

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." Galations 5:1

NEWS LETTER

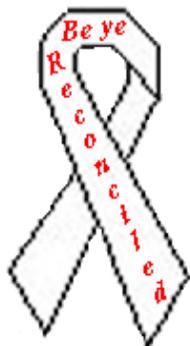
Issue #13

October 2013

Monthly Verse: *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." ~ Geniuses 2:7*

"Reconciliation"

by Bro. Todd Bryant



"And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" – Romans 5:11 NKJV

The word "atonement" is an important part of any theological system. What occurred at the cross of Christ is the most important doctrine in the Bible. When we use the word "atonement" in the New Testament sense, we really speak of "reconciliation". The Greek word katallagh is properly rendered as "reconciliation" in the verse before us. So, did Christ make atonement for us or did He reconcile us to God? This question is not asked concerning the way we often use the word. This question is asked from a Biblical standpoint. Biblically, "atonement" is an Old Testament word. Exodus 30:10 says, *"And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."* Notice, this "atonement" was temporary and had to be repeated every year.

How does the Old Testament atonement compare to what Jesus did for His people? Was it temporary? In John 10:28, Jesus says, *"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish"*. Jesus' sacrifice for the sins of the sheep was anything but temporary. It is eternal. Does it have to ever be repeated? Hebrews 10:10 says, *"...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* while in John 19:30, Jesus says, *"It is finished"* just before He gave up His spirit. The sacrifice of Christ is perfect and will never be repeated. It doesn't need to be.

Though we may actually speak of the "atonement of Christ", we are really talking about the "reconciliation" from a Biblical perspective. Jesus didn't try to do anything. He didn't temporarily do anything. He didn't perform an act that was insignificant and needed to be repeated year after year. Jesus literally "reconciled" us to God by His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. He saved us. He bought us. He washed us from our sins in His blood.

Child of God, take time today to thank God that Jesus' work is complete. There's nothing that we need to add to it. Oh, how we love the words to that old hymn – "Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow." Is your confidence in Jesus' work alone?

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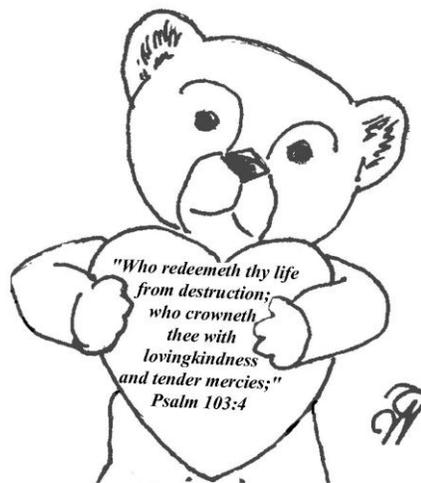
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President Barack Obama Weekly Address The White House October 12, 2013

Good morning. Over the past few days, I've met with Republicans and Democrats from both houses of Congress in an effort to reopen your government and remove the dangers of default from our economy. It's a positive development that House Republicans have agreed on the need to avoid the economic consequences of not meeting our country's commitments. Because once the debt ceiling is raised, and the shutdown is over, there's a lot we can accomplish together. We've created seven and a half million new jobs in the past three and a half years. Now let's create more. We've cut our deficits in half over the past four years. Now let's do it in a smarter, balanced way that lets us afford to invest in the things we need to grow. The truth is, there's a lot we can agree on. But one thing we have to agree on is that there is no good reason anyone should keep suffering through this shutdown. I met with some really innovative small business owners on Friday who've already lost contracts, lost customers, and put hiring on hold – because the pain of this Republican shutdown has trickled down to their bottom lines. It's hurting the very citizens that our government exists to serve. That's why a growing number of reasonable Republicans say it should end now. And it wouldn't be wise, as some suggest, to just kick the debt ceiling can down the road for a couple months, and flirt with a first-ever intentional default right in the middle of the holiday shopping season. Because damage to America's sterling credit rating wouldn't just cause global markets to go haywire; it would become more expensive for everyone in America to borrow money. Students paying for college. Newlyweds buying a home. It would amount to a new tax – a Republican default tax – on every family and business in America. It doesn't have to be this way. It's not supposed to be this way. Manufacturing crises to extract massive concessions isn't how our democracy works, and we have to stop it. Politics is a battle of ideas, but you advance those ideas through elections and legislation – not extortion. I know you're frustrated by what you see in your nation's capital right now. But because it's easy to get lost in or give up on the political back-and-forth, I want you to remember: this is not normal. Our government is closed for the first time in 17 years. A political party is risking default for the first time since the 1700s. This is not normal. That's why we have to put a stop to it. Not only because it's dangerous, but because it saps everyone's faith in our extraordinary system of self-government. And that hurts us all. Whether it's the work of creating jobs, growing the economy, or getting our fiscal house in order for the long haul, we've got a lot of work to do – and constant brinksmanship doesn't let us do it. It inflicts real pain on real people. It creates spasms of uncertainty for business owners. It threatens our nation's credit and standing in the world. And the longer it goes on – the more frequently this brinksmanship is inflicted – the more we'll see markets react, businesses put off plans to spend and hire, and unemployment claims tick up. The hundreds of thousands of hardworking civil servants who go even longer without pay will worry that they won't be able to cover their bills, and that their own creditworthiness will be ruined for no good reason at all. And I want to thank all the neighbors and local business owners who've shown acts of kindness to these Americans who serve their country. I ask that same spirit of citizenship from lenders who do business with these folks. Because they're being punished enough through no fault of their own. So let's pass a budget, put people back to work, and end this Republican shutdown. Let's pay our bills, and prevent an economic shutdown. Then let's get back to the work of the American people. Because there is so much else we should be focusing our energies on right now. We've got to create more jobs, and kids to educate, and an immigration system to fix. We've got more troops to bring home, and a middle class to rebuild, and opportunity to restore. There's so much America has going for it in this new century. And as always, this country works better when we work together. Thank you, and have a great weekend.

October 14, 2013 Press release by John W. Whitehead of the Rutherford foundation titled “**Fleeing the Taxpayer in the Age of Petty Tyrannies**”

We labor today under the weight of countless tyrannies, large and small, carried out in the name of the national good by an elite class of government officials who are largely insulated from the ill effects of their actions. We, the middling classes, are not so fortunate. We find ourselves badgered, bullied and browbeaten into bearing the brunt of their arrogance, paying the price for their greed, suffering the backlash for their militarism, agonizing as a result of their inaction, feigning ignorance about their backroom dealings, overlooking their incompetence, turning a blind eye to their misdeeds, cowering from their heavy-handed tactics, and blindly hoping for change that never comes.

As I point out in my book, *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*, the overt signs of the despotism exercised by the increasingly authoritarian regime that passes itself off as the United States government are all around us: warrant less surveillance of Americans' private phone and email conversations by the NSA; SWAT team raids of Americans' homes; shootings of unarmed citizens by police, to name some of the most appalling.

Yet as egregious as these incursions on our rights may be, it's the endless, petty tyrannies inflicted on an overtaxed, over regulated, and underrepresented populace that occasionally nudge a weary public out of their numb indifference and into a state of outrage.

Consider the red light camera schemes that have been popping up all over the country. These traffic cameras, little more than intrusive, money-making scams for states, have been shown to do little to increase safety while actually contributing to more accidents.

In most cases, state and local governments arrange to lease the cameras from a corporation such as Redflex, which takes its cut of ticket revenue first, with the excess going to the states and municipalities. Indeed, these intricate red light camera systems—which also function as surveillance cameras—placed in cities and towns throughout America, ostensibly for our own good, are in reality simply another means for government and corporate officials to fleece the American people.

For red light camera manufacturers such as Redflex, there's a lot of money to be made from these “traffic safety” fines. Redflex, which has installed and operates over 2,000 red light camera programs in 220 localities across the United States and Canada, made \$25 million in 2008. In addition to revenue from fines, Redflex also gets paid for installing the red light cameras, which cost \$25,000 a pop, plus \$13,800 per year for maintenance.

Although these cameras are in use all across America, Chicago boasts the “largest enforcement program in the world.” Since installing Chicago's 384 red light cameras in 2003, Redflex has made \$97 million from residents of the Windy City, while the city has profited to the tune of over \$300 million. Hoping to pull in an additional \$30 million for the year 2013, Mayor Rahm Emanuel began negotiating a new contract last year with Redflex to install speed cameras. However, contract negotiations for the speed cameras were terminated shortly after it was revealed that Chicago city officials had been on the receiving end of millions of dollars in financial bribes from Redflex. Chicago is now in the process of terminating its contract with Redflex, despite seeming attempts by Mayor Emanuel's office to delay the process.

One particularly corrupt practice aimed at increasing the incidence of red light violations (and fines) involves the shortening of yellow lights in intersections with red light cameras, despite the fact that reports show that lengthening the yellow lights serves to minimize accidents.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, “a one second increase in yellow time results in 40 percent decrease in severe red light crashes.”

Indeed, those who claim to champion the use of red light cameras in the name of traffic safety are loath to consider reducing the length of yellow lights if it means losing significant citation revenue. An investigative

report by a Tampa Bay news station revealed that in 2011, Florida officials conspired to reduce the length of yellow lights at key intersections below minimum federal recommendations in order to issue more citations and collect more fines via red light camera. By reducing the length of yellow lights by a mere half-second, Florida officials doubled the number of citations issued. Contrast that with what happened when the yellow light time was increased from 3 seconds to the minimum requirement of 4.3 seconds at one Florida intersection: traffic citations dropped by 90 percent.

If you want to know the real motives behind any government program, follow the money trail. Florida is a perfect example. In 2012 alone, Florida pulled in about \$100 million from red light cameras operating in 70 communities. About half the profits went into state coffers, while the other half was split between counties, cities and the corporation which manufactures the cameras.

Fortunately, the resistance against these programs is gaining traction, with localities across the United States canceling their red-light camera programs in droves. In early May 2013, officials in Phoenix, Arizona backpedaled on a one-year extension of their contract with Redflex, with the city's chief financial officer, Jeff Dewitt saying, "We made a mistake." Florida state legislators are also considering banning all red light cameras in the state.

What's the lesson here? Whether you're talking about combating red light cameras, banning the use of weaponized surveillance drones domestically, putting an end to warrantless spying, or reining in government overspending, if you really want to enact change, don't waste your time working at the national level, where graft and corruption are entrenched. The place to foment change, institute true reforms, and resist government overreach is at the local level. If we are to have any hope of reclaiming our run-away government and restoring our freedoms, change will have to start at the local level and trickle upwards. There is no other way.

Raising the debt ceiling; Judge Andrew Napolitano in an interview this month discussing the raising of the debt ceiling pointed out that the US government still hasn't paid the principle on loans to fight World War I, video here <http://youtu.be/W4qP4Z8vQ-8>

"Government Program To Control Religious Beliefs Preview"
Ben Swann of the 'Truth in Media' project posted a story on October 16th exposing a government program that seeks to manipulate how people think. His website contains both a video and a transcript. <http://benswann.com/government-program-to-control-religious-beliefs-preview/#ixzz2hooRyxSU>

New source for news, one of the brethren created a webpage to help sort through the news of the day Tiger FX News Digest, you can find it at <http://news.tigerfx.com/>

The Forum: "What actions should God's people be taking to help save lives?"

Question: Scriptures declares human life to be precious, however we see dehumanization of people groups, devaluation of life, death & warnings of impending doom all around us and in the news, what practical actions should God's people be taking to help save lives as part of our walk, testimony and caring out of the great commission to preach the Gospel to all living?

Replies:

Bro. Jason Shults (Washington, Illinois): If I understand the gist of your question, it seeks for practical actions on the part of Christians to oppose the devaluing of human life. I take that to mean more than just abortion – although I think that is the primary area on display in our society.

Voting First, we should use our voice in the voting booths. By searching the New Testament you'll find that the Apostle Paul depending on God for His leading and instruction – but also utilized the rights he had been given as a Roman citizen. When God has placed us in a society that gives us rights – in our case, the vote – it is incumbent upon us to use those rights as good stewards of what God has given us. We can take an active role in supporting Pro-life candidates, as well as those who will value life by rejecting assisted suicide laws and opposing the so-called "death panels" in the Affordable Care Act.

Interpersonal Pleading Secondly, we should seek to promote the sanctity of life at the interpersonal level. If you know someone considering abortion, lovingly plead with them to reconsider. Actively pursue the alternatives with them. Offer as much assistance as you can. Don't just give them brochures ... give them a ride ... give them your heart ... give them the Gospel. You may, from time to time, meet someone contemplating suicide. Or, if they are acting as a caretaker for a relative, they might be thinking of assisted suicide as a consideration. Encourage those folks to see the purpose of God in all our experiences. This will require boldness because often they are not seeking our advice. Remember, we're speaking as Godly advocates and giving a voice to the weaker party. It is as much your duty as stopping someone from committing murder in front of you is your duty.

Intercessory Pleading The single greatest tool we have is prayer. We have the ear of the Sovereign God who is capable to do things we cannot do. Indeed, Ephesians 3:20 tells us He is not only able to do even more than we ask, but also more than we can even think to ask! Pray for our nation. Pray for our leaders. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for the women seeking abortions. Pray for the child at risk. Pray for those who would devalue life in other ways. And then – oh, this is so hard – pray for the abortion doctors, nurses, assisted suicide advocates, etc. Those we consider our enemies are in need of prayer. Pray for them remembering that we were once enemies and have been reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ

Bro. Curtis A. Pugh (Missionary in Poteau, Oklahoma): We live in a time when many people - including lost people - have a sense of impending doom. Most everyone I speak with agree that things cannot go on as they are. Both world events and the direction our nation is going cause many people to be concerned. But even such a future looming before us will not bring men to repentance.

As children of God we ought to be doing what we always ought to have been doing. We need to be interested in people, actively witnessing to them about the grace of God that brings salvation. That means testifying to them that God does the saving - i.e. that man cannot save himself by anything that he might do. We need to do what Paul did - testify to them about "*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 20:21).

I do not know what hope others might be able to give, but if you, like I do, believe that the catching away of the Lord's people is imminent, we have a great message of hope for sinners. Briefly summed up in 1Thessalonians 1:10 which says: "*And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*".

We are to be expectantly waiting on the Lord Jesus, knowing that we shall escape the wrath that is coming upon this world. Whether it be Satan's wrath or God's wrath, we are not appointed unto wrath. Those who understand something of God's grace have a positive message of hope and assurance for the lost. We preach a God who really saves by His grace for it is the grace of God that brings salvation (Titus 2:11). And we preach a Christ who really did pay for the sins of His people. He did not just make salvation possible, He actually paid for the sins of those for whom He died.

We ought to be a people of much prayer and constant witnessing - both by our lives and also by our words. Just living right is not enough. We must be proactive as the first century saints were in spreading the gospel of Christ.

*Sermon: "God's Way
of Salvation for
Sinners"
by Bro. Todd Bryant*



I Tim. 1:15 *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."*
Are you concerned about where you will spend eternity? It will either be heaven or hell. Those are the two eternal places described in Scripture.
Mat. 25:34 *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*
Mat. 25:41 *"Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

If you are concerned, then there is good news for you in this article-- please read all of it.
The reason we needed a savior to come to save us is because all mankind is guilty of sin.
Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*
Romans 3:9 *"What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."*
Romans 3:10 *"As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one."*

ALL NEED A SAVIOR
Romans 5:12 *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*
Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

SO WE SEE MAN IS GUILTY OF SIN AND CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF. SALVATION IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN CAN DO.
Galatians 2:16 *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

NOT BY WORKS OF THE LAW.
Titus 3:5-6 *"Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."*

SALVATION FOR SINNERS IS OF THE MERCY OF GOD, AND IS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SACRIFICE WHERE IN HE PUT AWAY OUR SINS BY HIS DEATH AND HIS SHED BLOOD AND GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE GRAVE.

Hebrews 10:10 *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

NOTE THOSE WHO BELIEVE ARE SET APART FROM THEIR SINS ONCE FOR ALL -- WHO TRUST IN CHRIST AND HIS ONE OFFERING.
Colossians 1:14 *"In whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins."*

IT IS THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.
I John 4:9 *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us. Because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him."*

SENT HIM INTO THE WORLD TO DIE FOR OUR SINS AND THAT HIS DEATH WOULD MAKE PEACE UNTO GOD FOR SINNERS WHO BELIEVE ON CHRIST AND HIS DEATH AND SHED BLOOD
I John 5:11-13 *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son of God hath not life. These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God."*

THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE THAT YE MAY BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.

GOD IS SAYING TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND TRUST IN CHRIST AND HIS SACRIFICE AS HAVING PUT AWAY YOUR SIN AS HAVING MADE PEACE FOR YOUR SIN TO THE ONE WHO IS RESTING IN CHRIST'S BLOOD. THAT YOU MIGHT KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

God's record is that He sent His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save a people from their sins.
I Timothy 1:15 *"And this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."*

CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD TO DIE FOR SINNERS TO PAY THE SIN DEBT BY GIVING HIS LIFE AND HIS BLOOD AS AN OFFERING TO GOD.
Mat. 1:21 *"And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."*

NOT WILL TRY TO SAVE THEM. NOT THAT HE WILL HELP SAVE THEM, BUT HE SHALL SAVE THEM.
Christ has already performed the saving work. When He died on the cross. It is finished.

He gave His life in our place. He shed His blood as atonement for sinners. He put away sin by His sacrifice. And God was satisfied and raised Him from the grave.
Romans 5:9 *"Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

SALVATION IS NOT IN JOINING CHURCHES. NOT IN GOING THROUGH PRAYERS OR ANYTHING WE DO, BUT IT IS IN CHRIST'S SHED BLOOD UNTO THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND REST IN IT

May you see and rest in Christ's shed blood as your salvation.
Christ dying on the cross for sins, being buried and raised again the third

day is victory for sinners.

I Corinthians 15:57 *"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

VICTORY OVER THE PENALTY OF SIN VICTORY OVER DEATH
Salvation is not something you have to get Jesus to do for you today. It is something that He has already done, when He offered Himself unto God on behalf of sinners at Calvary and God raised Him from the grave. May God bless you to see this glorious truth.

Editorial: "Whose Life Is Of Value?"

by Sis. Joanna Works



At the beginning of this month I started typing an article addressing issues, talking points, social media memes, and bias of human depravity in our media that have bothered me for the past couple of years all related on the subject of the many ways our culture devalues life by constantly dehumanizing those people and groups whom we have a disagreement with. The article had become four pages long after three days of studying the Bible, writing, and researching news stories, and yet it was still simply an out line barley scratching the surface of all the facets that I had wished to cover. As the dead line for this issue drew nearer it became painfully apparent that I would not be able to complete the article with the depth & scope I had set out with, nor would there be room to publish this endeavor in a single issue and still have room for other articles.

Therefore I present to you these points to prayerfully consider, study, & research for yourself;

We live in a culture of death.

I won't trivialize the issue by pointing to the often blamed entertainment industry, though it does have it's part in desensitizing us to violence and indoctrinating us, the fact is human nature being corrupt can't produce of itself a culture of life. Not only do we have the mass murder by the means of abortion and the constant threat of euthanasia, but suicide and gang wars are forever in the news, furthermore my generation hasn't known a day of real peace in this nation. Truth be told the US has been in one kind of conflict or another with little pause since World War II. While many people point to 9/11 as a date that "changed everything" it serves in the history books as a point of acceleration of US military involvement in the Middle East, not the start.

Scriptures tells us that Jesus is life John 1:4-5 *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."*

Violence is the antitheses to God's word.

Geneses chapter 6 tell of how the whole earth became corrupt as mankind rejected God, the other charge brought against them was violence.

We see our LORD Jesus summing up the law during his earthly ministry as love; *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Matthew 22:37-40

The Ten commandments can be broken down into two parts 1st man's

relationship & duty toward God because God is the creator, and second man's duty to one another as fellow creatures, both parts of the law is summed up as love.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:8-10

Our culture degrades human value in our speech and thoughts toward others.

Matthew 5:21- 22 *"Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."*

It is often to easy to put someone else down in both our thoughts & words. We need to ever be mindful not to be 'good' proud Christians that we forget the words of our LORD; *"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."* Luke 18:9-14

What does this have to do with the value of life you may wonder, well because our thoughts turn into emotions, and emotions become actions. One of the things that is easily detected in research of the holocaust was that people's words either in propaganda or in regular interactions was rife with degrading language toward those who didn't measure up. In Nazi Germany this usually applied to one's 'race', in America it is often in religious purity or social conservative standards. How we allow ourselves to think and speak about others is of extreme importance to valuing people.

Our actions need to be in line with what Christ taught.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48
The Apostle Paul echoed Christ's words in Romans 12:14-21, also read Proverbs 25: 21&22

God gave life even to the wicked.

Some of God's people have become so desensitized to death that they rejoice in the death of workers of evil. I remember when the news broke out of the death of Osama Bin Laden social media was abuzz with shouts of jubilation, however one preacher simple posted these verses; *"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD:"* Ezk. 18:32
"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" Ezk. 33:11

Some questions worth studying and answering:

The difference between murder and self defense?
Why do some deaths bother us but others don't?
Who is just to judge the worth of another person?
What ought God's people to be about?

Other things to take notice of:

Nazi Germany had a culture not dissimilar to our own.
Conservative media personalities are not godly sources of news or judgments.
God's people are to be set apart from national and global christianism.
God's people are to be set apart when people are shouting "turn them to glass"

God is just to judge the worth of a man.

"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"
Romans 9:22-24

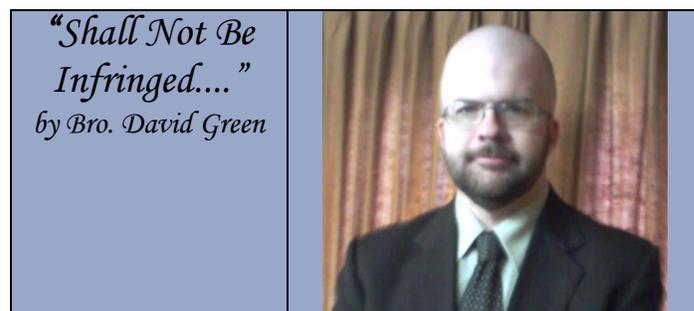
To answer the question: Who's Life Is Of Value,

All life has value because it is created by God and made in his image. Yes the Saints are much more precious to him and we ought not to neglect to care for one another, however God will judge the souls of the wicked. It is God alone who created man, it is God alone that man has sinned against, it is God alone who can turn the heart. We do not know who the elect of God is, our part is to share the gospel. In the end every knee shall bow and every mouth shall confess that Jesus is Lord, and he will be glorified, in the mean time we ought not mingle hate and fear mongering to our testimonies, adding more confusion in this world as the children of wrath do.
Whenever we think a prejudice thought, speak a degrading word, click 'like' or share on such posts online, or fail to stand up for someone being physically abused simply because they are homosexual, Muslim, not our kind of Christian, of a different ethnic group, weren't 'born American' speak a different language, are without a job, under educated, over indoctrinated, too rich, too poor, too liberal, too conservative, etc. you are devaluing another person's worth, the value of their life. That person might be written in the Lamb's book of life, and even if they are not these kinds of actions and words do not honor your Savior. We can read the scriptures and say something is sin without being cruel.

I believe this relates to what Regina Duncan wrote in conclusion to her book review this month;
"Those who believe that quality of life should be the deciding factor for whether we live or die consider self as the only factor because they are thinking only of how this person living or dying will impact themselves. However, if we begin thinking in the quality of life direction, where will we stop? How physically or mentally damaged should a person be before their quality of life is such that their life is not worth living?"

If we, as Christians, say we believe in the Sanctity of Life, we need to have viable reasons for saying we believe that. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. Christians who don't have a good testimony are hurting all Christians' testimonies. America is at a point where we can either go further away from God or we can go closer to Him because there is such a fight for evil and also the good side is

putting up quite a fight. The fight for good vs. evil begins with each individual Christian and Jesus Christ's churches across the nation (2 Chronicles 7:14)." [her review can be read on our website here: <http://baptistsforliberty.weebly.com/2/post/2013/10/fighting-for-dear-life-the-untold-story-of-terri-schiavo-and-what-it-really-means-for-all-of-us.html>]



"A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."
(Amendment II of the US Bill of Rights)

We are being told that only "reasonable" gun controls are necessary to keep the country safe. Those who are pushing such control tell us it is only about the "assault rifles" and "high capacity" magazines. They tell us that nobody really needs to have an AR-15 or an AK-47. They tell us that nobody really needs a magazine that holds 30 rounds of ammunition.

The politicians who push for such legislation which would ban or restrict such weapons try to sell themselves to the American people as hunters, or sportsman. Yet, when we look at the wording of the Second Amendment, it mentions nothing of hunting or skeet shooting. It says that "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." Instead of telling us what kind of arms we can have, or how we can carry, it says "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." In order to understand what they meant by that, we must go back to their original intentions, their own words. Let's consider their testimony:

"A free people ought not only to be armed and disciplined, but they should have sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own government." -George Washington

"The laws that forbid the carrying of arms are laws of such a nature. They disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes.... Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man." -Thomas Jefferson (quoting 18th century criminologist Cesare Beccaria)

"A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercises, I advise the gun. While this gives moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball, and others of that nature, are too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun therefore be your constant companion of your walks." -Thomas Jefferson

"The Constitution of most of our states (and of the United States) assert that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves; that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed."
-Thomas Jefferson

"I ask sir, what is the militia? It is the whole people except for a few politicians." -George Mason (father of the Bill of Rights and The Virginia Declaration of Rights)

"To disarm the people is the most effectual way to enslave them."
- George Mason

"Americans have the right and advantage of being armed, unlike the people of other countries, whose leaders are afraid to trust them with arms." -James Madison

"The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. A well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the best and most natural defense of a free country."
- James Madison

"Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are ruined.... The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able might have a gun." -Patrick Henry

"The Constitution shall never be construed to prevent the people of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms."
- Samuel Adams

"The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them."
-Joseph Story

The Second Amendment to the Constitution means what it says. The right to keep and bear arms is a God-given right, and the state should not be able to dictate how we carry, what we carry, or how we carry. That should be ours to decide and ours alone!

Why do we need to own AR-15s and AK-47s? Why do we need to have magazines that will hold above 7 rounds? Why did Rosa Parks need to sit at the front of the bus?
Leave our freedoms alone. My right to keep and bear arms must never be infringed.

Historical Marker:
"Halloween"
by Bro. Stephen McCool Sr.



In our nation today we are seeing a deliberate distancing from the God of the Bible and the teachings of our Founding Fathers. From the very beginnings of our country, we see that people have given thanks to God for everything in their lives. We see that the politicians of the past instituted national days of prayer and thanksgiving to the one and true God. Yet today, as a nation, we have forgotten our national upbringings and have forgotten Who gave us the land in which we so proudly live. Our nation has turned from worshipping the God of heaven to bowing down to the pagan gods of Satan. Removing God from our lives has brought sins such as abortion, homosexuality, drunkenness, drug addiction, idol worship, murder, deceit, self-indulgences, etc. into our society today.

There was a time when even the mention of the word Halloween would bring fear to the hearts of true Christians, but today we see many churches who participate in holy pagan worship. Some churches have Halloween parties while others will have what is referred to as a "Christian Alternative Party." Why celebrate the day at all? Why not do as our forefathers and just treat it as any other day? As children of God, Jesus warned us to not be of the world and to not love the things of the world. He said that if we love the things of the world then the love of the Father is not in us. That should be a scary thought to us; if we are consumed with the things of the world, then the love of the Father is not in us. No wonder we see the things going on today in our nation that we do. It should be no surprise to a true believer in Jesus Christ that the problems our nation is facing today are results of the sins we as a nation have committed against God.

As for Halloween specifically, it started as a pagan worship ceremony. There is nothing Christian about the day. Yes, the Roman Catholic Church and her daughters celebrate the day after Halloween for different reasons which we will discuss soon, but as true blood-bought Christians we are not to celebrate, worship, or have anything to do with this unholy day. This is a subject I have studied for many years and the more I study the more I am amazed at how deceived we are into believing what is truth and what is not. Please pray with me as the Lord opens the truth to us through this teaching, and may everyone who reads this see with their spiritual eyes the truth.

Psalm 50:14,15 *"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."*

Many of the customs of Halloween that are practiced today can be traced back to the ancient Romans and the Druids of Celtic Britain. October 31 was a date on which the Romans worshipped their many false gods and held feasts to those gods. The Druids took this same holy day and had a more elaborate event than did the Romans. The Druids celebrated Samhain (lord of the dead) on both October 31 and November 1. The Druids chose October 31 as the day to make sacrifices to their gods for protection from Samhain. It seems they believed that Samhain gathered all the wicked souls and spirits who lived in the bodies of animals and turned them loose to torment the living on the night of October 31. The Druids also believed that certain people would be punished for their evil ways by being reincarnated as cats; they considered the cat a holy animal. This teaching on cats can also be traced back to ancient Rome and Egypt. The Druids taught that on this day they were surrounded by evil spirits, ghosts of the dead, witches (good and bad), fairies and elves. These beings were present on this day to torment the living.

A Roman Catholic website briefly describes Halloween as such:
The true origins of Halloween lie with the ancient Celtic tribes who lived in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany. For the Celts, November 1 marked the beginning of a new year and the coming of winter. The night before the new year, they celebrated the festival of Samhain, lord of the dead. During this festival, Celts believed the souls of the dead --including ghosts, goblins and witches-- returned to mingle with the living. In order to scare away the evil spirits, people would wear masks and light bonfires. When the Romans conquered the Celts, they added their own touches to the Samhain festival, such as making centerpieces out of apples and nuts for Pomona, the Roman goddess of the orchards. The Romans also bobbed for apples and drank cider - traditions which may sound familiar to you. But where does the Christian aspect of the holiday come into play? In 835, Pope Gregory IV moved the celebration for all the martyrs (later all saints) from May 13 to November 1. The night before became known as All Hallows' Even or 'holy

evening.' Eventually the name was shortened to the current Halloween. On November 2, the Church celebrates All Souls Day. The purpose of these feasts is to remember those who have died, whether they are officially recognized by the Church as saints or not. It is a celebration of the 'communion of saints,' which reminds us that the Church is not bound by space or time. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that through the communion of saints, 'a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory, and those who are still pilgrims on Earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.' (#1475)
(AmericanCatholic.org)

Halloween did not become popular in the U.S. until the 20th century. It spread out of the Irish Catholic settlements with a major resurgence by the Wiccans. Today many churches have Halloween celebrations. Many will host haunted houses full of scenes of murder, rape, the occult, and other grotesque visions. Some churches have resorted to having "Christian alternatives" to Halloween. These celebrations are nothing more than an attempt to paganize the churches. Every year we see on Halloween how evil and wickedness are unleashed during one night. Many pagans use this day to offer human sacrifices to their false gods. What did God say in His word about this?

2 Chronicles 33:6 *"And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and DEALT WITH a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, TO PROVOKE HIM TO ANGER."*

Are we provoking God to anger with the celebration of Halloween? Is our Heavenly Father pleased to see us celebrating with the world a holy day of pagans? As Christians, what is wrong with holding a prayer service or preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to those on the streets on this night? I dare say that if you were to ask most of those out there celebrating this holiday if they know Jesus, most would say yes.

Revelation 21:8 *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 *"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."*

In the verses above, God is warning the Hebrew children not to follow after the religions of the nations that possessed the land of Canaan before they conquered. If we read the history of the Hebrew children and the nation of Israel, we see many times they rebelled against this law that God commanded and followed after the false gods and idols of the heathen in the land.

As with Israel down through history, so have those who call themselves

Christians today, most notably the Catholic church and her daughters of the Reformation. Every time the Catholic church conquered a "heathen" nation they would adapt church holy days to the holy days of the native peoples of the land. In the very beginnings of the Catholic church, when Emperor Constantine conquered parts of the old Babylonian empire, he allowed the Chaldean priests to become part of the Roman church. These Chaldean priests brought with them the mystery religions of ancient Babylon, and some historians even believe it is possible that these same priests brought with them the religions that were on the earth before the flood in Noah's days.

When the Catholics went into Europe they adopted many of the holy days that the pagans worshipped. We see many Nordic traditions in the worship of Christmas and the New Year holidays along with Italian, Slavic and Celtic Gauls of France. When they reached the isles of Britain they compromised with the Druids. Most of what we see as part of the celebration of Halloween today came from the Druids of Scotland and Ireland and was passed down through the Catholic church. During the Irish Potato Famine of the mid-1800s many Irish Catholics immigrated to North America, bringing with them their pagan holy days and superstitions; this included Halloween. These pagan holy days became a way of life in the Irish communities in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and in the mountains of Appalachia. As our country grew, so did the pagan holy days.

Our Founding Fathers refused to allow the celebration of Halloween in the early days of our country because they saw it as satanic and pagan. As time went on, the daughters of the Harlot in Rome followed after their mother and began to worship the same pagan holy days.

In the past hundred years many Baptists have followed after the way of the religious world. It saddens me to see scripturally sound Baptists who have fallen into pagan worship. I know many who will say, "But it is for the children," or, "it is all in fun." O how easily are we deceived! With the commercialization of Halloween it is now more popular than the 4th of July and Thanksgiving, the only true holidays of our nation. Ephesians 5:11 *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them."*

So far we have discussed the origin of Halloween as coming from the Celtic Druids and coming to America via the Irish Catholics. But where did the Druids learn these teachings?

If we go back to Noah and his sons, we see in Genesis 9:20-24 that Noah's youngest son Ham sinned against Noah. In verses 25-27 we see that Noah places a curse on Ham's son Canaan and his descendants. In Genesis 10:6-20, God tells us the lineage of Ham. If you will notice here the sons of Canaan inhabited the land we now know as Israel. They were not in the line that brought forth Abraham; he was from Noah's son Shem's line. You will also notice that Canaan's line built the great cities that were known for their paganism later in the scripture and also Sodom and Gomorrah. Canaan's older brother was Cush who begot Nimrod. Nimrod is famous for building the Tower of Babel. He is also well known in pagan worship. It has been said by many historians that Nimrod was responsible for the beginning of paganism.

In Joshua 24:14, Joshua tells the twelve tribes of Israel, *"Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood..."* For several generations after the flood, men passed down the traditions and religions that were before the flood. I will also note here that not only did men pass these tales down through the generations but that also Satan and his demons have done the same. Now, an interesting note here is the fact that Satan and his demons are everlasting beings, as are the angels in heaven. Satan and his demons have existed since before the creation of man. They were once in heaven with our Lord as angels but fell to earth when, along with Satan, they sinned against God. With this being said, think about it this way: On Halloween night the tradition is that all the evil spirits out there are unleashed on the earth to reek havoc

upon people. If these demons have been around since the beginning, would they not know the past? Could they be the ones passing down the teachings of the gods from before the flood and of the gods of the descendants of Ham? Is it not possible that they could take on the form of animals or even our dead relatives and even know everything there is to know about us and our families? I believe the scriptures teach us that the true worship of paganism/false gods had its beginnings before the flood. Therefore I believe we can say that Halloween had its true beginnings also before the flood. Halloween is nothing more than the worship of Satan and his demons.

All through the scriptures we see that the people of God battled against evil and at times joined in the worship of evil. The prophets of the Old Testament were continually warning the people of Israel of the dangers of following after false gods. Jesus warned of it in His earthly ministry, as did the apostles and writers of the New Testament. And yet today we continue to ignore the very warnings that took our forefathers down a road of destruction. Ministers today refuse to stand and preach the truth about holy days such as Halloween. Instead they ignore the warnings of the word of God and allow their congregations to participate in the same pagan rituals that caused the downfall of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. How long will our Lord stand for this deliberate denial by His own children?

As we have studied this subject we have seen how the holiday known as Halloween got its start. Even though there is no specific date, we see that the very false gods that are worshipped today were worshipped on the same date possibly as far back as Noah's days before the flood. We have seen that Satan and his demons have helped to keep the pagan traditions alive and well, even in our day with all its sophistication. We have even seen that the scriptures of God warn us to flee from the worship of false gods and other evils. I honestly believe that what I have been studying and writing on Halloween should be taken very seriously by all of God's people. We are warned time and time again by the Lord to stay away from evil and those who do evil. Yet every year at this time we see so many who wear the name Christian refusing to heed the warnings of our Lord. They let their children out onto the streets to threaten and beg their neighbors. They tell us it is for the children. If they are so concerned about their children then why do they live the lie of disobeying God's word? Halloween was from its beginning a holy day to Satan and continues to this day to be. There is nothing godly about a holy day that celebrates evil.

The founding fathers of our nation saw the wickedness of this celebration and they did their best to prevent it from being celebrated here. However, with the teachings of humanism came the gross negligence of God's people to follow any form of truth. We saw that, with the help of the Catholic church, Halloween has become the holiday it is today, more proof that the Catholic church is an apostate religion and headed by none other than Satan himself.

I pray you have got some useful information from this study and have been blessed by it also. I hope you realize now that this holiday that is observed by so many is not for the children of God.

<p><i>"Infanticide"</i> by Bro. Todd Bryant</p>	
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"Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?" – Job 31:15

Election time is upon us again. Many issues are being discussed relative to who one should vote for. In the opinion of this author, one issue

which has steadily been forgotten needs to be brought back up. In years past, Christians have spoken out against the infanticide, called abortion, which is taking place right here in America. Nobody would ever suggest that Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein had the "choice" to murder all of the people they did. And yet, right here in America, people (sadly, sometimes even professing believers) maintain that a woman should have the "choice" to commit the same crime as these wicked men.

Almost 40 years have passed since our government legalized the murder of infants in the womb. Since January 22, 1973, over 55 million children have been murdered in the very place that should be the safest place on Earth – their mother's womb. To put that in perspective, it is estimated that Adolph Hitler murdered 11 million people. None of us would ever vote for a man like Adolph Hitler. And yet, this year Christians will vote for candidates that have put their stamp of approval on the murder of 5 times the amount of people that Hitler murdered. Has our conscience been seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2)? I think it has.

Our text verse is one of many verses which prove God's attitude towards the unborn. Simply, life begins at conception. There is no other time that life can begin logically, medically, scientifically or, more importantly, Biblically. God alone is the giver of life and this begins at conception (Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5). When Elizabeth heard Mary's salutation, the Scripture tells us that her *"babe leaped in her womb"* (Luke 1:41). John the Baptist is referred to as a *"babe"* before he was ever born. It has well been said, "Abortion doesn't make you unpregnant, it makes you the mother of a dead baby". If the Bible is true (and it most certainly is), this is as true of a statement about abortion as has ever been made.

If anybody today was for the mass murder of two year olds, there'd be no discussion here. Nobody in our churches would even consider that there was ever a reason to kill a pre-kindergartner. And yet, in the eyes of God, there is no difference. Abortion is as much murder as any other taking of life. This is why God had penalties in the Mosaic Law for a child that was killed in the womb (Exodus 21:22-25). If a man hurt a pregnant woman so that her unborn child died, his life was required. God's attitude towards the life of the unborn is clear in the Bible.

The longer sin is tolerated, the more accepting we are of it. We know this is true in our own lives. Christians by and large stood against abortion on January 22, 1973 when Roe v. Wade was decided. However, 40 years later, it's almost forgotten. Oh, theologically we may oppose abortion. But practically, it's less of an issue than taxes, national healthcare or social security. What a sad state we are in today. Child of God, millions of American citizens have been murdered in the past 40 years – more than all of the world's wars put together. Stand up and oppose the legalized infanticide that is going on in America today. Remember this ever so important issue when you examine candidates. You can find out where their heart is really quick by finding out their position on this important issue.

<p><i>"A Biblical Look At Suicide"</i> by Bro. Curtis A. Pugh</p>	
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A recent report published by the United States government Centers for Disease Control says that in this country death by suicide is now more frequent than death by automobile crashes. Furthermore, the report says that suicide has increased some 28% among White People, American Indians and Alaska Natives between the ages of 35 to 64. The biggest increases in suicide rates were amongst people aged 50 to 54 years (up 48%) and 55 to 59 years (up 49%). The rates for those aged 10 to 34 and

those 65 or older did not change much. This news is indeed distressing. If this trend continues you and I can expect to hear of more and more suicides amongst our families, neighbors and acquaintances in the future. While we believe that the greatest single deterrent to the sin of suicide is an experience of regeneration by the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth, there are some questions that do come to mind. Obviously professing Christians do commit suicide. However, one question that arises is this: can a true child of God commit suicide? Along with that question, another one is this: if a true child of God commits suicide will he or she spend eternity with the Lord or not? The Arminian view held by many Protestants, some Baptists and the various branches of the Catholic church is that suicide automatically results in eternal punishment. The idea behind the typical Arminian view seems to be that a person who commits suicide cannot afterward be forgiven of his sin. If he is of the Catholic party, he cannot seek and be absolved of the sin of suicide by a priest. That is their view. Protestants and Baptists who hold that suicide results in eternal punishment do so based upon the idea that after the commission of such an act a person cannot repent and confess his sin. Thus the forgiveness of sin in their mind depends not upon the finished work of Christ, but upon the actions of sinful human beings. To them, forgiveness is based upon man's works, not upon God's grace. To them justification can be undone by unconfessed sin. It matters not to them that the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to the believing sinner. According to the popular view, justification is negated by failing to confess one's sins - in the case of suicide, by failing to confess just one sin.

However there is another view. Some people believe that God will work in such a way as to not allow His true children to commit suicide. This writer can find no basis in the Bible for it. This view causes those who hold it to automatically condemn to eternal punishment all professing Christians who commit suicide. To be consistent they must condemn to eternal punishment all who fail to confess even one sin! It is true that God provides grace for His true sons and daughters, but it is also true that all of us sometimes fail to avail ourselves of it. The Bible says: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13). That verse certainly is true. However, Christians still sin. We do not always look for the way of escape! There is nothing in the Bible of which this writer is aware that teaches that God will not allow His true sons and daughters to take their own lives any more than there is a verse that says God will not allow His children to commit any other sin.

The Bible teaches that while all sins are equal in that they are disobedience to God, there are some sins that result in more severe consequences than others. There are natural consequences to sin and there are eternal consequences also. For instance, Jesus said that certain persons saw His revelatory works but did not repent: of these He said, "But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matthew 11:20). Clearly, those who are given more light will be judged more severely than those who have received less light. Speaking of Pilate Jesus said, "...he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:11). Here Christ spoke of the High Priest and perhaps other Jewish religious leaders who were well-taught in the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. In spite of their knowledge they sinned by willfully rejecting their Messiah (Jesus) when He came to them. The difference is not in degree of disobedience; rather the difference is in degree of punishment. This difference in punishment is tied to the amount of light against which a person sins. If we understand this, we see that all the sins which men commit are equally reprehensible in God's sight and ought to be in our sight also - even those "little sins" we allow in our own lives. There is only one sin mentioned in the Bible as being unforgivable. Jesus said, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against

the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32). Do we have the right to say that there are two unpardonable sins? We know that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. But if suicide is also unpardonable why is it not so stated in the Bible? What Biblical authority do we have for saying that suicide is unpardonable? Or should we class suicide as one of the "all manner of sin and blasphemy" which Jesus said "shall be forgiven unto men?" We must admit, if we believe the Bible, that all sin is sin. Killing another person or killing one's self is no worse than telling a lie or having lustful thoughts about the spouse of another in the sense that all these things are a transgression of God's law. There are no "white lies" or "white sins." So we must conclude that suicide is no worse than any other sin. Consider James 2:10-11: "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*"

Let us consider these facts. When Christ died He died for the sins of people yet unborn. That is, He died for sins yet uncommitted. If He did not, all who have sinned since He died are yet in their sins. To paraphrase old John Owen, Christ died either for (1) all the sins of some men: (2) some of the sins of all men: or (3) all the sins of all men. We believe that the first is the truth: Christ died for all the sins of some men. If Christ died for only some of the sins of all men, then all men yet have sins for which they must answer. If this is true, then all men are hopelessly lost for they must pay for those sins not paid for by Christ. On the other hand, if Christ died for all the sins of all men, then all men are saved. This last is, of course, foreign to the teaching of the Bible. If Christ died for all the sins of His elect then all their sins - past, present and future - have already been paid for by the precious blood of Christ. Paul's words addressed the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia are recorded for us. In Acts 13:39 he spoke specifically about what Christ accomplished. His words were these: "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." True believers are "justified from all things!" Justification is a two-sided coin. It means the righteousness of Christ is put down on the account sheet of one who believes. It also means that God no longer puts down their sins on their account. This is clearly stated by Paul in Romans 4:8 where he wrote: "Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Think about the meaning of that verse, please! Unless you understand the two-fold nature of justification, you will not have a clear picture of what God does for those who believe. True believers are declared to be righteous even though they are sinners. That is one side of the coin. And sin is no longer imputed to them. That is the other side of the coin. It matters not whether the sin is of omission or commission. It matters not whether the sin committed is one of thought, word or deed. It matters not whether the sin was committed prior to or subsequent to the new birth. So, why then, is suicide said to be some kind of unforgivable sin which will send a true child of God to eternal punishment? Did not Christ promise safety and security to all that come to Him? Did He not specifically say, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"? (John 6:44). This is a promise of a future blessed resurrection to all whom are drawn by the Father to Christ. Is not this a promise of eternal safety and security? If we hear that a child of God becomes so emotionally distraught or mentally afflicted as to take his own life, we must ask some questions. (1) Did God know ahead of time that such a sin would be committed by one of His elect? (2) If so, did Christ die for that sin as well as the other sins of this elect person? (3) Was such a believer justified from this sin as well as all the others committed by him? We must answer these questions in the affirmative. Yes, God knew from eternity of such a sin and yes, Christ died for all the sins of the elect. And yes, by Christ "all that believe are justified from all things." This is free and sovereign grace! This is salvation!

But, someone says, what about 1 John 1:9? That verse says: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Does not that verse teach that we have to confess our sins to have forgiveness? Let us remember first of all that forgiveness and justification are not the same thing. Ponder that a bit, please. Next, let us look at this verse in its immediate context. We read: *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"* (1 John 1:5-2:2). We may be sure that these words concern saved people.

The "we" does not include the unregenerate. Do not err by making plural pronouns include more than the context indicates. Second, notice that John here writes not about individual acts of sin but about habitual or continual sins. One individual act of sin does not mean that a person is walking in darkness. What John says here is that if or since we walk in the light we have fellowship with Him. Fellowship with other believers is not the subject here. Fellowship with God is the issue! If you doubt that, read the context cited above again, please! This passage teaches that if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with Him in whom is no darkness at all. Walking in the light or according to the truth is evidence that *"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* What sin? The answer is all sin! Did you notice that the Bible clearly says that *"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* "That means both confessed sins and unconfessed sins, does it not? If it does not, pray tell how a child of God is cleansed from unconfessed sins? If he is not cleansed of unconfessed sins, how shall he escape eternal punishment? Will just one honestly forgotten and therefore unconfessed sin condemn one of God's elect to eternal punishment? Now some would tell us that this cleansing applies only to past sins - sins committed before we were regenerated. Therefore they conclude that there is a work we must do in order to obtain forgiveness for sins committed after we were born again. Such a view, it must be admitted, confuses forgiveness with imputed righteousness and holds that salvation is at least in part by works.

We have pointed out that the context of the passage quoted above is clearly about walking in fellowship with God! The issue is not "sonship," but fellowship! The issue is not justification, but forgiveness. That is the context! "Sonship" has to do with justification (imputed righteousness). The "sonship" of all the elect throughout the whole world depends upon the propitiation (satisfaction or payment) made for our sins by Christ. God said in Isaiah 53:11 that *"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."* When the Father saw the travail of Jesus Christ's soul as He hung on the tree, God was satisfied. The demands of God's justice were met. Christ bore "their sins" - i.e., the sins of many whom He justified by His death. Furthermore, Christ, who satisfied the just nature of God by His death, is our advocate with the Father. The very One who paid for all the sins of all the elect now appears in Heaven on their behalf! Christ was the satisfactory payment for all the sins of all the elect throughout all the world. That is what enables and determines the "sonship" of God's elect people.

While "sonship" (justification) is dependent upon the work of Christ for His people, "fellowship" is another matter. Fellowship is walking in fellowship with God. It is communion with Him. It depends upon

whether or not we walk in the truth and includes whether or not we confess our sins. The idea of confession in 1 John 1:9 is not merely a dry intellectual recital or enumeration of acts of sin which we have committed. Someone said it means to say the same thing about our sins as God says. It means to see and speak of them as the horrible deeds they are. It means - having seen the holiness of God - that we say with Job, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). It means to condemn or judge sin in our own lives. The Bible is clear: if we do not say the same thing about our sins as God does - if we do not judge ourselves, we can expect chastening from God. Paul made this clear even in the sin of omitting self-examination prior to taking the Lord's supper. He wrote, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:31-32).

When a child disobeys a parent by a willful act of disobedience fellowship is broken between them. The parent may chasten the child hoping to bring about repentance. But until the child sees and repents of his or her wrong, fellowship remains broken. The child is not walking according to the wishes and instructions of the parent. The child is in rebellion to the parent to one degree or another. But the child has not destroyed his or her "sonship" by such disobedience. The disobedient child is still the son or daughter of the parent and will ever be even though they no longer "have fellowship one with another." The same is true of the child of God in relationship with the Father. "Sonship" is never destroyed. The righteousness of Christ never ceases to be imputed to the believer! Sin is never imputed to the believer! Just as your natural child will always be your child, so the child of God is always God's child. Even suicide cannot destroy that relationship! Why should it? It is not a greater sin than any other. What is destroyed by acts of sin - and that temporarily - is fellowship. And only confession to God restores that fellowship!

Are we Baptists going to take the position of the Thomists (Arminian Catholics)? Will we say that if a person dies with unconfessed sin they cannot go to be with the Lord? Will we imagine a Baptist purgatory? Purgatory is the Catholic answer to unconfessed venial sins. Are we such strangers to grace as to think that our actions are the cause of either our initial or our final salvation? Can we not accept the fact that all the sins of God's elect were paid for by Christ? Do we really believe that we can pay for or somehow erase our sins by confessing them? Are we capable of such a Divine act? Can we not understand the difference between fellowship and "sonship?"

There is a promise of God to His people that will prevent suicide. It is a positive promise of both mental and emotional safety. This promise is found in Philippians 4:6-7 which says: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The promise here is for a garrisoned heart and a garrisoned mind. It is clearly stated that this keeping or garrisoning of the heart (emotions) and mind (intellect) is by the peace of God which passes all understanding. Someone said this is the kind of peace that must be "felt" rather than "telt." This is a peace only experienced by true children of God when they (1) do not worry but who (2) in faith make their requests known unto God earnestly and with thanksgiving. (3) This praying and thanksgiving must include "every thing." Prayer with thanksgiving in all things is the boat hook that pulls our little boats along the dock of God's sovereign unchangeable will. As one man said it, "I have often used a boat hook to pull my boat alongside the dock. But I have never used a boat hook to pull the dock alongside my boat." Surely this promise means much to those who understand something of the absolute sovereignty of God for only they understand that all things both good and evil come from the hand of God (see Job 2:10). After all, God is absolutely sovereign and therefore is in control of all things. Although He chastens His children, He shall never allow real harm to come to

them. Sins committed by true believers may result in temporary pain or hurt as God chastens His children. But no real harm spiritually or eternally comes to them. Even so the act of suicide cannot spiritually or eternally harm the child of God. (It is certain to hurt the family and friends of the one who commits suicide and it will certainly bring a reproach on the name of Christ and upon the congregation of which the person is a member).

Let us always keep in mind that the world in which we find ourselves is enemy territory. This modern world is too much with us and we are too weak to walk through it alone and unaided even though we are God's regenerated sons and daughters. The carelessness of prayerless-ness and unthankful-ness is not walking in the light. From such omissions as prayerless-ness and unthankful-ness we can expect discouragement, despair, and depression. These things come when we have not docked our little boat alongside God's dock. These are the seeds of suicide. The CDC report cited at the first of this article mentioned that "...those struggling with financial challenges, job loss, intimate partner problems or violence, stress of caregiving for children and aging parents, substance abuse and serious or chronic health problems" are the most likely people to commit suicide. True children of God face these difficulties even as others. These are problems that often seem insurmountable even to the children of God - especially to those of us in the United States. We are presently either experiencing difficult times or are seeing them zooming toward us on the horizon - or both. We see increasing losses of freedom and a society that has thrown away the morals and ethics of the Bible. These things are beloved to the children of God. Furthermore, we must admit that we have become accustomed to prosperity and a "cushy" lifestyle. Experiencing the erosion of such a lifestyle is stressful. Such stresses as these added to daily personal pressures which we all experience sometimes become what seems to be an insurmountable mountain. Only "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" can the child of God experience "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." And only by experiencing it will God's peace "keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." We must walk - i.e., live prayerfully and thankfully for all things - so that we walk in fellowship with God. In that way the glorious "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" shall guard our hearts and minds. Paul exhorted his readers with this brief phrase: "...continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12). That is the need of the hour! Let us all seek to "walk in the light, as he is in the light" so that "we [God and the believer] have fellowship one with another." The three Hebrew children were enabled to survive in the fiery furnace because Christ was with them. King Nebuchadnezzar looked into that furnace and said that he saw four men and that "the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Fellowship with God is only ours when we walk in the light! Consider these words of exhortation: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7). Amen.

"The Loss Of The Soul"

by Bro. Milburn Cockrell
(1941-2002)



"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (Luke 9:25).

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught what no other teacher ever has--the transcendent worth of the soul of man. He taught that the soul of a man is precious beyond all price. He affirmed that every soul is accountable to God for all he thinks and feels, as well as for all he says and does. Christ warned men of the great danger of losing their own souls. We know from Scripture that the soul of man is of immeasurable value. No sum of money can express its worth. It transcends expression. If we were to judge by the conduct of men, we might conclude that the soul is of no worth whatsoever. Everything seems to occupy the attention of mankind rather than the salvation of their own souls.

EVERY MAN HAS A SOUL

What is a soul? It is the spiritual, the best and most noble part of man, and it is distinct from the body. It is the immortal part of a man which allies him with angels and God who are spirits. Speaking of the immortality of the soul, Jesus Christ said: "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" (Matt. 10:28). Luke records Him saying: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (12:4).

According to Jesus Christ, man may go so far as to kill the body, but here the power of man ends. Christ clearly distinguishes between the state of the body and the state of the soul. The state of the soul would not be different at death, if the soul sleeps after death as does the body. Jesus Christ taught that a soul could be lost but not annihilated.

The soul outlives the body and is superior to the body. When Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin it is said that "her soul was in departing" (Gen. 35:18). Here we see death is the departure of the soul from the body to the world of the spirits. When Elijah wanted the dead child to come back to life he prayed: "O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again" (I Kings 17:21). The Lord answered Elijah's prayer, "and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived" (v. 22). Here again we see the soul left the body at death and existed separated from the body. This proves its immortality. Then we see that this immortal soul returned to the body of the child and the child lived. If the soul can exist separated from the body, it is not the same as the body.

The powers and properties of the soul are amazing. The soul retains its powers when the body is mutilated or destroyed. This demonstrates its superiority to the body. The soul is capable of thought and reflection, matter is not. It has power to contemplate God's being as well as His government over the world. The soul is capable of enjoying the friendship of God and of reciprocating His love.

The body is the house of the soul (II Cor. 5:1; Job 4:19; 13:12). The body is compared to the house, and the soul to him that lives in the house. Man is more noble than the house he lives in, so is the soul more noble than the body. The body is the clothing or garment of the soul (II Cor. 5:2-4), and we know that the body is more than raiment (Matt. 6:25). As clothing is worth less than the body, so the body is worth less than the soul that it covers. The body is a tabernacle in which the soul worships God (II Cor. 5:1; II Pet. 1:14), and a worshipper is more honorable than the place of worship (Heb. 3:3). Even so the soul is more honorable than the body.

IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE SOUL TO BE LOST

In the text Jesus Christ said that a man may "lose his own soul." Sin is what causes a soul to be lost. "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4,22). Isaiah 3:9 declares: "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves." Sinning against God is what ruins the soul and causes it to be sent away from God. Sin is what makes the soul hateful in the eyes of Divine Justice.

A soul is lost when it is separated from God and His favor and is under His curse and wrath. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2:8-9). These words of Paul

express the second death and the torments of Hell. Unless satisfaction is made for the sins of the soul by the blood of Christ, this is to be the future condition of every sinning soul on earth.

A soul is lost when it is shut out of Heaven and sent to Hell. In Luke 9:25 Jesus Christ called it the casting away of the soul. In Matthew 23:33 Christ declared that impenitent sinners cannot "escape the damnation of hell." The soul is lost when it is excluded from light, peace, and rest. Of the lost souls of the wicked Job said: "They grope in the dark without light" (Job 12:25). As to the present and future estate of the wicked, Isaiah declared: "*There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked*" (Isa. 57:21). Of the beast worshippers it is written: ". . .they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. 14:11).

A soul is lost when it is "*punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*" (II Thess. 1:9). It is lost when it is told by Christ: "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25:41).

IF THE SOUL IS LOST IT IS THE SINNER'S OWN FAULT

Christ did not say that He would lose some souls committed to Him. Rather, He spoke of the man losing "his own soul." It is the man who does the losing. Man cannot lose the souls of others; he can do no more than lose "his own soul."

The man that loses his soul loses himself. A man may lose his family and estate and in time have them restored again. But if he loses his soul he can never regain it. He that has lost himself is no longer his own master. He is at the mercy of the Devil. He is in the hands of Divine Justice. What a great grief it is for a man to realize that he has lost his soul, lost the most important part of his being, lost himself! The knowledge of the awful loss of his soul makes him a self-tormentor. How fearful is the loss of the soul! It is the deprivation of all good and exclusion from God's protection. It is to suffer the due reward for your deeds--to be left to your own shame--to be delivered to the torments of the Devil and a guilty conscience. In short, it is to be swallowed up of all the most fearful miseries that a just and holy God can righteously inflict upon the soul of a sinful man!

When a man loses his own soul it is an everlasting loss, for a soul that is lost can never be found again. It's banishment from God is everlasting and the fire that it suffers is everlasting fire. You could sooner count the drops of water in the sea, or the grains of sand on the seashore, than you can count the millions and millions of years that a damned soul shall suffer in the lake of fire. The person who has lost his soul can never say he is half way through his sufferings, for that which has no end has no middle (Jude 7).

A man loses his soul by doing what is destructive to it: "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. 6:32). Divine Wisdom says in Proverbs 8:36: "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." All forms of sexual impurity and sins of every kind are destructive to a man's soul. Such a person may say he cannot extinguish his burning lusts, but he will find it shall be more impossible to extinguish the fire that shall never be quenched. He will ruin his soul because he wills to do so. His blood is on his own head (Hos. 13:9).

ONE SOUL IS WORTH MORE THAN THE WORLD

Add field to field, city to city, and nation to nation, yet one soul is worth more than all of this. One soul is of greater worth than all of the gold in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Take all the pleasures this world has to offer, and yet one soul is of greater value than all of these. Gain rank or fame until all men applaud you, but one soul is more precious than all of this. Go beyond earth, gather the sun, moon, and stars to yourself, but all of this is not worth one soul!

Let us suppose that a man could gain the whole world and be the master of it. Such a man could not enjoy the whole world if he had it to enjoy. One man can only be in one place at a time. He can only travel so far in a day, enjoy so much fine food, ride in but one automobile at a time, sleep with but one woman at a time. Such a fool would kill himself in a few weeks. Health would not endure such possessions. Worse still, of

what use would the whole world be to a man who must leave it?

THE WINNING OF THE WORLD IS OFTEN THE LOSING OF THE SOUL

The world presents a man with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, and pompous honors. The desire of these things of the world causes men to waste and consume themselves to get preferment, to enjoy pleasure, to heap up riches and increase them. To attain these men will ruin their bodies and souls. In the end such men discover they have been hired servants that carried a great load of wealth and fame on a weary back all the day. Then when the sun of life is set they are turned into a dark grave and a burning Hell with a raw shoulder and a tormenting conscience.

Worldly prosperity has ruined many a soul. "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" (Luke 12:16-21).

This rich farmer forgot God and his soul. He imagined his fruits and goods would be food for his immortal soul. A God of judgment cuts off his long years of promised enjoyment. He required the soul the rich fool had neglected, corrupted and ruined. The rich man goes to stand before God with a lost soul, a soul lost by trying to win the world (I Tim. 6:9-10).

Why is it that men insure their lives and property, but they are so careless about their souls! How foolish to gather treasures and lose them--to lose the soul, Heaven and God. Millionaires in time are beggars in eternity (Luke 16:23).

THE LOSS OF THE SOUL IS SO GREAT THAT THE GAIN OF THE WHOLE WORLD CANNOT MAKE UP FOR IT

All the men of this world and the angels of Heaven cannot save a soul--cannot give it eternal life--cannot open the gates of Heaven--cannot close the gates of Hell--cannot make a person rich toward God. Ah, vain world! you are a poor reward for the loss of Christ and Heaven! O poor lost soul, you have the riches of earth, but you have lost the treasures of Heaven. You have the pleasures of the world, but you shall never drink of the rivers of God's pleasures. You have the honor of men, but you shall receive the everlasting contempt of God.

The world promises more than it can deliver. While the god of this world is pleasing your fancy, his hand is in your treasures, robbing you of your soul. To gain the world and lose the soul is a fool's bargain. Such a person is an unspeakable loser! When he comes to balance the account, to compare profits and losses, he will find he has been taken in by the great deceiver.

Our Lord asked: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:37). What would he not give in exchange for the salvation of his soul at the great white throne of judgment? He would gladly trade his vice for virtue and his sins for the great salvation, but it cannot be done. No doubt he would be willing to give ever so much, but it will then be too late, for no exchange can be made. Once in Hell a great ransom cannot deliver a man from this awful place. In such a solemn hour a man will realize he is the biggest fool in the world!

CONCLUSION

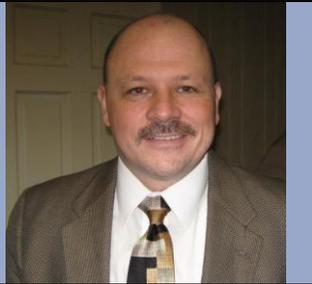
The gospel is a revelation of a sovereign remedy, provided by God, through Christ, for the salvation of a man's soul. It causes a person to see his sins are as black as Hell, and he becomes mindful that sin has ruined his soul and that within himself his soul shall surely be lost. The only way to escape is to commit the keeping of his soul to Christ (I Pet. 4:19). Paul did this with the confidence that Christ could and would keep his soul safely until the day of judgment: ". . .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 Tim. 1:12).

The redemption of the soul is precious (Ps. 49:8). The loss of this most excellent thing is unspeakably great. This is a good reason for people to be careful to whom they commit the teaching and guidance of their souls.

Don't play the hypocrite in religion. Be what you profess to be, for where is the hypocrite "when God taketh away his soul"? (Job 27:8). Let the soul have the chief and first concern. God alone can save and keep the soul. Cry out day and night if you are undone, dear sinner: "O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee" (Ps. 25:20). Believe with all your heart the gospel of Christ and receive "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your" soul (I Pet. 1:9).

"Shew me a token for good: Psalm 86"
by Bro. Jeff Short



"Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me."
~ Psalm 86:17

The eighty-sixth Psalm is a prayer of David to God. The tone is set for the Psalm in the first verse, "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy." He is crying out to God because of his affliction. The distress of David is obvious. This matter of prayer is pressing. He cries, "Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily" (Psalm 86:3).

Though David is in trouble, this is not a plea of desperation without faith. He prays, "In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me" (Psalm 86:7). David declares his faith in verse thirteen, "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell."

David's confidence was bolstered here by two reasons. First, he has been delivered in the past from times of trouble. God had shown Himself strong on David's behalf before, so there was reason to hope that another temporal deliverance would be wrought. Second, David has already been delivered from eternal condemnation. Even if David were not delivered from his present distress by God preserving his life, David would still be delivered ultimately.

As a prayer, there is much in this Psalm for our instruction. For one, when we consider the whole Psalm, we find there is more of the praise of God in it than the trouble of David. This should immediately convict us to the very selfish nature of many of our prayers. David did spread his complaint before God, but he seems almost swept away at times with the worship of God in His various glories. However, we wish to focus our attention upon the conclusion of David's prayer and glean some good for our soul from it.

David concludes his petition asking God, "Shew me a token for good" He is asking God for a sign or some sort of visible evidence of God's mercy toward him. David does not doubt that mercy. He has already said, "For great is thy mercy toward me" (Psalm 86:13). He is seeking a manifestation of that abiding mercy in his present situation.

At one time, Christ rebuked the Jews because they were seeking a sign. He said, "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign" (Luke 11:29).

They wished to be healed from some sickness or they wanted to witness some great miracle. Their motives were to receive benefits to themselves and Jesus reproved them. David's desire was different. He was seeking a sign that God would be glorified and His enemies would be "ashamed." David asked for a "token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed." This request is in accord with the whole reason for David's prayer. His complaint is voiced in verse fourteen, "O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them." David's distress is because of persecution. He rightly recognizes his detractors as the enemies of God, not just David. He said they "have not set thee before them."

We find reasons for his persecution in verse two. He said, "For I am holy," or, favored of God. He also said he was "thy servant that trusteth in thee." The fact that God's blessings were evident in his life was the reason he was held in contempt. Paul had experienced this same persecution. He wrote to Timothy, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

Christians in America today know little of real persecution for "righteousness' sake." One reason for this is that perhaps we are not living godly. We have an ungodly self-reliance in this country. We believe in the "American Dream" and our own ability to "make a living." As a result, the evident tokens of God's mercy are largely absent from our life. We read here success story after success story of how some poor fellow started out with nothing and with hard work and determination, pulled himself up to the top of the heap. God help us not to bless "the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth" (Psalm 10:3). Our lives ought to be trophies of God's grace, not testimonies of our own ingenuity. We must repent of our self-reliance and start depending on God.

David gives reason for both his persecution and his request saying, "Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me." The word "holpen" carries the thought of surrounding or protecting. David said that his enemies hated him because God covered him. Did not Satan complain to God of His protection of Job? He asked, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" (Job 1:10). The wrath of David's enemies was aggravated by this fact of God's protection. Just when they thought they had him, some deliverance would be wrought that confounded them. They hated David because God helped and comforted him.

We conclude then, that it is not wrong to ask God for a "token for good" in our lives. In fact, we should seek that God's hand will be evidently with us every day. I was greatly stirred in the reading of John Warburton's Mercies of a Covenant God. He would often pray for deliverance that God would be glorified in his life and that he would not be confounded before his enemies. He did not want his life and lack of faith to give cause to the enemies of God to reproach and blaspheme His name. Feeling himself to be poor and needy, he would also ask God to confirm His love for him again.

We should desire to be trophies of God's grace. We should want our lives to be testimonies to the goodness of the Lord. Can we really be a trophy of grace and walk in sin? Let us cast off the works of darkness with its independence and let us seek the signal blessings of God that a demonstration of His power will be seen in our life. May God give us tokens for good that others may see, fear, and glorify Him.

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