

The Way of Truth

Vol. 82

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

No. 10



"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
– I Thessalonians 5:18

November 2024

DO YOU HAVE A THANKFUL HEART?

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

—I Thessalonians 5:18.

THANKSGIVING is without doubt the most appropriate holiday observed in the world. Every one of us has so much to be thankful for. It is only right and proper that there is a specific time when all of humanity is called to give thanks to our Creator for all His blessings on us. But the sad truth is that the thanksgiving that is expressed by many is hallow and without heartfelt sincerity.

The Bible speaks of those who are "unthankful." For instance, II Timothy 3:2, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." And in Romans 1:21, we read, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Jesus speaks of the unthankful in Luke 6:35, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

The unthankful manifest their contempt toward God in various ways. The children of Israel were unthankful and it showed as Exodus 16:7, 8 reveals: "And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord."

The unthankful are complainers. The Israelites complained at the Red Sea. They complained about lack of food. When manna was given they complained about lack of meat. When they were told to possess the Promised Land, they complained about giants in the land.

The apostle Paul warned in I Corinthians 10:10, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

The unthankful take credit to themselves and refuse to give glory to God. Two such examples are Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:30, 31) and King Herod (Acts 12:21-23). A truly thankful heart will produce humility!

On the other hand, there is evidence of people who possess a thankful heart. It is manifested by giving God thanks in everything and in every circumstance.

When things are going well—Romans 8:28—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

When things seem to be going bad—Psalm 42:5—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou

disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

When we are in a trial—I Peter 1:6, 7—"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

When we enter the sanctuary—Psalm 100:4—"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

When we sit down to eat—Matthew 15:36—"And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

Early in the morning—Psalm 57:8, 9—"Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations."

In whatever we do—Colossians 3:17—"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

The way we give thanks to God shows a thankful heart.

With all that we have within us—Psalm 103:1—"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

By the life we live—Psalm 119:145—"I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes."

With our prayers—Philippians 4:6—"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

By our conduct towards God's creation—Psalm 24:1—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

I John 4:20—"If a man say, I [am thankful to] God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he [be thankful to] God whom he hath not seen?"

With our lips—Hebrews 13:15—"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The thankful heart is always the optimist. It is full of thanksgiving for God the Father, for His faithfulness, for His majesty, for His holiness!

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."—Psalm 30:4.

A thankful heart gives thanks always for Jesus Christ the Son, for His willingness to go to Calvary, for His compassion, for His love!—II Corinthians 9:15—"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

A thankful heart expresses appreciation for the blessed Holy Spirit, for His guidance, for His inspiration, for His power!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Vol. 82

November 2024

No. 10

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

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

Our telephone number is 301-739-2980

Our e-mail address is truth@fred.net

Visit our website at www.wayoftruth.org

For the stripes Jesus bore—I Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

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

For joy—I Peter 1:8, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

For peace—Colossians 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

For the privilege of living in America.

There is so much to be thankful for!

Do you have a thankful heart? †

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

—Colossians 3:15.

The thankful heart abounds with thanksgiving!—Colossians 2:7—“Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

Following are some things people overlook, but for which the thankful heart expresses thanksgiving:

For health and strength,

For life and breath,

For the right use of our mind,

For reasoning ability—understanding of truth;

For knowledge of the will of God.—II Corinthians 2:14 says, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”

For the ability to walk, talk, see, and hear—in Him—Acts 17:28a—“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”

For food and raiment—food on my table and shoes on my feet,

For shelter and transportation—the ability to work,

For this beautiful world which God has created—plants, animals and nature,

For the privilege of prayer—for answers to prayer, Colossians 4:2 admonishes us to “continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

For salvation—for deliverance from bondage—for power over temptation,

For victory in Jesus—over sin, over temptation, over death and hell,

I Corinthians 15:57 declares, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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POETRY PAGE



"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name:
make known his deeds among the people."

—Psalm 105:1.

THOSE MANY BLESSINGS

Edward M. Brandt

Lord, give me a thankful heart
And may I ever grateful be,
For the many, many blessings
Thou hast showered on me!

Some I take for granted,
Of some I'm not aware,
But Lord I am ever mindful of
Your precious, loving care.

These countless blessings Savior, Lord,
Fill my soul with joy and peace,
They never seem to dwindle,
They never, never cease!

THANK GOD

F. W. Davis

Thank God for the beautiful sunshine
That comes from His heaven above;
Thank God for His wonderful presence
Plus His care and heavenly love.
Praise Him for the health He has given
And His help through sorrow and pain;
Be grateful for all of His blessings
Regardless of sunshine or rain.
Thank God for the peace He has given,
So calm to our heart, life and soul,
For His promise of a mansion in glory,
Where none shall be feeble or old.
Thank God for neighbors and kinship
Who live all about us each day.
Let us praise Him while here we are living,
Then we'll praise Him through eternity's day.

THANKSGIVING

William Stanley Braithwaite

My heart gives thanks for many things;
For strength to labor day by day,
For sleep that comes when darkness wings
With evening up the eastern way.

I give deep thanks that I'm at peace
With kith and kin and neighbors, too—
Dear Lord, for all last year's increase,
That helped me strive and hope and do.

My heart gives thanks for many things;
I know not how to name them all.
My soul is free from frets and stings,
My mind from creed and doctrine's thrall.

For sun and stars, for flowers and streams,
For work and hope and rest and play—
For empty moments given to dreams,
For these, my heart gives thanks today.



OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

Grenville Kleiser

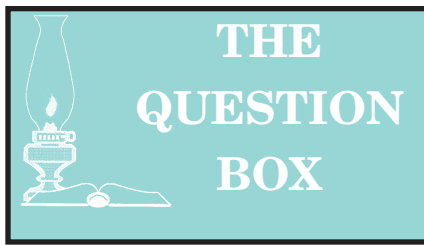
Lord God of hosts, we render thanks
For all Thy mercies sure;
Thy tender love environs us
And will through life endure.

Teach us to know Thy perfect will,
Humble and meek to be;
May we, in gladness, praise Thy name
Throughout eternity.

Lord God of hosts, we offer thanks
And call upon Thy name;
A psalm of praise to Thee we sing,
Thy wondrous love proclaim.

Thou art our refuge and our strength,
There is no other power;
If sudden danger threatens us
We find in Thee a tower.

Lord God of hosts, we offer praise,
Direct us on our way;
With grateful hearts we worship Thee
On this Thanksgiving Day. †



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

QUESTION: When Jesus Christ went to John the Baptist to be baptized, John recognized that He was the Christ. Why then did John send disciples to inquire of Him whether He was the Christ or whether he should wait for another? Did he not know from the time of His baptism that the Messiah had come?

ANSWER: John the Baptist was like anyone else. Though he was full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb he was subject to discouragement. Having been cast into prison when he did not deserve it, things looked dark to him and Satan caused him to wonder, after all, if Jesus was the Christ. Therefore, he sent disciples to Him to inquire further in regard to the matter.

QUESTION: In Hebrews 7:3 it says, Melchisedec had no mother nor father. Was he one of the angels or who was he?

ANSWER: No, Melchisedec was not an angel. He was a man who lived during the time of Abraham. It is said he was a Canaanite. Anyway, he was a man, a priest of God and a type of Christ. It is said that the Jews looked upon a Gentile who came over into, or embraced the Jewish religion as being one who had no father or mother because he could not trace his lineage back through the tribes. The priests were chosen from the tribe of Levi. Christ did not come through that tribe and thus some rejected Him. Though Melchisedec lived before there was a Hebrew nation, the Hebrew writer is showing that Melchisedec was a priest of God, although he was not "one of them" and that Christ too could be and was a priest even though His descent was not through the tribe of Levi.

We would also say, since the one we know as Jesus Christ had no beginning and will have no ending, another reason no record was kept of Melchisedec may be since he was to be a type of Christ.

QUESTION: In the Old Testament, Exodus 28:4; Jeremiah 13:1; Isaiah 11:5 and in the New Testament, Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6, it talks of a girdle of ephod. A line girdle and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; a leathern girdle about his loins and with a girdle of a skin about his loins. What represents this girdle in the dressing of the present religious bodies? Is it worn by priests only?

ANSWER: The girdle was a part of the dress worn by not only the priest but also what might be called the average person. The girdle was a belt-type of article worn around the waist. The people while out at work

would tuck their loose garments into the girdle to keep the loose garments from getting in their way. Also, when they needed to run bearing a message, they would tuck their loose garments into their girdle so they would not stumble or fall. It would seem from Matthew 10:9 that some had another use, which we would call today, a money belt.

Now today there is no requirement in a religious manner that such should be worn. Christ, Paul, and others used this in a spiritual way, such as is found in Luke 12:35, "Let your loins be girded about." Commenting on this verse *Cruden's Concordance* says, "That is, be always prepared for any service that God requires of you and be diligent about it; be like servants who are girded and ready to obey their masters' commands, or like soldiers who wait for orders from their commanders."

In Ephesians 6:14, "Have your loins girt about with truth" would be to know the truth, rely upon the truth, love the truth, live the truth, and thus receive its benefits: protection from false doctrines, among others.

QUESTION: Could you possibly tell me what is the main purpose of all men coming to earth?

ANSWER: God created this world and put man upon it for His glory. To understand what all is to His glory would entail a lot. Briefly stated: To have fellowship with God; to prove to Satan that people would of their own choice serve God and do right; to increase the family of God; to have subjects that would worship Him; that would take His creation and "subdue" it. There are many other reasons.

QUESTION: Isaiah 59:14, "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." What does the word *equity* mean?

ANSWER: The word *equity* means "fairness; justice; a system of rules and principles based on fairness and justice."

The Lord speaks to Israel through Isaiah and points out that they had departed from Him. There were none that called for justice (verse 4); "They have made them crooked paths" (verse 8); in their transgressing they were lying against the Lord (verse 13), and as a result, "truth is fallen in the street, and equity (fairness and justice) cannot enter."

QUESTION: Acts 9:7 says, "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." But Acts 22:9 says, "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." Which is the correct verse?

ANSWER: Both are right. It is simply a matter of understanding how the word *hear* is used. We use the word *hear* in different ways. If someone spoke to you and you did not understand what he said, you might say, "I didn't hear you," but you did "hear"; you did not UNDERSTAND what you heard. These men "heard" but they did not understand. Saul was the only one that understood what the Lord was saying. †

WHO TOUCHED ME?

2024 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Duane Jeffries



PLEASE TURN with me to the book of St. Mark's gospel, chapter 5. I will read verses 25-30: "And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?"

I am amazed tonight at God's capacity to love mankind. If we're really honest with ourselves, from the pulpit to the pew, none of us are worthy of His love, but even so, He loved us. We've failed Him and turned our backs on Him. The Bible says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." We turned our backs on Him. We failed Him. We let Him down. We even put Him to open shame, and yet He has the capacity to love us. Isn't that amazing?

Love is such a beautiful thing. Love is uplifting. Love is encouraging. Love is reassuring, and especially in the kind of world we're living in today, we need more love. It's a cold, hard world. We are living in a time where people have grown cold and callous, vicious, angry, and vindictive, and they will do just about anything to hurt other people. But thank God for His love! His is a love that we can depend on. Thank God it is not seasonal. You live in this beautiful country where you see the four seasons. From where I come, we have one. Summer all year long. But it's a beautiful thing to see the changing of the seasons. Some people's love is like that. It changes with the seasons. If things go their way, they love you, but if things don't go their way, then love changes. But that is not God's love. God's love is not seasonal. He loves you in the good times and in the bad times. That is a love you can always depend on. Let me tell you something: when you need that love the most, it's going to pick you up and carry you through. Such love, wonderful love, dependable love, faithful love. If I may say so tonight, that is a love that God expects of all of His children.

I was just thinking. Would you hurt someone you love? No. Would you intentionally let down someone you love? No. You see, love has standards. God's love has standards. We have a responsibility to love one another. It's not just when we agree on a certain subject or a certain thing. Even in disagreements, we are to love one another. If we are true Christians, we are to love one another. Even in times when we have failed, we are to love one another as God has loved us. Love is real. It's not just an emotion or a feeling. It's a real thing. As we heard this morning, perfect love casteth

out fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). If there's fear, then it's not love. In perfect love, or God's love, there is no fear. Thank the Lord! When we were at our worst, God still loved us. Think about that tonight.

A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE

Back to our text—Mark, chapter 5. Here was a woman with an issue. The Bible says that it was an issue of blood. But there are many of us who are faced with many issues; not just one, many issues, problems, and they're all hitting us at the same time. Let me tell you something tonight, life is real. Life can be turbulent sometimes. Like an airplane that's 30,000 feet in the air, we go through turbulence in life. I thank God that we have good people that He has placed in our lives to help us, to pray for us, and to encourage us. But there's only so much that we can humanly do to help one another. This is why, Beloved, that I'm so thankful that I serve a God who cares and understands. He knows all about my problems. Someone who cares. Isn't that beautiful?

The people of God are not alone. Yes, the world can be turbulent, life can be turbulent, but our God is able to carry us through. Sometimes when we feel alone, He's right there, and He's promised not to leave us nor forsake us. I'm so glad that He's undefeated. There is no circumstance or problem that God cannot help you through. Too often we try to lock him up in a small box and relate Him to us. He's not like us. His ways are higher than our ways. He has the capacity and the power to change our circumstances. He's a mighty God. I like the song we sing: "For the conquering Saviour shall break ev'ry chain, And give us the vict'ry again and again."

God comes through in the morning, He comes through in the evening, and bless God, He comes through at night. What a wonderful God! The reason why we fail God sometimes is because we allow our circumstances to distract us, and we take our focus off this mighty God and put them on our problems. It's no wonder that we fall into discouragement or become despondent, because we then lose sight of victory. We lose sight of the goal. With Christ in the vessel, we can smile at the storm.

Like the woman in our text with an issue that she dealt with for twelve years, perhaps there are some of us here in this service that have been dealing with a particular issue for longer than twelve years. But I want to encourage your faith in God. Keep trusting in God. Don't lose sight of Him. One day He's going to come through. The Bible says that this woman spent all she had on many physicians, but as life would have it sometimes, problems often grow worse. Her problem

grew worse. It brought her to a place where only Jesus could help her. That's not a bad place to be in. That's the place we need to be. The Bible says that this woman heard that Jesus was passing through. She determined in her heart, "I'm going to touch the hem of His garment." But she couldn't get to Jesus because there was a crowd.

Let me tell you something, we live in a noisy world full of distractions, and the people of God are not immune to these distractions. There are all kinds of distractions that we have to deal with. There is noise of opposition. There are people who don't wish us well. Some are counting on us to fail. Not everybody gives encouragement. I'm not trying to be negative, but this is reality. I'm trying to point out something. If you're not focused on Jesus, the noise of the crowd will distract and discourage you. The ministry is not immune to this. We have all sorts of distractions. They come from within and come from without.

The Bible said the woman did what? She "pressed through the crowd," because she had a purpose. She had a goal, and that goal was to touch Jesus. She knew that Jesus could help her. She knew He could solve her problem, and she didn't care who was around her. Sometimes we have to go through some hard places, but as long as we're focused on what God has called us to do, we'll reach the goal.

DISTRACTIONS

Let's talk a little about distractions. Turn to the book of Luke, chapter 10. We'll read from verse 38. We read about two sisters, Mary and Martha, who attended to Jesus. "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [I love that.] But Martha was cumbered [preoccupied or distracted] about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Martha was focused on all of the things she should not have focused on, but Mary paid attention. Look at what happened. Martha then complained. Jesus said unto her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and [thank God] Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." If we're not focused, we will miss the best things of life because we're distracted. Imagine having someone like Jesus in the flesh at your home and you're still distracted. Martha was worried about the amenities. She was worried about preparing the food, but Mary was near her focus. All she cared about was sitting at Jesus' feet. Mary received the benefit of having her focus in the right place. The reason some of us can't be blessed is because our focus is not in the right place. We're worrying about other things when our focus needs to be on Jesus.

As a church, and even as a ministry, our focus needs to be in the right place for the church to be successful, for the people of God to be successful. If we focus on personalities, what's going to happen to the church? If it becomes all about the person, or the man, we will lose our vision of the church. I thank God that I serve

in a church where no man is the head. Jesus is the Head of the church. To man-rule she does not bow. That is the church I believe in.

What does it matter if God calls Bro. Shaw to lead and us to follow? The church belongs to God. What does it matter if it's Bro. Ray's turn to preach and us to support him and stand behind him? It's God's church. It doesn't matter if one of us preaches or doesn't preach this week. What matters is that the work of God is marching on. Distractions can come, but we're dealing with the true church tonight. The Bible says that she is the mother of the free and there's none like unto her. She has no counterfeit sister or brother. She stands alone. God's church is alone triumphant. She's all pure in this world below.

My father, being a pastor, was asked a long time ago by a gentleman, "How's the church?"

To him he replied, "The church is like the sea. Sometimes it's calm, and sometimes it gets rough." Thank the Lord for His great church.

Perhaps it is time to ask ourselves, where is our focus? What are our priorities? What are the things that are more important to us, or are the things that are important to us important to God? Because what should be important to us are the things that are important to God.

THE STORMS OF LIFE

Turn with me now to the book of Matthew, chapter 14. We'll begin from verse 22: "Straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary."

The disciples of Christ were in the midst of the sea caught in a storm. Storms can be distractive. All of us, even those of us of the strongest faith, don't like to go through storms. We don't like when life turns on us. It's a human reaction. But, Beloved, it's not a question of *if*, but a question of *when*. The Bible says, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It's part of the package. We won't get to heaven rocking in a rocking chair. Unfortunately, not everybody is going to love you. It's a matter of fact. Some religious people are going to hate, and they're going to hate you for no particular reason at all because of your testimony in Christ. The winds grow contrary and start to blow against us. That is the situation the disciples were in, but someone was at the fourth watch. There in the midst of the storm came Jesus walking on the water. "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:41). He has power over the elements, and, Beloved, He has power over your circumstances. I know the Master of the wind. I know the Maker of the rain. He can calm the storms and let the sun shine through.

Someone wrote—

I can't take a heart that's broken

Make it over again,

But [bless God] I know a man who can.

I can't walk upon these waters or calm the troubled sea,

But I know a man who can.

Some call Him Savior the Redeemer of all men,

But I call Him Jesus for He's my dearest friend.

Let me tell you tonight, He's a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He's a faithful friend.

As I said before, Jesus came walking on the water. When the disciples saw Him, they said, "It's a ghost." But Jesus said, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Oh, how gently He entreats us tonight! In the middle of our fears, He calms our fears. "It is I; be not afraid."

Then Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Have you ever seen a man walk on water? But there and then, a man walked on water. Jesus said to Peter, "Come." Peter stepped out of the boat and started walking on the water. As long as Peter was focused on Jesus, he walked on the water, but then he started to look around. He got distracted. All of a sudden, the waves, the wind, and the rain became real to him. The Bible says that he started to sink. But I thank God that I serve a God who doesn't cast us down, but He reaches His hand way down and lifts us up. Thank God, He brought us up out of the miry clay, and set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings. He is the God I serve. He cares about us. Jesus didn't let Peter sink, but He saved him. He said to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

There was another time the disciples were out in a storm, but this time Jesus was in the boat. The Bible says He was in the hinder part. The disciples were troubled by this storm. They had Jesus on board, yet they feared. When things turn against us, a lot of people jump the ship. But let me tell you something, that's the wrong time to jump the ship. When you're going through a hurricane or a storm, or even going through a tunnel, that's the wrong time to jump the ship. That is when you need to stay on board. It's ship-ahoy time.

As the disciples were rocking on the waves, someone said, "Go, and awake Jesus." He was asleep. Nothing worried Him. They awoke Jesus and asked Him a question: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus got up and said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He stepped out of the bow of that little ship, and He rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." The Bible says, "The wind ceased, and there was a great calm." The disciples said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Jesus can calm the troubled storms of your life. He can speak, "Peace, be still," if you'll only trust in Him tonight.

Sin is vicious, cruel, and brings us down. Sin bankrupts men and women. Sin leaves us empty. Look around. Look at the world we're living in. Look at the looseness in the land. Look at the restlessness. Look at the abundance of emotional problems that the world is experiencing. People's lives are empty. They need God. They need Jesus. Only Jesus can satisfy the longing of a soul.

Back to our story. This woman came to Jesus, even though there was a crowd. I can see her by faith coming

from the back, but she was focused. "I'm going to touch the hem of His garment. I don't care what it's going to cost me. I don't know what I'll have to leave behind. I don't know what I'm going to face, but I'm going to press on. I have a goal. I'm going to touch the hem of His garment, for I believe in my heart that only Jesus can help me." She pressed through the crowd. The Bible says that she touched the hem of His garment, and immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up. What manner of man is this? The Bible says that when it happened, Jesus felt something. Virtue had gone out of Him.

Isn't it beautiful that we can touch Jesus tonight? "Touching Jesus is all that really matters. Then your life will never be the same. There's only one way to touch Him. Just believe when you call on His name."—words of an old song.

CONCLUSION

I don't know what your situation is here tonight, but I know a Man who can turn your life around, who can give you purpose, who can elevate you from the dead state that you're in. A songwriter wrote the words: "Love, love, God's mighty love, Love found a pardon for me."

In closing, we read in the book of Romans, chapter 5, verses 8 and 9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Jesus loves you, Friend. He loves me. Where would we be tonight without His love? †

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We are making available audio CD's of the wonderful services of the 2024 Convention. These may be purchased for \$3.00 each. The complete set of all services and five singing CD's included: \$50.00.

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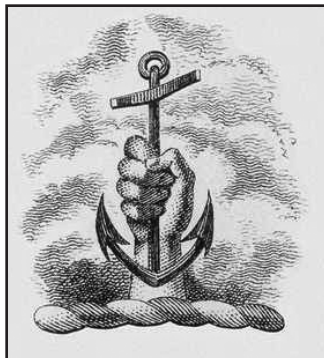
- ☐ #1607 Love Never Fails—Doug Shenberger
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RECOGNIZING GOD'S GOODNESS TO US

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

A MAN BY the name of Simon Patrick, wrote, and I quote: "It is distrust of God to be troubled about what is to come; impatience against God to be troubled with what is present; and anger at God to be troubled for what is past."

I'll be speaking to you today on "Recognizing God's Goodness to Us." This is a very simple subject, but very real and relevant.



The book of Isaiah is called *The Gospel of the Old Testament*. I'll be using the twelfth chapter of Isaiah. It has only six verses. I'll not be reading the verses now. I'll be referring to them a little later on in the program. I'm sure there are many, if not all, who are listening to me that will agree with me that God has been so good to all of us. I tell the church here all the time that we're on a journey. We're on our way to heaven. But where are we now? We're still along the road. We're not home yet. We're still traveling. We're still militant. We're still marching on.

The Bible says that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but to the one that endures. The spiritual life of a human being has nothing to do with his physical stature. Some people are very small in their stature, but they're powerful people of God. Some may be big giants, but they might not be as strong spiritually.

The Bible tells us that we should be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Be strong in the faith. That's what it says, too. So the church today is caught between holding a Christian standard and surviving among the many changes that are taking place very rapidly in the world.

There is a song that says, "When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there." Will we be there? What a question! Will we be there when the roll is called up yonder? That's a bold question, but we can make it through. We will be there if we stand fast and endure.

Through these stormy times, will your anchor hold? Everywhere we turn we hear about these stormy times, and these trying and problematic times. It's a fact.

There's another old song from the *Redemption Song Book* that says—

*Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor shift, or firm remain?* What a question!

*It will firmly hold in the straits of fear,
When the breakers have told the reef is near;*

*Tho' the tempest rave, and the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our barque o'erflow.*

*When our eyes behold, thro' the gathering night,
The city of gold, our harbour bright,
We shall anchor fast by the heav'nly shore,
With the storms all past for evermore.*

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fasten'd to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.*

What a beautiful old song!

The intention behind this little message today is—

- to help to inspire and to motivate.
- to encourage all who are doing their best to live life to its fullest for the Lord with a greater awareness of God's willingness to work for us as long as we work to retain His favor.
- to remind the Christian body to guard their experience with all due diligence as the greatest of all their possessions.
- to magnify the power and grace of God to a frustrated and confused world. Thank God, we can anchor on the Rock. The Bible says, "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (I Peter 2:6). Build on the Rock, build on the Foundation, Jesus Christ.
- to take heart and be comforted by the Word. We have no doubt of God's faithfulness to us. God never fails anyone. We fail God, but He doesn't fail us. Stand on that promise, My Beloved Friends.
- to ensure that we are aware of these times; meaning, the present with respect to prevailing conditions and trends. Yes, the trends we see around us are very different now. Things are changing, and what used to be right is wrong now, and what is used to be wrong is right in the minds of many people. Thank God for the guidance that we have through the Holy Spirit of God and His holy Word. There's another song which says, "God leads His dear children along. Some through the waters, some through the flood, Some through the fire, but all through the blood." We have to always apply ourselves to this great God. Many, many things have changed and are still changing today, but the One who never changes is God.

If you'll look into the first chapter of the book of James, it says in verse 17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What a promise!

The twelfth chapter of Isaiah has a lot to say in it. It's a very short chapter. Every day is a gift, and it's good for us to be able to kneel down or sit down or stand up, whatever our posture might be, and say, "Thank you, Lord, for your blessings on me." Our islands here and other parts of the world have been blessed materially speaking, but it takes more than running water and electricity to make a top quality of life. It takes more than that. Let me tell you, there's a spiritual side to life. What a good thing it is to be able to live upright and godly, to live a life of integrity and stand against

all wrong and evil and not be moved! That's the kind of people that God's looking for in the world today.

The twelfth chapter of Isaiah refers to God's deliverance of His people and how they praised Him: "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (verse 1). God provided salvation and provides salvation for the hopeless: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid" (verse 2a). And then, the power not only to find it, but to hold it, and to spiritually exist hand in hand with God. It goes on to say: "... for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

God leads us along, My Beloved Friends. We can't live this Christian life alone. We can't walk this path without God. It takes the Holy Spirit in our lives to stand against the wiles of the devil and to be bold enough to live for the Lord and to wave the bloodstained banner high and lift it up to the world that others may see and understand. Christians have a banner. We must wave the old bloodstained banner high. Tell the lost of Jesus Christ and His love. Witness to your friends. Witness to your co-workers. Witness to your family. Witness to your neighbors. Don't be ashamed of this God whom we serve.

The Lord is our strength, our song, and salvation. Such a positive act brings joy. Isaiah went on to say: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (verse 3). Life is not always joyous. We know that. Every day is not alike, but though troubles and problems come to us, they are common to all people in the world. All sorts of discouragement, despondency, distress, and financial problems come upon people. Physical problems, emotional problems, and martial problems are all common in our world today, but deep down in our souls we can have a joy that the world can't take from us. The Bible tells us that. That's the privilege we have as being children of God.

In spite of the rain and the wind blowing, the little birds still sing. In the mornings, they're still singing. Their little tunes are so sweet. Let us sing as well in our problems and in our trials. Sing the songs of Zion—

*Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Calv'ry's mountain.*

*What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

*Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

God deserves our thanks and our praises to Him for His goodness to us.

Verse 4 of Isaiah 12 says: "And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his

doings among the people [And then, it should be voiced around also to others], make mention that his name is exalted." When we stop for a few moments and think of the great God of heaven and earth, the One who made this world and all that therein is, the very Giver of life, who am I?

David said, "Who am I that God would be so good to me?" He also said as he looked up into the starry sky and saw the moon and the stars, "What is man that God is mindful of him?"

I'm afraid in many cases the world is losing the fear of God out of their hearts. Reverence and respect for God, and even for His people. Things have changed. It's not like it used to be.

Isaiah goes on to say in verse 5 of chapter 12: "Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things." I thank God every day for what He has done for me. Whether we have little or much, thank God for it. Look around in the world today. Those who have the least are the happiest and the most grateful to God. Material things don't bring happiness and peace in our hearts. Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Let me tell you, it's being at rest with God, at peace with Him, and knowing that all is well with our souls that brings peace of mind.

Express it in singing. God's goodness is universal, too. The latter part of verse 5 says, "... this is known in all the earth." God is everywhere, you know. It doesn't matter what language we speak, we can feel God. We can see Him as we look up into the starry sky. We can imagine God with our spiritual eyes, and we can see this great God holy and lifted up, as Isaiah saw Him in a vision. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1). What did the angel say? "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

Christians spread the good news. Isaiah 12:6, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Christians are supposed to be the happiest people in the world. The Psalmist says in Psalm 100, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

Stand true for the Lord. He will never fail those who trust and believe and stand on His promises. †

WATCH OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at www.wayofftruth.org where in addition to reading past issues and other information, you can watch our general services every Sunday LIVE at 10:40 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. E.D.T. Enjoy Spirit-filled singing and preaching. Also, our mid-week service at 7:00 P.M. Wednesdays is aired live. There is a chatroom where you can interact with us and share your prayer requests.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



THE BEND IN THE ROAD

Bible Lesson by Rebecca Bland

"Is this the new road, Daddy?" I asked. I slid forward from the backseat of the car and knelt on the floor, wrapping my arms around the headrest of the passenger seat in front of me. In those days, there were no laws that required children or adults to wear seatbelts. In fact, our car didn't even have seatbelts.

"It's the new road, all right," replied my father. "Feel how smoothly the car rides on it!" I looked around the headrest and out the front windshield of the car. The newly constructed interstate highway lay before us, its two wide lanes separated by dashed lines.

In all my five years of life, I had never seen a highway so grand. The trees on the right-hand side of it flashed by in a blur of speed. On the left, a "median strip" divided our two south-bound lanes from two north-bound lanes of traffic.

"Daddy, could we ever drive across that median strip?" I asked.

"No," he answered. "That would be against the rules of the road. Only emergency vehicles can cross the median strip."

My three-year-old sister, Twila, sat in the front passenger seat of our car. Little Wilma was at home with our mother, who had asked my father to pick up some packages of frozen meat from the cold storage locker we rented in a facility north of town.

"The section of new interstate highway they've been working on is finally finished," Dad had said as we walked out of the cold storage building. "We're going to try it out on our way home."

"What's 'instate highway'?" Twila had asked.

"Interstate," my father had said, correcting her. "An interstate highway is a big, wide road that goes from state to state. It goes around cities instead of through them, so you can go faster and save time."

Now that we were on that wonderful highway, I was full of questions about it. "Daddy, how far does this highway go?" I asked. "It looks like it will never end."

My father laughed. "Every road ends somewhere," he answered. "This highway, once it is all finished, will run all the way from New York to Tennessee!"

"How many miles is that?" I wanted to know.

"Oh, about eight or nine hundred," my dad replied.

"Eight or nine hundred miles!" I repeated. "That's farther than I can think about in my mind!"

"It is far," he agreed. "Just imagine riding smoothly all the way from here to Tennessee with never a red light or stop sign!"

"But how do you turn off the highway if there aren't any red lights?" I asked. Although I was very young, I

knew that turning off one road and onto another usually required stop signs or traffic signals to keep drivers from crashing their cars into each other.

"Do you remember how we got on this highway?" my father asked.

"No," I told him. "All of a sudden, we were just on it."

"Well," Dad said, "we veered off the road we were on, and we drove onto an entrance ramp. When we got to the end of the entrance ramp, we merged into the traffic that was on this highway."

"What does 'merged' mean?" I asked. "How did we merge into the traffic?"

"We joined the traffic," said my dad. "We eased over into the lane when we saw there was room for us to enter the highway."

"Then how are we going to get off the highway?" I asked.

"We'll get off the highway by taking an exit ramp," said my father. "When we get to the end of the exit ramp, we'll merge into the traffic that is on the road that leads to our house."

My father paused, and then pointed ahead. "In fact," he said, "we are coming to our exit ramp now."

I looked where he was pointing, and I saw a large green sign. The white letters on the sign said EXIT. An arrow pointed to the right, and my father used his right-hand turn signal to let the drivers behind him know he was getting ready to move off the highway and onto the exit ramp.

We were about halfway up the exit ramp when my dad gave a cry of alarm. He pressed suddenly on the brakes and turned the steering wheel hard to the right. I fell to the left, bouncing on the backseat and hitting my head on the side window. A few moments later, the car glided to a stop as my father pulled over onto the shoulder of the road.

"Are you all right?" I heard him ask. "Here, open your mouth and let me see where you are bleeding." He was talking to my little sister, Twila, who was crying so loudly she could hardly hear what my father was saying.

I got up off the backseat and stood up to look into the front of the car. Blood was running from my little sister's mouth. When my father had braked to make the sharp turn, Twila had been thrown forward with enough force for her face to hit the dashboard of the car.

"Shhhh! Don't cry," said my father. "You're going to be all right." He fumbled in his pocket for a handkerchief.

"My tooth is gone!" Twila sobbed.

"Let me see," said my father.

Twila opened her mouth again. Sure enough, one of her front teeth had been knocked out.

"I'm so sorry," said my father. "The curve in the exit ramp was a lot sharper than I was expecting. I had to slam on the brakes to keep from running off the road."

Gradually, Twila's sobs faded. She lay curled up on the front seat, the bloody handkerchief pressed tightly against her mouth, until we were safely home.

In a few days, Twila's wounds healed. She even laughed when people told her she was ahead of me

because I hadn't lost either of my front "baby" teeth yet.

But my father never laughed about it. The unpleasant surprise of the sharp bend in the road stayed with him. "Here comes Twila's curve," he would say whenever he took the exit ramp where the accident happened. "Everybody hold on tight!"

Even today, when I drive on that exit ramp, I think of my sister and how she was hurt because of a dangerous bend in the road.

Children, you will sometimes hear people talk about "life's highway." What they mean is that, as time goes by, we go forward in life just like traffic goes forward on a road. We pass landmarks like birthdays and graduations, just like we pass towns and cities on a literal highway.

Just as literal highways can have dangerous curves, so does the highway of life. Dangerous curves on "life's road" are things that happen unexpectedly in life that frighten us or make us sad. Temptations arise that could cause us to lose our way. That is why we need to have Jesus in our hearts, so He can go with us down life's highway and keep us safe whenever the road makes a sharp bend.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 1:33, which says, *But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.* To "hearken" means to "listen." If we listen to the voice of Jesus, we do not need to fear what lies ahead on the road of life. He will keep us safe from all evil.

Activity

See if you can find the location of the scripture from which each phrase below is taken. The first word of each phrase begins with a letter that spells the word "safe." Remember—only Jesus can keep us safe on life's road.

HINT: The book of the Bible is given for each of the scriptures. All you need to find is the chapter and verse.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. ... (Psalm __:__)

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. ... (Psalm __:__)

Fear God and keep his commandments. ... (Ecclesiastes __:__)

Enter ye in at the strait gate. ... (Matthew __:__)

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who **desire** to fear thy name" (Nehemiah 1:1a).
2. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I **desire** beside thee" (Psalm 73:25).
3. "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the **desire** of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee" (Isaiah 26:8).
4. "But now they **desire** a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16). †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE STEPS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH JACOB (Part I)

Scriptures: Genesis 28:10-22.

Genesis 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

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

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

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

Memory Verse: And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.—Genesis 28:15.

Aim: To give an insight into the workings of the Spirit with the early saints.

INTRODUCTION

THE SPIRIT of the living God has been a force for good in the earth from the beginning of time, endeavoring to lead men in the way that would be for their good. The only way that God can carry out His plan in the earth is through the lives of men, and He is constantly seeking those who will do His will. There is no greater calling than to the service of God,

and there is no occupation that pays so well. With our social, economical, and spiritual situation such as it is today, there is great need that we be led by the Spirit of God. Jacob's life was blessed because he yielded to the voice of the Spirit. Likewise every man today who yields to the Spirit shall be blessed.

MEDITATIONS

JACOB'S SIN CAUSES HIM TO FLEE—Genesis 28:10—Jacob went out—By stealth Jacob had taken the birthright and blessing from his brother Esau. It greatly stirred Esau's anger, and he vowed that after his father died he would kill Jacob. His mother concluded that it would be good to send Jacob away under the pretense of getting a wife. So today's lesson finds him running for his life. **Verse 11—Lay down—**His sins were finding him out. Weary and worn physically he lay down to rest.

Genesis 28:12—And he dreamed—Angels going up and down would be indicative of heavenly beings traveling between heaven and earth to carry out the will of God. Such a picture would have a very sobering effect upon Jacob, especially since he was guilty of doing wrong to his brother.

DIVINE PROMISE—Genesis 28:13—I am the Lord God—Even though Jacob was made to run from his brother because of sin, God knew that he would repent of this; therefore, He was able to tell him the things that should come to pass in the future. **Verse 14—As the dust of the earth—**His offspring was to be very great. This, no doubt, was of great significance to Jacob, for in those days the Jews regarded large families as a great blessing from God. It was through the seed of Jacob that the gospel was to come in the gospel age.

GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED—Genesis 28:15—I will not leave thee—We have Jesus' promise for our day in the last commission when He said that He would go with us, even unto the ends of the earth. This is a great blessing, for He is all-powerful and all-wise. He is the great Physician and never knows a disease or sickness that He cannot heal. We should be a happy and prosperous people indeed. It was the very same God who promised to be with Jacob, and surely this would have been a source of great encouragement to him at this time.

A DREADFUL PLACE—Genesis 28:16—The Lord is in this place—When Jacob laid down his head that night, it never occurred to him that the presence of God might be there, for he was too much engrossed with his own personal situation. How often the very same thing fills the lives of people today, and they cannot enjoy divine fellowship because their own personal ambitions are first in their lives. **Verse 17—The house of God—**The pureness of the personality of God and the wickedness of Jacob did not make for peace, but fear, in the heart of Jacob.

JACOB'S HEART IS CONVICTED—Genesis 28:18—Jacob rose up early—It is good to arise early and pray. It seems that Jacob had not prayed before retiring. Other things were filling his mind, but the

dream had made a great impression upon him, and he realized that the eyes of Almighty God were upon him. He did not rebel, but rather arose early from his bed and began to make approaches to the God who had visited him in the night. **Verse 19—Bethel—**In later years this place was the scene of many spiritual occurrences, some of them in connection with idol worship.

JACOB TAKES INVENTORY OF THE PAST—Genesis 28:20—Vowed a vow—His life had not been what it should have been, although his teaching at home had been such that he knew what was right for his generation and what God had expected of him. He also knew that he was dependent upon God and that every good and perfect gift came from above. He had not been properly grateful for these things. **Verse 21—Then shall the Lord be my God—**Jacob knew that the God to whom he was talking now was able to do the things that he had asked Him. It was this God that Jacob was choosing for life. **Verse 22—Give the tenth unto thee—**Jacob, it would seem from the reading of this scripture, was behind in his tithes. In the matter of performing spiritual requirements, it seems that the divine requirement in regard to the giving of money was heaviest upon his mind. The law had not yet been given in written form. Where did he learn about the responsibility to God of paying tithes? He had learned it from his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham.

CONCLUSION

The life of Jacob was somewhat different from now on. God did go with him and prospered him in his way. Jacob will not be judged in the last day according to the standard that we have; neither will we be judged by the standard that God gave for Jacob in that day. We are blessed in that the light of the gospel shines clearly and beautifully in this our day. Thus, since we have but one God and one faith, we, of necessity, in all ages who are children of God belong to the one great and gracious family of the living God and truly shall, as Jesus said, come from the east and the west and sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was Jacob making the trip in which he had the dream about the ladder?
2. Consider the meaning of the words of the Lord when He said that He would be with Jacob.
3. What did Jacob mean when he awakened from his dream and said, "This is an awful place"?
4. Why did Jacob vow to the Lord that if God would prosper him he would pay tithes?
5. How many families does God have, and how are members added? †

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LOVE—How It Is Expressed and How It Is Perceived

2024 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Doug Koerner



WE WILL TURN to our theme scripture, which is I Corinthians, chapter 13. This is a very, very familiar chapter. No doubt many of us have read it many times.

As I started to consider the message, I went into the twelfth chapter a little bit to get some thoughts and ideas. Looking at chapter 12, Paul was referring to the spiritual gifts to the church. We're going to read a couple verses at the end of this chapter. Verses 28-31 sort of sum up the entire chapter: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT

I know that the book of I Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul, and it is a letter that is continued in chapters, but I was thinking about this: *Any time I bring messages, I try to think of what was going on in between those times—what's was in Paul's mind—what was happening in different situations that we don't have the privilege to read about.* I want you to try to understand my thoughts here a little bit. Paul wrote the twelfth chapter and sent this letter to the Corinthian church. He was probably thankful that he did this as it was good information for the church. Then, the Lord said to him, "But, Paul, you've missed something. You've missed the most important gift there is, love." Now, Paul starts to write chapter 13.

Paul wrote in chapter 12 about the different gifts that I read to you in verses 28-31. All of those gifts are wonderful, and a lot of times those are what we desire to have, but now Paul writes in the first verse of chapter 13: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." No matter what gifts are mentioned in chapter 12, which are a blessing to the church, let's put first things first. The first thing you need to have is love. If you don't have that love within you in having the desire to bring the Word of God, there's not much of a blessing to anything else. Paul wrote about some other things in chapter 13, but he summed it up in verse 13 with three words: "faith, hope, charity [love]."

I know messages about love have been brought several times this week, but I want to just take a few minutes to try to get our minds to think about the word *love* for a few moments. Love is the greatest thing that

God told us about in the Bible. God is love. In I John, chapter 4, verse 8, it says: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." One of the most famous verses in the world that people often quote is John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Many people know that verse. Love is emphasized strongly throughout the entire Bible from Genesis all the way to Revelation. So I want you to think about love.

You might say, "I know about love." When we think about the word *love*, most of us have a direction or a mindset of what we think love is as we have in our theme. It's sort of like, it's there. It's like riding down the road and seeing a stop sign. There's not a whole lot to think about. It says STOP. It doesn't say to yield or to make a U-turn. It just says STOP. We don't think about it. That's what it is. So I want us to think a little bit about the word *love*. An interesting word.

HOW I RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE

You may think that the theme Bro. Greg sent out is an easy topic to preach on. I thought it, too. When he sends out the invitation of the theme and the scripture verses, I usually open it up and sort of read the entire invitation. I go to the Bible to see if the Lord gives me a thought to write some things down, but this time He didn't. I thought, *well, that's an easy theme.* I pondered it here and there. Bro. Greg sends out the letter of invitation a couple months before the convention. As time went on, I'm thinking and thinking: *I don't have anything. Lord, I need a thought.* Bro. Greg called me on June fifth wanting to know my thoughts and plans for the meeting. I didn't tell him I didn't have a message yet. I told him that I was working on it. I said, "Lord, it's June the fifth; I need some direction." That day went on. We had prayer meeting at home that Wednesday evening, and after service as I was leaving and walking across the street, God gave me a thought for this service.

I think I had gone back to my office, and I looked at the theme that was lying on my desk. The thought of charity embedded in my mind: *love never fails.* That just set a tone for me. I didn't put a title on my message till last night. Love Never Fails was to be my title, but my title is, "LOVE—how it is expressed and how it is perceived." That's what God gave to me.

Sometimes we express things and we perceive things differently than someone else does. Love never fails. If we're doing things in the order of God and have a desire

to please Him, love will never fail. The thought here is that we as saints of God live in a world where we're all different. We've been brought up differently. We all have different ways in which we do things, and the devil is always trying to attack our minds and attack our spirit and to kill our love for one another. The thought that's embedded here is that love never fails. If we're children of God, we have the love of God in our hearts, and if he has the love of God in his heart, and she has the love of God in her heart, we may not express or may not perceive how things are being done. We'll bring some examples later on, but we have to have the attitude, "Lord, I believe, by the grace of God, we still have love no matter whatever issue is going on."

WHAT IS LOVE?

If I were to ask everyone here, *what is love*, how many answers do you think I would get? Verse 13 of I Corinthians says, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." If I were to ask each individual here, what do you perceive as faith, what do you perceive as hope, and charity, I may get multiple different answers. So although the thought of *love never fails* is an easy title, it can be broad sometimes. Paul says in verse 2 of I Corinthians 13, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

I want you to get in your mind the idea of what you think love *is* and what you think love *means*. In the last couple days, as I was studying for my message, I decided to ask a few young people and adults in the congregation, "Can you give me one word or phrase that you think represents love?" I didn't know exactly what I was going to expect. I had to get their perspective. I had to give some of them some time to think. I said, "Let me know by the end of this service or let me know later." When you think about love, what does love mean to each one of us?

These are the different answers I received from those I asked:

- *A good marriage.*
- *Babies or children.*
- *My wife, and another, My husband.*
- *My mom.*
- *My parents.*
- *A selfless person.*

You may have some different thoughts or ideas of what love is.

When I was thinking of the basic things of love, I thought *a husband and wife* is an example of what represents love. I think of young people who may be dating and looking forward to getting married. I think that's a precious example of love. I think about our love towards God. But love is not always, in one sense, cut and dry. That's what I'm trying to get to us this morning. I'm trying to get us to have an idea of accepting love regardless of how it may be expressed.

As a father, I have a different way to express love to my children than I do to my wife. That's just common. There's no other way you can get around it. It's just the way God made us. That's probably true with any husband and wife and children. Children are more attracted to their mom more than maybe their dad in some situ-

ations that arise. It's just the way it is. Fathers are not always the most emotional or the most loving sometimes compared to a mother. There's something special that God has created in a mother to show a blessing of love.

When I read chapter 13 of I Corinthians, there is always a meat to this chapter. Paul has it emphasized in verses 4-7. When you think of the chapter on love, you think it's a wonderful chapter, but when you tie in some of the other verses before verse 13, they don't seem to fit. In verse 4, I'll use the word *love* instead of charity. "Love suffereth long." *Love* and *suffering* are two words that are not usually combined together, but we know sometimes in serving God, we as saints of God have to suffer. We have to love another person. We have to have care towards another, because it is the love of God within us. "Love suffereth long, and is kind." Now, there again, *love* is a bold word just like the word *stop*. It doesn't seem like you would have to put a definition to love, so why would you tell somebody, "Well, if you have love, you should be kind"?

LOVE MUST BE TAUGHT

The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives. Wives, love your husbands." I'm going to read to you a little thought pertaining to that from Titus, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, ... That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, [this next instruction is so profound here] to love their children." When I think about charity suffering long and envying not, and the others that charity does, telling the young women "to love their children" should be a natural instinct, you would think, but it wouldn't be in there if it wasn't a natural instinct sometimes. We have to be taught. I don't want to get too ahead of my message, but sometimes we're trained in certain ways. Sometimes it's hard for us to understand somebody else's way of training and how they've been brought up, and how we've been brought up.

Paul goes on to say in I Corinthians 13, "Love envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." These are instructions Paul gave to the church about love. So my thinking is this morning is that we need to work at love. I believe every single one of us need to work at love. We have the love of God within us, but we still have to work at that love. Love is mentioned throughout the Bible. Love has been emphasized many times as the messages went forth, but love isn't something that just flows so easily sometimes. It's something we have to work at. It's something that we have to be aware of so that we don't offend somebody or get something out of order. We must have that love towards one another.

I'm speaking of expressing love and how people perceive love. We do it differently. We express love differently and some people can perceive love differently. My thought is *Help us, Lord, as children of God, to have the love of God in such a way that when someone seems to be expressing love that should not be, just how can*

we perceive it? Do we cut them off? Do we get upset? There will be some people that will offend us. Sometimes they may do it unintentionally, but it is how we perceive it. What we perceive people doing may not actually be what their intention is.

We view actions in different ways. That's why a lot of times when there's an accident out there, two or three witnesses are wanted. They want different people to give their input. If this person says that the blue car went through the red light, and another person says that it was the green car, there's conflict there. Somebody saw something wrong. If they both had seen the same thing, then there wouldn't have been a conflict.

We're saved this morning by the grace of God. Back in 1981, an individual gave me an invitation to come to a revival. I had been going to Sunday school. I was in my twelfth year of high school. I was getting ready to graduate. I had all kinds of plans and hopes and dreams. I told the individual that gave me the invitation to the revival that I would think about it. This is what I said to myself, *I don't want anything to do with that*. No one else heard that, but God did. God's love was so great, He didn't accept that. He could have said, "Fine, I'll just leave you alone. You'll live your life and die and go to hell." But God didn't do that. He started dealing with my heart. He put me under conviction. There is one place I wanted to be when that revival started, and that was to be at the first service. I don't even know why God was dealing with me. So God's love won over my thought of *I don't want anything to do with that*. You might give an invitation to somebody, and they may not want to come, but pray, "Lord, bring them under conviction." Plant the seed, and trust that God will help to water it, and it will grow.

SOME EXAMPLES OF LOVE

Here are a couple of examples. I'm going to read a couple different stories, and I want you to understand the perception of things and how people express things. Let's go to Mark, chapter 12, verse 41: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much." If you're putting \$100 in the offering, or writing a check for \$1,000, you certainly must love God and the church. There may be some truth to that. That's how everybody perceives things. That's how everybody looks at things. Jesus was letting them know, "Look here what they're doing. They're casting into the treasury, because the rich have much." But He goes on to say in verse 42, "And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing."

Let's just say I'm sitting in a bench and this person is putting in \$100, and another person \$100, and I pull out a nickel and drop it in the offering plate. What would people perceive? "He must not really care for God." But see, Jesus knew the heart of that poor widow. Jesus called His disciples and said, "Come here, let me show you something. Let me show you something you did not see. You may have seen with your physical eyes and perceived something there." Verses 43 and 44 of Mark 12: "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abun-

dance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

The sister who spoke in prayer meeting this morning had a good point. She said, "There could be somebody over here clapping and rejoicing and praising God." I'm not discrediting that at all, but the perception of that is, that person really loves God. Then, she said, "There could be someone over here weeping and crying." Perception and what we express. My thought is, *Lord, help us not to judge because of what we see, and not to judge because of events that have happened, but by the love of God in our hearts to accept, or to see the things that we're not seeing that everybody else may see*.

Let's go to Luke, chapter 7. Another story picking up at verse 44: "And he [Jesus] turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

Now, look where this took place. They brought Jesus into the house. They were thankful. They were religious people. They were doing the right thing on the outward scene a bit. This woman came in and began to wash Jesus' feet with her tears, wipe His feet with her hair, and anoint His head with oil. What was the perception? Let's go back to verse 39 of Luke 7: "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." What did they see, and what did they perceive? What did Jesus see, and what did He perceive?

EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE

We don't always see how the Spirit of God works in people. We just see the outward and maybe the emotions. Every one of us, even the ministry, need more of the love of God to have kindness and care towards people. Love is kind. Sometimes we can get out of that realm because of how somebody is acting or doing. I say that for me. "Lord, help me; help us, Lord."

Our theme is taken from I Corinthians 13. Let's go back there. Verse 8: "Charity never faileth." It never hurts to have love. It never hurts to show kindness. It never hurts to express that, even when we may get abused by it, or even when we may get cast out by it. Real true love will never fail. It may not be recognized by everyone, but it will not fail. We perceive and express ourselves differently in many ways. I believe love is no different.

As I mentioned already, men and women express charity differently towards a husband and a wife, towards their children, and their grandchildren. I was talking to one of our neighbors and she asked, "How are your grandchildren?" We talked a little about them. She said, "I tell you, there's a different love with grandchildren." I agreed with her 100%. She said, "I can't explain it, but there's a different love with your grand-

children.” It’s a different love with your children, but even how we express that between grandchildren can be different—how we express it and how they perceive it. The way I express charity to different brethren is because of being closer to some than to others.

To those of you who might not know, I have my sister here with me today. She’s been here all week. My sister, Linda, and I had good parents. They provided a very good home for us. Our dad had a good job. Our mom was a homemaker. She took care of the home until later in life she got a little job, but she always took care of things at home. Our mom and dad passed away in 2010. Dad died in March, and seven months later, our mom died. In the years since then, my sister and I have chatted about us growing up. I never realized it until I after we talked a little bit. We both discussed this. As good as our parents were, and as much as we loved them, and felt that they loved us, we never heard, “I love you.” It’s just sort of the era that they were brought up in. We pondered it when we talked about it. When Linda started to have children, she said, “I made sure I told my children all the time that I loved them.”

I don’t ever really remember, as a little boy, my mom and dad picking me up and sitting me on their lap, as Bro. Doug and Sis. Julie do with their family. They’re like a little koala bear family. That’s a treasure and a blessing. Some of you might do the same. I don’t discredit our parents in a sense. That’s just how they were brought up. So as time went on, I realized how it affects me sometimes in how I express love. It’s hard for me to use the words, “I love you” with the freedom some people do. Some people tell you every second, “I love you, I love you, I love you.” Sometimes that can go overboard, too, if you just say it and don’t mean it.

Our dad was an electrician by trade. If I made a phone call to him and said, “Dad, I need a ceiling fan put up in our house,” he was there. He came and did everything. I said that for this reason: Sometimes how I express love to my family, it maybe different than the way you do. When my son calls me and say, “Hey, Dad, I need something,” I’m there. It’s just how we perceive things sometimes.

We’re all raised differently. Looking at Sis. Meldy here, it reminded me of the Filipino saints taking their pictures together. They’re touching one another. That’s just the way they are. We’re raised differently. So if I perceive something different in you, that doesn’t mean you don’t have any love. Or, the same way if you perceive something different in me, that doesn’t mean I don’t have any love. I say, “God, help us to still have love, even though we may offend somehow.”

Bro. Duane Jeffries brought a beautiful message last night. He brought the story that I’m about to bring to you. I didn’t want to say this here without first speaking to Bro. Duane in letting him know where I was coming from. This story is a little different from what he presented last night. What he presented last night is how I believe we look at it. This is the story of Martha and Mary. I believe what Bro. Duane said about it was in line, but I want to look at it a little bit from a different angle. I don’t want to take away from anything Bro. Duane said.

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Now, Mary and Martha were sisters. They were no doubt brought up by the same parents and raised in that culture. In this particular instance, when Jesus came and was in the house, Mary sat at His feet. The perception here is, certainly, Mary has greater love than Martha. But Martha was working. Let me digress here: This convention is taking place because there are ladies and men downstairs working. They’re preparing food and taking care of things. There are all kinds of things that need to be done. Sometimes we say, “Well, they’re not in service. They should be here.” They’re taking care of things. With Martha, in how she was brought up, she was expressing her love. “I need to serve. I need to wait on Jesus.” I know Jesus criticized her some. He said, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Sometimes what we look at, and how we perceive how people are, may the Lord help us to have a love not to question them until we find out their reasoning behind what it really is.

JUDGMENTS BY OUTWARD APPEARANCE

One more story. Let’s go to Matthew, chapter 15. This is a very touching story of mine. Now, understand the message that I’ve been bringing—what we express and what we perceive from the outward. You may witness two people in a conversation that you’re not even involved in, and somehow their expressions, as they part, leave you to think that there was a problem, and it may not have been. Verse 22: “And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word.” Now, for a second, don’t think about Jesus, but think about the perception of the story. Most people didn’t know who Jesus was. He was just a prophet or Elias to them. Here this woman came in and said, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David [She had such a love for her daughter.]; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” She needed help. It’s like the woman Bro. Duane spoke about last night. She believed Jesus could heal her sickness. This woman was the same way. She somehow knew by faith that Jesus was what she needed.

I was thinking about this with Jesus: *how much it might have hurt Him by not answering her a word.* That was not like Christ, but He was doing it also for the perception that was around. He didn’t answer her. Do you know what happened then? The disciples chimed in a little bit with what He was doing: “Lord, send her away; for she is troubling us.” How many of us would have been offended and left? Verses 24 and 25 of Matthew 15: “But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.” She needed Jesus. It even got worse. Verse 26: “But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” We would have all probably left. “You ignored me. You told me to go away. Now you’re calling me a dog,” but she knew Christ was the answer.

You might say, “Somebody spoke to me the wrong way. Somebody hurt and upset me,” and they may have,

but Christ will never hurt you. He will always bless you. When you get saved and He puts His love in you, you might recognize that maybe in your perception that the person you said offended you did not offend you. Every one of us need the love of God ruling and dwelling in our hearts. Unless we have that, we're going to get offended and cast down. I want to serve Jesus Christ. How is our love?

CONCLUSION

Peter said in I Peter, chapter 2, verse 20: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" If you get rebuked for something you did wrong, okay. You know, the perception of love doesn't usually go with correction. As parents, we don't always want to correct our children, but we know we have to from time to time. It isn't because we hate them, but we love them. Sometimes we make mistakes and God corrects us because He loves us. At the end of verse 20, it says, "But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Instead of being defensive, say, "Lord, I'll take it patiently." God said that it is acceptable. One thing for certain, God understands all things. He knows the very intents of our hearts and the desires of our lives. That's who we need to please. The Bible says that we need to live our lives that we're not found in condemnation towards God and man, but especially God.

May the Lord bless you. †

STEPS HEAVENWARD

By the late R. L. Berry

Chapter XVII

Grieving the Spirit

THE SPIRIT of God brings new life to the newborn babe in Christ. That new life is of the same nature as the Spirit. It came from God and delights in all that the triune God delights in. Whatever is contrary to the nature of this new life from God is displeasing to the Spirit, therefore the young convert should be careful to do those things which he knows are pleasing to God and refrain from those things which he knows are displeasing to Him. Anything that will grieve the Spirit of God is hurtful to our best interests, and anything that is beneficial to us will have the sanction of the Holy Spirit. Grieving the Spirit means doing things, not exactly sinful, but that are harmful, tending in the wrong direction, and weakening to our faith and hope in God. Grieving the Spirit may lead to open sin, and cause the Spirit to leave us dead and lifeless.

Indifference is very grieving to the Spirit of God. "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth," said the Spirit to an ancient church (Revelation 3:15, 16). Lukewarmness means indifference. To be indifferent means that it makes little or no difference to one how he lives or what becomes of him. Satan will tend to all the indifferent ones. He is at work now on the chains that will bind the indifferent ones

to their own destruction. Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is represented as being coaxed and persuaded to tarry behind in the City of Destruction and not be in such a hurry to go; but instead of listening to the deadly appeals of his worldly friends, he stopped his ears against their pleadings and ran, ran away from them, crying "Life! life! eternal life." When the angel came down into Sodom to take Lot and his family to a place of safety while the Lord burned up the wicked place, He took them out of the city, and said: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17).

Neglect is very grieving to the Spirit. Neglect of prayer, neglect of reading the Bible, neglect of assembling together—neglect of Christian duties, neglect of the soul's best interests.

Your progress in the Christian way, yes, your very life, young convert, depends upon your being wide awake to the things of life and death. Feelings of indifference and temptations to be neglectful must be most earnestly resisted. Backsliding and loss of soul seldom come of a sudden, they are generally preceded by indifference and neglect.

Carelessness is very grieving to the Spirit. Careless of the company you keep, careless of keeping your promises, careless of how you think, speak, and live, such as this leads to sin and backsliding.

Anything that opposes your soul's higher interests is grieving to the Spirit of God. You must never lose sight of the main issue, the great fact that you have an immortal soul to be saved or to be lost. Anything that obscures that main issue or prevents your doing everything possible to save your soul is grieving to the Spirit. You, of course, have or will have many temporal interests to care for, and it will be entirely right to care for these interests provided they do not take the lead and become matters of chief concern. Jesus told of a man who had so many "things" that he pulled down his old barns and built greater, and there he put his goods. And he then said he had so much that he would eat, drink, and be merry. That night he died. Jesus said he was a fool, because he neglected his soul to take more care of the body than it needed.

Earnestness is very necessary to your success. We are told to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." We are told that the Christian life is like that of a soldier, and that it is like running in a race, things that require most strenuous application. A soldier in the battle has all his energies centered on one thing, the gaining of the battle; a runner in a race has all his powers concentrated on one single issue, the winning of the race. This is the spirit with which you must start out on the Christian way to heaven. You must determine that everything must stand aside when the interests of your soul are at stake, that to gain heaven is the chief business of your life. When you put such earnestness into your Christian life as a runner does into his running, you will find yourself rapidly growing in the grace of God—and the danger of grieving the Spirit is greatly lessened.

If we grieve the Spirit of God, it leads to chastisement—in plain words, a whipping. "For whom the Lord

The Way of Truth

loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:9, 10).

Whenever you, either knowingly or ignorantly, engage in something not to your soul's best interests, the Spirit will check you in it. There will be an inward doubt about the propriety of doing that thing. If you continue, you will be chastened of the Lord. His stripes He will lay upon you just as a good father sometimes lays the stripes on the back of a son who has been disobedient. If you knowingly go against your soul's higher interests, you will be beaten with "many stripes"; if ignorantly, with "few stripes." Whenever you neglect your duty, you will feel the inner conviction that you have not fully discharged all your duties, and again will the Lord scourge you.

This chastening or scourging may be done in a variety of ways. It may be the direct chiding of the Spirit in our hearts. This is the most effective chastisement, if we are wise enough to take it that way. In this kind the Lord shows us the mistake, the neglect, the error, or whatever it is, and points it out very definitely, gently admonishing us of the misstep, while we acknowledge it with sorrow and with promises to do better.

If this is not effectual, or if, rather, we are too hard-headed to listen to the Lord directly, then he may let trials or distresses or losses come upon us. We are in the Lord's school, and if one method will not teach us to listen to His voice, He tries some other way. A certain man was called to preach, but he was so set against it that not till after his wife died, his children died, and various losses came upon him did his will yield to the will of God.

Young convert, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Hebrews 12:5). You are called to walk in a holy path, and your Father's corrections and chastisements are exactly what you need to prevent your going astray. †

OUT OF BOX 88

To the Church of God (Universal),

Thank you for sending your monthly publication. The sermons are so good and does my soul well, especially in these last and evil days. ... I don't believe in playing with God in these last and evil days. If one does not have the Spirit of God, there's no way to win against the devil.

Please pray for me that I can continue running the race until I can see what the end is thereof.

Lord willing, I will send my tithes and offering each month to help in your publication.

—C. H., Illinois

We wanted to let you know that the inmates at Three Forks Regional Jail in Beattyville, KY, appreciate your radio station. They tune in and hear your messages of truth.

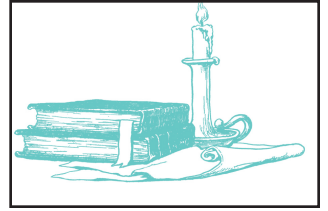
May God bless your ministry.

—M. W., Kentucky

What the Holy Spirit Will Do for You

By the late Charles V. Weber

THE PERSON who is converted has already experienced personal contact with the Holy Spirit in more than one way. It was the Holy Spirit which first caused him to think about accepting and confessing Christ. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:3). The inner tug which turned his face toward Jesus and caused him to acknowledge that Jesus is Christ the Lord was the action of the Holy Spirit upon his will.



The Holy Spirit is now in the earth doing business for the Godhead. In the Godhead is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In some mysterious ways these three are one God. The Trinity may be compared with the mind consisting of the three faculties called intellect, emotion, and will. There seems to be no human way of accurately defining the Trinity, but obvious that all three members of the Godhead have functioned in definite phases of the work of God.

There was a long period before the coming of Christ to earth when God dealt directly with men. He talked with Abraham, met Moses through the burning bush, backed up Elijah on Mt. Carmel, and gave the prophets messages which the people needed.

Christ, or God the Son, had a brief period when He dealt directly with the people. He came to this earth, gave Himself to a ministry of healing, saving, and teaching, and finally took our sins in His own body and gave His life in our stead. He came forth from the tomb because death did not have the power to hold Him, and ascended to the Father where He now intercedes for men.

Before Jesus left the earth He explained that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His place so believers would not be left alone, but would have a comforter. Jesus said to His followers, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).

Ten days after Christ went back to the Father, the Holy Spirit descended upon men, and since that time the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, has been active on earth doing the work of God.

The Holy Spirit is not doing work just for Himself, but for the Godhead. Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit, "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak" (John 16:13). "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). In every case, the work done on earth, whether by the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, is done for the Godhead.

This is the day of the Holy Spirit and every act of God performed on earth is done through the agency of the Holy Spirit. People are wooed by the Spirit and are drawn to God. They are born of the Spirit (John 3:5) and begin to live as children of God. They are filled with the Spirit and are comforted by His abiding presence.

After the departure of Christ, the Holy Spirit was given to the believers in Christ and not to unbelievers. Jesus said to the disciples, "The Father ... shall give you ... the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:16, 17). Although the Spirit is in the world and is at work drawing men to God, yet the world does not know Him. It is the privilege of the Christian alone to know Him and to be filled with His presence. Although a man may be drawn by the Spirit of God and be born of the Spirit, it is only after he is "born from above" that he is in the position to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit's presence. Until man has been born spiritually—born again—he is in no condition to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

When a man is in sin he is a slave to Satan without power to free himself or to present himself to God. He can cry for deliverance, and when he does the Holy Spirit makes available the redeeming grace of Christ. If man yields to that grace, confesses Christ as his Redeemer, and lets go of the old life of sin, he is released and redeemed from sin. He is then free from Satan, and for the first time in his life is in a position to fully dedicate and consecrate his life for the fullness of the Spirit. That is why the baptism of the Spirit comes after one becomes a Christian. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because unsaved men are not free to know Him. But the moment a man is regenerated or born again, he is free, and is in a position to present himself for God's fullness.

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). It is readily seen, then, that the gift of the Holy Spirit was for the Christian.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the actual presence of God blended with the human spirit which enables a person to live a victorious and fruitful Christian life. It is a mystical experience, but yet it is as real as the food a person eats. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Or, as Paul testified, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). The gift of the Holy Spirit is the actual presence of God blended with man's personality. We may not be able to explain this experience easily, but it is glorious and leaves a man stirred to the depths of his soul.

It is better than when Jesus was here in bodily form. When Christ was here bodily He could be only with the believer. But the Spirit of God, not being limited by a body as was Christ, can dwell within the body of man and be blended with his personality. Christ recognized this, and that was why He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away" (John 16:7). "But ye know him [the Holy Spirit]; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you [through the infilling of the Spirit]" (John 14:17).

The reality of God in a person's life as a result of the infilling of the Holy Spirit means a great deal. Jesus, in telling about this experience, spoke of the Spirit being a comfort to the believer—a Presence who would abide forever. He also explained that the Holy Spirit would be a witness in the hearts of believers, making them a convicting power in the world to reprove men of sin. The Holy Spirit, Jesus said, would also be a guide leading to a knowledge of truth and would give power or ability to the Christian. When a person actually experiences the baptism of the Spirit, all speculation as to what Jesus meant ceases.

There are various ways in which the Holy Spirit will work, and what happens in individuals will depend upon differences between individuals. The Spirit works according to the need.

Every Christian can expect to bear the fruit of the Spirit, and the infilling of the Spirit is for the purpose of enabling the Christian to bear more fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23). The Spirit-filled Christian finds the natural expression of his life to be in the category of this fruit.

Every Christian may also expect manifestations of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and to receive supernatural ability to meet any need which may arise. Hebrews 2:4 speaks of God "himself bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." As the Christian obeys God, surrenders to the Holy Spirit, there will many times be imparted to him supernatural ability. All these divine impartations are not for personal profit (although indirectly blessings are received) but are for the ministry and for the purpose of helping those in need.

From the time that the Christian receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit, he has God's presence with him to make his life a radiant expression of the love of God. God does not promise the Christian that he will be without trials, but God does promise to be with him in every trial, temptation, and weakness. Through the Holy Spirit he can be victorious. ...

The Holy Spirit will give the Christian an overflow which will make him a soul-winner. This stream of overflow will be a wonderful blessing. As it flows through the life of the believer, he will experience an abundant, full, rich life. Jesus said, "If anyone believes in me, streams of living water ... shall flow forth from his heart." He meant by this the Spirit—which those who believed in Him were to receive—or the Spirit had not yet come (John 7:38, 39). Now that the Holy Spirit has been given, this full flow is the blessed experience of every Christian. ...

Christian, God wants you to have this Spirit-filled life. He wants you to live a triumphant, victorious Christian life. God is eager to give you this experience. Jesus said, "If ye ... being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). The important thing is for you to humbly consecrate your life to God so that He can use

you for His glory. Dedicate your all to Him, then believe that He fulfills His promise and sends the Holy Spirit to dwell within you. †

—Reprinted from June 1995 issue

HOLY GHOST LEADERSHIP VERSUS MAN-RULE

By the late H. R. Matthews

IN THE TRIUNE Godhead, or Holy Trinity, we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Godhead is one made up of three very distinct persons. So perfect is the unity of the Trinity that we speak of them as being one.

For the human mind to comprehend how three entities can compose one God, is not possible; nevertheless, we believe it to be true, for the Word of God is unerring. For one to know God, a relational experience with the entire Trinity is necessary.

Since this article is not being presented as a means of proof of three distinct, eternal, divine entities, we shall not pursue that particular thought further. Rather, we wish to clarify the incompatibility between Holy Ghost leadership versus man-rule. Our endeavoring to accomplish this, in itself requires Holy Ghost leadership, and for this we pray.

The apostle John makes it clear that not every religious spirit is of God, and that it becomes the responsibility of the child of God to try (prove) the spirit in order to determine if it is of God or of the devil. These are the only two sources from which the spirit can originate. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

From the Old Testament readings, we understand a prophet to be one who had the God-given ability to foretell future events. As we move into the New Testament, prophesy was one of the gifts of the Spirit. A prophet was one who was ordained and called by God to preach the gospel message. However, the apostle John declared “many false prophets are gone out into the world.” A false prophet, then, would be a prophet whose calling came from a spirit other than the Spirit of God.

The apostle Paul spoke of the false prophet in the following manner: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Corinthians 11:13-15). We must understand that a God-called minister could be mistaken on some point of truth without becoming a false prophet. A false prophet would not only be without a God-called ministry, but also his message would no doubt be flawed.

We must understand also that a self-ordained prophet may preach truth, but it would be the letter only. In describing his own ministry, the apostle Paul declared, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Corinthians 3:6).

The God-called, God-ordained prophet will “speak the truth in love,” for so doth the Word of God command. “But speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). The ministry of the false prophet brings into bondage; whereas, the speaking the truth in love sets at liberty in Christ Jesus. Speaking the truth in love stays in the center of the road; whereas, the message of the false prophet strays to compromise on one side of the road to fanaticism on the opposite side of the road.

The false prophet may be a gifted speaker while at the same time possessing a winning personality. This will cause his spirit more difficult to discern, but “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

In Holy Ghost leadership, then, the prophet becomes a vessel, a mouthpiece through which the Holy Spirit guides into all truth, a vessel through which the Holy Spirit comforts and instructs, through which the Holy Spirit imparts gifts that bring relief from suffering the oppression of the devil, from sickness and disease. The prophet of God through wisdom from above becomes a counselor to the weak and needy. “The servant [prophet] of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (II Timothy 2:24, 25). Through the Holy Spirit ordained prophet will the Spirit Himself bear witness of son-ship.

Jesus said, “I will build my church.” We find Holy Ghost rule (leadership) only in this one body; all others under man-rule dwell.

Man-rule is not comprehended in the fact that man possesses leadership positions in the church. These leadership positions are imparted to man by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. “And he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body [church] of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11, 12). “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:7-10). It is important for us to understand that “the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will” (I Corinthians 12:11).

To those who are self-appointed to these offices would come under the heading of man-rule, for the manifestation of the Spirit was not imparted to them.

The qualifications for Holy Spirit leadership positions are clearly designated in the Word of God:

- Born again of the Spirit of God
- Holy Spirit baptism would give greater power
- A genuine love for truth
- Speaking the truth in love
- Clothed with humility
- Not greedy of filthy lucre
- Patient
- Gentle
- A correspondingly natural ability
- The endowment of gifts according to the Holy Spirit's choosing
- Laying on of the hands of the presbytery

In trying the spirits, the following discrepancies would help to identify the spirits manifested by man-rule:

- The spirit of carnality
- Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils
- Desirous of vain glory
- Covetous of fame and fortune
- Follower of the traditions of men
- No unity of the Spirit
- No unity of the faith
- Much false prophecy concerning events beyond the last day
- Teacher of false doctrine that Christ was nothing more than a prophet
- Low level morality

We hear much about legalism. Legalism is not a product of Holy Spirit leadership. Legalism is a by-product of man-rule and also is the cry of those who object to the presentation of a Bible standard that would require a change to their lifestyles.

The desire for this article is that it will assist us in distinguishing between Holy Ghost leadership and man-rule. This will require not only a familiarity with the Word of God, but also a trying of the spirits to see whether they be of God.

As a gift of the Holy Spirit, not many possess the gift of discernment; nevertheless, most saints of God have an innate level of discernment. However, a genuine love for truth is a requisite for spirit trying discernment. Truth is a product of love. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Good morning Friend,

I am so thankful for your service to our Lord Jesus Christ. *The Way of Truth* is my food and nourishment to my soul. I enjoy every part of each message. I feel God's presence when I am reading; only He can do that.

I want to be a light and always do God's will, not my own. ... I pray I will always stand for what is right in His eyes and in His Word and in my heart. ... I love Him so much, and I know He died for me, and He is the Son of God.

—L. P., Kentucky

STREAMING CHRISTIAN MUSIC ONLINE

We now have a site streaming Church of God music and messages 24/7 recorded during our services. It can be found by going to:

www.wayoftruth.org and clicking on: [Way of Truth Internet Radio](#)



Greetings!

Recently, there was a young people's Sunday morning service centered around "The Fruit of the Spirit." Lord willing, we will be sharing the thoughts given in this service over the next couple months. We trust you will receive a blessing! —Bro. Doug

PEACE

By Sis. Makenna Goodyear

I AM GOING to be speaking a little about peace which is one of the fruits of the Spirit. I would like to start out with a story about peace that I thought was interesting.

There once lived a very wealthy man who was willing to pay a small fortune to the artist who could best illustrate the presence of peace. Several artists brought paintings of sunsets and quiet meadows, but the man did not accept any of these. One day as he was walking through looking at the most recent attempts, two paintings captured his attention. One was a painting of a beautiful calm lake surrounded by lush green mountains. The water seemed as still as glass and wispy white clouds danced in the bright blue sky. Next to this painting was another with vast differences. It was also a picture of a lake surrounded by mountains, but the strong winds had whipped the lake into a tempest and the dark clouds hovered about the rugged mountain landscape ready to release a downpour of torrential rains.

The audience standing about watched with anticipation to see which one the man might choose to depict the story of peace. All were shocked when he did not choose the first, but instead chose the second. How could such a stormy scene tell a story of peace? The rich man explained. The first painting was beautiful and peaceful, but it didn't tell the truth of where peace can be found. Anyone could feel peaceful upon a crystal-clear lake with white clouds drifting across the sky and barely a breeze blowing across the water. Then he pointed out something in the second painting which everyone else had overlooked. If you peered closely into the mountains of the second, there was a waterfall, and tucked into a crevice of that mountain near the waterfall was a small nest on which a mother bird sat upon tiny blue eggs.

The man spoke. "This second painting is a picture of true, perfect peace because it is within the storms of life we find real peace tucked into the side of God knowing His presence will guard and protect us even in the midst of this world's storms."

What is peace? It's definition is, "freedom from quieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions." We all



need peace at some point or another. Worry often causes us not to have peace.

Psalm 4:8 says, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

This is a very comforting verse to me. When I gave my heart to the Lord, He gave me a peace that no one can take away from me. He gave me the assurance that as long as I serve Him, I will have the peace of knowing that someday I will make it to heaven to live with Him through eternity.

Another verse that shows God's promise of peace is 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."

Jesus promised to leave His peace with us. The devil's goal is to try and take that peace away from us. To keep God's peace, we can keep praying to God to help us not to give into the devil's torment. Just as Jesus rose in the ship and "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace be still,' and there was a great calm," so He can rebuke the devil on our behalf making us have peace. God has power to give us peace even in the worst storms of our lives.

Just as Horatio Spafford, who is the writer of the song, "It Is Well with My Soul," had peace in a huge storm, we can have peace in any hard circumstance.†

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Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

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THANKFULNESS

"It's only when we choose to give praise for the rough spots in life that we will begin to see them from God's perspective. If we don't give thanks in all things, we are living in unbelief, for we are assuming that our circumstances are not controlled by a God who loves us!"

—Erwin W. Lutzer

"Life without thankfulness is devoid of love and passion. Hope without thankfulness is lacking in fine perception. Faith without thankfulness lacks strength and fortitude. Every virtue divorced from thankfulness is maimed and limps along the spiritual road."

—John Henry Jowett

One of God's faithful missionaries, Allen Gardiner, experienced many physical difficulties and hardships throughout his service to the Savior. Despite his troubles, he said, "While God gives me strength, failure will not daunt me." In 1851, at the age of 57, he died of disease and starvation while serving on Picton Island at the southern tip of South America. When his body was found, his diary lay nearby. It bore the record of hunger, thirst, wounds and loneliness. The last entry in his little book showed the struggle of his shaking hand as he tried to write legibly. It read, "I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God." Think of that! No word of complaint, no childish whining, no grumbling at the circumstances—just praise for God's goodness.

—Bible Illustrator

"For three things I thank God every day of my life: thanks that He has vouchsafed me knowledge of His works; deep thanks that He has set in my darkness the lamp of faith; deep, deepest thanks that I have another life to look forward to—a life joyous with light and flowers and heavenly song."

—Helen Adams Keller

"One act of thanksgiving when things go wrong with us is worth a thousand thanks when things are agreeable to our inclination."

—John of Avila

"If gratitude is due from children to their earthly parent, how much more is the gratitude of the great family of men due to our Father in heaven."

—Hosea Ballou †

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2024 PHILIPPINE CONVENTION

Paniqui, Tarlac, Luzon

December 26-30, 2024, Lord willing

Bro. Rey Fabian, Host Pastor



2025 JAMAICA CONVENTION

Cornwall Mountain, Westmoreland

March 4-9, 2025, Lord willing

Bro. Peter Ramsay, Host Pastor



2025 INTERNATIONAL
CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

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Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

July 1-6, 2025, Lord willing

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor

THE CHURCH OF GOD
STANDS FOR

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

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

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

PLEASE PRAY FOR THESE MEETINGS