

The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 6

He Must Increase, I Must Decrease

Message begins on page 18

June-July 2025

BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”—Ephesians 2:14.

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN challenged the communist world in 1989. The Berlin wall was built in 1961 to partition East Berlin from West Berlin and isolated the people so there could be no passing to and fro. President Reagan presented a powerful challenge while visiting the German capitol: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” And lo, and behold—down it came.

That was a literal wall. Applying to the spiritual, Jesus Christ had the intent of breaking down any walls that separated mankind from God and separated the family of man from each other. Walls are partitions which can be good when it has to do with protection, but separations caused by walls can be a bad thing. A chorus we sing says, “He is our peace who has broken down every wall.” The scripture above tells us that there was a “middle wall of partition” which the apostle explains in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” To be made one in Christ requires breaking down walls.

The Wall of Division needs torn down! Jeremiah said in verse 1 of chapter 1: “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.” There are those who scatter God’s people and forbid brethren from having fellowship with other saints of God. There are those who reject or neglect Christ’s challenge in St. John 17:21, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” As far as God is concerned, there is only one fold. St. John 10:16, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” Let this wall of division be broken down!

People—even religious people—do not realize that imputed sin is a wall of partition that separates man from God. So the *Wall of Sin* must come down. The prophet Isaiah cried in chapter 59 and verses 1 and 2: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Now the Bible is speaking of *imputed sin* or a known transgression of the Word of God. We see the purpose Jesus came was to break down the wall of sin! I John 3:8, “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

Another wall that needs broken down is the *Wall of Bondage* which is built by addictions of all sorts. A great promise is given by God in Leviticus 26:13, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land

of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.”

I think about the man in Mark 5 who was separated from God and his family by a wall of devil possession. He was tormented and tried to do himself harm. He had lost any semblance of self-respect. But this wall was broken down when the Master came. As the chorus says, “The conquering Savior shall break every chain.”

I think about the multitudes who are chained in a life of addiction and cry day and night for that wall to be torn down. It can be by yielding to the Lord!

Life has many burdens which can weigh us down if we aren’t careful. This state causes us to be weighed down and ineffective. Jesus came to break down that *Wall of Burden*. Again, the prophet Isaiah declares in chapter 9, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.”

Martha was cumbered under a wall of burden. Luke 10:40, 41, “But Martha was cumbered 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. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.” Too busy! Saints, we should let Jesus tear down the wall of burden! “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Peter 5:7).

So many like Felix are putting off salvation. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

Another wall that separates many from God is the *Wall of Bitterness*. This wall, too, must come tumbling down. Hebrews 12:15 says, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

No man can be a servant of God who hides bitterness in his heart. Ephesians 4:31 states, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”

Don’t let something someone else has done be a wall of bitterness and cause you to be lost!

A wall that exists in the heart of so many is the *Wall of Hatred*. This wall has caused many to be lost forever. I John 4:19, 20 is very plain: “We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Some

ABOUT THE COVER

The Upper Geyser Basin in Yellowstone National Park is renowned for its high concentration of geysers and hot springs, including the famous Old Faithful Geyser. It’s a major attraction within the park, offering a unique experience for visitors.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 83

June-July 2025

No. 6

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.

Published by the Church of God which assembles at 12819 Point Salem Road in Hagerstown, Maryland. Publishing office: 12811 Point Salem Road, Hagerstown, Maryland, U.S.A.

The Way of Truth is published without any given subscription price, and is supported by freewill offerings from our readers and funds supplied by the local congregation. It is sent out free to anyone who is interested enough to ask for it. We shall continue this policy as long as God sees fit to make it possible. FOREIGN READERS are requested to write us at least once a year if they wish to continue receiving the paper the following year. Address all correspondence to: The Way of Truth, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741, U.S.A. Always when writing, give your name and address clearly, please.

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may shout, "But you don't know what he did to me!" or, "You don't know what she said about me!" It doesn't matter! There is no justification for a person to let the wall of hatred to keep him out of God's favor. Let Jesus break it down!

We can clearly see the wall of hatred collapse in the example of Jacob and Esau. Jacob had stolen Esau's birthright and blessing through deception. Esau declared that he would kill Jacob for it. When Jacob returned after many years, Esau met his entourage with 400 men to avenge the wrong. Esau determined to do Jacob harm! But after Jacob wrestled all night, something miraculous happened! Instead of doing harm to Jacob, Esau fell on his neck and kissed him. The wall of hatred was broken down!

Another wall that separates man from God is the *Wall of Pride*. Psalm 10:4 declares, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." Psalm 73:6 says, "Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain ..."

Proverbs 16:18 plainly states, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Nebuchadnezzar was filled with pride. God broke down that wall of pride by taking away his power and making him eat grass as a beast of the field. After the collapse of the wall of pride, this is what he pronounced—

"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37).

Yet another wall to be destroyed is the *Wall of False Perceptions*. People have a tendency to hold to their perceptions, whether they are true or not. For example,

many stay unsaved because they are convinced they cannot live it. But God says, "I will give you power." Mark 4:12 says, "That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

They cannot comprehend the joy unspeakable and peace that passes all understanding.

Taste and see! Let Christ break down that wall of false perceptions and know the truth, for it will set you free.

The Wall of Profession is another wall to be broken down. Jesus, speaking in Matthew 7:21-23, has pointed scripture: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." There will be many surprises at the last day. Why not let the wall of profession be destroyed?

The Wall of Selfishness and Self-destruction. People are refusing Christ to the destroying of their own souls. Proverbs 6:32 points out, "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."

There are many other walls that need torn down. Let me close this editorial by reminding all that *Jesus Broke Down the Walls of Our Prison*. As Psalm 124:7 says, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped." †

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Question Box	Page 2
<i>Our monthly feature</i>	
Dead to Sin, Alive to God	Page 3
<i>Radio message by David Shaw</i>	
Winning a Crown	Page 5
<i>Part V of the book by the late C. W. Naylor</i>	
The Trojan Horse (Part II)	Page 8
<i>Full-length sermon by David Goble</i>	
The Poetry Page	Page 13
<i>About fathers</i>	
The Children's Corner	Page 14
<i>"Family," by Rebecca Bland</i>	
Young People's Page	Page 15
<i>"I Am the Resurrection and the Life"</i>	
Bible Lesson of the Month	Page 16
<i>"The Spirit of God"</i>	
He Must Increase, I Must Decrease	Page 18
<i>Full-length sermon by G. E. Tyler</i>	



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



QUESTION: What is the battle of Armageddon?

ANSWER: What is commonly called "The Battle of Armageddon" is a battle referred to in Revelation 16:14. In this verse the battle is called, "The battle of that great day of God Almighty." Verse 16 reads, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Armageddon is a place. *Har-megiddon*, means, "Mount of Assembly." *Chormah-Gedehon*, another spelling of the word, means, "Destruction of Army." Still another spelling, *Mount Megiddo*, means, "Where troops gathered for battle."

In Old Testament times, this was the scene of the two greatest victories ever won by Israel. Here is where Barak conquered the Canaanites, and Gideon overcame the Midianites.

The Church of God teaches that this battle spoken of in Revelation 16 is NOT a literal battle but a spiritual one, just as various things in the Old Testament which literally happened to Israel were types of spiritual things in the New Testament, such as the *Passover*, the *seventh day sabbath*, the *captivity in Babylon*, etc.

In his book *The Battle of Armageddon—What, Where and When*, Lawrence J. Chesnut, wrote:

"Armageddon (Mount of Holiness) of the New Testament is an antitype of the Megiddo of the Old Testament. Literal battles in the Old Testament are types of spiritual battles in the New Testament. Here (Mount of Holiness and Truth, the great battlefield of the New Testament) shall the army of the redeemed put to flight the infernal host as mentioned in Revelation 20:8. Gog and Magog are the combined forces of false religion.

"Armageddon is not as some have supposed, a battle fought with lead and steel, but a struggle between the powers of right and wrong. The true Biblical Church of God is a spiritual institution, and is not an army that fights literal battles. Her members are saved from sin and hatred."

So *The Battle of Armageddon* is a spiritual battle between the forces of false religion and the true saints of God. It is not a literal battle in which Russia, along with other nations, invades the little country called Israel today.

QUESTION: I would like to refer to an answer to a question in an issue of *The Way of Truth* your words: "One who actually commits known, imputed sin is no longer in the Church. He has lost his salvation and whatever gifts he had." I am not sure I understood this correctly. Is this a "Saved Today—Lost Tomorrow" doctrine? Is there a confirming reference to the foregoing question, one which I can look up in my old King James Version of the Bible? Where in the Bible does it tell us

that when David sinned by his sexual relationship with Bathsheba he "lost" his salvation?

ANSWER: If you think a Christian can commit adultery and murder and still be a Christian, then it is not strange that you disagreed with my answer. God is willing to forgive people of such sins that I am sure of, but the KJV does not teach a Christian can do those things and still be a Christian. Galatians 5:19-21 clearly states that those who do such things "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

I do not question God's ability to keep us from sin; I teach that strongly. But God has made us as freewill moral people, with the responsibility of choosing. If a Christian chooses to return to a life of sin, he can, and the KJV tells us that Judas "by transgression fell" (Acts 1:25). The Bible also tells us that Demas departed from the Lord, having loved this present world. The Bible also tells us of those who returned to wallowing in the mire, according to Peter: "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:22). A Christian who has been washed in the blood of the Lamb cannot return to the hogpen of sin and still be clean any more than the sow!

Now if you really believe the KJV of the Bible, note what it says in Ezekiel 33:13—"When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it." See also Ezekiel 18:24.

I do not preach "Saved Today—Lost Tomorrow," but I do teach, as the Bible teaches, that Christians live free from all KNOWN sin. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1, 2).

Adam was the son of God; he sinned and he died! "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

QUESTION: Would you please explain Revelation 2:20?—"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

ANSWER: Jezebel is used as a type of false religion, just as the pure woman in Revelation 12 symbolizes the true. This congregation was permitting false teachers to work in their midst. The end result was that the people were committing spiritual fornication, that is, giving their allegiance to false religion. The same is still going on today. This same truth is brought out in Revelation 18:3. That is why God said "come out" (verse 4). †

DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD

Radio Message by Bro. David Shaw

I WOULD LIKE to speak from the book of Romans, chapter 6, verse 12. It reads thus: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

I have been wanting to deal with this topic. I would like the world to know that our hindrance in this life of happiness is sin. Sin is a havoc in the world. God desires to destroy sin, but it is through the obedience of His Word. My topic is "Dead to Sin, Alive to God."

It is obvious that sin is destroying the lives of millions across our land. Each day we are more grieved as we behold the works of sin being accomplished. The devil is successful in using different means and ways. Each day we see things that are grievous. It causes us to wonder and ponder. People are under the influence of the devil. That's what is making all the havoc.

Sin is a hindrance in the lives of those who are involved in it. So, the apostle Paul, as he looked down through the ages of time, recognized that Christ came that sin would be diminished. He came so sin would be removed from the lives of individuals, but because man is contented in his own ways, sin is having the preeminence in the lives of many today. Paul is saying to us that we have the power to say *no* to sin and *yes* to righteousness. We don't have to allow the devil to have the preeminence over us. It seems like it is easier to say *yes* to the devil, and so millions are caught up in the trap of the enemy. They have allowed him to use them for his own purposes. I am here to say to us that we should never allow ourselves to be used as a tool by the devil, because Christ came to give us deliverance. We have a right to say *yes* to the devil or *no* to the devil, and we have a right to *yes* to God or *no* to God. To whom will you be submissive?

Who is worthy of our lives while living here? If I should answer for you, God is the only One who is worthy of our service. Paul is saying to us that we have the power to disallow sin to rule in our body. He said, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body," this fleshly body of ours that the devil takes and uses to his advantage. It is God who is the One that is to be honored, exalted, and praised as we live on. This body was given to us by God and not the devil. Why then has the devil obtained the upper hand? We should be able to ask God that through His grace we can say *no* to the devil. The devil is a strong force, but praise God, the force of God is stronger. Because God is stronger than the devil, we can override him in the name of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said in His Word, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Why is the devil having such a stronghold on the lives of individuals? They are listening to his every word. It is a hindrance to righteousness. Eve listened to the devil and was unsuccessful. When he came to her in the Garden of Eden, he showed her the fruit that looked so pleasant to the eye. He told her that partaking of the fruit would not do her any harm. It would

make her as gods, knowing good and evil. She did not understand that there were no true gods. There is only one true God—G-O-D, not g-o-d-s. She believed the devil was telling her the truth. The devil is a liar. In many instances, he may speak truth and add just one word of a lie in the statement which changes the whole statement. The devil was successful in getting Eve to taste the fruit, and so he brought man into a terrible state. It dissolved the blessing God had in store for her and Adam. It diminished their blessings that would have obtained. They lost favor entirely with God, because God is against sin. Sin is obnoxious in the nostrils of God. While sin is ruining the lives of individuals, God is absent.

Again, the apostle Paul is saying to us that we have the power to disallow sin in our mortal body, and we should not obey it in the lusts thereof. Paul brought us to the understanding that Christ came and suffered and will forgive those who will ask for forgiveness of their sins. Christ made room for us to have access to God. We can be justified as individuals, but it is by faith.

Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What is that saying? It is simply saying that once we are in sin, we have no peace with God. We can only have peace with God when we are living holy, righteously, godly, and soberly in this present world. Therefore, we are now given the opportunity to be saved through Christ coming into this world to die in our stead and forgive us of our sins. Verses 2-4: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."

Though we are living in a miserable and confounded world, there is hope in Jesus. He is always willing and ready to forgive each one who will trust and obey His Word. If man would only be submissive to God, what a happy world it would be!

In Psalm 19:13, the Psalmist wrote: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." God's grace is able to keep. If we are willing to commit our ways in the hand of God, and ask Him for grace to make the run successful, we'll be able to be an overcomer in the name of the Lord Jesus. The writer here realized that the devil is cruel and always leading men into evil. He asked the Lord in his prayer to "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." I tell you, the word *presumptuous* needs to be looked into. People know that things are wrong, and they presumptuously do the wrong. We need to take thought. Yes, we are living in a world where people seem to be carefree. They're not understanding that the more sin they commit, the more disaster will strike. The more sin they commit, the further from God they go. The more sin they commit, the more God is angry. God is against every work of sin, no matter how simple it might be.

We learn of a man in the Bible by the name of Achan who was in the army of Israel. The army went to destroy

a certain territory of the enemy, and Achan took things from the enemy's territory and hid them in his tent. It caused men to lose their lives in the army of Israel.

Beloved Ones, people are dying in our land. They are dying in the most evil way, all because sin is involved. Our nation can only escape a lot of the disasters that are now happening only if man turns from sin. The writer said that man is presumptuous in committing sin and it's getting worse in our land. The Psalmist said, "Let them [sins] not have dominion over me." This brings me to the point that I'm concerned that millions are preaching today that man cannot live free from sin. The Bible does not say such. The Bible demands that man should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. I will read that passage later in my thoughts. "Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

Have we ever thought that we should allow whatever we say, whatever we do, to be acknowledged in the sight of God? He is a silent listener to every conversation. We cannot say a word that God doesn't hear. We can't have a thought in our hearts that God doesn't know about. He knows the very thoughts and intents of our hearts. God is desirous that man would change his attitude and conduct and mindset. We are always set in our own ways and not willing to obey the Word of God, but God is in love with man, and He desires that man would change his attitude.

Paul said in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Glory to God! The privilege is yours to leave the ranks of sin and cling to the almighty God and stop telling yourself that you can't live free from sin.

What is sin? *Sin* is the "transgression of God's law." James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." May I ask a few questions? Why know the right and do the wrong? Why is it the wrong is easier to do than the right? Is that wise? No, that is an unwise decision. The person who knows to do good and does it not, he puts himself in a dangerous position. He sinks deeper and deeper in the miry clay.

David recognized and understood his testimony to God. He said, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth." If we commit our time, our talents, and all in the hand of the Lord, certainly He will allow us to find in Him the joy, the peace, and happiness that can be ours to rejoice in.

Paul said in verse 13 of Romans, chapter 6: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." I would like to bring to your thoughts the fact that when you are living in sin, you are dead. You are dead in trespasses and in sins. You can only be alive when Christ reigns in your heart, for sin shall not have dominion over you. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are

not under the law, but under grace" (verse 14). Praise God for the grace that Christ brought unto us! By grace we are saved through faith. If we'll only allow the Lord to have preeminence in our lives, allow His Word to take root in our hearts, we can find victory in Jesus. We can find joy and peace as we live on. Our lives will be rid of misery. The devil will try to trample us under his feet, but he will not be successful. Today, the devil is standing in the way of people. He's forcing them in the evil, all because they refuse to resist him. The Bible says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We are thankful that grace is sufficient today, and by God's grace we can make the run successful.

Romans 6:14, 15: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" That is what you need to understand today. If you are yielding yourself to the devil, you are his servant. If you will yield yourself to God, you will be His servant. We cannot serve God and mammon. It's absolutely impossible. Jesus said it, and it's true.

How can you want to be a Christian and a sinner at the same time? We must resist temptation that we face on a daily basis. The devil will not leave us, but we need to go in the name of Jesus and ask Him for grace, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of His Word. If the Lord says, "We should not," He means just that. Therefore, we can't obey the devil and desire to be a servant of God. It's altogether impossible! We either obey the Word of God unto righteousness or obey the works of the devil unto death. It's a choice to be made. Millions are making the choice of death automatically. They do not understand what they're doing. When they sin, they think it's okay and God understands. They think they can't do without sinning because they are flesh. No, My Friend, our fleshly condition is not an excuse for the sin that is committed. Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." If we will only recognize the work of God and give Him our hearts, we will be able to make the run successful.

Paul desired that the world would know that God is able above all, and that He can manifest His will in our lives if we are willing to obey Him. He said one time, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." We need to get to the place where we can allow God to have full preeminence, and that we will serve Him in Spirit and in truth.

Earlier I made reference to Titus, chapter 2, the apostle Paul's epistle. He was trying to give the standard of grace to mankind. He said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all [not some] men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

WINNING A CROWN

By the late

C. W. Naylor



Part
V

The New Heart

“From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:25, 26). The heart of the sinner is truly stony, and especially in its attitude toward God. How often the same is true in regard to its attitude toward man’s fellow creatures. The story of this world is largely made up of what has been termed “man’s inhumanity to man”—unspeakable cruelties bringing oceans of tears, hatred of God and of His creatures. Yes, man’s heart is naturally a stony heart. But God promises here to take away that stony heart and give a heart of flesh, even a new heart. What a change this expresses! Out of the natural heart flows a stream of wickedness, vile and degrading. It is a very fountain of iniquity. As Jeremiah declares, it is “desperately wicked.” But regeneration changes all this, and God gives, as He has promised, a heart of flesh.

Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:35). According to this, the difference between a good man and an evil man is in the condition of his heart. A good man’s heart is like a treasure-house filled with good things, which he brings out in the acts of his life; whereas of the evil man, the opposite is true: he has an evil treasure, out of which flows an evil life. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (chapter 15:19).

In order for the evil man to become good, there must of necessity be a change in the condition of that treasure of his heart. And so the Lord said, “I will give you a new heart.” This signifies an entire renovation of the heart—a new creation, as it were, in Christ Jesus. Out of this new heart flows new life. Instead of impurity, there comes forth purity. Instead of hatred for God, there is love of God and of all that is good. The new heart is a heart of pity, kindness, compassion, and sympathy. The old hard feelings are gone, the old cruelties are now no more; and there comes into the life a tenderness and a gentleness never known there before. The whole aspect of the life is altered because he is altered. He no longer loves anything that is evil; he loves instead that which is good, pure, holy, noble, and uplifting. His desires are to do right, to please God, and to be a real example of His grace before his fellows.

This same truth Jesus set forth when He said that a good tree could not bring forth corrupt fruit. If the life that flows from our hearts when we profess to be Christians is not a pure, godly, virtuous life, it is because there has not been a cleansing of that inner fountain.

I would like enlighten us with the thought that we should be zealous for God. We should not allow the devil to block our minds. We should present ourselves in God’s hands in a willing way, and desire to serve Him as He calls us to do. Do you know what we need to do?

The writer tells us what we need to do—

*Dead to every worldly pleasure,
Dead indeed to sin am I;
But alive to Christ my Savior,
Daily to him I’m drawing nigh.*

*Let me strive not for the riches
Of this earth that soon decay;
From the world I’ve turned to Jesus
And his more abundant way.*

*Storms in fury beat around me,
Tempests oft my bark assail;
But my Pilot’s name is Jesus,
He will calm the wildest gale.*

*When I face death’s chilly river,
When upon its brink I stand,
I shall fearless be if Jesus
Leads me gently by the hand.*

*Let me see Jesus only,
Jesus only, Jesus only,
Let me see Jesus only,
Only he can satisfy.*

We seek satisfaction in a life of sin, but it is impossible to be found. Satisfaction cannot and will not be found in sin. Satisfaction is found in the Lord Jesus. Until we are willing to make that submission to Him, we are fighting a losing battle.

James 1:27, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Oh, we talk about keep me, Lord, keep me, Lord! We must be willing to keep ourselves. His grace is sufficient to aid us, but we must be willing to keep ourselves. The problem we are having in the world is that people want to serve God, but they walk too far from Him. We must walk hand in hand with God.

James also said in chapter 4, verses 8 and 9: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.” The thing that we are enjoying should be that which we try to avoid, and the thing that we are avoiding is what we should seek to enjoy.

Beloved Ones, the grace of God is more enjoyable than anything you can name in the world, but you have to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. Do you want to be elevated? You have to give yourself unto the Lord, and say, “Jesus, save me. Jesus, strengthen me,” and He will be your portion. †

In vain do we try to live right until we are made right; but when we are once cleansed within, when once the fountain of our heart is purified, we can then live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:12). God dwells in that new heart. It is the place of His sanctuary—the place in which He delights to manifest Himself, and out from which He speaks through our tongues, and looks in kindness through our eyes, and spreads forth His hand through us in pity and compassion and helpfulness. Of us then it may be said, “It is God which worketh in you.” Without this change of heart there may be morality, but there can never be Christianity.

The New Life

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 5:17, 18). According to this text, all things in the new life are of God; that is, they are wrought in righteousness. We cannot live partly for God and partly for self and Satan. The life must bear one complexion throughout. God looks upon it as a whole and expects us to live it as a whole for Him. He will accept nothing else. He has said that we are either for Him or against Him, and that we cannot serve both God and Mammon, and that we cannot serve two masters, for we shall either love one and hate the other or cleave to one and despise the other. If we truly love God and are truly living for Him, our lives are godly. Scripture says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (I John 3:9), and, “He that committeth sin is of the devil” (verse 8). Our sinning or not sinning shows to which master we belong. Therefore, if we are Christ’s, there is not seen in our lives the practice of sin, but we delight to do His will. We delight in that which is right and just and noble. People looking upon us can be able to say with real conviction that Christ liveth in us. The distinction between the Christian and the sinner is neither superficial nor imaginary, but reaches to the utmost depths of the heart and life. The line of separation is clean-cut and absolute. It is not simply a difference of profession, nor of acts, nor of association, nor even of character. It is more than all this; it is the possession of a new life divinely implanted—a new life that controls and actuates the being.

New Ideals and Purposes

When the heart is changed from sin to grace, the old ideals give place to new and better ones. The old purposes cease to sway us. Instead of being essentially selfish and living for our own pleasure, we begin to seek God’s pleasure and earnestly to desire to do His will—that which pleases Him. Whatever may have been our ideals before, they are now much exalted and must be so to be compatible with our new state. God becomes the ideal of our life, and it is our earnest desire that those qualities and characteristics which are manifested in Him may be manifested in us. We abhor that which is low and debasing, and we reach out to that which is high and noble. These new ideals and purposes dominate our life and make it one of which we need not be ashamed.

Effect on the Moral Attributes and Faculties

The effect of regeneration upon man’s moral attributes and faculties is most profound. It amounts to a complete transformation. His conscience, his will, his perceptions and sensibilities are all revolutionized. His faculties are quickened and changed. He finds himself different in a thousand ways, and these differences show to him that he is indeed a new creature.

The conscience of the sinner is defiled. “But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, there is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15). Paul, speaking on this point, says that they have “their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:2). This state of the conscience, however, need not be permanent. No matter how defiled it may have become, no matter how unclean, no matter how seared, when the soul turns to God there is a remedy. “How much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14). Again, it is said, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience” (chapter 10:22). The result of this purification through the blood of Christ is told in chapter 10:2—“Because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” When our iniquities are blotted out, the guilt upon our conscience is removed and we are free. We are before the Lord as though we had never committed sin, so far as any sense of present guilt is concerned. We are brought into a blessed state of peace, which is thus expressed: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). This state may be maintained. Paul said, “Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). Among other things which we are to do is to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (I Timothy 3:9). There is nothing that can give us more inward satisfaction than a conscience void of offense, one that approves our conduct and our state. Nothing can be more harassing than the stings of a defiled conscience.

God has promised us that we should have His peace, and we can have this peace only as we have a peaceful conscience. This is the Christian’s heritage; this is his glorious portion. We can so maintain our lives before God that we shall have the approval of our consciences and a continued realization that the things we are doing are done with the single purpose of pleasing God. We can be conscious that we are following Him as His dear children and yielding our all to Him. This inner consciousness is a joy indeed and a satisfaction that can come from no other source.

The sinner is fully bent on doing as he pleases, in following out his own purposes and desires. He does not take God into his consideration. He asks only, “What do I wish to do?” He feels that he is master of himself. He gives allegiance to none. Self sits upon the throne of his life and rules there. In regeneration all this is changed. The will submits to God. It takes its orders from Him, as it were. The regenerated person yields his will to carry out the purpose of his Maker. This yielding is not forced; it is willing and ready. The regen-

erated will delights to do the will of God, delights to carry out His purpose. That charity which is from above "seeketh not her own." Instead of opposing God, the will actively cooperates with Him. The one-time rebel has become a dutiful and obedient son.

The moral perceptions are also now greatly changed. We see things in a new light. Instead of seeing in God qualities that make us fear Him and dread Him and shrink from contact with Him, we see those things which attract us and draw out our love toward Him. God becomes, as it were, a new God. We find Him entirely different from what we supposed Him to be. We find His attitude toward us different from what it seemed to be. His love, which we never really knew before, becomes a glorious reality to us. His Word becomes as a new book, and we read it eagerly and enjoy it greatly. Our perception of moral qualities in actions is also very different from what it was before. It was abnormal. We looked at things through the obscurity of our sinfulness. But now we see things face to face. We see them in their true colors, in their true perspective.

Our sensibilities, too, are vitally changed. There is, in fact, a complete reversal of the effect of the causes which excite our sensibilities, the effect upon our feelings of things involving moral questions being quite the opposite of what it was before. Sinful things repel instead of attracting, excite our disgust and disapproval instead of producing in us a sense of pleasure. The company of our former wicked associates brings to us now a feeling different from what it did before. The things of the world have lost their charm. We are strongly drawn to holy things. Contemplation of God and our relation to Him instead of causing feelings of fear and distress, stir emotions of joy and thankfulness. New emotions arise and are sometimes very powerful. Spiritual joy, peace, contentment, and satisfaction unite to uplift the soul to new heights.

Different persons have different emotions, depending upon their natural temperaments. There is a wide variation even in the same person at different times. Emotion is not salvation or any part of it, but it often accompanies the work of God in us and follows in the life. We are profoundly conscious of the reversal of the effect of outside things upon our emotions. This is the most important thing in regard to them in our new life. In this particular they become an evidence of the change wrought in us. This subject will be treated more at length in a succeeding chapter.

Our natural faculties also are vitally affected. In the sinful life we may reverence God in a way, but not as when we are saved. We might worship Him in form as we see others doing, but we cannot worship Him in Spirit and in truth until our hearts are in harmony with Him. In the new life we need no command to praise Him or to worship Him, for it is natural to do so. Praise flows from our hearts unto Him as water from a fountain, and the flow is quickened by every consideration of His goodness to us. The contemplation of His being and character arouses a reverence in us that we could never have felt before. The wisdom and justice of His law excite our highest admiration.

Faith is another thing that is profoundly affected. It passes from the passive to the active state in the individual, and not only so, but it is greatly increased in degree. As sinners we may believe in God; but when we are converted, when we become God's children, our faith is active then, and we trust, we rely in Him and believe Him, and this faith brings us into and keeps us in vital relation with Him.

The sinner is pictured as being without hope and without God in the world. He has nothing to look forward to. Hope brings him no blessings from the spiritual realm. He looks forward to the future, and all is dark and disappointing. He has no foundation for hope. But with a Christian it is quite different. Hope is born anew in him. Hope looks forward and sees its pathway illuminated with a heavenly light. It looks beyond this life and sees the future glorious with expectation. The Christian's hope is based upon a sure foundation. He knows that he will not be disappointed. He knows that hope reaches within the veil and grasps hold of that which God has in store for him in the years of eternity. The Christian has hope in his present life and in his death and in God's glorious kingdom of heaven. No wonder that Paul spoke of it as being the "anchor of the soul." The sinner has no anchor for his soul. He is tossed about wherever the storms of life may throw him, while the Christian rests serene and calm and untroubled.

The faculty of love also is greatly changed, or manifests itself in a greatly different way. The sinner does not and cannot really love God. He may have an admiration for the character of God and for the laws of God, but this can never rise to love. He may love himself; he may love his friends and the things about him; he may love and does love his sins, or he would not persist in them. This selfish love and the love of sin must be destroyed out of the heart and is destroyed in regeneration. The newborn soul loves God. He knows not when he began nor how it is, but he feels his heart drawn out in tenderest love toward God. His capacity to love seems to be increased, and all its strength seems to go out toward God. Not that he does not love those about him nor the things that are lovely; he still loves these, but he loves them as they ought to be loved, and he loves God more than they all. "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19), and a contemplation of His love for us begets more and more of love toward Him in return.

Our sense of justice and fair play is likewise greatly affected. If we are treated unfairly, we no longer feel vindictive. We no longer feel disposed to take vengeance on those who do us ill, but rather to say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The disposition to enforce our rights by carnal means is taken away. We are willing to let God rule in our lives and rule in the things that concern us. Hatred, bitterness, envy, malice, and all such things have their end, and in their stead come kindness and mercy and justice. Abnormal self-esteem, pride, haughtiness, arrogance, and all such things give way to meekness, quietness, and consideration of others. We learn to value others at their true worth and by the same standard by which we value ourselves. †

THE TROJAN HORSE (Part II)

2025 Spring Revival Message by Bro. David Goble



THE TROJAN HORSE is this idea that when Adam disobeyed, when humanity disobeyed the commandment of God, he released something that has affected us. This is important: God created Adam and Eve perfect. There was no Trojan horse that God created, along with Adam and Eve. He created Adam and Eve perfect in His image with the ability to live the rest of their lives in the will of God. He said He wanted them to multiply and be fruitful, and so there's no Trojan horse in creation. It's an invention, and a machine of war, if you will, that humanity created. It was released into the world that we live in because Adam and Eve fell and sinned.

I have good friends and good brothers that I have talked to about these things. My thought is this: When this release went into the world, Adam and Eve were evicted. They were exiled from the presence of God. They've brought this machine of war that they constructed with them into our world. I'm not born into a Garden existence. I'm born into a world of exile. I'm talking about physically. Innocence. Sin is not imputed to innocence. But I was born into this world of exile. It makes perfect sense to me that when this Trojan horse was released, what's inside was released into this world of exile; it affects all of us. We're all born with this exile from God.

This morning, I would like to take us, by the Lord's help, into the book of Romans. It's only by the Lord's help. If anything good is accomplished, we'll give thanks to God. We won't take any credit for any of this. If we do, then it would weaken the faith and the message. We want God to get all the credit for any good that's done, and if there's anything that He needs to correct, we will plead His Holy Spirit to make the correction and straighten us out.

THE RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE

As we're in chapter 3 of Genesis, we want to begin with what we've been speaking about. This is part II of "The Trojan Horse." Verse 8: "They [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Why? Because they had something to be guilty of. They had disobeyed. Let's go down to verse 22, because between verses 8 to 22, God told them they were going to suffer. He told them, "You can't stay here. You didn't obey." Verses 22-24: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Now, that's the beginning of the problem. When we're born into this world, we inherit not the Garden of the East, but the Paradise Lost of the West. Can I share that image with you? The garden is eastward, towards the rising of the sun. The garden is a symbol of a place where God's eternity meets the temporal nature of humanity. We weren't born into this garden as Adam and Eve were. We're born into the Paradise Lost as the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, which I call the Exile of the West, a setting sun kind of situation. But God doesn't want us to end our lives in a Paradise Lost of the setting of the west. God wants us to enjoy once again the Garden of Eden before we end our lives. I believe that! That's a privilege, because this is one of the things that's distinctive about what the Church of God stands for, which is, we can be returned to the garden of the East. We can live a life once again pleasing to God every day, where we don't bring the Trojan horse back into that garden. We leave the Trojan horse in the exile of this world, but we ourselves can go back to that garden of the East. That's a privilege. This is something that will help young people.

MY EXPERIENCE

When I was a young person, I sat in the front row at church, sometimes by myself, desperately wanting to hear the preacher tell me the truth. I wanted him to say, "You can be saved and serve God every day of your life. You don't need to fall back and forth into sin. You can live a victorious life every day, and this is how you do it." I desperately wanted him to tell me that, but I heard stories and other things. I believe he was a kind man. I believe he wanted to do his best, but I'm not quite sure if he had the truth, because I never heard a way to escape my inclination towards sin. I found myself wanting to do good but frustrated, because I myself was responsible for my own condition. But as I looked around, people were happy living a life in sin. They were content with that. I guess the thought was, *Well, this is the best we can do in this human existence.* I saw folks lying, cheating, going to church, smiling, shaking hands, and greeting each other. I thought, *Is this the best it can be?* Even a young person, a human being who wants to serve God, he recognizes the exile of the West. I'm not talking about California. You might, but I'm not.

This idea that many people have is that we're exiled from the presence of God, and that's as good as it can be. You know, we'll try hard. Then, what religion does is that it makes up a theory which says, "Well, Jesus died for us, and He became the cloak for our exiled existence. He became the cloak for our sin that God doesn't see." And I thought, *No, that's not good enough. I'm addicted to sin.* Sin becomes an addiction. I want to be free from that addiction. I don't want somebody to throw me a life preserver as I'm drowning, or worse

yet, the life preserver is in the boat and the person throws the end of the rope to me, saying, "Here you go, hold on to it. It's all going to work out for you." And then as I go down for the third time, because the rope's not keeping me afloat, I'm thinking, *What good was that? That was a waste of a Sunday morning.* But, thank God, there was one time I found myself amongst a group of people, and the message was that you don't have to be content with the end of a rope to save you from the condition you find yourself in. God has a plan to take us, not only from the surface of the water, which is a symbol of sin, but He has a plan to take us out of the water entirely.

CALM AFTER THE STORM

We read a story the other night about a man who walked on the water and went to Jesus. He was quite content to stand on the surface of the water with Jesus, but when he was sinking, Jesus said, "O ye of little faith," and helped him up. Jesus took him off the water and back into a boat, and He went there with him. When they got inside the boat, everybody was fearless. Fear did not go back into the boat, but what happened was, the storm calmed. Our thought was, *wherever God is, and whenever God is, there is calm, there is peace.*

The frustration for a person who doesn't hear a message which says you can live free from sin is that that person will begin to accept something else. Some sort of substitute. It might be a religious substitute. In my case, my substitute was the world, because I thought, *there's nothing to this. I can have more fun and be more honest sowing my wild oats and being crazy.* That's the way it was for several years, but then after awhile, God is faithful, and He catches up with us. He says, "I tried to tell you before that you couldn't live it where you were before, but I have a people who are living the life that I'm promising." God will bring us to a place where we can find the truth that He has told us about. We don't have to continue to try to find our satisfaction. That's what happened in Ecclesiastes. The writer said, "Vanity of vanities." We don't have to keep trying to get our satisfaction in the world by saying, "This is the best it can be." But we can come back to a front bench, like I did, and be satisfied. Why? Because the message will be taught that not only can God forgive us of our foolishness and the things that create separation, but He can restore to us a condition that now allows us to walk justly and honestly with Him.

There's a commentator who gave a commentary on these two things. One is that *we are forgiven of our committed sins*, and the other is that *this inclination or this imagination of the heart can be changed back to an inclination towards God*. People asked, "Which one is more important?" And he answered, "The forgiveness that places us in the kingdom of God is more important." I don't know if that's the right way to look at these two things. They're both important, but I will tell you this: without the ability to walk every day according to the will of God, it's going to be a miserable existence, because the heart will want to walk with God, but if the spirit is inclined to evil, there's going to be a conflict there that will frustrate our desire to walk with God. So the ability to have our imagination or inclination towards

good away from evil is critical for the Church of God to be the Church of God.

Somebody has said, "God has lots of justified churches." Now, I don't know if this is so, but somebody has said, "But God has very few sanctified people." God may have lots of justified people, but what He really wants is a sanctified people. The sanctified people can live the message consistently. I realize we need to be justified, we need to be brought into the kingdom of heaven by the forgiveness of our sins, but I'm grateful that I can comprehend having that inclination towards God every day. I'm using biblical language now, because some folks have a problem with other language. I'm grateful for that inclination now which is turned towards good. That's where we want to go. So we see the problem in Genesis, right? Adam and Eve were evicted. They're exiled from the presence of God.

THE INCLINATION TOWARDS EVIL

Let's go to Romans, chapter 5. The essential difference between us and the first Adam is that we are born into this existence with an inclination towards evil. There's no question. We proved it the other night that if it were not so, then somebody could live just and right and never sin, and never need a Savior, but all of us who have come to a knowledge of good and evil and have a sound mind, we're inclined towards evil. That is the existence that humanity is born into, but there's a solution to this. This is where we would like to spend some time. It's a long subject, so I want to honor the time that we have. Verse 16: "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation [speaking of Adam], but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one [that would be by Adam's sin]; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

It's important to remember that in the book of Romans, the apostle Paul is dealing with this subject: he's comparing and contrasting the law which we call the law of Moses that God gave Israel with what we call the law of Christ. Paul is defending the law of Christ. Paul is an apologist. He is a defender of the gospel, so it is important that we remember the overall theme here. It's a comparison and a contrast between one kind of law and another kind of law, so we need to be careful that we don't get off course here. Verses 18-20 of Romans 5: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This is the beginning of the solution: because Jesus came, and we all need a Savior, we can be justified with God. We can be brought back into God's presence, because He forgives us of our sins.

There's a second part of this. That's what we're going to speak about also: the inclination that we have either as a sinner or as a saint. Let's go to Romans, chapter 6, verse 19: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity

unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” Can you see the word *yield*? As we were in Genesis, chapter 6, verse 5, it talked about the imagination of man’s heart was evil continually. We said that the word *imagination* means “inclination.” And now, you’re seeing the word *yield*. This is about this thing in us that tilts us one way or another.

“Yield your members.” We want to pay attention to those words. Yield is to incline. The natural state. Look at this again: “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness.” The natural state of humanity is to yield to uncleanness. Can we see that? That’s our natural state. That’s how we’re born, so to presume that our natural state is somehow neutral is not consistent with what we’re reading. We’re sort of a white board, right? We come into existence sort of neutral, and then later something gets written on it. That’s not what we’re reading in scripture. As people, our natural existence is to be inclined towards evil. That’s how we come into this world. That’s the exile of the West. That’s what the Trojan horse brings to us.

Look at what Paul says now: Romans 6:20-23: “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness [something changed], and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” So Paul is advocating for a change in this direction, this yielding. We used to yield unto evil, but he’s telling us now *to yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness*. How did this happen? Is it simply by our will that we now tilt the other way? That can’t be, because the natural state of man is to yield towards evil.

We can’t by our own desire just be good. Other than the fact we come here to worship, we also come here to be admonished, to be corrected, to be taught, to see how to change, but a big reason we all come to church is to get something supernatural. If it weren’t so, we don’t have to be here. We can read things at home and talk to somebody across the kitchen table. If we could help ourselves get better, a lot of us wouldn’t be here. We’d go to the bookstore and get a self-help book, and we’d feel better about ourselves. We wouldn’t be frustrated. No, no, no, we need something supernatural. If the natural state of man is to be inclined towards evil, there’s no way for that to tilt the other way naturally. The only way we can go pass center and be tilted towards good is something supernatural has to happen to us. That’s what Paul is referring to.

We don’t really have time to go into this, but Paul is also dealing with the comparison and contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. He says in Romans 8:8, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Now, the reason why Paul is telling us that the law of Moses is not sufficient to cause this supernatural change that we need is because when God gave Israel the law, in those days they did not have grace that

comes from heaven. Evidently, they did not have the Spirit of God that’s available to us now to incline their will towards good. Israel inclined towards evil because that was the nature of man, and God gave Israel the law. Paul would tell us, “There’s nothing wrong with the law of Moses. The law is good. The law is not evil, but when the heart of man is inclined towards evil, the law becomes bondage.” Why? Because the law is good. Anything that comes from God is good, and the law was given to Israel that there might be boundaries placed on Israel that they might know who God is, that they might not fall into paganism and all sorts of things.

In general, the law only had two remedies for sin. One was punishment and the other was proscription. Proscription means *you can’t do this, you’re exiled, you have to leave, you can’t be here anymore*. The law generally had two remedies: either there was punishment or proscription. That’s the reason why the Law of Christ is better. Why? Because while the Law of Christ might also proscribe some things, and it certainly might also result in certain punishment, the Law has something else that God now brings in Jesus. His mercy. The Law of love. The Law of love now brings another remedy. It was available to the woman caught in adultery. The law of Moses proscribed that she was to be put to death, but the Giver of the Law, who was present, said, “Which of you shall cast the first stone? Those of you without sin, cast the first stone.” Each one there melted away, but the Law-giver who brought a better covenant based on love, said, “I forgive you.” And then He said, “Go, and sin no more.” He said that more than once. I don’t think God gave a commandment that people couldn’t do, and I think it is still true that God is saying, “Go, and sin no more.” But if we’re to do that today, then our hearts need to be inclined towards heaven, because if we go out of here and our hearts are still inclined towards evil, guess what’s going to happen?

Romans, chapter 7. The first six verses in Romans 7 are different than the verses which end it. We’ll start at verse 16. “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.” See, Paul doesn’t have a problem with the law. Paul recognizes there’s a natural inclination of the human spirit that’s causing the problem. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me [Paul wants to do this.]; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Paul wanted to do that, but he just couldn’t figure it out. “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Someone might ask, “Brother, are we talking about a justified person, or are we talking about a sinner?” There are two schools of thought on that, but I want to stay in the text here. Paul’s talking about a comparison and a contrast between the law of Moses that is trying to corral and control an inclination to sin. He’s comparing it to the Law of Christ which will now give liberty and to a supernatural change in our motive, in our inclination which will now allow us to walk in the Spirit.

Verses 20, 21: “Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” Paul is recognizing the conflict, the frustra-

tion of trying to walk after the Law of Christ with an inclination towards evil. This is really about the Law of Christ and how it can help us with this inclination to do evil. That's what this is about.

Verses 22, 23: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law [Can you see the frustration of trying to walk after something which is good without the ability to do it? We can be forgiven, and forgiving is good. The forgiving gets us into the kingdom, but I want to stay in the kingdom. I don't want to fall in and out of the kingdom. How do I do that? Because my natural inclination is going to slay me.] in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." This is a wretched experience: to want to try and do good, and not being able to do it, because naturally I'm just wired that way. This is a wretched experience.

Verses 24, 25: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." The flesh will always serve the law of sin. It is its nature. Our mind wants to be saved, wants to live right, wants to have freedom from the foolishness of this world, so we see this conflict here in this yielding. Paul told us earlier, "Yield, and there's a way to yield."

WHEN WAS PAUL JUSTIFIED?

Let me go back into Acts, chapter 9. I would like to bring an example into this story here, a real life example of this nature Paul is talking about. Verses 3-6: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Verses 8, 9: "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Now, what's going on here?

The question is, Was Paul justified when he was arrested by Jesus and fell to the earth and then said, "What do you want me to do"? Was Paul justified? In other words, did Jesus accept Paul in this moment? That's what justification is. It's when God accepts us. Did Jesus accept Paul? That's the question. For some, they'll say, "Not yet." I respect those who try and see it, but I can only see it this way: I believe Paul was justified on the road to Damascus. First of all, I want us to remind ourselves who this man was. He was a fanatic zealot for who he thought was God. Later, in Galatians or some other book, he said, "God did not impute my foolishness because I did it in ignorance."

Now, we can argue about Saul being a sinner, but it's clear to me that this man was a fanatic zealot for

God. He didn't understand God properly. He was hauling men and women to jail, and he stood at Stephen's feet when Stephen was being stoned. Saul thought he was doing God's will. This is the man who was arrested on the road to Damascus. It's not a person who is sort of a carouser. This is not the prodigal son here that's arrested on the road to Damascus. This is Saul who was a fanatic zealot. He's wrong, but that's important, because now when he sees Jesus, and Jesus appears to him, and he knows clearly it's Jesus talking to him, he says, "What do you want me to do?" So I'm seeing a man who is zealous for God, who realizes that he was wrong, but instead of turning away, he turns towards God and says, "What do you want me to do? You just tell me which way to go. Oh, I've been so foolish." Then God says, "I'll let you know, but you're going to be blind." "That's okay. You just let me know." I think this man was justified on the road to Damascus. I think it does injury to the text to presume that somehow he's not yet justified. I believe God accepted Paul. Paul asked, "What do you want me to do?"

Paul was brought to Damascus. He arose from the earth, and he was three days without food or drink. And then God called Ananias and said, "I want you to go see this man whom I have chosen. [This man is justified.], and I want you to lay hands on him." Verse 15 of Acts 9: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Verse 17: "Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul [This is a man who has been justified by God. He's been chosen by God, and the man is waiting for whatever God wants him to do next. This is a justified man. Ananias called him, 'Brother Saul.'], the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

URGENCY TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Later, Paul himself would see people, and he would put his hands on them and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost." Jesus, in one moment, breathed on people and said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." However we get the Holy Ghost, we need Him. We can be justified, but we need the Holy Ghost. Somebody says, "This is the only way we can receive the Holy Ghost." In other places, people would get the Holy Ghost in different moments, for example, the disciples who followed Apollos and other ways.

One thing I take from these events about people being filled with the Holy Spirit is, there's an urgency that people are filled with the Holy Spirit. Somebody may ask, "Brother, in what moment can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?" First, I believe we have to be justified. The vessel has to be cleaned in order for something holy to fill it. Something holy cannot fill an unclean vessel. So with sin in our lives, we have to find a way to ask God for forgiveness. We illustrated this last night: if Bro. Brian and I are walking in opposite directions and we bump into each other, we still keep on going. We say, "Sorry, Brother, I didn't see you." It's the same with God. But in order for me not to keep on bumping into him, I need to have some sense about me, some sort of

carefulness, some sort of desire not to want to injure him. Otherwise, what? There is no good thing in my flesh. It will govern, and the flesh has a tendency to want the world. The flesh has a tendency to hate God, but the Word says, "Yield your members unto righteousness." How? By getting something supernatural in your life.

Verse 18 of Acts 9: "And immediately there fell from his [Paul's] eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, however God fills us, all I know there are things I don't understand. Can any of us tell us what the Holy Spirit does to change our inclination? How does that happen? Does He rewire our motive? We use our brain to think, right? We use our brain for motive, right? How does this happen? Does anybody know? I don't. I don't know how the Holy Spirit rewires my motive. But immediately after Paul received the Holy Ghost, scales fell, and he could see. Something changed.

SUPERNATURAL SOLUTION FOR A UNIVERSAL PROBLEM

So one of the questions I have for us this morning is, If we find ourselves frustrated that we can't just walk after the commandments of God, and it's just this up-and-down thing, and it just seems so wretched, I wonder if we could pay some attention as to whether or not we've been supernaturally inclined to do good? I also believe that we can ask God for this. If we ask God for a fish, He's not going to give us a serpent. If we would just say, "Lord, I seem to be having trouble with my flesh." I think this is a universal human condition. That's why this makes a lot of sense. It's a supernatural solution for a universal problem. The problem is by my own foolishness I've separated myself from God, but in addition, I seem to walk after my own flesh. All of us have this, but He gives a solution. He says, "If you will allow me to change you supernaturally, you'll be able to yield in the right direction." That's how I see Saul getting the solution we've been preaching about.

Go back to Romans, chapter 7, verse 25: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Paul goes on in chapter 8, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We would have to read more than we have time for, but the thing is, the flesh and the Spirit cannot coexist in the same vessel. It cannot remain coexistent in the same vessel, because one would tend to dominate the other, and because we have freewill, the flesh will tend to dominate the Spirit. It was that way before. It will be that way again if we allow those two to coexist, but God desires and wants His Spirit to dominate our flesh. In order for that to happen, we need to be willing to let the flesh go. "Lord, I'm pleading with you. I don't know how you do this, but I want the nature of my inclination to go. I want your inclination to take precedence. I want your inclination to dominate." I want God to *dominate* my spirit. I like that word.

We can't serve two masters. Either we're going to love the one and hate the other or love the other and

hate the one. We can't serve both God and mammon. We can't have the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world coexisting side by side. It doesn't work that way. It won't work.

Verse 16 of Romans, chapter 8: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." I would encourage you to read chapter 8 and look at the domination of the Spirit of God over the domination of the flesh and what's going on there.

The inclination of the fleshly mind is a natural consequence of this Trojan horse that Adam brought us. The inclination of a fleshly mind won't lead to victory. We can overlay a law on that fleshly mind, but it will produce death. That's what Paul said. Why? Because the remedy from the law is punishment or proscription. So we can overlay something on our fleshly motive or on our fleshly mind, but it's not going to work. The only way this Church of God thing works really over time, fully satisfying, fully victorious, is that the flesh is gone. The motive of the flesh is gone and is replaced by the motive of the Spirit. That's the only way this works.

I was saved for 30 days in 1981 as a senior in college. I didn't know anything about anything. Brand new. If you're like I was, you're in good company. I'm in your good company. I didn't know anything about anything. I headed down to San Diego for Christmas break. Everybody at church was worried. They were worried that I was going to lose my salvation, that I was going to go back into some inclination and would fall, because I hadn't been saved long enough, and I wasn't going to be around the saints. I found out later, "Brother, we were all praying for you." I thought, *Well, I appreciate that.* But God gave me something, and before I left to go on Christmas vacation, back home, I was in the pastor's office. I don't know, but maybe he was worried, too. I hadn't even read what Peter told Jesus, and I said, "Brother, where am I going to go? I found life. Where would I go? Been there, did the other. I don't want to go back to that." See, when God saves you and really gives you something inside, and even more, when He changes your inclination or your imagination towards good, this is so wonderful! Very soon in my experience, God showed me what vanity was. Vanity is pointlessness.

CONCLUSION

I wake up in the mornings, and the first thing I do after I pray is to read the news. I go to *Google incognito* so that it doesn't know where I am, and even then, it's torture. If you don't know what that means, I try to tell the Internet that it doesn't know where I am. I read the news. I think, *No, no, no, not much good today. Pretty much like yesterday.* I disconnect and say, "Well, at least I'm up to date." I think to myself, *The enemy wants me to choose this over this? You must be insane.* The enemy wanted me to choose vanity over meaning. This happened to me in 1981, but I've never regretted the choice that I made. There's no better option than the one God gave us. God seals this option when He gives us His Spirit, and that's how we can walk consistently with Him. That's what we're advocating this morning. I hope some of this made sense.

The Lord bless you each one. †

THE POETRY PAGE

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."—Psalm 127:3.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ephesians 6:4.

A FATHER'S EXAMPLE

Edgar A. Guest

There are little eyes upon you,
And they're watching night and day
There are little ears that listen
To every word you say.
There are little hands all eager
To do the things you do;
And a little boy who's dreaming
Of the day he'll be like you.
You're the little fellow's idol,
You're the wisest of the wise;
In his little mind, about you
No suspicions ever rise.
He believes in you devoutly,
Holds that all you say and do
He will say and do in your way
When he's grown up just like you.
There's a wide-eyed little fellow
Who believes you're always right;
And his ears are always open
As he watches day and night.
You are setting an example
Every day in all you do,
For the little boy who's waiting
To grow up to be like you.

KIND OF DAD TO BUY

Anonymous

If I went shopping for a dad,
Here is what I'd buy:
One who would always stop
To answer a little boy's "why?"

One who would always speak kindly
To a little girl or boy,
One who would give to others
A bit of sunshine and joy.

I'd pick a dad that followed
The Bible's Golden Rule,
And one who went regularly
To church and Sunday school.

I'd buy the very finest dad
To place on our family tree,
And then I'd try to live like him
So he would be proud of me.

WHAT GOD HATH DONE

Jean Jones

God took the strength of the mighty oak
The steadfastness of the mountains tall,
The warmth of the rising sun—
He used them one and all.

He took endurance from the hardy pine,
Love vast as the rolling sea,
Peace from the mountain stream,
And the heart of the dogwood tree.

He took from spring her promise,
From summer the beauty of life,
Courage from the winter's struggle,
And added faith to meet the strife.

He took the soul of the twilight hour,
The rich mellowness of the fall,
The depth of the quiet lake,
And the mystery of the wild bird's call.

A FATHER God molded from these things
To lead each home aright,
Down the path the Savior trod,
Out of darkness into light.

GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

Roy Z. Kemp

If children play within your door
And they are all your own,
You have a radiant, shining thing
The greatest hearts have known.

They show that God has blessed your home;
He's given of His love
And sent fulfillment of your dreams;
He smiles down from above.

He's given things which are worthwhile,
To make your life more bright.
Be worthy of His trust in you
And thank Him, day and night.

A little child within a home,
Be that home large or small,
Is evidence of God's great love
The greatest gift of all. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



FAMILY

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Are we going to the store tonight?" I asked my mother one Friday evening. I had finally saved up enough money to buy a pack of colored pencils that I had been wanting.

"Yes, we're planning to go to the shopping center," my mother answered, "if Daddy gets home in time from milking. He needs something from the automotive store."

Everything depends on how long it takes to milk the cows, I thought grumpily to myself. I wish I lived in a different family. I wish I had a whole different life.

"Be careful," said my mother, "or those frown lines on your face will become permanent."

I continued to frown, but I turned away so she couldn't see it.

At that moment, the baby started crying in the next room. "Go see what's wrong with the baby," my mother said to me. "I've got to get this ironing done before we leave, so we can stop on our way to the store and deliver it."

I turned on my heel and went to see what was wrong with the baby. *She probably needs her diaper changed, I said to myself. That's all I ever do around here—take care of babies. I wish I lived in a different family. I wish I had a whole different life.*

While I changed my baby sister's diaper, I grumbled to myself about the ironing we had to deliver on our way to the store. *Why do we have to deliver people's ironing, anyway? No one else in my class at school has to do that. Their mothers don't have to do other people's work for them. And their fathers don't have to milk cows every morning and night, seven days a week.*

I had just finished changing the baby's diaper when I heard my father call out from the front porch. "I'm home! Anything to eat around here?"

"There's a plate of food keeping warm on the back of the stove," answered my mother. "By the time you're finished eating, I'll have this ironing done, and we can get going."

In no time at all, we were loading up the car with freshly ironed clothes. Some hung from a broomstick stretched from window to window across the back seat. Some rested in neatly folded piles in a laundry basket.

"Be careful how you sit in the back seat," my mother told my three younger sisters and me. "Try not to touch the clothes that are hanging. I don't want them wrinkled." She got into the front seat of the car with my baby sister, and my father slid behind the steering wheel.

"Ready to go?" my father called out cheerfully.

"Ready," said my mother. My father looked over his shoulder at the neatly ironed clothes hanging on the broomstick above our heads. He squeezed my mother's hand.

"You're such a hard worker, Mommy-Honey!" he said.

I stared out the car window. The sun was setting. Soon the stores in the shopping center would be closing. I wished my dad would stop talking and start the car.

At last we were on our way to town. When I wasn't keeping my little sisters' hands off the ironed clothes, I was looking out the car window, silently begging the wheels of the car to roll a little faster.

Once in town, my father stopped in front of the house where my mother's customer lived. I jumped out quickly and carried the clothes up to the front door and rang the doorbell.

I hope nobody sees me delivering these clothes, I thought to myself. It would be so embarrassing! In my mind, I could already hear someone from my class at school saying, "I saw you last Friday standing on someone's porch, holding a bunch of laundry. What were you doing there?"

I wish I lived in a different family, I said to myself again. I wish I had a whole different life.

I handed over the ironing to the lady who answered the door, and then ran back to the car with the money she had given me. I passed it over the back of the front seat to my mother, who placed it carefully in her worn pocketbook.

Finally, we reached the shopping center. My father parked in front of the automotive store, and we all got out of the car.

When we got to the door of the automotive store, my mother turned to me and pointed to the department store next to it. "The stores will soon be closing," she said. "If you want to go get your colored pencils, go ahead," she said. "You're a big girl now—almost twelve years old. We'll be right next door. You can come over when you're finished shopping."

I smiled, feeling suddenly grown-up. I waved goodbye to my younger sisters and walked all by myself into the department store. In the stationery department, I found the box of colored pencils I had seen the last time we had visited the store. The price was still seventy-nine cents. I picked up the colored pencils and walked confidently to the checkout counter. I had eighty cents in my pocket, enough to buy the pencils with a penny left over.

"That will be seventy-nine cents," said the cashier. I dug into my pocket and pulled out a small pile of coins. I counted them quickly, and then counted them again, more slowly. Each time, I counted only seventy-four cents. One of my nickels must have slipped out of my pocket. Or maybe I had accidentally left it at home. In any case, I did not have enough money for the pencils.

The cashier tapped her foot impatiently. "You need another nickel," she said curtly. "If you can't find it, I'll have to put your pencils back. We're about to close, and I don't have time to wait around." She looked at me as though I were nothing but a nuisance.

Suddenly, I felt small and very alone. The world was a cold, hard place. I missed my family. I missed the people who really cared about me.

I looked up at the cashier, ready to tell her that I would have to give up the colored pencils, when I saw my mother come through the front door. As long as I live, I will never forget the feeling of love that rushed over me when I saw my mother walk into that store.

"Mom!" I called out to her. My voice shook. I couldn't help it.

My mother walked over to the counter. "What's the matter?" she asked.

"I don't have enough money," I told her. "I'm missing one of my nickels."

My mother reached into her pocketbook and pulled out her change purse. She dug around and found a nickel. She gave it to the cashier, who quickly finalized my purchase.

"Thank you, Mom," I said as we walked out of the store.

I sat quietly in my corner of the car the whole way home. I didn't mind when the baby cried, or when my younger sisters argued over whose turn it was to sit next to the window. Not one time did I think to myself, *I wish I lived in a different family. I wish I had a whole different life.* I was content to be with parents who loved me, and who worked hard to provide for my needs.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 1:8, which says, *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.*

Children, God expects you to honor and respect your parents. You may be frustrated when you do not get your way, or when your parents don't allow you to do certain things. There will be days when you are even angry with them or with your siblings. But always remember that a loving family is a gift from above. Look for ways to show your appreciation for what they do for you each day.

Activity

Name the Bible character who ...

1. Forgave his siblings, even though they were very unkind to him. (_____)
2. Watched over her brother to keep him safe from Pharaoh's soldiers. (_____)
3. Declared that he and his whole family would serve the Lord. (_____)
4. Gave her son to the Lord, but loved him so much she brought him a new coat each time she visited him. (_____)
5. Refused to leave her mother-in-law, but cared for her as a true daughter would have done. (_____)

Answer to Last Month's Activity

"God cares so much about us that He has written our names on His hand" (Isaiah 49:16). †

If you would like to communicate with Sis. Rebecca, you may write her here at The Way of Truth, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088. Write on your letter, Attention: Rebecca Bland.

Dear Young People,

In Revelation 1:8, we read, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**"

The Trinity is, was, and will always be. In Exodus 3:14, 15, we read about God the Father: "*And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*" In John 8:58, "*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*" And in Matthew 28:20, Jesus said, "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*"

We read about the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, "*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter; that he may abide with you for ever.*"

Many have worshiped gods that had a beginning and an end, but we are blessed to serve the great I Am! He is ever present! We don't ever have to wonder if He has changed; He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever!

Over the next few months we will be sharing exhortations given by the young people in a special Sunday morning service. The thoughts will be centered on the I Am's given by Jesus while here on Earth. He was made flesh to bring the truth that God is, was, and always will be the great I Am!

Blessings,

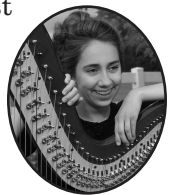
Bro. Doug

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

By Sis. Lauren Swain

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

In a young people's service we had last year, I discussed different facts about Jesus' resurrection and how we can actually validate its truth from history and eyewitness accounts from many different sources. This morning, I want to talk about a proof of the resurrection that each of us can see without ever even studying or reading. This is the proof described in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This is probably a favorite verse of almost every Christian; it so perfectly describes the complete, fundamental change each one of us as Christians has experienced. When someone repents of their sins, confesses that Jesus is the only Savior, and gives



Him complete control of every area of their lives, they are changed. Every part of them is changed. God renews their mind, He cleanses their heart, and He makes their body His temple.

Peter is an excellent example of the dramatic change God can bring to a life. I don't have time to read the verses, but several places in the gospels we see that Peter and the other disciples were envious of each other and other people. They wanted to call fire down on a city to destroy it. And most notoriously, Peter said he would die with Christ but then denied even knowing Him. However, we read in Acts: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words ..." And Peter proceeded to preach an entire sermon to several thousand people expounding on the resurrection of Jesus and exhorting them to repent. Because he had truly repented and then had seen Jesus after the resurrection, Peter was a different man. From denying his Lord and fearing for his life, Peter changed to boldly witnessing for Christ in the face of likely death and certain persecution.

Another example I'd like to mention is Paul. We all know that Paul was perhaps the greatest Christian apostle, but Paul was once known as Saul, the terror of the early Christian church. Acts 9:1, 2 says, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." Saul watched and consented while Stephen was being stoned to death. He didn't even spare women but treated them just as brutally as the men. He was so feared that the Christians who heard he had been converted didn't believe it at first. But after he saw a vision of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul experienced forgiveness for all his sins and became a new man. From being one of its most dreaded opponents, Paul became one the most well-known and inspirational proponents of Christianity.

There are countless other examples I could talk about from history and from many people I know personally. William Wilberforce was living a debauched, troubled life until he became a Christian. He then became the single greatest reason that England banned the slave trade. John Newton was captain of a slave ship and had completely rejected Christian teaching from his mother. But one day he repented and became a profound influence on William Wilberforce and against slavery. He wrote the words to "Amazing Grace" describing the miraculous change God had brought about in his life. Many times we've heard different people in our own congregation testify that from a life of drinking or drugs or whatever it might have been, God saved them and gave them power to never go back to those things.

Finally, I experienced the transformation that God can bring about in my own life, although in a much less dramatic way than Peter or Paul. I was much younger when I was saved, so I didn't have a lot of regrets to look back on. But I clearly remember the pride and

selfishness that filled my heart even then. I might have seemed fine to most people around me, but my family knew and I knew things were not right. I gave my heart to God and repented of my sins in November 2015. From being full of pride and contempt, God changed my heart to one full of humility and joy. From looking down on other people, God gave me love and respect for others. And when I went to sleep each night, my heart was filled with peace instead of dread or guilt.

If there is anyone here this morning who knows you are missing that love and peace I mentioned, I urge you to take inspiration from the stories shared and from my testimony, and find for yourself the new life, the joy, the peace, and the love that Jesus brings.

I'll end with John 10:10, one of the most beautiful sentences ever written: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE FAMILY OF GOD THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Scriptures: Ephesians 4:4; Genesis 6:3; John 14:26; 16:7, 8, 13; Romans 8:14-16, 26; John 14:16-18.

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

Genesis 6:3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

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

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

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Memory Verse: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.—John 14:26a.

Aim: To identify the personality and work of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

Our Aim states that this lesson is to identify the (1) personality of and (2) the work of the Holy Spirit. There are religious groups who deny the Spirit of God as an actual personality. Nevertheless, the Scriptures often speak of the Spirit as “He,” “Him,” “His,” etc. He had His part to play in creation (Genesis 1:2), in reproving the sinner of his sins (Genesis 6:3), a work He still carries on. We need to understand clearly what the Spirit’s work is and what man’s job is, for we cannot expect the Spirit to do that which God has given man to do. There are extant two extreme beliefs—one, that everything must be done by the Spirit (man having no place at all); the other, that man rules, doing away with the Spirit’s work altogether. The family of God needs to know the truth and fulfill the will of God.

MEDITATIONS

ONE TRUE SPIRIT—Ephesians 4:4—There is ... one Spirit—This is a statement of fact, regardless of what anyone else declares. There **IS** one true Holy Spirit, just as there is one body, which of course means one family (of God), one church, the Church of God, to which all truly saved souls belong.

THE SPIRIT DRAWS—Genesis 6:3—My Spirit shall not always strive—The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict, to draw, the sinner to Christ. This verse should be a solemn warning to every unsaved heart to “seek the Lord while He may be found”; tomorrow may be too late. Here again, we must not overlook man’s part in saving the lost. The Spirit uses godly, Spirit-filled lives of others. He uses preachers, He uses earnest prayers and burdened hearts to draw sinners to repentance. For a sinner to override this is serious, for the “Spirit will not always strive” with him.

THE TEACHER—John 14:26—Shall teach you all things—Some may think, from the casual reading of this verse, that the Spirit without any help from anyone, is personally going to teach everyone the truth; but other scriptures inform us that the Spirit gives the gift of teaching to some in the family. Thus when a Holy Spirit-filled teacher is instructing, it is the Spirit who is doing the teaching, but He is using a human through whom to do His work. Jesus said the Spirit would bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples, whatsoever He had said unto them, thus showing man’s part in Holy Ghost teaching.

THE COMFORTER—John 16:7—I will send him—Here Christ plainly stated that He would send the Spirit, a real Person, One who was to comfort every believer who would receive Him. One cannot remain a Christian and refuse to receive Him. Besides being a Comforter, the Spirit gives power to live above sin and gives to the church the gifts as God directs. **Verse 8—Reprove the world of sin—**The Spirit is in the world now reproving sinners, but He is limited! Why?

Because the Spirit works through those who are willing to obey Him. If the Spirit worked independently of men, He could reprove every sinner in the world, all at the same time; but “it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH—John 16:13—Show you things to come—The Spirit of God always teaches the truth, nothing else. The devil is the father of the lie. The Spirit of Truth has been given the task of showing God’s children things that are yet to come to pass. You may rest assured when the Spirit gives a revelation, it will come to pass. This gift is greatly needed in the church NOW.

THE SPIRIT, A LEADER—Romans 8:14—As many as are led by the Spirit of God ... are the sons of God—Some people fail to realize that when a godly pastor leads a flock, that flock is led by the Spirit. The Spirit must lead in our daily lives, but even here, we are to live the life the Word teaches and the man of God preaches and not expect the Spirit to tell us every step to take. God expects us to live out what the Word and Spirit have already taught us without telling us over, every day, what He wants done. **Verse 15—Not ... the spirit of bondage—**The Spirit of God is the Spirit of freedom and not the spirit of bondage. Many people, especially among the “tongues” movements, have received a spirit of bondage, thinking it is the Spirit of God! **Verse 16—Children of God—**There are times when Satan comes to the child of God, even as he did to Jesus, and tries to plant a doubt in his mind as to whether he is a child of God. The Spirit is faithful, and if that person will listen for His still small voice, he can know that “all is well.”

THE SPIRIT, AN INTERCESSOR—Romans 8:26—The Spirit maketh intercession—Here again I feel it is necessary to point out man’s place along with the Spirit’s place, for the Holy Spirit cannot make intercession for us unless we pray. If we pray, the Spirit then does His part. “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

ABIDEFOREVER—John 14:16—And I will pray the Father—The Spirit of God is for the family of God. Every child of God can have the abiding presence of the Comforter in his heart, not for just a week or two, but forever, if he will obey the Word. The Spirit will give power over sin, will help in prayer, will teach the truth, and will show things to come, and help the individual to put the program of God over. **Verse 17—The world cannot receive—**This should be clear enough for all to understand. The world, that is, sinners, cannot receive the Spirit! One must first become a child of God through the new birth, then present himself to God a living sacrifice in order to receive the Spirit. **Verse 18—Will come to you—**Christ comes to us through His Spirit. As great as the Holy Ghost is, as powerful as He is, one may wonder why more is not being done. Again, for Him to be able to work He must have vessels through whom to work. Can He use you?

CONCLUSION

The world is lost! While you have been studying this lesson souls have been leaving the world, going into

eternity. God would have all to be saved, but His plan does not call for Him to send angels to preach. He has told His family to “go into all the world and preach the gospel.” The great, all-wise, all-powerful Spirit of God is ready to go with us.

Will we do our part?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the Holy Spirit a person or merely, the “power” of God?
2. How does the Holy Spirit reprove of sin?
3. Is there danger in rejecting the Spirit?
4. How does the Spirit help us pray?
5. How can we know we are sons of God?
6. Does the Spirit abide in your heart today?

He Must Increase, I Must Decrease

Full-length Message
by Bro. Greg Tyler

LET US TURN to St. John, chapter 3, as our text of scripture. The third chapter of John is broken into three parts. First, the meeting of Nicodemus with Jesus teaching him that he must be born again. Then, in the middle of the chapter, he reveals one of the most sacred truths known to the family of man: “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.” And then, the latter part of John 3 deals with John who baptized people.

I want to start reading from verse 22 of John 3, down to the end of the chapter: “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of



the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Before I introduce the text and the title of the message this morning, I want us to think about John who baptized in the river Jordan and the remarkable life that he lived. You know, everyone who serves God lives a remarkable life. When God’s will is done in a life, it is a beautiful thing, and John lived a beautiful life. His father was Zacharias, a priest in the temple. Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, were up in years, and Elisabeth wasn’t able to bear a child. The angel Gabriel appeared unto Zacharias and told him his prayers had been answered, and his wife would bear a son, and his name would be John. But because Zacharias doubted, because he questioned, he was stricken dumb until the child was born. That same Gabriel appeared to Elisabeth’s cousin, Mary, and told her she would bear a child, and He would be called the Son of the Highest, and His name would be called Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins.

When Mary, who was visited by Gabriel when Elisabeth was in about her sixth month, went to visit Elisabeth, she saluted her cousin, and the child that was within Elisabeth leaped in her womb. That was John. John and Jesus had fellowship right there in their mother’s wombs, and it was a beautiful thing. Elisabeth went on to bear her child, and we know Mary went on to bear her child, and their paths crossed. John was baptizing in the river Jordan, and it became a popular thing. Many people started gathering to be baptized, but John would not baptize just anybody. He was called to be a minister of truth and a minister of God. He told the hypocrites to go back and repent and to “bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:8).

John recognized that he was a forerunner of Christ. He said in St. Matthew, chapter 3, verse 11: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Shortly after that, Jesus came to John at the river Jordan. John at first hesitated to baptize Him because he felt he was not worthy. John was a humble man, as all men of God are humble men. Jesus said, “It behooves all righteousness that you do this,” so Jesus went down into the water, and there we know that the Spirit of God came down in the form of a dove, and Jesus was baptized by John. A voice spoke from heaven and said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” There at the baptism of Jesus, we see the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit all revealed unto us.

John acknowledged the supremacy of Christ. He said in John, chapter 3, which we read in your hearing: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John went on

to be faithful and true to God. He stood up to the king and told him the error of his way, and because of that he was beheaded. He lost his life, but don't feel sorry for John. He lived a victorious life. Though the king could take his head from his body, he could do nothing to his soul. We don't often hear about John so much, but I believe that he went on to be with the Lord. Right now, he is with the Lord in heaven.

OUR TEXT OF SCRIPTURE

As wonderful and beautiful as the life of John the Baptist was, our message this morning is not about him, but about a profound truth that came from his lips; that is, in verse 30 of St. John, chapter 3. He simply said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Let that sink into your heart. What a principle! What a profound statement! He, meaning Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Christ must increase, but I must decrease. I'd like for us to take that to a personal level this morning. In my own individual life, for me to be successful, for me to be victorious, Christ must increase in my life, and I personally must decrease. He must have His way more and more. I must have my way less and less. He must increase, but I must decrease.

We must be determined, I believe, to let Christ increase in influence in our lives and commit to decreasing the power of our own selfish tendencies. What a powerful formula! For one to happen, the other must take place. For Christ to increase in a life, self must decrease. There's a conflict, there's a war for our attention, for our affection, for our devotion.

Christ wants to work more in our lives. Christ wants to have His way in a greater way, but oftentimes our own personal wants and desires get in the way. We must allow Christ to dominate in our lives—our personality, our conduct, our words, our thoughts, our attitudes, our actions—the total man. Christ must be able to increase in our lives.

We often hear the scripture that Christ is to have the preeminence in all things. Many times we apply that to the church in general, but I believe that principle should be applied to us personally. In everything in my life, Christ should have the preeminence. He should be able to rule and overrule. He should be able to guide my thinking and my decisions. If we allow Him to, He will increase. I don't believe this happens overnight. It's the result of a long term plan to dedicate one's life to the cause of Christ, and to allow Him through the Spirit to work in our lives more and more.

I talked about losing weight for years. Finally, I said to Ellen, "I'm going to lose some weight." She just kinda smiled, but she soon saw that I meant business, and I changed my diet. I ate less and ate better. The pounds started coming off at first very easily, then I saw not so easily, but I would weigh myself on the scales each day to see what was happening. If the scales were down, I was very happy. If the scales were up, I was not so happy. But I soon learned that it is not the daily point that's important, but it's the long term plan that if I stay the course, those pounds are eventually going to come off. I got down to losing several pounds. I know that if I stay the course, and I continue to be disciplined and watch what I eat, I will lose more.

My point is this: Through the course of time, as a result of our determination and positive plan and discipline, we can allow Christ to increase in our lives. His power to increase, His love to increase, His righteousness to increase. We'll find ourselves on higher ground. It's not an overnight thing. There's growth to be made. There's a scripture that tells us that we must grow up unto Him in all things, and to desire the Word of God that we might grow thereby. A very familiar scripture says, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). So it's a growth. It's an effort put forth on our part to allow Christ to dominate our lives in a greater way.

This message might not sound exciting to the shallow person, but if you have a desire to be all that God wants you to be, it should sound exciting that Christ has greater power over your life, and you'll be a better vessel of honor for His glory and honor.

THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

What happens when Christ increases in our lives? There's an increase in the fruits of righteousness. In II Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 10, Paul says: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." Children of God are to live righteous lives. We don't need to be ashamed of that. We don't need to be intimidated by that. It is not our own righteousness that we're talking about. It's the righteousness of Christ. If Christ increases in our lives, the fruits of righteousness are going to be seen in a greater way through us. Paul says in Philippians 1:11, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." The Lord wants us to be filled with His righteousness. He wants us to make right decisions. He wants us to live holy. He wants us to live pure. This is true Christianity.

What did the Psalmist say in Psalm 23? "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." As Christ begins to dominate our lives in a greater way, our righteousness shall increase. Again, not our own righteousness, but that righteousness which is of God. It's simply means that we become more and more in the image of God's Son. The more we become like Christ, the greater power our righteousness is going have, the more proper decisions we're going to make, and the more power we'll have in our testimony.

If we will follow the paths of righteousness, and let Christ lead us in the paths of righteousness, Psalm 23:6 tells us, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ..." If I follow in the paths of righteousness, if I allow Christ to increase in my life and dominate my life in a greater way, and I follow Him deeper and deeper in the things of God, there are two things behind me: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." If I go slow, they'll be behind me. If I go fast, they'll be behind me. If I go through a trial, they'll be behind me. Wherever I go, goodness and mercy are going to follow me because Christ is leading the way. He leads in the pathway, not

of sin or error, but He leads us in the pathway of righteousness for His name's sake. "... and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Sometimes Christ leads through waters deep for our benefit and profit.

Sometimes when we make mistakes, we get chastised, but again for our benefit and profit. Let's turn to Hebrews, chapter 12. We're still talking about increasing in the fruits of righteousness. Verse 11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Even in trials and tests, if we'll follow the Lord and allow Him to dominate our thinking and our wills, the chastening in difficulties will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

AN INCREASE IN LOVE

What else shall happen in our lives if Christ increases? I believe there will be an increase in love. I believe God wants our love to increase. I believe every child of God has the love of God shed abroad in his heart, but how deep is it? How full is it? How rich is it? I believe we can go deeper as Christ leads us. I Thessalonians 3:12, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." So our love is going to increase towards one another, but not only that, the love of God will increase in our souls toward all men: saint and sinner alike, friend and enemy alike. Paul said in I Thessalonians 4:9, 10: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." I say as Christ increases in our lives, as we allow Him to dominate our lives in a greater way, our love will increase, not only for our friends, but for the entire world.

Jesus Christ Himself cried out from the cross, "Father, forgive them." They had just crucified Him. They had just treated Him evilly, but He did not pray down fire from heaven upon them. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Stephen, the man of God, who allowed Christ to increase within his life, was full of the Holy Ghost and faith. He allowed Christ to increase more and more so much that His love was so divine. As he was being stoned to death, he did not pray that God would curse those who were stoning him. He did not pray that God would pour out wrath upon those who were stoning him, but Stephen had enough of the love of God in his heart that he actually prayed in sincerity, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." What kind of love is that? Persecutors, those who were stoning him. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. Saul of Tarsus could never get away from that. He heard those words over and over in his mind. Saul saw that scene over and over in his mind, so finally one day on the road to Damascus, the Lord saved him. My Friends, as Christ increases in our lives, our love for our fellowman will increase, and even for our enemies.

AN INCREASE OF FAITH

In Luke, chapter 17, Jesus said to His disciples, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, and if he repents, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Do you know what the disciples said? "Lord, Increase our faith." They couldn't take it in. They couldn't grasp it. But I believe this morning, as Jesus Christ takes up His rightful place in our lives, as King of our hearts, and we allow Him to increase and increase and increase, our faith is going to increase as well. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). His Word is going to become richer to us. We're going to spend more time in the Word of God. We're going to spend more time in the house of God. Christ is dominating our lives so our faith is going to increase more and more.

Paul said to the Roman church in chapter 12, verse 3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Christ is the One who gives us the measure of faith that we have, so it just follows that the more right of way we give Him in our lives, the greater faith we're going to receive. We need faith. Congregation, we need faith. One way to get faith is to allow Christ to increase. "He must increase, but I must decrease."

AN INCREASE IN POWER

There will be an increase in power. Not only do we need faith, but we need power. Christ gives us power. Philippians, chapter 3, verses 7-10: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Stop there for a minute. Think about that statement. Are we used to thinking in those terms? What's mine is mine. I know we have to take care of our families. I know we have to take prepare for the future. We live in a material world. But Paul was so determined to let Christ dominate his life that he considered whatever was gain to him personally, he considered that a loss for the cause of Christ. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

I believe that if Christ increases within us, as we allow Him to work in a greater way, our power will increase. More power over sin, more power over temptation, more power over the evils of this world, more power in prayer, more power in our preaching, more power in our visitation, more power in our testimony. We need more power in our lives, and Christ is the Author of power. He said, "I have all power in heaven and in earth." We need to tap into that power. "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Before I go to the second statement, let me say this: If we are able by the grace of God to make spiritual progress, and Christ is able to increase within our lives, it is to His glory and honor and not our own. We have nothing to boast of in ourselves. Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." To God be all the glory and praise and honor for anything that we're able to do by the grace of God.

"I MUST DECREASE"

Now, the second part of that verse says, "I must decrease." As I said earlier, I believe one is dependent upon the other. For Christ to increase, our own selfish ways and desires must decrease. Let me say before I go on into this point. God wills that we enjoy life. The songwriter said, "Who but the Christian is happy and free, Filled with the glory of God? None in creation so happy as he, Washed and redeemed in the wonderful blood." It's God's will that we be happy. It's God's will that we enjoy the fruits of our labors. It's in the Bible. Ecclesiastes 5:18, "It is good and comely for one to enjoy the good of all his labour." In the New Testament it says, "God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." So I'm not talking about a sad life here. I'm not talking about a nonproductive life, but all of us need to realize that along with this truth, that God wants us to enjoy life, is the fact that the Christian life demands self-denial. You see, people have an idea that to be happy, they have to get everything they want. The more they get, the happier they'll be, but that's not so. There's a formula that works although some people don't understand. When we deny ourselves for the cause of Christ, we become happier and happier. God satisfies the longings of our souls.

Luke, chapter 9, verse 23: "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily [every single day], and follow me." This is a daily life to live. There's a cross to bear. There's self-denial in the Christian faith, but along with our self-denial comes a reward from the Lord for doing so. Notice what it says in verse 24: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Does that make any sense? As we lose our lives in Christ, and we allow Him to dominate our thinking, and we lose our own selfish ways and desires as He has more control, we find it in Christ. Verse 25: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" So the Christian life demands self-denial.

Jesus Himself, in Gethsemane before He went to the cross, saw the cross coming, and He was burdened about it. He was God Incarnate, and He had the flesh to deal with. There was a conflict going on within Him. He knew what He had to do, but the flesh was crying out against it. He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He wasn't satisfied. The second time: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The third time: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou

wilt." He sweat great drops of blood, as it were. Jesus gained the victory because He was able to submit to His Father's will.

I must decrease. "Lord, not my will." Conflict between my will and God's will. Conflict between what I want to do and what Christ wants me to do. Conflict between what I want for my future and what Christ has in store for me. Conflict! Can we say this morning with a free heart in sincerity, "Lord, not my will, but Thine be done"?

CONCLUSION

For Christ to increase in our lives, we must at times deny ourselves even of some legitimate things. Listen to the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:12—"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." It's the second part there that caught my attention. It's possible to be caught under the power of legitimate things so that you think about them too much, or you put too much time and effort into them and rob some time and effort from Christ.

I believe in taking vacations. I enjoy time with the family. I enjoy the social side of life, but we have to be careful that the temporal things do not dominate our lives and our thinking. We have to make sure that Christ is increasing and we are decreasing. I want more than just barely making it to heaven. Yes, I want to make it to heaven, don't you? But I don't want to just barely make it. I want to go sweeping through the gates of Paradise. I want to have victory in my soul. I want to have some sheaves to bring to my Lord. I see clearly for that to happen, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

A songwriter has written—

*Let me lose myself and find it, Lord, in Thee,
May all self be slain, My friends see only Thee,
Tho' it costs me grief and pain,
I will find my life again,
If I lose myself I'll find it, Lord, in Thee.*

I see that in order for me in my own individual life, in order for me to provide an environment where Christ can work in a greater way, "He must increase, but I must decrease." I don't believe that's just for me. I believe that this principle will work for anyone. †

OUT OF BOX 88

I'm not sure how long it's been, but it's been a few years I received one of these magazines in the mail. I had no idea how it came to me. I didn't subscribe to it, and I knew no one that had my address to have it sent, but when I received the first one, I flipped through it scanning over everything to see if it lined up to the Bible. After discovering it did, I began to read it and enjoyed it so much. I told my daughter that reading the sermons were like being right there in them. I love this magazine and hope to keep on getting it. ... Please know that I pray for this ministry. I can see God has done great works through **The Way of Truth** ministry, God's continued blessings upon this ministry and all that you do. Continued prayers for you all. Thank you for **The Way of Truth** magazine.

—L. D., West Virginia

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Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

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Permit No. 15

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

COMING MEETINGS

2025 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

12819 Point Salem Rd.

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

July 1-6, 2025, Lord willing

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor



JAMAICA YOUTH REVIVAL
Grants Mountain, St. Ann
July 22-27, 2025, Lord willing
Sis. Linette Jutan, Pastor



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