Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, to see a lost and dying world. Open my eyes of my heart, Lord, to see deep things in the Word of God." The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." I believe God has much more in store for us than we realize and understand. God is able to do all things if we don't doubt.

I Corinthians 2:10, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Paul cried out in Romans 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" I say, God has greater things for each one of us—ministers, deacons, teachers, members of the congregation. If you'll allow God to open the eyes of your heart, you'll see with excitement what God has in store for you.

There is a heaven to gain, Dear Saints of God, and we need to open the eyes of our heart to behold it. Isaiah 51:6, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." 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). "Lord, open our eyes that we might see into heaven and behold your glory." Peter said, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." If you are a Christian, there is a place reserved in heaven for you if you remain true and faithful. It's not automatic. You have to be true and faithful to God and true to the end. Isn't it wonderful?

"Lord, open the eyes of my heart to see the exceeding greatness of your power to us-ward who believe." God's power are for those who believe; God's power are for those who have faith in Him.

"Lord, open the eyes of our heart. Let us see your power." I want to see signs and wonders following the preaching of God's Word. I want to see the gifts of the Spirit operating in the body of Christ. I want to see scriptures fulfilled in our time. I believe it's possible if we allow God to open the eyes of our heart. †

LOOKING BEYOND OUR DIFFICULTIES

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch



ALTHOUGH there are difficulties and problems in life, we can always look beyond them and trust in the One who is able to take us through them.

I'll be reading a couple of verses of scripture from Psalm 46, Philippians 3, and Psalm 23. Psalm 46:3-5, "Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." These are a very comforting combination of scriptures.

It is a blessing to be able to live in God's world, to believe in Him, to see life as a precious gift, and to make the best of that journey. It's a comfort also to know that we can be His and that we can be sheltered under His wings. It's good to see that there are many yet who know and live for God and believe in what God can do for them. It's commendable to see young people embracing the opportunities that's afforded them as well.

We have a part to play in what we receive from God. Psalm 37:4, 5 says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Com-

mit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Those scriptures that I quoted here a few seconds ago, picture two different thoughts. The first refers to the natural struggles of life and, of course, the other one to the spiritual. It is not realistic to think that all will be smooth in this life. We have to be realistic. With all the advances and the technology in our world, troubles and problems abound, I suppose, as ever. There is no shortage of them.

Many struggle with inferior feelings. They feel beaten down. It is happening among children, teenagers, and older people as well. Many struggle with material poverty and are unable to cope with the pressures of life. They are all so very real.

There are those, too, who struggle and long for acceptance, just somebody to care and to think about them. Even a phone call or a little visit would brighten their day.

There are those who live with very little and some with so much, and they say that they have nothing to live for. Some live very happy with little.

Probably the most common battle among us is sicknesses and illnesses that surround us all the time.

What about the other side? Whether we are sick, distressed, poor, or friendless, we can still have the love of God in our soul. Jesus said that He came to bring it. This has to do with the spiritual side. The Bible says, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

God saw beyond where we were, and He gave Jesus Christ, His Son, for us. If you'll look into I John 4:10, it says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thank God, we do not have to live in sin, either. That's the prime thing Christ came to take us out of.

Paul comforted the Corinthian brethren. You will find it in the fourth chapter of II Corinthians: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." So what he was saying was: going through your struggles and battles, etc., in life, underneath it all there is a God, One in whom you can always trust. God surprises us, you know. He does things for us that people don't understand. God is still the miracle-working God. We find it a very comforting fact to know that we can trust in the One who never fails.

One of the scriptures I quoted earlier used the word *press*. In fact, the apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark." So you don't stop along this road. You have to keep going and keep pressing. The word *press* means, "to advance, or carry on vigorously; to push forward." These are not times for Christians to fall away and become intimidated and feel outnumbered. These are the times for Christians to stand up and be counted and stand up for what is right. Stand on the Word of God.

John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew

him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." None of us need to live void of the grace of almighty God. It is indeed amazing grace. We need to sing it in our hearts every day: "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see,"

Jesus said of Himself, "I am," on several different occasions. He said, "I am the bread of life." Bread is sustenance. You can't live this Christian life without the Lord Jesus Christ. It's just going to become a profession or a form. You have to live it in line with Him. You have to associate with Jesus. You have to have a personal relationship with Christ. This is what makes us genuine Christians.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Light shows you where you go. When you know where you're going, you know.

Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." He is the One who takes us out of this old dead state of sin and gives us a new life. Salvation is a resurrection from the dead state of sin. The apostle Paul made that very clear. He said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

Jesus said, "I am the true vine"; that means, there must be other vines that are not true. Be sure you are standing on the Rock, Jesus Christ. Be sure you are serving Him and not some man or popular leader or some charismatic figure. Follow Jesus. Jesus also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Again, the apostle Paul said, "I press." He pushed for the finish line. Let me tell you something, Friends, this is very real. This is a one-time journey. We're not coming back here. This life is once. When you close your eyes here on Earth, it's finished. How we have laid it down will be how we awake. In so doing, Paul had to drop the past. He had to forget the things of the past. He had a lot to forget. He said, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He had to wade through the difficulties. You're not going to get through this life without difficulties. They're real. Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." It's one thing to start this beautiful race with God and it's another thing to finish it.

I quoted the words of David from Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Every day is a new untrodden path, but thank God, we have an able leader. This Shepherd will stay with us in our highs and in our lows. When we're down and when we're up, we will still have the Lord.

David referred to going through the valley. *Through* means, "by way out." A *valley* is a low area between hills. Sometimes we get down in the valley. Those are times that we find God more real. Some people leave Him out when they get down in the valley, but that's

when we need Him. That is when we need to prove Him. There are low times in our lives—discouragement and hurt—beaten down by critics. We'll experience those things. Unexpected circumstances, etc. All our struggles and battles seem to be failing. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, My Beloved Friends. Our loved ones are going through circumstances that we don't understand. We never will understand it all. There are mounting pressures. Beautiful teenagers have gone astray. No regard for the parents. "Do what I want." They have forgotten the teachings of home and the church.

Have you ever stopped to think about the rose? Roses grow on stems of thorns. If you see only the prickles, you will never pluck the rose. So with the thorns (the bad things in life), come an assurance and a rest, for in that scripture it says, "I am with you." Thank God, there is a river, the grace of God. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." God has promised to be with His church. He has promised to preserve His people through the thick and the thin, through the evil and the good. Anywhere you find yourself, God has promised to preserve His people. That's what we have to think about and encourage ourselves with, because we serve One who is bigger than us.

David said, "When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." He started off Psalm 46 by saying, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." †



Giving praise or approval is a critical part of our relationship with others. Given properly, it is a way that we show someone has our attention and that we have observed behavior worthy of recognition. It is a way of encouraging others, showing the value that we place upon them and showing ourselves friendly. It is important that we don't hesitate to use the opportunity to do this; it is easy sometimes to be so busy or self-focused that we don't notice or we forget. Equally important is that we don't fall into the habit of giving praise or approval constantly or in just a habitual way. It is only really effective when it comes from the heart and is justly earned.

It is my privilege to say how pleased I am with the many fine examples of young people in the church that we have the privilege of working with. It is a pleasure to see the Lord working in and through them and to hear and read their thoughts. Trusting that Bro. Alan Richards' thoughts which follow will be a blessing to you this month, and that we will all use the opportunities that we have to touch the lives of others.

Sincerely,
Bro. Doug Shenberger

WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

By Alan Richards

I've been asked to speak on a specific request the apostle Paul made in a prayer to the Colossians. Paul loved and prayed for the church. His concern for the different congregations can be readily seen in his letters to them. If you were to look at the first chapters of many of these letters, you would find phrases, such as: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers"; and, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." In Colossians 1:9, Paul told the brethren, "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."



I have been asked to speak about wisdom and spiritual understanding. As I thought about what Paul was really praying for, I thought I should get a clearer understanding of understanding and wisdom.

So what are they? What is wisdom and what is understanding? Thousands of years ago, a man asked a very similar question. Let's turn to Job 28:12: "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" Job did not receive a satisfactory answer, so he asked again, "Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?" This time, he finally received the answer. Reading verse 20 again: "Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?" Skipping down to verse 23: "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." Then to verse 28: "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." There is the answer. If you'll look at the world around us and you get a true understanding that there is a spiritual realm that is at play all around us, and that there is an almighty Creator on one side and a terrible destroyer on the other, you will take action. If you truly comprehend, that understanding will cause you to depart from evil, and your wisdom will compel you to fear your God. But when Paul wrote to the Colossians, he addressed them as brethren: men who had already come to the knowledge of God and had shunned evil.

So what more is necessary? We need spiritual understanding and wisdom as Christians, because we are at war. I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." These verses make it clear that we have an enemy, a dreadful enemy who will do all he can to destroy our souls. We need spiritual understanding to avoid his traps. II Corinthians 2:11, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us:

for we are not ignorant of his devices." We also need spiritual understanding to know, as Sis. Desiree brought on Wednesday night, who our General is. Revelation 17:14, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings." We need wisdom when we battle this wily opponent. It's not always easy to navigate some of the situations we find ourselves in as Christians. We need wisdom to act in a godly manner in tricky situations.

A good example of this in action is the account of Daniel. One day the King of Persia made a decree that no man could pray to anyone but the king for 30 days. Daniel was aware of the punishment for disobedience. A painful death; being eaten alive by hungry lions. A thought may have entered Daniel's mind: *It's only thirty days, you have a very high position in the kingdom, don't forfeit it for mere conversation with a friend. If you pray to God, you will suffer tremendously, if you just stay low, you can pick back up with God in a month.* Daniel resisted any such thought. The Bible says that when he knew the decree had been signed, he went and prayed to God just as he had before, with his window wide open and probably praying out loud. When he was punished for serving his God, the Lord preserved His faithful servant by closing the lions' mouths. As was brought out Wednesday night, understanding who we are, who we are fighting, what we are fighting for, and who we are fighting for, will give us the wisdom to keep on the firing line, no matter what.

Another area where we require wisdom and understanding is in the offensive. We need wisdom to defend ourselves against Satan's attacks, but we need much more wisdom to win other precious souls to the cause of Christ. Just because we have truth does not mean we can go up to anyone and everyone and say, *I have the truth. Sit down and let me tell you about it.* It takes spiritual understanding to know that there are many souls headed for hell and that the fields are ready to harvest; and it takes wisdom to go about convincing others of the gospel. Jesus, when He convinced sinners, rarely told them, "I am the Messiah; follow Me." He understood that there are different ways of winning people. For some, such as the rich young ruler, He was blunt with a person already familiar with God's commandments. With others, such as lowly fishermen, He did a great miracle, such as causing fish to appear in swarms before telling them to follow Him. Still with others, He showed great mercy, such as the woman caught in adultery.

We need to be close to God so that when He shows us a soul that is tender, we will be ready to guide that soul to the highway of holiness and to receive the wisdom we need to persuade men, as did Philip when he was brought to the eunuch. For the reasons above, the Bible commands that we seek wisdom and understanding. Proverbs 4:5, "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth." Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." God knows that we need understanding and wisdom because we are fallible human beings. Therefore, He instructs us to seek godly wisdom and

spiritual understanding. God never gives us anything to do that we can't, with His strength, accomplish.

So how do we obtain this wisdom and understanding? James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." God giveth wisdom. All we need to do is to acknowledge that we need it, He has it, and we want it. Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." If we respect God for who He is, what He has done and what He can do, and if we keep His commandments, we are on the path to wisdom and understanding. Whenever we feel we need more, we can learn from asking God, reading His Word, and learning from life.

I found recently that there is much wisdom in the Bible that I had skimmed right over. Sis. Julie challenged us a couple of months ago to read a chapter of Proverbs a day. I started to but found that I was only finding a few verses that really stuck out to me. I was kind of surprised because I thought that there was supposed to be lots of wisdom in Proverbs. Then one evening as I was studying the book of Proverbs in school, they asked me to write a certain verse in my own words. The verse was a "simple" one that I thought I understood, but when I tried to reword it, I realized there was a depth that I had missed when I first read the verse. I spent several minutes meditating on that verse and pondering what all it really meant. It occurred to me that if I would take my time and read the book of Proverbs, and the Bible in general, more slowly and thoughtfully, that I might find there is more depth to some of what I thought I knew when I was currently comprehending. Since that time, my thought has only been confirmed by events, such as the Wednesday evening Sunday school lesson we had on the woman at the well. During that lesson, Bro. Doug had us to ponder why Jesus began His conversation with the woman with a request. I had never stopped to think why Jesus did what He did. There is much wisdom and spiritual understanding to be gained by a thorough study of God's holy Word.

In conclusion, I hope that you have received some little understanding this morning. Wisdom and understanding are essential to our daily fight for right, both when under siege and when swiftly conquering for our King. Paul told many of the churches, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren." Ignorance can get you killed in real combat. In Vietnam, the soldiers who lived the longest, generally, were the ones who learned quickly and learned from the veterans. It's no different in the spiritual battlefield. We cannot afford to be ignorant. Job 32:7, "... multitude of years should teach wisdom."

As young people, we would do well to learn from the veteran spiritual warriors and soul winners around us. If we want to be greatly successful in this race, we need all the wisdom and understanding we can get. That is one of the reasons Paul told the brethren to exhort one another. We are all to help each other to be the best soldiers we can be for our King of kings and Lord of lords. †

AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Bro. Greg,

This trying time, I'm sure is making all of us take inventory of our spiritual walk. I, for one, am discovering opportunities for growth I had failed to realize were even needful until now.

The song, "In Times Like These," just came to me as I was watching the end of the service last night as Bro. John was talking about the good that's coming from what we're going through. I'm sure all of us have recognized this good and have used it for encouragement. He also asked if anyone wanted to share what they were doing during this time.

That's when the song came to me as the possible title for a message due to the open-endedness of the title. (And, of course, could be sung as well.) It led me to have this random assemblage of thoughts with the song's title preceding each one:

In times like these ...

... is your anchor holding; does it grip the Solid Rock; is it slipping; are you beginning to faint?

... are we spending more time in the Bible, not just reading and meditating, but also adding to our memorized verses or even chapters? Are they becoming more a part of you to draw from?

... are we taking spiritual inventory of our lives to root out (any weeds in your garden?) anything that could be a hindrance to unanswered prayers or outcomes we desire?

... are we subservient to this molding; this possible "fiery trial" He is now subjecting us to?

... are we "patient in (this) tribulation" that may fall over us for a long time?

... will we continue to rejoice in hope and, IN all things give thanks, no matter what happens?

... are your prayers "effectual" and "fervent" that include your memorized scriptures? Are we becoming better "prayer warriors"?

... are we finding any chinks in our armor; are we wearing all the protective pieces; have some slipped down around our ankles?

... are we reaching out to encourage those we may not have much contact with otherwise and that may need their courage bolstered up?

... are we taking advantage of this opportunity to reach out to those we know are lost and may be more receptive to us and to salvation at this time? (If there ever was a time they might fall under conviction, it would be now.)

... are we following up on those who once came to church—not to pressure them in returning but to just see how they're doing—show we love them and miss them?

... are we neglecting anything just because we have a good excuse to stay home? Do we know of needs that are going unmet that may need someone's attention?

Agreeing with you all in prayer,

Marc Slate, Alabama †

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THE CHURCH OF GOD STANDS FOR

An eternal God	Psalm 90:2
A divine Christ	John 1:1, 14
An infallibly inspired Bible	II Timothy 3:16
Salvation from sin	Matthew 1:21
The new birth	John 3:1-7
Entire Sanctification	Ephesians 5:25, 26
A holy life	Titus 2:11, 12
	Hebrews 12:10-14
Unity of God's people	John 17:21
	I Corinthians 12:13
Divine Healing	James 5:14, 15
The ordinances	Matthew 28:19, 20
Eternal life	Matthew 25:46
	John 3:15; 6:54; 10:28
Eternal punishment	Mark 9:43-46
	Revelation 20:15

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

Jesus bought it with His own blood	Acts 20:28
It has a good foundation	Ephesians 2:20
	I Corinthians 3:11
Christ is the Head	Ephesians 1:22; 5:23
	Isaiah 9:6
Christ is the Door	John 10:9
	John 10:1
	Acts 2:47
Only the saved are members	John 15:2-6
	I John 3:8, 9
Membership is offered to all	II Peter 3:9
	Revelation 22:17
Membership is rewarded	John 14:2, 3

OUR SERVICES ON CD'S

CD's of our services are available for purchase. These are \$3.00 each; however, orders of 10 or more are only \$2.50 each, postage paid. Please write in the blank how many you would like to receive. Send check or money order to: The Way of Truth CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

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