

The Way of Truth

Vol. 80

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

No. 1

80

Beginning our 80th year publishing
the gospel of Jesus Christ

He cares for you

Message begins on page 12

January 2022

A RETURN TO CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

FOR AN EDITORIAL, I would like to use some thoughts I presented in a radio message some thirty years ago. I'm going to call your attention to a very familiar verse: Proverbs 14:34, which says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." I would like to entitle my thoughts, "A Return to Christian Principles."

Each year it seems that time is passing so swiftly, and there are many conveniences that we enjoy today that our forefathers did not have. I am not one to stand in the way of true progress. I'm glad there are airlines. Without modern means of transportation, we cannot go from place to place. We enjoy these blessings: modern washing machines, refrigerators, electricity, etc. These things are good and proper in their place. But Beloved, honestly I must say, we have lost something. Somewhere along the line, people have departed from Christian principles, and these are the real important aspects of life. It's not only in America, but in other places we see the same spirit working.

The spirit of disobedience, the spirit of evil and sin, is prevalent throughout the world, and people are rejecting the truth of God's Word. They are rejecting the principles that Jesus Christ taught, but as a people, we need to return to Christian principles.

We need as a people, in general, to go back to the principles of the Bible, for in the Word of God, life is to be found. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Sin always has been and always will be a reproach to any people.

We need to return to the principle of holiness. The Bible teaches holiness. The Bible tells us that God is holy, for it says: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." The Bible also says: "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

There needs to be a return to proper conduct, uprightness, and righteousness. I know that even many religious teachers would try to tell us that there is none righteous, and there is no hope for living in righteousness because we are all sinners, more or less. It is true that sin is prevailing, but there is a Conqueror who is able to destroy sin. Yes, Beloved, the very purpose that Jesus Christ came into the world was to destroy the works of the devil. Believe me, when Christ has control of your life, when He is ruling, and your path is directed by Him, He is going to lead you in the pathway of holiness. He will never, never, never lead you in the pathway of sin.

We need to return to the principle of holiness in our conduct: how we live, how we think, and how we talk. There was a time when profanity was taboo, but not so today. Profanity is prevailing on every hand. You hear evil words constantly, and it is not right, Beloved. It is sin. There needs to be a regard for clean language. We don't need to fill our language with profane babbling. We can communicate in an upright way.

We need to return to the principle of holiness in dress. *Holiness in dress* means "modesty." We are told

in the Word of God to adorn ourselves in modest apparel. This is for a reason: to cover our bodies so that we will not tempt our fellow man. We are male and female, and God has set down the standard of dress (modest apparel), and yet many have disregarded that standard all together so that even walking down the street of any town, you're apt to see near nudity, especially in warm weather climates. Beloved, this is not right. It is not proper. It is evil. It is sin. It is destroying our land. There is sexual promiscuity on every hand, and no wonder it's so, because people have thrown away the principles of Christianity. I'm not talking about returning to church joining. I'm not talking about just sitting on a pew in the church of your choice. Beloved, people can be consistent church goers and end up in hell. We need to be a people who live Christian principles: the principle of holiness and obedience. If we love the Lord, we will keep His commandments. There isn't anything wrong with that, for Jesus taught us how we are to live.

We need to return to the principle of love. I know the word *love* is used many times in our day and age, but few people have a true comprehension or understanding of what love really is. Love is not getting. Love is not receiving. Love is giving. Jesus told us about a man who spoke and asked Him the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus had told the people there to love God, and to love their neighbor as themselves. "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29).

Then Jesus gave us the parable of the man who fell among thieves. He was beaten and robbed and left for dead. A religious man came by, a priest, one who was supposed to be an example in proper conduct, walked right by the man in need. He showed him no interest whatsoever. This is so prevalent in our day and age. When people are in need, everyone seems to be too busy to help. But we need to return to the principle of true love, Beloved. Next, came a Levite, a religious person, a church goer, who looked at the man in need. Doubtless, he shook his head and went on. He did not help. He did not love his neighbor. Then came a Samaritan. If we understand correctly, this man who was beaten was a Jew. The Jews hated the Samaritans, but this Samaritan saw the man in need. Jesus said, "The Samaritan bound up his wounds, put him on his donkey, took him to an inn, paid for his staying in the inn, and said to the innkeeper, 'If it costs anymore, by the time I return, I will make it right.'" Beloved, Jesus asked, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" Of course, it was the good Samaritan.

How many true, good Samaritans are there in our world today? Most people who do things do them with a purpose in mind. Something that they can receive for themselves. "I'll give if I get in return." Not so is

ABOUT THE COVER

The dawning of a new day brings with it the anticipation of good things. We stand on the brink of a brand new year with our hope in God that 2022 will be better than 2021. This issue of *The Way of Truth* begins our 80th year of publishing the gospel of Christ. May this monthly messenger continue till Jesus comes!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Vol. 80

January 2022

No. 1

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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true love, Beloved! We need to return to the principle of love, where people help one another just because it's right, and because they love their neighbor.

We need to return to the principle of giving. Oh, there is so much selfishness in our world! Everyone is seeking self, self-gain, self-progress, etc., but what happened to the principle of selflessness, of giving, of helping those who are in need with our time, service, and money? We need to return to Christian principles. There was a time when people who didn't even profess to be Christians would give of their own means willingly to help someone in need. Let us return to the principle of giving.

We need to return to the principle of honesty. There is much lying and deceit in our world. Beloved, we need to return to the principle of honesty. Romans 12:17 says, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." We need to be honest. Lies should not be produced by our lips and by our hearts. We should be honest in the sight of all men. Treat people fairly. Employers should treat their workers fairly, and workers should give a fair day's work for an honest day's pay. These principles have been departed from, and we are suffering the consequences for it. We need to go back to the blessed old Bible, back to the words of our Savior, loving, obeying them all.

We need to the return to the principle of truth. People are not searching for truth today. Many people would have us to believe there is no such thing as truth. Everything is gray. There is no good, there is no bad, it's all personal opinion. Not so, Beloved! There are some definite rights. There are some definite wrongs, and we need to search after truth. We need to reach for it. We need to dig for it. We need to allow the Spirit of

God to lead us into all truth, as Jesus said He would do in St. John 16:13. We need to buy the truth, and sell it not. These are principles that our nation was built on.

These are principles, that if they're put into practice in today's world, we would have a happier people. We would have fewer problems, because the principle of holiness, the principle of love, the principle of giving, the principle of honesty, the principle of truth would be reigning and working in the lives of individuals. These will produce a nation of righteousness. Our text says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

Dear Ones, if you know not God, if you're living in sin, you are adding to the problems of our world. Depart from sin and return unto God. Return unto righteousness. Live a life clean and pure in the sight of God. It is possible through the blood and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I challenge you to return in your own individual life to Christian principles. Hate evil. Turn from that which is wrong and cleave to that which is right. If you'll do it, and I do it, and our nation does it, this would be a better place to live. We would be a help to our fellow man.

We trust our words have been a blessing to you. †

MAY GOD BLESS YOU THROUGHOUT THE COMING YEAR!

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

F. W. Davis

How much have I done for the Master?
How many lost souls have I won,
Thru the year that has gone into history,
And a new year for me has begun?
I wonder if Jesus, my Savior,
Is pleased with the number of men
I spoke to about their salvation,
And caused them to turn from their sin?

But the failures I made in the old year,
I must never repeat in the new.
For millions in sin still are dying,
And laborers for Jesus are few.
If I would press forward to victory,
I cannot look back on the past,
But ever march onward and upward,
Till I shall see Jesus at last.

ANOTHER YEAR WITH JESUS

Author Unknown

I do not know what God in love
Has planned for me this coming year,
But this I know, come weal
Or woe, with Him I will not fear.

I do not know what rugged paths
I'll have to tread on highways drear,
But this I know, where'er I go,
God will be very near.

I do not know what coming days
Will hold for me, of joy or pain,
But this I know, God loves me so,
And all He sends is gain.

I AM ALWAYS THINE

Dolores Karides

I will not fear the future
Nor what's in store for me,
God's love will lead and guide me
Through all eternity.

His love is ever constant
And He takes care of me,
He fills my life with blessings
No harm can come to me.

With faith and hope deep in my heart
Then peace and joy are mine;
Dear Lord, You're always with me,
And I am always Thine.

A NEW YEAR WITH THE LORD

M. S. Lowndes

A new year is about to unfold
With new opportunities to explore;
Doors will open for new experiences,
New adventures with the Lord.

Remember not the former things,
The things of this past year;
The Lord will do new things in us,
Much more than we are aware.

For He will make a way for us
As we put our trust in Him;
And He will guide our every step
By His presence we have within.

What God has placed within our hearts,
We find we'll be able to do;
If we look for the opportunities,
We'll see the door to go through.

We mustn't let anything hold us back,
But rise up and take our place;
And be all that God wants us to be,
With a fresh touch of His grace.

NEW YEAR'S MORNING

Author Unknown

We humbly ask, Dear Master,
That our New Year gift may be,
All meaner things forsaking,
Rich fellowship with Thee,
Our hearts at rest and tranquil,
Thy blessed will our own
Until we know Thee fully
In Thy eternal home. †

As we begin a new calendar year, let us
redouble our efforts to draw nigh to God and
have more success in defeating Satan.



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

QUESTION: Why was John cast out to the island of Patmos? Who cast him out and why?

ANSWER: John himself tells us why he was cast out: "I John, who am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). So John was banished to the isle of Patmos because of his stand for Jesus Christ and the truth, which resulted in the conversions of heathens, among others.

Historians do not agree as to who was the ruler who had him banished. Some think Nero was, and others, Domitian.

QUESTION: What does Paul mean in I Corinthians 9:5, 6, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working"?

ANSWER: Reading from the first verse of this chapter it is plain to see that there were some at Corinth who questioned whether Paul was an apostle. The statements that follow are to show that he is an apostle. In the verses you ask about, Paul is saying that he has a right to have a wife, even though he did not have one. Possibly the reason he did not have a wife was because of his great burden for the spread of the gospel. Further, his trouble and manner of living would have made it difficult for him to have a wife. Paul believed and taught that the workman was worthy of his hire, but again, because of the type of work he was doing, he was not fully supported by his converts. He made tents from time to time to support himself and those that were laboring with him, but he had just as much right as the other apostles to be supported by the saints. The fact that he did not have a wife, the fact that he worked with his hands at times to support himself, was NOT to be taken as proof that he was not an apostle.

QUESTION: Does Romans 8:16 mean that a true Christian has two spirits in him? If so, what are their works?

ANSWER: Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit that, when we are truly saved we are children of God.

The Bible declares there is a spirit in man; this is true whether he be a Christian or a sinner. When a sinner comes to Christ, repents of and forsakes his sins, is forgiven and born again, then he becomes a child of God. The spirit, or soul, in him has been converted, regenerated, which is the same as being born again.

The Holy Spirit is with him. In sanctification the Holy Spirit comes in and his soul becomes possessed by the Holy Spirit and his body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to teach, to guide, and to give power. So there are two spirits in such a person: his own spirit and the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION: What will be the fate of Israel when Christ comes?

ANSWER: In this New Testament age God has concluded all under sin; He has offered all salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Those who accept Him will be saved; those who reject Him will not be. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). This is true of Hebrews as well as Gentiles. So they will stand before the Lord in judgment and give an account of their lives like all the rest of us will.

QUESTION: "And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2b). What is the meaning of purging, and how long does it go on?

ANSWER: Normally, we think of pruning trees, but the Master uses the word *purge* here, so we understand Him to mean something different from pruning. Many Church of God ministers through the years have understood this to refer to the experience of sanctification—when the converted child of God is filled with the Spirit and depravity is removed, leaving only the "divine nature." That is not to say the Christian is not to continue to grow in his experience, for he is, doubtless, as long as he lives.

QUESTION: Is there a certain action or evidence of being baptized in or filled with the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues?

ANSWER: There is no certain action or evidence that you are to go by to let you know you have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

There are conditions that must be met, for Jesus said the world cannot receive the Spirit—John 14:17—so you must be saved from your sins first, and then, after being saved, present yourself a living sacrifice to God—Romans 12:1.

We are justified by faith, not feelings, and we are sanctified by faith. Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also [note that *also* means something in addition to being justified] we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1, 2). Church of God ministers have taught down through the years that sanctification is "standing grace."

The idea that you must utter some unknown words as an evidence that you have been filled with the Spirit is false. Millions have been filled with the Spirit and have not spoken in "tongues."

We need to understand that the true gift of languages is only one of the gifts of the Spirit, and is never used as an evidence to the believer that he or she has received the Holy Spirit. †

The Work and Effect of Righteousness

2021 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Gary Alwell



IF YOU HAVE your Bibles, you can turn with me to Isaiah 41:10—"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." If you want to turn back to Isaiah 32, there are two scriptures to add to this. Isaiah 32:17, 18: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." For my thoughts tonight, I have a title: "The Work and Effect of Righteousness."

Righteousness is required if we're going to make it to heaven. We have to live according to the Word of God. We're instructed in the book of Titus to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." God made it possible that we can live that way. When we live according to the Word of God, and His plan for us, it does produce what the scripture says in Isaiah: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

I like peace. I like that peaceable feeling in my heart that the Lord gave me when He saved me. I'll never forget that feeling of rising up from praying and asking the Lord to forgive me for not serving Him, forgiving me for not living for Him, and for all the sinful things that I did against Him and to other people. I asked Him for that forgiveness, and said, "Lord, I want to follow you." Peace came over me. There's nothing like it. Paul said, "It's a peace that passeth all understanding." This happens when we turn to the Lord. He puts that peace there. We're not able to acquire that peace ourselves.

When you look around, you see how troubled the world is. I thank God that I didn't have to look at the troubled world this week. I've had other things before me. I've been in a place of refuge all week with the people of God. That's what helps to strengthen me. I've been drawn away from this troubled world. The people of the world are full of trouble. They don't know where to go for their help. Dear Ones, we heard this week that it's the people of God who will show them a better way. It's up to us to let them know there's a better way. False religions don't teach them a better way. They say, "Well, that's the way it is. You have to live this or that way." Thank God that is not the truth. There is a better way. Thank God there is a Savior who can give us this peace.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is the One who brought this peace and made it possible for us to have peace. This is not the peace that the world tries to tell us about. The world looks at peace as just an absence of violence toward each other. One country attacking another and talking about having peace. I'm not talking about that kind of peace. I'm talking about the peace that Christ puts in our hearts. Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

Let not your heart be troubled." That's the peace I'm talking about. I'm talking about the peace of knowing that everything is made right between you and the Lord. There isn't anything between you and Him. You're together. That's the kind of peace I'm talking about; the peace that we can have when we lay our heads down at night. As we review our day, we can look back and see and know in our hearts that all is well with our souls. The great thing about it, you know when it's well with your soul. You also know when your soul is not well. There's no getting around it. It either is or it isn't. Christ can give us that quietness and assurance that it is well between us and Him.

The apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:8-10, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." The law couldn't do it. The law could only teach us what it was, but Jesus made it possible for us to have the righteousness of God in our hearts when He saved us. He took off those old filthy rags. Isaiah 64:6 tells us: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Our works or anything that we in ourselves try to do is as filthy rags in God's sight. There's nothing we could do to make it right. We were helpless, but God had a plan.

God loved us so much that He made a plan from the foundation of the world. He sent His Son to be our Savior so that we could have this righteousness by faith, by believing, by coming to Jesus and confessing our sins and asking Him to forgive us. "I'm done with sin. I'm going to follow a new way today." That's what repentance is. We turn from that old life we lived and follow a new path.

I had to believe in repentance when I came to the Lord for salvation, and I prayed and asked for forgiveness. I began to confess and pour out my heart to Him. Then I had to believe that He would forgive me. I had to have some faith. I had to have something that I could hang on to. I heard the Word of God preached. I knew for years true saints of God who taught the true gospel. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I took the Lord at His Word. At that point, that's all I had, but I also had examples of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles who truly served the Lord. I could see how the Lord kept them and how they served Him. I hung on to that. That was enough. "I believe you, Lord, and I'm taking you at your

Word.” He loves for us to take Him at His Word. “Trust in me,” He says, “let go of that old life and take hold of this new way.” I think sometimes people are reluctant to let go of that old life they’ve lived because that’s all they know. What do they need to do to get into this new way? They have to accept Jesus. They have to take Him at His Word and lay hold on eternal life.

I always liked to speak about the first three fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace. I believe they’re the first three we begin to bear. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We begin to realize this is what love is, and we begin to learn how to love other people. Then we see the joy that comes with it. It’s overwhelming. There are tears of joy. To me, tears of joy are a wonderful thing. The first year that I was saved, I wept many tears of joy. I was not ashamed of them because I was so thankful that I still had a heart that could feel that joy.

The longer you’re in sin, it makes your heart hard. God showed me that I had a tender heart. I could feel the peace and joy that came with it. Peace that passes all understanding. We had to confess. We had to come to the place where we were willing to confess our sins to gain this righteousness.

Forgive me if I often talk about my experience because that’s what I have and know. I remember my grandfather, Bro. Marion Trisler, Sr., preaching. He was the pastor at Deville. After his passing, Bro. Terry became pastor. Many times I heard the gospel preached as a young man. I would be under such conviction, but I could not get myself to yield. The Holy Spirit would deal and work with me. There was a time I said to myself, *If I could just step out in that aisle, I think another force would take me to that altar.* I hesitated. I would not yield. I could see my grandfather pleading. Then I went out farther in sin. After a while, that feeling of conviction is not comfortable, but it’s an assurance to you.

If the Holy Spirit is convicting you, the Lord is ready to forgive you. He wants to forgive you. He’s there waiting, just like the father of the prodigal son. He’s waiting and watching. Just step out and come. He’s ready to forgive. Psalm 86:5 says, “For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.” He wants to forgive you, but you have to make that decision. It has to be your decision. You have to come to the place where you’re honest with yourself and realize that you need a Savior. So many think they can just make it out in the world on their own. When you come and give your heart to the Lord, and He saves you, you’ll rise up, for those old filthy rags of sin have been removed. He puts on you the robe of righteousness. Paul said in Philippians 3:9, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Christ gives us that righteousness.

I was thinking about Adam and Eve there in the garden. We read about this in Genesis 3. Eve took the fruit and she ate of it. She gave it to Adam and he ate. Verses 7 and 8: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the

garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” They tried to hide themselves. That’s what people in sin do. They try to hide their sins. They try to go away from people who love them. They don’t want anyone to see what they’re doing. They try to hide from God. We know we can’t hide from Him.

Genesis 3:9, “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” You know, that’s a good question for people to ask themselves: “Where am I tonight?” Where are you in your relationship with God? Verse 10: “And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” As I read that, I was thinking about what Genesis 2:25 says: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” They were trying to hide themselves, but I’m thinking now about the excuses that Adam was trying to use. In reality, if he was honest, he was saying, “I disobeyed you, God, and I was ashamed, and I hid myself.” That robe of righteousness that Adam had before as he walked in the way, and obeyed God, he now had no covering. His sin was exposed, and God saw him. In verse 11, God asked him, “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” It changed Adam. God asked him, “Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Adam should have said, “Yes, Lord, I did,” but he started to make an excuse and tried to blame Eve. People make excuses today. That’s what I did in the beginning.

People don’t want to admit they make excuses. We have to come to the place where we accept our responsibility. It’s our sins that separated us from God, not other people’s sins. When we stand before God, we’re not going to have excuses. When the woman offered Adam the fruit, he could have said no. That won’t be a liable excuse for Adam. God told him not to eat of that fruit. He had a choice, but because he ate of it, he lost that robe of righteousness. He was not covered anymore. He was exposed in that he disobeyed God. Therefore, we know how it caused the fall of the human race. Now we needed a Savior. Thank God, we have a Savior! Thank God, Jesus was willing to pay the price so that we could be reconciled to God, and we didn’t have to stay separated from Him. We have a way that we can be washed clean and be able to stand once again in that clean and pure state that was there before.

In Romans, chapter 5, verses 17 and 18, we read: “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” So by Jesus Christ, the free gift has come that we can be justified and be able to stand in the presence of God once again. We can be restored.

Romans 5:6-10 says: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." We were reconciled unto God. We were justified. Now we can have peace with God. Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Because of the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus, we now have peace with God. We're not at odds with Him anymore. When we begin to have peace with God, we start to realize we can have peace with our own selves and peace with our fellow men. We don't have to be at odds with people and have all the turmoil and strife that would go on in our lives. We can live a peaceful life.

Salvation does some wonderful things in our lives. We read about these examples in Psalm 40, verses 1 and 2: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay [He lifted us up out of sin.], and set my feet upon a rock." He gave us a foundation to stand upon; that solid Rock. He will sustain us through the good and the hard times. Bro. Raymond sings a song, which says ... "and if I hit rock bottom, I'm still on the Rock." Before, we didn't have a foundation. I know I didn't in my life. How low would we sink in sin without a foundation? It's bottomless; but with the Lord, there's a foundation. Jesus Christ is the solid Rock that we can build our lives upon. When the storm comes and beat upon our lives, our house will stand because it's built on the Rock. It's built on a solid foundation. Another thing Jesus did was, He "established my goings." He gave a purpose. He put a purpose to my life. He became the purpose of my life. Oh, what a beautiful thing when we can make Christ the purpose of our lives! The whole point of us being here in this world is to serve Him, to be at His beck and call, to go where He would have us to go, to do what He would have us to do, and to say what He would have us to say.

I think it was Bro. Goble who spoke this week about us not being our own. We've been bought with a price. Our hearts and minds belong to God, even our opinions. I hadn't thought about that very much. Sometimes we think we have a right to this or a right to that, but we need to weigh that against what the Lord would have us to answer. What would the Lord have us to do? When we are living that way, we are living according to the righteousness of God. This produces a peace in our lives. Paul said, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

There are situations that come our way, and we need to look at them and ask, "What would be the best outcome for this situation?" Sometimes we might even be mistreated. It has happened and will continue to happen. Jesus said that it would, so how are we to respond to that? We need to seek the Lord and ask, "Lord, how would you have us to respond?" We need to let the peace of God rule in our hearts. That's the most important thing. Let that be what guides us and shows us how to respond when we're mistreated in the world.

We have an example in I Peter, chapter 2, of how we should respond. Verse 18: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear." I know this is speaking of a time in that part of the world where people had slaves. Here, I'm thinking, *we're servants of Jesus*. Bro. Brian brought a message a while back about Paul saying that he had become a servant to all. That's the attitude I believe the Lord would have us to take. We're servants to all. Verses 19-25: "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Think about what Jesus went through for us. Think about what He would have us to do and what He suffered for us. If He was willing to do that, He would have us to be willing to suffer some things. This is what is going to show people. This is what sets the true people of God apart from the people of the world and from those who teach false teachings. This is what makes us different.

When the Lord saved me, I rose up and was determined, "Lord, I'm committed to making this work." I tried a lot of things in my life and failed in a lot of things, but I was determined I was going to serve the Lord and stay with Him. One thing I desired was, I wanted to look like the people of God. I didn't want to look like the world and be confused like the world anymore. I wanted to talk like the people of God and know the things the people of God knew. I wanted to know what the Bible said and what Jesus wanted to teach me. This makes us different from the world. This sets us apart. God is with His people. In the time of Moses, how did the children of God know? God said, "I will be with you." That's how the people will know that you are God's people. We love His way.

A sister testified earlier and said that she was not serving the Lord out of fear from losing out. She was serving the Lord because of the joy it gave her. The Bible says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It's a joy to be in this convention. In the presence of God, there is joy. Joy unspeakable! How do you explain what we've been in this week to someone who doesn't know this joy? "Lord, help us to always be an example. Help us to walk before the people of this world that they might see something in our lives and ask us." Peter said, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." People need to know there's hope. They need to know there's a better way. We're the ones that need to help them to see the better way by God working through our

lives. Don't let it be a hindrance when people mistreat us. We're too busy serving the Lord to let that bother us. Let it be like water rolling off a duck's back. Pray for them.

When I was looking at this great peace that the Lord gives us, I thought of when Jesus was born. Angels appeared to the shepherds and gave them this message: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Peace had come to the earth. The Prince of Peace had come. He's here now. I can imagine how peaceful it must have been when they found Him lying in that manger. I can imagine the presence of God, the holiness, and the beauty of it. Peace on Earth! God wants us to have this peace in our hearts. Though the world be raging, we can have that peace. We can have peace in the time of trouble and turmoil.

It is difficult to see our loved ones leaving us. God is able to take away the sting of death and give us peace. Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." They've gone to the place the Lord has made for them. He's gone to prepare a place for each one of us. When He calls us, are we going to be ready? Are we going to be prepared to be with Him? If we're going to be ready, we have to have the righteousness of God upon us. We have to have on that robe of righteousness. If you don't know the Lord, the time to prepare is now. Don't linger. Come and make sure. It's too important to leave to chance and too important to put off. Too many people have put it off and haven't been afforded another opportunity. But there is a price in not being ready.

We read in Matthew 22, where Jesus was telling His disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment [I believe this is symbolic of the robe of righteousness.]? And he was speechless." Listen to what was done: "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him

into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Some people might think that was harsh, but that's why it is so important to be righteous before God.

God is the only One that can make us righteous. It's "by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," the scripture tells us. It's not by anything we can do, but by Him putting that upon us. It's by the blood of Jesus cleansing us and taking away those sins and making us able to be pure to stand before Him. That's the kind of righteousness that is required. If we're not prepared, the time to get prepared is now. We've won't be able to sneak in. He knows whose name is in the book of life.

What a blessed thing it is to be in the kingdom of God! One writer called it, "The Kingdom of Peace." Truly, it is. It is a peaceful habitation. In our text, Isaiah said, "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." It's nice to think of that peace.

Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." As I said before, we can have this peace, no matter what goes on around us. Sometimes our eyes might get distracted or our hearts might get distracted by the things that come against us, but remember, to get that peace again, go to the Prince of Peace. Get back into the presence of God and seek Him.

The devil doesn't like for us to enjoy this beautiful convention, so he fights people. He tries to fight the ministry. He tries anything he can. I know with all my heart, he has been defeated this week. We've been lifted up and strengthened. We've been renewed, and we're ready to go out into the world to be an example before the people. The Bible way is the way.

I encourage you tonight, if you don't know the Lord, make your peace with Him. Come and seek Him with all your heart. Make your peace with the Lord. Through salvation is where you'll get the robe of righteousness. You'll get this peace through the salvation of our Lord.

When Jesus gave the parable of the prodigal, he came to himself. He said, "I know what I will do. I will arise and go to my father. I remember what it was like at my father's house. Even the servants have more than enough. I know I'm not worthy to be his son." He got himself in a bad place because of the life he chose and the decisions he made. He left God out of his life. He thought he could make his own way in the world. Sin almost destroyed him, but he had hope. He remembered people who served the Lord. I believe the Lord is counting on us to let people see there is hope.

The prodigal's father saw him coming from afar off. He had compassion on him and ran and welcomed him back. He began to confess to his father: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." The father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put shoes on his feet. Welcome him home. Rejoice! for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." They rejoiced because he came home.

I believe our heavenly Father is waiting for you to come home that way. He's watching and ready to forgive if you will just turn from the life you're living. Be determined to serve the Lord and live for Him. Then the work of righteousness shall be peace in your life. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." The kingdom of peace is a sure dwelling. You know it will stand. Jesus said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God has always had a church. He will have a people.

I'm thankful for my salvation. I'm thankful for what He has done for me. My desire is to always serve Him and to live a life so someone around me might see my life and know there is a better way. There is a true way. Be determined to stay true to God. †

SHADOWS OF GOOD THINGS

By the late Russell R. Byrum

(Part IV)

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNITURE

(Exodus 25-27, 30, 35-38, 40)

What the Tabernacle Typified

ONE CAN scarcely contemplate this peculiar structure with its various apartments, its strange furniture, its bloody sacrifices, and its mysterious rites without being impressed with the fact that it must be of symbolic significance, even if the Scriptures were silent as to the fact. We need have no doubt that the tabernacle was a type and therefore also symbolic to the Israelites. The writer to the Hebrews, after giving a description of the tabernacle, says, "Which was a figure for the time then present ... But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands" (Hebrews 9:9-11). Also Jesus is described as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:2). And again Christ is spoken of as the "Apostle and High Priest," as a "son over his own house; whose house are we" (Hebrews 3:1, 6). From these texts it is clear that as a house and as the dwelling-place of God the tabernacle typified the true, spiritual "house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15).

But let it be noticed that only as the house of God does it find its antitype in the church. As a means of worship and ceremonial or symbolic purification from sin, it typified the way by which today the sinner comes to God or obtains salvation through the precious blood of the true Lamb of God from the guilt of sin and depravity of the nature. Of the large number of New Testament texts that teach this, probably the following is sufficient for our present purpose: "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

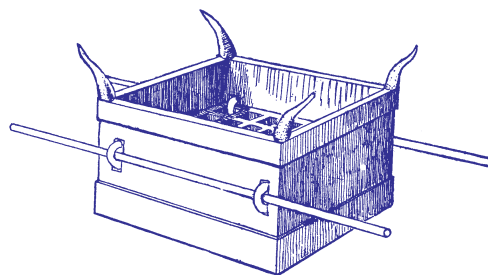
having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The Court

(Exodus 27:9-19)

Surrounding the tabernacle was a considerable space called the "court" enclosed by a high fence three hundred cubits around, or it was one hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five feet wide. This was a screen of linen cloth, and was not very different from what is commonly used in the East at the present time to enclose the private apartments of important persons. The linen curtains as already described were seven and one half feet high and were supported by posts, twenty on each side and ten on each end. These posts were probably of shittim wood, were five cubits apart, stood in sockets of brass, and had chapiters of silver and silver fillets, which were probably connecting-rods between the posts from which the curtains were suspended. Whether the sockets beneath were for the purpose of keeping the posts upright is not certain; but we are told that there were pins and cords which probably were used for this purpose as a common tent is supported. In the court were located the brazen altar and the laver.

But what is the typical significance of the court? Into the court came the penitent Israelite to offer sacrifice for sin, to obtain the favor of God. Here he came for justification. Here at the altar of burnt offering he came to God. If, then, those who came into the ancient court of the tabernacle were seeking forgiveness through those symbolic sacrifices, they must be typical of those who are convicted of their sins and are coming to God for salvation through Christ. They have forsaken the outside world, but have not yet come into God's church.



The Brazen Altar

(Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7)

The altar is doubtless the oldest of all religious institutions, and dates from the earliest dawn of human history. Doubtless Cain and Abel offered their respective offerings upon altars. Noah built an altar when he left the ark. At the first place Abraham stopped in the land of Canaan he built an altar to the Lord. These altars were of earth or of unhewn stone. Altars were common to heathen peoples—in Egypt, at Athens, among the American Indians of Mexico; and some of the ruins of the ancient Druids are supposed to be a kind of altar.

When God told Moses to make an altar of brass He was not introducing a new institution, but rather

The Way of Truth

regulating the construction and use of an existing one. This altar of the tabernacle is called by various names, as *the altar*; the *brazen altar* (to distinguish it from the golden altar of the holy place); and the *altar of burnt offering*, probably because the burnt offering was that most commonly offered there. It was the most used and probably the most important instrument of service in the tabernacle.

Its Structure—The brazen altar was constructed of shittim wood overlaid with brass. As these materials were used considerably, it is of interest to give attention to them. This shittim wood is the desert acacia, a hard, close-grained wood, very durable, and capable of taking a fine natural polish somewhat as our imported *lignum-vitae* wood. The “brass” used for the altar and other parts of the tabernacle is understood as meaning copper, for we are told brass was not known to them. The altar was made “hollow of boards,” without top or bottom. In size it was to be five cubits, or seven and one half feet, in length and width, and four and one half feet, or three cubits, high. It was large enough to receive the largest animal and not too high for the ministering priests. Horns were to be shaped on the four corners. The purpose of these is unknown—unless we suppose the sacrifice was to be tied to them, this may be understood from Psalm 118:27: “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”

The altar had a compass and a grate of network of brass in the middle, also a ring in each of its four corners through which was run on either side a stave or bar, also overlaid with brass, as a means of carrying it. Some difference of opinion exists concerning the compass and the grate of brass. At least four different views are held. The most probable view seems to be that the compass was a mere crown or band around the top for ornamentation as on the golden altar, and that the grate was a “hearth” or “fireplace,” as it is rendered by the Septuagint, and was hung inside the altar midway between the bottom and the top. This grate was held in position by the rings in the corners, which passed through the corners of the altar to the outside, where the bars passed through them. Thus the grate would serve a valuable purpose; and it being supported by the loose bars, the ashes might have been sifted through by shaking the bars. The grate was thus one and one half cubits from the ground, which was also the height of the altar of incense and the mercy-seat—probably signifying that atonement, mercy, and communion are coordinate, that one cannot exist without the other.

Its Meaning—Neither the use nor the symbolic meaning of the altar can be understood apart from the sacrifice offered upon it. On the brazen altar was sprinkled the blood and were burned the bodies of animals as sacrifices to God, for the sins of the offerers. The sprinkling of the warm blood of the dying victim round about on the altar was an important part of the sacrifice, because it was the blood that atoned for the soul. After this the animal was skinned, cut in pieces, and all or part, according to the kind of sacrifice being offered, laid on wood on the altar and burned.

This act of sacrifice was very full of meaning. It was symbolic of vicarious atonement. When the sin-burdened Israelite led the trembling lamb to the altar of

Jehovah before the holy house, laid his hand upon it signifying that he was now identified with it—that the suffering for his sins was now laid upon it—cut its throat with his knife, while the priest hastily caught its blood in a basin and sprinkled it on God’s altar, after which its body was prepared and burned there, he must have been forcibly reminded of the awfulness of sin, the holiness of God, and of the great truth of propitiation by another if his sin was to be forgiven.

If the ancient Israelite saw no more than this in his offering of sacrifice it doubtless had a good effect. But the spiritual-minded offerer doubtless saw dimly in this faint shadow that most glorious future reality, the Lamb of God suffering for the sins of the world. The altar then with the sacrifice on it typified the glorious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the blood of that animal was poured out in symbolic atonement, so Jesus’ precious blood, or life, was freely and willingly poured out for us. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ... The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ... He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:5-7). “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). That the brazen altar with its offering typified Christ, the true offering for sin, is clear from many texts in the New Testament, especially in the Hebrew epistle.

The importance of the truth typified by the altar cannot be overestimated. For atonement is the only possible means of forgiveness and acceptance by God. That ancient altar stood directly before the entrance to the house of God. It was directly in the line between the gate of the court and the ark of God in the holy of holies, signifying the great truth that we cannot come to God except by Christ. “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Neither is this requirement of atonement for pardon of sin an arbitrary requirement on God’s part. It was necessary in the very nature of things. Man had sinned against the righteous commandment of a holy God and deserved to suffer its penalty. Moreover, if the penalty was remitted without atonement and the sinner received by God to himself, it could be only at the expense of God’s holiness and the dignity of His good law, which men would then be tempted to despise. This could not be. So God sent His Son to suffer in our stead and to make an atonement or propitiation to God by which we might be spared the penalty due our sins.

At Jehovah’s altar the stupendous problem of sin is settled. God forgives the sinner, but still remains a God of holiness—and yet the God of love. He is holy, and still merciful. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth

in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26). Behold the depths both of the goodness and of the holiness of God in the atoning work of Jesus!

Some professed Christians acknowledge no objective or Godward element in the atonement. They claim they see only a manifestation of God’s love in Jesus’ death, and a consequent moral influence exerted on men to lead them to salvation. We gladly allow all this, but also we see at God’s altar exhibited something more than the bloodless religion of Cain that these men teach. There a life is sacrificed that another life may be spared. The wages of sin is death, but the Lamb of God dies instead and the sinner lives. What a glorious thought! What matchless mercy! Eternity will be none too long in which to render to Him the praise and thanksgiving that is due.

Only by way of the altar can a sinful soul draw near to the holy God. Only when washed in the blood of Jesus can we have fellowship with God. Even our very worship is acceptable only after the sin-cleansing blood has been sprinkled. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP (Tithes)

Scriptures: Genesis 14:20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:7-12.

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Genesis 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful some land, saith the Lord of hosts.

Memory Verse: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law,

judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.—Matthew 23:23.

Aim: To teach that one-tenth of our income belongs to God.

INTRODUCTION

NEVER SINCE the creation of the world has there been a time when God has not required humanity to return unto Him a portion of the fruit of their labor; not that He needs it for Himself (although it is necessary to the promotion of His work), but that mankind might constantly be reminded of their dependence upon God and that it is from Him that every good gift comes. In the Garden of Eden, God demanded that Adam and Eve care for and dress the garden, but among the trees was one from which they were not to derive any benefit. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, and Jacob vowed a vow that he would tithe if God would prosper and protect him. Soon after, the law required a return of a proportional part of man’s income to God. This teaching was also adopted by the heathen nations, and they paid, in many instances, a tithe to the support of their heathen worship. Little is said about the tithe directly as a requirement in the New Testament; but even so, that does not detract from the fact that it is required by God. In the days of Jesus and the disciples, the law of tithing was practiced rigidly. The Pharisees were very faithful in this, but neglected the weightier matters. If the people as a whole observed the practice of tithing, there was little to be said about it except in the way of commendation. Let it suffice here to say that if God required the tithe under the less glorious covenant, the ministration of the law, how can anyone expect to please God if he contends for a lesser standard in this more glorious covenant?

MEDITATIONS

ABRAHAM’S EXAMPLE—Genesis 14:20—He gave him tithes of all—Abraham was called by God His friend. He found friendship with God because of his humble obedience to God. Abraham paid one-tenth to God’s servant, and we may wonder where he learned this practice; for before this, tithing is not mentioned in the Bible, and no part of the written law was given either. So the doctrine of tithing precedes the written law and beyond controversy continues after it. Abraham was careful to make sure that he gave one-tenth of all. Tithing is a moral obligation of man to God; it cannot be abolished.

JACOB’S VOW—Genesis 28:20—Jacob vowed a vow—Jacob was running away from home and friends, driven by the threats of his brother, whom he had injured. The presence of God seems to have convicted him, and now in an effort to regain some relief from his guilty conscience, he makes some promises to God. **Verse 21—Then shall the Lord be my God—**It is evident that he had strayed away from God, and here, under these unusual circumstances, he decided to return to the Lord. **Verse 22—Give the tenth unto thee—**It is evident that Jacob knew well the doctrine of tithing but had failed to practice it; he was condemned for it. He knew that he could not have peace with God unless he did. He declared he would give the tithe to God. We

have no doubt but that he kept his promise, for he prospered greatly. This incident occurred also before the giving of the written law.

WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME—Malachi 3:7—Return unto me—God has always sought to get mankind to turn away from the breaking of His commandments to walking in His truth. Isaiah declared, “Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely.” When a man gets deep in sin and disobedience, it is often hard due to his blindness to see the error of his way.

ROBBING GOD—Malachi 3:8—Will a man rob God?—To rob God means to take something that belongs to God. If the tithe belongs to God, then the returning of the tithe to Him is not an act of giving, but the meeting of an obligation or a debt. It is more dangerous to steal from God than from your groceryman. Also, according to this verse, God can call for an offering whenever He wishes and the amount He desires. To fail to respond is to rob God. Giving on our part then would be an imparting freely over and above that which God asks.

FAILURE TO TITHE ACCOMPANIED WITH A CURSE—Malachi 3:9—Ye are cursed with a curse—Failure in our day to meet our obligation to God will bring a curse upon us the same as it did upon the people to whom Malachi was talking. The only way that God can carry on His work in the earth is by tithes and offerings. If we fail to tithe and give offerings as God requires by His Word, it is certain that the Word cannot go forth as it ought, and the failure of the Word to go forth will most surely bring a curse upon the people.

DISPOSITION OF THE TITHE—Malachi 3:10—Into the storehouse—It is evident from this verse that God intends that the tithe be brought to the place where we worship (get our spiritual food). It is not our privilege to scatter it out in various places where we know of a need. (We are at liberty to give offerings in such places.) A reward is promised for obedience to this command that should entice every reader.

GOD IS ABLE TO REWARD—Malachi 3:11—Rebuke the devourer—God in very short order prepared a worm to destroy the gourd of Jonah. He likewise is able to bless or curse the efforts of our hands. This I am sure He does. Let us obey His Word.

GOD’S WORD FINAL—Malachi 3:12—Saith the Lord of hosts—God never needs to reverse His judgments, for He never makes a mistake. We must, therefore, always scrupulously obey Him because He is always right.

CONCLUSION

Abraham is called the friend of God; he is also known as a man of faith. There is something else about Abraham we need to remember. The gospel was preached to him (Galatians 3:8), and under the gospel he paid tithe. So tithing was, and is, a part of the gospel. Now in the days of Moses the law was “added ... till the seed should come” (Galatians 3:19). That which was added to the gospel is what was taken away—when Jesus died and brought in the New Covenant—the gospel remained. Abraham is the “father” of the Christians. He paid

tithes to Melchizedek, a type of Christ. So under the gospel we pay tithe to Christ.

When a man is employed by another for a certain amount of money per hour or day, he sells to his employer a part of his life. Since our lives belong to God (every moment), why should we think it strange that we should be required to return to God one-tenth of the money for which we sell our time? If He gives us increase from our fields, why should we object to returning unto Him one-tenth? Would He not have a right if He desires to demand all? Could He not bring us all into a state of slavery if He so desired, and yet be within His right? Yes, He could. But He does not want us to be slaves. He wants us to be free, and He has so devised the financial system in His Word that we can without the iron hand of imperialism impart that portion of our substance that is necessary to carry on His work and still have an abundance for ourselves. Those who withhold that which is justly God’s do not realize that God has a thousand ways in which He can either subtract from our income or He can add to it.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How long has God required men to return unto Him a portion of their substance, in one way or another?
2. Where do you think Abraham learned of tithing?
3. What do you think prompted Jacob to make his vow to God?
4. In what way is it possible to rob God?
5. What will be the result if we fail to tithe?
6. What can God do to mar our income?
7. Do we have a right to say where our tithe shall go after we put it in the “storehouse”? †

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.

- ___ CD #1283 Walk Humbly with Thy God—Doug Shenberger
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- ___ CD #1302 Walking in the Light—Brian Richards

2021 HAGERSTOWN FALL REVIVAL REPORT

THANK THE LORD we were able to have our Fall Revival from October 29-31. Bro. Darrell Sanford from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was our evangelist. We were glad to have his wife, Sis. Donna, with us as well.

Although the meeting was quite short, the four messages that were delivered were indeed challenging and of a spiritual help to us.

Below are some excerpts (in italics) from the messages. One of the messages entitled, "He Cares for You," has been selected for print in this issue.

Friday evening—"Because You Are Sons." Text: Galatians 4:1-9. *When we became "sons," the connection with God was re-established. Jerusalem—New Covenant—is free. Under the law, the Jews were still in bondage to sin. The law showed them their sins, but it could not take their sins away. If you are still in bondage to sin, you don't have what Jesus came to bring. Jesus came to bring redemption from sin. Christ took us to a level that the law could never attain. Jesus came so we could live a holy life. We are no longer servants of the law, but sons who are free—free from sin. Sons abide in the house; servants who were bound by sin did not abide in the house. If you are fulfilling the lust of the flesh, there is a way out. Jesus came to defeat the lust of the flesh. When we are cleansed from sin, we are no longer in bondage to the flesh. Our minds are transformed. Jesus came so we could be "sons" and have a relationship with God and to be a part of His family.*

Saturday evening—"He Cares for You." Text: Psalm 55:4-7. This full-length message follows this report.

Sunday morning—"This Is the True God." Texts: John 17:1-6, 13-23; I John 5:18-21. *God gives all the opportunity to respond—to know the only true God. True religion teaches us to shun the world, keep His commandments, and live a holy life. Jesus prayed that God would keep us from evil. Through Christ we have the power to keep ourselves from the evil of the world. We have a part to play—resisting. A sanctified experience is necessary to live the Christian life. In John 14:15-17, the Comforter was with them, but shall be in them. If we say we love God, we will keep His commandments. If we do that, Jesus said He would take up His abode with us, which is the infilling of the Spirit. It will take a Spirit-filled people in order to be one with one another.*

The religious world lowers God's expectations when they say it's not possible to live without sin. It doesn't change the Word of God; it cannot be tweaked to satisfy what we believe. True religion requires repentance of sins. Sin separates from God. It is the problem. Repentance frees us from sin. Then we must continue as servants of righteousness. Living right makes sense. Religion has clouded the issue. We need to live this way because there is coming a day of judgment. Nothing will slide by on that day.

Sunday evening—"Will He Find Faith on the Earth?" Text: Luke 18:1-8. *God is not like the unjust judge. God's plan is not haphazard, and we want to work to that plan. We are here for God's purpose, not for our purpose. We want to do God's good pleasure. We go through some difficult things, but God works through those things. Whatever comes, God has grace for us, and we can rejoice in it. Fear will cause us to seize up. We must not just bear persecution, but rejoice! for great is our reward in heaven.*

We have available CD's of our Fall Revival. These include singing as well as the messages. Price \$3.00 each. Complete set \$10 postpaid. Please put a check mark in the blank by those you would like to purchase. Send check or money order to: The Way of Truth, CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

- ☐ CD #1293 Because You Are Sons
- ☐ CD #1294 He Cares for You
- ☐ CD #1295 This Is the True God
- ☐ CD #1296 Will He Find Faith on the Earth? †

HE CARES FOR YOU

2021 Fall Revival Message
by Bro. Darrell Sanford



LET US LOOK at Psalm 55. There's a great hope that we have as the people of God. People in the world are lost and are going through all manner of things, but there's a hope for people. The bottom line of the message is: we have a hope. We'll be using this passage again later, but we're going to use part of it now. Psalm 55:4-7: "My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness."

We know that David expressed many things of, we might say, despondency, or we could use the word *despair*, with the things that were going against him in a strong way. But how many of us may have felt this at some point? How many of us may have felt a fearfulness and trembling coming against us in this thought of "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest"? and "I wish I could just get away from this thing. I don't want to deal with this."

Well, there is somewhere we can turn. Yes, we feel these things. We have to deal with these thoughts in our mind. I'll use the term *depression*. A depression or melancholy just comes. Where did that come from? Just a pressing down. Do you know Jesus was pressed down? Sometimes we're just pressed down, Saints. I guess I'm speaking for most of us. I know I'm speaking for myself. We feel inadequate at times. We feel things coming against us. Our own inadequacies, right? Our own inabilities and our own faults. I'm not speaking of sinfulness. I'm talking about our own faults and those things that we know in us. Sometimes that really comes down upon people in a strong way and they just want to get away from it. Do you know what? We can't get away from it, but God has made a way for us to deal with it.

I thank the Lord we have somewhere to turn. A lot of people in the world don't have anywhere to turn or they turn to things that they think might possibly help

them to deal with it. Saints, there are all kinds of things that can contribute to these feelings. It's a broad subject. People in sin go through things in their lives that damage them. They just don't go away. They become part of who they are. They cling to them. But we have a place to go! People that don't have Christ have a place to go. It is Christ to whom they have to go. I Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." The title of our message is: "He Cares for You." He really does care.

Saints, Christ cares for you. Sinner Friend, He cares for you. He loves you. He has compassion. I know we preach often about overcoming sin and getting saved. We often speak about the old sinful world we're living in, but in the midst of all the sin, we have a compassionate Christ that truly does care for us. No, He does not like the ungodliness of the world. He does not like the wickedness that's going on. He doesn't find joy in that in the least. There's coming a day when all will be brought into judgment and dealt with. The wicked will be turned into hell. We understand that, but today, there's compassion and opportunity. Today there's a way to be free from those things, and at least to be able to bear them. Jesus does not necessarily take away every difficulty in our lives, but if He doesn't, He'll give us grace to bear them.

Paul went to the Lord three times saying, "Take this thorn in the flesh from me." The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee. I have it there for a reason and a purpose." Even in that difficulty, it was there for a purpose, and the Lord gave him grace to bear it. So Paul was able to say, "Amen, I'll gladly bear it that the grace of God may be upon me."

"Casting all your care." The word *care* means, "anxiety; distraction which causes a care; distraction which results in care or worry or anxiety." I Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." The word *care* in that sense means that Jesus has a concern. He has a concern for us. He really does. Isn't it wonderful to know that Jesus Christ is concerned? This is not just poetry. This is not just a little phrase. Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

I thought of an analogy when these thoughts were coming to me the other day: *when someone is trapped under a great weight, he is unable to extricate himself. He has to have help. He must have a deliverer. The bind is too tight. If you're trapped under something by it falling on you, and it has you pinned in, the bind is too tight. You're helpless. The weight is so overwhelming that it renders the sufferer powerless and helpless. Except someone else comes who is able to lift the load and free the person from that which has him trapped, he will perish. So it is by the one who is crushed by despair, by depression, by stress, and by the cares of life. When a person is under that mental weight by stress and depression, it seems there is no way out. It is certain that the resources to free one's self do not exist. If or when the case is that with us, we have but one hope—Jesus Christ will be our rescuer.*

I'll tell you how it works with me. I'm opening up my soul to you. I was under a huge weight in my mind. As I began to write and look at the Scriptures, it began to lift. By the end of the day, I was able to concentrate.

I was able to put together a message that had nothing to do with this. It was a totally different message, but God ministered to me just by really riding out my feelings in what I was going through. But in the midst of it, I was seeing God there to help me through. He was there to lift those things.

There are different sources of what we might call melancholy (an old term) or mental anguish or depression of sorts. The enemy can bring that on us. Hard struggles or battles we're going through can bring that, but life experiences, hardships, can bring those things. Things we've been through in our lives can stay with us, and come back from time, seemingly, to haunt us. Sometimes they may never be too far below the surface. People in the world struggle. People who come to get saved have these things in their lives at times. There's a whole world of people out there that are struggling with hard things in their lives. It may be from home life or any number of things. All manner of things people are struggling with. Is there any hope? People spend a lot of money going to doctors and getting on medicines. I'm not casting down anyone. I'm just staying that people spend a lot of money going to psychologists or a psychiatrist to try to deal with these things.

Before I confirm that I'm not wrong, let me ask you, Can Jesus deal with it? Can Jesus heal the mind of man? Well, He will, won't He? There is a hope. I don't want to put down anyone that suffers. Obviously, we all suffer some of these things to a degree. Some suffer more than others and some worse than others. Sometimes just temporary things brought about by situations of life cause people to suffer. But can Christ take care of these things?

Let's look at Luke 4. This may not be something we like to talk about a lot or think about a lot, but it's very real. We'll start at verse 16: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written [Jesus is in the synagogue and takes the book of Isaiah and begins to read this part in the scripture:], The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." What a glorious thing to think about!

Some didn't like it too much what Jesus came to do. "He's lifting Himself up." He wasn't lifting Himself up. That scripture had been written all those years before, and Jesus said, "This is the fulfilling. I'm here to fulfill it." Is He still able to fulfill it? That's what He came for. This was not just "Ok, I'm just going to heal the blind and do this for you people that are here now." No, this same Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He's still here. He's still able to do this for us, is

He not? This is what Jesus came to do. He came to preach the gospel to the poor. It wasn't dependant upon someone being of wealth or being of middle class or respectable. He came to preach it to everyone. He came to preach it to the harlots, the tax collectors, and to those who were the dregs of society. He came to preach deliverance to them. Did they get delivered? Do they get delivered?

I was one of the dregs to society to a lot of people. I was very cool to a part of them, too, as far as that goes. We all had our part. But Jesus came and talked to my heart one day. He came in that old room with me where I was living in an old house. I didn't even have a light bulb in my bedroom. I had a mattress on the floor. I was lying in there all intoxicated, but do you know what? The Holy Spirit of God came in that room in the dark of night and began to talk to my mind. Tears came to my eyes because I knew that I didn't think that way, but Jesus was reaching out to my soul. So He is this same Jesus. This same Jesus is still doing that today. He's still saving souls. If a person will come down here with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and desires to be saved, this same Jesus will save him today. That person would get up a new creature, healed of his sinning and rejoicing in the things of God. Jesus can do everything He could always do. He hasn't lost any of His power. He still cares for us. He's still compassionate. He still offers healing to all.

Brokenhearted in Luke 4:18 is defined as "shattered; broken in pieces; to shatter one's strength." Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted. People in the world have been shattered. Perhaps you've been shattered in your life. Even as a saved person, you still have to struggle with some things in your mind. Emotional things. But Jesus can heal the emotions. If He can deliver us from our sins, what can He not do? He changed me. He made me a different person. You know it, because He did it for you, too. Jesus took drunkards and made them "sober as a judge" as they say. He took that desire away. He made immoral people walk a straight line and live a moral life. He can heal our emotions. Emotions are a part of man. Man gets affected and shattered in the world. The world is cruel. Life is cruel out there. The devil is cruel, but Christ is able. He's the Christ that heals. He's the healer. He's the One that can heal the broken heart.

The word *bruised* means basically the same as brokenhearted. It means "to be crushed; to be shattered; to be broken." We know things in life can do that. They will shatter people. There are a lot of shattered people walking around. But there is hope. There is deliverance in Christ. He came to heal the brokenhearted and to deliver those who have been crushed. He has the power to do it. Whatever our need is, He has the power to do it. Is anything too hard for God? Is it His will? We have to ask according to His will. We have to have faith and ask according to His will. Jesus said He came "to heal the brokenhearted, to set at liberty [to free] them that are bruised." What beautiful thoughts! Those that have been crushed, those that have been broken in their hearts, He came to free them. Have you been broken? Have you been crushed? Are those things still warring against you? Has life crushed you down? Jesus came to liberate you from being oppressed.

We want to touch on this: He came "to preach deliverance to the captives." Are you a captive in sin? Sin is bondage, and the devil is a hard taskmaster, but Jesus came to deliver. You can't deliver yourself from your sins. You can try to be a better person. You could try to turn over a new leaf or even start going to church. You could do all kinds of things. You can do better. Man has the ability to do better. People do all kinds of things. They quit drinking and smoking. Maybe they try to treat their wives better or be a better husband or a better wife or mother. People can do all kinds of things if they set their mind to it, but they can't deliver themselves from sin. They can't prepare themselves for heaven. It takes Jesus Christ to do that.

Let's look at Psalm 51. Jesus came to bring deliverance to you if you have sin in your life. Verse 1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness [the rich mercy that He has for us]: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." If you'll pray to Him like that, really from the sincerity of your heart, He will do it. He will blot out your transgressions. Verses 2 and 3: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions [That's what you have to do if you're in sin.]: and my sin is ever before me." When you are in that shape, you can get something from Christ.

Romans 10:10, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Sin is a load. It can get to be a heavy load. It's amazing, for that load is the mercy of God that causes you to feel that load. I went around kicking my heels up for many years. I was just having my time out in sin. It didn't bother me at all. I would not have done the things I did if it had bothered me. Thank God, one day as I looked in the mirror, I looked different. One day those things started weighing on me. One day I started feeling dirty. One day I started feeling not quite so good about the things I was into. By the time I made it down to the altar, that weight was heavy, and it came out through my tears and through my cries unto Jesus. Do you know what He did? He looked on me. That's what He wanted to see. He lifted that load off of me. No one knows what kind of load that is. But He lifted that load off of me and set me free. He sets the captive free. Are you under the burden of sin? There's only way to get free from sin, and Jesus Christ can do it.

Look at verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 51: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." All the sins we commit are against God. If I'm sinning against a brother, I'm sinning against God. Whatever we do, it is all against God. If we can see and realize that, we can get some help.

Jesus understands our deepest pain. Let's look at Hebrews 4. Christ has the answer for whatever your need is. If your problem is sin, and the weight is due to sin, He can deliver you from that. If there are other things in our lives that are weighing us down, He is able to help us. There is no doubt. He would not have said it if He couldn't, would He? Thank God! A great

Savior came into this world, put on flesh so that He could relate to us, feel what we feel, and bear what we bear. Verse 12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I thought about that scripture the other day. You can preach that in such a way as God knows exactly what you're thinking, and what's down inside in a kind of a strong searching way, but thank God, He knows what we're feeling. We don't have to tell Him. We may not have the words.

The Bible speaks about things that cannot be uttered. When we're burdened down with something, we don't know what to ask for, so we make those expressions that cannot be uttered. We cannot put them into words. "Lord, I don't know. Why am I thinking this way? Why are these things upon me? Why am I having all these depressing things coming upon me? I don't know, Lord, but you know exactly. You know how I'm feeling." He really does! He can empathize with us. The Lord doesn't just sit afar on the throne and empathize "poor creature." He came and put on flesh and experienced a lot, so He knows what we're going through.

Hebrews 4:13-15: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We do not have a High Priest that cannot be moved with the feeling of our weaknesses. I'm convinced we have weaknesses, and feelings of weaknesses, because He is moved by those. There's nothing to be ashamed of in that thought. It's part of what we have to deal with. It's part of what we go through. Verse 16: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let us come with confidence. The word *boldly* means "with confidence." "Let us therefore come [confidently] unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We're not just going for any reason. We're going to get our needs met. We're going to get the grace we need to help us.

We've already read I Peter 5:7, but it says: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." We'll say like this: cast all your anxieties and worries upon Jesus, for He has concern for you. He has compassion on our weaknesses. He doesn't look at us, Saints of God, and say "get the victory! What's the matter with you? Get up from there." No, Christ is compassionate. He cares. He has compassion on our weaknesses, our feebleness, our frailty of mind and spirit. He, too, has suffered hard trials. He has been assaulted by enemies. He's been doubted by His family. He's been deserted by His friends in His darkest hour. He's been left alone to bear the anguish of what was laid before Him.

Have you ever felt like you've been left alone? Have you ever felt like you had to carry something alone? There are some weights out there. There are some

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weights on people's minds. There are some things that are difficult to bear, are they not? Whether we're saved or not, there are things that are difficult to bear. Sometimes you're the one that it's on, and you're the one that has to bear it; but thank God, Christ is there for us. He's there to help. He's been there. He's felt that.

Let us look at Matthew 26. Thank God, Christ cares. We don't have to carry these things around. We might have to press and fight through. We may have to look unto Him and go before Him to the throne of grace. That's a process there. "Come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." That may take a little time, Brethren. That may take some crying out. That may take some increasing of self, right? "Ask, and you shall receive." That may take some seeking and knocking, but He's there, and He'll help us. Verses 36-39: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." We know that was the intent of His heart. "Not my will, but thy will be done." Look at the agony Jesus was in. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Matthew describes it as "exceeding sorrowful." The term *exceeding sorrowful* means "intensely sad." Was Jesus ever sad? Well, the Bible says He was. The Bible says He was intensely sad. It says that He began to be *very heavy*, which means "to be distressed; to be anguished; to be depressed." Why didn't He just go through guns blazing and banners waving? Because He came as we are. He came to relate to us. He came to bear the things that we bear and to have compassion on us. He began to be very heavy. Jesus suffered all of this mentally and emotionally, even before He bore the horrific suffering on the cross. We know the mental and physical suffering on the cross was intense. But before He got there, He suffered. Don't we suffer sadness, distress, and anguish sometimes? Thank God we have Jesus to go to in our suffering.

Luke 22:39-44 says: "And he [Jesus] came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." So Jesus was truly in agony, was He not? "... being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." *Agony*, meaning "anguish; severe mental struggles and emotions."

Have you ever gone through agony? Jesus has already been through it. When we come to Him, He

knows how we feel. "And there an angel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthening [meaning, *invigorating*] him." Thank God, God will send relief and comfort to us. He won't just leave us to suffer on our own, Saints of God. Let us have faith in Him. I know it's hard sometimes when those feelings and thoughts and emotions are on your mind. Like I said before, when we are under a great weight, we can't just push it off, but Christ is always there to help us.

Let us read Psalm 103:13, 14: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Fathers, how do you feel about your children? Do you pity your children? Do you have mercy to your children? Do you have love and compassion to your children? That's how the Lord feels towards us. Our Lord created us. He recognizes that we face times of heaviness, times of brokenness. He knows our frame. He knows how to help us.

We know sometimes we're in difficulties through temptation, etc. We go through trials where the enemy is trying us. We go through just the trials of life. Some things are just life, right? Everything is not an attack of the devil. Some things are just life, and we have to go through those things as other people in the world. We all have to go through some things that are common to man. I Peter 1:3, 4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [a living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Don't forget that is what is going to help us in heaviness through this manifold temptation and realize we have this hope to look to. Verses 5 and 6: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." God help us that we'll greatly rejoice in what we have. Rejoice in our salvation when we're going through those things.

As the disciples came back to Jesus and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," He said to them, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." We can't lose sight of that. Until that day comes, it's not the end of the game. We may go through some hard things, but we're waiting for a hope.

What does heaviness feel like? It feels like heaviness. *Heaviness* means "distress; grief; sorrow." There's heaviness through temptation, manifold adversity, manifold trials, but we have to keep our eyes fixed on the hope. I Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." So if the things that are coming against you are caused by your trials and hardships, and by the temptations you are surrounded by, just remember, it's not for long. We can even gain strength through those things. The refining of the gold. "In the heated furnace, Father, let me stay, Precious gold refining, purge the dross away," is

part of a song. That's how we get strong. That's how we become more Christlike. So may God help us to be able to deal with those things. We can be a blessing and a help to one another when we're in these times of difficulty.

Let us look at II Corinthians 4:8-11: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." We know the saints of God there went through some things. They went through actual persecutions, etc., which is what Paul's talking about. Verse 12: "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." They were going through hardships and difficulties for the gospel sake so others could be delivered. Verses 13-15: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." So Paul was talking about the things that he went through for the good of others.

II Corinthians 4:16, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Saints, sometimes we go through some things in the presence of others. We may be mistreated and abused, as it were, but how are we to take those things when others are looking on? May God help us that we put Christ first in whatever we go through for Him. I'm not saying that you have to accept every form of abuse, but the Bible does speak to "servants." "Servants, if you're reprimanded for doing something wrong, what thanks is that? But if you're reprimanded when you did well, and you take it, this is acceptable with God." It will show a Christlike spirit. Bearing hardships and bearing difficulties for the sake of souls. Paul said, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." We have to have our mind fixed on Christ. He went through hardships and difficulties. He was mocked and lied on. Why? He did it for us. Verses 17, 18: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 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 [will burn and pass away]; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

In II Corinthians 7:4-6, Paul said, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." God sent Titus to Paul to encourage him. God sent an angel to

Jesus to strengthen Him. We get comfort from different places. We can be a comfort one to another. He says in verse 7, "And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you [Paul is writing to the Corinthians here saying, 'We weren't only comforted just by Titus' presence, but we were comforted and encouraged because you encouraged him and were doing well.'], when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more." May we be a people to encourage and strengthen one another. Rally to one another in those times when we're going through things. Who else do we have such as the people of God? Who can comfort me more than a brother or a sister?

Psalm 55:1-4: "Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me." Sometimes the enemy wars against us. Certainly, the enemy is warring in this world. There is so much wickedness. There's enough wickedness in this world to bring anybody down. It's enough to discourage anyone just to be exposed to all of this. But Christ is still there for us. He will bring us through.

Saints, I don't know, and you don't know what faces us out in the future, but I know this: Christ is there. He's already there. He knows the end from the beginning. I know this: whatever awaits us, there will be grace and strength there for us. It may be that the world needs to get darker so that the light will shine brighter. May God help us to be the light as the world tries to drag us down. It wants to drag us down, but Christ is there for us.

Psalm 61:1, 2: "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart [my feelings, my mind, my will] is overwhelmed [I love that thought: when I'm at the end of my rope, and I can't go any farther]: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Thank God, I still have someone to go to. I still know who is in control. Sometimes we need to be able to get up higher. We need to get up on the rock so we can see clearly. There's Jesus! There's the One who delivered me. We have the heritage of them that fear His name. That's our heritage. God opened the sea. He gave the children of God water and bread in the wilderness. He did many things. That's our God! He saved those eight who were in the ark.

Jesus Christ came into a dark, dark world. We are in a dark, dark world. Wickedness such as we have never seen is supported and lifted up and made legal. It seems Christians are stripped of their rights, etc. It's a dark time. It's a persecuting time. But do you know Jesus came in such a time? He started His church in such a time. Never a man spake like this man. There was Apostasy in Judaism on one side, the dragon on the other side, the heathenish culture supported by the world government of that time, and Jesus walked in the middle of that with a message they'd never heard. They asked, "When are you going to do this or do that? When are we going to get victory over the Romans?"

He said, "Just settle down. It will all be clear in a little while."

Thank God, Peter stood up and said, "This is that. This is a freedom that we've never even conceived. This is better than the glory of nations. This is the glory of God dwelling in our hearts." They took that message forth and went out into the heathen world and boldly proclaimed the love and the power of Christ and the judgment to come. This gospel is great and powerful.

Psalm 40:1-3: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." The Lord has something for us. He has deliverance for us.

I know we've covered a lot of different things, but the solution for all of these is Christ. The Lord will bring us through. No matter how shallow or how deep it is, He's the same Christ. Is one thing harder for Him than something else? Is a deep depression state brought on by some difficulty in life any harder for Him than a little sort of "blue feeling" upon us? It's all equal to Him. It doesn't matter. He's the healer. He heals the broken heart. Has your heart been broken? Have you been shattered in life? He can heal and put that together. He can take away whatever is there. May God help us.

Matthew 11:28, 29: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Psalm 27:13, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Thank God, He is able. Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." He cares for us. He's concerned for us.

May God bless each one. †

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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. There is a chatroom where you can interact with us and share your prayer requests. Tune in and worship with us!



Dear Young People,

The thought of working for God is something that we often come in contact with, and it is a necessary, purposeful part of our Christian walk. Patrick does an admirable job of drawing out the beauty of how it draws us closer to God and to others in this month's thoughts.

Truly, we are not and are not intended to be islands unto ourselves! To the extent that we give of our time, love and resources to God, and others, we will find deeper meaning and the abundant life that God has planned for us. In the midst of your busy days, don't neglect to delay finding time to work for God!

Blessings,
Bro. Doug

I am thankful for the opportunity to share my few thoughts with you. Drawing closer to God through working for Him is a wonderful experience. John 12:26 says, "If any man serveme, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Isn't that so beautiful to know that if we serve God, He will honor us? But how do we know that we need to work for God? If we turn to II Timothy 2:15, we find these words: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." God wants us to be constantly examining ourselves, seeking how we may draw closer to Him, and endeavoring to meet the standards that He has set in our lives. We need to try every single day to improve our spiritual walk with God. If we don't do these things, when we are called upon to do God's work, will we be ready? No. Only by laboring to draw closer to God, by praying, and studying His Word will we be ready to do God's work.



Patrick Swain

Now some people might ask, "Can't I just have faith and see things done without laboring?" Well, let's look at James 2:17: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." From this verse, we understand that we can't say, "Oh, I have faith that this is going to be done so I don't need to go do anything about it." No, the Bible clearly states that if we say we believe and don't go out and actively work at what we believe in, then it's useless, it's dead. God will help us only if we help ourselves first.

When we work for God, or anyone for that matter, we need to give our best. Colossians 3:23, 24 says: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." This verse means that God wants us to do our best in all things, whether we're working for God or not. This is one of the ways that we can benefit from

working. If we're doing our best in whatever we do, either for God or for men, God will reward us splendidly.

Now some people might say, "I don't feel like going and doing God's work right now, but when I'm good and ready, then I'll go and do God's work." Proverbs 10:5 says: "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." We could take this verse literally, but let's apply it to working for God. The harvest is our lifespan. In the harvest, we must not sit around idle, doing nothing. Precious lost souls are dying every minute. We need to take every opportunity to do our part in the quest of seeing souls saved. It's crucial that we don't waste a single opportunity to witness to some lost soul. It might be their only time of ever hearing the truth.

Some things we can do for God are listed in James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." In this verse, we find a few examples of the many things we can do for God: visiting the elderly and needy, giving to the poor, helping somebody in need, and the list goes on. But we need to remember, we're not on this earth to gather wealth for ourselves. There is nothing wrong with having wealth, but we are here to live a life of servitude to God and to others.

When we do something for someone, we are rewarded spiritually as well as, occasionally physically. The Bible has something to say about the rewards that we receive when working for God. Matthew 25:21 says: "His lord said unto him, well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The man that had ten talents went and worked for God and felt good about himself as he worked. Working for God is in itself a reward. When you do something for someone, you naturally feel closer to that person. You feel friendlier towards that person. It is the same when you work for God. Working for God will satisfy you like nothing else can. Besides the internal reward of peace that comes from serving God, when we leave this earth, heaven awaits us as the ultimate reward. There really is no other way of truly living besides living a life of servitude to God. Not only does working for God draw us closer to Him, but it brings more joy and peace than anything this world will ever have to offer. †

—Bro. Patrick Swain

Hagerstown, MD, Age 15

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE

This page is included in *The Way of Truth* magazine to encourage saved young people throughout the world. This is your page! We are inviting those young people who have a genuine experience of salvation to send us your testimony to be shared worldwide. Send to:

The Way of Truth
Young People's Editor
P. O. Box 88
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THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



CIRCLES

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Now, you remember what we are going to do as soon as I turn on the lights, right?" asked my grandmother.

"Yes," I answered confidently. "We are going to go in there and swat every bug that moves."

"That's right!" said Grandma. "We want to hit every one of them!"

My grandmother lived in an old apartment building that was inhabited by roaches. We seldom saw any except at night time. When we would come home after the evening church service, we would find them running here and there, looking for something to eat. Grandma kept her food put away in the refrigerator and pantry, and she even kept a lid on her garbage bucket. But the roaches came out, anyway, searching the dark kitchen for the tiniest crumbs.

"Are you ready?" my grandmother asked.

"I'm ready!" I said.

Grandma flicked on the kitchen lights. Sure enough, I saw three of the six-legged pests scurry across the kitchen table. I flew after them, beating at them with the palms of my little hands. In seconds, the kitchen was quiet, with not an insect in sight. Grandma and I washed our hands in hot, soapy water. Then Grandma wiped the kitchen table. With a sigh of relief, I sat down in one of the kitchen chairs and watched as Grandma put the kettle on the stove to make tea.

Suddenly, I called out. "Grandma!" I said. "We missed one!"

"What do you mean 'we missed one'?" she asked, turning to look at me in surprise. I pointed to the clock up above the stove. It was an electric clock with three hands—an hour hand, a minute hand, and a thin, red second hand.

I was only six years old, but I had learned to tell time, and I knew that the red "second hand" had to get around to every number, from one to twelve, in just sixty seconds. I liked to watch that little red second hand as it made its circle around the face of the clock—one circle every minute. The other two hands moved far more slowly, and so they were not as interesting to watch.

But to my surprise, this evening the second hand had a passenger. Clinging tightly to the red hand was a little roach. Around and around the roach traveled on the second hand. It seemed to be in a hurry, but it wasn't going anywhere—just circling endlessly around the twelve numbers on the clock face.

Grandma chuckled when she saw the roach riding around and around on the second hand. "I wonder how

he even got into the clock," she said. And then she added, "He is getting nowhere fast."

Although "getting nowhere fast" is a common expression, I hadn't heard it before. I spent some time thinking about those words. *Maybe it's the same thing as "running around in circles"* I thought to myself. Sometimes, at home, my mother said those words to me. "Stop running around in circles and get your chores finished," she would say. I knew what she meant. I wasn't running in actual circles, but I was going through a lot of actions without accomplishing anything.

I looked up at the clock again. The roach was still circling, but it hadn't gotten anywhere.

For the next several weeks, the roach remained stuck to the second hand of my grandmother's clock. It was apparent that the roach was no longer alive, and yet it continued its circular trips, every minute of every hour, day after day.

Years later, as an adult, I sometimes picture that clock in my mind's eye. I see the roach on its futile journey. I think of what it looks like to appear busy without accomplishing anything.

We all have work to do. Your parents give you jobs. You have school assignments to complete. Sometimes you are asked to do something at church. The Bible tells us that we are to do our work "heartily" as to the Lord, and not unto men. That is a reminder that the Lord sees down to our hearts. He knows whether or not we are doing our best. We may be able to pretend to do our best and fool the people around us, but God knows the truth about every one of us.

This month's wise saying comes from Proverbs 20:11 which says, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." The next time you are given a task to do, remember that God is aware of the effort you put into your work. Determine in your heart that you are going to do your very best, and ask the Lord to help you keep that determination. By doing so, you will bring glory to God, and you will be a blessing to others.

Activity

See if you can find the location of the verse that tells us to do our work "heartily" as to the Lord. HINT: It is in a New Testament epistle written by the apostle Paul.

Answers to Last Month's Activity

1. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14b).
2. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).
3. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16a).
4. "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Peter 1:25). †

JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN,
ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

CHRIST STILLING LIFE'S STORMS

Radio Message by the late Bro. Alvin Craig

(aired 11/15/98)

UR SUBJECT for today's broadcast is entitled, "Christ Stilling Life's Storms." First, we'll read Matthew 8:23-27: "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

Mark 4:35-41: "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

In our thoughts today, we would like to cover, at least, four points:

- No. 1—*Life is a voyage;*
- No. 2—*Tempests often arise;*
- No. 3—*Christ alone can still those tempests;*
- No. 4—*Be sure that Christ is in your vessel.*

Life is a voyage. We are all voyagers. Children, youth, middle-aged, seniors. We're all voyagers on the sea of life, and we shall not get across without storms. Some will meet with more than others, but all will meet with storms. There are sunny days, and there are smooth sailings, but there are also stormy days and rough seas. The question is this: Is Christ with you in your vessel?

Many in their youth tell themselves that the voyage will be easy and prosperous. They say, "We know how to handle things, thus we do not feel our need of Christ's help as we should." I know, though I am advanced in years now, I passed through those youthful days. When you're young and so optimistic, full of life, and you have good health and so much energy, you do not feel your need many times of God's help. Many times we did not feel the need of counsel and help of older people, but we need to remember some things.

I'll speak to the young people at the moment in our congregation. You need to remember some things. First of all, the Bible teaches us, "It is not within man to direct his own steps." The Scriptures instruct us, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Solomon, the wise man, said, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Young people would be well-advised if they would just listen to what the Word of God teaches, and let God direct their path.

Young People, make sure that Christ is in your vessel. Older ones, who have faced the storms of life in their youth, may be able to help you if you will but listen. I realize there are many older people out there that would not give you proper counsel and proper advice. Of course, you should not listen to them, but there are those who are older in years and have experienced some difficult places through life, and they have learned some things by bitter experience that can help you if you would just be willing to listen to counsel and to advice.

Regardless of our age, as we journey across the sea of life, we all are going to meet with storms. There are going to be sunny days, smooth sailings, and things will be going well, but it's not always going to be that way. We should be realistic to know that there are going to be storms on the sea of life. There are going to be problems to face and difficult things to overcome.

Young People, life is a school. You don't get out of school when you graduate from the twelfth grade or from college. Life is a school, and you're going to learn things as long as you live. You should never get so old that you can't learn. So life is a school, a time of learning.

The Master Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, may teach us by letting sorrow, as well as joy, come our way. I realize that is contrary to the thinking of some people because they have the idea that because God is love, everything is just going to go like clockwork. There isn't going to be any sadness in your life, any difficulty, and any real clouds of testings in life, but that is a wrong conception of life. I might add, it is a wrong conception of Christianity. Now I don't want this message to come across negatively, as far as living the Christian life is concerned. Certainly not! I recommend the Christian life to everyone. You don't know what real living is if you do not know Christ, for he that has Christ has life. He that has not Christ has the wrath of God abiding upon him. But school is a life of learning. We are not able to sail across the sea of life and go through this school without any difficulties. The Master Teacher may well teach us by letting sorrow, as well as joy, come our way. He may allow disappointments to mold us into the Divine image. Remember, the Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ Himself learned obedience through the things that He suffered.

We know how Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. That was not all He suffered, although doubtless those two times were the greatest, but He suffered whenever people rejected Him, accused

Him of being devil-possessed, being a glutton, and a wine-bibber, etc. Jesus suffered many things, according to the prophecy of the book of Isaiah. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He learned obedience through the things He suffered. So if our Master learned obedience through the things He suffered, it should not be surprising that God allows us to suffer some things that we might learn some lessons. He may teach us by letting us suffer and allowing disappointments to mold us into the Divine image.

Divine love does not lift us out of trouble the moment we get into it. I know we human beings would like to be delivered the very moment, as it were, when we get into a problem. The very time we get into a difficulty, we'd like to get out of it immediately, but Divine love does not lift us out of trouble the very moment we get into it. We may have to labor on to the fourth watch of the night. The disciples had to do that while on the Sea of Galilee, so we may have to labor on to the fourth watch of the night, buffeted by the winds and waves. But before we reach the breaking point, the Master will come to our relief. Remember, He has promised in His Word that He would not let us be tempted above that which we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape for us.

When I think of difficult places and times of testing, I remember the young man, Joseph. He was taken away from his family at the age of seventeen. He was taken to Egypt and sold into slavery. The story of Joseph is a beautiful story in many respects, but he faced some very, very difficult situations. One of the things I rejoice in, as I read that story in the book of Genesis, that when he was thrown into jail, the Bible tells us the Lord was with him. If we will make sure Christ is in our vessel, the Lord will be with us, just like He was with Joseph in Egypt. God brought him out.

God could have kept the three Hebrew children from going into the fiery furnace, but He did not. He kept them *in* the fiery furnace. The king saw the fourth one in there whom he declared looked like the Son of God. Pater said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." He is telling us that the fiery trial is something that we all must face. It's not some strange thing, and it's not just exclusively for us. Every Christian must face the fiery trials and the tests of life. Why is this? One reason is so that we'll be able to grow in our Christian experience. God does not allow the trials and the tests to come to discourage us and cause us to turn aside from serving Him. He allows them to come that we might grow in our Christian experience, that we might be exercised in prayer, in faith, and in other ways.

The apostle Paul, as he was being taken to Rome as a prisoner on the Mediterranean Sea, he, and the men met up with a very severe storm, and they did not see the sun shining for days. Even the men, laboring on the boat, did not eat for about fourteen days. Paul was praying and fasting, and the angel of the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer," because God had given him every soul on that vessel. Paul was able to come out of his secret place of prayer and assure them that not one person would drown but all of them would

be able to escape to shore safely. But remember, they didn't see the sun shining for many days, and the storm was very severe, but the Lord was with Paul.

Someone has said: "Smooth seas make poor sailors. It is gales and tempests and white-capped billows that develop seamanship."

No wise parent smooths out all the rough places in the pathway of their children. I know it's only natural for us as parents to try to protect our children, and there are some things that we should protect and shield them from when it comes to sin and wickedness and ungodliness. Of course, do your very best to shield and protect them, but there are some things we need to allow them to venture out to do; otherwise, we are going to teach them to be so fearful that they'll not try anything, as it were. So no wise parent smooths out all the rough places in the pathway of their children. There are things we learn in hardships that we will learn no other way.

Our heavenly Father is a good Parent and a good Teacher, so He will not smooth out everything for us. He will not smooth every storm on the sea of life. He will not remove all the difficult places, but rather, He will teach us lessons through these things.

Just because someone is allowed to have pain and to suffer does not mean that God is not love. Too many people have a misconception of God and of God's love. God's love does not mean that we'll never face any hardships. It does not mean that we'll never face any difficult places, and it does not mean we'll never have any pain. God's love means that He will keep us in the times of storm. He will soothe our hearts and help us through the pains and difficulties. He has promised to be with us, and He always keeps His promises.

The disciples were troubled, and yet Christ was there in their vessel. Christ actually rebuked them for it, and asked them, "Where is your faith?" In other words, if they would have had sufficient faith, they could have faced that storm without waking Him. Nevertheless, they awoke Him and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" So Jesus stepped out on the deck of that little ship and said, "Peace, be still."

Beloved, if we have Christ in our vessel, we may rest assured that no storm will be able to sink it. No ship will ever sink while Christ is on board, for He is still able to say, "Peace, be still." As He said to the disciples of old, He says to everyone of us: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Jesus Christ loved us so much that He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If Christ loved us so much that He was willing to give His very life for us, don't you think He loves us enough to keep us in the storms of life, and in the trials and tests that are bound to come our way? Yes!

Life is a voyage. We're all voyagers, and we're all are going to have to face the storms of life; but remember, make sure Christ is in your vessel, and He will see you through every storm of life. He'll give you victory in every time of testing. Whenever you are tried, you'll come forth as pure gold. God said that He would have a tried people, but He has promised to be with us—never to leave nor forsake us. †

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Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

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Sandy Bay, Roatan, Honduras

March 15-20, 2022, Lord willing

Sis. Siggie James, Host Pastor



2022 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

12819 Point Salem Rd.

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

June 28-July 3, 2022, Lord willing

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor



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