

# The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 2

**After a brutal winter,  
signs of spring look heavenly!**

**THE CULTURE OF HEAVEN**  
**See page 4**

**March 2026**

## MY TESTIMONY

G. E. Tyler

**T**HOSE WHO KNOW me are familiar with the fact that I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease some 20 years ago. For the last 7+ years, I have had the privilege of pastoring the Hagerstown congregation of the Church of God. One of the ministries of our congregation is *The Way of Truth* publication. This 24-page monthly began in 1943. Since then, the pastor has assumed the responsibility of editor. There have been three: Earl E. Marquiss (1943-1979), Alvin A. Craig (1980-2018), and myself (2018-present).

My speech has become very affected, so much so, that I am very difficult to understand. This does not fare well for a pastor. I have been holding on looking for my Lord to heal me. But it has not happened. The congregation has been very patient with me, knowing I have a pastor's heart. More and more I have been depending on the local ministers and deacons to provide preaching, and they have been exercised thoroughly.

We could keep pressing on this way, but I believe the time has come to retire and turn over the reigns to my assistant pastor, Bro. Douglas Shenberger. Departing from tradition, he has asked me to continue on as editor for as long as I can. I am growing weaker, but my voice is not essential, so I have consented to do my best as long as my Lord enables me to do so.

We have added thousands of names to our mailing list, and these precious individuals know very little about me, so I want to share a glimpse of my life. I've had a wonderful and full life, and at 73 I want to continue to bear fruit for my Lord.

My story begins in Ionia, Michigan, where on June 15, 1952, I, the oldest of four children, was born to Robert and Eunice Tyler. I have few fond memories of my childhood since my father was an alcoholic. Growing up, I have memories of spending much time in taverns. There was constant bickering which led to my parents separating.

We did not know where dad was for years. Mom had a tough time working two jobs trying to raise four children. At age 12, I worked at Fortino's Grocery Market in Lansing stocking shelves. Every little bit helped.

In 1965, my father reentered my life. Still an alcoholic, Dad wanted a fresh start. Mom loved him, so we started moving around. Our first stop was in Wheeling, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. We were only there three months, and for some reason we left abruptly and headed west. In 1966, Dad got a job in Bell, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. It was here that I had my first conversation with God. Fleeing from another argument, I found myself looking heavenward and crying out, "God, what's going to happen to me?" I knew nothing about the Lord, or even whether there was a God at all. At age 15, God witnessed to me.

In December, 1967, it was *on the road* again. This time we loaded up the car and headed for Tampa, Florida. Though he had no job waiting for him, Dad always dreamed of living in Tampa. Having just enough

money to get to Florida, rather than paying for a motel, we pulled off the road in an isolated area and slept in the car while my brother Phil and I slept in sleeping bags in the sandy desert. We were awakened one morning in New Mexico by a giant bulldozer headed right at us. It was a construction site!

As we approached Baton Rouge, our car broke down. We had just enough money to fix it, so Mom and Dad decided to fix the car and stay in the area. So there we were, four children, two adults, no place to live, no food, no money, no job, no problem! As I look back, I see the hand of God providing for us. Somehow I was part of His glorious plan! Dad was very intelligent and could always find work as a mechanical engineer. Next day, he had a job. For a place to live, Dad found a trailer park that let us stay until he got his first paycheck. True story! For food I accompanied Dad to the Salvation Army where we were given plenty of food. A local church donated a little money for gas. Within a month we moved to a house in Lockport, Louisiana. After six months we were moving again, not to Tampa, but to a town I had never heard of—Hagerstown, Maryland. Dad had gotten a job as a supervisor at Mack Trucks there.

Though my family moved again (finally ending up in Tampa) I was through with relocating. I graduated from North Hagerstown High School in 1970 and was training for supervisor at a national department store. So when my parents informed me of the move to Tampa, I let them know I liked it here, and I was staying behind. This was a key decision in my life. I had no family in the Hagerstown area and no reason to stay alone. I believe with all my heart that God had His hand in that decision. Though I knew nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ up to this point in my life, I would soon not only know *about* Him, I would know Him personally.

I rented an efficiency apartment in early 1971. Next door was a restaurant. A couple of months later, I stopped in for a bowl of chili. I was struck by my waitress. Though she was plainly dressed, her eyes revealed a heart of compassion. She was different than any girl I had known. I found out that she was the daughter of the owner. Her name was Ellen Craig.

Needless to say, I spent many evening meals in the Queen's Kitchen. I finally worked up the nerve to ask her out for a date. She consented, but there was a problem. When I suggested going to the movies, she responded, "I don't go to the movies." I suggested going bowling. She said, "I don't go to bowling alleys." Eyeing one across the street, I asked, "Do you have anything against laundromats?" Ellen smiled and said she did not. Our first date was washing my clothes at the laundromat. You might laugh but we talked for three hours and learned a lot about each other.

I began visiting her at home and sharing in some wonderful dinners. Ellen, of course, was a Christian

### ABOUT THE COVER

Blossoms budding forth on fruit trees are a sure sign that spring has arrived. Any culture or evidence of spring's arrival is a welcome sight. There is a culture of heavenly things revealed in the Word which is a revelation of a better place. See Sis. Bland's message beginning on page 4.

# 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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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

Our telephone number is 301-739-2980

Our e-mail address is [truth@fred.net](mailto:truth@fred.net)

Visit our website at [www.wayoftruth.org](http://www.wayoftruth.org)

God began using me as I began leading prayer meetings in early 1973. I was asked by our pastor to bring my first message in 1974. I received a burden to enter full-time gospel work in June 1974. I began work at *The Way of Truth* pressroom running the Linotype machine.

This afforded me the opportunity to learn from working side by side with Bro. Alvin Craig, who more or less took me under his wing. He answered all my questions (and I had plenty). Plus, by typing the hot metal slugs for the Linotype, I saw every word that was printed in the magazine and Sunday school literature. It also gave me opportunity to travel to different gospel meetings.

My first overseas trip was to Cornwall Mountain, Jamaica, in September '74. Bro. Alvin told me to prepare a message for the Durbin, West Virginia, fellowship meeting in October. Bro. Edward Brown, pastor at Cornwall Mountain, asked me if I had a message for the Jamaicans. I told him I had one for West Virginia next month. I never forgot how he answered me. "What's good for West Virginia is good for Jamaica!"

Between Cornwall Mountain, Catadupa, and Salem, I returned nearly 20 times to Jamaica. Such memories! As Bro. Sammy Barrett once proclaimed, "Heaven came down and kissed the earth!"

(continued on page 2)

and consistently invited me to church. Though I was attracted, I was stubborn and began to "kick against the pricks." I resisted for a while but finally attended church with Ellen. The sermon made me mad. I remember wanting to punch the preacher right in the nose! Though I did not understand, I questioned Bro. Ollen Craig often about the Bible. I began to see the beauty of the Christian life, not only through understanding the Bible, but by seeing it lived out. Ellen's parents were a great contrast to mine.

Then on Sunday, May 18, 1971, it happened! I felt God lift me as it were to the altar where I was gloriously saved. I shouted as I felt the guilt of my sins roll away! I learned afterwards that some of the saints thought I was influenced by charismatic forces, but I had never been to a Pentecostal service in my life. It was simply a manifestation of joy unspeakable!

I was sanctified later that year. Although when I was saved (justified) I received a manifestation of joy, it was not so when I was sanctified. Instead there was a sense of deep peace that flooded my soul. I would have to rely on that *blessed quietness* throughout my Christian life.

I proposed to Ellen in December, 1971, and she said, "Yes." Our marriage would have to be on hold for a while because the Vietnam War would affect my immediate future. I joined US Army Reserve as a Helicopter Mechanic. I shipped out for basic training to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, then on to Advanced Individual Training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. I returned to Hagerstown in May 1972. I served six years in the US Army Reserves, 1972-78. I was able to attend church services of the Church of God on Sundays.

Ellen and I were married July 29, 1972. God blessed our union with seven wonderful children.

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Through these experiences and so many others, I learned so much. I owe so much to Bro. Alvin Craig, who was patient with me, and Bro. Ollen Craig, my father-in-law, who not only taught me the course of a true Christian, but showed me the way through example. I began teaching Sunday school and was publicly recognized as a minister in 1979, ordained as minister July 4, 1982, and became young people's leader in the early 1980's. In the 1990's we broke ground with the *Young People's Broadcast*, a 30 minute weekly radio program which gave our young people opportunity to testify and preach to the local community. We were on WKSL for several years and developed a listenership. I served the young people until Bro. Doug and Sis. Julie Shenberger took over in August 2017.

After Bro. Alvin's passing, I was asked to pastor the Hagerstown congregation of the Church of God on March 14, 2018, at which time I also became editor of this humble magazine.

As I look back, the years flew by! I want to give God all the glory for anything I have been able to do by His grace.

My first trip to Grand Cayman was to attend the Cayman Convention in 1976. I had the great privilege of attending 18 more conventions in Grand Cayman. Pastor James Arch invited me to hold revivals in East End and George Town from 1999-2012. I was so blessed to minister more than 165 messages there.

I had the privilege of ministering in Louisiana from 1989-2017, laboring in both Deville and Jonesville. Pastor Terry Deville and his wife, Carol, became very close to Ellen and me. We even took many vacation trips together, visiting National Parks throughout the West. Though we have grown old, and Bro. Terry can't hear well and my speech is very hard to understand, we remain the closest of friends.

I had the opportunity of ministering twice in Kenya, East Africa, in the 1990's. Beginning in 1994, I made seven trips to Roatan Island, Honduras. Beginning in 1983 when I was young in the faith, early in my ministry, I was invited to first Richwood, WV, then Craigs-ville to exercise myself. Pastor Harley McClung taught me a lot. In the 1980's I was also invited to Patton, Pennsylvania, and Gale, Illinois.

I feel I gained more than I gave as I represented the gospel everywhere I went. This was especially true when it came to the Philippines. I never met a people so humble as the Filipinos. My first visit to the Philippines was in 1994. I was blessed to travel there every other year for a total of 12 visits. My health now keeps me home, but the Church of God in the Philippines captured my heart. *Mamimis kita*. (I miss you in Tagalog).

Another congregation that I preached to that had a tremendous influence on me was the congregation in Essex, Maryland. They had no pastor when they contacted me. On September 21, 1997, I brought my first message there. Though we had never met before, the Lord witnessed to them and to me that we were brethren. Our love for each other grew as they kept inviting me back. I traveled the 90 miles from Hagerstown to Essex time and time again. According to my records, between 09/21/97 and 09/24/17, I preached 334 messages to the sweet Essex congregation.

This testimony is just a glimpse of what God can do if we let go and let God have His way. This testimony is but a brief overview of my life. I could tell you of answers to prayer concerning our seven children, victories that have been won and lessons learned. I could tell you of a wonderful, caring wife who held down the fort with never a complaint while I was thousands of miles away. I could speak of celebrating 53 years of happy marriage. All has not been roses. "Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come, 'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home."

I have written this editorial in no way to take any credit to myself but to acquaint myself with our readership and to show how God can use unworthy vessels to advance His kingdom.

So, though I have retired from the pastorate, as editor I plan to continue the great task of spreading the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. †

### LET THE PEOPLE RENEW THEIR STRENGTH

*"Let the people renew their strength."*—Isaiah 41:1.

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continueth by itself. "Thou renewest the face of the year," was the Psalmist's utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labor, must drink of the rain of heaven and suck from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap fresh drawn from the earth. Neither can man's life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the waste of the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the waste of the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances.

How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starvelings some saints are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strifes within.

When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that hath not sucked up fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many inter-twisted roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and so, mayhap, a painful desolation, and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise, "*They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.*" †

—Taken from Charles Spurgeon's Readings



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

**QUESTION:** Matthew 10:34-36 says, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Can you explain this to me?

**ANSWER:** First of all, let me point out Jesus was not talking about bringing division between Christians, for He prayed that all His followers be one.

Jesus said He came to save the lost, to set the captives free, to give sight to the blind, to heal the broken-hearted, and to bear witness to the truth. This He did, and John tells us, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). In becoming a child of God, a person is made a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17). He is translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Those who refuse the light and continue on in sin many times become very bitter against those who get saved. This produces the condition Jesus spoke of in verse 35 and verse 36.

In regard to verse 34: Jesus did not come to drive out the Romans and to set up a literal kingdom, as some expected Him to do. The Jews had forsaken the true worship of God and had been brought into literal captivity. Christ did not change that; He came to set souls free from the prison house of sin, and He did not come in vain.

**QUESTION:** I Corinthians 7:9, “But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” What is the real meaning and application of this scripture?

**ANSWER:** Paul, because of the present distress, felt it was best not to marry. This was a personal conviction, and must not be taken that Paul was against marriage, for such was not the case. He goes on to say that if their desire for a companion was so strong that they “could not contain,” in other words, their desire for companionship was so strong they would commit fornication if they didn’t have a husband or wife, then they should get married! For it was better, even under the present distress, to marry than to “burn” with desire. Of course, whether single or widow, they were to marry only in the Lord. Christians should marry Christians.

**QUESTION:** In Acts 7:56, did Stephen see the face of God, the Father?

**ANSWER:** Jesus said in John 5:37, “The Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.” Jesus also said, “God is a Spirit,” and we understand you cannot see a spirit with your natural eye. Therefore, I would conclude that what Stephen saw was a vision. The verse you ask about does not say whether he saw God’s face in this vision.

**QUESTION:** Was Abraham called from Assyria? Where is his father’s town?

**ANSWER:** The Bible gives us to understand that Abraham, and his father, along with others, left Ur of the Chaldees. I assume Ur was his father’s hometown.

As it is not certain just when Abraham lived we cannot say whether Assyria ruled the area in his day, or whether it was a part of the Babylonian Empire. As you doubtless know, the Babylonian Empire rose and fell more than one time.

Adam Clarke says the name Chaldea did not apply to the area in the time of Abraham, but during the time Moses wrote this part of the Scriptures. This is one problem in answering such questions—the changing of names for the same area.

**QUESTION:** Can you explain those people found in Revelation 7:3, 9?

**ANSWER:** The people referred to in Revelation 7:3, 9, are the children of God. These scriptures refer especially to those in the early period of this “gospel day.” To “seal” does not mean to save from sin. “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:21, 22). The time of this sealing is after we are saved! Note: “After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

**QUESTION:** In burying the dead, the minister commits the body by saying, “Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes.” I understand “earth to earth, dust to dust,” but why, “ashes to ashes”? Is this biblical?

**ANSWER:** A few scriptures speak of man as ashes. Abraham said, “I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27). Job said, “He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes” (Job 30:19). The Lord spoke to the Hebrews through Ezekiel and said, “Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee” (28:18). Again the Lord said through Malachi, “And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts” (4:3).

However, many scriptures speak of people getting down in ashes when they repented, or otherwise expressed regret. “Sackcloth and ashes.” †

# THE CULTURE OF HEAVEN

Message by Sis. Rebecca Bland



I WOULD LIKE to read from the book of Philippians, chapter 3. I don't have anything new for you because the Word of God is sure and unchanging. But sometimes we can look at scriptures with new eyes and ask the Lord to show us things we haven't noticed before, and He's so gracious to do that. Philippians 3, starting with verse 17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

I'd like to revisit verse 20: "For our conversation is in heaven ..." I'd really like to focus on that part of that verse: "Our conversation is in heaven." We have heard many times that the word *conversation*, as it's used in this verse, means "way of living," and that is true. But if we go really, really in depth with the Greek word that the word *conversation* is translated from, it might give us an even greater insight into what the apostle Paul was saying here. If you look up the Greek word, it means "culture"—sometimes "city," "community," but more basically it means "culture." What this verse is saying is "Our [culture] is in heaven." When I first read that, I just sat for a while and let it sink into my mind.

We use the word *culture* a lot, don't we? Somebody behaves a little differently from what we do, somebody may say, "Well, they're from another culture. They have different habits than we have." So sometimes it's an ethnic culture from another country or from another part of a country. Sometimes even inside of the same country there are different cultures. "Oh, that's their culture." Well, the Bible tells us, "Our [culture] is in heaven."

Even though we use the word *culture* a lot, I don't stop and think about where it came from, but if I do, I know the word *culture* is found inside of other words—agriculture, cultivate. It comes from the word that means "to dig and till." That tells us that culture is not accidental. People don't create cultures accidentally, or just find themselves in a culture. Culture is generally built around habits and rules and laws. They may be spoken or unspoken, written or unwritten, but those in a culture have a feeling of belonging to that culture, because they follow the rules of the culture. Cultures are not made accidentally. They're tilled, they're planted, they're grown, they're watched over, and people notice if others are not paying attention to the rules of the culture.

## TWO SPIRITUAL CULTURES

Our culture is where? In heaven. When we speak spiritually, there are just two cultures. There's a godly

culture, and then there's a culture where those who belong are the enemies of Christ. That's mentioned in the passage I read from Philippians 3. Let's look at that again. Verse 18: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." These people don't belong to the culture of heaven. They are the enemies of Christ. They have different laws and rules, and they produce different fruit. We know that if we belong to the culture of heaven, there is a fruit we bring forth, because no culture is established accidentally.

## THE CULTURE OF THIS WORLD

Verse 19: "Whose end is destruction ..." Those four words tell us why we don't want to be a part of that culture—because their end is destruction. Who would want to be part of a culture where you are going to be unsuccessful, fail, and in the end be destroyed? Do we want to belong to anything that's going to be destroyed? No. So if we look at that verse we see that this culture we don't want to belong to is described. Let's look at the next part of the verse: "... whose God is their belly [In that case, *belly* means 'their inmost being,' not just where their food goes.] and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Those are the three laws of the culture that is enmity with Christ. *Whose God is their belly*—those who trust in themselves and whatever their inside self desires. It doesn't mean that you would run around looking for things to eat. It's not talking about your belly as in part of your anatomy. It's talking about your inside self, who you are inside, your desires.

## WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY

If your God is your belly, you're focused on yourself. You're going to do the things that you think will make you happy here on this earth, and you're going to listen to the "prince of this world" who tells you "this is going to be what makes you happy," and "this is what you want." But he makes you think that you're choosing it for yourself. "Oh, I'm in charge. Nobody is going to tell me what to do." All the while you're being told what to do—and pretty much everyone can see that except for you. It's sad. Unwholesome appetite. Things that are unwholesome are not good for you, and they will make you sick. The same thing is true of the worldly appetite. It is an unwholesome appetite. The things of this world—a worldly culture—will make you sick. Again, many times every one else can see it except for you, because the god of this world blinds you. The Bible says so. Those unwholesome appetites and desires will drag people down, whether they want to go or not. So it is slavery, even while the person is thinking they're free.

We heard the song "I'm Free" this morning: "I'm free from the guilt of tomorrow, I'm free from the sins

of the past, for I've traded my shackles for a glorious song, I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last." What shackles? If you belong to the culture of this world, you are enslaved, and you have shackles around you. Pretty much everybody can see it, except for you. Other people who are bound can see that you're bound, and so are they. There is only one way to be free, and that is to belong to the culture of heaven. But then, we see that you can't have all of your affection on things of the earth and belong to the culture of heaven.

### **WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME**

Look at the second description of this earthly culture: "... whose glory is in their shame." When the Bible speaks of a *person's glory*, it means their idea of their self-worth. Do you mean somebody's self-worth is only to be found in their shame? Yes, that is true all over this world. People feel they're worth something because they're copying what other people do, and many times they are shameful things, but they feel that they are worth something because they are doing what the other people are doing. How many times have we heard children say, "But this one is doing it, and that one is doing it"? What have our parents often said to us? "If they jump off a cliff, are you going to, too?" Did parents all go to a school to just learn to say that to their children? I don't know. I always wondered. It doesn't matter what part of the world you come from. In the English speaking world, your parents probably said to you, "Well, if they jump off a cliff, are you going to, too?" It would be kind of funny, except that's what is really happening in this world. People are jumping off cliffs, and everyone else is following them, because that seems to be the thing to do. But lots of times, they don't know they're jumping off a cliff until they hit the bottom. That's the worldly culture—their glory is in their shame.

A couple years ago, Barry and I went to a diner for breakfast, and we ran into a former student of mine. We were very glad to see each other, and I asked her how she was doing. She said, "Okay." I saw her again as we were leaving. She was stooped down behind the open door of the driver's side of her car, and she had a paper bag with something in it. She was sneaking behind the door of her car and drinking from something in her paper bag. I'm sure it wasn't a carton of milk. I thought, *Honey, no!* But she had seen other people drinking. She had joined that crowd when she was just coming into adulthood. I can see what happened without ever having been there. She followed what they were doing, and then she got caught by it. Now she is driving around in her car with a bottle of alcohol, and she knows she shouldn't be doing that. Why did she stoop down behind the door of her car? Because she really didn't want me or anyone else to see her. She was ashamed.

If you are a part of a worldly culture, there is going to be a lot of shame in your life. Even other people who are in that culture with you will call shame on you. They're not your friends. They'll call shame on you, too. Your self-worth is in your shame.

### **WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS**

"... who mind earthly things." They don't have a relationship with God. If you do, you're not going to

focus on earthly things. We have to think of some earthly things. We have to buy clothes, food, and we have to provide a place to live, but that doesn't mean earthly things are our focus. If our strongest focus in life is on material things, we can't be part of the culture of heaven, because in this case, *minding something* means "being captured" by it. If we're captured by the culture of the world, we are minding earthly things. They are our focus. Then we don't belong to the culture of heaven.

On purpose, I described the earthly culture first because I don't want to end on that. I don't even want to think about it, but we have to notice the contrast. I would rather look on the bright side. I would rather think more about the culture of heaven, but we have to know that other culture is there so we can't let it catch us. Satan is the leader of the culture of this world, and he has been plying his trade for thousands of years. He has so much experience. Only with God's help can we stay away from that culture so that it won't ensnare us.

### **THE CULTURE OF HEAVEN**

Let us think about the culture of heaven in contrast. Let's go back to those three points: The culture of the world is described "whose God is their belly." The culture of heaven—Their God is not their belly, but their God is the Lord—not their own unwholesome selfish desires, but the Lord. Let's look at Psalm 48:14—"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Why? Because the culture of heaven is here on this earth and in heaven, and when we belong to the culture of heaven, it's within us right now. We are part of it *now*. If we waited until we got to heaven to learn about the culture of heaven, we wouldn't be ready for our new home, would we? Would we be able to join in and feel like we belonged? No. So we have to learn about the culture of heaven here on this earth. That's what our time on this earth is for. We have to learn about the culture of heaven and be comfortable with it, and pledge our allegiance to it, so that when we go to heaven, all we're doing is changing our address. We've been part of this culture already. We were part of this culture on earth and now we're part of that culture with God forever in heaven.

### **WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD**

Let's look at Psalm 144:15—"Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." If you belong to the culture of heaven, you are happy. I don't need to ask you one by one, "Are you happy in the culture of heaven?" I know you are because that's where happiness comes from. Happiness comes from belonging to the culture of heaven.

What does it look like to be part of the culture of heaven? God is your Lord. That means He's your Master. That means what He tells you, you'll do. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: you will love one, and hate the other; you will cleave to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the world." You cannot have membership in both cultures at the same time. You cannot sit on the fence in between the two. If you sit on the fence, you might as well just give your address as the worldly culture, because that's where God sees you. If you're sitting on the fence and saying you cannot

make up your mind, then Satan will make it up for you. You have to make up your mind to serve God. If you can't make up your mind, well, then, you're already on Satan's side. No man can serve two masters, and no one can live on the fence.

### WHOSE GLORY IS IN THE LORD

Let's look at the second description of the worldly culture—"whose glory [self-worth] is in their shame." The heavenly culture is totally the opposite. Where does our glory come from, our self-worth, if we're in the heavenly culture? Jeremiah 9:24 says, "But let him that glorieth [anybody who has any self-worth and thinks about who or what they might be] glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." If you're in the culture of heaven, you, along with the Lord, delight in those three things, and your self-worth is in the fact that you know God. That's the best thing you can ever know about yourself. "I'm a person who knows God. Oh, I don't know everything about Him." We never will. He's too high and mighty, but He wants us to know Him to the extent that a human being can, and we can get to know Him better every day. If we ask Him to reveal Himself to us, we can get to know Him better every day.

The apostle Paul quoted that verse from Jeremiah 9 in I Corinthians 1:31: "As it is written [That means he's quoting from the Old Testament.], He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Not in anything we are personally able to accomplish, but glory in the fact that we know God, and that we appreciate the same things He appreciates. What are those three things? We'll look back at Jeremiah 9:24—"loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness." What does that look like? In our lives if we have loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, what does that look like? Do we know what *loving-kindness* looks like? We know what it means to be loving and kind. We should be loving and kind like Him. That one is not difficult, is it? Loving and kind is who God is, and that's who He wants us to be. That's part of the culture of heaven. You know every culture has its own laws and rules, some written and unwritten. A lot of the culture of heaven is loving-kindness.

We have to be a little careful with the second one—*judgment*. Judgment doesn't mean going around and judging other people. It means judging ourselves, because judging is comparing. Judging ourselves against the Word of God. "Am I living what the Word of God says?" That's judging righteous judgment. Oh yes, sometimes we see people and know how they live. We can't help it, but we're not going around criticizing people because we know they're doing something against the law of God. But when it's talking about judging what God wants us to judge, it means comparing our own lives with His Word. That's the best kind of judging we can do. It will keep us so busy. If I'm judging myself by the Word of God, it's going to keep me so busy that I'm not going to really have any leftover time for judging other people to see if they're living by the Word of God. I will leave that to the Judge of all the earth. My job is to exercise judgment over my own

life so that I can stay in that culture of heaven whose end is not destruction.

### WHO MIND HEAVENLY THINGS

You are not in the culture of heaven if you are part of the worldly culture. You mind earthly things. But if you are in the culture of heaven, where is your mind? Where is your focus? On heavenly things. *Righteousness*. Can we have our focus on heavenly things while we're here on earth? We can't see heavenly things. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). You can't really see heavenly things. How are you going to focus on them if you can't see them? A lot of people are focused on the things of this earth because they can see them, but heavenly things you have to see by faith. You have to believe God and aim for things. We walk by faith, not by sight.

Let's read from Matthew 6, the words of Jesus, and part of the Sermon on the Mount. It goes right along with the culture of heaven and minding heavenly things. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." I don't know how many of you use online banking, but I imagine that I'm probably not the only one here who uses online banking. Do you actually see that money in your account? Can you physically count those dollars and touch them? No. But if I look at my checking account balance in online banking and see a certain amount, I actually believe it's there. I would be highly upset if the bank would say, "Oh, we just put a number" or, "That's not real money. That's just figures." In my mind, that's real money. When I look online at all the expenditures I made, I think, *Did I really go there? I don't remember that. Oh yes, that's right.* Even though that real money didn't go through my fingers as dollars, I believe that money was spent there.

When we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, we don't see them with our eyes, we can't touch them and count them, but we believe God when He says they're there. Thieves won't break in and steal them. No one is going to ever hack into that account, and no one is ever going to scam us out of the money. That's why Jesus said to put our riches up there. Don't put them somewhere else, because if you focus on things of this earth, you don't know what's going to happen to them. People spend their whole lives touching and seeing and adding to their earthly treasures, but I have never known of anyone who took one dime with them. Not one. Fame, for an example is an "intangible," but it is still valuable. But you can't take fame with you, either.

When I pick up my phone just about every morning, it suggest news stories that I may be interested in. At least three times a week probably, there is the name of a famous person who had passed. Sometimes I recognize the names and sometimes I don't, but they were famous and they had their time. But nothing on this earth is immortal. The only culture that it pays to belong to is the culture of heaven, and laying up our treasures there by exercising those three things: *loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness*. Those are the things God delights in. You can't ever exercise those things and God doesn't see it.

When you put money in the bank, what do you like to have in return? When you stop at the drive thru and

you actually physically put money in it, what do you like to see? A receipt. If the bank says that I didn't deposit the money, I have proof that I did. Well, if you exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, God keeps a faithful record. He delights in those things. He notices even the littlest act of kindness. What if you're a child and you do something kind, will He notice it? He will. You won't get a paper receipt for it, but you can believe it's recorded in heaven. You're laying up treasures in heaven. When you examine yourself in your private prayers and ask the Lord to make you more like Him, and you judge your life by His Word, does He notice? He does. Does He keep a record? He does. You are laying up treasures in heaven when you exercise righteous judgment.

Even in the Old testament, people knew this was true. I don't think I can leave this subject without quoting Micah 6:8—"He [God] hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee [part of the heavenly culture He requires], but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" When we do that, we're laying up treasures in heaven, and we're part of the culture of heaven. When we arrive in heaven one day, we will be welcomed home.

I remember coming home from overseas one time, and going through the US citizen's line I gave my passport to the agent in charge, and he said to me, "Welcome home." I said, "Thank you." I asked him, "Do you get tired of saying that?" He said, "No, I'm happy every time to say that to every returning citizen." You know, that's like God. One day when we arrive at the gates of heaven, we will hear Him saying, in effect, "Welcome home. You've been part of the culture of heaven. I watched how you lived. I kept a good record. You might not have always seen the receipt, but everything you did for Me is in my book. Welcome home." We belong to the culture of heaven. We don't want to belong to that culture which is nothing but destruction. I don't want destruction. I want to hear *welcome home*.

## CONCLUSION

In closing, I'd like to read a few verses from Hebrews 11, starting with verse 13: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off [talking of the promise of Jesus coming one day], and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." If you are part of the culture of heaven, you are a stranger on this earth. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." Do we seek a country? "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." We can always go back to the other culture. If we think about it, we have the opportunity to return. Do we want to return to that culture? "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

God has prepared for us a city, and we can enjoy His blessings. We can belong to that culture of heaven right here on this earth. May the Lord help us to

remember the things He has told us in His Word—how to belong to this heavenly culture—what He requires of us. Then, nothing will destroy us. It will make us a better person for ourselves and for all the world around us. Just because we can't touch it doesn't mean it isn't there. Thank the Lord for that reality. †

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## RAYS OF HOPE

By the late D. O. Teasley

(Part I)

**F**AITH IN the New Testament has at least three distinct meanings. First, the act of the soul in appropriating the benefits of the promises of God to its individual needs. Of this faith Jesus spoke to the woman mentioned in Luke 7:50, and said, "Thy faith hath saved thee." "Have faith in God." Peter also mentioned this faith to the unbelieving multitude that had gathered in Solomon's porch, greatly wondering at the manifestation of the power of God through faith. "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Acts 3:16. By this faith we are justified (Romans 5:1), sanctified (Acts 26:18), kept (I Peter 1:5), and healed. James 5:14, 15.

Secondly, faith means the doctrine of the gospel. Paul in writing to the Philippians exhorts them to strive together for the faith of the gospel. Jude also speaks of the faith once delivered to the saints and exhorts the children of God to earnestly contend for that faith. The New Testament is the Christian's creed and articles of faith. The New Testament is spoken of as faith because it is a written expression of what the first Christians believed. They did not believe it because it was written, for they believed it before it had been written. It was written because they believed it. "These are written that we in turn might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life through his name." The New Testament is an expression of those principles of the Christian religion first taught by Jesus Christ and believed by His disciples and afterwards taught by the disciples and believed by all who accepted Christ, therefore called "the faith once delivered to the saints." For this simple faith alone did the early Christians contend and in striving for the faith of the gospel they were exhorted to, and did, strive together.

Thirdly, there is a kind of faith sometimes called historical faith. This kind have all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, whether they have accepted Him as their personal Savior or not. The vilest of men often possess this faith, and even the devils themselves believe and tremble. James 2:19. This kind of faith is a dead faith, for "faith without works is dead." It is not enough to believe that Jesus tasted death for every man. In order to receive the benefits of His glorious atonement, you must believe that He died for you. Things that are dead do not move themselves or anything else. So a dead faith is inactive and does not move those who possess it to righteous acts, but living faith

inspires and animates those who possess it to live in strict harmony with every principle of faith laid down in the New Testament.

As dead faith is of little value and is uninspiring to contemplate, I shall now call your attention to the inspiring subject of living faith in God. This faith every Christian must have, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them." Hebrews 11:1, 2. *Revised Version*. "But faith is, of things hoped for, a confidence, of facts a conviction, when they are not seen. For thereby well attested were the elders."—Rotherham. "Now faith is the persuasion of the things that are in hope, as if they were in act; and it is the manifestness of the things not seen. And for it the ancients are well testified of."—*Syriac*. "But faith is a basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen. For by this the ancients were attested."—*Emphatic Diaglott*.

From the foregoing texts we learn that faith is the persuasion, a confidence, the assurance, a basis, of things for which we hope; the manifestness, a conviction, or proving, of things unseen. We do not have faith for those things which we see, yet the conviction that the unseen things for which we believe are ours makes them as real as if they were seen. "Now faith is the persuasion of things that are in hope, as if they were in act." A commentator on this subject says: "The word which we translate 'substance' signifies subsistence—that which becomes the foundation for another thing to stand on—and the word which we translate 'evidence' signifies such a conviction as is produced in the mind by the demonstration of a problem; after which demonstration no doubt can remain, because we see from it that the thing is; that it cannot but be; and that it cannot be otherwise than it is and is proved to be." Without faith we have no ground-work, no substructure, no foundation, for things hoped for; without it we have no evidence of things unseen. Seeing, then, that faith is the foundation of our hopes, let us inquire what is:

### THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

The foundation of our faith is composed of three stones—the character, the ability, and the will, of the one in whom we believe. There are only three just reasons to doubt anyone. First, if a person is or has been unfaithful or untruthful, our knowledge of his perfidy or untruthfulness is a hindrance to our faith in him, for faith is a dependence on the veracity of another, and one is said to keep his promise inviolate when he performs the promise upon which another relied. Secondly, if a person is unable to perform what he promises, we cannot depend upon him for the things we need. Thirdly, though a man has always been faithful and is able to perform his every promise still we cannot believe that he will favor us unless we have his promise—the expression of his will—for a man's power is exercised only in accordance with his will.

Now, first of all, let us ask who should be the object of our faith. "And Jesus answering saith unto them,

Have faith in God." Mark 11:22. Next let us ask ourselves three questions: First, is God's character such that we can rely upon it? Second, is His ability such that we have no reason to doubt it? Third, has He promised to supply all our needs? If we can answer these three questions in the affirmative, then no man has any reasons to doubt God.

First, let us examine His character. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." I Corinthians 1:9. God made a promise to Judah that the scepter should not depart from his tribe nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh should come. (Genesis 49:10). In exact fulfillment of this promise Shiloh, the Rest-giver, Jesus of Nazareth, came just about the time when the scepter departed from Judah and the first foreign prince—Herod the Great—ruled over Judea. God promised Abraham that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. In the fulness of the times God sent forth His Son to bless every one of us in turning us away from our sins, and in Him—the seed of Abraham—all nations are blessed. God promised Noah that the world should no more be destroyed by floods and as a token of His promise placed His bow in the clouds. Ages have passed, men have been unfaithful, and many times the wickedness of men has come up as a stench in the nostrils of God, yet God has been faithful to His promise, and the fountains of the great deep have never again been broken up nor the windows of heaven been opened to overwhelm unfaithful man in a deluge. Who could doubt the faithfulness of one who has kept His promise inviolate from generation to generation and has proved Himself faithful even to all His enemies? "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." II Timothy 2:13.

"Since the morn when time began,  
Hath his word ceased to prevail?  
Is the God of heaven weak as man,  
Or can his promise fail?  
"Hath a mortal yet been found  
Who hath trusted him in vain?  
Search the whole broad space of earth around,  
And search it once again."

Secondly, let us inquire of the ability of God. Should He make us a promise, is He able to fulfil it? "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." I Peter 3:22. "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:18. To Jesus Christ is given all power on earth, and power over death, hell, and the grave. Yea, and all power in heaven is given Him, for angels and powers and principalities are made subject unto Him. He "is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." Who, then can doubt the power of Him before whom angels prostrate fall? Unnumbered worlds are at His command. He measures the ocean in His hands and meets out the heavens with a span. Look, doubting one, to the power of His might! Look and live and doubt no more.

If you have considered what I have set before you, you surely cannot doubt his faithfulness and his ability to supply the needs of your soul or to care for your body. So to lay the last stone of this imperishable foundation and complete the triune rock of our faith, let us answer the question. Is it His will to save us and to raise us above every discouragement and oppression of the devil? A man's will is known only by the expression of his promise; so if God promised victory, we know it is His will to give victory.

1. His promise to save. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

2. His promise to sanctify. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17:17, 19. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Hebrews 13:12. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." I Thessalonians 4:3, 4. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Thessalonians 5:23.

3. His promise to keep. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are ... I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17:11, 15. "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." II Thessalonians 3:3. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Peter 1:5. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." II Timothy 1:12.

4. His promise to heal. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:15, 16. "And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." Matthew 8:7. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:3. "And said, If thou wilt diligently harken to the voice of the Lord

thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Exodus 15:26.

5. His promise of an eternal abiding-place with Him. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I Thessalonians 4:17. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Corinthians 5:1. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:16, 17.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!  
What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not harm thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,  
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

Now, dear reader, if you are doubting God, you are doing so without a cause and against your reason and better judgment. Nothing can be more unreasonable than to doubt one whose name is faithfulness and truth, whose power is unlimited, and whose promise reaches you. It is much easier to believe God than to doubt Him, for we have all reasons to believe and not one reason to doubt. Can you, will you, do you, firmly believe Him for all that He has promised you? Faith is the road to victory; doubting, the road to despair. Which way will you go? †

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"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

**LET'S MARCH**

**Ann Davis, Essex, MD**

Happy New Year's been greeted, the winter receded,  
Now March  
Toward spring's blest appearing, heat of summer soon nearing.  
Now March.

In March, not much happens, we're done with the wrappin's,  
Busy days have removed all our starch.  
Is that why the name of this month is an order?  
Must we all be reminded  
To March?

It's a long time till reaping, when the fields will be heaping,  
But March.  
If we want to see sheaves bow, we must plan in advance now,  
So March.

We can't wait for fair weather if rich harvest we'd gather,  
For the sun's hot beams surely will parch  
Unless we've plowed deeper and prepared for the reaper.  
Don't waste one priceless day now,  
Just March.

Have you had a hard trial, has it meant self-denial?  
Just March.  
Don't miss one single beat now, keep the spring in your feet  
now,  
Just March.

Trials sure would beset us, but the Lord won't forget us,  
And He offers a brand new fresh start.  
So don't wait till tomorrow, put behind you that sorrow,  
Just obey this month's order  
And March!

**THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE**

**Charles Wendte**

The secret of a happy life  
Is an industrious hand,  
Which gladness finds in earnest work  
For noble purpose planned.  
It leaves no time for idle fears,  
Thoughts morbid or depressed,  
But cheerfully it does its part  
And leaves to heaven the rest.

The secret of a happy life  
Is in a loving heart  
Whose good-will flows to all its kind,  
To all would joy impart.  
It shares in others' weal and woe;  
Is not with self engrossed.  
The richest and the happiest heart  
Is his who loves the most.

The secret of a happy life  
Is a believing soul  
Serenely trusting in the power  
Which animates the whole.  
On earnest, upright, loving lives  
Heavens' choicest blessings fall;  
The Christ of God within the soul  
The crowning joy of all.

**JUST NOW**

**Author Unknown**

Never mind about tomorrow—  
It always is today;  
Yesterday has vanished,  
Wherever, none can say.  
Each minute must be guarded—  
Make worth the while somehow;  
There are no other moments;  
It's always, Just Now.

Just now is the hour that's golden,  
The moment to defend.  
Just now is without beginning;  
Just now can never end.  
Then never mind tomorrow—  
'Tis today you must enjoy  
With all that's true and noble;  
And the time for this is—Now!

**HE HAS A PLAN FOR ME**

**Rosella Thiesen**

I to Christ my life have given,  
Ever His alone to be;  
Oh, what peace and blest assurance,  
That He has a plan for me!

Now I know that He is leading  
In His love so full and free;  
I can rest in Him securely,  
For He has a plan for me.

As I walk along life's pathway,  
Though the way I cannot see  
I shall follow in His footsteps,  
For He has a plan for me.

So I look to Him for guidance,  
Saviour, Lord and King is He;  
I can trust Him—aye, forever,  
Since He has a plan for me!

Trusting Him in full assurance,  
This would be my only plea—  
Reveal, Oh Lord, just step by step  
Thine own perfect plan for me! †

# NOT BY, BUT BY

Message by Bro. John Romero



**L**ET US TURN to the book of Zechariah, chapter 4, and read what it says: “And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

## NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER

We would like to focus our thoughts on verse 6: “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Just to put the scripture in context a little bit. Zerubbabel was a man who was used by God to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. He had begun that work, and there came a time in the rebuilding of the temple that the angel came to Zechariah. He gave a vision to Zechariah and told him he had some things to say to Zerubbabel. So God used Zechariah to give Zerubbabel the message. Zerubbabel had begun the job of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, but there came a long period of time where the rebuilding had stopped. I believe it had been almost 16 years between the laying of the foundation to this time that God had sent this angel to tell Zechariah, in effect, “Give some words of encouragement to Zerubbabel. Here are some things that he needs to hear.” These were part of the words of

Zechariah by the vision that the angel gave him when he woke him up. He told Zechariah that God said it was time to finish the temple. It was time for him to finish the work. We find in verse 9 of Zechariah 4 where God said, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.” So this was an incomplete work. This was a job that had not been finished.

There are some things that God starts that He wants us to finish. If we started with salvation, He didn't just start us out, but He wants us to finish it. He wants us to make it all the way to the very end. So there are situations that are going to come in our lives, just as things came in the situation with Zerubbabel and the people who were attempting to rebuild the temple of God. There were situations that had come and hindered them, and there were reasons why the temple had not been finished, so God sent a word of encouragement. He sent a word of truth to Zerubbabel. It's possible that Zerubbabel was discouraged. Maybe he was confused. Maybe he wasn't sure if it was time to start or not, so God gave him some good, solid truth. God gave him some good words. He wanted Zerubbabel to know that it was time to finish this work.

## BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAITH THE LORD

God said in verse 6 of Zechariah 4, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” God said, in effect, “If you're going to finish this, Zerubbabel, it's not going to be by might, nor by power, nor by human devices, but by my Spirit. If this work is going to get done, it's going to get done by the work of the Spirit of God.” There is a good lesson for us in how God had to come and encourage Zerubbabel after the work in the temple had been stopped for a number of years. Thank God we can understand that the only things that can truly be built that will stand the tests of life are those things that are not built by might, nor power, nor by human doctrines and human organizations, but by the Spirit of God.

We can come to a place in our lives where things may come to a standstill. Maybe we became a little discouraged. Maybe we sort of let things grind to a halt. Maybe you're here in this meeting and that's how you've felt about your spiritual life. So God can send us His Word. God sends us things right from heaven to let us know it's time to get going again. It's time to keep building. It's time to keep going onward. It's time to have the determination that we're going to be able to make it to the very end. It's not by our own might, not by our own thinking, not by our own ways, but by submitting and obeying the Spirit of God. Thank God He can take us through to the place that we need to get to. It's not by human power or by human abilities, but by the power of God's Spirit. This was the only way that the building of the temple was going to be finished. Most certainly, this applies to the church today.

We live in a world today where there's a church building on every corner. We have men's organizations and men's denominations, but thank God the only way to build the true Church of God is with the true Word of God and by the true Spirit of God. What we have seen here in this meeting this week is not men dictating, pushing, and forcing things, but men preaching God's Word as the Spirit of God has led them. We can see the good effect of allowing the Spirit of God to have His way in men's lives and hearts. God cannot do anything for us if He does not have His way in our lives. We might have knowledge, power, money, organization skills, and other things, but if we do not allow the Holy Spirit to have His way, first and foremost, in what we say and do, we are wasting our time. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). You know, men have tried to put the Holy Spirit in their own little program and in their own little box and tried to dictate and control Him. It has all been to no avail, because no one can dictate to the Holy Spirit how He should work. He must dictate to us. We know God can do good work for us by letting Him have the preeminence in our midst.

We'll be going back to Zechariah, but now let us go to John 3, verses 5-8: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

### **LET THE HOLY SPIRIT DO HIS WORK**

We can no more put the Holy Spirit in a program or in a box than we can go outside and catch the wind and put it in a bag. The wind blows where it does. We don't know where it comes from, and so it is with the Spirit of God. Our job is not to control the Spirit or program the Spirit or force Him into a ritual, but to let the Spirit of God have His way in our hearts and lives. Let Him do what He does, when He does, and how He wants to do it. He does His work because He is the Spirit of God. Our job is to let Him have His way in our hearts and lives.

We have heard of many souls that get saved at the altar of prayer under the preaching of the gospel. That's a good way to do it, but it's the Spirit of God that has to save souls. I heard that someone was saved at their house last night. Let us be careful not to program the Holy Spirit and say, "Oh no, you can only get saved at the altar of the church." That's a good place to do it, and we believe that's what He wants to do, but the Spirit of God can save anybody anywhere when they pay the price and respond to the Holy Spirit. That is how God works. We know of a sister who got saved in the shower. She was taking a shower and God convicted her, and she fell on her knees right in the shower and got saved. That's the Holy Spirit working.

We know of a man in the Philippines who was a drunkard. But do you what? God spoke to that man and he fell on his knees at home and got saved. He repented with all his heart. He then got up and went

and found a true Church of God to attend. That's the Holy Spirit. We don't want to limit Him. We don't want to box Him in. We want to let the Holy Spirit have free domain in our lives, in our ministry, and in our obedience, so that God can do the things He wants to do. Thank God we've seen Him do some good things this week because He has had His way.

Men have done many things in their own might to try to build God's church. They've used human powers and human practices, but just because things were done behind a pulpit and with a Bible does not mean that it was the Spirit of God that did it. We can do things and say, "Well, we're enforcing this, and you're going to do this and do that," and just because it gets done a certain way does not mean it was done by the Holy Spirit. We have to see the fruit of it. God has to see the fruit of it. The Holy Spirit has to be in charge. We don't tell Him what to do. He tells us what to do.

### **WHEN WE ARE SANCTIFIED HE WILL GUIDE**

Let's go to John, chapter 16, verses 13, 14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thank God the Holy Spirit is our guide. When the Spirit of truth comes into our hearts, and we're fully sanctified, He will guide and direct us. We've been hearing all week about the light. Even though we are in a world of darkness, we have a guide. We have a guide who will guide us into all the pathways of truth.

We need the Holy Spirit to keep us out of doctrinal error, to keep us out of walking in the pathway of error that is contrary to what God has for us. Thank God we have a guide for our lives. It is God's Word and God's Spirit working harmoniously—working together. Thank God for the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Thank God for the true witnesses that He has sent to guide our lives. The Word of God will agree with the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God will always agree with the Word of God. They work together. They are perfect witnesses to our hearts and lives. They never fuss with one another. They don't fight one another, but they work together to help us to make it where we need to go. The Spirit of God is our guide. This is why God has put the Spirit in us: to guide us in all the paths of truth, and to help us that we might be led in every right pathway.

Again, John 16:13 says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Thank God the Holy Spirit will always keep us in contact with heaven. Those are not man's words. What we heard this week was not man's words or ideas, but thank God it was the true Word of God. You might ask, "How do you know?" I'll tell you how I know. The Holy Spirit witnessed to it. The Holy Spirit brought conviction and moved in men's hearts. The Holy Spirit shall not speak of Himself. We don't want to hear anybody talk about themselves. We want to hear men and women talk about the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, edifying us along life's pathway.

The Holy Spirit said He will glorify Christ. When it is all said and done, it is the Son who will be glorified. If we are doing what we're doing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, all the glory goes to the Son—not to men—not even to our organization. We thank God for the Church of God, but we're not here to glorify the church in that sense. We're here to lift up what God did for us. You might ask, "Why do you say that?" I've known people who always talked about the church—"the church, the church, the church." Thank God for the church, but the church as an organization is nothing without people living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. We need to make sure the Spirit of God has the preeminence. Nothing more, and no one else. We need to make sure that we give the Holy Spirit a clear pathway—no hindrances, no stop signs, no self-will, but open hearts to pray and to preach and to live the way He expects us to live. It is not by might nor power. No matter how hard we might try, no matter how hard we might want to see something happen, we must always learn to lean on the Holy Spirit of God to help us.

### **THIS IS A WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Ephesians, chapter 2. Let's read verses 19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Through the Spirit. It's not a work of men. It's not a work of some man's denomination or men's ideas. This is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Church of God is not built by men's hands, their ideas and abilities, but this is a work done through the Spirit. How do we know if it's done by the Spirit? If it's done by the Spirit, all the parts will fit together. He said, "In whom all the building fitly framed together." It doesn't make any difference of our background, our color, our culture, our race. When the Spirit of God gets done with us, He can fitly frame us together. He can put us together.

I'm thinking now about the Old Testament tabernacle, the one that Moses built out in the wilderness. You've heard of those who set up the boards, put the boards together, and put the poles through them, etc. All of the boards were the same height, the same width, and the same thickness. God gave Moses all the instructions on how to build that tabernacle in the wilderness. Moses never told them to put this board by this board all the time, but no matter where they put the right board, it would fit. When the Spirit of God is in it, it works. When the Spirit of God saves and sanctifies us, and gets all the carnality out of us, we can be what He wants us to be—a work done through the Spirit—a building fitly framed together. It doesn't make any difference who we are or anything else about us, but thank God this is a work of the Spirit. There is only one power that can deliver us from sin, deliver us from carnality, and build this New Testament temple of God and that is, the true Holy Spirit of God. There are reasons why we have a mess in false religion. We have people split-

ting and dividing and having bad attitudes. Some people are church shopping all the time. One month they're here and the next month they're somewhere else, but thank God in the true Church of God, through the Spirit, we can be a building fitly framed together.

I'm reminded of Paul speaking in I Corinthians 3, about him being a wise master builder, and how God gave him the plan to lay the foundation by using only silver and gold and precious stones. He starts this chapter out by talking about those men who were carnal. One said, "I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos." Paul said to them, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." He goes on talking about how God builds only with certain kinds of material. So some things can't be a part of our lives if we expect God to use us and make us a part of His holy church.

### **LAY ASIDE ALL MALICE AND ALL GUILE**

Peter says in I Peter, chapter 2, verses 1 and 2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." When you become a newborn babe and lay aside some things, such as malice, ill-will, hard feelings toward people, and bitterness toward people, salvation has made a change in your life. A lot of people don't rob banks or do drugs, but they'll hold hard feelings against people all of their lives. Thank God for real deliverance. Religion can't do that, but the Holy Spirit can. How do you know if someone has really gotten saved? They have a desire and a hunger for the Word of God.

I Peter 2:3-5: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." How do you know it's the work of the Spirit? If it's done through the Spirit, it will build up a spiritual house. It will produce a holy priesthood. It will produce a holy people. Thank God it will produce a people free from sin, a people who have put aside all their malice, all their guile, all their hypocrisies, and all envies, and evil speaking. They allowed God to save them from all sin, sanctified their hearts, and made them a living stone built up as a spiritual house to give God what He wants from them. Spiritual sacrifices. The true work of the Spirit saves and sanctifies and produces a people who live and walk and pray in the Spirit. Thank God for His goodness to us.

### **CONCLUSION**

In closing, we'll go back to Zechariah for a little bit. There are some things we want to look at here. Zechariah 4:7, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain ..." It seems like in all the things Zerubbabel had gone through, he was looking at what seemed to him a great mountain. It seemed to him that as the work in the temple had stopped and people had come in opposition to him, he wasn't sure exactly what to do. Zechariah tried to encourage him. Listen, maybe there's a great mountain

before you, but if you will make sure that you won't face it by your own might or power, and let the Holy Spirit have His way in your own life, that mountain will soon become a plain. That mountain will soon be gone way. God can take it away. He can level it out.

Sometimes people think about getting saved. They know they need to be saved. They know they need what God has to offer them, but there are things in their lives that seem like mountains. There they stop. There they are. They have made no progress. Maybe they come to services. Maybe they have been under conviction, but it seems like there's a mountain before them. I want to encourage you to do what God tells you to do. Do what the Spirit of God tells you to do. Quit doing it by your own power and might. Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm going to try this. I'm going to figure it out this way," then when it's all said and done, the mountain is still there. Allow the Spirit of God to take you and bring you through, and you're going to find that mountain is going to be gone one day. You're going to look back and say, "Do you know what? I was hindered for a while. There were things I thought I couldn't get over or give up, but now I see when I obeyed the Spirit of God, He made a plain so nice and so smooth for me to walk on."

Some of you may have gotten saved recently. You saw things before you and thought, *Well, I can't go passed this, I can't get over that*, but you found out that when you let God have His way, those mountains were, because that's the power of God. Only God's Spirit can move mountains and make plains out of them.

In our spiritual life, sometimes things bloom up like mountains and we come to a standstill. Sometimes we're tempted. Maybe God knew Zerubabbel was tempted. He knew that he would try by his own means, or he would try this or that to get the temple finished, but God said he wanted Zechariah to tell Zerubabbel, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." So it is in our lives. We have seen God work. What seemed like mountains are plains now, because God had His way. Troubles and tribulations will come before us, but let us not lean on our power or might. Let the Spirit of God guide and direct us in His time and in His way.

Sometimes we are tempted to press for our own way. We're tempted to move things ourselves. We tend to be in a hurry all the time. One thing I can guarantee about God, He's never in a hurry. If you get in a hurry, you're going to leave the Spirit of God out of it. If you do it by your own power, you will mess things up. Let God have His way and His own time.

Zechariah 4:9, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you." Whatever God helped you to start, He will help you to finish. God started you out in salvation. You might have some dry places, and you may feel like you're not making any progress, but God wants to help you to finish it. He wants you to put your hands to it. Do your part, and He'll help you to finish it. Verse 10: "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet [a building tool; helps to keep the walls straight] in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of

the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Sometimes it seems like what we're doing isn't really that important, but anything we do in the name of the Lord, God said, "Let's not despise the day of small things." Sometimes a good work and a great work is done one small thing at a time. Sometimes we see where we'd like to be, and it seems like we're a long way away from where we'd like to be, but let us get there God's way. Sometimes God's way is one small step at a time. There are good things in our future if we will let the Spirit of God have His way.

Thank God He can encourage and challenge us. Not by our might or power, but by His Spirit He can help us to do whatever we need to do to be in His will and to serve Him.

God bless you. †



Greetings!

In Proverbs 4:23 we are admonished to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Our heart, which is the seed of our emotions and affections, is a gift given to us by our Creator. Our heart allows us to love deeply and yet hurt the same. It is a blessing to know we can safely

trust our heart to the Lord.

We trust you will be blessed by the this month's article written by Sis. Kirsten Goodyear on the thought of "Heart Walls."

—Bro. Doug

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## HEART WALLS

By Sis. Kirsten Goodyear

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."—Proverbs 3:5.*

We all have an understanding of what a *wall* is, but here's a definition of a wall to make sure it's clear in our minds: "a vertical structure that defines an area; provides security, privacy, shelter, and sound-proofing."

Walls are an easy concept to understand. We see them everywhere. They direct where we walk and how we get to our destinations. They define our living spaces. They define an area. Once there are walls up, the area isn't able to grow. It is defined. People aren't able to just wander in; they have to find a gate or door, so it provides security. If the wall is high, it provides privacy. Once walls are up, they will provide shelter. Whoever is in the enclosed area is separated from what's going on outside, happenings are muffled—sound-proofed.



# THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

## VANITY

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland



Heart walls function the same way. We just can't see them in the physical world. Their effects aren't so easily witnessed and understood. Yet they are just as familiar to us as we've probably built a few ourselves and navigate other's heart walls often.

Heart walls are generally built to protect a hurting area of our heart. They give some time for the tenderness to pass and healing to be well on its way. It is when they are left in place after this initial hurt that they begin to do a disservice.

This is when we can recall the definition of a physical wall: "provides security, privacy, shelter, and sound-proofing." When we experience a tragedy or repeated hurts, we can have a tendency to build a wall around our heart. It provides security—now people aren't able to tread carelessly over our hurts or add to them. It provides privacy—it's none of their concern anyhow, is it? It provides shelter. And the wall provides sound-proofing. You don't get one 'benefit' without the others. All of these combined can give you time to heal, especially after a deep sorrow or repeated hurt. As soon as a heart wall goes up, though it "defines an area," it keeps people out and in, and it separates from the outside world. All of these 'benefits' quickly begin working against you, and begin adding up over time in separating us from others, keeping relationships at arm's length, and if left up long enough, ultimately separating us from our Creator.

With walls, our heart is unable to grow and expand over life events. They stunt our heart's capacity to give and receive love. Heart walls 'sound-proof' or muffle any love trying to go in or out. Like mice or other pests finding their way through walls, hurts find their way in again.

Stepping back and looking at the picture as a whole, you can see where heart walls lead. A person who originally built the heart walls because of a painful time, now is being stunted and robbed of giving and receiving love wholeheartedly by the very walls put in place to protect and give time to heal.

Heart walls are difficult to pull down, and a difficult habit to be rid of. Once one wall is torn down, the next time a hurt comes along our impulse can be to let our heart fly into action, building the next wall. With our own understanding, it makes sense that if we have experienced a hurt, if we just put some protection in place, we'll never have to experience that again. Our heart does not work that way though.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). The only safe place for our heart is with the Lord. Here the word 'safe' does not mean we will never experience hurts, sorrows, rejections, diseases, losses, etc, ... even though the Lord has our heart. Here, 'safe' means the Lord will preserve our heart. He will walk beside us through all of the difficulties. And through it all, we will still be able to give and receive love. Through it all, we will still be able to love and receive love from our Creator †

"Daddy, do you have good eyes?" I asked my father one evening. My sisters and I had just finished washing the supper dishes, and had brought our school books to the kitchen table so we could do our homework.

My father sat at one end of the table, studying an alarm clock that he had taken apart. Mom had complained that it wasn't working, and so he was looking for the problem.

"What do you mean by 'good eyes'?" he asked.

As a ten-year-old, I was quick to understand that I hadn't asked a clear question. I tried again. "I mean—do you have good eyesight?" I asked.

"Yes," answered my father. "I can see very well."

"When people are young, and they have poor eyesight, does it get better as they grow older?" I asked.

"Not usually," my father answered.

"Hmmm," I said.

My father looked up. "Could you go get me a clean rag?" he asked.

I ran and got the rag to give to my father.

"Thank you," he said. After a moment he asked, "Why are you so concerned about my eyesight?"

"Because," I said, "I saw a picture of you when you were a little boy, and you were wearing glasses. But now you don't wear glasses, and you can see very well." I paused, and then went on. "So I was wondering how your eyes got better."

My father didn't answer right away, so I jumped up from the table and ran to the cupboard where Mom kept the old photo albums. "I'll show you the picture I'm talking about," I said.

After a little searching, I found the album with the photo and ran back to the table with it. "See?" I said to my father as I pointed to a picture of a little boy about eight years old. His smiling eyes looked at the camera through a pair of wire-rimmed glasses.

"That's you, isn't it?" I asked my father.

He studied the picture, and a slow grin spread over his face. "Yes," he said, "that's me."

"Was your eyesight poor for a little while, and then it got better?" I asked. I pointed to my father's other school pictures on the album page. In none of the other pictures was he wearing glasses.

"No," my father answered slowly. "My eyesight has always been good."

"Then why are you wearing glasses in that picture?" I asked.

My father sighed, and his face became serious. "I deceived my mother," he said. He thought for a moment, and then continued. "I thought I would look good in glasses, and so I pretended that I couldn't see very well."

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"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul."—Psalm 121:7.

My mother grew concerned. She wanted me to do well at my studies, and she knew that poor eyesight would be a hindrance to me. So she started saving money to buy glasses for me.”

My father shook his head. “When I think about the things that my mother went without so that she could afford to buy glasses for me ...” His voice trailed away.

I thought about Dad’s mother—my grandmother—and what a kind heart she had. I could easily imagine her giving up little things and big things to help my father. And all for something he didn’t need at all.

“What happened?” I asked. “Why did you stop wearing the glasses?”

“They got broken,” he said. “My mother was going to save up to buy me another pair, but I told her I didn’t need them anymore.”

“Didn’t she wonder how your eyes got better so fast?” I asked.

My father shook his head. “I think she figured it out,” he said.

“Did she punish you for deceiving her?” I asked.

“I don’t remember if she punished me,” he said. He thought for a moment. “But I’ll tell you what the real punishment was. It was the guilt I felt in my heart for the hardship I caused her, all because of my vanity.”

“What’s ‘vanity?’” I asked him.

“‘Vanity’ means having too much pride in how you look, or what you have done,” my father answered. “Vanity causes people to put their own desires first without thinking of the needs of others. That’s what selfishness is all about.”

I looked once more at the little boy wearing glasses in the school picture, and then I closed the album and took it back to the cupboard. I couldn’t imagine my father being selfish. He was always doing what he could to help others, giving what little he had to make their lives better. *I guess he learned his lesson*, I thought to myself.

This month’s wise saying comes from Proverbs 30:8, which says, *Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.* This scripture has so much to teach us. Vanity, or selfishness, is something that we need to ask the Lord to remove far from us. It is not pleasing to Him to see us put our needs before those of others, or to hurt others just to get what we want.

God doesn’t expect us to make ourselves poor on purpose, nor to spend all our time and effort to make ourselves wealthy. He has promised to give us all that we need if we put Him first, and if we consider the feelings of others before we consider our own.

### Activity

A man once asked Jesus, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus answered him by giving—not only the greatest commandment, but also the second-greatest. Can you find those two commandments in the Bible? If we obey them, we will never be vain or selfish.

### Answers to Last Month’s Activity

1. God created the heaven and the earth. **Genesis 1:1**
2. The Lord thy God is a merciful God. **Deuteronomy 4:31**

3. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **I John 1:5**

4. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. **John 4:24**

5. God is love. **I John 4:8** †

## BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

# THE FAMILY OF GOD

## THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY (Part II)

**Scriptures:** I Peter 1:16-25; Revelation 5:9.

I Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Revelation 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

**Memory Verse:** And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.—Revelation 5:9.

**Aim:** To impress the student further with the price of membership in the family of God.

### INTRODUCTION

As members of the blood-bought family, it is necessary that we conduct ourselves in such a way that the Father of this family may be respected and adored throughout the earth. He that is a child of God has been born again by the Spirit of God and removed from the family of Satan and added to the family of God. This means an end to the business of sin, and holiness and righteousness become the order of the day. Modern Christianity, so called, is mixing the world with its religion, but this will greatly disappoint the professor

when he comes to the judgment bar. Therefore, it is most important that we set down the truth here in regard to the conduct of the family.

## MEDITATIONS

**HOLINESS REQUIRED—I Peter 1:16—Be ye holy**—This is a command, and is indispensable as a characteristic of the blood-bought family. If we are children of God it is only reasonable that we be like Him. We know that our God is a holy God. This command did not originate with Peter's writings, for he referred to the command given to Moses. People were required to live holy under the law.

**GOD IS IMPARTIAL—I Peter 1:17—Without respect**—He that originates the peculiar family is truly the one true God, giving justice to every man. Every man's reward shall be according to his works. Therefore, it is necessary that we be very careful of our daily life.

**GOLD CANNOT BUY FAVOR WITH GOD—I Peter 1:18—With silver and gold**—The world relies upon its wealth to do the things it wants done. Money oftentimes (not always) will save the worldling from the prison or gallows. Even in sickness, money buys medical care that may prolong the span of life, but divine healing or the redemption of the soul cannot be purchased with gold or silver. Only the blood of Christ can save us from the power of sin and disease. Millions are living today by the vain, handed-down traditions of modern religion. Only the blood of Christ can save from this error.

**THE BLOOD OF CHRIST MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD—I Peter 1:19—The precious blood**—The blood is precious because it is the only thing that can redeem a poor, lost soul from the power of sin. God required that he who would make a sacrifice to Him must choose an animal that was perfect in every detail. Likewise, in the one great sacrifice that the Father made, He gave a sacrifice that was perfect in every detail.

**REDEMPTION OLDER THAN THE EARTH—I Peter 1:20—Before the foundation**—God carefully plans everything He does. How safe we are in trusting Him! He knew that man would sin even before He created the world, and so He laid His plan accordingly. In the mind of God, Christ was slain before the earth was created, and anyone who believed that God would offer His Son received the same benefit as he who today believes that He did offer Him.

**THE BLOOD-BOUGHT SOUL HOPES IN THE INVISIBLE GOD—I Peter 1:21—Hope might be**—When a Christian kneels, he bows before an invisible God. The world serves gods they can see as well as the invisible powers of darkness. We hope in the invisible God of light.

**THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY IS FERVENT IN LOVE—I Peter 1:22—Love one another**—The world is full of hate which often ends in murder. This is not so in God's family. Hate genders turmoil and strife. Love genders peace. Through God's redemptive plan the soul of the sinner is made clean and free from

the scourge of sin. **Verse 23—Being born again**—Peter does not speak of a physical birth, but a spiritual birth, born of the incorruptible Word of God, which lives and abides for ever. The new birth marks the beginning of a new life and also marks the end of the old life of sin.

**MAN VERY FRAIL—I Peter 1:24—Is as grass**—Grass grows up quickly and soon is gone. So it is with man. Miserable indeed will be the man who falls into the hands of the devil for all eternity.

**THE PRESERVING POWER OF THE WORD—I Peter 1:25—Endureth forever**—David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." It is only the Word of God in the heart that can preserve man in his frailty. The saving Word has been delivered to us by God through the process of preaching. It is by this process that God elects to save them that believe.

**ONE PLAN FOR ALL MEN—Revelation 5:9—Every tongue**—Around the throne of God in eternity will be gathered men of every age, clime, and race. This shows the universal nature of the gospel of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

God is relying entirely upon the testimony of the blood-bought family to extend the borders of His kingdom in the earth. The family is met by great opposition as we try to do this, but even so there are many great advantages before us today of which we should make the very greatest use. Means of communication is the very best ever known. Every channel should be filled with the pure gospel of Christ. In eternity our reward will be determined by the way we have used the opportunities before us. How will our generation compare with all others in devotion and service? We must not come short in anything.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How is entrance gained into the blood-bought family?
2. Give some of the characteristics of the blood-bought family.
3. What is the calling of this family?
4. What is meant by the words that God is no respecter of persons?
5. In what way might God be considered helpless in the redemption of one's soul?
6. When did the redemptive plan originate?
7. What great emotion animates the blood-bought family?
8. Why is man so much in need of the redemptive plan? †

## THE WAY OF TRUTH BROADCAST

On Sunday, February 1, The Way of Truth Broadcast began airing on WMTC 99.9 FM, Jackson, Kentucky, at 4:30 p.m. It is also LIVE STREAMED on the Internet at the same time. The cost of the air time is sponsored by Reformation Publishers

# THE SOUL

IS THE VOLITIONAL PART OF OUR BEING.

IT IS A CONSCIOUS ENTITY, AND

# IS IMMORTAL

By the late H. M. Riggle

From the book, *Beyond the Tomb*

“Your heart shall live forever” (Psalm 22:26). How much is implied in these words. This teaches the absolute indestructibility of the seat of our spiritual affections—the heart, or soul. There is one thing in this fleeting world that is immortal, the nature of which is undying, and that is the human soul. It “shall LIVE FOREVER.” So positively teaches the Word of God.

How beautifully this text in Psalm 22:26 blends with that of I Peter 3:3, 4: “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Here again immortality is clearly brought to light. The subject is adornment, outward and inward beautifying. The embellishment of a true Christian is not external decorations, “not that *outward* adorning” of the body with costly apparel, gold, etc. Do not spend your time trying to adorn and beautify the outward man, the physical body, for it is corruptible and will soon decay and die. Your “*mortal* body,” “mortal flesh” (Romans 6:12; 8:11; II Corinthians 4:11). How vain to spend valuable time hanging jewels on this poor “vile body” of ours. What then shall we adorn? Answer: “Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible.” How plain this statement. A “hidden man” which is “not corruptible” dwells inside this corruptible and decaying body. The adorning of this inner man—the soul—is not something that we put on, but is a state or condition of our spiritual being, a “meek and quiet SPIRIT.” The hidden man of the heart is our spirit, and it is beautified by meekness and quietness in salvation. “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” “The beauty of the Lord God is upon me.” “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.”

On this text Dr. Adam Clarke remarks—“*Hidden man of the heart*. This phrase is of the same import with that of St. Paul—Romans 7:22 the *inner man*; that is the soul, with the whole system of affections and passions. Every part of the scripture treats man as a compound being: the body is the outward or visible man; the soul, the inward, hidden, or invisible man.” “All the ornaments placed on the head and body of the most illustrious female are, in the sight of God, of no worth; but a meek and silent spirit are, in his sight, invaluable, because proceeding from and leading to himself, being incorruptible, surviving the ruins of the body and the ruins of time, and enduring eternally.” This is sound. Man possesses both a corruptible and an incorruptible part. The outer man is corruptible—subject to natural decay, and as a result, death. It is

the only part of us that will put on immortality and incorruption at the resurrection (see Philippians 3:20, 21; I Corinthians 15:42, 44). The inner, or hidden man of the soul, the human spirit, “is not corruptible.” It is spirit—“for there is a spirit in man.” All spirits, now and all the time, and evermore, are incorruptible; and the human soul is spiritual. Materialists will argue that it is not the hidden man but the adornment that is incorruptible, the ornament the hidden man is to wear. But this ornament is not a trinket of some kind—it is a state, a condition of the soul when saved by grace. The inward man, being incorruptible, must be adorned with incorruptible, imperishable graces.

The words “not corruptible” in I Peter 3:3, 4 are derived from the Greek word *aphthartos*. This same word is found in the following texts: I Corinthians 9:25, “incorruptible [*aphthartos*] crown”; I Corinthians 15:52, “The dead shall be raised incorruptible [*aphthartos*]”; I Peter 1:4, “Inheritance incorruptible [*aphthartos*]”; and in I Timothy 1:17, “Now unto the King eternal, IMMORTAL, [*aphthartos*].” Here then we unmistakably have its true meaning. The Deity is *aphthartos*—immortal; and in the final resurrection the dead shall be raised *aphthartos*—incorruptible, and Paul defines this—“this mortal shall put on immortality” (I Corinthians 15:54). Immortality is from either of two Greek words—*aphthartos* or *aphtharsia*, which mean imperishable, incorruptible; or from *athanasia*—deathlessness. The words “not corruptible” in I Peter 3:4 are rendered “imperishable” in Bible Union and Sawyers translations. “Imperishable—not subject to decay; indestructible”—*Webster*. So this text properly rendered reads, “The hidden man of the heart, in that which is immortal—imperishable.” So there is no evasion of the fact that inside our mortal flesh there lives a conscious entity, a soul or spirit, an intelligent being, the real inner, hidden man of the heart, and it is immortal, imperishable, and does not go down in decomposition with the body.

Jesus taught this truth in the clearest manner: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:4, 5). If the body were the soul men could kill that. If by soul is meant merely the physical man, men can kill him. If by soul is simply meant physical life, man can take that from us. But here Jesus plainly taught that the soul of man is indestructible by material forces. Man can kill the body, but he “CANNOT KILL THE SOUL.” So when the body dies the soul still lives. Then it is immortal.

This clear teaching of Christ’s announcing the separability of the soul from the body and of the fact that the death of the body does not involve the extinction of the soul, has troubled and perplexed our materialistic friends not a little, and it is surprising how much time and space they devote in their writings to explain away the force of its meaning. But with all their labor, Matthew 10:28 stands unshaken and mocks their

efforts. One of their writers, J. P. Ham, in his work *Life and Death*, says, "Nothing more is implied than that the soul is distinct from the body." Good for Ham. While he denies its immortality, he admits what is fatal to the whole materialistic teaching—"the soul is *distinct* from the body." And, may I add, Matthew 10:28 as clearly teaches that the soul survives the death of the body. Uriah Smith in *Here and Hereafter* (pp. 109-116) argues that soul here means "the life which is to come." He quotes Matthew 16:25, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." That is we may lose our present life in martyrdom or death for Christ's sake and gain it again in the resurrection. That would make Matthew 10:28 read, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the life which is to come in the resurrection." This is certainly a new definition of the term *soul* and does not at all give a correct exegesis of this scripture.

I quote Dr. Clarke: "We find that the body and the soul are distinct principles, for the body may be slain and the soul escape; and secondly, that the soul is immaterial, for the murderers of the body are not able, have it not in their power, to injure it." The import of Christ's words cannot be mistaken. He expressly asserts that man consists of both soul and body, and that the soul survives the death of the body and continues in a state of consciousness when separated from the body. The soul and body do not perish together at death. Jesus taught that all of us possess souls which come not under the power of men, but are subject to the power of God alone. Fear Him, who, when the body is killed, can cast the soul into hell, the God who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell. The term *kill* as it relates to the power of both man and God in both these texts has reference only to the body. For surely Christ did not teach that God will kill the soul and then cast it into hell. If so, why fear its being cast into hell! 'Fear him, which *after* he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.' To cast a dead body into hell was not Christ's meaning, nor did He mean to cast a dead soul there either. This casting into hell as recorded in Luke 12: 4, 5 is after the body has been slain, hence *can refer only to the soul*. This proves that the soul is the conscious personality, and after the soul is susceptible of happiness and misery. After the death of the rich man, in Luke 16, he lifted up his eyes 'in hell' and cried, 'I am tormented in this flame.' †

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### OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Way of Truth Staff,

May God's richest blessings continue on your work publishing the gospel.

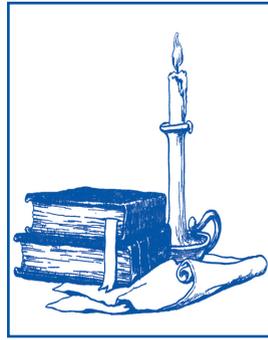
—P. & T. L., Kentucky

Dear Saints of God,

I want to let you know I still love the truth. Thanks so much for sending the magazine to me. I was 22 years old when I gave my heart to the Lord. I am now 96 years old. God has brought me through a lot of things. I am so thankful for His help.

I am sending a little offering for the great work you are doing. Keep up the good work.

—J. H., Kentucky



## CHRIST, THE DOOR TO REAL LIVING

Radio Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

We will turn to St. John, chapter 10 and look at the marvelous example that Jesus gave us of the good Shepherd and the sheep. Verses 7-9: "Then said

Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." I'd like to entitle my few thoughts, "Christ, the Door to Real Living."

I am afraid that many people of the world have wrong opinions of Christianity. There are a lot of different opinions about Christianity and most of them are wrong. One opinion is that Christians are just like everybody else, except they go to church on Sundays. That's a misconception. Christians are different. Among those people who know that Christians are different, some have the idea that if you become a Christian, you can't do anything enjoyable. Some say, "Life is a drudgery. It's not worth living." That, too, is a misconception, for you see, My Friends, Jesus Christ is the door to real living. Without Christ, you are not living at all. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

Jesus came into the world that we might have life and have it more abundantly. The Christian life is the abundant life. It is the fulfilling life. It is the good life, the best life to live in this time world. A life of sin, Beloved, is a life that is wasted. It is time that is wasted. It is a wasted life, but a life lived for Jesus Christ is an abundant life, a full life, a rewarding life.

Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Human beings are twofold—physical and spiritual. The world caters to the physical. Jesus Christ caters to the spiritual. The Spirit of God caters to the spiritual man, the real man, the eternal man that is inside every one of us. There is only way for that eternal man that is inside of us to have peace, joy, and contentment. That comes through Jesus Christ. We must enter through the door to be saved. Christ is the door.

What does it mean "to come in through the door"? It means to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to repent of your sins, and to forsake your wicked life to take up the cross and follow Him. If you do that, you will be saved. If you're unsaved, you're not prepared for eternity, and you're living far below your privilege. There is an abundant life to be lived. There is an abundant life to be had. It is given through Jesus Christ alone.

The first thing we want to mention is that you will be saved if you come through the door. Notice Jesus said that after you are saved, you shall go in and out and find pasture. You are not bound as a Christian,

although there are things you do not do. There are things you could not do as a Christian because the seed of Christ is within you. The sinner is the one that is in bondage. Bondage to the power of sin. A cigarette smoker is bound to a cigarette. An adulterer is bound to adultery. Sin is binding. Sin is powerful, and people find themselves under the bondage of sin, but when you are saved and come through Christ the door, you can go in and out and find pasture. That means there is liberty in the gospel—not liberty to commit sin and do evil, but liberty to do that which is right. You are free indeed if you are freed by the Son of God.

The Bible tells us, “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” If there are things that are forbidden by the Word of God, they are things that are harmful to us. That is why they are forbidden. God would not forbid His people from doing anything that is good or upright or proper or beneficial. No! It is only those things which are detrimental to us that are forbidden by the Word of God. The Christian walks according as the Word of God teaches him to walk. We are to walk as Christ walked. He is our example, and once we enter into the door and come into His pasture, we follow Him as the good Shepherd.

The thought of finding pasture is a pleasant thought. It is a thought associated with being filled, being satisfied. Yes, My Friends, if you come to Christ and yield your life to Him, you will find soul satisfaction. You’ll not be wandering any longer. You’ll not be searching any longer. Christ is the fulfillment of the human experience. If you find Christ, you have found a reason for living, a reason for existence. You don’t have to wonder why you are here any longer. You’ll know that God made you, and that He redeemed you, and has set your feet on the strait and narrow way. You’ll realize as a Christian that you have a duty to your fellowman. You are God’s representative in the earth. You are God’s child. You are God’s ambassador that the Scriptures speak of. So if you enter in through this door, you’ll enter into real living. You’ll have an understanding of what life is all about. You’ll have guidelines on how to live, and you’ll have satisfaction in your soul.

Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The only way to have peace with your Creator is to come through the door, Jesus Christ. Not only will you have peace with God and be able to lay your head on your pillow at night knowing that all is well with your heavenly Father, but you also have peace with your fellowman. You’ll get along with your fellowman, and you’ll forgive those who trespass against you. It is truly the abundant life. You’ll have peace with God, peace with your fellowman, and peace with yourself. You’ll have self-respect as a child of God. You have come to Christ knowing you’re not worthy or deserving, but once you have been redeemed, once you have experienced the new birth and have Christ abiding in you, then you have peace with yourself. You are whole. You are complete in Him. Not only do you have peace with God and peace with your fellowman and yourself, but your soul is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Christ is the answer to sadness. Christ is the answer to those who are distraught and disillusioned. When

an individual comes to Christ, he finds fulfillment. He finds peace, joy, and glory in the human experience. Beloved, if you come to Christ, you’ll come to the abundant life. He is the door to real living. The door is open. Jesus came and tasted death for every man. He was crucified on Calvary so that you, My Friend, might have everlasting life. Not only is it the life worth living in this time world, but it is also the life that will bring you an entrance into God’s everlasting kingdom in heaven. Yes, Christ is the door to real living in this time world.

What more can we offer you? Peace, happiness, contentment, fellowship in Christ—reasons for living; and at the end of the way, life everlasting. World without end! Oh, My Friends, I offer you the very best thing in the world—salvation! I point you to Christ, the Lamb of God, the Savior of the world. He is the door. Jesus said, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” You shall be liberated in the gospel, free to do the will of God, free to treat your fellowman in a way that is acceptable and right. You shall find pasture, satisfaction, peace, and at the end, eternal life. It is yours if you will accept His proffered grace. †

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## THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT

By the late H. R. Matthews

*“And thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”—Isaiah 30:21.*

The voice Isaiah writes of here, though its source is in heaven, is heard by us, no doubt, daily, and it is the voice of our Lord and Master. This walk, whether literal or spiritual, will have a spiritual significance.

Let us consider Abraham whom God told to leave his father’s house in the land in which they were living and go into a land which He would show him, the land of Canaan.

Abraham’s obedience to God in leaving Haran and going, he knew not where, had spiritual significance. But greater significance than this was the fact that Abraham’s vision looked beyond Canaan: “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). This city was the heavenly Jerusalem: “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). This is none other than the New Covenant church Jesus said He would build.

But Canaan was to become the land of inheritance to the twelve tribes of Israel, ten of whom were the sons of Jacob, and two the sons of Joseph. However, it would be necessary for them to drive out or evict the ten nations that occupied Canaan. This was of great spiritual significance, for the occupying of Canaan, and Canaan land itself, was clothed with symbolism.

It is taught by many that Egypt, where the Israelites were held in bondage for many years, was symbolic

of the bondage of sin. During the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea into the Sinai Desert. When the Egyptians endeavored to cross the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites, they were all drowned, thus the Israelites were free forever from Egyptian bondage. Their wilderness journey, then, was a type of justification.

Because of disobedience, the wilderness journey lasted for forty years or until all those over twenty-one at the time of disobedience had died off. At the end of the forty years, under the leadership of Joshua (for Moses had died), they crossed over the Jordan River into Canaan after having evicted nine of the ten nations that had occupied Canaan, and each of the twelve tribes, except for the Levites, had received their inheritance; they were at rest from their enemies. Thus Canaan became a type of Christian perfection that the prophet Joel prophesied of, and of that which the apostle Peter spoke of on the day of Pentecost, saying, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ..." (Acts 2:16, 17). So Canaan is a type of the New Covenant experience of Christian perfection, or sanctification. (It must be noted that Canaan could not become a type of sanctification while they were still traveling the wilderness journey. Their wilderness journey had ended, the enemy had been evicted, they received their inheritance, and were at rest from their enemies. Only then could Canaan become a type of New Testament sanctification).

As to the forty year wilderness journey, it is interesting how God conveyed the thought to them: "This is the way, walk ye in it." As for the journey itself, God led them by day by a pillar of cloud. When the cloud stood still, they stopped and encamped. When they traveled at night, they were led by a pillar of fire. It not only lighted the way, but it provided warmth. It was on this wilderness journey also that they received the law that was to be their spiritual guide with God conveying the thought, "This is the way, walk ye in it." This was the Old Covenant law. Today's Christian lives under the New Covenant law which is inscribed unto us in the book of the New Testament, the Bible which is God's Word to us, and of which Isaiah spake: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8).

This is the way Jesus spoke of when He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). This narrow way is well marked; the instructions are clear. Before we can even enter the narrow way, we must obey the instructions, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This is the only way of entrance; there is no other way. As we enter the narrow way, we will observe an assuring message, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

But before we travel further, I must caution you that there is another way to travel, but it leads to a destination that must, at all costs, be avoided. It is wide and more heavily traveled than the narrow way. In approaching this wide way, a warning will be issued: "This is not the way. It is the wrong way," but the way

seems so appealing that many travelers do not heed the warning. The warning is well founded, for on the wide way is found all the evils of this world, and if it were possible for an individual to have only one unforgiven sin in his life, it would disqualify him from traveling the narrow way. Soon this wide way begins to lose its appeal, the pot holes begin to appear, and there are many crashes along the way. There is a route leading off this way directing the traveler to the narrow, beautiful way, but few there are in their stubbornness who will follow this route. At the end of this way, there is a great abyss, and all travelers at that point plunge to their eternal destruction.

Jesus declared, "I am the way." Jesus is the one way to eternal life. Sadly, those who have only their names inscribed on an earthly church book will not be found traveling the narrow way. Their names will not be inscribed in heaven's Book of life. Disobedience to the rules of the road (narrow way) results in immediate exiting of the narrow way.

Attempting a U-TURN would result in immediate exiting of the narrow way. Reentering the narrow way at the point of exit is not possible. The traveler must return to the point of entry where again he must repent and believe the gospel. Even though the traveler has returned to the narrow way, he has eternally lost all that was gained before he attempted the U-TURN.

Forward, ever forward, is the motto of the narrow way. Being with Christ for the Christian is not attained until our final destination on the narrow way becomes a reality.

Just as God told Abraham to leave his father's house and journey to a land which He would show him, and which he would after receive for an inheritance, so we of today who are Abraham's seed are traveling the narrow way that we have never before traveled to the destination where we shall claim our eternal inheritance. Our road map is the eternal Word of God which speaks for itself: "This is the way, walk ye in it." †

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- \_\_\_ CD #1753 The Culture of Heaven—Rebecca Bland
- \_\_\_ CD #1754 Righteousness of the Heart—Doug Shenberger
- \_\_\_ CD #1755 Brotherly Kindness—Brian Richards
- \_\_\_ CD #1756 God's Reaction to Evil—Doug Shenberger
- \_\_\_ CD #1757 Draw Nigh to God—Rebecca Bland

**Church of God (Universal), Inc.  
The Way of Truth  
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### **DON'T WAIT TO REJOICE**

**By Mackenzie Miller - Grade 11  
Truth Christian Academy  
(our local church school)**

Proverbs 15:15, "All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."

"All the days of the afflicted are evil"—People who are afflicted are in pain, suffering, or in a state of physical, and or mental pain, and this may cause them to use unhealthy or, in this case, evil outlets. I suffer with chronic pain and when I have a bad day, I tend to lash out because of the pain. When I am struggling mentally, I tend to take it out on others. Other translations, such as the MSG (The Message - Version Information), use the word miserable in place of evil: "A miserable heart means a miserable life," which I find more suitable for my situation. Afflicted people who are without God wait until their affliction is over before they rejoice; they basically wait until they're starving before they "eat," not knowing that they don't have to wait. I do not need to wait until my physical or mental state is perfect to praise God and appreciate the blessings He has given me. Living a life where I choose anger and unhealthy outlets to my pain leads to a miserable life full of hatred and unappreciativeness.

"But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast"—It is a known fact that this world is evil, and if I want to look at it realistically, I cannot ignore that. But if that is all I choose to see, how will I ever be able to live happily? How will I ever allow myself to "eat my feast" if I lose my appetite, because I focus too much on the "food" that looks gross or bad? This verse isn't saying that people with a merry heart do not suffer with afflictions. They do, but they do so differently

and with God at their side. I personally struggle to praise God during these hard times, but I believe that God put this verse in the Bible to remind me that if I choose to focus on Him and His blessings that I do not have to wait to dig into the feast, because it's right there in front of me and will satisfy me in all conditions: good or bad.

The MSG—"A miserable heart means a miserable life; a cheerful heart fills the day with song."



### **REVIVAL SERVICES**

**Essex, Maryland**

**April 5-8, 2026, Lord willing**

**Bro. Doug Koerner, Pastor**

**Bro. Eric Jones, Speaker**



**Hagerstown, Maryland**

**April 16-19, 2026, Lord willing**

**Bro. Doug Shenberger, Pastor**

**Bro. Doug Koerner, Speaker**



### **CHURCH OF GOD COVENTION**

**Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.**

**June 30-July 5, 2026, Lord willing**