

The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 6



**God is due our best,
our all.**

(2026 Convention Report, Page 16)



September/October 2026

JEREMIAH 2:13, *For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

Throughout the Bible and history we find a strong tendency for people to forsake God and His ways. This is a great evil—forsaking the fountain of living waters—and comes with many terrible results. But there is also a second evil that often goes along with the first. Humanity tends to endeavor to replace the proper relationship with God with something else they feel will meet their needs. So, they create a different form of religion that will in some way replicate the sense of right that is lost when forsaking God. We see here in Jeremiah the analogy of hewing out cisterns to capture the needed water after being cut off from the fountain of living water! God says they are broken cisterns, ineffective at holding or providing for the needs of the soul of man.

Why is this so often the case? There are no doubt many reasons we could consider, but a few stand out for how common they are. Discontent—*life isn't what I wanted or expected. Why do bad things happen to me, accidents, health problems, lack of work? I'm not popular enough, I lack friends, companionship, approval, financial needs.* The list could go on and on, but discontent has caused so many to lose faith and trust in God.

Lack of gratitude—taking God for granted, lacking appreciation for the blessings that the fountain of living water provides, deceitfulness of riches, failing to depend on the relationship with God, forgetting what it is like to be bound by sin and guilt.

The way is too hard! God asks so much of me. Others don't have to do the things that I do. I want to be able to live like other people. Surely some of these things aren't really necessary. I'm tired of doing the same things over and over again. I want change, new light, new understanding. I despise the old paths. We are a new generation—need to chart our own path.

Lack of knowledge and understanding also causes many to forsake the fountain of living water. People forget, as the children of Israel so often did, what the results are of rejecting God. Times of peace and abundance rapidly cause overconfidence and the feeling that we can chart our own way.

All of this tends to happen incrementally! One small step, little decisions that slowly change thinking and direction and lead people to come to a place where they forsake God. Lack of church attendance, prayer life, unwillingness to sacrifice or to give to God's work and needs, shutting up bowels of compassion, a critical and fault-finding spirit to excuse one's own decision and direction. We need to remember that this is a likely path, well-trodden through the years of time.

The result is separation from God, the source of living water and of spiritual life. As Jesus told the woman at the well, ask me for living water so that you never thirst again! When we are cut off from the living water we become thirsty, spiritual needs are unmet, we are missing something. So many people are searching for something. They are discontent and thinking that if something were just a little different, *they would be happy again.* But forsaking God includes forsaking His way, His plans for us, His love and guidance.

This then creates the need for the second evil—something to take the place of the proper relationship with God. This results in many types of evil, attempting to build one's own way to heaven based on human reasoning. The result of that is a multitude of religious thinking and systems. Many interpretations and beliefs are created in deciding what fits a person the best—something to fill the needs, appease the conscience, and present a form of godliness.

But they are broken cisterns, lacking life, power, true peace, and joy in the presence of God. Stagnation and disappointment, a downward march of morality and testimony are the inevitable result. The Bible is full of warnings and admonishment of the dangers of this strong human tendency: watch and pray, examine ourselves, keep under my body, and so many others. The consequences of hewing out broken cisterns, replacing God with our own ways are so often permanent. It is hard for people to admit they are wrong; few come back to God after going this path. Once they hew out their own broken, failed cisterns they are invested in them! It is difficult then to humble the heart and return to God and submit to Him and find the fountain of living water again. After we become our own authority, who can instruct us? The Word of God can be explained away and we are no longer easily entreated but set in our own thinking and way.

We need to be on guard, realizing the tendency and danger, and seek for the old paths and the good way. Value the living water and where it comes from, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Otherwise, we will find ourselves following the time worn pathway that has been so often trodden to the destruction of so many before us.

Let us be content to be humble, modest servants of the living God! Live in meekness and holiness, separate from the world and its thinking and desires. Come to God with wonder, gratitude and desire for more of Him—to be like Him, to please Him, to dwell under His approval and blessing. What more can life really offer!

It only takes a little different spirit, attitude, and thinking to end up in a very different place over time. A place where we commit two evils, forsaking God and then endeavoring to build our own way to heaven. May God protect us from that! †

AN ESTABLISHED LIFE

Message by Brother Matt Deville
(Minister at Deville, Louisiana)

I WOULD INVITE YOU to turn to Proverbs 16, beginning with verse *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. All the ways of a man*



THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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—Doug Shenberger, Editor

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are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

God created man as a free-willed being. We are blessed to be able to make our own decisions, our own plans. Not only that, but God blesses us with the ability to complete the plans that we have. Even the breath that we breathe—where does that come from? From God! Without Him, we can do nothing. Life is a precious gift. I enjoy life. I enjoy talking to my wife and making plans. It's enjoyable. It's part of life.

I don't make plans thinking, "This isn't right. This isn't how it should be." Proverbs 16:2 says, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes." Our ways make sense to us. We feel like we know what we're talking about. Right? If I'm going to plan to do something, I would be foolish not to want to do it right. But can I tell you something? Sometimes I think I know what I'm doing, and then I realize I'm not correct. We as humans don't always like to realize that we're not correct, do we? We can be a little stubborn. Sometimes we can have our minds so set that we know what we're talking about, that we refuse to listen to reason and logic.

Thank God for Sister Wenda, when she's there to tell me, "That's not the right way to do it." Sometimes I almost want to pout a little bit. We're human. But once I realize that she's right, how foolish of me to want to sit there and still do it the incorrect way.

TRUSTING IN GOD'S WISDOM

God sees the very intent of our actions better than we do. Our ways of thinking, our thoughts, our processes are influenced by many different things—our upbringing, those around us. It might seem like we have good,

sound thoughts, but we don't see it as God sees it. We just don't. It's foolish not to get God involved in our plans. When I try to work on a project, it behooves me to go and find someone ... I'll get on YouTube sometimes. I like to see someone else doing it. I like a proven method. I want someone that knows what they're doing, and I like to try to learn from them.

It's not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. The Lord Jesus Christ has trod the way before us, and we need to look to Him—the Author and Finisher of our faith, our Example.

Commit thy works unto the Lord. But here's the important part—and *thy thoughts* (thy life, all that you do) *shall be established*. It can have a foundation. It can be something that will stand the test of time. People build stuff, and it may look beautiful. But if the structure, the foundation is not sound, that beauty is not going to hold. Only God can establish us for what's to come. We don't know what's on tomorrow, but we need to make sure we're holding the hand that holds tomorrow.

We make decisions. Even as Christians, we sometimes look back and realize, "I should have sought the Lord more on that." We're human. But, Dear Ones, all our decisions have consequences. Let me ask you something. Are we willing to look at ourselves and say, "I was wrong"? If it helps us to get in the will of God, we would be foolish not to accept that. Because, what are

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we working toward? What are we trying to achieve? We want our ways to be established. We want there to be a purpose. We want there to be a foundation.

Many today are trying to establish their ways on something other than God. The Bible says that every man's ways will be tried by fire. We can't say, "Brother Matt said this was fine." No, we've got to make sure that our ways align with God's ways. We can't use the excuse, "Well, I thought this." God said that if we acknowledge Him, in ... a couple of our ways? No! In all our ways. What did He say He would do? He would direct our paths.

That sounds easy, but all of us—at times—can get ahead of God. We can start desiring something, wanting something, thinking, "Well, I understand how this works. I've seen this before." What's wrong with acknowledging God, seeking Him for guidance? Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts." That's not the end of it, though, is it? God looks deep. "The Lord pondereth the hearts."

God sees, not only the present, but He sees the future. And God wants what's best for us. Did you know that? But sometimes what's best for us, long-term, may seem—in the moment—not best for us. Can we trust God? The Bible says, "No good thing will he withhold." Do we believe that? But sometimes, in the moment, when we want something, when we see something, we wonder, "Why wouldn't God let me have this? I want it so bad!" God knows what's best. Sometimes our children want this, and they want that. But if we truly love them, we want what's best for them. Not just in the moment, but long-term. God sees it clearly. God knows what's best, and God sees the far reaching effects of our decisions.

HAVING OUR STEPS ESTABLISHED BY GOD

Established means "set, fixed firmly, founded, ordained, confirmed." God can establish our steps, our future. We read about Joseph. Joseph suffered. None of us here this morning would say, "I want to be in prison for thirteen years. That sounds inviting." We would say, "How is this God's will?" Sometimes we can't help but question. We're human. We wonder, "Why?" But, Dear Ones, we still have to hold to God and do it God's way. No matter what we come up against, even "though He slay me," even if we're afflicted or beaten down, we've got to say, "Lord, I'm going to hold true to you." We've got to hold onto God's unchanging plan. But, you see, influences come in and draw people away from God's ways.

Dear Ones, we've got to make sure that our thoughts align with the Word of God. Sure, we feel emotions. Sure, we have desires. But do they line up with "thus saith the Lord"? If they don't, they're not established of God. People throughout time have taken the Bible, taken verses their own ways to them. Pastors have leaned to their own understanding and put a stumbling block in the way of precious souls. God forbid we do that! Do we have our opinions? Do we have our thoughts? Sure! But we'd better be sure that what we bring forth

is from God, and not from our own thinking. We'd better lean on the Holy Spirit.

I'm not saying that the knowledge, the understanding that we get, we should just throw it all away. If we've done something many times, we learn from that, don't we? And as we go along life's way, we're learning, we're growing. But we should never feel like we've learned so much that we don't need to seek God. There's a trap there. We start thinking too highly of our own opinions—"Look at me! I know what I'm talking about! I've got this figured out!" There are consequences to that. Solomon, in all his wisdom ... he was a lot smarter than me, than all of us ... he started leaning to his own understanding. Doing that can cause us not to be open to what God is trying to show us.

We don't know what's on tomorrow. Many people let their own understanding, what they've been taught by their parents, grandparents, or this or that, hinder them from hearing what God is trying to tell them.

I Corinthians 1:21, *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God ...* in other words, so much knowledge, so much understanding keeps so many people from accepting the simplicity of the gospel. Jesus walked about healing, caring for, even raising the dead in front of people. They beheld this. But their wisdom and the things they had been taught kept them from accepting the beautiful, precious Son of God. How sad is that! Jesus would raise people up right in front of them, but they looked for ways to tear Him down.

If we build up something that's established by God, it can keep us from receiving what God is trying to tell us. What God is trying to tell us is, "I want to bring you to a place I'm preparing for you, that where I am, you may be, also." He's the only way. There's no other way but through Christ Jesus. But we have an enemy that's constantly trying to pull us away from God's precious way. "Well, I don't see it like that. I don't believe that verse means that."

Dear Ones, regardless of what you think, what I think, God's Word standeth sure. If the Word of God says, "Thou shalt not," we'd better obey it. I don't care who tells you it's okay. Paul said, "If I or an angel from heaven come preaching any other gospel, let him be accursed." Why? Because that gospel that once delivered is the only one that's going to get us home to heaven.

HAVING OUR DECISIONS DIRECTED BY GOD

I've endeavored to teach my boys—"I want you to hear the voice of God above all else. Hear what God's trying to tell you. I want you to hear that above what I'm saying." They can testify to that. They've heard it for many years. I have their best interests in mind. They may come to me for advice, and I want what's best for them, but my thinking is not on God's level. God knows what's best for them. I'm glad I can entrust them to God. I want God to lead, guide, and direct them because He knows what's best. With the best of intentions, sometimes, we can give the wrong advice. Do I want to harm my children? Absolutely not! But I fail to see things as God sees them. So if I give them advice, I want God to bear witness to it. If not, they need to keep seeking God.

They need to get what they're going to do established by God. Our decisions—when God is directing them—they're built on a firm foundation. The winds and storms are going to come our way. We need to make sure we're established in the Lord, we're trusting in Him. We can't lean to our own understanding. God forbid that anyone lean on something that's off, that would keep them from getting what God has for them. How dare my boys ever say, "Well, Dad said this, so I've got to do it."! No! God comes before family, before friendship. If we're truly teaching the truth in love, we want people to get what "thus saith the Lord."

HAVING A PART IN THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED BY GOD

But people can hold onto their thoughts and what they feel, but we have to let it go to receive what God has for us. Mark 7, beginning with verse 7 says, *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men ...* Holding on so much to what some man has said that they won't do what God is saying. That is dangerous. *... ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

Are all traditions bad? No. But if they keep us from obeying God, there's a problem. Many today will not follow God because—"I was taught this. I was taught that." If God calls us to lay something aside, we need to lay it aside. I don't care who said it, who preached it. When God solidifies something, when God reveals something, we'd better hold to it. I'm not saying we're blown about by every wind of doctrine, but we'd better make sure it's of God, because that's going to stand.

Verse 9 says, *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.* Our own traditions will fall away. There's not a foundation to them. But God's commandments and God's Word standeth sure. We need to make sure that we're in the church that Christ built. So many say, "Well, I'm in this church, I'm in that church." That's not going to suffice. The Lord said, "I will build my church."

Someone might say, "Well, this is Brother Doug's church." No sir! "This is what so and so said." No, no, no, no! "I will build my church," said Jesus, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." If someone's in a church that's been established by anybody else, or is established on anything else, it's going to fall. We've got to make sure that we stay with God, no matter what. What did Peter say? "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

Peter was saying, "I don't understand everything, it's not all clear to me, but I'm going to stick with you, because you have the words of eternal life." Dear Ones, sometimes we may not fully see God's reasons, but we don't need to so easily cast away what God has given to us.

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. That house may look pretty for a while. "They've got it together. Things seem to be going their way. They've got plenty of money in the bank, and not

a worry in the world." But who's building that house? Is that house established? *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* God has to be the head. God has to be in control. God knows what's needed. But too many today lean to their own understanding.

SUBMITTING TO THE WILL OF GOD

I Timothy 6, verse 18: *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* These are just a few of the things God has given us to do. Ready to distribute. "But I worked hard for this. This is mine. They need to get out, and they need to do, and ..." If God lays something on our heart, we need to submit ourselves to His will. Does God ever lay something on us that may be a little tough to do? Sometimes God has something for us to do, and we're like, "That scares me." Can we trust Him, though?

That they do good. Is it always easy to do good when someone spitefully uses us? At first, we might feel like, "I'm going to get them back." But that's not "doing good."

When we do things God's way, here's what happens. Verse 19 says, *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come ...* God's going to prepare us for what's up ahead ... *that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Dear Ones, we've got to make sure we're doing it God's way.

So many today want to put their own thoughts, their own emotions on how things should be done. Recently, in Louisiana, there was a pastor that had been treated very badly by a neighbor. On video, they saw the pastor going across the road and getting into a fight with his neighbor. He had him on the ground, punching him in the face and kicking him. He was arrested, but so many people have tried to justify his actions. Again, do we have emotions? If someone threatens my family, I'm going to feel some emotions. The flesh wars against the soul. But we've got to ask ourselves, "What does God say? What's God's pattern for me to follow?" Maybe everybody else thinks something is okay, but what does God say? Only what He says will stand. I understand people's emotions. I understand we get upset sometimes. But we've got to make sure we're doing things God's way, because there's a day coming when we're going to stand before Him. If we say, "Well, everybody else said it was fine," we will hear, "What did the Word of God say?"

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? "I thought I was doing what I was supposed to do." ... and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? "Look at all this that I've been doing. I'm ready! I've done really well! ... And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." "Yeah, but I went to church every Sunday. Anything that the pastor asked, I did it. I did this, I did that. I gave money." But did you obey God? Was your life established by God? Dear Ones, we're all going to stand before God, and all the excuses of this, and that, and the other are not going to fly.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man ... a wise man—one that built his foundation upon God.

What is guiding your life this morning? I want you to really think with me—all of us. Where are our decisions leading? We can say to ourselves, “Oh, I’m going to be fine, and I’ll do this later on. I’ll do that.” But we’ve got to be honest with ourselves. We can put off, we can put off, we can put off ... but we’re going to have to face it some day.

Proverbs 23, beginning with verse 17 says, *Let not thine heart envy sinners ...* It’s easy to look around sometimes, and say to ourselves, “It seems like all these people are living so evil, and yet they’ve got all they need, and everything seems to be going their way. And here I am—every time I turn around, my vehicle’s broken down, this happens, and the other. I feel like I finally get a little money in the bank, and then something else pops up.” None of us likes that.

“But here’s this other person, they’re just living wickedly and doing everything that is wrong, and they’ve got plenty. Everything’s going their way. I don’t know about that Christian way.”

STANDING BEFORE GOD AT THE END OF OUR WAY

Dear Ones, God is concerned with our end. God is more concerned about the end than He is the in between. God wants us to enjoy life. Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. But He would rather we went through some hardship, yet be able to stand before Him and hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” than for us to go through life seemingly soaking up pleasure while living in sin, making our own decisions. It can even seem to be just a walk in the park. But one day, when we stand before God, only what we have done for Him will be established.

Let not thine heart envy sinners but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end ... It is appointed unto man once to die. Every one of us. That’s not always pleasant to think about. But we want to have the Lord there to say, “This is my child. He was faithful to me. He served me. Even when he didn’t understand, he stayed true to me.”

David said, “Search my heart, O Lord. Search it.” What is guiding our hearts this morning? There are so many influences around, here and there. “God, search my heart, and see if there be any evil way in me.” Anything that leads us away from God is evil. Sometimes we don’t realize it. Sometimes we don’t see it. We need to say, “Lord, help me to look and see things clearly. If I need to get some things out of the way, help me to do that.” Because we’re going to stand before God one day. We may fool everyone else around us. We may get pats on the back—“You’re doing good. You’re a good Christian.” But God sees it clearly.

Many throughout time thought they were doing things right, had it all figured out. Jesus told about one man that worked hard. Is it wrong to work hard? He built up much wealth, much comfort. I like it when I have a little cushion set up. I like it when the refrigerator is full. We’re human. I like it when things seem to be going well. But the man in Jesus’ story started mak-

ing some plans. He said, “I’ve got so much. Life is just a breeze. Look at all these other people. I imagine they look at me and want to be like me.” (Probably many did.) “I’ve got so much that I don’t know what to do with it. I know what I’m going to do. These barns I have are pretty nice, but I’m going to tear them down and make even bigger ones. I have nothing to worry about. I’m set. I’m going to eat, and drink, and say to my soul, ‘Just sit back and take it easy. If I want to go somewhere else and visit, I can do it. If I want to do this or that, I can go and do it. I’ve set myself up from my great planning that I’ve done. I’m ready just to live it up.’”

But the man heard a voice from heaven that said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” That wasn’t in his plans, was it? We don’t know when the Lord may call. This man could have worked hard and acknowledged God, and enjoyed all that God was blessing him with. He could have said, “Lord, what would you have me do with this abundance that I have?”

God wants us to acknowledge Him. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. We are to keep everything surrendered to God—our plans, our dreams. My son, Matt, was telling me about some of his plans and dreams. They’re good. It’s good for a husband and wife to sit and talk. But we’ve got to keep it surrendered to God. “If the Lord wills, this is what I will do.” We’ve got to make sure it’s surrendered to God.

The man in Jesus’ story was foolish. Dear Ones, in all love I say this morning that if our lives are not established in God, we’re making a foolish decision. There are far-reaching effects. The Bible talks about the house that was founded on the sand. The winds and the waves came, and the house fell. And great was the fall of it.

Are you on the solid Rock? It’s good for us to look at ourselves and say, “Lord, help me to see myself clearly. Help me to make those adjustments.” This is between you and God. It’s not between you and me. “Lord, show me this morning. Is there something I need to adjust? Do I need to make things right with you?”

We’re all going to stand before God. It’s coming. You can either hear, “Depart from me, I never knew you,” or we can hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord.” It pays to get this right.

May God bless you. †

ON MINE ARM SHALL THEY TRUST

My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.—Isaiah 51:5.

In seasons of severe trial, the Christian has nothing on earth that he can trust to, and is therefore compelled to cast himself on his God alone. When his vessel is on its beam-ends, and no human deliverance can avail, he must simply and entirely trust himself to the providence and care of God. Happy storm that wrecks a man on such a rock as this! O blessed hurricane that drives the

soul to God and God alone! There is no getting at our God sometimes because of the multitude of our friends; but when a man is so poor, so friendless, so helpless that he has nowhere else to turn, he flies into his Father's arms, and is blessedly clasped therein! When he is burdened with troubles so pressing and so peculiar, that he cannot tell them to any but his God, he may be thankful for them; for he will learn more of his Lord then than at any other time.

Oh, tempest-tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives you to your Father! Now that you have only your God to trust to, see that you put your full confidence in Him. Dishonor not your Lord and Master by unworthy doubts and fears; but be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Show the world that your God is worth ten thousand worlds to you. Show rich men how rich you are in your poverty when the Lord God is your helper. Show the strong man how strong you are in your weakness when underneath you are the everlasting arms. Now is the time for feats of faith and valiant exploits. Be strong and very courageous, and the Lord your God shall certainly, as surely as He built the heavens and the earth, glorify Himself in your weakness, and magnify His might in the midst of your distress. The grandeur of the arch of heaven would be spoiled if the sky was supported by a single visible column, and your faith would lose its glory if it rested on anything discernible by the carnal eye. May the Holy Spirit give you to rest in Jesus.

—Taken from Charles Spurgeon's
Morning and Evening Readings †

THE POETRY PAGE

A CHILD OF THE KING Edith Lillian Young

Poor? No, of course not! Why, how could I be,
When Christ, the King, is taking care of me?
Tired? Sometimes—yes, more than tired; but then;
I know a place where I can rest again!
Lonely? Ah, well I know the aching blight;
But now—I've Jesus with me day and night.
Burdens? I have them; oft they press me sore,
And then—I lean the harder, trust the more.
Worthy? Oh no! The marvel of it is
That I should know such boundless love as His!
And so, I'm rich; with Christ I am "joint heir,"
Since He once stooped my poverty to share.

GOD IS NEAR Elizabeth McE. Shields

Sometimes when morning lights the sky
And gladness fills the air,
I feel like telling things to God,
He seems so very near.

Sometimes when flowers are in bloom
And birds are singing clear,
I feel like singing things to God,
He must be very near.

Sometimes when trees are standing tall
With branches in the air,
I feel like saying things to God,
I know He must be near.

Sometimes when work and play are done
And evening stars appear,
I feel like whispering things to God,
He is so very near.

FORGIVE ME Author Unknown

Forgive me, Lord, for careless words
When hungry souls are near;
Words that are not of Faith and Love,
Heavy with care and fear;

Forgive me for the words withheld,
For words that might have won
A soul from darkened paths and sin
To follow Thy dear Son.

Words are such mighty things, dear Lord,
May I so yielded be
That Christ, who spake as never man,
May ever speak through me.

STORMS OF LIFE Gloria Hall Wood

When the storm clouds threaten
And on the sea of life we're tossed,
When we don't know where we're going,
Feeling all alone and lost,
There is a Friend to turn to,
A calming Hand to guide your way.
He will make the dark clouds scatter
And brighter grows the day.

GOD'S LOVE O. J. Robertson

God's love is like the rolling ocean
So deep and very wide
No force can ever hope to check
Or stop its surging tide.
Like craggy mountains towering upward
Vast and strong and tall,
There is no measure for His love
And yet I have it all.

BE TRUE
Horatius Bonar

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach!
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed. †

**THE
CHILDREN'S
CORNER**



MISCHIEF
A Bible Lesson by Sister Rebecca Bland

"Mommy!" cried my six-year-old sister, Twila. "Make Rebecca stop it!"

"Stop what?" asked my mother. She was in the kitchen packing green beans into quart canning jars, while Twila and I played in the next room.

"Every time I'm just about to pick up my doll baby, she beats me to it and throws it into the corner."

"Is that true?" my mother asked me.

"Yes, ma'am," I admitted.

"Well, stop it!" my mother said. "Can't you girls try to get along for once?"

With a triumphant smirk, Twila ran to the corner and picked up her doll. A split second later, she strode to a nearby chair, picked up my favorite book, and hurled it into the corner.

Although my mother couldn't see what Twila had done, she certainly heard the thump when my book landed in the corner. Of course, she thought I was still throwing Twila's doll baby, even after she had asked me to stop doing it.

"Rebecca Ruth Castang!" my mother called from the kitchen, "I told you to stop throwing that doll baby! You march yourself in here right this minute!"

I could have explained to my mother that Twila, not I, had thrown something after she had said to stop, but I didn't. I was angry that my mother had assumed I had disobeyed, and so I decided I would punish her for being unfair. I would make her feel guilty for correcting me when I hadn't done anything wrong.

When I appeared at the kitchen doorway, my mother pointed to a nearby rug. "Sit there," she said, "and don't get up until I tell you. And no talking!" She turned back to the table and continued filling jars with green beans.

While our mother's back was turned, Twila tiptoed to the kitchen doorway and looked at me. Neither of us said anything, because I wasn't allowed to talk. I could see by her face that she was sorry she had gotten me into trouble. But she wasn't sorry enough to admit to it and take the punishment. After a few minutes, Twila left the doorway and went to play quietly with her doll.

I spent the rest of my "time out" thinking hard thoughts about my mother. *As soon as this punishment is over, I am going to tell her that she made a mistake, I thought to myself. I am going to let her know that she punished me unjustly. She is going to feel very guilty, and I am glad. It wasn't fair for her to assume I was the one who threw something.*

I couldn't wait for my punishment time to be over. I couldn't wait to set my mother straight and to have her admit that she had wronged me.

At last, my mother said, "You can get up now and go play. After this, you listen when I tell you not to do something!"

I got up from the rug and spoke in a tone that I hoped was both hurt and dignified, "I wasn't the one that threw something after you said to stop. That was Twila. She threw my book into the corner."

I stood quietly, waiting for my mother's apology. It never came.

"Humpf!" she exclaimed. "Well, you should have told me. We'll let that punishment stand for all the times you did something wrong and didn't get caught." She began placing jars of green beans into the pressure canner. As far as she was concerned, the incident was over.

My mother had seen right through my ploy to get attention and sympathy. She knew there had been mischief—not kindness—in my heart when I allowed myself to be punished in my sister's place.

But my plan had backfired. Since I had decided to take my her punishment, Twila wasn't disciplined for what she did. And I didn't succeed in making my mother feel guilty for punishing the wrong person. Instead, I felt ashamed for even trying.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 6:14, which says, *Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.*

This verse gives the description of a naughty person—a person who has frowardness in his heart. A "froward" person is a troublemaker, always thinking up mischief.

It was mischief that motivated me to try to hurt my mother's feelings. That kind of mischief is never pleasing to God. We must ask the Lord to search our hearts and help us make sure that our thoughts and actions are always kind and tenderhearted toward others.

ACTIVITY

See if you can find a positive attribute in each of the following scriptures that is the **opposite** of **mischievous**.

1. Psalm 52:1
2. Romans 16:19
3. II Peter 1:5
4. Hebrews 10:34
5. Isaiah 30:5

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S ACTIVITY

1. Christ was **kind**, even to children. (Mark 10:14)
2. When Christ was reviled (insulted), He **did not revile (insult) in return**. (I Peter 2:23)
3. Christ was **obedient** to His parents. (Luke 2:51)
4. Christ was **thankful** for every blessing. (Matthew 15:36)
5. Christ **prayed** to His Father in heaven. (John 17:1)
6. Christ did only the things that **pleased** God. (John 8:29)
7. Christ showed **love** to others. (John 13:34)
8. Christ showed **compassion** to those in need of help. (Matthew 9:36)
9. Christ did the **will** of God. (John 6:38)
10. Christ **forgave** even His enemies. (Luke 23:34 †)

RAYS OF HOPE

By the late D. O. Teasley

(PART V)

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE

The following is a supposed argument or dialogue, between Satan, Doubts, Fears, and Feelings on one side, against Reason, Truth, Faith, and Trust on the other. The argument is supposed to be concerning a doubting soul that is trying to get the victory.

Satan (speaking to Doubting Soul)—You are progressing so slowly of late, it must be that you are deceived in your Christian experience.

Feelings—Yes, you have been feeling so downcast for several days, and one who has the victory should feel like shouting and praising God.

Reason—This is the devil; you had better dismiss him at once, or he will deceive you.

Fears (coming up hastily)—Many people have been led astray by Reason, and supposing they were right, have lost their souls. So very many people are deceived, you had better examine yourself.

Doubts—You know you did not get a clear witness of your sanctification, and even if you are justified, you are not sanctified.

Feelings—Yes; we all believe that Doubts is right about this; for at the time of your consecration you did not feel like Brother A, who felt the fire and really knew that he had received the Holy Spirit.

Faith—Pay no attention to Feelings, but believe in God.

Doubts—But those who are saved should feel better than you do.

Truth—"By grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8); so heed the admonition of Faith and dismiss these—

Fears (interrupting)—You had better be careful; you are liable to turn the Lord away.

Trust—"Trust in the Lord and do right," and these enemies shall not harm you.

Satan—Yes, but as Doubts has stated, this soul was not sanctified in the beginning.

Doubts—You had better give up your sanctification and—

Fears (interrupting again)—Yes, you had better be sure of it, for it is an awful thing to be lost.

Feelings—These awful feelings are surely the fruits of depravity or inherited sin. You do not feel right toward your brethren, and you feel so tried.

Doubts, Fears, Feelings, and Satan (all in unison)—Give up! give up! give up! you know you are not sanctified now, for you have listened to Doubts.

At this Doubting Soul concludes to give up and seek sanctification to be sure of heaven.

Satan—Although you have given it up now, you know that you were sanctified in the first place; and you could not fall from sanctification without committing sin, and if you have sinned, you are no longer justified.

Doubts—Yes, you have doubted, and doubting is sin.

Feelings—Yes, you feel just like a lost sinner; so you will surely have to repent.

At this Doubting Soul begins to weep and concludes to begin over again and seek pardon. About this time Feelings comes in, and his two friends—Despondency and Discouragement—come along for company. It now being late Doubting Soul weary with the struggles of the day, concludes to retire for a little rest. But Feelings and his two friends keep up such a chatter talking over the day's victory that Doubting Soul is unable to sleep, and arising concludes to pass the night in prayer. After Doubting Soul prays for a short time, Reason and Truth come in and persuade him to dismiss Feelings and his two friends and to invite Trust and Faith to come in. After some persuasion Doubting Soul concludes to invite Trust to come in, which he does, and concludes to rest for a while, as the night is now far spent. But soon after he retires, Doubts and his friend Worry rap at the door and ask to be admitted. Despite the earnest pleadings of Trust, Doubting Soul finally opens the door just a little and Doubts and Worry quickly press their way in; and as they come in at the door Trust is compelled to hasten out at the window, and Doubting Soul is again left in the hands of his enemies.

After a long struggle with Doubts and his troublesome comrade, Doubting Soul concludes to call for Reason to come in again. On entering, Reason at once sets to work to encourage Doubting Soul and offset the work of Doubts and Worry. After a few encouraging

words from Reason, Doubting Soul concludes to have Trust and Truth to come in and help. At the entrance of Trust and Truth, Doubts at once calls for Satan and Fears to come in and to bring Feelings along. On their entering, Doubting Soul feels somewhat alarmed; but as Reason and Trust take their stand one on each side of him and Truth at his back, he feels quite secure. After a short conflict Satan, Doubts and Fears are compelled to retreat to one corner; but Feelings, seeming to be more fearless, lingers near for a while, but finally recedes to the corner with his friends, where all make considerable noise by way of lamentation, as Reason, Truth, and Trust encourage Doubting Soul.

Finally Doubting Soul is advised to permit Faith to enter. At this the crowd in the corner are greatly angered, and Feelings begins to weep. But Doubting Soul is strengthened by Truth and still exhorted to invite Faith to come in. Acting on the request of Doubting Soul, Reason goes to the door and admits Faith. At the sight of Faith, even before he is fairly in the room, Satan, Doubts, and Fears all make a wild rush for the window and clamber out almost treading upon one another; while Feelings crouches himself in the corner and keeps very still for a while. At the entrance of Faith, Doubting Soul seems much revived, and Truth says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Faith replies, "The victory is won," and Feelings is compelled to go out, but lingers near the door. Doubting Soul now retires for the remainder of the night while Trust stands guard.

Satan, Doubts, Fears, and Feelings all appear at the door early in the morning and agree that Feelings shall take the lead in gaining an entrance.

Feelings (rapping at the door)—Let me in just for a while.

Truth (speaking to Doubting Soul)—Beware, this is one of those enemies that caused you so much trouble last night.

Fear (trying to assist Feelings)—You were too worried last night to make an intelligent consecration. It is a terrible thing to be lost.

Doubts—You would do much better to give up trying to believe and make another consecration this morning.

Truth—The Bible does not say you are saved by your emotions, but "through grace are ye saved." You had better not listen to these treacherous fellows who are trying to deceive you. You are now safe in our hands if you will but remain in our company; but should you allow these enemies of right to come in, we shall have to go out, for we will not keep such company.

Doubting Soul—I love you, my friend, and want you to stay with me, but I fear that in shutting out Feelings I may be deceived and shut out a dear friend. He is such an innocent fellow and longs so to be in my presence. I can hardly refrain from letting him in just for a little while.

Faith—The joy that you will obtain by remaining in our company will far surpass the friendship of Feelings, and—

Satan (interrupting in a boisterous tone from the outside)—Doubting Soul, you know that God is angry

with you. The best thing you can do is to turn over a new leaf. Make a new resolution this morning and start at the foundation to build up a Christian character.

Fears (speaking in a trembling voice)—Oh! it would be a terrible thing to be shut out of heaven; to be lost in eternal darkness and sable gloom forever.

Satan—He that fails in one point is guilty of all, and there must be some point in which you have failed.

Fears—Doubting Soul, you have been on your knees so much and your nerves are in such a strain you will ruin your health. You had better resolve to quit praying.

Doubts—The Bible says, "Pray without ceasing." You have ceased to pray, therefore you are a sinner.

Satan (throwing his voice like a ventriloquist and representing himself as the Lord)—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Hebrews 6:7, 8.

Truth—This is the voice of Satan trying to deceive you. He stopped quoting the scripture just before coming to this encouraging clause—"beloved we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation."

Feelings (now fearing, since Satan is exposed that Doubting Soul may take courage)—You feel so depressed; even much worse than last night. You feel that God is angry with you. Even the bright sunshine of the morning does not cheer you and if you look out at the window, you will see that even the trees and the flowers seem to droop in sadness. Surely, surely these are not the feelings of a redeemed soul.

Feelings pleads so sympathetically that Doubting Soul at once lets him in.

Feelings (after gaining an entrance)—Now you feel just as bad as you did before and you did not receive a definite witness.

Doubts (from the outside)—Yes, let us in, and we will help you to settle this matter.

Satan (from the outside)—"In the multitude of counsel there is safety"; so let us in. Now, you want to be sure this time, so don't go too fast. You had better let us in while we consider. With a few sympathetic words from Feelings, Doubting Soul opens the door against the warnings of Reason and Truth; and Faith, Trust, Reason, and Truth all retire disappointed at Doubting Soul's conduct, though not in any wise discouraged. Doubts and Feelings soon convince Doubting Soul that he is not justified, much to the satisfaction of Satan, while Fears walks the floor and casts an occasional glance at the haggard face of poor Doubting Soul.

After the continuance of this for some time Doubting Soul becomes very much discouraged, and Satan says to him, "You have committed the unpardonable sin."

Feelings—Yes, you feel just as if there were no mercy for you.

Fears—I too think that this case is hopeless. Doubting Soul, you will never get out of this deplorable condition.

Doubts—I have seen several cases like this one, and none of them ever found peace. Doubting Soul, you have now been in my company so long that you can never again look upon the countenance of Faith; for he is my bitter enemy, and I will not permit him to see you.

Satan—You are a burden to your friends, and God no longer cares for you, and you are so miserable that the best thing you can do is to end your life and—

Reason (coming up quickly and entering the room without ceremony)—This is Satan, and if you do not resist him, he will drive you insane.

Satan and Fears (both speaking at once)—Insane! insane! you are almost insane now.

Doubts—Yes, see how forgetful you are. You will never recover from this. Your mind is affected now.

Truth (stepping in with an air of assurance)—“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

Doubts—You are too weak to resist, so Truth must go out.

Faith (speaking from the door)—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Fears—You have doubted too long now. You are too great a sinner to be forgiven.

Truth—This is false, you have not sinned, and even though your sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow, though they were red like crimson they should be as wool.

Satan—But you have no confidence in yourself, even if God is not displeased with you. Through long doubting you have cast away your confidence.

Faith—Your self-confidence will be restored to you if you will “have faith in God.”

Feelings—You have doubted so long now and you feel so weak that you cannot believe.

Faith—Trust me, and I will drive Satan, Doubts, and Fears to the “four winds,” and will conquer Feelings and make him your servant.

Reason—Feelings is always deceptive; trust him not. Many people feel right who are only deceived, and Feelings causes many an honest soul to listen to Satan and Doubts, who are both enemies of God.

At this Doubting Soul is almost ready to dismiss Satan and his troublesome companions and to invite Faith to come in.

Satan—But don’t be in a hurry; there is plenty of time.

Truth—“Today is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time.” You had better invite Faith in at once.

Doubts—You are too weak to have Faith to come in.

Trust—Let me enter and sustain you, and you will soon be strong enough to entertain Faith.

Reason—I will assist you.

Truth—Whosoever will may be saved.

Doubting Soul is now much encouraged and invites Trust to come in immediately, and Satan, Doubts, and

Fears again recede to a corner, while Feelings stands back at quite a distance. Soon Faith is allowed to come in again, and all the enemies of Doubting Soul are again cast out, and Truth says, “Your name shall no longer be called Doubting, but Faithful; and so long as you will trust us we will protect you from Satan, Doubts, and Fears, and will cause Feelings to be your friend.” On this Faithful takes courage, dismisses all his troublesome foes, and settles down to enjoy the constant friendship of Faith, Truth, and Trust.

Many times after this did Satan come as an angel of light and try to gain an entrance, but Truth invariably exposed Satan, and Faithful was not deceived by him. Doubts often clothed himself in pitiful robes and sought to excite the sympathy of Faithful and to gain admittance. And many times when Faithful would turn Doubts away, it seemed very hard—almost like turning away his best friend. Fears often tried to intimidate Faithful and make him dismiss Faith; but Faith, Truth, and Trust would sing a trio, which would always stimulate and encourage Faithful.

At first Trust would not allow Faithful to look out at the door when Satan, Doubts, and Fears were trying to get in, lest he should not be able to withstand them; but finally Faithful forgot all his former troubles, and when his old enemies would come around, he would take Faith with him and boldly open the door and rebuke Satan and his fellows and cause them to flee.

Feelings was rather treacherous for awhile and often came near deceiving Faithful; but Trust finally enabled him to ignore the foolish whims and sympathetic stories of Feelings, and to look to Faith and Truth for guidance.

Faithful soon aspired to greater victories and remembered his former troubles “as waters that pass away,” and instead of spending his time in struggling with his enemies, he had time to praise God and worship him with joy. And Faith ‘appointed unto him beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.’ Isaiah 61:3. †



Greetings,
This article from Sister Lauren reminds us of the verse from the hymn, “What A Friend” ...—*O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer!*

Surely there is more peace, comfort, and power to be obtained through prayer than what we often pursue. May we be encouraged to take everything to God in prayer and to learn to trust Him fully. God is faithful to His Word, and a firm belief in His promises brings peace like a river!

In His Service,
Brother Brian Richards

HOW PRAYER AFFECTS PEACE

By Sister Lauren Deville

Sometimes peace is a fight. I find it interesting that often a topic I'm asked to speak about becomes something very relevant, and sometimes it also becomes a struggle that I start facing when I try to start writing! That's how it was with this one. The day I started thinking and praying about what to say for this topic, the devil began trying to destroy my peace. This morning I'm going to discuss "How Prayer Affects Peace." My verse to go along with that is Philippians 4:6, *Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.*



First of all, that verse is exclusive. It says be careful for nothing, be anxious for nothing, be worried about nothing. But in everything, not just a few things, not just the easy things, in everything, let your supplication be made known unto God. Everything that might cause us to worry, everything that might cause us to doubt, or feel anxious, everything that threatens to destroy our peace, we are to pray about all of those things.

We sing a lot of songs about the power of prayer and how God wants us to ask Him for things in prayer. Why? Because prayer takes faith. We have to believe that God will give us the things that we have need of when we ask Him. Something that came to my mind this past week was Uncle Doug's message one Sunday where he mentioned the verse in Hebrews: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* So what it comes down to is a matter of faith, and trusting that God will do what He says. It's trusting that He will guide, direct, protect, comfort, and everything else like He says. Whenever the devil is attacking, specifically attacking our peace and trying to bring fear, doubt, or anything like that, the first weapon we should turn to is prayer. Prayer is acting out our faith and showing God that we are following His instruction in Philippians. It also shows that we are actively trusting God and showing faith in Him, admitting that we need His help and His grace. When we pray, we know that God always hears us. That doesn't mean that He always answers right away or gives us what we need or what we ask for right away, but He always hears us.

Speaking from my own experience, I have had some different opportunities lately to practice actively trusting in God and coming to Him in faith. I came to God asking for Him to restore my peace. But I realized that for that prayer to be answered, it requires two things: continued faith in God and surrender of whatever is destroying my peace. And for me, that often is much more than just one prayer. It can be many, many prayers over several days or weeks, even months or years. Part

of that is because we have an enemy who delights in robbing us of our peace. Just at the point when you think you have peace about something, he will bring it back to your mind and start whispering all sorts of fears and worries into your ear. But that's when I can decide to go back to the verse in Philippians: *Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God,* and the following verse tells why: *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* That's a promise, something from God that can't be broken. God cannot lie, so whether it takes one prayer or a 1,000 prayers, He will give us His peace in which we can rest our souls. For myself, every time the devil tries to bring back certain worries or cares or fears, whatever they might be, my part of that is to pray and tell God that "I've already given this to you, and by your grace, I am not going to let the devil bring this back to me anymore. When he does, I'll come to you in prayer or I'll start singing a song or reciting some verses."

We know that God does not want us to live in fear because He *has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.* I think that the last part about a sound mind speaks of a peaceful mind—a mind at ease filled with calm and contentment. That is God's vision and desire for each one of us—that we would rest under the shelter of His wings and not give thought to the things of tomorrow—that we would not feel care or worry about them, but that we should be ruled by His Spirit of power and of love and of a sound, peaceful mind.

When His disciples were facing an unknown, possibly dangerous future, Jesus instructed His disciples in John, *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* †

WHAT LOVE CAN ACCOMPLISH

Message by Brother David Goble
(Pastor at Carmichael, California)

EPHESIANS 4, beginning with the eleventh verse: *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge*



of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

There are three things in the verses that we read here that seem to stand out as things that we can accomplish by speaking the truth in love. One is the unity of the faith. Another is maturing in faith (or maturing in the Spirit, or maturing in Christ), and the third—which is so important to us all—is the increase of the Body. I might also say “the increase of the Kingdom.” As is so often true in the gospel, they seem to connect, don’t they? The unity of the faith is necessary for maturity in Christ. Maturity in Christ is necessary for the building of the Kingdom—or the building of the body of Christ. So these things are connected, and they’re all connected by speaking the truth in love. It’s a very simple message. We could stop here and say, “Thank you for your attention. Let’s all go eat something.” But the common denominator that makes these things connect is “speaking the truth in love.”

Don’t look for a whole lot more. It’s very simple this morning. We have some things to suggest along the way, to spur your thinking, but as I often say, our goal is that, when we leave here, we are equipped with something more than we had when we came in. Otherwise, we heard a nice lecture, had a good time, enjoyed each other’s company, and that was about it. If that’s all it was, it stayed inside these four walls. But, God help us, we want what is in here to go out there. The church is really the church when it’s out “there.” This is a gas station. This is a refueling station. We get our batteries charged, we get a little fuel in the tank, we change the tires, we get the car back on the track, and we go out because the checkered flag is out there. It’s not in here.

I hope you’re not misunderstanding me. I love to be in the service. The reason we come here is for all these things—essential things. I really have a passion and a burden for seeing the kingdom of God increase. It is hard work, isn’t it? The day and time we live in, the world seems like it doesn’t want truth. It seems that way, but guess what? I don’t believe the door of the ark is closed. I believe God is calling men and women, boys and girls into the safety of the ark. So I’m not discouraged. It’s hard work, but it’s worthy. It’s an excellent profession.

NUMBER 1—THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

Let’s speak about the unity of the faith, and then we’ll speak about maturing in Christ, and then about speaking the truth in love that the Kingdom might be built. Let’s look at verse eleven again: *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evan-*

gelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints.

Why was that necessary? When I read Scripture, I ask myself, “Why?” Don’t just read a verse and say, “I understand what it says.” Ask yourself, “What’s the point? Why is that scripture in here?” I’m not necessarily going to give you the answer. It’s something we must ask ourselves—“Why is the apostle saying this?”

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith.” Evidently, we lack something after we are converted. We are not yet whole. One of the things we need after we are converted is the Spirit of Christ dwelling within us. Otherwise, this isn’t going to work. We’ll be walking after the flesh. We might have a desire to serve God, but the flesh will dominate the Spirit. It’s not going to work out. So we need the Spirit of God to dominate the flesh. It’s essential. We can ask ourselves this morning, “Am I walking in the Spirit, or by my own behavior—at home, at work? Is the flesh still dominating the Spirit?”

We need to come to the unity of the faith. I said that the common denominator is speaking the truth in love. Speaking the truth in love will help us come to the unity of the faith. It’s important. Why? Because it brings us to the knowledge of the Son of God.

And then he says something interesting—*a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* All of these things are necessary, and we’re going to be building up to a conclusion in verse 16. We need to be built up in the knowledge of the Son of God. We’re not perfect in the sense that we’re complete after we’re converted. There’s work to do. We spent a long time, most of us, serving the flesh in sin, and corrupting that which God desired to be holy. And many of us built up bad habits and behaviors that don’t help anything. We spent a long time doing that. I spent a couple of decades doing that.

And so the Lord saves us. He converts us. When God converts us, don’t you think He does something on the inside? He doesn’t just cover us with His blood so that God only sees the blood that was shed. God sees the blood that was shed, and it does a work on the inside. But there’s yet a work to be done, isn’t there? We’re talking about the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, and coming to a perfect man. We have room to grow, a place to become complete. We are yet, in a sense, a bit incomplete. I hope you’ll allow me to say that. It doesn’t take anything away from holiness. It doesn’t take anything away from the Spirit of God that dwells within. But the human is yet a bit incomplete. And so he says there is a need for us to come to a perfect man—or to become complete.

I wonder if that’s not almost a lifelong project. And guess what? Because it’s a lifelong project, we’re always going to be learning more about the Kingdom, more

about the love of God, more about ourselves. It was probably in my late fifties—and I'm in my late sixties now—that it became necessary for me to learn a lot more about myself.

EXAMINING OURSELVES

There are “Jacob moments at the river” in life. Do you know what I'm talking about—where Jacob wrestled with the angel, and God broke Jacob? Jacob found out some things about himself that he didn't know before. There are moments in our lives when God breaks us again. That's necessary. We find that we have something inside that yet needs to be broken. It's such a privilege for God to do that, even after we're saved. When that happens—when He breaks us, when He shows us more about ourselves—then He can fill us with more of Himself.

God help us not to become so self satisfied, so religious, that we say, “Thank God, I got mine. I hope that one gets theirs.” Do you know what I mean? I wonder if that's helpful. We spoke about humility in the ministers' meeting this morning. I think humility is the language of heaven. All kinds of good stuff comes when we learn the language of heaven. I'm still learning it.

The very first time I came here, I didn't feel worthy. Because I felt the holiness that was assembled here. Wasn't there a prophet that felt that way, and needed his lips touched by a coal from the altar? I still feel that way when I'm in the company of the saints. This is not a false humility. I hope I'm being genuine with you this morning. I wonder if you can relate to what I'm saying. I feel like, “God, sometimes I feel like I don't belong here.” Not because I've sinned, not because I've backed up on truth, not because I've gone my own way, but because where God is present, you feel the Spirit. And it's a good thing. It checks you. It causes you to examine your heart.

You might have been rolling along, going with some routine, but then you come to a place where something special happens. God's people are there, and the Spirit is there. And the Spirit examines you. He says, “Just hang on, slow down, and let me deal with you.” That's a wonderful thing. It brings us to the unity of the faith. One of the things that's been so wonderful is that I have never yet heard a message here that has been preached by anything but love. Each message that I have heard here has been motivated by and infused with love. That is so attractive. It's so inviting. It wants to bring you in. It wants you to examine yourself.

Someone mentioned Psalm 139. “God, examine me.” And I'm paraphrasing. “God, shine your light on me. Show me if there's any wicked way in me.” Why? Because I want to make heaven my home. But more than that, I want to see the kingdom of God built here. I want to be a worker. I want to be a part. I don't want to be incomplete in the job that He's given me to do.

So it's a good thing to be examined, and to find yourself in a place in life where God reveals to you more about yourself than you knew before. You might

have lived fifty years, and somehow God calls you up by the side of the river one night, and brings His angel. People say that Jacob wrestled with the angel. I think the angel wrestled with Jacob. Jacob didn't quite know what he needed, but God knew what he needed. And when the angel broke Jacob, for the rest of his life he remembered that moment. He couldn't walk the same way he could walk before. He walked differently. He had a new name, didn't he?

Look at this: *the stature of the fulness of Christ*. Do we think about that? What an honor! We used to be walking in the vanity of our pride, of our mind, seeking the affection of men, and position, and all of that. That's how we used to walk. And now God calls us to the opportunity to be filled with the stature of the fulness of Christ. What a privilege! I can't explain in words what a privilege that is! To be filled that way—it's part of the lifelong privilege of being a Christian.

So that's the first thing. The truth that is spoken in love brings us to the unity of this kind of faith. And the unity of this kind of faith is not the end goal. Some banners I have seen at different places and at different times have put unity as the last goal. I don't think so.

THE END GOAL: MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

We're speaking of the unity of the faith that is brought by truth and love. Speaking the truth in love accomplishes something. This is one of the things it accomplishes. Acts 1:6-8: *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

That is the end goal. Matthew 28:19—making disciples of all men—that is the end goal. We can't lose sight of the goal, otherwise everything else misses the objective. If we make something else the main goal, or something else the objective, that's what we shoot for. That's what we work for.

Unity is necessary for this objective. Is unity the main goal, or is it a means to an end? I believe Jesus felt strongly about this. John 13:34, 35: *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* If we can't say to each one sitting in the pew next to us, “I love you, brother, I love you, sister,” we've got some business to do. We can't leave here, and leave some sort of animosity inside here, and go out there and say, “I represent the kingdom of God.” Look at what Jesus said: *A new commandment I give unto you.* Why is this new? He says so.

That ye love one another. That's not new. *As I have loved you.* That's the new part. *As I have loved you, that*

ye also love one another. How did Jesus love us? He died for us! He spread His arms out, He hung up on a cross—on purpose—because you and I needed somebody to save us. That's why He died for us.

So the new commandment is the sacrificial love that Jesus demonstrates for us, that we might demonstrate that for each other. That is the new commandment. That makes us the Church of God. Otherwise, we're something else. We take it for granted that every church in the land today is like this, but it's not. There are lots of places where people are coming for a show, or they're coming to hear somebody clever talk, or maybe to get a wife or a husband. There are lots of reasons why people come to church today. But Jesus died for this—that the world might know that, "I yet have a church on the earth that is like me. That I died for them, and they're dying for each other."

But why is this? He answers the question: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* That's the end goal! Unity is a way to get there. We can't get there without unity. But unity is not the end goal. We can't say we love each other, we like to sing to each other, we like to go to church together, we like to listen to all the things that happen in church—that's the end goal. No! The end goal is that we are sacrificing ourselves for each other that we might deliver this message to the world. To make disciples of all nations—that's the end goal.

Why am I laboring over this? Because we need to be very clear what the goal is—what the mission is. The mission will determine the objectives. The objectives will be achieved by the actions that we take. There are critical success factors that must happen for the mission to go right. All of this is part of management. It's the same in the church: we need to know what the mission is so that we manage to the mission. We've got to get it right.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. This is the unity of faith. So the unity of faith is a means to get to the end goal, which is to build the Kingdom, to let the world know that what's in here is not going to stay in here. But rather, it's going to go out there. That's important.

NUMBER 2—MATURING IN CHRIST

I said I wanted to cover three things this morning that speaking the truth in love accomplishes. The second is maturing in Christ. Let's go back to Ephesians, and I like to go begin at the first part of chapter 4. We were at verse 11, but I'd like to go back to verse 1.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord ... every word in here means something. Later on, in your devotions, spend time here ... every word means something ... I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord ... He said the same thing in chapter 3, verse 1.

I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering ... This is the humility which is the language of heaven ... *forbearing one another in love ...* Love permeates this.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We're talking about maturing in Christ—growing up in Christ. He's telling us how to do this. When we were babes, we had some learning to do, didn't we? We were crawling. We didn't walk. We didn't run. We had some crawling to do. How does a baby really mature? How does a baby grow into a healthy human being? That caregiver, that mother, or that grandma, holds that babe in her arms. That baby looks at the eyes of that one. So many good things happen right there. Attachment. Without that, they say children develop difficulty in attachment. Eye contact ... God wants eye contact with us. Spiritual eye contact. It establishes an attachment.

He says, "I want to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That word *bond* literally means "to be chained." Think about it. We are supposed to be chained to peace. And not with some lock that can be unlocked. These chains are meant to be permanent. When we are consecrated, when we are forgiven, and all those things that bring us into the Kingdom, we are chained to peace.

Think about it. Can a person who is chained to peace cause division? Not only am I chained to peace, I'm chained to my brother, I'm chained to my sister by the bond of peace. We're chained together. If I'm chained to you, and you're chained to me, we can't be divided. What's part of this chain, these links that are formed? Isn't it love? The chain of peace ultimately is love.

I don't see love as wishy-washy. I don't see love as a fabrication of religion, and that's all they talk about. Love is the power of God. These chains that hold us are meant to be strong. The gospel holds us in strong tension. Something in high tension is difficult to break. Perhaps that glass over there is tempered glass. Tempered glass is formed under high heat. When it's formed under high heat, just as tempered steel is formed, the molecular bonds that hold that stuff together are stronger. It's hard to break it. And when it breaks, it breaks! Because it's in high tension.

We are meant to be bound together in strong tension by the gospel. And bound by the bonds of peace. The reason I come to fellowship is to learn from you all and to make friends. The end! I don't have any other agenda. I'm not here to divide good brethren. I'm not here to make little comments or have little sidebars, or see if we can develop little cliques here and there. That's not why I come to convention. I come to learn new stuff, worship God, make new friends, go home. Repeat. The end.

What if it was all that simple? Right? Imagine the size of God's church if that's all we came to do. To be bound by peace, to be bound by love together. I love the expression somebody gave: "I may not always understand the way you say it, I may not always agree with the way you say it, but I will do nothing to hurt you." If we just had that, we would be good.

I covenant, I will do nothing to hurt you. And if I don't quite see it the way you do, perhaps God has given you a vision that He hasn't yet given me. Go by the grace of God. I may have to watch from the sidelines.

You may have to watch me from the sidelines. Some people say that people from California are curious. You may have to watch me from the sidelines. I don't know. Guess what? Some people from West Virginia are curious.

This is what I loved about Brother Greg. We grew up at different places, and in different times, and in different ways. But before we ever met, we were bound by the bonds of peace. Why? Because the love of God was already working. That's how it's meant to be. You begin to know people that you never even knew before, and guess what? There's a kindred spirit there.

Maturing in Christ—why does this help us grow up in Christ? Because we're not looking for advantage. We're not looking for preeminence or position. We're not looking for titles. We're not looking for "big I's and little you's." That's an immature Christianity. Speaking the truth in love helps us grow up to the full stature of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

ACKNOWLEDGING SIN AS SIN

Something else that happens when we mature in Christ ... we will not call mistakes that are sin "mistakes." If something is a sin, it's sin. We're not going to call it a "mistake." Because "holiness folks" treasure holiness. And what that means is we don't want to sin. We don't want to commit willful sin. We don't want to commit any kind of sin. But until it's willful, it's not unto death. If the Lord shows us something, and now it's willful, it becomes "unto death" if we don't repent of it. So for us, sin is a big deal. It's important. That's one way that we grow up. We don't call a sin a "mistake." Think about it.

The greatest mistake a Christian can make is to call a willful sin a "mistake." You know what? The enemy will shame a person. He'll say, "Oh, don't confess your sin. You've been saved for ever so long, and you have a position," and so forth, and so on. He'll say, "Don't confess it. Just call it a 'mistake.' Say, 'Well, I just didn't know.' " If it was knowledgeable, if it was willful, and it was against the law of God, it was a sin.

But the good thing is, Jesus doesn't want to destroy us. He wants to save us. We have an advocate with the Father. He wants us to come back, acknowledge the wrong, confess it, repent of it, and keep going. Stay in the race. The enemy wants to shame people. He wants to knock them out. He wants to say, "If you say something, you'll lose your position." Well, some of that might be true. There are consequences to sin. There is still no better way than the way we're going. There's no other alternative. So if we find ourselves having done something which causes spiritual death, we must confess it, and call it what it is, and ask God to forgive us. Thank God, He will. And we move on.

We mature in Christ when we speak the truth in love. One of the things that happens is, when God saves us, He changes us from the inside out. It's not just, as some people say, an "energy field" or something. It's not that the blood of Christ is like a cloak that He places over us, and nothing really happens to the

human nature, nothing really happens to the inside. This is a common teaching in religion today—that God doesn't see through this "cloak," because if He did, He would still see a corrupt human. I can't agree with that. My experience has been that, when God brought us to an altar of repentance, He did a perfect work at that altar. And all the sins that we had committed, God washed them all away—as far as the east is from the west. We got up a new creation. I didn't get up a corrupt creation, covered by Jesus' blood. I stood up a new creation that the blood had infused in me.

And then later, when I discovered ... I can't speak for anybody else. I know how it was for me. Later, when I discovered that it was difficult to keep this experience and walk by the flesh, somebody said, "Brother, you need the Spirit of God within you." I'm just explaining what happened to me. I went back again. I said, "Lord, whatever you have for me, that's what I want." That was 45 years ago. And God is still helping me walk in the Spirit.

WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT

I'll be honest with you. As I've matured in this walk, I've discovered there are times that flesh wants to raise its head. You say, "Never has flesh given the preacher any trouble." Sometimes the flesh wants to raise its head. That moment, you know ... and you say, "Why did I say that? Why did it come out that way?" There was no intent to hurt or harm, but the flesh just wanted to protect itself. Thank God, one of the things the Spirit does is oil the gears. Sometimes they get a little bit rusty, not because of willful sin, but the flesh gets them a little rusty sometimes. But the oil of sanctification makes the gears start turning again.

That's the wonderful thing about the Spirit of God. He keeps the gears turning, even after the flesh sometimes causes them to seize. We don't have to walk after the flesh. We can walk after the Spirit. That's maturing in Christ. We're not overthrown, we're not condemned. Sometimes the flesh wants to raise its ugly head. We say, "Well, evidently I have a need to yet be perfect in the love of God." That doesn't mean you're carnal. That means sometimes the flesh wants to raise its head. But the Spirit of God makes Himself known, and dominates once again. That is maturing in Christ.

Ephesians 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children ... this fulness of stature, it's meant to bring us to a maturity ... tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness ...* There is such a thing in the world today—in the religious world—I call it "the magic show." Religious professors promise things that can never happen, and aren't true. It's "sleight of hand." That's how a magic show works. "Watch this hand." Guess what? The other hand is doing something else. Religion today is a magic show. It wants to promise holiness, but it doesn't demand a change of heart. It doesn't demand repentance from willful sin. It's a magic show, you know. "Look, you can make heaven your home. You can slide in. It will be easy." That is an immature way of looking at Christianity.

We're supposed to grow up. When I first became pastor, a sister came into the office and said, "Brother, just tell me what to do, and I'll do it." And there are times when we do. There are times when we say what to do. But I said, "Sister, I'm going to tell you what the consequences of your decision might be. But then you are going to make the decision. I am not the third parent in your home. I might help you, and guide you, and even sometimes set boundaries for you, but don't tell your child, 'Brother Dave said ... We can't do this because Brother David said ...'" That's an immature Christianity. We need to be convicted and convinced that what we're doing is the right thing. Yes, thank God for wisdom that comes from different areas. It helps us. It's meant to be. It's one of the benefits of the church. But I have told people, "I am not the third parent in your home. Do not say, 'Brother Dave said ...'" Because that child now believes that you do not have any authority in your own home. And guess what? I don't live there. We're meant to grow up. We've been changed.

NUMBER 3—INCREASING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Finally, we get to the idea of increase. Ephesians 4:15, 16—*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part ...* Why is all of this important? What does the next phrase say? Why does all that body function and work together, and grow up? Why is it? He tells us ... *maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

I look at "increase the body" as "increase the kingdom of God." The unity of the faith, the maturity of growing up in Christ ... speaking the truth in love is meant to accomplish something. It's meant to increase the kingdom of God. Otherwise, we're having a nice conversation amongst ourselves. There's meant to be a purpose for all of this.

Building the kingdom of God. The world today wants to co-opt biblical symbols. I'll tell you what I mean. Jesus Christ was a real person. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. All those things are true, and they are real.

Jesus Christ is also the symbol of so many things. He's the symbol of salvation. There's a portrait of Jesus Christ hanging in that room over there. I'm not quite sure if He looked like that, or not. It's a symbolic rendering of Jesus. I'm not making Him mythology. I'm saying there are religious symbols in the Bible. There's nothing wrong with that. Symbols mean things to people.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Love is also a symbol. Love is real. Love changes things. Love is demonstrated by action. Love is all of these things that we've been talking about. Love brings us to the fulness of Christ. Love helps us to mature in Christ. Love is a symbol, but it also means things.

People of the world take biblical symbols and co-opt them. They change them. They steal them. They make them into something else that they're not. That's what "co-opt" means. They take a symbol for their own purposes, change it, and now it becomes something different. Love is one of those things. In the religious world today, they talk a lot about love. Just because they co-opt the symbol does not mean that the symbol is not true. Just because I take something that is true and corrupt it, does not mean that the truth is not the truth.

The Bible says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." And I like to say, "Let God be true, and the rest of us try to figure it out." The point is, let God be true. There is a truth which cannot be changed. It doesn't matter if it's corrupted, it doesn't matter if it's co-opted, it doesn't matter if the world takes it and makes it look like something else.

My wife and I were talking about how the world has taken the rainbow. The rainbow is a symbol, isn't it? It's real, and it's a symbol. When Noah's ark landed, and God brought out that rainbow, it was the symbol of His covenant with Noah, right? The world today has taken the rainbow and co-opted it. They've made it into something else. That doesn't mean the rainbow isn't still true. It means they've corrupted it and made it into something which is not what it's supposed to be.

Love is the same way. Do not be afraid to preach on love. Do not be afraid to extol the magnificence of love. Do not be afraid to say, "God's power is love." He still says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." There's power in love. Just because the world talks about love in this wishy-washy way, and this kind of compromised way, there is no compromise between love and judgment. Just because you preach on love does not mean you're wishy-washy on judgment. Just because you preach on the justice of God, the judgment of God, does not mean that you're wishy-washy on love. They are independent things, and they're dependent things.

Love and judgment. I have no problem with what we call "judgment preaching"—preaching that sets the thing down on the line so you know right from wrong. Thank God for that. And I have no problem with someone preaching on love, and they don't have to apologize for it. We don't have to put adjectives with love, like, "Well, it's love, but it's not ..." Get away from "love ... but ..." Let love be love, and let it be. Don't apologize for love. Love is the power of God. Love is not weak. Love is powerful. Love needs no apology. It needs no other adjectives. It's the power of God unto righteousness. It needs to govern us. It needs to be in our living and in our preaching. It will save the soul from sin and build the kingdom of God.

He shows us in verse 16 that all of these things are meant to make increase of the Body. The Body is meant to have a self-generating engine in it, that edifies itself in love. It just keeps building, it just keeps growing, it's part of our maturity, it's part of our fulness.

I support preaching which helps identify right and wrong, and I don't think that is contrary to the love of God. I think they work together. But neither do I think that, if I am just preaching on the love of God, and I'm not preaching something that needs clarity about right from wrong, but something else about the love of God, I've learned not to apologize for that. I don't apologize for the love of God. The love of God is the currency of heaven, and it helps the church build the kingdom of God. ‡

RESULTS OF SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

2026 CONVENTION REPORT

From notes by Sister Sarah Arch
and Brother David Marquiss

The annual Convention of the Church of God, Hagerstown, Maryland, was held June 30-July 5, 2026. Saints came from various states and internationally. It was good to see the different ones once again.

Prayer meetings were held ten days prior to the convention, as well as fasting for souls. Success would not have been given if the Lord wasn't sought to have His way. God is due our best, our all. It was good to see each one laboring together for a successful convention.

The theme of the convention was, "Results of Speaking the Truth in Love." The pilot scripture text was Ephesians 4:15, 16: *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

As usual, prayer meetings were held at 7:00 A.M. each day of the convention. Exhortations were given by various saints to inspire us to prayer before seeking the Lord. General services followed at the times given in this report.

Here are a few excerpts (italics) of messages of each service:

Tuesday, 10:30 A.M.—Brother Doug Koerner from Essex, Maryland, spoke: "Don't Compromise Truth for Favor." Text: Ephesians 4:15, along with other scriptures used. *When someone gets saved, we like to see results. Salvation produces results. We gain faith. We have a love for God's people. There are also results of rejecting truth. Truth and love—great conflict between these words. There's rejection of truth in today's world. Jesus died because people hated the truth. Truth can hurt, but there still is love. We have to love the truth to make heaven our home. The world tries to change the Word of God for the favor of men. Christ desires His Body [the church] to be united. Love requires God's*

laws. Conviction is unpleasant because God loves you. People today don't want to be told how to live. If you don't love the truth, you can be deceived. God gave His ministers the instructions to preach the Word of God.

2:30 P.M.—Brother Franklyn Bascoe from St. Mary, Jamaica, was the speaker. "Be Strong in the Battle." Text: Ephesians 6:10, and other scriptures. *We don't like to accept growing older. We are just passing through this world. Soon our labor will be through, so we must do with urgency the work God has called us to do. One of the requirements for work is to be strong in the grace of God. We may not be physically strong, but we need to ever be spiritually strong. We need to see the work that needs to be done, and do it! There is a payday coming according to our work. The enemy wants us to be afraid to do a task. Having the Lord on our side makes all the difference. Be of good courage. In order to be strong, we must put on the whole armor, not part of it. We need to be prepared to stand against the wiles of the devil. The armor of God completely protects us.*

There is danger in not speaking the truth. We can speak the truth in a way to hurt people. Even when we speak the truth in love, it can hurt. We have to be strong in the Lord that if we lose our lives for the truth, we will be willing to stand.

6:00 P.M.—Brother Harley McClung from Craigsville, West Virginia, spoke. "Who Am I?" Text: Ephesians 2:1-6, and other scriptures. *We don't look at each other like God does. David said, "What is man that this great Creator is mine?" We were God's enemy when we were in sin, and yet God was mindful of us. Every soul is precious in God's sight. All of us are connected to God. God looks at us as a little part of Himself. We are His offspring. We were not created to go to hell. God wants mankind to be reconciled to Him. Once we are changed, we see people how God sees them. Only then can the gospel be preached in love. Love is an action—we have to show them. How would we have treated the thief on the cross? Paul said, "Who are we to judge another man's servant?" We cannot judge others to the glory of God. In the hands of God, we can become precision instruments to prick the hearts of men. A person converted from sin to be God's child becomes the apple of His eye—cherished, loved, protected.*

Wednesday, 10:30 A.M.—Brother David Goble from Carmichael, California, was the speaker. "What Love Can Accomplish." Text: Ephesians 4:11-16. (This message can be read in its entirety in this issue).

2:30 P.M.—The Young People were in charge of this service. Brother Cameron Deville was chairman. Special songs and thoughts from the song "Blessed Quietness" were given. Those who spoke were—Sister Vahnyah Vickerman Kelley, "Walking in the Spirit Brings the Soul into its Proper Dwelling Place"; Brothers Logan Arch, Trenton Violet, Logan Matthesen, "Walking in the Spirit Provides Guidance"; Sister Ellie Williams, "Walking in the Spirit Enables Us to Hear God's Voice." (You can listen to this entire service,

as well as others, by going to the Service Archives on our website—www.wayoftruth.org).

6:00 P.M.—Brother Doug Shenberger, pastor of the congregation here in Hagerstown, Maryland, was the speaker. “Results of Speaking the Truth in Love.” Text: Matthew 22:35-37. *Jesus always spoke the truth in love, even though some things seemed harsh. If He didn’t show them salvation, He really didn’t love them. If He failed to tell them the truth, it would not be an act of love. Jesus was eager to forgive. He searched for souls who sought help. Jesus brought people to a point of decision about the welfare of their souls. He told people what they needed to hear—maybe not what they wanted to hear. He didn’t want them to have a form of godliness. He is asking some questions today. Jesus hasn’t changed.*

The heart rightfully belongs to God, but Satan also wants a place there, even a little bit. He builds on people’s pride, lust, complacency, rebellion, and offenses, until he starts enlarging his hold. He uses those things to separate us from God. Then comes shame, hopelessness, strong delusions. A person feels like they can never escape. Christians need to watch that the devil doesn’t even get a little space. He leaves us with just a profession. Man cannot throw Satan out of his heart. He needs the truth to meet that need. When the truth is spoken in love, the devil’s citadel is in danger of being torn down. The Spirit speaks of freedom and restoration. But He needs our will. He brings us to a point of decision. When our will engages with the Spirit, the power of God will destroy the works of the devil. Bondage is broken.

Jesus said to love God with all our soul, mind, and strength. Are we doing that? We must love God with all that is within us. Does that truth bring a sense of guilt? A sense of failure?

Thursday, 10:30 A.M.—Brother Matt Deville, Sr. from Deville, Louisiana, spoke. “An Established Life.” Text: Proverbs 16:1-3. (This message can be read in its entirety in this issue).

No service was held at 2:30 P.M.

6:00 P.M.—Bro. Tim Crooks from Jonesville, Louisiana, was the message bearer. “What Has God Shown You?” Text: Micah 6:6-8. **“O man”**—universal address to mankind. No entitlement, mere humans in God’s sight, accountable to God; “what is good”—lots of people are good and do good. What is good is the way of righteousness, the way to heaven; **“and what doth the Lord require of thee”**—God has requirements; **“but to do justly”**—personal spiritual action instead of a religious ritual. Walking, doing, drawing close to God, showing emotion, evidence of growth. Christians give their “rights” to God; **“and to love mercy”**—some people love judgment. When we obtain mercy, we want to extend mercy; **“and to walk humbly with thy God”**—surrendering your own agenda to God and being teachable. We are living a life of learning and growth. Be humble. Receive correction.

Friday, 10:30 A.M.—Brother David Shaw from Manchester, Jamaica, brought a short message for September/October 2026

the Divine Healing Service, after which souls were prayed for their physical needs. Text: Mark 1:23-27. *We want Jesus because He is the same and will always be. The man in the synagogue had an unclean spirit. Demons know God. But Jesus commanded the devil to hold his peace and to come out of him. The man was delivered. God’s power prevails. He may heal in ways that seem strange, but ultimately there’s victory. Don’t let your faith grow weak if you have to wait for the answer. Be willing to suffer as He asks it of us. Whatever He allows is for our good. Sometimes you feel like enough is enough, but don’t give up. Our sicknesses are costly. They cost Jesus many stripes. So be patient and wait. You may be suffering, not only physically, but mentally. God is never late, but always on time. Whatever we receive from God, we need to make sure He gets His portion. Submit to God. We know we serve a mighty God, but in reality, we can’t understand or fathom Him.*

2:30 P.M.—Various songs and tributes were given in remembrance of our former pastor, Brother Gregory E. Tyler, who went to be with the Lord on June 13, 2026. (You can listen to this entire home-going service by going to the Service Archives on our website—www.wayoftruth.org).

6:00 P.M.—Brother Thomas Harris, of our local congregation, was the speaker. “The Greatness of God.” Text: Romans 11:33-36, along with other scriptures used. *There are things about God that we will never fully understand. He is so much greater than we are. God told Moses to tell the Egyptians that “I AM has sent you.”*

God is eternal. No beginning and no end. He’s not confined by time. He can see tomorrow. Nothing will ever surprise God.

God cannot be measured. He is self-sufficient. He won’t run out of fuel. Whether or not I believe in God doesn’t change the fact that He is.

Why is it important that I understand the greatness of God? Why did He create humans? To love them. He created them in His own image and their souls to be immortal. They were created with the knowledge of the supremacy of God. They (Adam and Eve) had a relationship with Him. But sin and rebellion happened. It is absurd to think of rebelling against such an almighty God. Humans think they have within themselves to be self-sufficient. Physical strength won’t last; spiritual strength will. It’s presumptuous to think God has not a right to be a part of my life. Rebellion against God is a serious thing.

When we acknowledge the greatness of God, we can put ourselves in perspective. Things that overwhelm and are too much for us, God understands them perfectly. In spite of His greatness, God wants to talk to us, to be our friend.

God is motivated by love. He is calling to us.

Saturday, 10:30 A.M.—Brother Brian Richards, assistant pastor of our local congregation, was the message bearer. “Edifying the Body.” Text: Ephesians 4:11-16, and other scriptures. *The body of Christ—*

Christ is the Head, not man. We look to Him for guidance. He's the Foundation. We're all building on that Foundation. The whole body is "fitly joined together." One body, one Head. Saints all over the world, but one body. Structured internationally. "Compacted"—pressed together, strong, chosen, connected. We all have a part to play.

The Word of God in the soul produces results. When truth is delivered in love, it edifies the body of Christ. Follow the things which make for peace, not contention. Pursue, make some effort. Don't highlight others' lack. Value our connections.

Truth builds up the body. It is not divisive. We must stay under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God delivered in love builds up the body. The Spirit invites people. Be mindful of how we go about our living. Use our gifts for the edifying of the body. How we conduct ourselves in the world impacts others around us. Be vigilant; walk circumspectly. Don't take the enemy lightly. Be mindful how we use the tools of today. Be careful what we publish on Facebook.

Excel in spiritual gifts for the use of edifying, not putting ourselves on display. Think of how you may come across to others. Are we seeking to build up the church? We are all "preaching" the gospel. It must be presented in love. People watch our behavior, our speech, and how we handle difficult situations. Be careful how we present scriptures to the world. We need the direction of the Spirit.

Is speaking the truth the only way to share the gospel? Show love and respect and care. Take time with people. Go the extra mile. Be patient. Show concern. Then they will know where to turn.

The apostle Paul reached out to people in their spiritual understanding. He said, "I am made [became] all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." The goodness of God leads men to repentance.

Edifying the body brings reconciliation. Put off things that bring contention. Issues will arise—restore in the spirit of meekness. Don't be quick to push others aside. Work through issues under the leading of the Spirit of God.

2:30 P.M.—Brother Peter Ramsay from Westmoreland, Jamaica, spoke. "Speaking the Truth in Love." Text: I Corinthians 13:4. A result—outcome we are expecting. Love is important to everyone. Real love helps us to put ourselves in the place of others. Truth hurts at times. Chastening is not joyous, but afterwards it yields peace. Speaking the truth in love takes a lot of courage. We are accountable to God for what we say.

Jesus loved the woman at the well. He told her about living water. We have to be tactical when winning souls to Christ. The woman was interested in this water. Jesus knew she had no husband, but when He told her to go call her husband, He spoke the truth in love to her.

We are called to witness to others with the spirit of care and understanding. Don't be arrogant. It takes love and connection to God to make a difference to the

world. The love of God will shape us into the place where we ought to be.

Following this service a Baptismal Service took place.

6:00 P.M.—Brother Duane Jeffries from George Town, Grand Cayman, was the speaker. "Are You Willing to Pay the Cost?" Text: Luke 14:26-28. *We are encouraged to love everyone. But Jesus said in order for us to be His disciples, we must make a commitment to Him. Many followed Jesus for various reasons, but when He challenged them, many stopped following Him. We must make a commitment to leave the world behind to pay the cost. There's a cross to bear, something for us to do. Nothing should take us away from a personal devotional life. Christians try to fix and solve problems. It sends a bad message to the world when two Christians can't get along.*

Everything in life has a cost. Cost to marriage; cost to serving God. People in the world want God, but they don't want to give up what it costs to have Him. Whatever you give up for God, it's worth it. This is a life that truly matters.

On the surface, the rich young ruler was picture-perfect, but Jesus told him, "One thing thou lackest." He cared more about his possessions than his soul. People can think you're okay, but inside you're not. God sees beyond the surface. Jesus had a solution for the rich young ruler, but he was not willing to pay the cost. People want an easy way, no boundaries, and live how they want. To have Jesus is worth paying the cost.

Sunday, 9:30 A.M.—A synopsis of the lesson "Teach No Other Doctrine" was taught by Brother Donovan Barnaby from Jamaica.

10:30 A.M.—Brother Harley McClung was the speaker. "You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat It Too." Text: Matthew 16:21-23. (This message can be read in its entirety in this issue).

No service was held at 2:30 P.M.

6:00 P.M.—Brother Paul Wilson, a minister in our local congregation, spoke. "When the Blood Is Applied." Text: Leviticus 17:11. *The life of the flesh is in the blood. There is power in the blood of Jesus. There was a cost to His blood. It took His blood to pay our debt. Jesus paid it all. When the blood is applied, it washes and cleanses. The debt is canceled. No condemnation. But the person has to believe before the sins are gone. Then there is a reconciliation between God and man. Peace with God and with one another. When the blood is applied, it makes a difference. There is forgiveness of sins.*

Thanks to those who helped tremendously (especially the young people), with the preparations before and after the convention. All worked together so willingly and happily.

Now that convention is over, it is not a time to sit down and rest. There's still an enemy to fight. He never rests. We are all going to be scattered abroad to our various homes. We all have a job to do that no one else can do. We must press on until the victory is won. †

YOU CAN'T HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO

Message by Brother Harley McClung
(Pastor at Craigsville, West Virginia)

THIS MORNING I would like to call your attention to Matthew 16, starting with verse 21: *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*



I would like to entitle my thoughts this morning, "You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat It Too."

This week they've served a lot of cake downstairs, and people have eaten it all. When they ate it, it was all gone.

WHAT THE PROVERB MEANS

This famous proverb reveals the intricate dynamics of choice and consequences. It communicates a simple yet profound message about decisions and consequences. The fact highlights the logic behind decision making. It emphasizes that certain things in life are not possible to have simultaneously. And, quite frankly, God has given us enough intelligence to believe that's just common sense. It's not complicated. That cake that was eaten downstairs this week is gone.

What Jesus was telling Peter was, "You can't have the things of God and your own way at the same time." Isn't that what He said? He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." What He was saying was, "You really want those things that be of men."

That is what this proverb is actually talking about, or referring to, in spiritual terms. You can't have your way and be in the will of God at the same time. It's absolutely impossible.

WHY JESUS REBUKED PETER

We think about the truth ... and the theme ... it's a beautiful, beautiful verse. "Speaking the truth in love." Do you believe Jesus was speaking to Peter in love when He said to him, "Get thee behind me"?

Jesus had nothing but love. Jesus was love. He is love. And what Peter was doing there was harmful to

Peter, because what Jesus was telling him—and them—was that it was needful for Him to go to Jerusalem, to go through a mock trial, to hear the sentence from Pontius Pilate, to suffer, bleed, and die for Peter. And Peter was getting in His way. Peter was doing something that was actually detrimental to him.

When we think about Peter wanting to please Jesus, I think his motive wasn't all that bad. I believe that when Peter considered what Jesus was saying, he was thinking, "I love this man. I want this man to always be with me. Now He's telling me that He's going to go up there and be crucified. He's going to be treated like a criminal. I don't want this man to do this."

So many times, people get in their own way, not having the understanding that they need. And it could be said that, because Peter didn't fully and completely understand—and Jesus knew this—Jesus had to teach Peter a lesson. He had to be firm with Peter. And sometimes He needs to be firm with us. I wonder if, even then, Peter fully and completely understood. But one thing he did understand: Jesus was not going to allow him to get in His way, because if he did, Jesus knew that you would have no hope. He knew Peter would have no hope if He didn't carry out the responsibility of why He was sent.

Now the words that Jesus spoke to Peter did not condemn him. If you go to John 3:16, 17, you'll find that Jesus did not come to condemn. He came to set the suffering captives free. He didn't come to condemn people. But then, being true to them—Jesus was nothing but the Truth—He said, "You are condemned," and He gave them the reason as to why they were condemned. He said, "Light (or truth) has come unto you, and you have rejected the truth. The reason that you have rejected the truth is because you love darkness more than you love the light, more than you love the truth."

JESUS CAME, NOT TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT TO SET CAPTIVES FREE

Jesus didn't come to condemn us. He came to set the captives free. And the only way a person can be truly freed is to hear the truth, accept the truth, and live by the truth.

Jesus was having a conversation with some of them, and He said to them, "If you will receive me, if you will continue in my Word, then ye shall be my disciples. It is then that you will know the truth, and that truth will set you free." Isn't that the same exact thing He told Nicodemus when Nicodemus came to Him by night? He was very, very true to Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a master in Israel. He was highly religious. Jesus was saying, in effect, to Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, it takes more than just religion. You must be born again. You must come to a place where you

leave the kingdom of darkness and come over into the kingdom of God's dear Son, which is the kingdom of truth. It is the kingdom of light." And He said, "When you come over into the kingdom of light, then your eyes are going to be opened. You're going to understand the things and the ways of God, and you're going to be able to see." He said, "Unless you are born again, you cannot enter—you cannot see—the kingdom of God."

I believe with all of my heart that Jesus didn't come to condemn the world. He put that on display when they brought to Him the woman caught in the very act of adultery. They were sitting around, and they were getting ready to put her to death. I want you to think of this. Jesus told Peter, "You savor the things that be of men." We need to savor the things that be of God. Whenever they told Him they had brought her and said what the law required them to do, Jesus knelt down and started writing ... What He was writing there was what they were actually doing. They were probably doing the very same thing that they brought her to be condemned for.

We can't do that. We've got to make sure that our lives line up with what is in the will of God before we look at anyone else, or try to help anyone else. So when Jesus was writing there in the sand, and those that brought the woman to Him, I believe He was showing them what was in their lives. He knew all of their hearts. He knew everything about them.

That's the thing about us here, this morning. God knows everything about us. There's not anything that we can hide from Him. He understands where our hearts are, and if we savor the things that be of God, or if we savor the things that be of men.

As Jesus was writing, the men started leaving. They started going. When He raised up His head, and they were gone, He said to the woman, "Woman, where are those, thine accusers? Are they already gone?" She said, "Yes, they're gone."

Jesus asked, "Who condemns thee?" The woman answered, "No man, Lord." Do you know what Jesus said? "Neither do I condemn thee." I believe that He was saying some things to her like He said to Peter. "I'm not condemning you, but you cannot continue in this life. You cannot have your cake and eat it too. You've got to make a decision. You've got to make a choice. Do you really want to live a life that is free from condemnation? Do you want to live a life where you have the favor of God resting on you? Do you really want to be free?"

YOU CANNOT HAVE UNGODLINESS AND BE GODLY AT THE SAME TIME

That's what salvation really is—glorious liberty, glorious freedom. God loves us so much that He has sent His favor on every single one. I know there are some people that believe that God chooses this one, or that one, or the other one. But the Bible doesn't confirm that. The apostle Paul said, "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to everyone." And because that grace has appeared to everyone, the apostle Paul

said that there are going to be people that stand before this Righteous Judge one day, and they're not going to have an excuse. They're not going to have a reason. They're not going to be in a position then where they're going to bring a lawyer in to plead their case and get them off the hook.

This grace that brings salvation starts a process with every man's heart, and the way they think. It starts teaching. When Brother Donovan was bringing the Sunday school lesson this morning, we heard what the doctrine of Jesus Christ does. "Doctrine" simply means teaching. It starts teaching us that we are to deny ungodliness. So then you can't have ungodliness and be godly at the same time. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

YOU CANNOT LIVE IN SIN AND BE RIGHTEOUS AT THE SAME TIME

You can't live in sin and be righteous at the same time. God has made a way. He has made provision, by His grace, to free us, to put us in a position where we're on a higher plain. God thinks in different terms than man does. His ways are up here. Man's ways are down here in the beggarly elements of sin. You can't live down in the beggarly elements of sin and be up on the highway of holiness at the same time. You've got to make a choice which one you want. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

The grace of God that brings salvation starts teaching us, and I'm so thankful this morning that He was willing to look down on me and teach me a few things. I needed to be taught. I needed somebody to teach me. We look at the theme of this convention, and the beautiful verse that is with it. "Speaking the Truth in Love." Do you believe that the truth this week has been spoken in love? I don't want to be guilty of trying to tell somebody something about the Word of God, and it not be with their soul's best interest in my heart. I want you to feel that I care for you. I want you to feel the love of Christ from me whenever I try to speak on the truth.

I'm so thankful that God was willing to take me—little me—and place me into this Body. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together ...* We're not all the same. There are differences between us. God has made room, He's made provisions for all of us to be able to fit in this glorious family—the kingdom of God.

Brother Duane Jeffries preached last night. It was a beautiful message. There's a big difference between Brother Duane and me. I'm six foot, three—he's only four foot, I mean, five foot, three. But Brother Duane is highly intelligent. I'm low IQ. (If you don't believe me, ask my son.) But God has made a way, because He loves us so much, that He's made provisions for all of us in every situation, to fit into this Body.

Brother Duane started off his message last night with the singing about "God is the Potter, we are the clay." We're the clay, and He's going to have to mold us. He's going to have to form us. He's going to have to put us through some rigors.

Jesus was doing that right there with Peter. He said, "Peter, you get behind me. You don't savor the things that be of God. You savor the things that be of men." That is the place where He's trying to mold us and make us, to get us into a place where we can understand, where we can see the ways of God and how He, right from the beginning, created man to be.

Did you know we were created in His image? We were created in His image. But something happened there in the Garden of Eden. You all know the story well. There was a serpent, and he came to Eve. And that serpent started reasoning with Eve. Let me tell you something here, you'd better not start reasoning with Satan. Don't reason with him. You're going to get in trouble.

I want you to remember this: Eve was created in God's image. But that doesn't mean that the saved and the sanctified cannot be tempted. We are all tempted. Jesus Himself was tempted. Temptation is not sin. It's what we do with the temptation.

This serpent started reasoning with Eve. He said, "Did God tell you that you couldn't eat of this fruit?" She said, "Yes, we're not allowed to eat of that." The serpent asked, "Why?" She said, "Well, if we eat of that fruit, we're going to die." Do you know what Satan said? He said, "You're not going to die."

That is exactly what Satan tells so many people in the world today. That's why a lot of people in the world today are living carelessly, haphazardly. That's why the apostle Paul has told all of us we need to be very careful. We need to walk circumspectly, not as fools. We need to redeem the time because the days in which we live are evil.

YOU CANNOT BE DEPENDENT ON GOD AND INDEPENDENT AT THE SAME TIME

As Satan started reasoning with Eve, he said, "You're not going to die." And then he said something that really, really appealed to her. He said, "When you eat of this fruit, you're going to be like God."

Well, now, what's God like? She knew what God was like because she was created in His image. She spent time with Him. She was there walking and talking in the cool of the evening with Him. She understood a great deal more about God than you and I. And she saw that God was independent. And she wanted to be independent. You know, one of the most troubling things that people run into is that they want to be independent. That's why there are so many different ways of thinking, so many different ways of doing this or that.

But Jesus said, in the fifteenth chapter of John, "I am the true vine." That tells me that there are a lot of false vines out there. There are a lot of false vines out there that are telling people, "You can just do it your way. You can have it your way. You can do this, you can do that, you can do the other." What was that famous song that Frank Sinatra sang? "I Did It My Way." That resonated. People want to do it their way. But Jesus said, in John 15, "I am the true vine." And He said, "Every branch that is in me ..." (And this

is actually what Jesus was telling Nicodemus he needed to do—get connected to the Vine, get connected to Him. Get connected to that source and let the sap flow through him.)

What Jesus said is worthy of deep study. He said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit ..." Why do branches not bear fruit? Could it be that branches, even in Him, want to be independent? In and of yourself, you can't bear the fruit of the Vine. You can't have what the Vine has without having that sap—or the Spirit, or the truth—that is in the Vine flow to you.

He said, "Any branch in me that beareth not fruit ..." And this is the long suffering of God. Do you know, that time when He crossed the Kidron Valley, and He looked at Jerusalem up there, He cried out, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! if you would have just listened to me, I would have taken you under my wings as a hen does her chicks, but you would not? You didn't believe me, you want to maintain your independence." He said, "Therefore your house is left unto you desolate." It didn't happen for forty years. God is long suffering.

Jesus said, "Any branch that does not bear fruit, eventually ..." That's why Brother Matt's testimony was so good this morning. We need to have the means—that infilling of God Himself to enable us to go through the tests of time, face what may come to us, and bear the fruit of a true Christian. Brother Matt, keep what you have. And if others here this morning don't have what Brother Matt was testifying about, it's available. The grace of God that brings salvation is providing everything. All of the provisions of His grace are made available to each and every one. God said that He's more willing to give to His children—to give Himself, to fill us with Himself—than we are to give good gifts to our children.

There comes a time and a place where the decision must be made whether or not to bear fruit. The consequence of not bearing fruit is to be severed. There's so much in this chapter. I challenge you to study it. Jesus had told His disciples so much already. He had said, "I'm going to give you the keys to the Kingdom." He had said, "I'm going to build my church. I'll show it to you."

YOU CANNOT WALK IN LIGHT AND DARKNESS AT THE SAME TIME

But we need to bear the fruit of the Vine. We live in a dark world. Paul said that there would be perilous times. If you and I don't bear the fruit of the Vine, who will? God has given us this glorious opportunity, this high vocation, and we need to walk worthy of it. We cannot do this, we cannot be this if we have our own ways at heart, and set aside God's ways.

You can't walk in light—or truth—and walk in darkness at the same time. You can't have your cake and eat it too. This is something that Moses understood. When he came of age, he knew he had to make a choice. He had to make a decision. He knew he could not stay in Egypt, he could not stay in that realm under that

influence, and then live with the people of God. So he made a choice.

Sometimes these choices are very, very hard. Moses knew he was going to have to do some suffering. “Brother Harley, are you telling me I’m going to have to suffer?” I’m telling you what Moses said. Moses said he chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He knew he could not eat his cake and have it too. He knew that he had to leave Egypt in order to have God. And we have to understand completely, this morning, that we have to leave a life of sin if we want to have Jesus Christ ruling supreme within us.

You know, Jesus loved Peter. Peter was very, very close to Jesus. He loves you, too. I truly believe that He wants you to be really close to Him, and He’s made it possible for you to be the apple of His eye. He’s made it possible for you to be His jewel. He said, in Matthew 16:25, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it.”

What does that mean? It means choosing my life just for me, myself, and I. It means holding it just for me, and not being willing to give any of it to God, who is the rightful owner. He went to Calvary and shed His life’s blood to redeem His own property. He went there, suffered, bled, and died so that He could buy us back. He wanted us back. You can’t have God’s redemption and become His property, and love the world at the same time.

In his message Wednesday night, Brother Doug said that the first and great commandment is to love the Lord thy God with all of our heart, all of our mind, and all of our soul. As Brother Tim said, in his message, “There is a requirement.” God is worthy. He is deserving.

When you look at what the serpent did to Eve, and you look at what God has made possible for us, it should be an easy decision for us to choose God over ourselves. You can’t have your cake and eat it too. Jesus said, “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose (give up) his life for my sake shall find life.” He will find the means to obtain a blessing by sitting in heavenly places.

If you’re here this morning, and you don’t know this glorious life, you can. God wants you to have the best, because He sent His best. He sent His best into the world—not to condemn this world, but to save this world, to set the suffering and the captives free. All you need to do is make the choice, make the decision: “Lord, it’s you that I want. I don’t want this world.” You cannot love the world and love God at the same time. You have to choose one or the other. You can’t have your cake and eat it too. †

THE TEMPTER’S “IF”

By the late C. W. Naylor

Satan is never convinced; that is, he never acts as if he were convinced. You may prove a thing to him over

and over again, but he is right back to question it, no matter what proof you offer. He may be whipped out a little while, but only for a season; then he is back ready to ask you to prove the whole thing over again. Of course, he did not doubt who Jesus was. He knew very well. Nevertheless, when he came to tempt Him in the wilderness he said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” He did not ask proof so that he might be convinced and believe on Jesus. He said “if” only to tempt Him. Jesus refused to accept the challenge. But that did not satisfy Satan, so he again said, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.” Again Jesus refused to give him the proof asked. This was in the beginning of Jesus’ work, but all through His life the tempter was always ready with an “if.” Through the Pharisees he demanded a sign, but Jesus refused to give it. In His last hours upon earth the same “if” was thrown in His teeth. As He hung upon the cross, they that passed by said, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” And the chief priests with the scribes and elders said, “If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” One of the thieves also said, “If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.”

He had proved His deity in a thousand ways. He had done things and said things that no man had done or said before. He had given evidence that ought to have convinced anyone, evidence sufficient to convince all those who were teachable. Satan himself was convinced, so that the demons cried out that they knew Him and told who He was, and yet Satan returned to the attack again and again saying, “If thou be the Son of God.” In his first attacks Jesus met him with the Scriptures. In the attacks that he made through human agents while Jesus hung upon the cross, he was ignored.

Temptation is always an invitation for us to come down to a lower level. Satan said, “Cast thyself down.” The unbelieving Jews said, “Come down.” Whenever Satan comes to us with his “if” of unbelief, his attempt is always to get us to discredit ourselves or our Lord, to get us to come down to a lower level. In fact, he would have nothing to gain if he could not get us to come down. When we listen to him and try to argue with him and offer him proof of this or that that he questions, we are only coming down to a plane where we give him a hold upon us. The truth is a firm footing. Upon it we may stand and instead of having to establish the truth, the truth will establish us. Satan has been battering his head against the truth since time began and has hurt only his head and has never injured the truth.

He sometimes comes to us and says, “If thou be a son of God, do this or that to prove it.” He can use Scriptures very forcefully sometimes. A man once said to a brother, “The Bible says, ‘If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.’ Now, if you believe that, let me fix up a dose of poison for you. If you are really a believer, it won’t hurt you if the Bible is true.” The brother answered him as Jesus answered Satan, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Some people say, “If you are a Christian, you can pick up snakes and

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they won't bite you." Some people are foolish enough to try it, and some of them are bitten, and God lets some of these die for their folly. If Jesus did not use His power to convince the devil when He was on earth, He will not use it to convince him through you or me. We are only casting ourselves down at Satan's feet if we try such things.

Sometimes Satan says: "If you are a son of God, why do you feel as you do? Christians ought to feel joyful. You are a pretty Christian; see how you feel." When he says that to some people, they have a hard time trying to prove that he is not correct. They feel that they must prove it or else acknowledge that what he says is true. They overlook the fact that it is not proving it that makes it so, but believing it. If they believe that they are saved and obey God, they will be saved whether Satan acknowledges it or not. He may surround them with a wall of "ifs," but that will not affect their salvation unless they believe his "ifs."

To another he says: "If you are a child of God, why do you have so many trials? People who are what they ought to be will never have such trials." They know that they have the trials, and if they listen to Satan's "if," they have a hard time holding fast their faith. But trials no more prove that one is not a child of God than it proves that one is, for all people, saved and unsaved, have trials.

Sometimes he says: "If you are a Christian, why is it you have so many faults? You are a pretty Christian, aren't you?" All Christians have faults. None of us are perfect in the absolute sense, and the more humble we are, the more conscious we are of these faults; but they do not prove that our hearts are not right if we are doing the best we can.

Satan has many "ifs" of all sizes, colors, and shapes, and he will present the one that he thinks will attract your attention and give you the most trouble. Perhaps he will have half a dozen set up around you at one time. Sometimes he will bring scriptures and apply them to you and make them seem as though they had a very real application to your case when they have no bearing upon it at all. All you have to do in such a time is to use your good sense and meet him with faith and the Word of God. He is the devil; meet him as though he were the devil, remembering this one thing, that "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

He often comes to persons and says, "You might as well give up." By that he means you might as well come down to his level. Sometimes he discourages people until they feel that it is of no use to resist him. He makes his "ifs" so plausible that argument will not answer them. At such a time you can only meet them with faith and a determination to serve God, no matter how things seem. If you are a Christian, Satan does not doubt it in the least. He knows if we are serving God, but still he will do with us just as he did with Jesus. He will come around and say, "If thou be." He will act just as though he were not assured that we are saved, as though he very much doubted the matter, but would like to know and so favors us with

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a chance to prove it to him. Yes, he would like to favor us this way, but do not accept his favor. You do not have to prove anything that he asks you to prove. He is only taunting you. If you ignore him, that will hurt him as much as anything you can do. If you will go on your way not allowing him to disturb you, keeping your faith steadfast and your courage strong, he will not enjoy it a bit. But, don't suppose for a moment that you can live so close to God and be so spiritual that you can convince the devil that he will acknowledge that you are what you profess to be. No matter how true you are, he will be around with his "ifs," and you will have to meet him.

Sometimes people say, "If you are what you profess to be, you would try to please me." Then they ask us to do something that will displease God, and if we will not accede to their requests, they heap condemnation upon us. Sometimes they sincerely think that we ought to do thus and so, when we can see very clearly that it will not do at all. We cannot act according to the wisdom of this world. We must act according to the wisdom that God gives us. If people feel that we should do some other way, we cannot consent to do wrong to please them. Satan often works through people to discourage us and to condemn us. People often say, "If you were good as you say you are, you would do so and so." They say this because they wish that thing done regardless of what moral consideration may be involved. Remember that such things are only Satan's "ifs," and meet them as you would meet Satan himself. Stand by the truth. Keep a clear conscience before God; do not allow yourself to be talked into or forced into something that you cannot do with a good conscience. Let a holy life and a godly conversation and obedience to God be the proofs of your life to the world and to the devil. When he comes with his "ifs," meet him as Jesus met him in the wilderness and on the cross. Pay no attention to his sneers; give no heed to his pretended unbelief. Do not try to prove anything to him. Go your way unafraid, trusting, confident, and disregard both the tempter and his "ifs."

—Reprinted from September 1994 issue

DEEPEST GRATITUDE

To our dear church family,

Our family would like to express our deepest gratitude for the many prayers, acts of kindness, love, and support you have shown us. We are so thankful for everyone who surrounded us with encouragement during the passing of my wonderful husband, Greg.

Greg loved each of you dearly and found great comfort in knowing that so many people were praying for him. He truly knew he was loved, and that was a tremendous blessing to him and to our family.

We would also like to thank the many congregations who sent flowers, cards, and other expressions of sympathy. The outpouring of love was overwhelming, and

we are deeply grateful for every thoughtful gesture. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Greg reached the ultimate goal in life—to hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” and to be at home with the Lord. It is our prayer that each of us will remain true and faithful so that we may one day be reunited with him in heaven.

One of Greg’s final messages was to a young man, Ryan Shenberger, who visited him at his bedside. He simply said, “Stay true, God won’t fail you.” Those words reflect the way he lived and the legacy he has left behind.

Again, thank you to everyone for your prayers, your love, and your support during this difficult time.

May God richly bless each one of you.

—Ellen Tyler †

A LIFE THAT LEFT ITS MARK

During a mighty movement of the Spirit in the city of Glasgow, Scotland, a young lady was saved. Her name was Helen Ewing. She was just a slip of a girl, but at the very threshold of her new life in Christ, she crowned Him as Lord absolutely and was filled with the Spirit. The rivers of living water just simply flowed from that young girl’s life. Although she died at the age of 22—all of Scotland wept.

There were hundreds of missionaries over all the world who wept and mourned for her. She had mastered the Russian language and was expecting to labor for God in Europe.

She had no outstanding personality. She never wrote a book. Never composed a hymn. She was not a preacher. Never traveled more than 200 miles, as far as I know, from her home. When she died people wrote about her life story. Although she died so early in life, she had led a great multitude to Jesus Christ.

She arose early EVERY morning of her life at 5:00 to study God’s Word, to commune and to pray. She prayed for hundreds of missionaries. Her mother showed her diary. One of many diaries. And there were at least three hundred different missionaries for whom she was praying at all times. It showed that God had burdened that young heart with a ministry of prayer. She had the date when she started to pray for a request and the date when God answered it. She had a dynamic prayer life that moved God and moved man.

One day, two university professors were talking in London. They were talking about dynamic Christianity when one of them suddenly said, “I want to tell you a story.” And he said that in Glasgow University there was a remarkable little girl who, wherever she went on the campus, left the fragrance of Christ behind her. For example, if the students were telling dirty stories someone would say, “Shh! Helen is coming.” And as she passed by, she unconsciously left the power of God.

—Selected from Bible Illustrator

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE Hurricanes

I had always thought of hurricanes as something mankind could do without. But recently I learned that they are necessary to maintain a balance in nature.

These tropical storms, with winds up to 150 miles an hour and accompanied by torrential rains, glaring lightning, and rumbling thunder can be devastating. Yet scientists tell us they are tremendously valuable. They dissipate a large percentage of the oppressive heat which builds up at the equator, and they are indirectly responsible for much of the rainfall in North and South America. Meteorologists therefore no longer use cloud-seeding techniques to prevent them from being formed. They are convinced that hurricanes actually do more good than harm.

The Bible teaches us that the afflictions of God’s people are like that. Though they bring temporary pain and grief, they can produce eternal dividends.

—Bible Illustrator †

WATCH OUR SERVICES LIVE!

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

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

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Postage rates continue to rise, and we would want the magazine to be received by those who would want to read it.

Our e-mail address is truth@fred.net or you may write to:

The Way of Truth
PO Box 88
Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 †



These questions and answers were answered by past editors of *The Way of Truth*.

QUESTION: Is it because of Paul's ignorance that made God to call him into the ministry?

ANSWER: Paul was not ignorant! He was a highly educated young man, unless you speak of his lack of knowledge of who Christ was before his conversion. He was chosen by God to be an apostle to the Gentiles, a very important work indeed.

Paul was caught up to the "third" heaven and shown things no other apostle was shown, and even rebuked Peter for his failure on one point.

QUESTION: In Matthew 27:46, why did Jesus say "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," while being God Himself, having come in the flesh?

ANSWER: That statement was addressed to His heavenly Father in heaven, not to Himself, though He was God manifested in the flesh. God the Father and God the Word are not the same person. There is "one God" but there are three persons in the Godhead.

QUESTION: The Bible says in the last days of time, there will be hunger, war, terrible sicknesses, etc., but in the olden days things like these have happened. What will really happen in the last days?

ANSWER: So many people refer to these things as proof that we are in "the last days"; but as you have said, these things have been happening through the ages. Part of this comes about by applying Matthew 24 to this present time when Jesus was speaking of His day—see Matthew 24:34.

The fact of the matter is, people have been living in the last days (the last age) since Jesus Christ died on the cross. The apostle Peter tells us this in his sermon on the day of Pentecost—Acts 2:16-21.

QUESTION: God ordered the Israelites not to have any affairs with the Egyptians, but in I Kings 3, we read of Solomon taking an Egyptian woman as a wife. Was this the will of God?

ANSWER: God's command was not limited to Egypt! He told them not to take wives for their sons, nor give their daughters to be wives to the people of other nations around them. The Lord told them what would happen if they did—they will lead you away from the true God to worship idols. How many times did they disobey, and how many times did it happen just as God said it would?

As to Solomon, the Scriptures tell us these foreign women caused him to do wrong—turned his heart away from the true God. He even built a temple for the idols. Was this the will of God? No.

QUESTION: Are there guidelines on Christian deportment and appearance?

ANSWER: *Deportment* means "the manner of conducting or bearing oneself; behavior; demeanor."

The answer is yes! The entire Bible is given to us as to how we should live, including the manner of dress. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this donation helps in some way in your ministry. I am so blessed to be a part of the Hagerstown family in my life, even if just by the internet.

It is so sad that there aren't any godly churches in my area. But thank God for the internet services! Blessings and love to all.

—S. M., Indiana

The Way of Truth,

Thanks for your ministry to raise up our Lord. May it be blessed! Remembering you in prayer. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Continue your good work in this publication. †

—V. D., Illinois †

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THE CHURCH OF GOD
STANDS FOR

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

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

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