

The Way of Truth

Vol. 81

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

No. 10

December 2023

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

See page 4

SO DOING

“Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”—Luke 12:43.

CONTRARY to modern teaching, Jesus taught humanity that there are some things to be done in order to receive eternal life. Teachers in nominal religion emphasize the thought that there is nothing required of man to be saved. It is true that Jesus Christ paid for our redemption with His blood which was shed on Calvary, and no amount of good works can reconcile a man to God. We are saved by grace—not by works. However, it is error to teach that once we are saved, we continue in sin and live a life of evil works because Jesus’ blood hides the believer’s sins and the Lord cannot see. Such teaching is false! There is some *doing* to be done once an individual becomes a Christian. He is a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17) and walks in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

So what is expected of the Christian? Jesus said, “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Luke 12:43). The Christian life is a lifelong learning process. There is to be growth. We don’t know everything immediately. We learn gradually what the Lord’s will is, but once we are redeemed our heart desires to please God.

What shall we “so do” towards God?

We must believe on Him—John 6:28, 29—“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

We must believe Him and observe His commandments—Luke 6:46—“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” According to I Corinthians 10:31, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

We are to hunger after Him—Matthew 5:6—“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

We should remember Him—Luke 22:19—“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

We are to follow His example—John 13:15-17—“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

What shall we “so do” to our fellowman?

We are to observe the Golden Rule—Matthew 7:12—“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Luke 6:31 puts it like this: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

We are to be honest in our dealings—II Corinthians 13:7, 8—“Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that

which is honest, though we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.”

What else shall we “so do”?

We are to comfort and edify one another—I Thessalonians 5:11—“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

We are to love our neighbor—When asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answered with a parable in Luke 10:30-37—“And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

We must forgive our neighbor his trespasses against us—Colossians 3:13—“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

This is not optional! We are warned by the parable of the unforgiving debtor—Matthew 18:21-35—“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his

ABOUT THE COVER

The Fountain Paint Pot is a mud pot located in Lower Geyser Basin in Yellowstone National Park. The Fountain Paint Pot is named for the reds, yellows and browns of the mud in this area. The differing colors are derived from oxidation states of the iron in the mud. God is able to change a life that has become ashes into something beautiful.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We should always keep in mind that His grace is sufficient to help us "so do"—Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

What shall happen to us if we be found "so doing"?

We shall never fall—II Peter 1:10—"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

We shall be blessed—Luke 12:37, 38—"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

Matthew 25:21—"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

We shall receive the glories of the kingdom—Luke 12:32—"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Will He find you watching? Will He find you "so doing"? †

fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

What shall we "so do" to our enemy?

We should care for him as we would any other—Romans 12:20—"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

We are to love our enemies. This principle is still revolutionary!—Matthew 5:44—"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." And in Matthew 5:46, Jesus asked this stirring question: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

What should be our attitude in so doing?

We only have done that which was our duty to do—Luke 17:10—"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Our attitude should be forgetting, reaching, and pressing as we "so do"—Philippians 3:13, 14—"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one

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THE POETRY PAGE

"The birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it."—Frederick Buechner.

THE PERFECT GIFT

Julia Benson Parker

We worship Thee, O Son of God,
On this most holy day,
Who came to earth a little Babe
And in a manger lay;
Thou who didst leave Thy heavenly home
To break earth's chains of night,
Whose advent brought a world new hope,
Changed darkness into light.
The angel of the Lord appeared
As shepherds vigil kept,
Proclaimed good tidings of great joy
To man, which 'round them slept.
The heavenly host sang praises to God
And peace, good will on Earth;
The shepherds sought the Christ Child's bed
And marveled at His birth.

As wise men traveled from the East,
Led by that gleaming star,
And brought their precious gifts to Thee
From their own lands afar;
So we to Thee would homage bring
And sing that heavenly strain
Of peace on Earth, good will to men,
The world so needs again.
At this glad time we too would bring
Our greatest gift to Thee;
Lord, first ourselves, then all we have,
Our perfect gift would be.
Wilt Thou through us shine forth to men
Who need Thy light so clear?
Use us, our money, talents, time,
In Thy sweet service here.

THEY CROWDED HIM OUT

F. W. Davis

Our Savior was born in a stable one night,
For there was no room in the inn.
The world was too busy to welcome the Guest
Who had come to redeem them from sin.
Yes, there's plenty of room for pleasure today,
And business and silver and gold,
And many a heart is crowding Him out,
And taking a chance on their soul.

The curse of indifference is now paramount,
And damning the millions today;
No time for the church, the Bible or prayer;
They are turning the Master away.
Make room for the Savior before it's too late,
While He's patiently waiting for you!
No longer be guilty of crowding Him out
E'er His Spirit should bid you adieu.

THE STORY THAT NEVER GROWS OLD

James M. Gray

O tell me the story that never grows old,
The story of One whom the prophets foretold;
The Horn of salvation, the Scepter and Star,
The Light in the darkness they saw from afar.

O tell me the story that never grows old,
The story the angel at Bethlehem told;
The Babe in the manger, of lowliest birth,
The highest archangel excelling in worth.

O tell me the story that never grows old,
The story the Gospels repeat manifold;
The love and compassion in Jesus we trace,
The power and patience, the glory and grace.

O tell me the story that never grows old,
The story the ages to come will unfold;
The kindness of God in redeeming the lost,
The death of our Savior in paying the cost.

THE SAVIOR OF MEN

Lela Hudson Decker

Long ago, in the hours of night
There shone a Star so wondrous bright;
Telling the birth of Christ, the Light,
Of Jesus, the Savior of men.

Brightly it shone o'er the little inn,
O'er the stable where Christ lay safe within;
From the glory above, to a world of sin
Came Jesus, the Savior of men.

Mary and Joseph were glad indeed,
Child of the Promise, of David's seed;
Never before was there such a need
For Jesus, the Savior of men.

That was long ago, still we keep the day
When Jesus was born on a bed of hay;
And it still is true, we are glad to say,
He still is the Savior of men. †

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:11.

HAGERSTOWN FALL REVIVAL REPORT

October 13-15, 2023

IT IS WITH much praise to God that we were privileged to have such a wonderful revival. Bro. Mick Akers, pastor of the Church of God in Patton, Pennsylvania, was our evangelist.

The singing and the messages were indeed refreshing. We were encouraged to keep on in the good way. There were a few saints from other states who came to be with us.

Below you will find a few excerpts of the messages:

On Friday night, the message was entitled, "A Father to the Fatherless." Texts: Psalm 68:5, 6; Romans 8:14-16. Excerpts: *Many of you know how the children of Israel got to Egypt, and how Joseph got carried away, and eventually his brothers followed. They dwelt there during the days of famine, and they grew and grew in number. But Joseph died, but his family stayed in Egypt. Soon after, King Pharaoh also died, and another king came and took his place. He didn't treat the children of Israel with the same favor that the king who had known Joseph treated Israel. The Egyptians began to grow concerned. I'm sure the counselors counseled the king. They said, "As these Israelites are growing in number, soon they will outnumber us. If we are attacked, what is going to happen to us Egyptians if Israel should decide to join with our enemies?"*

What does the word bondage mean to us today? Bondage is slavery; servitude. God delivered the children of Israel from bondage and took them as His own. He called them, "My people." He emancipated them to perfect liberty. He reunited families. God was a father to them.

Satan—sin—is the enemy of mankind today. Billions are in spiritual bondage. Sinners carry their burdens alone. They cannot change themselves. Sin follows after them.

Only the blood of Jesus can deliver. It was promised to all of us. God gives us the Spirit of adoption. We are treated like His sons and daughters. We can depend upon Him like a father. We are in His family. We're no longer alone. We have kinship with Jesus. God understands our difficulties. We have no guilt but peace.

Saturday night's message was entitled, "Beauty for Ashes." The text was taken from Isaiah 61. This full-length message begins on page 4 of this issue.

Sunday morning's message was entitled, "The Victim Mentality Is Not for the Christian." Text: Hebrews 12:12, 13. Excerpts: *Trends, fads, and attitudes from the world are not for the Christian. There are victims in this world. But other "victims" have the attitude that they are owed something, while they themselves are nothing. The right to demand. Society tells people they have a right.*

Symptoms:

(1) placing blame on their circumstances on everyone except for where it really belongs. It is used as an excuse to stay where they are. They refuse to take responsibility for their own actions. Easily offended. They fail to learn from mistakes and keep making the same mistakes over and over.

(2) They're determined to have their own way. They can take action to better themselves, but are determined to do their own thing. They don't give God time to work.

Victim mentality produces a sense of powerlessness. We are not in a powerless experience—our resource is God. He knows and understands our situations intimately. God gives us whatever we need to overcome. When we wallow in despair, we are not portraying the proper attitude to the world.

Victim mentality undermines a person's reaction to facing persecutions. Persecutions will come, because we are living righteously in a sinful world. We can be thankful we are worthy to suffer as Jesus suffered. A victim mentality lowers faith.

A "victim" will blame life on who they are and refuse to believe God can help. Even Christians must watch negative thoughts. Satan feeds on this. The reality is that God specializes in deliverance and hope. God is our Advocate when we serve Him.

Victimhood takes the joy out of life and out of a personal experience with God. It will minimize our blessings. Our attitudes can reflect ungratefulness. We can be thankful, no matter what our earthly circumstances are.

Victimhood affects our contentment. Appreciate what we have—little or much. Contentment is vital for a Christian. When you're not satisfied, your experience will not thrive.

If anyone had a right to adopt a victim's mentality, it was Jesus. He instead had the mindset of a humble servant. Let that mind be in us—suffer for the benefit of something greater. Jesus actually sought God's help to go through His agony.

Sunday evening's message was entitled, "Spain." Text: Romans 15:24. Excerpts: *It was Paul's intention to go to Spain, but he never made it. But the burden of his heart was to spread the gospel.*

Spain—entire lost world. Many people have no understanding of who Christ is and the work He can do in their hearts. We need to have a desire that people will see the gospel through us. What can I do with the gifts God has given me? God can use anyone who has a willing heart. He will make opportunity for you. Be zealous for God. Desire to be useful. Hunger after the gifts.

Spain—desire for God's work to be spread. We are God's messengers. Talk to God and tell Him your problems. Be aware that God has called us to His work. †

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___ CD #1527 A Father to the Fatherless

___ CD #1528 Beauty for Ashes

___ CD #1529 The Victim Mentality Is Not for the Christian

___ CD #1530 Spain †

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

2023 Fall Revival Message by Bro. Mick Akers



I AM THANKFUL to the Lord for His help. He has said it, and it's true: "Without me, ye can do nothing."

There is something about wood burning to ashes. Once wood is burned to ashes, there is nothing useful left. You probably have seen houses that have been burned down to ashes. Ashes denote destruction, don't they? So much so, that you read in the Bible where people were so stricken with grief that they would put sackcloth and ashes on themselves. I can give you an example of that just to let you know I'm telling you the truth.

THE EXAMPLE OF HAMAN

The example is found in the book of Esther, but I'll just tell you the story. Ahasuerus, King of Persia, had a servant, and he was promoted above all the princes. This sounds like I'm speaking of Daniel, but I'm not. His name was Haman. This promotion really brought about the worst in Haman. He began to use his power deceitfully, and he used the king's authority for his own good. He was a proud man. There was a man named Mordecai who stood against Haman. He saw him for what he really was. It enraged Haman when Mordecai did this, so Haman went to the king, and he turned the king's heart against the Jewish people. If you really read it in Esther, it seems even more so that the king was like, "Whatever you think is best. I've put my confidence in you." He didn't really consider the matter. He just trusted Haman. He didn't realize that Haman was working out his own revenge against Mordecai and the Jewish people. Imagine just for a moment. Someone so prideful and angry that he would kill a whole nation to get revenge on one man.

Well, the word, the *post*, as the Bible calls it, went out, and it became common knowledge. When Mordecai heard about it, he was grieved. His whole nation, not just him or his family, but his whole nation, his whole world, at that moment felt like it was collapsing on him. It says in Esther 4:1-3, "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes." Their world was on the verge of being destroyed. To indicate how much this affected them, and how they felt about it, they poured that symbol of complete and utter destruction on their heads. They poured ashes on their heads.

It is fitting to say that ashes are a symbol of destruction, waste, and ruin. There are many people in the world today who also feel and have encountered moments where something seemed completely

destroyed. Truthfully, this message tonight is for the Christian and the unsaved. I really feel like we all can gain something from this. No doubt you all have encountered things where you've felt like the world was collapsing around you. Whatever it could be. Sometimes it's relationships. There are times where relationships are strained, where husband and wife are no longer on the same page, and everything is unraveling itself. Everything that you thought it would be, everything that you've worked for, everything you desired it to be, unraveled around you. It just felt like you looked around, and it just burnt down to ashes. There's nothing left. "There's nothing that I can pick up and make something out of." People are in those situations. They feel like there's nothing left. "I've got only ashes to work with. It's all been destroyed." That's the feeling.

LIFE AND ITS TRIALS

Maybe sometimes you're facing a health crisis, and you just got news that you have cancer, or someone else you love has another disease, or they've been in a horrible accident, or they're struggling with some crisis of health, and it feels like there's nothing you can do. It's outside of your power. It's bigger than you. I just feel like you just need to sit down, or you're just like Mordecai. "There's nothing to do here but grieve. What can I do with this news? There's nothing for me to use to make it better. In myself, it's all just ashes." Deterioration of health can lead to some dark places, just like relationship issues can lead to dark and difficult places. "I can't do what I used to do. My quality of life is not good. I'm dying." When we're healthy, there are things we don't always think about, do we? But when get that news, it's as if our whole world is going to be destroyed or is destroyed.

People face financial ruin, don't they? They don't manage things well. They don't learn lessons well. They allow their wants to outweigh their income. They lose things through deceit. There are so many scams out there. Many people are taken advantage of. It's one thing that someone takes advantage of you for \$20, but what if they take all, all that you've worked for your whole life? What if they put you in that position? You lose everything. You lose your home, your car, your retirement, or any inheritance you were planning on giving to your children. It's all gone, wiped out in a day, in an instant, as if you had labored not at all. Would that affect you? Sure it would. It affects people. Do you know that in 1929 when there was the fall of the stock market, and the great depression was kicking off, people who faced financial ruin killed themselves? They jumped out of buildings and committed suicide in different ways. Ruin is ruin.

All of those that I mentioned are ruination and destruction, but spiritual ruin is more severe than those.

Look around at our world where people are deceived or lukewarm or have a relationship with a religion and not with God. I appreciated what Sis. Rosemary said in her testimony. That's what we all want—a relationship with God. I'm not interested in a relationship with the church, an organization, or a denomination. I want a relationship with God. When I have a relationship with Him, then I'll have a relationship with the family of God. But people are in spiritual ruin. Look, I'm not talking about just Christian professors. I'm talking about the world in general.

More and more people (and you can find articles on this) are giving up on the idea that God even exists. In America, in Europe, strongholds of Christianity for hundreds of years are giving up on the idea that God even exists. Many professors and Christians alike, look out on the spiritual horizon and have even given up hope of a restoration. "There's just nothing left to work with," they say, or they feel. "It's all destruction. There's nothing to build with here."

"BEAUTY FOR ASHES"

Our message tonight has been pretty downheartened right now, but I want to read something to you, and then I'll give you the title of our message. It's taken from Isaiah 61:3. It's really our scripture text. It says: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Our title tonight is, "Beauty for Ashes."

Now, I've told you about the ashes, and I've tried to bring it to your mind's eye the idea that with ashes, there's nothing left, and it symbolized that with the idea of complete destruction. So in man's eye, we see ashes. There's nothing left to build with, but you know, God said He's going to give us beauty for ashes. God specializes in restoration. God specializes in something that is destroyed. He specializes in taking a circumstance that looks hopeless, where people are renting their clothes and dressing in old sackcloth and putting ashes on their heads. He'd take that situation that Mordecai and the Jews were in there in the Kingdom of Persia, and He can work through His people, and work a mighty work and deliver them. That's just what He did for Mordecai and all the Jews. God worked through Esther and brought Haman's treachery and his true personality traits to the attention of the king. They saw Haman for what he was, and they hanged him for it. The people were delivered, and Mordecai was put in Haman's place. God can take something like that, which seems so hopeless, and He can deliver you from it, and make you better from it. He'll take something from ashes and give you beauty.

The Bible is full of examples of this principle. I want you to consider some of these things. The first one is not a biblical example. I've mentioned health and how it feels like there's just nothing that can be done. I want you to consider the example I'm going to give of a small three-month-old child from the 1880s. She was sick and her parents did all that they could to make her well. They took her to a doctor, but the doctor gave her the

wrong medicine for her eyes. It caused her to go blind. It's hard to comprehend blindness, outer darkness. I close my eyes and I open them and I expect to see you, but to be blind from a child! If I went and got by phone right now and flipped through pictures, you would see sunsets that caught my attention of how beautiful they were. You'd see closeups of flowers, because I'm just struck by how perfectly those flowers are made. You'd see pictures of my granddaughter. I know she's perfect. I'm sure you all agree with me on that. When I see her, I see the beauty of her. It speaks to me. It has been said "a picture is worth a thousand words." And that's true. If I tried to describe the sunset to you, it would be difficult to do so, wouldn't it? But it just really speaks to how important vision is when I say, "Look, here's what I'm talking about."

THE EXAMPLE OF FANNY CROSBY

Well, our first example is of how God took something that looked like it was completely destroyed and nothing could be done with it. It was Fanny Crosby. She said, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me." She also said, "When I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior." Is that beauty from ashes? Yes, that's beauty from ashes.

If you're going through a crisis of health, I can't stand up here and say one hundred percent that certainly it's God's plan to deliver. That's based on faith. That's based on God's plan. Our understanding of what is God's plan is not always clear as we would like for it to be. It may be that God uses a crisis of health to say, "Walk with me daily, step by step." This is not going to be easy for you. It's not going to be easy for the ones that are around you. It may feel like your world has turned to ashes, and there's nothing that you can do, and you're almost in mourning, but God says, "Walk with me. Every day I will give you grace, I will give you strength, I will give you help, and the ones that are around you, I will give them strength, I will give them grace, and I will give them help to help you."

People will surround you and lift you up in their prayers. And even though you're suffering, and it feels like you're going through ashes, what God will really do is, take nothing and make something beautiful out of it. He's brought people around you. He's brought people supporting you, and He's giving you strength down from heaven that you might not have been able to experience otherwise. You're doing something now that had you been asked twenty years ago if you could do it, you would have said, "No, I could never do it." But God is faithful. He's faithful to each one of His children. He is a helper in every time of affliction. That's making something beautiful out of ashes. I said before, affliction can be a dark place to be in. But here's the secret: Give God the ashes, because if you hold onto the ashes, ashes are all you'll ever going to have. That's it. If you want something beautiful for your ashes, you have to give your ashes to God. You'll hear me repeat that, God willing, a couple times tonight.

THE EXAMPLE OF JOB

What about someone who faces complete ruin? There's a well-known individual in our Bible. A whole book was written about him. Job. I thought Job was a wealthy man, but you know what the Bible says about him? "This man was the greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3). He wasn't a wealthy man. He wasn't a great man. He was the wealthiest man, the greatest man in the east. God had blessed him so richly. It came a time where Job lost everything, didn't he? It wasn't a little at a time. I don't know which one would be easier: losing a little at a time, or losing everything all at once. If I remember the story correctly, Job regularly offered offerings to God for his children. If I remember correctly, while he was doing so, his children were away having a feast at the elder brother's home, and he got word that a group of people had come and stolen his camels. While the messenger was speaking, yet another came saying that fire came down from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants. He lost his cattle also. The Bible says that Job got another message that a strong wind came and blew down the older brother's house and everyone inside perished. Job didn't curse God. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Another affliction came to Job, didn't it? He lost his health. There he was, down in ashes, literally, for the sake of whatever comfort that would provide him. Literally, he was in ashes, but I guess in a typical fashion, everything had been destroyed. He had nothing. He lost it all. Everything! Imagine that. Put yourself in that place. You've lost everything.

God willing, I expect to go back to my home in Pennsylvania when I leave here after the revival. "Don't you expect to go home tonight, Bro. Ralph? If you need to get gas and you swipe your card, don't you expect the charge to be accepted and then move on?" Yes, you expect the money to be there that you have put in the bank account. We all do. But imagine losing that. Imagine having nothing. Look at some people who are living homeless in our country today. So many of them have nothing. Just a few scraps of things. No money in their pocket. Don't you know if I want something to drink tonight, I'll go and buy it? If I think I need a new pair of shoes, I'll go and buy them. But imagine losing all of your ability to do that. No shelter over your head. No way to take care of your own needs. Lost everything.

Many of God's people have faced financial difficulties. They've lost many things. Even in this congregation, people have lost things that they worked hard for. It's no fault of their own. They lose things. There was an economic downturn not many years ago, and people lost things. It impacted people in a real way. It just felt like the world was turned upside down, and there was just nothing left. "Everything I worked for is burned down. All I have left are ashes." But God in His faithful way gave strength to Job. He gave strength to the people we know in this congregation that have suffered so many losses, to continue on, and they're here living for God yet today. Their experience is stronger because of it. The reason why it is, they took the ashes and gave them to God. "The Lord giveth, and the

Lord taketh away, and now I have something more beautiful in my heart than what I had in my hand, because God is an expert in restoring things." What did God do for Job? The Bible says, "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."

There are a number of us who can put ourselves in that category, where we feel like we lost everything, and now our latter days are more blessed than our first days because God intervened, and we gave Him the ashes. Where I couldn't do anything with these ashes, and you couldn't do anything with them, He built something beautiful and honor unto Himself.

THE EXAMPLE OF NAOMI AND RUTH

Another one: There was a woman who had a husband, two sons, and two daughters-in-law. Her husband died, and then her sons died. She decided to go back home to Israel, and she told her daughters-in-law, "There's nothing for you but me. It's all ashes. Everything I thought I had is done with, it's all over with. There's no benefit of you all staying with me. You go back home." One of the daughters-in-law did. But another one said, "Don't ask me to leave you. I'm going to go with you. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." And Naomi and Ruth went home or at least to Naomi's childhood home. They were desperate for food, so much so that Naomi sent Ruth to her kinsman's field to gather grain and glean from the edges of the field so that they would have enough to eat and store away. That's how dire the situation was. No husband, no children to take care of her. Just her and Ruth living on the edge of existence by gathering and gleaning a little grain so that they could make some cakes and have some food. Who knows after the harvest how they were going to survive? But as God would have it, He had something better in store for them.

Ruth caught Boaz's eye, and he inquired about her. You may know their custom, the idea of inheritance and who would take up Ruth, and how he could have access to her to marry her, he settled it in the city gate, and he married Ruth. The Bible says that Boaz went into her and she conceived. But what I'm saying about the restoration is not really about Ruth. Listen to what the Bible says about Naomi. It's in Ruth, chapter 4, verses 13-17: "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David." It was all burned down. There's nothing left. Naomi had given up on her life where she was and decided to return home, but God was able to restore her a kinsman, a family, and a life, and take those ashes and make something beautiful for her. That's what God does.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

There was a son who was rich, but he was wasteful. You know the story. He was a prodigal. Many young men think they know everything. I know I once thought I knew everything. When you're young, you don't recognize what you don't know. This young man, like so many others, thought he knew everything. He knew how the world worked. He knew better than his father how to manage what was coming to him. He said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that is mine." His father gave him his portion. So often fathers will do things for their sons out of love. Sometimes it's not always best, but his father gave him his inheritance. He took it to a foreign land. The Bible says "And there wasted his substance with riotous living." He thought he had something that would never run out. He wasted it on riotous living. No one likes to be alone in riotous living, so no doubt he wasted it on his friends. I say that with a certain degree with confidence, for I see that in the world today, and I've lived it myself. That's the way it is.

We really don't know how long it took the prodigal for his money to run out. The money ran out, didn't it? He got to such a low point that after his money ran out, he got a job feeding swine. He got even lower, if it was even possible for a Jewish boy to get lower than feeding pigs. He began to look upon what the pigs ate. He was so hungry that it looked good to him. Hunger does something to you, doesn't it? He was there contemplating eating what the pigs ate.

The Bible says that the prodigal came to himself and said, "What am I thinking? At my father's house, there are servants who eat better than this. I'm going back to my father's house and say to him, I'll be your servant." So he arose and went. He took the ashes. Everything was burned down around him. There was nothing, nothing that he could do. So he took those ashes and humbly went home to his father, not knowing what response he would get from his father.

The father loved his son. It seems he was looking out, almost like he was looking out daily, praying and hoping that his son would come home. One day while he was on the rooftop, he was looking out and he saw a form, and no doubt he thought *that's the form of my son*. He went down and met his son. The son said, "I'll be a servant in your house." The father said, "No, you're not going to be a servant. We're going to kill the fatted calf. We're going to put a garment on you. We'll put a ring on your finger, a signet of you being my son. We'll eat, and be merry." That ring meant he was of his father's house now. When they would write a letter, they would seal it with a ring. "You're my son which was lost but has returned." There was his son offering his ashes, but for his ashes, he got something beautiful. His relationship with his father was restored.

GOD CAN DO THE SAME FOR YOU

God can do the same for you if you have lost a relationship with your heavenly Father. All you have to do is to pick up that which remains of your life. Simply give those ashes to God. There's nothing left that you

can do. There's no need to starve where you are. There's no need to be unsatisfied with life where you are. Take it all, and give it to God.

God specializes in restoring people by giving them a better life through Jesus Christ, helping them, making things easier for them, restoring them in their body, in their mind, and in their soul. Yes, when people start putting godly principles of love and relationship and finance in their lives, things are restored. God can take what remains they have of what they thought life was going to be and give them something greater than what they even thought it would be in the beginning. That's what God does.

When God looks down on this world, there is a degree of obvious anger. The Bible tells us so. When He sees the unsaved, there is some anger there, but there is also love. When He looks down, He says, "If you would just give me your ashes, I can take them and make them something beautiful. I can make your life worth living. I can give you peace with me. I can come and dwell in your heart. I can give you a higher calling and purpose to life. I can give you an understanding about what living in this world is really about. Not only that, I will be with you the whole way through. I'll help you through all your difficult times. I'll be with you when your eyes close in sleep the final time, and when they open, and you see me, I'll be there waiting for you. All the labors you have done for me, I'll give you a reward. It's yours forever, and we'll be together forever." All it takes is for you to give God the ashes. You have to give Him the ashes. You might say, "Well, it's not that bad," and He'll respond to you and say, "Are you going to wait until it's all burned down? because sin burns things down. It destroys things."

CONCLUSION

Jesus gave a parable about tares, which were basically weeds, I suppose. They were going to be harvested, along with the sheaves of grain. The tares had made it all the way through to the end of the harvest, but in order that the sheaves would be spared, the tares were allowed to grow, then harvested, then they were separated, and the bundle of tares were thrown into the fire. So even though they were allowed to grow to the fullness of time, they were eventually turned to ashes. At that point, the harvest was over, and there was nothing left to be done. The promise of taking some ashes and making something beautiful, the day of the fulfilling of that promise was over with.

What does that mean to you? It means that this promise is for you while you are alive. You might say that your life is not in complete ashes, but if you don't make things right with God, and you continue to be alive until the harvest, or you die in this condition that you're in, figuratively, you will be bound in outer darkness, into a fire. The day of the promise will be over with. You will remember the day that you rejected the day of promise. You will regret it throughout eternity. "Here I am, forever in ashes, forever in destruction, forever in torment when I could have been restored and had something so beautiful." Will you give God the ashes tonight? No one can give Him *your* ashes. It's up to you. The Lord bless you. †



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

QUESTION: Please explain Galatians 3:21, “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” Does this mean that the law is against God’s promises? For if a law had been given that could bring life to men, then man could be put right with God through law.

ANSWER: Adam Clarke’s comments on this verse are as follows: “Is it possible that the intervention of the law, in reference to one part of the Abrahamic seed, should annul the promise made to the other? It is impossible. If any law or rule of life could have been found out that would have given life—saved sinners from death, and made them truly happy, then righteousness—justification, should have been by that law.” Paul was pointing out here that righteousness—justification—did not come by or through the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

QUESTION: Since Jesus was born of a woman, “according to nature,” what kept Him from inheriting sin from His mother?

ANSWER: Depravity comes as a result of Adam’s sin; it does not come from the flesh. The one who lived in the physical body known as Jesus was God, the second Person in the Godhead; therefore, how could He have had depravity? I would add, however, that His physical body was subject to hunger, tiredness, sleepiness and sickness, although we never read of His being sick. Further, His body would have returned to the dust of the earth, “seen corruption,” IF it had not been resurrected.

QUESTION: In the parable of the “talents,” who are represented by the three slaves?

ANSWER: If we are going to say the “man traveling into a far country” represents Jesus Christ, then the three servants are His. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters.” He entrusted them with certain abilities. Two were faithful, one was not, and the unfaithful one ceased being His servant. “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).

QUESTION: Please explain Job 1:6-12. Does it mean that God and Satan are meeting and talking to each other?

ANSWER: When the Bible describes things that take place in the spirit world, it must be put in terms that we can understand, by the help of the Holy Spirit. We also must understand that some verses speak of

God doing some things when it simply means He permitted it.

In regard to Job 1:1-12, and whether God and Satan actually spoke, I can only say that a “message” passed between them. Just how I cannot say. One thing is for sure, God knew what Satan had been doing and did not really need to ask him. What we have here is a battle between good and evil—Satan trying to get Job to turn his back on God, and God allowing Satan to tempt Job, but only so far. In all the tests Job proved true, and God blessed him for his faithfulness.

QUESTION: Mark 13:25 speaks of the powers of heaven being shaken. Does it mean God will send a great spiritual awakening, or what?

ANSWER: Mark 13:25 speaks of the same thing Matthew 24:29 does. In Matthew 24 Jesus tells of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70. He told His followers to flee out of the city to the mountains, which they did. In verse 29 Jesus said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days [the destruction of Jerusalem] shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” I know of no great spiritual awakening at that time.

In Revelation 12 we find the sun representing the New Covenant, the moon, the Old Covenant and stars, ministers—see also Revelation 1:20.

However, in the Old Testament scriptures we find these same things spoken of as representing the rulers of nations. Adam Clarke says Isaiah 13:9, 10 speaks of the fall of Babylon. Further, he says Ezekiel 32:7, 8 speaks of the destruction of Egypt.

In Daniel 8:9-12 the “little horn,” Antiochus Epiphanes, is said to “cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground,” which is speaking of his taking Jerusalem and defiling the temple.

Falling “stars” were deemed an omen of evil times by the common people.

So it appears that Matthew 24:29 and Mark 13:25 speaks of the evil times that came upon the Jewish nation after they rejected their Messiah.

QUESTION: When the Lord did not allow Moses to enter into Canaanland, did this mean Moses was not sanctified—surely not? What is this the type of?

ANSWER: The Church of God has taught through the years that Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage was a type of souls being saved from the bondage of sin, that the water out of the rock was a type of Christ the living water, that the manna was a type of Christ the bread of life, and that crossing the Jordan into Canaan was a type of sanctification. However, the Israelites were literally delivered from Egypt and later entered Canaan. As such it does not mean that they were spiritually saved or sanctified. This was a type of these two experiences. I would assume that there were some true servants of God among the Israelites who died in Egypt, and of course, they were not lost because they literally died in Egypt. I do not know that Moses’ dying before the rest entered Canaan is a type of anything. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



HOME

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Mommy," I asked in my most persuasive voice, "may I please spend the night with Grandma?"

Grandma Castang was dearer to me than just about anyone else in the world. I was elated every time I had the opportunity to be with her.

"I don't know," my mother said slowly. "We'll have to ask if it suits her."

I knew in my heart it would suit my grandmother. Even though I was only five years old, I had spent the night with her several times already. We had such fun together!

Sure enough, my grandmother agreed that I could stay, and I waved goodbye to my parents and two younger sisters.

At the end of the cozy evening, Grandma fixed me a snack, and then read me a Bible story. After that, it was time to go to bed.

I followed Grandma up the dark, narrow steps to her attic bedroom. She tucked me in on one side of the bed and then settled herself on the other side. She pulled the long string that was fastened to the light bulb hanging from the rafters above the bed, and the attic was plunged into darkness. I opened my eyes wide, and soon they adjusted to the shadowy room.

I looked to the right where a small window let in the dim rays from the street light across the avenue. Although the window was closed, I could hear traffic passing on the street below. Now and then a car horn sounded.

I looked to the left where my grandmother was already asleep, a quiet "puh-h-h" escaping her lips each time she breathed out.

If I were at home now, I thought, I would be tucked into bed next to my sister, Twila. Mommy and Daddy would be across the landing in their room.

I pictured the little house where we lived, set in a wide yard next to a quiet country road. If I were at home right now, I thought, I wouldn't hear any cars or see any lights shining in my window. All would be dark and quiet, except for the sound of crickets and peepers outside.

A sudden longing flooded my heart. I wanted to be at home in my bed, right across from my parents' room. The desire was so strong it brought tears to my eyes. The tears ran down my cheeks in a slow trickle, and I squeezed my eyes tightly shut to stop them. The tears wouldn't stop. Soon I was sobbing—quietly at first, and then loudly enough to awaken my grandmother.

Grandma sat up in bed. "What's wrong, honey?" she asked. "Are you feeling sick? Does your stomach hurt?"

"No, I'm not sick," I sobbed. "I miss Mommy. I want to go home."

"Oh, honey," said Grandma, "you must be homesick."

"But I'm not sick," I insisted.

"Do you know what 'homesick' means?" Grandma asked me.

"No," I answered between sobs.

"It means that you miss your home so much that you feel sick," Grandma said.

I stopped crying to think about what Grandma had just told me. I had never heard the word 'homesick' before. Maybe that was what was wrong with me. Maybe I missed my home so much it was making me feel sick.

"You mustn't think about going home right now," Grandma said gently. "Your mommy and daddy are sleeping, and we don't want to wake them up and ask them to drive all the way in here to get you."

Grandma was right. It had been my idea to spend the night with her, and this was not a good time to change my mind.

Grandma got out of bed and got a handkerchief from her dresser drawer. "Here," she said. "Dry your eyes and blow your nose. I'll tell you a story and you'll fall asleep in no time."

And fall asleep I did. The next thing I knew, Grandma was waking me up for breakfast. The sorrow of the night had passed, and I was excited for a day of adventure with Grandma.

Have you ever been homesick? Have you ever missed your home and family so much you felt sick?

For most of us, home is a place we love. It is a place where we have a feeling of belonging. It is a place where we feel comfortable and at ease. It is a place where people know and understand us.

Long ago, the sweetest Person ever known left His home in heaven to come here to the earth. His name was Jesus.

When Jesus lived in heaven with His father, God, He had the praise of angels all of the time. He was treated with respect and honor all over heaven. Heaven was Jesus' home.

Why would Jesus leave His home in heaven and come here to the earth? Was it because He knew He would be treated with even more love and respect here on Earth than in heaven? No. Jesus was loved by some people here on Earth, but He was hated by others because He spoke the truth about their sins, and it made them feel guilty.

Jesus must have been homesick for heaven sometimes. But he stayed here because He loved each and every person who lived, or would ever live, on this earth. He stayed even when He was arrested, mocked, beaten, and crucified on an old rugged cross.

After Jesus died, His friends buried Him in a tomb. But on the third day, He rose again! After appearing to His disciples several times, He went home to heaven to live with His father forever. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we may choose to make our home with Him in heaven one day.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 18:24 which says, *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* No friend or family member could ever love us the way Jesus does. Not only did He give His life as a sacrifice for our sins, but He is willing to walk beside us each day and help us with every trial and temptation as long as we put our trust in Him. What a friend we have in Jesus!

Activity

When Jesus lived here on this earth, He spent His days in Israel, the land of the Jews. He visited many towns and cities, preaching to the people about the kingdom of God. Can you name the city or town in which each event happened?

1. Jesus was born in the town of _____.
2. Jesus grew up in the town of _____.
3. _____ was the town where Jesus performed His first miracle.
4. Jesus spent much time in _____, the fishing village where Simon Peter lived.
5. Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the grave near the city of _____.

Answers to Last Month's Activity

1. Food; 2. Clothing; 3. Shelter; 4. Parents;
5. Salvation †

STEPS HEAVENWARD

By the late R. L. Berry

Chapter VII

What To Do With Doubts

EVERY CHRISTIAN, whether young or old, newly converted or long on the way, knows something about doubts. In fact, some know more about doubts than they do of the way of victory over them.

Bunyan, in his incomparable allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, has put this matter of doubting in a most interesting and telling way in the story of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle. These two pilgrims strayed away from the King's Highway a few steps, and old Giant Despair caught them and put them in the dungeon of Doubting Castle. The next day the old giant went down and beat them with a crab-tree cudgel and nearly killed them. Next, he threatened them with death and told them that the best thing they could do was to kill themselves. At last Christian woke as if from a dream, and said: "What a fool am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Then said Hopeful, "That is good news: good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try."

This is only an allegory; but many a Christian has felt the club of old Giant Despair. Many a pilgrim has sobbed and cried with deepest discouragement simply because he was doubting God. When Christian and Hopeful used the key called Promise, they unlocked the doors and ran, with old Giant Despair after them. But the giant had a fit just then, as he always does in fair, sunny weather, and could not follow them.

Now, it is our purpose to show the young Christian how to live in the sunshine of faith, a place where Giant Despair cannot operate, because it is so deadly to his health.

There are a variety of doubts to assail the young Christian. First, the young convert will be tempted to doubt his experience of salvation. There will likely be doubts as to whether you really repented in just the way that the Lord commanded you to, or whether your faith was entirely sufficient, or the doubts may be just a sort of indefinable something that broods over you like a cloud and does not concern any particular point of the great transaction between your soul and God, but blurs and obscures the whole.

Another serious source of doubt is the question whether your experience of forgiveness is real and genuine when compared with the experience which you hear others relate. When they tell their experience of conversion, especially that part which relates to the joy or emotional side of it, then there may steal over you a doubt that surely your experience is not genuine, for you did not feel that way. You hear others tell of how the birds sang more sweetly and the sun shone more brightly, and then you reflect that you did not notice that. In fact, you may have been like many others, as soundly converted as anybody, who did not think anything about the birds, nor the sun, nor of any such things. What have such things to do with salvation? Nothing; we are saved by faith in Christ and we may think the sun shines brighter or we may not; as long as our faith is anchored in Christ we are saved. Indeed it is likely that this thing just mentioned, comparing your Christian experience with others, will be, as it has been in a multitude of cases, the most fruitful occasion of doubts.

It is the grand old ruse of Satan to get you to doubt. Of all the imps of his Satanic kingdom, old Imp Doubter is the busiest. Young Christians are his especial object of attack. He well knows that they are sincere and honest and want to be sure, and so he comes as if he were a friend trying to help. He will bring to your mind the terrible consequences of being deceived, and the probability of your being lost after thinking you were all right, and he will offer the suggestion that you had better be sure, very sure, that you are right with God. This idea makes quite an impression on you, especially if your feelings from your new birth have subsided somewhat, or perhaps at this time you may not feel as though you were a Christian at all. Imp Doubter times his approaches in the most intelligent way to do you the most damage. His method is to inject some doubts into your soul as to your standing with God. It matters not to him how he does this; the essential thing with him is to get you to doubt, that is, doubt God. Of course he will not come and bellow at you, saying, "I have come to make you doubt

God”; but that is what he will make you do if you allow him. He will point out to you some other Christian and tell you that your experience was not like his. He will try to get you to doubt your faith in Christ, your motive in coming to God, your honesty of intention in repenting, your ability to stand—anything and everything that concerns your relationship with God.

Now, it is of the utmost importance that you know what to do with these doubts when they come. Your happiness and peace of mind depend on it; for if they come in and abide, they will make you weep and mourn and bewail your state, and there will never again be peace till you do learn how to overcome them. Doubts are the most weakening, the most painful, the most pernicious things that afflict Christians in this world. They do those who engage in them more damage than all the persecutions and trials and troubles that they have in this life. Doubts are deadly. Either you must overcome them, or they will overcome you. If in the beginning of your Christian life you learn how to overcome doubts quickly, you will have learned one of the greatest lessons to be learned in the journey of life.

To overcome doubts, young convert, go back to bed-rock facts. Do not allow any side issue to come in. Stick to the main subject. Satan will try to inject a doubt of your salvation by comparing your experience with that of others. Do not allow any such comparisons; for what has their experience to do with yours? Suppose that your experience was not identical with theirs, that does not weaken or destroy yours. It would be just as logical for them to doubt their experience because it does not tally with yours exactly as for you to doubt yours because it does not tally with theirs. God promised to save you, so just let Him do it in His own way. He will give you an experience that will just suit your case. And we must know also that there are a great many types and kinds of people in the world, some sober, some emotional, some quiet, some noisy, some demonstrative, some imaginative, some without imagination, and it stands to reason that the experience of salvation will affect each of these in a somewhat different way, as regards the human side of it. So allow no comparisons; stick to God by faith.

If the doubts seem to involve the whole transaction between you and God, get right down to the facts in the case. Cease the agitation and come to some decision. In the first place, remember that good feelings are not the evidence of salvation, and the lack of them is no proof that you are not saved. Settle that point well, and for all time. Then ask yourself whether you really want to serve God. If the answer is, Yes, then you are to consider yourself still on God’s side. Your feelings in the matter have nothing to do with the case at all. If you, down in your heart, desire to serve God and live holy, and if you still abhor sin and turn from it, then all you need is to know that Imp Doubter is after you and needs a good rebuking. Doubts are seeking to overcome you; but you are to overcome them—how? Just by using a little faith. Simply believe that God saves you, as He said He would, and worry no more about it. Faith is believing what God says; to doubt God means to believe what Satan says. Take your choice;

but if you want peace, believe in God with all your heart.

There is another class of doubts, a class that revolve around one’s own self, that seem right to be indulged in. For instance, one will say, “It is myself that I doubt. God will do His part; but I have not done mine, or I have not done my part as I should.” Many think that since it is themselves they doubt, it is all right to doubt. The fact is, a great many of our doubts seem so reasonable, so just, almost as though we should not be true to facts if we did not doubt, that to believe in spite of them seems out of place, really impossible. There are honest souls who have done all that anyone could do to have peace with God, and yet they doubt and blame themselves for not enjoying that peace. They are not sure they repented. They are not sure they believed. They are not sure the Lord loves them. They are so wayward, or so sinful, or their case is so peculiar, or there is something else on the human side of it that, they think, gives them the right to doubt. They have no such right. Why so? Because such doubting is as really doubting God as is the other kind. God has promised to save you. All He asked you to do you have done the best you can. Then there is only one thing for you to do, and that is believe that He saves you. To doubt reflects upon the mercy and love of God.

Suppose a lamb that is lost should say, “I am so small and weak that the shepherd cannot think of me nor care for me, and he does not remember me; for he loves and cares only for the sheep and lambs that never wander away.” Suppose a sick man should say, “I am sick, so therefore no one will come to see me, and pray for me, or help me get well; for the physician visits only well people.” Your very need of Jesus is the greatest factor in your favor, and if you have done the best you can, count it all right and believe in Christ as your Savior.

The thing to do with doubts, then, is to give no place to them. Resist all doubts steadfastly believing in God.

Many young converts have had the experience of being specially assaulted with doubts in the early morning, just on rising from rest. A whole army of doubts seem to be in camp around you, all night, ready to pounce upon you as soon as they can gain your attention. All religious feelings seem far away. Nothing that you did when you were saved seems real now. Nothing seems true. And especially you feel that it is not possible for you to be the object of God’s care and love, because you do not feel either that He loves you or that you love Him. As soon as you awake they begin their din. You do not feel this and you do not feel that. And you admit you do not. “Well,” says old Imp Doubter, who leads that miserable host, “you have no Christian experience anyway; if you had one you know you have lost it. See how you feel!”

What are you to do when this occurs? You should lift up the shield of faith, and hand the whole army of doubts over to the Lord. Say most emphatically that you are the Lord’s, that you know you are His child because you did repent and do still believe in Jesus. Jesus saves you now by faith. You must declare this by faith, whether your feelings say so or not, and chase the army of doubts away, or you will have a hard day

of it with them as company. They will camp with you day and night if you allow them to.

Doubting is so weak a thing to do. It seems so unmanly, we might say. It is kind of cowardly. It is the cry of the weak and despairing souls, who bestow much self-pity upon themselves. Consider, for a moment, what consternation would ensue among your friends if you doubted them as some people doubt God! You arise in the morning and say, "I cannot eat this food, for I doubt the ones who prepared it, they may have put some poison in it." After a while you take up the newspaper and read a happening, but you throw down the paper with a sigh and say, "I doubt this paper, and how do I know that these things which it says are so?" Someone comes with a message from a friend; but you doubt the message and imagine that it may have been a forgery. If we accept the witness of men, shall we not accept the witness of God? Shall we believe the newspapers and doubt God's Word? What shall we do with doubts then? Cast them out and give no place to any of them. Be a man. Be a strong man for God. Stand your ground like a soldier. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Believe, believe, and keep on believing that you are a child of God. By faith you will grow and become strong in the grace of God. †



Dear Young People,

Time is indeed precious! The decisions we make about how to use it will end up defining who we are and what we accomplish in life. And where we spend eternity at the end of our days here on Earth. It is encouraging and exciting to

think about the potential of young people who realize and act on these great truths early in life. They indeed have the opportunity to be wonderful vessels for God to use to bless others.

May you be encouraged with the thoughts by Bro. Grayson Williams, from the Craigsville, West Virginia, congregation.

—Bro. Doug Shenberger

THE TIME IS NOW

By Bro. Grayson Williams

WE ARE GIVEN a limited amount of time each day. If we do not use our time wisely, that is time that is lost. Our time can be well spent by doing things to benefit our soul. We need to spend our time on righteous things and with the people of God.

In Ephesians 5:15, 16, it says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." In the limited amount of time that we are given in life, we should use it for things that are beneficial to our spiritual well-being. The scripture in Ephesians that uses the word "circumspectly" means to be careful. If



a person doesn't fill their days with good, sustaining activities and content, it will leave time for things that may hinder their spiritual life. For example: one may say that missing a few services to work isn't that bad of a thing. When it comes down to it, that is your decision to do so. However, making those decisions can harm you spiritually. That's why the scripture says to walk "circumspectly" and plan to use our time wisely.

In James 4:14, it says, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." By understanding that our time in life is limited, it allows us to keep that notion at the forefront of our minds and not to dawdle and play. In the parable that Jesus told regarding the talents, there were three persons given talents. The first two used their time to multiply their talents. However, the last one didn't do anything with his talent. Jesus summarized by saying in Matthew 25:26-28, "His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Good ways to use our time wisely and for the spiritual good is to spend time with other people that are spiritual, praying and reading our Bible. Doing this, helps us to "redeem our time" for spiritual things.

As a Christian, we aren't living our lives just to ourselves. Jesus called His disciples to be "fishers of men." In Colossians 4:5, it says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." We are to live in such a way that we are an example to everyone that we come in contact with. There are people that do not know right from wrong, and many do not know what it means to be a Christian. Using our time wisely, we can help lead them to Christ. We should be patient with them. I was working with a man that went to bars quite often and still claimed to be a Christian. He was being ignorant with his time by doing something that didn't benefit him in any way. By the Lord's help and through my example, it is my prayer that God will let him see truth in me. In I Peter 4:10, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." By being a good steward of our time, a person could see Jesus through our lives. That could lead them to pause and look at their life and reflect to see if they could make any changes. It may also give opportunities for God to draw them to Him.

To summarize these thoughts regarding time, we should use our time wisely. We do that through doing spiritual things. Our days need to be spent learning how to be a good steward of our time and learning how to be spiritual in this world. There are many things that can take our mind and time away from spiritual things, but our efforts need to be focused. As Jesus called His disciples to be "fishers of men," we need to be the same. Time spent helping others is another good way to use our time because it brings purpose to our lives. Time is limited, so make the most of it! †

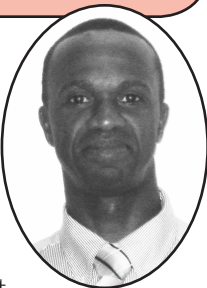
JESUS PAID IT ALL

2023 Hagerstown Convention

Divine Healing Message

by Bro. David Shaw

LET ME GREET the household of faith in the mighty name of our Lord, that name to whom we look today for all our needs to be supplied. We've already heard that there's nothing impossible with God. All things are possible to them that believe. There was an individual in the Bible who believed, but to a limit, it seemed. He said, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief."



INTRODUCTION

I'd like to call your attention to St. Matthew, chapter 8. I'll be reading verses 14-17: "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." I love the thought in this verse: *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*. I would like to entitle my thoughts, "Jesus Paid It All."

We remember that before Christ came, the offerings for sin were bulls, rams, turtle doves, pigeons, and other different creatures, but we did not hear of an offering of this nature for healing. However, healing was performed, because the prophets down through the ages were able to heal through the power of God. But when Christ came, it was a special moment. He came to fulfill the will and the promises of the Father.

When Christ came to begin His ministry, He called a few men. The number of them was twelve. Among the twelve, there were three special men that He took on special occasions—Peter, James, and John. If you'll notice, although Christ had them with Him, they were not able to do what He did. I think in my mind, He had them under training. He was trying to let them understand the real meaning of His coming. They, when He left, would be able to continue where He left off.

There was a man in the Bible who had a daughter who was sick. Jesus was called upon. On His way, He was given the message, "Don't bother to come, for the damsel is dead." Jesus went to the house, and the crowd was concerned about the matter, but Jesus said, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." They laughed Jesus to scorn. Today, when we speak about divine healing, we're mocked. But we speak that which we do know. We speak that which we have experienced. We speak that which we have had a part. I had a part in divine healing. I've received my healing.

When they laughed at Jesus, it did not make any difference to Him. He was on a mission, so He asked the crowd to be excused. He took into the room the mother, the father, Peter, James, and John. He didn't want any interruptions. He didn't want people in there who lacked in faith. When Jesus went into the room, He called the damsel back to life and gave her back to her parents. What a change! What a joy that brought! When the damsel arose and went to the door, can you imagine how that crowd felt, seeing the girl walking through the door with her parents? That must have created a feeling that was unusual. They were ashamed because something happened that they did not expect.

BIBLE EXAMPLES OF HEALING

When Christ came, He came to raise the dead. He came to give the deaf their hearing. He came to give the blind their sight. He came to make the lame to walk. There was nothing, absolutely nothing that was impossible for Him to do. So what man looks upon as being impossible, it's all possible with God. When Christ came, He came that we would receive our healing.

The same day that Jesus raised the damsel, He healed a woman who had a condition that marred her for twelve years. Do you have a chronic condition today? Are you undergoing an issue that you think is too much? "I can't go any further. It's enough." Your condition is not too hard for Jesus. This woman spent all she had on physicians, but got no aid. I'm certain, as I speak today, there are people under the sound of my voice who have been spending and spending and spending money on physicians, but getting no aid. As a matter of fact, their outcome is uncertain. The doctor is still guessing, but this Jesus who paid it all, knows all about their struggle. If we will only but trust Him, He is faithful and willing to aid us.

The crowd was thick, as it were, and this woman with her need decided that she would not allow anything or anybody to prevent her from obtaining what she needed. So she began to push by faith through the crowd. As close as she could get to Jesus, her hand was able to touch the hem of His garment. She made certain of the first opportunity she had. She touched Him, and praise be to God, instantaneously something happened. Something strange happened to her. Something passed through her body as an electric shock, because she touched the Master. More than that, Jesus stopped and said to His disciples, "Someone touched me." Can you imagine in a throng being pushed around? But Jesus declared that someone had touched Him. This is something special. I'm saying that to say this: Jesus knows your need.

If you all were gathered at a doctor's office like you are gathered here today, waiting in line for your number to be called, the doctor probably wouldn't know who is the sickest person unless he was told. If a doctor is smart enough, he would ask which one is the most serious. You would be in the doctor's office with an ailment, but there's someone who is sicker than you. The doctor would, I'm sure, look after the most seriously ill person. Jesus doesn't have to do that. He'll just speak the word, and immediately your condition would be solved. We serve a mighty God.

There is hymn in our hymnal that says: "I've touched the hem of his garment, And now I, too, am free; His healing pow'r; this very hour, Gives life and health to me."

Sickness is not welcomed. It is not anything entertaining. It is distressing. It is burdensome. Sometimes it becomes even more than a concern. As I stand here today talking to you, I have a burden on my heart. I'm concerned, because we are given the responsibility to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, heal the sick, and raise the dead. We are to cast out all demons. Our world needs such today. We, as it were, need an Isaiah who will go: "Here am I; send me."

Jesus came because His Father planned it that way. His Father knew that down the road the human family would be in need of a healer, because once sin was involved, it brought disease and disaster. All that we are encountering today, My Beloved Brethren and Friends, is all because sin has entered the human family. It has brought what we are seeing on us today. The seed of sin has been sown. But Jesus in His mercy came and said, "Father, I will go." He came and did many mighty miracles. They were numerous.

The apostle Peter, in I Peter, chapter 2, verse 24, said: "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."

Do you know today that divine healing in some cases is still unbelievable by many people? Yes, they are still thinking that God cannot heal. Some believe the days of healing have past. It is as today as it was then, but we need to claim it. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). I have many instances where I knocked, I asked, I sought, and certainly received the answer.

ISAIAH FORETOLD OF HEALING

Isaiah brought a clear thought upon this. Listen to what Isaiah said in chapter 53: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Who has seen the reality in God's promise through Christ His Son, our healer and only healer? Even if nature has its course in your healing, God controls nature. God is merciful and gracious. By His mercy, He sent Jesus. Jesus was so merciful and compassionate. In the passage of scripture that I read earlier on, of the healing of the woman with the fever, the news spread abroad, and when evening was come so many came to be healed. Jesus did not tell them to go away. He healed all of them. My Friends, He will not get tired of us coming to Him or His being unconcerned. He is concerned about us. As a matter of fact, He is more concerned than we are. Jesus bore our burdens. His mercy and compassion are toward us. His love is towards us. He just wants us to humble ourselves and believe that He is, and that He can do abundantly above that which we could ask or think. We need to allow ourselves to grow in faith so we can believe what the Lord has promised is true. We must believe His promises are true.

Verses 3-5 of Isaiah 53: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions [sins], he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Praise God, though we were so unworthy and grieved Him so much, yet Jesus was willing to pay the price for our healing. "With His stripes we are healed." Those lashes on His back, the blood flowing from different sections of His body, the crown of thorns on His head, and the sword piercing His side were all done for us. We are blessed and privileged. The blood still prevails. It still has power, and by faith we can receive our healing. Isaiah gave us the assurance that our healing is possible. The Psalmist said in Psalm 103, "Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Jesus heals all diseases.

A CASE OF CANCER HEALED

I remember a sister back home who was diagnosed with third stage cancer. She was preparing to come here to the States to be treated, but I stopped and prayed for her before she left. I said to her, "I'm awaiting the day when it shall be told you have no cancer." Today, as I speak, she is cancer free. Her last test she did revealed no cancer cells in her body. I couldn't wait to see her. We cried, we praised, we shouted "Glory," for the God we serve is a mighty God. I want to assure you, My Friends, Jesus is no less than He was then. If you'll come to Him by faith believing, surely you shall receive what you seek for.

In Acts, chapter 9, verses 32-34, we read of a young man that the apostle Peter came in contact with: "And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And [praise God] he arose immediately." This is the effectiveness of faith. This is unhindered faith. Positive faith—faith in knowing that it is possible with God.

If we ask in doubt, we will not receive what we are asking for. We must believe that God is, and that He will give unto us what we request at His hand. Let us promise Him that, Lord, for all the blessings received at your hand, we promise you, we will glorify you.

Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer. In Acts 3, there was a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb. He was carried there so he could ask alms of those that entered into the temple. People would pass by and give him what they could. But here were these two intelligent-looking gentlemen. With assurance, he was hoping to receive alms of them, but something alarming happened to him. Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." I assume that a man who was lame for many years had difficulty accepting that. Don't you? "And he [Peter] took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet

and ankle bones received strength.” I love the word *immediately* in that verse. “And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” That was something there that day. Do you know why all the people believed? Because they saw the man. “And all the people saw him walking and praising God.” He was a living witness.

CONCLUSION

Are there any witnesses here today who know that Jesus still heals? Anyone here a witness? We serve a mighty God. Thank God, when Jesus came, He paid it all. Today, your portion is available. Jesus paid the price. You don’t owe anything. Jesus paid it all. When you come today for your healing, believe that He is. As I said before, the price has been paid. You don’t have to have any money. Just come and ask Him, and you shall receive. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS

THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Scriptures: Romans 15:4; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; II Thessalonians 2:16, 17; II Timothy 3:14, 15; II Corinthians 1:3, 4; 13:11; John 14:27; I Thessalonians 4:18.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

II Thessalonians 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

II Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

II Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Memory Verse: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.—Romans 15:4.

Aim: To examine how the Christian receives comfort from the written Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK we call the Bible is estimated to have been written over a period of fifteen hundred years. The number of men used of God in writing the books of the Bible is not known for certain, but scholars have estimated that between thirty-five and forty men had a part in writing them. The men came from various walks of life—kings, shepherds, fishermen, and other occupations.

D. O. Teasley in his book, *The Bible and How to Interpret It*, says: “The fixing of the canon [of the Old Testament], having been a gradual process, no exact date for its settlement can safely be given. The settlement of the New Testament was a gradual process. Each book was tried—not only by the usual methods of ascertaining the genuineness of a book, but in the fires of human need and experience.” One thing we know for certain is that the Books of the Bible were inspired by God, and in that sense we can say that God is the author.

Another quote from Teasley: “The Bible is the greatest book in the world. Ever since there has been a Bible, men have endeavored to fathom its unfathomable depths of knowledge. What we do know of the Bible is so extremely satisfying that we constantly thirst for more.

“Even though no man has ever known all about the Bible, yet we never tire in our efforts to understand it.”

The Old Testament was written mostly in the Hebrew language with a very small portion written in the Aramaic language. The New Testament was written in Greek.

I trust the study of this lesson will help you to be able to find comfort in the Scriptures. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”

MEDITATIONS

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE—Romans 15:4—Written aforetime—Paul refers to the Old Testament Scriptures, for at that time not all of the New Testament was written and gathered into one book. There is much in what we call the Old Testament that is good for us today. The Old Covenant expired at the death of Jesus, but the Old Covenant was a small part of the Old Testament Scriptures. What Christian has not gained much comfort in reading the Psalms and the victories of various Old Testament heroes?

IMPORTANT TO DO—John 5:39—They are they which testify of me—Again, Jesus speaks of the Old Testament Scriptures, for that is all they had at that time. There is much in those Scriptures about Jesus Christ, especially Isaiah. Eternal life was taught

in the Old Testament. For instance: Ezekiel 33:15, 16, "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." If we are to have eternal life, we must do what Ezekiel said.

PAUL GOES TO EUROPE—Acts 17:11—Searched the Scriptures—Paul had ministered in Philippi, and from there he went to Thessalonica, where he won some to the Lord, but he also met with much opposition. From there he went to Berea, and he found those who were ready to listen to what he taught. Even so, they searched the Scriptures daily to see if what he was saying was the truth. Everyone not only has a right to do that, but is instructed to do it! "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Ephesians 5:6).

TRUTH IS IMPORTANT—II Thessalonians 2:16—Hath loved us—The Lord loved us so much that He gave His life for us. God our Father loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son. And they have given us everlasting consolation through their grace. **Verse 17**—The above facts should be a comfort to us and to help us to be established in the work we are striving to do for the Lord.

DO NOT DEPART—II Timothy 3:14—Continue—Paul is encouraging Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned. Demas had left Paul, for he loved this present world. Doubtless others had departed from the faith. Timothy had learned much truth from Paul who had faithfully lived the gospel before him. Now Paul was admonishing Timothy to continue in what he had learned.

A RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND—II Timothy 3:15—From a child—Timothy had a God-fearing mother and grandmother, and they had exposed him to the Scriptures. Just how much truth he knew we are not able to say. It seems that Timothy was converted when Paul passed through that area on his first missionary trip. Paul had Timothy to start traveling with him on his second missionary trip.

LIVING IN A TROUBLED WORLD—II Corinthians 1:3—Blessed be God—John said in his day, "The whole world lies in wickedness," and the city of Corinth was no exception. Paul, in his second letter to the Church of God, opened his second letter with a warm and loving greeting: "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 2). He went on to say that God was the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. If it were not for the mercy of God, where would we be today? But He is not only the Father of mercies, but "the God of all comfort." *Webster* says, in part, for the word *comfort*: "to soothe in distress or sorrow; ease the misery or grief of; bring consolation or hope." So it good to know this "God of all comfort."

HELP OTHERS—II Corinthians 1:4—Comfort them—God comforts us in all our tribulations so that we may comfort those who are in trouble! We live in a real world. There are many who are in trouble, and

where it is possible it is the duty of the Christian to lend a helping hand. When you pass through some trial, test, or trouble, you are in a better position to help others.

LIVING THE GOSPEL—II Corinthians 13:11—Finally, brethren—Paul lists a number of things in this verse that are very important parts of a Christian's life: be perfect—meaning be mature; be of good comfort—see comments on verse 3; be of one mind—be in unity, speak the same thing; live in peace—peace with God and peace with all saints. In fact, as far as it lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Do these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

PEACE IN THE STORM—John 14:27—Peace I leave with you—The world cannot give that which it does not have! Jesus Christ was preparing to return to the Father and promised to send them another Comforter. He also said, "I leave my peace with you." What a blessing peace is, and the Christian has it in real salvation!

CHRIST WILL RETURN—I Thessalonians 4:18—Comfort one another—The saints in Thessalonica were troubled because some of their loved ones were dying and Christ had not returned as they had expected. Paul told them they had nothing to worry about, that they would not be left behind, there would be a resurrection, all would be caught up together, and since this would happen "comfort one another with these words."

CONCLUSION

Since the Word of God offers us comfort and hope, we need to study it, hide it in our hearts, and use it in our daily lives. Men through the ages have tried to destroy the Bible, to prove it is full of lies, mistakes, and is unreliable. Those who have accepted it for what it is, the inspired Word of God, have found it to be true and have been comforted by it in many trying times of life. Let us remember that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God—John 1:1-14—and He is full of grace and truth.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How do Christians receive comfort from the Word of God?
2. What are some of the promises in the Scriptures that have been a comfort to you?
3. What does II Corinthians 1:4 tell us to do after the Lord has comforted us?
4. Why were the saints of God at Thessalonica troubled? †

OUT OF BOX 88

Hello Friends,

I am one of your gifted and blessed members of *The Way of Truth*. I dearly love you all for everything you do, all your hard work, and prayers for the world. Your magazine gives me so much peace and love in my heart. Please keep me on your mailing list forever. ... God bless you.

—G. G., Michigan

LOVE MERCY

2023 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Doug Koerner



I INVITE YOU to open your Bibles to our theme scripture: Micah, chapter 6. We'll read verses 6-8: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

We know that in the Old Testament, they did a lot of animal sacrifices and had ceremonies. We know that sometimes God became fed up with those sacrifices, because they were not done properly, or they never came from the heart. That's why those particular questions were asked in verses 6 and 7.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

It has always been the purpose of man to please God. That's why God put you in this world. Sometimes people ask, "Why am I even here?" You're here to please God. God created you to serve Him. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." That's our duty. Our duty isn't to be famous. Our duty isn't to be known worldwide. Our duty isn't to be rich. Our duty is to serve God, period!

We have two destinations in this world—heaven and hell. You're not going to live on this earth forever. You're not going to just die one day and not exist anymore. There are people who believe that when they die, that's it. I've talked to some people about that. I've talked to one particular person I know very well. He said, "I believe once I die, that's it. There's no after life." But you're here to serve God. You're here to please God.

After those questions were asked in verses 6 and 7, verse 8 goes on to say, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" I know we have many different countries represented here this week, but in the United States of America, I imagine there's not a soul in this country that can't get their hands on the Bible for free. I know some Bibles are different, but I believe there's not a soul in this country that doesn't have the ability to get their hands on the Word of God. That makes them accountable. Some people think that *if I don't go to church, if I don't read the Word, I'm not accountable*. But you are accountable. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee?"

I Samuel 15:22 says: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." God requires obedience. We're going to talk about some of these things as we continue to go on in the message. God has always desired obedience. Micah says, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" There are three things mentioned—"to do justly [do right], to love mercy, and to walk humbly."

As a Christian, it's not difficult at all just to do right. There are some people in this world who work hard at not doing right, but God requires of all to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him.

Bro. Greg always sends out an invitation to the ministers several months before camp meeting, and he gives a theme. I always get it and read it. I meditate on it and then set it on my desk. As time goes on, I know I have to start looking at it again. I have to start studying it and asking the Lord for a thought.

IT IS REQUIRED TO LOVE MERCY

As I read those verses, there was one thing in that verse that jumped out at me. I mean it literally just appealed to me to a point to where I thought, *Lord, I need help in this, too*. The one phrase is, "Love Mercy."

When we read the Word of God, we sometimes just read right over a verse, but other times the Lord helps us to stop and pause as there is something a little deeper. I read "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." I went back over it again, but the thought *love mercy* stood out to me. I want you to think about that phrase for a moment. If we're honest with ourselves, I believe we can honestly say, we need help from the Lord with that phrase. I'm not trying to condemn us, but we're human. We're in this world. We have many things that we're facing in our world today, but *to love mercy*. To have mercy is one thing, but *to love mercy* is something different. Micah says that the Lord requires us to love mercy. Think about that. I believe it can be a challenging thought to us. God's mercy is abundant.

When Christ walked on this earth, He had wonderful, loving mercy. God desires you and I to love mercy. The reason why you need to have a love for mercy is because if you're saved tonight, God had mercy on you. God expressed mercy to you. One song was sung here saying it was justice that I needed, but God showed me mercy. Justice is what I should have gotten, but God showed me mercy. God allowed His own Son to suffer on the cross greatly so we could go free. That's mercy. Jesus left the throne of glory, walked upon this earth, knowing what He would have to face. He knew He was going to be crucified on the cross, and His Father allowed it. Micah says that God desires us to love mercy.

Matthew, chapter 5, verse 7 says, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." I don't know about you, but before the end of this year, I'm going to probably need mercy from God. How much mercy He extends to us is how much mercy we need to extend to one another. How many times do we run across situations in life to where we don't have mercy or express mercy? Bro. Sanford said this morning, "We can have a disagreement with people, and sometimes we feel like

we need to go and straighten it out, but sometimes it's just good 'to leave it alone' as Jesus said to do." There's a verse in the Bible that says, in effect, "If you've done wrong, and you take it patiently, that's proper with the Lord, but when you haven't done wrong, and you're buffeted for it, that's pleasing to God." When I haven't done something wrong, and I'm criticized or accused for it, and I take it patiently, God says He's pleased with it.

As I thought about the theme, and the thoughts that have been expressed in the camp meeting, it's a shame that there's division like there is in religion today. The Bible lets us know that there's sin when there's division. We talked about pride and other reasons in division. There's even division in the natural family. I've seen division so many times when the moms and dads have passed away. Division just destroys the family. There are arguments and problems and splitting up. My sister is here with me. She and I are the only two. We don't have any other siblings. When our parents passed away, I said, "Lord, I don't want anything to come between the two of us." There were little things that could have come between us, but I didn't want anything to. We have to have the desire to love mercy, to work things out, and to care for one another.

SANCTIFY YOURSELVES

We'll look at some things this evening. Let's go to II Chronicles, chapter 29. We see here that Hezekiah began to reign over Jerusalem. He was 25 years old. Verse 2 is where I want to begin: "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them." Thank the Lord! What a leader! The very first thing he did was to restore the doors of the house of the Lord, to fix things up, to get them right. The very first month Hezekiah did some restoration, some repair. Let's look at verses 4 and 5: "And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place." What did he tell the priests and Levites to do? To sanctify themselves—the priests, the ministers, the elders, the pastors.

When it comes to sanctifying ourselves, one of the things that has to be done is that the ministry has to start first. They must have that love for mercy. We can't, as ministers and pastors, tell people "You need to do it," and we don't do it. I'm not saying that we don't. I'm just making a point to rebuild some things. Love mercy is something that I need to take upon me. I need to work with it. I need help. Before we can preach it, or to present it to anybody else, I need to work with it, and the ministry needs to work with it. Our country's leaders need to work with it.

I appreciated Bro. McCranie's testimony this afternoon. I also talked to some other ministers yesterday and throughout the week about the blessing of unity. Bro. McCranie said, "For many years I've been getting

The Way of Truth literature, but I've never been here." I can relate to what he said. I live in Essex, which is about an hour and a half east of here. It's not that far. I got saved on May 2, 1982, and from 1982 to when Bro. Greg first started coming to Essex, I never knew of Hagerstown. I never even knew that there was a Hagerstown. Our pastor had resigned and gone on, so Bro. Greg started to come and help us, and we just fell in love with one another. We started to fellowship and enjoy it. I've always thought from time to time, *why haven't we been together?* I'm not blaming any of these ministers here, but one of the reasons we haven't been together is because of the ministry. The ministry need to start first. We need to love mercy. Hezekiah said, "We need to clean up the house of the Lord. Let's all get ourselves on level ground first before we start doing some other works."

We think about the leaders of our country. The Bible tells us to pray for the leaders of our land. It doesn't matter whether it's the United States, Honduras, Jamaica, or the Philippines. The Bible still says to pray for the leaders of your land. Saints, we need to be encouraged. God can change things. When Hezekiah became king, the temple was a wreck. It was a disaster. It was filthy. Within the first month, Hezekiah changed things. If God desires, He can change the leadership of the United States. Let me tell you, if the leadership in the United States would get right, and do right, that would bless other countries, too. But it has to start with leadership. It can't start with the people, so to speak. I know we can pray and fast, but it first must start with leadership. It's the same way within the church. We have to be unified to be able to get together. We must have a desire to love mercy. We'll come back to that thought.

Zacchaeus climbed up into a sycamore tree, desiring to see Jesus Christ. As Jesus came by one day, He called Zacchaeus down from the tree. Zacchaeus started to make some changes. He said, "If I have taken anything from anybody wrongfully, I'll restore it." He made some changes. He cleaned up his sanctuary. He cleaned up his temple. He cleaned up all he knew to love mercy and to accept Jesus Christ. Jesus said to him, "This day salvation has come to your house." Zacchaeus got sanctified and cleaned up his life. We need to do the same. A lot of times, we want to put the blame on something or someone else. We need to remember ourselves that God said we are to love mercy. If a sister doesn't love mercy, I can't make her, but I have to love mercy. You have to do that as an individual, too. We read in John 17:19 where Jesus said that He sanctified Himself. We need to set things in order. Sanctify ourselves.

WE REACH OUR HANDS IN FELLOWSHIP

Let's go back to II Chronicles 29. We'll read through some of this chapter, beginning with verse 6: "Our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel." What Hezekiah

was telling them was, in the past other people have created problems.

There have been some divisions that have happened 40 years ago. Some have happened when I was a young person being saved. Those people who created those divisions are in their graves now, but there are still problems, and sometimes people don't even know why.

I was thinking of the part of the verse of a song that we sing sometimes: *We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood-washed one*. What about those who aren't blood-washed? What about sinners that come through the door? How do we react to them? Do we hold them off at a distance? Do we love mercy? I've mentioned several times that I appreciate the ministry testifying of how they were when they were young. I heard Bro. Junior's testimony. I heard Bro. Terry Deville's testimony and Bro. Sanford's about them having long hair. God delivered them. He delivers people. We need help on the phrase of that song. I believe as individuals, we need help with more mercy—to love mercy.

THE MERCY OF JESUS

Jesus had twelve disciples, but three of them seemed to be closer to Him than the others. Who were they? Peter, James, and John. They were there at the Mount of Transfiguration—seeing wonderful things—Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” While he was speaking, God's voice said to him, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

Later on when Jesus went to the Garden to pray, He took some of His disciples with Him, but He only took Peter, James, and John a little farther on. He had some confidence and trust in them. He needed some to help Him carry a burden. “I need you to help me pray.”

But there was a time when Jesus had to rebuke James and John. James and John came to Him one time saying, “There are some people over there who won't worship with us. Do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” Jesus said, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” I don't have any idea why they would say that, because as children of God, you would think they loved mercy. They were the closest disciples to Christ, and they still had to be corrected. We should never get to the place where we cannot receive correction and humble ourselves. I'm not saying it is because of sin, but I'm saying, we need to have the attitude that we need greater help to love mercy.

There is a verse in Psalms that I quote many times. It's Psalm 139:23, 24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me.” Have you ever prayed that way? I'm not saying you're having sin or issues in life, but from time to time we need to bring ourselves to a check and say, “Lord, search me, try me; find out if there's any wicked way in me.”

I was here in the spring for revival. Some of you may remember that I mentioned about growing a gar-

den. I started seeds. I had never done seeds before, so I decided to try it. Before I say more, how many of you have ever dealt with seeds in growing a garden? Have you ever seen a spring onion seed? I like spring onions, so I went to the store and bought a pack of spring onion seeds. I opened the pack and thought, *why, there's nothing in there*. I dumped the pack out—tiny, tiny seeds.

Do you know what the devil tries to do with a tiny, tiny seed? He tries to plant in you a wrong spirit. “Search me, Lord, see if there are any seeds that the devil is trying to plant in me.” When the spirit of the enemy tries to plant some things that are not of love, mercy, and kindness, and we don't allow the Spirit of God to rectify them, they'll grow to a place where we can't control them.

Let's go to some more verses of II Chronicles, chapter 29. Verse 18: “Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof.” Verses 21-23: “And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the Lord. So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them.” Verse 25: “And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.” Verse 28: “And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.” My purpose of reading all of that was to let you know that they were putting back together what they should have been doing all along. Hezekiah was rebuilding things. He wanted to get things back in order for the Lord.

There are things that we need to have in order. The doctrines of Christ are not to be compromised. They're not to be left off. Salvation. You cannot make heaven your home unless you repent from sin and get saved. Some people think, *Well, I'll be baptized. I'll sign a decision card*. No good. *I'll talk to the minister and pay extra tithing*. No good. You have to come to Jesus Christ and repent from sin and live free from it. The Spirit of God will teach you to go on to holiness, sanctification, water baptism, the Lord's Supper and Feet-washing. Those are in the New Testament. We don't sacrifice the blood of animals, but there are things that are mandatory in order to have the Spirit of God and the love for mercy.

GOD'S MERCY DISPLAYED

Let's go to Luke, chapter 7. We'll start with verse 36: “And one of the Pharisees desired him [Jesus] that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's

house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." We were sinners one day, and God had mercy on us. This woman was a sinner, and the religious people criticized Christ because He allowed this woman to touch Him. Love mercy. I'm not trying to condemn anybody, but sometimes we can have a pharisaical (wrong) spirit. James and John did. We're not to be that way.

Let's go on to Luke, chapter 22. This is when Jesus was already captured and the disciples were scattered and Peter was following Christ at a distance. Verses 58-60: "And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew." Now look at verse 61: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Jesus never looked at Peter and said, "I told you that was what you were going to do." But Jesus knew what he was going to do. I think Jesus' heart was broken because He felt so bad for Peter. He knew that Peter was crushed. Peter went out and wept bitterly. He did something he thought he would never do in his life. Has anybody ever done that? Has anybody ever thought *that's something I would never do in my life?* And did it? But God had mercy. Do you know one thing that's hard to do? Forgive ourselves. We need to forgive ourselves. If God forgives us, we need to come to the place to forgive ourselves. Sometimes that's when that "love mercy" comes in.

Let's tie Peter's story up with this. Mark, chapter 16, verses 5-7: "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Jesus made an extra point to make sure Peter was okay.

Have you ever had God's mercy on you? Every second we live, God extends mercy to you and to me. The Bible says that it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. Sometimes when I look out into the world and see what's going on, I say, "Lord, I don't know what keeps you on your throne." The world is wicked, but as happened with Hezekiah, God can change things with the leadership of our land.

CONCLUSION

Do you think you might need mercy again? Remember mercy. There may be some here tonight who are backslidden or some who may not be pressing forward as they should. All you have to do is to take a step. All you have to do is say, "Lord, help me to make a step," and He'll go with you to the altar of prayer. He wants you to receive the mercy He has for you. †

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE DEVOTED?

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

LIFE IS so short. It really pays to enjoy what God gave us. Thank God, His grace is sufficient. He made a beautiful world. It is absolutely amazing the handiwork of creation that we see every day around us. It's no wonder the Bible tells us that we should serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing. So what does it really mean to be devoted to God?

The word *devote* means "to give or apply one's time, attention, or self to any activity, a cause, or a person; to set apart for a purpose or use." The word *devoted* means "feeling or displaying strong affection or attachment." How thankful we are today that we can serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and we can thank Him every single day for what He has done for us. He paid the price for us on Calvary's old rugged cross.

The apostle John, in his first epistle, tells us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." You know, we can love and appreciate things and honor and respect everything that God has done for us, but what John is referring to there is the evil, sinful elements of the world that keep us away from God. That's what John meant when he said, "Love not the world." He went on to refer to several different things which are common in the world today, but I want to dwell for a few minutes on the seventeenth verse: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The more you love God, the closer you will get to Him.

What does it mean "to do the will of God"? It's God's desire or will for us. We're all human beings. We take the downward path so many times, and we really don't give ourselves wholly to the Lord. The only way to enjoy this relationship with God is to go all the way with Him.

It is God's will that people be saved. The Bible tells us in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." I believe it is because of the longsuffering of Jesus that He has not returned to end the world as yet. He's longsuffering to His people. Thank God for His longsuffering. Where

would I have been today, or anyone else, without His longsuffering and goodness and meekness and kindness to me? So it is God's will that people be saved. In fact, the Bible tells us that it is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

It is God's will that Christians be sanctified and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit of God. That's really what sanctification is—the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We find in I Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." The Bible covers every area of our lives. It leaves nothing out. Let me tell you, if the Bible was really lived out and obeyed in the world today like it should be, this would be a much, much better world.

It is God's will that we live humble and meek. It doesn't really make sense to live otherwise and expect to live for the Lord. We find in the Old Testament book of Micah, chapter 6, verses 6-8, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Listen to what it goes on to say: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Jesus Himself set the example of humility. There could not be any more greater example. His very birth was humble. He lived a humble life. He lived an exemplified life. As a result, we are called to follow as close behind Him as we possibly can.

It is His will that we walk in all the light and all the understanding we have and simply to obey Him. God only holds us accountable for what we know. What we don't know, we don't know. What we don't know is wrong, we don't know is wrong, but what we know, we know. The apostle Paul said to the little congregation in Ephesians 5:15, 16: "See then that ye walk circumspectly [live for the Lord carefully], not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." So the problem comes when ourselves get in the way, and we refuse to live for the Lord the way that we should live for Him, and give Him our total being.

One thing about the gospel is, it never, never persuades somebody against their will. Jesus offered the gospel. Who took it, took it, and who didn't, didn't. In fact, Jesus sent out some of His disciples one time and told them that those who rejected them, that they must brush the dust off their feet, to leave that particular place, and go somewhere else to work for Him.

Devotion requires some self-sacrifice. You cannot live for the Lord without sacrifice and self-denial. Some people don't like to let go of some things. They try to go halfway with the world and halfway with God. It doesn't work that way. "I will follow Thee," some people say, "but this, but that ..." We don't serve the Lord on our own conditions. Only on His. If you look into the ninth chapter of St. Luke, you will see there, "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain

man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." What a story! Let me tell you something, Friends, it is a pleasure to walk with the Master and have Him as Lord of our lives. Not only our Savior, but the Lord of our lives.

We hear a lot these days about tribulations and problems and how to take care of them. The Bible tells us about those who were troubled on every side. *To be troubled* means "agitated, stirred up, or inflicted with pain or discomfort." Yet, they went on, and overcame, and were not distressed. The Bible tells us about those who were *perplexed*, which means "confused, or troubled with uncertainty or doubt." They kept on, not in despair, but they kept their eyes focused on God. It tells us about those who were *persecuted*, which means "oppressed or harassed with ill-treatment." It tells us that they were not forsaken. They kept on going. It tells us about those who were cast down, beaten down by the devil or others who didn't wish them well, but they sprang back up with the Lord and kept on going. So it's always good to believe that God will be with us to the very end of our walk with Him. There is no lack in God. In fact, the Bible tells us to look to Jesus who is "the author and finisher of our faith." That's what it tells us in the twelfth chapter of the book of Hebrews. The best way to serve God is to always put Him first in our lives. David said, "I have set the Lord always before me."

Our Christian experience, living or walking with the Lord, is not based on what people think of us. It is based on our walk with God and our stand on the solid Rock, the Foundation which cannot be moved. Christians cannot be bought with money. Once we stand on the Rock, we're not going to come down too easily. So let us be sure today that we love the Lord with all our hearts and lean not unto our own understanding.

There are those in the world today who simply don't want their lifestyles to be disturbed. They don't want to give a little time and devotion to the Lord. The apostle Paul said one time that nothing moved him. It didn't matter what it was. Nothing moved him. Some are moved today by what the crowd does. Some are moved by fashions, etc. Some get very shallow in their experience and lose their hold on God. That's going on today, too. Some are moved by prosperity, etc. The Bible teaches that we should not get too caught up with the things of the world, but to give of our time and devotion and life to the Lord. Thank God, He understands. He knows all about us. The thing about it is, if we live for Him here, He's prepared a place for us that is better than this world. One of these days, if we live true and devoted to Him, we will hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." †

Church of God (Universal), Inc.
The Way of Truth
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COMING MEETINGS

2023 PHILIPPINE CONVENTION

Paniqui, Tarlac

December 26-30, 2023, Lord willing

Bro. Key Fabian, Host Pastor

2024 JAMAICA CONVENTION

Catadupa, St. James

February 13-18, 2024, Lord willing

Bro. Hezekiah Lamey, Host Pastor

2024 HONDURAS CONVENTION

Coxen Hole, Roatan

April 2-7, 2024, Lord willing

Sis. Ethlyn Soto, Host Pastor

2024 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

July 2-7, 2024, Lord willing

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor

RADIO LOG

The Way of Truth Broadcast

Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

(Aired on Sundays unless otherwise noted.)

Alabama, Mobile, WIJD 1270, AM & 97.9 FM 6:00 A.M.

Georgia, Augusta, WFAM 1050, 8:00 P.M. Wednesday & 11:30 A.M. Sun.

Illinois, Carmi, WROY 1460, 9:00 A.M.

Kentucky, Prestonsburg, WDOC 1310, 7:30 A.M.

North Carolina, Mooresville, WHIP 1350, 6:00 A.M.

Listen live—tunein.com/radio/whip-1350-s29320/

Oklahoma, Marlow, KFXI-FM 92.1, 7:00 A.M.

Listen live—Go to www.kfxi.com

Pennsylvania, Altoona, WRKY 104.9-FM, 9:30 A.M.

Tennessee, Chattanooga, WLMR 1450, 3:00 P.M.

Tennessee, Chattanooga, WLMR-FM 103.3, 3:00 P.M.

Virginia, Narrows, WZFM-FM 101.3, 8:00 A.M.

Virginia, Blacksburg, WKEX 1430, 8:00 A.M.

Virginia, Christiansburg, WKEX-FM 105.9, 8:00 A.M.

West Virginia, Summersville, WCWV 92.9, 8:30 A.M.

SHORTWAVE

WWCR, Nashville, Tennessee 4.840 on SW band

Sunday, 7:30 A.M. Eastern Time—12:30 G.M.T.

Listen live—Go to www.wwcr.com

WINB, Red Lion, Pennsylvania 9.320 on SW band

Friday, 9:30 P.M. Eastern Time, Saturday, 9:30 P.M. Eastern Time—2:30 G.M.T.

Listen live—Go to www.winb.com

INTERNATIONAL

JAMAICA, MELLO-FM, 88.1, 88.3, 88.5, 7:00 A.M. Sundays

Heard throughout Jamaica

**PRAYING THAT OUR READERS ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF GOD
DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**