

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #28

January/February 2015

Monthly Verse: *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." ~ 1 Timothy 6:10*

Morning Devotion:

"Yet I Will Rejoice In The Lord"

by Bro. Stephen McCool

Habakkuk 3:17 & 18 *"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail. And the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no heard in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."*

O what a glorious God we serve! O the love He has bestowed upon us and continues to love us even when we sin!

When all is gloom and doom in our lives. When everything we try to do seems for naught. When all seems lost and we have no other place to turn. When the world turns it's back on us. God, our Heavenly Father is there. Sometimes in that still, small voice. Sometimes with a loud shout! But He is always there.

In this verse Habakkuk is telling us no matter how bad it gets, we are to rejoice in the Lord. Always Praise the Lord!

We must remember who gave us the gift of salvation. It is not of ourselves but of God. We have so much to rejoice in Him for. But our salvation should be the number one gift we are thankful for and should be continually praising our Heavenly Father for blessing us with. No other gift can come close to the magnitude of our salvation on our lives.

Our salvation is unto eternal life and without it we would be eternally dead. Without the salvation of our soul we would be eternally separated from the Lord. Without salvation we have no Heavenly inheritance. Without salvation from the Lord we are doomed to hell and eternal torture.

Nothing we can do, no good work, no "sinners" prayer, no "Romans Road" can save the lost. Only the gift of God. The gift He gives us through His Son Jesus Christ. Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ we are saved from eternal death and hell.

What more do we need to rejoice in the Lord!

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Sermon: "A Message from Mary and Martha"

by Bro. Cecil Fayard



John 11:1-16

1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

INTRO: The message from Mary and Martha was a summons for Jesus to come to Bethany where their brother Lazarus was sick (vs 3). John records seven miracles connected with the public ministry of Christ. The first and last miracles recorded by John deal with families. The family is important to the Lord and His work. The church is only as strong as the families that make it up. Jesus wants us to stand up for traditional family values. During His public ministry, Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast and His last at a funeral. These represent life's gladdest and saddest hours. At the first, He turned water into wine. At the second, He triumphed over the tomb. Both miracles are humanly impossible. One reveals Him as the Lord of creation, the other as the Lord over death.

I. VSS 1-5, THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA—
FRIENDS OF JESUS VISITED BY AFFLICTIONS

A. Vs 1, The occasion of the miracle before us was the sickness of Lazarus.

1. Lazarus is another form of the Hebrew Eleazar meaning, "he whom God helps or God is my help."

a. He was a resident of Bethany. Jesus loved him and his family. "It is one of the most precious things in the world to have a house and a home into which one can go at any time and find rest and understanding and peace and love.... In the home at Bethany, he had just such a place. There were three people who loved him: and there he could find rest from the tension of life (Barclay 92-93).

b. We are told where he lived to distinguish him from the other Lazarus in the New Testament.

2. Bethany was the village of Mary and Martha.

a. Bethany was a town on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives on the high road to Jericho.

b. Bethany means house of afflictions, and as we shall see it will live up to its name in this true story.

c. The close knit family of Lazarus is hit by tragedy.

B. Vs 2, Mary is distinguished from the many other Mary's of her day.

1. She is the Mary from Bethany.

2. She is the Mary who anointed the feet of Jesus with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair.

a. She showed her love openly by anointing the Lord's feet.

b. Mary's expression of love (costly gift— \$132.00) and worship filled the house with fragrance (12:3). Where Jesus is worshiped, there is a sweet fragrance.

C. Vs 3, Here we find the summons of Mary and Martha.

1. Lazarus is sick. The word "sick" is *astheneo* in the Greek this means "impotent, weakening, sinking." This is a picture of a desperate situation.

2. The seriousness of the situation is pointed out by the use of the word "behold."

3. The situation is desperate, and Jesus is 25 miles away at Bethabara.

a. Picture the one sent with the message hurrying to deliver it. "Jesus your friend is sick."

b. Picture also the anxious sisters at the deathbed of their brother, hoping that Jesus will arrive on time. Questions cloud their minds:

1- Why had they waited to call for Jesus? Questions we all ask.

2- Could He not speak the word and heal Lazarus?

3- Did He not know by divine wisdom that His friend Lazarus was sick?

c. Picture their hearts gripped with fear. Lazarus is dying; he is sinking fast.

D. Vs 4, The end of this sickness would not be death.

1. Death would intervene, but death would not be triumph. It would not have the last word.

2. This sickness was for the glory of God and for the glory of the Son of God. All sickness falls into one of three categories: for chastisement, for the glory of God, or to death.

a. Jesus knew what would happen.

b. Lazarus would die, and He would raise him.

c. One day I will die; and at the trumpet sound, He will raise me. I Cor 15:51-57.

E. Vs 5, In verse three, the word for "love" is *phileo* which means Lazarus was Jesus' friend. In verse five, the word is *agapao* the highest kind of love, divine love. This is the love that sent Jesus to the cross (Rm 5:8).

II. VSS 6-10, THE PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S DELAY

A. Vs 6, The journey to Bethany would have taken about a day. Lazarus had died soon after the messengers had left Bethany.

1. Jesus knew Lazarus was dead, and Jesus was in no hurry. So He stays two days more at Bethabara.

2. Jesus did not hurry because He was on a divine schedule. His every move was in accordance with the perfect timing of God. Jesus works on God's schedule not on the persuasion or prompting of others.

B. Vs 7, Jesus did not say, "Let us go back to Bethany," where he had friends. But he said let's go to Judea where His enemies were. The disciples do not know that Lazarus is dead (vs 4).

C. Vs 8, In concern for Jesus, the disciples give their answer to the words of Jesus in verse 7.

1. They thought it folly to go to the place where folks had tried to stone Him.

2. The disciples warn Jesus that it would be dangerous for Him to go to Judea. The last time He was there, the Jews sought a way to kill Him.

D. Vs 9, The Lord does not set His eyes on the danger, instead His eye was on God's clock, on God's timing, and on the lateness of the hour.

1. The Jewish day, daytime, is twelve hours.

a. The Lord saw His allotted span of life on earth as a "day."

b. This day would end or be terminated at His death; He called this "His hour."

c. His hour had not yet come. It was still day and still time to work. He was sovereign, yet saw work that needed to be done.

2. Jesus could see clearly where He was going. This is why going to Judea did not cause Him to fear. He knew "his hour" had not come.

a. Jesus was in God's hands, in God's care, and on God's time table. "The day's periods is fixed, and nothing will shorten or lengthen it. In God's economy of time, we all have our day, whether it is short or long" (Barclay 96).

b. When the sun is shining, obstacles are easily seen and avoided.

E. Vs 10, If a person journeys in the night in a country with very little artificial light, he stumbles because he does not have sunlight to guide him.

1. Jesus knew that His work on earth was limited to the decree of God. It was definitely fixed.

2. By walking in the plan of God, nothing could happen amiss.

3. We must learn from verse 9-10 that we must get the work of the Lord done while there is light. "The night cometh when no man can work."

4. We preach the Gospel of light so men will not die in darkness.

III. VSS 11-17, JESUS IS TO AWAKEN LAZARUS OUT OF SLEEP

A. Vs 11, Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

1. "Our friend Lazarus."

a. Death is not the end of life.

b. Death is not extinction of our being.

c. "Our friend Lazarus" is still "our friend Lazarus," as if he were alive.

d. In life, Lazarus had been the friend of Jesus, John, Peter, and Matthew. In death, he is still their friend.

e. Jesus who could see the dead as clearly as the living knew that death had not changed the things that are essential.

2. "Sleepeth." Death is likened to sleep. We speak here of death of the body, not the soul, for the soul never sleeps.

3. Jesus was headed to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead.

B. Vs 12, The disciples misunderstood our Lord's reference to sleep. What they heard sounded like good news.

1. The disciples thought that Lazarus was in a restful, healing slumber. They thought that Jesus must have healed Lazarus from a distance.

2. Jesus said in verse 11, "I go, that I might awake him out of sleep." The disciples didn't think it was a good idea to go to Judea and put their necks on the chopping block if Lazarus was doing well. "Let's cancel this trip," was their thought.

C. Vs 13, Jesus was talking about death, but the disciples took Jesus literally, and they thought Lazarus was resting well.

D. Vs 14, Jesus clears up the misunderstanding of the disciples by saying, "plainly," "Lazarus is dead."

E. Vs 15, Jesus was not glad that Lazarus was dead for that would have been cold and heartless in view of the sorrow of Mary and Martha.

1. Jesus was glad because He knew the outcome. Jesus was going to awake Lazarus.

2. The miracle of raising a man who had been four days in the grave would strengthen the disciples. It would increase their faith. Jesus can do great things— He makes bad men good; lost men saved. The saved are brought from death to life by resurrection power (Eph 1:17-20; 2:4-6).

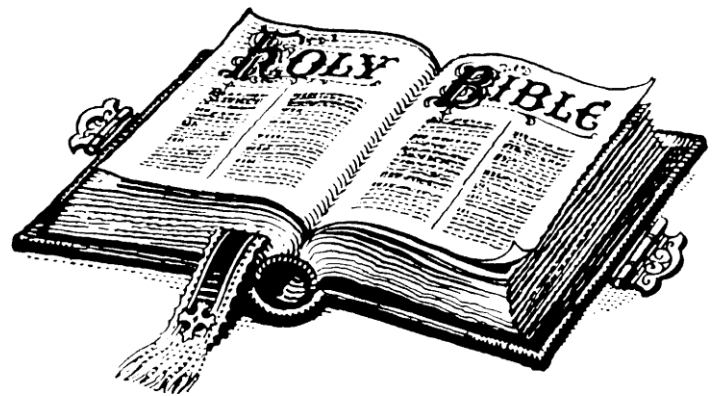
F. Vs 16, Thomas says to the other disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

1. These are words of devotion and despondency.

2. If Jesus was going to Judea where the Jews had recently sought to stone Him; then Thomas, deeply attached to Jesus, would go and die with Him.

3. We need to have such devotion to our Lord, to walk with Him no matter what. Find a cause worth dying for, then live for it.

CONCLUSION: Just as Jesus raised Lazarus, He will raise all of His saints at the rapture.



"Those Who Truly Need A Gift"

by Bro. Todd Bryant

"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" – 1 John 3:17

This is that time of year when most of us are hurriedly looking for gifts for our friends and family. Many (if not most) of these gifts are completely unnecessary and unneeded (hopefully not unwanted). I'm not in any way implying that it's wrong to gift somebody with something they only want, but don't need. Please don't take it that way. Those types of gifts are oftentimes some of the most precious. With that said, let us not forget that many at this time of year are hurting and in need. The most natural thing to do is to heap gifts on loved ones this time of year. Certainly, this is a wonderful time of year to build family memories that last a lifetime. But while we are doing that, let none of us forget those that perhaps have no family...no income...no help. This is a wonderful time of year to share the blessings God has given you with those that have less. Not only that, through your giving, you will have the opportunity to minister to the spiritual needs of those you help.

The instructions to the early churches from the beginning were to help the poor (Luke 14:13). The Jerusalem council ended with instructions to help the poor (Galatians 2:10). Several of the epistles certainly had instructions on helping those in need, as we have before us today. There are a plethora of Old Testament passages which could be cited with instructions to help the poor. These instructions do not go away during this season every year. Oftentimes, these folks are needier because of the lack of funding from people that are spending their donations on other things (i.e. gifts for family and friends).

In no way am I suggesting that we should all forego giving gifts to our friends and family this holiday season. Though, if our hearts are in the right place, that may be good. This is just meant as a friendly reminder that those that had needs 2 months ago still have needs during December. Those that were struggling 2 months ago are, most likely, still struggling today. It would do us all well to weigh a need greater than a want. Though, in our society, that has become quite a difficult thing to do.

So, as you are shopping this year, perhaps consider finding a family less fortunate than yourself to help. Maybe this is a good year to begin helping those that find themselves in a bad situation. Perhaps it's time that we, as believers, make this a normal routine – not only at this time of year, but all through the year. Let us ever be found to be givers, for God has given us much!

Child of God, if you know God has gifted you with far more than you deserve, consider passing that on to those around you. You may find this to bring great rejoicing to the Spirit that dwells inside of you.

Proverbs 16

- 1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.
- 2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.
- 3 Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.
- 4 The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
- 5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.
- 6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.
- 7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.
- 8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.
- 9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.
- 10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
- 11 A just weight and balance are the Lord's: all the weights of the bag are his work.
- 12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.
- 13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.
- 14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.
- 15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.
- 16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!
- 17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
- 18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.
- 19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- 20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.
- 21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.
- 22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.
- 23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.
- 24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
- 25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.
- 26 He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.
- 27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.
- 28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.
- 29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.
- 30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.
- 31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.
- 32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
- 33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

"Much Better"

by Bro. Jeff Short



What could be better than piles of cash and the stuff piles of cash can buy?

Young men are prone to many things that Solomon would call folly. One is the *if* syndrome.

*If I just had that toy
If I just had that tool
If I just had that car
If I just had some money*

Young men are convinced of how much more glamorous their life would be if only they had this or that. Their wishing frequently revolves around money and/or the cool stuff that money can buy. The delusion is so complete that it is not only a better life they envision, but a better self.

Of course, this insidious syndrome is not limited to the young nor to men. The lives of many are driven by the desire to get rich and in Christians justified by the thought of how much more I could give to the church, missions, and the needy if only I had a lot more myself. Paul gave a sober warning to all such pursuers of wealth:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- [1 Timothy 6:6-10](#)

What on earth is better than riches?

That is a good question to ask and consider. The Bible gives us several things that are better than riches here and now.

1 Salvation, deliverance from God's wrath is far better and more important than money. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death" ([Proverbs 11:4](#)). In fact, Jesus taught that it is better to be blind and without hands and feet in this life and to go to Heaven than to have all those in this life and then die and go to Hell ([Matthew 18:8-9](#)).

2 Integrity is better. "Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich" ([Proverbs 28:6](#)). It is far better to maintain honesty and uprightness than to gain wealth through the discarding

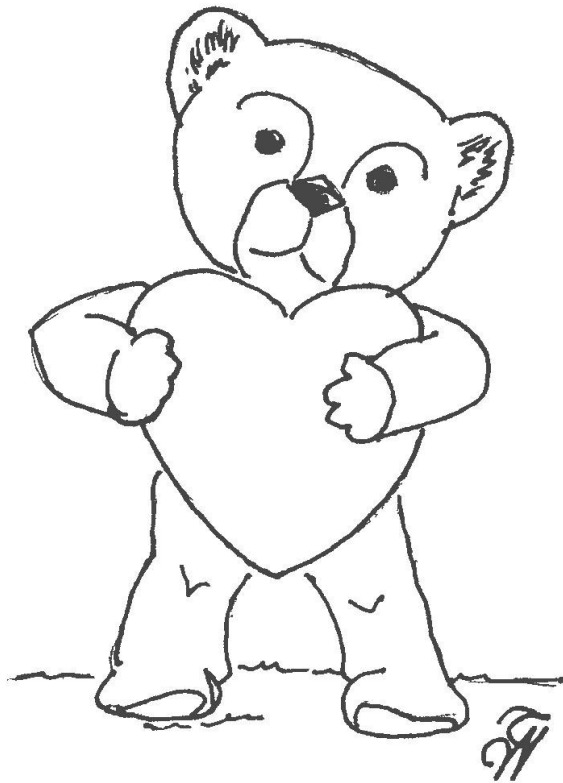
of these virtues. It is more conducive to peaceful sleep as well.

3 A good and sensible wife is far better than money. "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers and a prudent wife is from the LORD" ([Proverbs 19:14](#)). The man who has such a wife is among the richest on earth, for her value exceeds money and treasure ([Proverbs 31:10](#)).

4 A good reputation is much better than coins and green paper. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" ([Proverbs 22:1](#)). It is much preferred to have a track record of honesty and integrity than to drive a car that runs halfway to six figures or to wear jeans that cost you three.

5 It is better to have little with love and the fear of God. "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" ([Proverbs 15:16-17](#)).

(The above list is adapted from *Future Men* by Douglas Wilson.)



"The Eternal Investment of Your Soul!"

by Bro. Donnie Burford



Many a Man has lost that which is most precious while blindly seeking after the temporal riches of this World!

Mark 8:36-38; *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels"*

Luke 12:16-21; *"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

1 Timothy 6:17-19; *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*

Hebrews 10:37-39; *"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."*

"Giving & Living"

by Bro. Jeff Short

Giving necessarily involves some sacrifice or it is not really giving in a biblical sense. David refused to offer to God that that cost him nothing. In David's case, he would merely have been transferring and not giving. Giving means willingly taking something that rightly belongs to us and giving it to another. It comes at some cost to the giver. It was out of "deep poverty" that the Macedonian churches gave to support Paul in the mission work the Lord called him to (2 Corinthians 8:2).

Ironically, this type of giving tends to strengthen rather than weaken the giver. It may seem to us that the opposite would be true, but Solomon avows, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Proverbs 11:24). This is Scripture truth and practical reality. The greedy hand tries to cling tighter and tighter to what he has and cannot seem to find any room for giving to someone else, but in the end he has less.

The only real living is giving and that by sacrifice. But, let us apply the biblical test to the sacrifice. If the sacrifice harms us, we may be trying to play the martyr rather than giving in line with the life of Christ. Christ sacrificed and gave more than all, but rather than weakening Him, He was strengthened, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father" (Acts 2:33).

News:

For current news we recommend a variety of news sources including, but not limited to:

The New American,

(<http://www.thenewamerican.com>)

Ben Swann

(Benswann.com)

PanAm Post

(<http://panampost.com>)

Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East

(<http://www.al-monitor.com>)

We hope to bring you our own original news stories in our next issue.

"A debt Owed"

by Bro. Todd Bryant

"If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me. But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account" – Philemon 1:17-18

Onesimus had been "unprofitable" to Philemon in previous days (Philemon 1:11). In fact, there could have been much more to this story than one may think. Perhaps Onesimus had actually cost Philemon money in one way or another. Whatever happened, one thing we can be sure of – Onesimus owed Philemon in some form or fashion.

It may be that Philemon had tried to find his useless servant and was unable to. It may be that he sent Onesimus away and told him never to return. Either way, we know that Onesimus had wronged him and owed him.

However, Paul was the friend of Onesimus. Paul had neither wronged Philemon nor robbed him. In fact, it seems that Paul had been a very faithful friend to Philemon. As the faithful friend of both Philemon and Onesimus, Paul desired to stand between the two as a mediator. Our text even says that anything which Onesimus owed to Philemon was to be put on the account of Paul. Oh, what a wonderful picture of the work of Jesus Christ for sinners.

There isn't one person that hasn't done far worse to God than anything Onesimus could have done to Philemon. Naturally, we are all "unprofitable" (Romans 3:12). Each of us has "sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Though Onesimus owed a debt that was temporal, we owed a debt that was eternal (Matthew 25:41). Because we had sinned against the Holy and Righteous King of the universe, we owed a debt that we had no ability to repay. What a horrible predicament man is naturally in!!

Yet, just as there was hope for Onesimus, so there is hope for man through Christ. Without Christ, man is without "hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). In Christ, we are assured eternal life. As believers, we are guaranteed that all of our wrongs were put on His account when He died on the cross for our sins. Our entire debt of sin (past, present and future) has been paid! Without any help on our part, Christ passed through the judgment of God that we deserved and paid it in full. What a wonderful Savior is He!

Child of God, thank Him today for the wonderful gift of forgiveness that we have in Christ. Surely, Biblical forgiveness isn't the "forgive and forget" mentality that we have today. God's forgiveness of our sins is based on the work of our Substitute, Jesus Christ.

"Cold Love"

by Bro. Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

In describing the last days our Lord Jesus said: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12)

The word "iniquity" means lawlessness, or in other words, not having respect for and a refusal to obey the laws of God, the absence of the laws of God in the heart. The words "shall abound" can be rendered "shall have been multiplied." Thus, the absence of the laws of God in the hearts of men shall be multiplied, not just having a little increase but thriving and flourishing in great abundance. The thought is that the vast majority of the population upon the earth will not have any respect for the laws of God or will not obey the laws of God, and the laws of God will not be written upon their hearts. They will be lawless – there will be a cold dark abyss engulfing their hearts where the glorious light of the laws of God ought to be passionately glowing. Where God is, there the Light is also.

The word "love" in this passage is "agape," which is the high and holy love that originates from God, springs towards God, and shares with God. It is a love that can be enjoyed and shared only when God and the Lord Jesus dwell in the heart. The words "shall wax cold" could also be rendered "shall breathe cold," because the word cold in this passage consists of the root word meaning to breathe. Hence, the love of the multitudes, though pretentiously a holy love, will breathe coldness; "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:" (II Tim. 3:5) They will run to and fro crying "Lord, Lord," but will have none of the warm holy love of God or His laws within their hearts. They will only possess a mere empty shell of religion that breathes forth the iciness of the cold dark abyss within them. If they will not have the laws of God written upon their hearts, then they shall not have the warm holy love of God dwelling within their hearts either. Where God dwells there is the warmth of the Light, and in Him exists no coldness of the abyss.

Our generation is experiencing a multiplying of lawlessness. The lack of respect for the laws of God is thriving; the refusal to obey the laws of God is flourishing; and the absence of the laws of God in the heart is swelling. As a result, growing multitudes employ their wicked hearts to breathe out the coldness of the great dark abyss; they serve and do the bidding of their father the Devil.

“Remember To Love”

by Bro. Todd Bryant

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” – Romans 13:8-10

Sometimes we get so caught up in knowing accurate theology (which is important) that we miss the practical application of truth. Understand this – if a pastor is teaching theology without applying it practically in the life of the membership, he is not fulfilling his role. It seems we live in a world of unbalanced preaching. Either a pastor only preaches doctrine or he only preaches practicality. Why do we think the two are not related? James says, “...be doers of the word, and not hearers...” (James 1:22). Clearly, one must preach doctrine before he can apply it. Doctrine is foundational. However, without application, it’s empty.

Case in point – Romans is often viewed as a completely theological book. And certainly, the greater part of the first 11 chapters does contain much in the way of theology. However, in Romans 12:1, Paul was inspired to say, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service”. Did you catch the “therefore” in that? Paul is saying in light of all of the theology that has been laid out previously, we should live our lives daily for God. Theology should encourage godly living! In fact, theology properly preached does encourage godly living!!

What does any of this have to do with the text before us? Simply, Romans is often either preached weekly in a doctrinally minded church or avoided in a practically minded church. The book is viewed as having nothing to do with practicality. Our text verse proves that this is incorrect. Doctrine without love is useless doctrine. Paul elsewhere said, “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2). Correct doctrine without love is useless. In fact, it could be said that it’s actually NOT correct doctrine without love!

Who are we required to love? All people! Those referred to as our neighbor here means all. We are to love the saints, our families, our spouses, and even our enemies! The life of a child of God should be driven by love for God and love for our fellow man. If a professing Christian is not driven by love, his salvation is questionable. Without doubt, his service is not pleasing to God. Hate plays no part in good doctrine.

Child of God let us seek to love! Let us share the Gospel out of love! Let all of our conversations be seasoned with love and mercy. Above all, let us remember that God loved us even when we were unlovable!

“The Negotiator”

by Bro. Jeff Short

... remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. ~ [Acts 20:35](#)

Everybody has a Fanny.

Mark Clark Sr. shared a powerful testimony during the 2011 Missions Conference in Dover, TN of how he witnessed to an intimidating man on an airplane. He began by talking about when an offering was going to be received for a missionary, he was moved in his heart to give. But, when he pulled out his wallet, he began negotiating about how much. During his time in the airport, he felt moved to speak with this rough looking man, but began negotiating his way out of it. I appreciated his transparent honesty and I, along with most present, identified with what he said.

It is human nature. We are inspired to some difficult task or new discipline and then the negotiation begins.

“We don’t need to do quite so much.”

“We don’t want to go overboard.”

“Surely, nobody would expect us to do all that.”

“Nobody’s perfect.”

In many cases, it is not long before we have talked ourselves out of the action entirely. We usually then pat ourselves on the back for the wisdom we displayed in it all. At that moment, we are like those James reproved for their dead faith:

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

– [James 2:15-16](#)

Like John and Fanny

Jane Austen illustrated the human nature of negotiation brilliantly in her book, *Sense and Sensibility*. John Dashwood was the principle inheritor of the Dashwood estate. When his father, Henry, lay on his deathbed, his dying wish to John was that he would look after his step-mother and three step-sisters. John was moved by the deathbed scene and the prospect of his rich inheritance to a certain largesse and determined within himself to give his step-sisters a thousand pounds each upon their removal from Norland, the Dashwood home.

John was pleased with his plan and thought it suit his father’s dying wishes well. Once his wife, Fanny, learned of his intention, she was displeased and the negotiations began. She provided many reasonable sounding arguments that the sum was too large. John quickly cut his purpose in half to five hundred pounds a piece.

Fanny pressed the non-specific terms of Henry’s request and soon John adjusted to only gifting his step-mother with one

hundred pounds per year. Fanny then waxed eloquent on the sure unpleasantness of annuities and how long half-blood relatives are sure to live if they are to receive *per annum*. John could see the reason in this and confirmed that surely fifty pounds given every now and again would be far better in the long run.

Fanny returned to the general nature of Henry's request and questioned if he could have had a gift of money in mind at all. Having come down so far from his original intention, John found it an easy step to dismiss the idea of giving money at all. He thought his father must have meant more of a general kindness and such assistance as was convenient for John to give.

He thought then a small present of furniture when they moved was all that was required of him. Fanny, undaunted, reasoned that they already had inherited more furniture than they could ever need, nor indeed were worthy of wherever they might remove to. She concluded her argument that Henry had already provided for their needs and couldn't have thought of John giving them anything but general well-wishes and such. John was then resolved that to give them anything would be wrong of him and that he might help them, as he could, to find a place to live.

Austen was very insightful of human character and could paint characters with her words to rival any artist with brush and canvas. If Fanny had suggested in the first place that John was to do nothing for his step-mother and step-sisters, he would have been appalled since he had such a large plan. By cunning craft, she whittled and manipulated until she got him down to nothing and he was resolved to it as his own plan. Solomon has some words of warning for a wife like that.

Whenever I Would Do Good

The truth is: We all have a Fanny. To put it in more Biblical terms, we turn to Paul's words in Romans 7.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

– [Romans 7:14-21](#)

That pernicious wife of our flesh is always with us, and whenever we are moved to do good, she employs every cunning craft to negotiate us down to nothing. Then "the good that I would I do not." Giving in to Fanny only encourages and bolsters her. It only makes her harder to resist the next time. Soon giving in to her every demand is a way of life for a spineless man.

If we live in slavery to fleshy Fanny, we will not and cannot please God ([Romans 8:8](#)). The end of that life is death ([Romans 8:13](#)). We are bound to Fanny by law and only gain freedom

from her when she is put to death ([Romans 8:13](#)). We must stand fast, resist the evil negotiator, and gain victory through Jesus Christ ([James 4:7](#); [Romans 7:24-25](#)).

We need not despair. They that have the Spirit of God are His ([Romans 8:9](#)) and He is at work in us to will and do His good pleasure ([Philippians 2:13](#)). By God's grace, we can labor more abundantly than all, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" ([1 Corinthians 15:10](#)).

"Stewardship"

by Bro. Doyal Thomas

(First published in The Baptist Herald - February , 1994)

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

In this text, the diligent student of the Bible will find the requirements that God places upon His servants in order that they may, properly, labor for their Master in such fashion as to receive His commendation. Clearly, the Lord has stated His case, and that is, "... that a man be found faithful."

It appears to be a general consensus among professing Christendom that one must only do the best that one can, with that standard becoming more and more uncertain with each passing generation. Even within a given generation, the standards seem to be ever lowering, and always more lenient, thus allowing each to be his own judge of what is that good and acceptable behavior, that God must accept because a more enlightened, sophisticated population has directed Him to do so.

Popular figures of the world make sure that the people hear from them, and they all surely seem to insist upon flaunting their own vain imaginations of grandiose accomplishment in the face of others. Such as have been elevated by pride, and acclaim by the masses, have assumed a position that gives them assumed authority to say what they will, when they will, to whom they will. After all, these proud peacocks proclaim, "I have, by my obvious successes in the world, become imminently well qualified to tell you how to live and how to throw off those archaic restraints that only impede you in your quest for success."

Such statements as, "The ten commandments are old and out-dated", or "The age of enlightenment has forever put to rest those remnants of the dark ages, and man is at last free from their confining, limiting influences", or "Awake, America, to the modern world. Awake, world to the modern day in which each and every individual can, at last, be truly free, answerable to none, but able to soar to uncharted heights". (Beware of New Age and New World Order.)

Because the world of professing Christendom receives a

bombardment of Satan's tales, being hurled from every direction with such frequency and pseudo authoritativeness, many are caught up in these pernicious snares. Being thus entrapped and made captive by Satan, at his will, the masses follow blindly into an ever deepening and widening maze of madness. They quickly become advocates of this same propaganda pandemonium and are assimilated into this army of rebels who speak against, and fight against God and His ways.

But, reflecting upon the text (I Corinthians 4:1-2), we are reminded that God does not measure His stewards' accomplishments based upon the successes of their human lives, but upon their faithfulness to the assignment that He, their Master, has prescribed. It is "faithfulness", not "success" that God demands. It is "fidelity" and "veracity" that God recognizes, not "fiscal" and "verbooseness" abundant.

The words steward, and stewardship, in their noun forms denote the manager of a household or estate, according to the Greek scholar W.E. Vine. He further states that this steward was, generally speaking, a slave or other bond-servant to another. He was not in "ownership"; he was in "management". The resources over which he exercised his management duties were the property of his master, not his own at all. He was steward over someone else's property and resources. It was not his to claim, nor to misuse. It was his to manage; to "Occupy till the Owner returned", at which time he would be held fully accountable for his management and investment faithfulness of his master's goods.

Remember the 10 pounds, and the 5 pounds, and the 1 pound? (Read Luke 19:11-17.)

Let me strive now to lay before us all a clear picture, as the Scriptures portray this principle of stewardship, then tell us how men have failed in this work, and the consequences of this failure, and finally, God's solution to the problem.

In the writings of the prophet Malachi, God has given a panoramic view of this entire matter, and we will browse through the declarations of God by Malachi, "my messenger", to Israel, seeking to properly discern the problem, the consequences, and God's prescription.

As Malachi begins, he brings God's people great assurance from God that they are His people, and their relationship with Him is not the issue. Their association with Him and their fellowship and communion with Him is very much the issue, however. He begins this discourse with God's message, "I have loved you, saith the Lord." (Malachi 1:2). I have loved you, and I do love you, God says. You have belittled me, and my love, and good provision for you, but my love is not conditioned upon your actions, or inactions. My love for you is my love, and is unconditional. My love for you will not be augmented, nor

diminished by you, for you are not the author or controller of my love, God teaches.

Nevertheless, God continues, I am not happy with your conduct, nor with your demented motives as you continually profane my temple, my worship, and my character. You despise me and my commandments and go after the ways of infidels and their false gods and their false ways. You have disobeyed me, and you have violated everything that I told you to do, and you have gone the way of pagans.

In chapter 1, verse 6, God says, "O priests, that despise my name", and you say, "wherein have we despised they name?" And God answers, "Ye offer polluted bread upon my altar; and ye say, wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible," in verse 7.

Here's the gist of the matter: Because of previous sins and backslidings of Israel, God's chastening hand had been upon His children, in that He had permitted heathen nations to prevail upon them and carry them from their homeland as slaves and servants. While in their captivity, they had neglected to teach their children of God's ways, and to insist upon their children the necessity of obedience to God. Since the disobedience of the parents in the first place, had led to God's chastisement, is it any wonder that they did not properly teach their children God's ways? Is there a parallel here? Listen Christian parents. Listen!

While in captivity, the people grew more and more careless in their conduct and practice, and neglected God's order of worship of praise and sacrifice. This antinomian spirit of lawlessness became a way of life with Israel, and they continually despised (held in contempt, or belittled) God's commandments and His ways.

By the time they came back to their homes, sacrifice according to God's ways had become of little value to the people, and consequently, their priests thought nothing of offering lame, blind, diseased lambs in sacrifice (verse 8), when God had so plainly demanded the very best that they were blessed with. God demanded the "firstlings of the flock, and the fat thereof", and they were profaning God's table by offering these rejects, these left-over trash and garbage upon His altar. And God was furious, and He said, "Take it to your governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy persons? said the Lord of hosts." (verse 8).

God says to a disobedient and rebellious people, "Don't bring your left-over trash to me and expect me to praise you for it." He rebukes these people and tells them in effect, "If your earthly rulers will not accept your refuse, why do I get your refuse? Why do you bring your junk to me and expect me to be pleased with it?"

I wonder. Have you, or I, ever done as Israel was here doing? Don't we read this and think, surely God's people, Israel, should

have known better, and surely after all that God had done for them, they would have loved Him so much, and desired to please Him so much until they would have obeyed Him and worshiped Him with the firstfruits and the very best of what He had so graciously given them. Were the lame, blind, diseased lambs an actual, truthful expression of how much they loved Him? What about you? What about me? Is what we give Him an accurate expression of how much we love Him, and how thankful we are to Him for all He's done for us in saving us, and in keeping us? Is it? Shame! Shame! Shame!

As a consequence of the general abuse of God's commandments by His people, Israel, God says further to the priests, "And now O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, said the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to your heart." (Malachi 2:1-2).

Dear one, please stop right here! Read the entire book of Malachi before you read another word that this poor sinner has written. God's word says it all so much better than I, or any, could ever say it. My shame is great, for I see myself in so much of this, and I cannot adequately tell you of the greatness of God and of His worthiness to be praised and worshiped. But, He has already told us through "His messenger", Malachi!

Now, after your reading, may we continue.

It seems that Israel had done nothing right, and that everything that God had commanded, they had ignored, or openly rebelled at doing. Every aspect of worship, praise, and duty had been set aside by those "modern day" prototypes of our present society, especially present day religious professors.

The priests had done wrong, and they had taught the people to do wrong. They had put stumbling blocks in the path of the people, and were leading them, and urging them to be imitators of themselves. And there is a multitude of religious fakes, frauds, and charlatans in the world today who are leading the people to depart from God's ways, and from His commandments.

Israel also had an agricultural problem at this time, as we can see as we read the book of Malachi. God's ways had long ago been made known to Israel, as is recorded in Exodus, chapter 23, in which God instructed them to use the land in an orderly and God honoring manner. Specifically, they were instructed to divide their land into seven parcels, and then to cultivate six of the seven parcels every year, but on a rotating schedule so that each parcel was given a "sabbatical" year every seven years. This was to allow the land to rest from its required "bringing forth". That was God's way. Would it profit us if we followed such rules today?

The people were to bring the tithe of the land, along with the tithe of the increase from all that God provided for them. This tithe was to be brought into God's storehouse, and was able to be used as God directed. It is still God's way, even today in this so-called modern, enlightened age of 1994. Regardless of what the scoffers say, it's still God's way.

Now it seems that Israel was not doing this, and God had directed that it be done. And their excuse was, "The land is no longer producing much, THEREFORE, we are excused from giving much." Does this feeble, pitiful, ridiculous excuse sound familiar today? Listen, non-tither, you need to take heed to God's word.

Not only was the ground not producing much, and this being God's rebuke for the sin of Israel in disobeying Him, He also sent locusts, "the devourer" to eat up that which was produced by the land. Even when the land was abused, God still caused it to "bring forth" some increase, but nowhere close to its capacity to produce. A lesson to be learned?

When the people said, "The land is not producing much, therefore, we can't give much", God said: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, said the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, said the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed:

for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:10-12).

When the people reasoned, "we can't give", God said, "Bring ye ALL the tithes into the storehouse ..." But, listen, God, we don't have ..." "Bring ye ALL the tithes into the storehouse ..." "But, we're poor, and we have our obligations ..." "Bring ye ALL the tithes into the storehouse ..."

"But, God, the land isn't producing much!" To which God might reply, "If you don't TRUST me enough to OBEY me, guess what's going to happen to the land?"

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." (Malachi 3:8). God says, "Ye are cursed with a curse: FOR YE HAVE ROBBED ME, even this whole nation." (verse 9).

Will a man rob God? Placing emphasis upon that question, it reads, "Will a MAN rob GOD?" Will a puny, insignificant, vile, wretched, miserable MAN even presume to imagine that he can rob God and get away with it? God declares, in fact, "No man robs God." You may think you're getting away with it, but you're

not. Not at all.

Remember where we commenced this message?

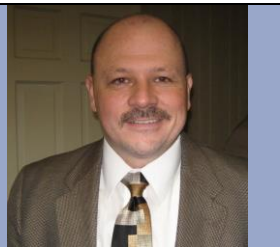
"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (I Corinthians 4:1-2).

God's preachers **MUST**, if they are to be found faithful, as good stewards, proclaim the word of God, as it is, to people as they are. They must teach man of God's commandments, and of God's ways. They must lead God's people by example and by word, so that the people will know of God's ways. They must know, else they will not obey. They must then teach their children, and their children's children.

Each and every one of the Lord's people, be they preacher, teacher, leader, or follower, must obey God. Each is duty bound to be obedient. Each, having been apprehended of the gospel, have been made to be new creations in Christ, and have been given their own stewardship responsibilities.

None are excused. None are excepted. None can come before God and say, "I have no responsibility to serve you, for I have nothing to serve you with." Rather, we have all been given much, and God requires of us that we trust Him, obey Him, and follow in all things, at all times, forever.

*John 7:43 "There Was A
Division Among The
People Because Of Him"
by Bro. Jeff Short*



"So there was a division among the people because of him." ~ John 7:43

What are we to do with Jesus? This was the question that troubled many in Christ's day. In the time of our text, many said of Him, "Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" (John 7:40-41). They first sought to understand or define who Jesus was and, though they were not agreed about who He was, they next had to figure out what to do with Him. "And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him" (John 7:44). On both accounts, "there was a division among the people because of him." Regardless of the diverse opinions of the people, one thing was clear—they could not ignore Him.

The division over Jesus was not limited to a few crusty old Jewish theologians. The questions about Jesus touched the whole community—the poor, the rich, the sick, the healthy, the powerful, and the oppressed. None were spared from facing this question. Everywhere He went the common people would flock to Him and this drew criticisms from the upper class, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19). So, wherever He went, "there was a division among the people because of him."

The division over Jesus was not limited to His own public life. After His ascension, His church began to spread throughout the known world, taking the message of Jesus with them. Not surprisingly, they found "there was a division among the people because of him." Paul told the Corinthians, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Paul explained the division of the people: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:22). Even then, there were also those who were called who found Jesus "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24).

It is amazing to think that the Jews could not find signs sufficient enough in Christ. Had there ever lived a man who did the quantity and quality of miracles that Christ did. With only a portion of His career available to us today, we certainly could not find any to compare to Him. John wrote in his Gospel, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). The world could not contain the books that would be required to record the things He did and yet "the Jews require a sign."

It is also amazing to think that the Greeks could not find sufficient wisdom in Jesus Christ—"the Ancient of day" (Daniel 9:7). On many occasions, the people were put to amazement when they heard Him speak. "The people were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 28:8). "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22). "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" (John 7:25-26). "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). Christ testified of the queen of the south who "came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42). The world had never known greater wisdom than Jesus had. Jesus Christ possessed the deep riches of the wisdom of God and yet the Greeks rejected Him and sought "after wisdom."

Evidently, the world at large fared no better in settling the question of Jesus in the first century than did those of Palestine during His life. Some would perhaps like to think that Jesus would receive a better hearing in the world today because we are more civil and progressive. However, even today, there is "division among the people because of him." Jesus is no more receivable today than He has been throughout history.

Just as the Jews and Greeks of the first century, many modern people have not found what they would like in Jesus Christ. They just cannot make the Christ of God to fit in their mold and so, significant revision is needed before their minds will rest from the question. And, there is no end of liberal theologians and scholars who work tirelessly to revise and upgrade Jesus to suit the tastes of modern man.

No matter how hard you might try, you just cannot ignore Him. However, we do not define Jesus and we do not put Him into any sort of a mold. He defines us and puts us into His mold. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:44).

The question of who Jesus is, is not decided, it is revealed: "Thou art the

Christ, the Son of the living God . . . flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:16-17). "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him" (Luke 10:22). "But when it pleased God . . . To reveal his Son in me" (Galatians 1:15-16).

The question of what to do with Jesus is not decided, it is commanded: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

Morning Devotion
"Yet They Prophesied"
by Bro. Stephen McCool Sr.



Jeremiah 23:21 *"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."*

In Jeremiah's day there were many in the land proclaiming to be prophets of the Lord. They were lying and cheating the people. But the Lord told Jeremiah "I have not sent these prophets". Do we not see this in our land today? O the irreverence by the so-called prophets in our day to the very Lord they claim to proclaim. The total denial of the truth of God's Word. And yet they claim the name of Jesus. These self-called men/women of God are out to destroy the very truths they claim to preach.

They have deceived many with their false gospels. Many have made false professions of faith not knowing that they have believed a lie. They use every trick in the book to draw in the crowd. All so they can claim the fame of large numbers in their congregations. All so they can draw in more money for their personal coffers.

I dare say that most if not all of these false prophets would give up their self-made calling if the crowds and the money went away. As Ministers of the Lord, He never promised us large crowds or worldly fame and fortune. Some of the Lord's men have seen these things but those same men were humbled by these gifts from the Lord.

I Timothy 4:1-3 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Do we not see the same thing in these latter times that Jeremiah was seeing in his day? False Prophets, speaking lies to the all

who will hear.

The Lord said "I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." So if they are not speaking the Word of God then they are not of God. No matter what they claim. If what they preach is not of the Word of God then they are false prophets and false teachers. We are commanded not to follow them.

Sadly I know many people who claim the name of Jesus who grew up being taught the truths of God's Word who are now following after these false prophets. The truth of the Word did not feed their flesh. They could not sit and listen to the truth and live in their sin. The truth cut to their heart and they could not handle being told they were sinners. They wanted their salvation and their sin. How sad it is to see those who once blessed the true churches now falling after the man of sin.

"The Christian And Evil Days"
by Bro. Doyal Thomas

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As I sit in my study on this cold, overcast and dreary day I meditate upon the conditions that mortal man faces each day. All around is the visual and the sensory perceptions of darkness and dread. There is the apparent evidence that the day holds many forebodings and anxious moments as one must face unpleasant conditions and circumstances. Just to go outside into such an environment as winter presents requires one to seek to muster up an extra measure of courage and strength. And I do not enjoy this set of circumstances, for I do not like the dark and dreary.

Why, do you suppose, do I and others have this particular feeling toward our lot and portion during the winter? Is there something that is inherently bad about winter? Surely, God has wisely appointed the seasons and the associated weather patterns for good and beneficial reason. He tells us, specifically, that seasons are in our best interest, and they produce much good, and that there is a time for all things. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:" (Eccle. 3:1)

I think, as others must surely think, of the ever present desires and choices of the flesh as it seeks to find gratification for itself with seldom a thought past immediacy. I want to face, or otherwise be confronted with the warm, the pleasant, the easy, and the enjoyable. I want everything to bring me into, and then to sustain me in a state of human pleasure. I want life to be everything that causes the flesh to find contentment in the world, as if one can stay in the world forever; as if there were no hereafter. I want what I want, and I want it now. I, being mortal, am sinfully fallible, and being such, am depraved and self-centered. I am a sinner.

Yes, even in normally warm south Texas, there are times when cold, somber dreariness sets upon us as a blanket of gloom and uneasiness. There are some days when life has some difficulties, and some unpleasantness with which the natural man must contend. There are plenty of reminders that we are mortal, and that as such, we must be required to bow ourselves before our

Mighty Sovereign and confess our weakness and our propensities to murmur and complain at the situations we face.

Could this rather simple illustration of the condition of the natural man be of great and wonderful instruction for us; for we who claim eternal standing before God in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? Could this also be a reminder that even though this particular day is cold, dark and dreary, there is another day coming in which none of these present factors will be our portion?

There is another simple fact that I want to share with you as well. As I sit here in my study and look outward to my surroundings, to those conditions outside my home, I see the darkness and dreariness that I have described. But here, inside, I am pleasantly warm, and there is the feeling of comfort and security that all is well. In spite of what goes on around me, all is well. My God is in control. All is well.

One of the problems that we as Christians face is the simple truth that everything is not always as it at first appears to be. Sometimes the only real problem that we have is one of perception, rather than one of reality. Sometimes all we can see is what we can see. Sometimes we are looking, and then walking by sight and not by faith. Is this the case with me? With you also perhaps, at some time or times in your life? Is it the case with all of us much more often than we admit or perhaps even realize?

Recently, I wrote on the subject of "Perilous Times." In that message, I sought to point out that we are living in times that are fraught with evil, and with the peril that is associated with evil times. I made an effort to describe just a few of the types of evils that all men are confronted with in these last days, for truly the evil is present in the world, and we, as do other men still live in the world.

In that writing I sought to alert God's people to the awful and fearful conditions around us, beginning with the human governments that God has appointed to rule over us, and then cascading down through all strata of human society to the individual; to alert us all to the conditions as they are in the natural realm, and as they appear to be in all realms of life. That was, and is my intent, for I believe that we must be brought to the point of recognizing that ". . . all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I John 2:16)

Dear reader, I want all to see that the world is rushing head long to a collision with the just, proper, and promised condemnation as God deals in judgment against Satan, fallen angels, and all unrepentant men. This is sure judgment, for God has also said, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof:..." (I John 2:17a)

So, we may properly conclude that all the dark, dreary, troublesome times that are associated with these "evil days" in which we all live prior to the dawning of the new day that God has promised are but a temporary thing, for ". . . the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." We may properly conclude that the Lord is coming, and ". . . he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I John 2:17b)

Yes, beyond this promised day there will be for the believer all joy, bliss, contentment, and eternal blessing. Eternity will provide all that brings those who dwell with God the unending privilege of worshipping, praising, and serving Him. In eternity, there will never be the slightest hint of unpleasantness. There will be no element allowed to enter in to cause any anxiety to the children of God. There will be no pain, nor anguish, nor sorrow, nor doubt. All will know that to be with the Lord is the epitome of life that is ordered, structured, and good. We will be forever happy, and we will know that nothing could be an improvement of this eternal state.

But, what about the day that follows the present time of man's day? Before the eternal state, but following the day in which man presently finds himself is another day. This anticipated day is spoken of as the Lord's day. It is the predicted and promised day of the millennium. It is the time in which the Lord Jesus Christ will rule and reign in perfect righteousness upon the earth from His father David's throne in Jerusalem.

I am well aware that there are many who will and do deny that such a day will come. There have long been those, some who even profess to be, and call themselves 'Baptists', who deny the millennium. There are even some who identify themselves as sovereign grace 'Baptists' who are of this persuasion, and who have convinced themselves of this terrible error by their "spiritualizations" of the literal Scriptures. And error, when imbibed, taught, and practiced becomes heresy. There are others who shun to contend for this precious truth, and in so doing, bring great shame and reproach upon the Lord and upon His true churches as they, under His command go forth proclaiming this wonderful approaching day. But, we must be true to Him who has called us to witness the truth, and announce to each of you who read these words that there is a millennium coming, and that Christ will usher in that great day at the conclusion of the time of great tribulation.

Let us now take a look at this coming day, as we seek A GLIMPSE OF MILLENNIUM.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan; and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

(Rev. 20:1-6)

Dear reader, some will reign with Christ for a thousand years. And that is a literal thousand years, rather than a "spiritualized", imagined undetermined time. And that reign will be upon this earth. I know, Christ presently reigns in the heart of His people. But, this prophesy is literal as to the reign of Christ, and as to when, where, and over whom this reign is to be. It is dishonest to seek to make a part of this prophesy "figurative" while holding other parts of it literal. It is either literal, or it isn't! I emphatically declare, "It is literal."

When? Following the tribulation time, which is Daniel's seventieth week. The millennium will follow the great tribulation time. Where? Upon the earth, for that is where David's throne is, and it is upon David's throne that Christ will reign, as the rightful heir to that throne. And God has promised that there will never cease to be a true and legitimate claimant to the throne of David.

I recently (within the past two weeks) heard a heretic, posing as a true sovereign grace Baptist declare in his message that was broadcast over the radio airwaves in this area that Christ entered into heaven at the conclusion of His earthly ministry and claimed and occupied "His father David's throne in heaven." Can you believe such heresy? Can you believe that some imagine that David's throne is in heaven? And in order to believe such foolishness requires a most vivid imagination. Surely, no such teaching can be found in the Bible.

Who will reign with Christ during this literal thousand years upon the earth? Verses 4 and 5 of this passage tells us. It is those who are made to be partakers of the first resurrection. It is those who are redeemed. Specifically, verse 4 tells us that among those who will reign with Christ are those who were slain by the beast during the tribulation, and that because of their witness of Jesus and for the word of God. These had been enabled to refuse to worship the beast, the image of the beast, or to receive the mark of the beast during the tribulation. And this DOES NOT teach the great error of the post-tribulation theorist. These are tribulation saints to be sure, but they are NOT saints who composed the Lord's true churches prior to the opening of the great tribulation week of years. These are those who were saved during the tribulation, but were never a part of the Lord's true churches. The saints of the church age were gathered out prior to the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week, which time is also known as "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Remember also that all that are made to be partakers of the first resurrection are the saved of God. This innumerable host which no man can know or number, but whom God knows, every one, reaches all the way back to the first redeemed soul and includes those who are redeemed, even during and out of this great tribulation.

What is the day of the Lord, the span of which will constitute the reign of Christ upon the earth, commonly called the millennium? It is the manifested kingdom of Christ that John the Baptist announced as being "at hand", in Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist said, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Literally, it is "of the heavens", signifying the Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. It is the kingdom covenanted to David's seed in II Samuel 7:4-17; described in the

prophets in Zechariah 12:8, and confirmed to Jesus Christ the Son of Mary as announced by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:30-33.

In Zechariah's prophesy, the Lord is seen as He delivers His people, particularly Judah as He defends the inhabitants of Jerusalem, putting down all opposition as He prepares to take the throne according to the Davidic covenant. It is the ushering in of the day of the Lord.

What conditions will exist during the reign of Christ upon the earth, during the millennium? Can we know about these matters? Does the Bible declare the state of the earth during this glorious day of the Lord? Does the Bible describe the six days that constitute "man's day" so graphically, and then totally ignore the day of Christ? Remember, we are still living in "man's day", but soon, the day of Christ will dawn and all will be such as was not since sin entered and man fell.

The Scriptures clearly teach that when Christ shall come He will set up a perfect reign of righteousness over all the earth. Man will be governed by a Perfect King and even though many will occupy the earth during this glorious span who are unregenerate, their lives will be regulated by the perfect law of God. Children will be born, life will go on, business and commerce will continue, and men will die.

The land will bring forth in abundance and men everywhere will be supplied all that is needful, of course being required to utilize lawful means to obtain what is needed (No well-fare state then). The crop land will flourish and the herds and flocks will be fruitful. World order (a true New World Order) will be maintained so that every one may dwell in safety and peace, and when men violate God's law they will be swiftly and properly judged and punished. Law will prevail at all times and under every circumstance. (I wonder why some who claim to be Bible believers will acknowledge that God of old required men to live under law, and will do so again in the millennium, and then imagine that He does not require that His people live under His law today. Are there more antinomians than we imagine?)

Even among the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea there shall be compatibility and harmony. The bear shall feed along side the cattle and the lion shall lay down with the kid or the lamb. The adder shall not harm, nor shall the scorpion sting. The young child will be able to play with what they will without danger of hurt.

What a day the day of Christ shall be! And listen, dear child of God, we will reign with Christ during this time. I don't pretend to fully know of this great time in completeness, but the Scriptures clearly teach that the saints of God will reign with Him. He being the Absolute Monarch will rule, and we shall reign with Him.

I don't know of the form of governmental activity that we will be involved in, but I truly believe that what ever human instrumentality of government He is pleased to employ will be manned by His saints. If there is such office as mayor, or sheriff, or judge, or whatever, those offices will, I believe be filled by men of the Lord's appointment from among His redeemed and glorified saints.

What a day the day of Christ shall be!

But what of the Christian and Evil Days?

Surely the millennium that we have been speaking of can not be described as being even slightly tainted with evil. The millennium is not the evil days, alluded to in the title of this message. NO, the evil days are the days in which we presently live while we await the catching away of the saints at the rapture, then the tribulation, and THEN the millennium.

How should the Christian be conducting himself now, while we still live among men, being used of God to witness to them of their sin and of the only Saviour, the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ? What should we be doing? What should we be saying? How should we be living in these "EVIL DAYS"? I am persuaded that God's children should be living as children of God, and that we should be expecting Him to return at any moment. How should we be living? As if He would come at any moment! Do you think that He will be pleased to find His children living as though they did not expect Him to come at any moment?

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons OUGHT YE TO BE IN ALL HOLY CONVERSATION AND GODLINESS, LOOKING FOR AND HASTING UNTO THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (II Pet. 3:10-12).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (men of all sorts, WDT) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Titus 2:11-15)

What about The Christian and Evil Days?

The Christian should be Christ-like. The Christian should know that we will not change the depravity that lurks in the hearts of men, even ourselves, but that does not mean that we should not earnestly contend for the faith. That does not mean that we should surrender and stop all efforts to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. That does not mean that we should be reticent when it comes to our opportunity to tell others of Christ and of His righteousness demands on us and upon them as well.

I believe that one of the major failures of Christian people today is twofold. First, hesitancy to tell sinners of their sins and of the Saviour. Second, reluctance to insist to ourselves and to other Christians that God requires faithful stewards to be about His business, which is, to tell sinners of their need AND to tell Christians that they should conduct themselves in a manner that

honors and glorifies the Lord in all that we say, in all that we do, and in all that we are.

In these evil days, Christian, fortify yourself with the Word of God, and seek His face in all that you attempt to do, and then do what He demands of us. Nothing less is acceptable in order to hear Him say one day soon, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants."



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