

Suppose...

When Illness Strikes

Living by the Spirit

Power in Humble Service

Jesus Christ is the Answer
To All the World's Anxieties

Restoration Movement:
Mission Work Among Indians

Be of Good Cheer,
I Have Overcome the World

Things Which Need to be
Restored: Fasting

Things Which Need to be
Restored: Church Discipline

Things Which Need to be
Restored: Confessing Sins to
One Another

Things Which Need to be
Restored: Fellowship Outside
the Church Building

Biblical Biography:
James the Son of Zebedee

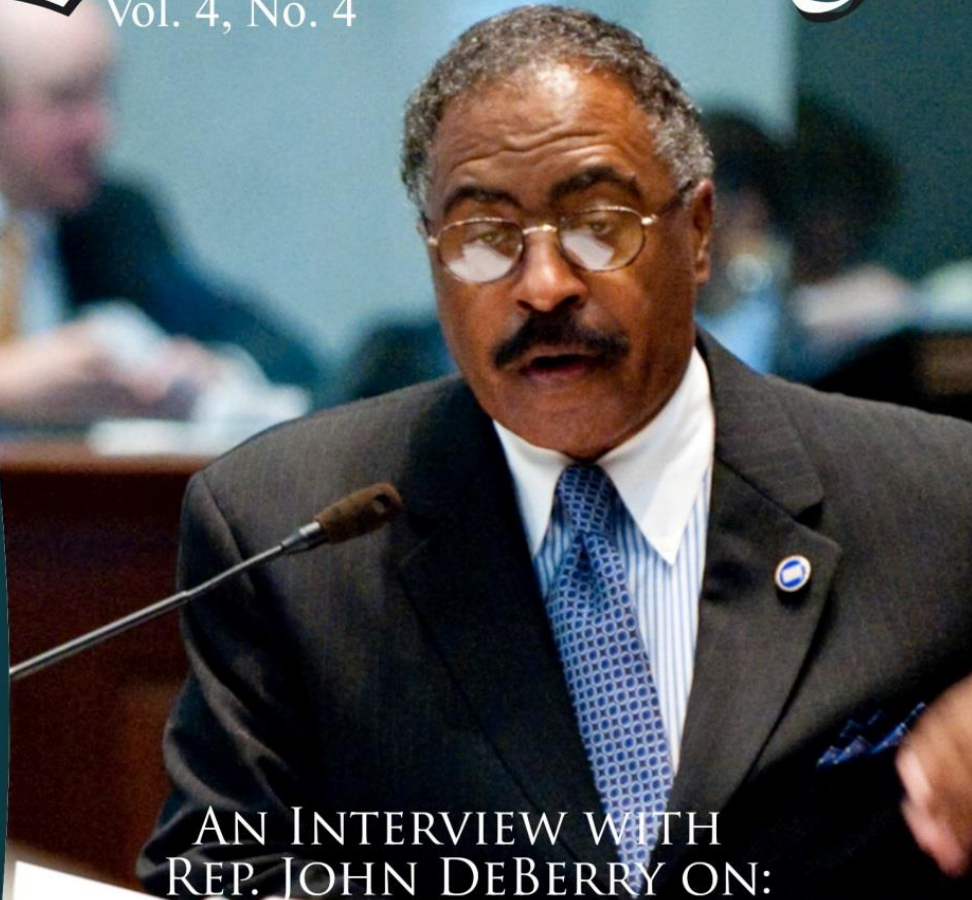
Heirs of the Kingdom

And More!

*The Best-Selling Magaine on Amazon by Members of
the church of Christ!*

THE Quarterly

Vol. 4, No. 4



AN INTERVIEW WITH
REP. JOHN DEBERRY ON:

POLITICS
RELIGION
and
RACE

Technology struggles at your congregation?
Need an advisor you can trust?

AUDIO | VIDEO | COMPUTING | WEBSITES | LIVE STREAMING

CALL
COZORT, LLC
AARON COZORT
901-484-8753



DOES
UPDATING
YOUR WEBSITE
FEEL THIS
OUT-OF-DATE?

WE HAVE THE
SOLUTIONS YOU NEED.

COZORT, LLC
901-484-8753



Editor:

Bradley S. Cobb

Regular Writers:

Dewayne Bryant
 Gantt Carter
 Gerald Cowan
 Adam Cozort
 David Dean
 Kyle Frank
 Perry Hall
 Bill Howard
 William Howard
 John Krivak
 Richard Mansel
 Mark McWhorter
 Jim Mitchell
 Jake Schotter
 Devin Self
 Michael Shank
 Keith Stonehart

Published Quarterly:

January, April, July, October

Cobb Publishing

704 E. Main St.
 Charleston, AR 72933
 (479) 747-8372
 CobbPublishing.com
 CobbPublishing@gmail.com

Subscription Rates:

Annual Print: \$15.99
 Bundles of 10 or more receive
 a 20% discount!

Digital Subscription: FREE!

The Quarterly (Vol. 4, No. 4) is
 copyright © 2020, Bradley S.
 Cobb. All Rights Reserved.

The Quarterly

Volume 4 – Number 4 – October 2020

UNDERSTANDING RESTORATION

The Restoration Movement is a favorite topic of mine, because I love the church, and I enjoy American history—thus, the Restoration Movement fascinates me. But unfortunately, we have a generation of Christians who don't know what needed to be restored—and frankly, they've taken for granted that everything the church of Christ does is what has always been done. Worse yet, I know of some who think that we've progressed to the point where there is nothing that needs to be restored anymore—even though some of the things that used to be Scripturally done by Christians have slipped from use (fasting, church discipline, confessing sins one to another, etc.).

That is the reason for several of the articles in this issue. The section on "Things Restored and Things Which Should Be" deals with nine different issues, from instrumental music to shepherd-leadership to fellowship outside the church building—as well as the items mentioned in the previous paragraph. I encourage you to read them, learn from them, and contemplate what has been written.

In addition to this, we have an extensive interview on Politics, Religion, and Race with Tennessee Rep. John DeBerry, a gospel preacher who recently was forced to change his party affiliation to "independent" (for reasons which he outlines in the interview). We think you will find it to be interesting.

In this issue, we welcome two new authors, Mitch Robison, who wrote on "Power in Humble Service," and Roger Russell, who (through an oversight by a certain editor) wasn't published in the last issue, on "Jesus: Our Advocate." We also have the conclusion of J.D. Tant's "Experiences and Advice to Young Preachers," Gerald Cowan's timely lesson on "Jesus Christ is the Answer to All the World's Anxieties," Kyle Frank's personal reflections on "When Illness Strikes," and a duo of articles from John Krivak on "Living by the Flesh" and "Living by the Spirit."

And there are more that you can discover, just by turning the page and looking at the table of contents!

The articles contained in each issue represent the research and conclusions of the authors, and may not reflect the views of the other authors (or even the editor).

But they are presented for contemplation by Christians who are dedicated to living for the one true God of heaven

WHAT TO FIND AND WHERE TO FIND IT

(AKA: The Contents of the Quarterly)

Be of Good Cheer, I have Overcome the World <i>An Editorial by Bradley S. Cobb</i>	6
Suppose... <i>Ted Knight</i>	11
Jesus Christ Is The Answer To All The World's Anxieties <i>Gerald Cowan</i>	12
Restoration Movement History: Mission Work Among Indians <i>Jimmie Beller</i>	16
When Illness Strikes... <i>Kyle Frank</i>	19
Politics, Religion, and Race: <i>An Interview with John DeBerry</i>	21
Heirs of The Kingdom <i>Bill Howard</i>	31
Jesus: Our Advocate <i>Roger Russell</i>	34
Things Restored and Things Which Need to Be <i>Introduction by Bradley S. Cobb</i>	35
Things Restored: God Authorized Mechanical Instruments in the Church of Christ <i>Michael Shank</i>	36
Things Restored: Shepherds among the Church <i>Andrew D. Erwin</i>	38
Things Restored: The Lord's Supper (Each and Every Lord's Day) <i>Chris Gardner</i>	42

Things Which Should Be Restored: Biblical Literacy	
<i>Adam Cozort</i>	45
Things Which Should Be Restored: The Significance of Stricter Judgment	
<i>Jim Mitchell</i>	48
Things Which Should Be Restored: Confessing Sins One to Another	
<i>Keith Stonehart</i>	51
Things Which Should Be Restored: Fellowship Outside the Church Building	
<i>Joseph McWhorter</i>	54
Things Which Should Be Restored: Fasting	
<i>Jason Floyd</i>	56
An Additional Note on Fasting	
<i>Bradley S. Cobb</i>	57
Things Which Should Be Restored: Church Discipline	
<i>Jamie Beller</i>	58
Living by the Spirit	
<i>John Krivak</i>	62
Living by the Flesh	
<i>John Krivak</i>	65
Biblical Biography: James, the Son of Zebedee	
<i>Bradley S. Cobb</i>	69
The Restoration Movement: Experiences and Mistakes of J.D. Tant	
<i>J.D. Tant</i>	78
Power in Humble Service	
<i>Mitch Robison</i>	85
Quotes to Contemplate	88
Covenant	
<i>Bob Haley</i>	89
Tabernacle Shadows: The Golden Altar of Incense	
<i>Mark McWhorter</i>	90
About the Authors	93

BE OF GOOD CHEER, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD

An Editorial by Bradley S. Cobb

Introduction:

It is Jesus' darkest hour. The hour when His disciples abandon Him. The hour when one of the men who had performed miracles, who had preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," betrayed Him with a kiss. The hour when He agonized in prayer, sweating as it were great drops of blood. His final 24 hours of life before being tortured, beaten, mocked, and killed.

They bound the hands of Jesus in the garden where He prayed; They led Him through the streets in shame; They spat upon the Savior, so pure and free from sin; They said "Crucify Him! He's to blame!"

And in this hour—the hour in which Jesus pleaded with the Father, "Please, let this cup pass from me"—we catch a glimpse of Jesus as an encourager.

How is it that someone who knows they are about to suffer excruciating pain [the word "excruciating," meaning *out of the crucifix*, was created because there was no word strong enough to convey the pain of being on a cross]—how is it that He could possibly think about encouraging people at a time like that?

Look at John 13 with me. We'll start there.

You're Going to Suffer

We are in the final evening of Jesus' life. He, along with the twelve apostles, have been in the upper room, sharing what would be their final meal together before the darkest event in human history took place. The Passover has been celebrated, Jesus has washed their feet, then Judas leaves—setting everything into motion for the grand finale of the Jews' plans to rid themselves of this Jesus. This is the setting in which some of Jesus' most famous statements are found.

It is here that Jesus said, "I shall [only] be with you a little while longer...Where I am going, you cannot come" (13:33). The person that they had followed for 3 ½ years, that they were dedicated to—the man who was both their hero and their friend—says He's about to leave, and from here on out, they won't be coming with Him anymore. If you've ever had to say goodbye to someone you loved, knowing that you'd never see them again this side of eternity, you can understand the pain and heartache this would cause in the disciples.

It is here that Jesus cryptically tells Peter specifically that the apostle will be killed too: "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward [or, later]" (13:36). Peter expresses his devotion to Jesus, says that he will die for the Lord, only to hear the words "Will you lay down your life for my sake? Most assuredly I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied me three times!" (13:37-38). Peter, especially, suffers internal disappointment here, knowing that his Master doesn't believe him. Worse yet, the Master thinks that he will forsake Him.

Just a bit later, in chapter 15, Jesus drops another bomb on them. Once He leaves, things are going to get bad. "The world hates you...If they persecuted Me [and oh did they ever], they will also persecute you" (15:19-20). You can imagine their thoughts here: *Wait, you're leaving, and then they're going to start attacking us?*

"They will put you out of the synagogues" [literally, make you outcasts from the synagogue] (16:2). The Jews will excommunicate them. The synagogue was the center of the Jews' religious life week in and week out. Being an outcast from the synagogue in essence made you an outcast among the Jews—the very ones

they wanted to save.

“Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service” (16:2). *Wait, what? KILL us?!?* They will be so rejected, so persecuted, their names and character besmirched so much that the Jews would think that killing them is actually doing God a favor, a service, by removing the worst kind of false teachers possible. This is some heavy-duty hatred and persecution that they’re in for.

“Because I’ve said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart,” Jesus says (16:6). “Most assuredly I say to you, that you will weep and lament” (16:20) because Jesus was going to “go away”—that is, going to die.

Then Jesus completely cuts the legs out from under them. Not only will all these bad things happen to you after I leave, Jesus says, but “Indeed the hour is coming—yes, has now come [it is here!]*—*that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me alone” (16:32). Outside pressures are hard. Persecutions are hard, but if you know you’re being persecuted for doing the right thing, at least you have some kind of peace in that knowledge. But Jesus tells them, in essence, ‘Y’all are about to cave to the pressure; you’re about to show your weakness; you who claim to love me are going to completely abandon me, run away like scared little children, and hope no one knows you were my disciples.’ They were going to have internal character failure, which is often the most difficult kind of persecution there is—knowing that you failed someone else in their time of need.

Really put yourselves in their sandals. No one wants to be persecuted, but they were going to be—that had to scare them. No one wants to be hated, but they were going to be—that had to cause their heart to drop. No one wants to be thought of as a coward, but that’s what they were going to be—and that had to make them sad. No one wants to lose their hero, their friend, but that was about to happen—and that would make them sad for their own loss. But the worst part of it all is that no one wants to watch their friend get tortured, mocked, spat upon, beaten, and killed—the helpless feeling had to overwhelm them as they realized they couldn’t save Jesus.

We all like to think that we could be a hero, stopping injustice, stepping in when someone is being wronged, standing up for the ones who are falsely accused or punished. But seeing Jesus on the cross, they wouldn’t—couldn’t—do anything.

Then in verse 33, Jesus gives the understatement of the evening: “In the world, you will have tribulation.” The sinful world, the world that doesn’t follow God, who doesn’t care about the doctrine of Jesus Christ—they will do their best to destroy you. They will try to undermine your efforts for God. They will make fun of you. They will mock you. They will try to discredit you. They will try to make you feel guilty for sharing the truth. They will try to pass laws to keep you from speaking up against sin. And that’s every bit as true today for us as it was for the apostles.

If we just left it here, it would seem like Christianity is a life of constant misery. If Jesus just stopped with the things we’ve touched on, then who could have blamed the apostles for running off?

But Jesus didn’t stop there, and we shouldn’t either.

Cheer up!

A quick glance through the same few chapters gives us some interesting insights. It seems that Jesus wasn’t trying to scare them, He was trying to *prepare* them. He wasn’t trying to frighten them, He was trying to *enlighten* them. He didn’t want to bring them fear, but *cheer*!

“Let not your heart be troubled,” Jesus said. “You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (14:1-3). Jesus says, *Yes, I’m going away, but don’t be afraid or sad. I’m going to get a place ready so we can all be together forever and never have to separate again! I’ll be coming back to get you.* This separation is only temporary!

“My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe” (14:27-29). Jesus says, *Don’t be sad, and don’t be afraid. In fact, you*

should be happy for me, because I get to go home to be with the Father! But I want you to know what is going to happen ahead of time, so it doesn't take you by surprise.

"Greater love has no one than this: than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are my friends..." (15:13-14). I'm going to die, the Lord says, but I am doing it for you—because you are my friends.

*There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
No, not one;
No, not one.*

"They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service... But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them" (16:2, 4). Yes, bad things will happen to you, but you will be prepared, and not be taken by surprise at the persecutions.

"You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy." (16:20). My death will cause you great sadness, but it will lead to a greater joy than you've ever known. I will be coming back, and your world—nay, the entire world—will never be the same. You will be persecuted, but instead of depressing you, you will rejoice over it! You will be blessed beyond measure to see some who persecute you turn in humble repentance and become your friends, co-laborers, and fellow-heirs of salvation. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake indeed!

"You now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one can take from you" (16:22). When I come back, nothing will be able to take away your joy, your inner happiness. Because when I come back, you will know that your work is vindicated. You will know that you are truly serving the one true God. You will know that death is no longer anything to fear—because I will have conquered death. And if I am raised, you can know assuredly that you will be raised too.

*On that resurrection morning
when the trump of God shall sound,
we shall rise (Hallelujah)
we shall rise!*

"You will be scattered...and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (16:32). You are going to see me alone on trial, alone on the cross, and you're going to be sad for my sake—but don't be. The Father is with Me—I'm never truly alone.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace" (16:33). It is turbulent, trying to live in the world, living by the world's standards and judgments, being surrounded by people who don't know or don't care about God and His word. But there is a peace—a peace that surpasses all understanding—that I want to give to you. Put your trust in Me, keep my commandments and be My friend, and know that I will come back to get you. Know that I will have a place prepared for you in the home of the One who loves you, who cares for you, and who wants to take care of you and be with you forever. I want you to know that in Me, you can have that peace.

"In the world, you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (16:33). The god of this world will come after you—He came after me too. But I won. His power is broken. It might seem like the world—his world—wins later today, as I am lifted up on a cross and murdered, but it will really be his undoing. And through my overcoming, you can overcome.

Then Jesus prayed for them (John 17).

Throughout this time of stress, this time of impending doom and trial, Jesus gave His apostles encouraging words. They were going to suffer, but they would be able to endure. Not just endure, but rejoice. Not just rejoice, but emerge victorious!

But Does this Mean Anything to You?

Obviously, we aren't the apostles—we weren't the ones specifically being spoken to on that fateful night/early morning. So what, if anything, do these sayings of Jesus mean to us? The answer is plenty!

The last thing we mentioned that Jesus did for the apostles was pray for them. But did you know that Je-

sus also prayed for *you* at the same time? Yes, you, sitting there on your couch or chair or wherever you're reading this—**you** were prayed for specifically by Jesus Christ less than 24 hours before He was brutally murdered.

Neither do I pray for these alone [the apostles], but for them also who shall believe on Me through their message (John 17:20).

How do we believe in Jesus Christ today? We didn't see Him in person; we didn't walk with Him or see His resurrected form ascend into heaven. No, but we have the written accounts from eyewitnesses, and from those who were inspired by God! This is what we need in order to believe! (John 20:31). Therefore, Jesus prayed for **us** before He died! This message of hope, of peace, of cheer—it is for us too!

There is a peace that comes **only in Him** (16:33). Now, if it is possible for **us** to be “in Him,” then we, too, have access to that peace. And it so happens that we can! When we believe in Jesus with all our heart, turn to Him in repentance, and are baptized “into Christ,” we can enjoy all the spiritual blessings that can only be found “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27). We can take hold of the peace that is so powerful that it surpasses all understanding. It allows us to be content when the world is crashing around us. It helps us to rejoice when we are tempted, knowing it helps to create patience. It helps us to endure the fiery darts of the wicked and continue to march in the fight against Satan's wickedness (Ephesians 6).

We look at these passages of encouragement from Jesus, and we can know that it extends to each one of us as well. It reaches through the centuries, up from the pages of your Bible, and deep into your heart—if you will let it—to cheer you on your journey through this land.

Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow!

“In My Father's house are **many** mansions”—that's because we have a place there too!

“I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” When He comes again, the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living Christians at that time will rise to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4). Brethren, this is a promise for every Christian throughout the last 2,000 years, and through the end of time itself—and it includes **you**! Jesus is coming back to get **you**, and take you home to be with Him!

“Greater love has no one than this: than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are my friends if you keep My commandments.” Jesus' death is for His friends—His church (Acts 20:28)—those who are trying to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). Does that describe you?

*I'll be a friend to Jesus.
My life, for Him, I'll spend.
I'll be a friend to Jesus
until my years shall end.*

We know that we will have trouble in this world, because the god of this world is Satan. But Jesus died to crush the power of Satan, to give mankind hope, to bring about the eternal kingdom of God, to make salvation possible, and to bring true joy and peace. Yes, we will have tribulation in this world. But cheer up—celebrate! Because Jesus overcame the world—and He did it for us so that we can do it too.

For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith (1 John 5:4).

Or to put it a more familiar way:

*Encamped among the hills of light, you Christian soldiers, rise
and press the battle 'ere the night shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foes, in vales below, let all our strength be hurled.
Faith is the victory, we know, that overcomes the world.*

*His banner over us is love; our sword the word of God.
We tread the road the saints above, with shouts of triumph, trod.
By faith they, like a whirlwind's breath, swept on o'er every field!
The faith by which **they** conquered death, is still our shining shield.*

*On every hand, the foe we find, drawn up in dread array.
Let tents of ease be left behind, and onward! To the fray!
Salvation's helmet on each head, with truth all girt about,
the earth shall tremble 'neath our tread, and echo with our shout!*

*To him that overcomes the foe, white rainment shall be given.
Before the angels, he shall know his name confessed in heaven.
Then onward from the hills of light! Our hearts, with love aflame,
we'll vanquish all the hosts of night in Jesus' conquering name!*

*Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
O, glorious victory that overcomes the world!*

Listen to the confidence, the certain hope, the peace, the joy in knowing that we have salvation in Jesus Christ.

There will be tribulation, but don't be sad. We will overcome the world too.

Barton W. Stone

*Alexander Campbell
J.W. McGarvey*

Smoking

THE FREE Restoration Movement

Jimmie Beller Memorial eLibrary

Eschatology

N.B. Hardeman Commentaries

Marshall Keeble

Debates

Lectureships

Denominational

Doctrines

WWW.THECOBBSIX.COM/JIMMIE-BELLER-MEMORIAL-ELIBRARY/

Suppose...

Ted Knight

Suppose that each day your brain is shrinking a little bit and all the medical experts in the world cannot stop it....

Suppose that today you have lost that special memory that you had yesterday....

Suppose that you have a difficult time finding the room that you want to go to in this house that you have lived in for only one year, after living in another one for over 39 years....

Suppose that you wake up every morning and have no idea what day it is until your husband tells you, and those plans that you made for today, you don't remember....

Suppose that special meal that you have prepared for your family for almost 62 years, you cannot remember how to make....

Suppose that you cannot prepare your medicines each day and that has to be done for you....

Suppose that your husband must lay out the clothes that you will wear each day because you can't get it together....

Suppose that you have gone to church so much in your life that you truly believe that every day is Sunday and that you don't know where we are going to church today...

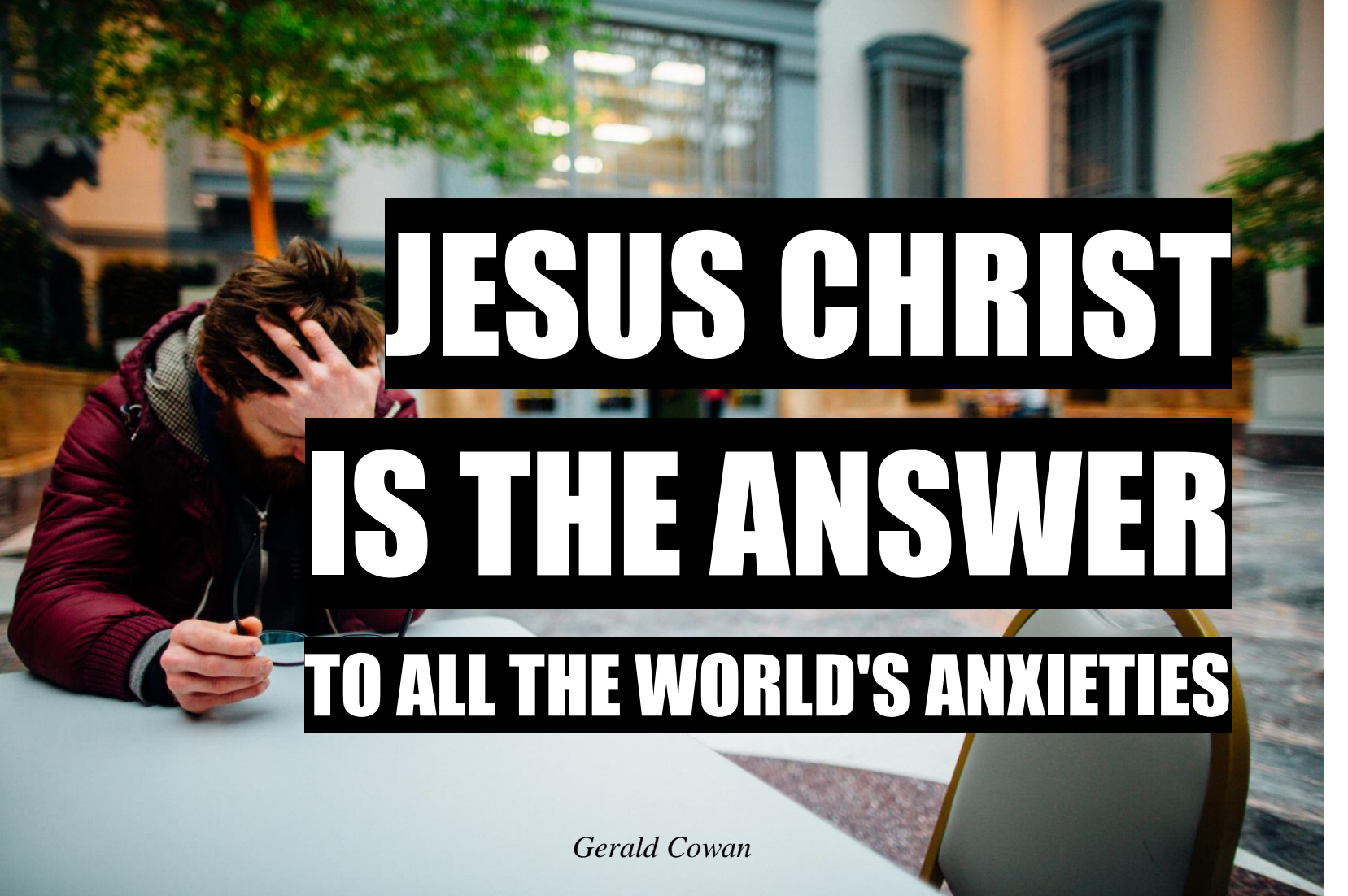
Suppose that your love for your family is as great as it has ever been, but that you can't remember all their names without help....

Suppose that you wake up at 2:20 AM and don't know who the man is who is sleeping beside you and you have to call your son next door and ask him to come help you to know that man is your husband of 62 years....

Suppose that you can't find your purse with your lipstick in it and that is one of the most important things in your life....and....

Suppose that you are conscious of the fact that you are taking a small step each day away from your family, and into a world that scares you to death and you don't want to go, but you cannot stop the journey....

Suppose.....Suppose....and the journey continues. We are doing quite well under the circumstances....



JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANSWER TO ALL THE WORLD'S ANXIETIES

Gerald Cowan

Does Jesus really have the answer – the remedy, antidote, cure – for all the world's anxieties? Did He himself ever worry about anything? Does He tell us not to worry about anything? Are worry, anxiety, and dread always sin? Is excessive concern justifiable and permissible? Even asking such questions can cause uneasiness, stress, and worry. Suggesting a satisfying answer will require considerable clarification, and we will need to look very carefully at the causes and sources of anxiety in order to develop the lesson properly.

***THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETIES
WHICH MUST BE NOTED.
WE MUST NOT GENERALIZE.***

Improper generalizations about “the sin of worry” give little help in resolving the problem of anxiety. It certainly does not prevent worry. Articles appear in church bulletins from time to time in which well-meaning but misinformed writers declare the sinfulness of worry and warn us not to yield to it. Such a generalization may suggest that all worry and anxiety are sinful. One who is subject to anxiety

and stress or worry, no matter what the cause – even though it is beyond his control and not his own fault – may feel he is condemned for it. The burden one bears is actually increased by imposed feelings of guilt and frustration. Such a person may then lose faith in God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Having read and misunderstood 1 Corinthians 10:13 they believe God promises that He will not allow intolerable burdens or troubles and that He will make a way of escape for us from all such things. They may incorrectly assume He will either not allow bad things to happen or will not allow them to be touched and hurt by such things. If it happens otherwise it may seem to them that God has failed, that He has given or allowed more burdens than they can bear. Some may feel they are somehow beyond or excluded from God's love, care, and help. To avoid negative criticism from others, they may deny their anxieties – with an Alfred E. Newman grin say, “What? Me worry?” But this only compounds the problem, because now they feel hypocritical. God's promise, misquoted from 1 Corinthians 10:13 as

“God won't put more on you than you can handle,” really means only that nothing will happen that can disprove or negate God's love and concern or be sufficient cause to lose faith in Him and thereby to lose one's soul. The “way of escape” He provides is strength to endure whatever comes without departing from Him or losing faith in Him. Loss of material things, even loss of life itself, does not mean loss of one's soul and spirit, one's hope and expectation of the soul's salvation and eternal reward.

Something equally damaging and also incorrect is the claim that anxiety, fear, worry, doubts and depression are always necessarily evidence of Satanic oppression or demonic possession. If this were true, the Christian who cannot control or resolve all his anxieties might logically conclude that he is possessed by Satan, not Christ, and that the devil's spirit is in him, not the Holy Spirit of God. It could also mean that one who prays repeatedly but continues to experience difficulty might logically conclude that Christ is not able to deliver him, not able to “cast the demon out of him.” Both Jesus and the apostle Paul taught against anxiety, yet both of them demonstrated and reacted to tremendous stress and anxiety at various times. Were Jesus and Paul demon-possessed? Did they violate their own teaching? Did they sin? Surely not! God himself put earnest care for others into the heart of Timothy (Philippians 2:19, 2 Corinthians 8:16) and surely also put such feelings into the heart of Paul and of Christ. Let's look more closely.

THE EXAMPLE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

What Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24-34 is very familiar, but can be distorted into something he did not teach or imply. He does not say that one should never be concerned about maintaining life in the body. Compare Matthew 6:11 “*Give us...our daily bread.*” But he urges people not to place physical needs above spiritual. Do not let concern for physical needs crowd God and His will out of your life (6:33). That kind of worry and anxiety would be sinful. He urges us not to be anxious in advance (6:34). Do not try to borrow trouble from tomorrow (that kind of worry is sinful too). You never can know for sure what tomorrow will bring. Very often the things we worry about do not happen at all. All that worry wasted – for nothing! The best way to cope with the pressures of daily life is to trust in the Lord and live each day as it comes, with Him and

for Him and in Him (Psalm 37:5 *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him also; and He shall bring it to pass.*).

Christ's teaching in Matthew 16:24-26 is equally familiar. He certainly does not teach that one should have no regard for his own life, or that one should not dread physical and emotional stress and the prospect of death. “*Love...as you love yourself*” (Matthew 22:39). In Luke 22:41-45 Jesus demonstrated the effects of great stress and anxiety about his impending death on the cross. “*Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly...and his sweat became like great drops of blood.*” The medical term for bloody sweat (which does actually occur in times of extreme stress, fear, and anxiety) is **haematidrosis**. The capillaries near the skin expand and become so thin that blood passes through the walls and is exuded through the pores with body perspiration (which also seems to flow freely under stress). Jesus was anxious, concerned, and perhaps fearful with dread too – but he did not sin. “*With strong tears and crying, he offered up prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save him, and was heard because he feared*” (Hebrews 5:7), because he said, “*Not my will but thine be done*” (Luke 22:42).

But suppose anxiety and stress leads one to deny God, reject the truth and yield to error. Suppose the pain and the desire to save one's life and end one's suffering cause one to turn away from the Lord. That kind of worry is sinful. One further example: in Luke 14:26 Jesus does not teach active malice, hatred, or unconcern for one's parents, spouse, children, friends, and one's own life. “Hatred” here means “put in a subordinate place,” to reject one in favor of another (compare Matthew 5:43-46, also Ephesians 5:25ff). Jesus himself groaned and was troubled in spirit, weeping openly at the grave of Lazarus. “*Behold how he loved him*” (John 11:33-35) – see how much Lazarus' death grieves him. The anxiety which causes one to reject God or to put family, friends, and self above and before Him is to be avoided, because that kind of worry is sinful (Matthew 10:37).

THE TEACHINGS AND EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Compare Romans 8:28 (KJV) and James 1:2. This certainly cannot be taken to mean everything which happens is good, and that we should thank God for it and rejoice because of it. How utterly absurd it would be to thank God for crime, murder,

crippling diseases, etc., and say that they are good. “Thank you God for my broken ankle. My baby has an incurable disease and will live in constant pain, and die in about one year. Isn't that great? My wife was assaulted, my house was burned, and my car stolen. Isn't it wonderful? It really makes me happy. Thank you God for all these good things that have happened to me.” That is ridiculous! Romans 8:28 actually says that God works for good, to work out something that can be called good – with those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, actually following His calling and fulfilling His purpose (read RSV and NIV). James supports Paul's teaching here. Far from saying that one should be glad when difficult trials and temptations come to him, James 1:2, really says no matter what kind of troubles and trials you may have to endure, you can rejoice to know that God is still there to provide the help you need, to bring you safely through the trial, to make you more patient, and give you a victor's crown at the end of life's trials (James 1:2-8, 12; compare Revelation 2:10).

Philippians 4:6 is very familiar, but let us not abuse it. “*Be careful (anxious NASB – **MERIMNA**) for nothing ...*” If taken at apparent face value, it seems to say that one must never be anxious, worried, or apprehensive or concerned about anything. If so, Paul contradicted himself, since in 2:20 he commends Timothy for his *care* for them (he uses the word **MERIMNA** [to care, be concerned, anxious, or worried], the very same word as he uses in 4:6. See also 2:26, 27 and 4:10 where proper care and concern are expressed). Paul himself was burdened with anxiety/care (**MERIMNA**) for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28). He himself sometimes experienced debilitating anxiety and fear (2 Corinthians 7:5, 2:12-13), but did not consider it to be sin. The anxiety Paul warns against is the kind which loses sight of God and loses faith in God's provision. That kind of worry is sinful (compare Philippians 4:11-13, 1:19-30).

To summarize: a healthy concern and striving to achieve and maintain righteousness in oneself and others is not sinful. Anxieties, about oneself and others or things that cause one to doubt or deny God and turn away from Him are sinful.

THE SOURCES AND CAUSES OF ANXIETY.

We have already referred to some. Let us just list them at this point. There are anxieties that grow

out of personal needs: physical, emotional, spiritual, or social (Philippians 4:10-19). Stressful relationships and situations, where the outcome is unknown, or does not appear favorable (Ephesians 6:19-22). Personal desires and personal fears which lead one away from what he knows to be good and/or required of him (Romans 7:7-8:9). Nebulous, non-specific and nameless dread and fears – inexpressible and often uncontrollable. These can be caused by both physical and mental factors in a person.

Physical factors can produce symptoms of anxiety. Dr. O. Quentin Hyder speaks of a *chemical factor* in the human system that can precipitate unreasonable and uncontrollable anxiety: an excess of *norepinephrine* (which is akin to adrenalin) in the circulating blood short-circuits nerve synapses even under mild stress or threat, and causes an over-reaction or exaggerated response, so that the physical symptoms may be far worse than the initial stress warrants. He adds that while some stress is necessary and good, uncontrollable stress is quite destructive (**Christian's Handbook of Psychiatry**, pages 111-12). The chemical cause can be treated and controlled, if not cured, with medicines. It is not sinful either to have the problem or to accept treatment for it. Dr. Hyder also speaks of phobias, fears conjured up by the mind or exaggerated by the mind, which cripple and destroy. These are often what-if fantasies.

“What if I go to bed and there is a monster in my room?”

“I'll go with you to your bedroom, and you'll see there's nothing there.”

“What if he is hiding and comes out after you're gone and I can't go to sleep?”

“I'll stay with you until you fall asleep.”

“What if I wake up after you leave and he comes back?”

“I'll be close enough for you to call me and I'll come back.”

Dr. Hyder is joined by others (and is easily supported by personal experience) when he says that most of the things we worry about never happen at all, so worrying proves to be needless, unproductive (page 113).

We must not overlook the power and influence of Satan as a possible cause of fear and anxiety. From the New Testament it appears that demonic possession is generally impossible today unless one

delivers himself up to Satan (Ephesians 4:27). But Satanic influence and demonic oppression are common. Satan and his evil spirits practice deceit and temptation (2 Corinthians 4:4, 11:14-15). But these can be resisted effectively with the help God makes available to us (Ephesians 6:10-17).¹ Satan can surely use one's physical problems, fears, and faulty relationships, etc. to convince him that God has failed him. "Maybe God has helped you before, but where is He now when you need Him?" We are to resist the devil, steadfast in our faith in the Lord (James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8).

Uncertainty about the end of life and what comes after it is often a great cause of anxiety. But Christians do not have to sorrow at death, as others do, who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Christians, who accept God and trust in Him, find in Him a hope that assures their minds and provides security in an unstable world (Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:1-4, 1 John 3:19-22, Hebrews 6:16-20, and more).

GOD IN CHRIST PROVIDES ALL WE NEED FOR DEALING WITH ANXIETY.

By God we may refer to Father/Son/Holy Spirit (Romans 8:24-39). God gives hope, invites us and encourages us to come to Him (Romans 8:24-27, Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 4:16, John 6:27). He is able to help, to save, and supply all our needs (Romans 8:31, Hebrews 7:25, Philippians 4:19, Ephesians 3:20). He is willing to help, to comfort us because He cares for us (Romans 8:32, 1 Peter 5:7). He actually gives help (Romans 8:26-28). He is eternal, and can keep forever those who commit their lives to Him (Romans 8:35-39, 2 Timothy 1:12, 1 Peter 1:39). God is faithful – He will not depart from us or turn against us so long as we walk faithfully with Him (Romans 8:14-17, 28, and 38; 1 Corinthians 1:9 and 10:13, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Hebrews 13:5b-6).

The scripture is reassuring about both the present and future. It tells of people who trusted God and were not put to shame (not disappointed) – they were people just like us, whose confidence proved not to be misplaced (Hebrews 11, Romans 10:11). There is great help in reading about people who were strengthened and brought closer to God and

each other by adversity (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 1:27-30). Who would not be lifted up and encouraged to keep on, by reading 2 Corinthians 4:8-5:9? Those (Christians) who have endured and have been strengthened and comforted by God are able to encourage and comfort others undergoing similar trials (2 Corinthians 1:3-5, Galatians 6:1-2).²

CONCLUSION:

Anxiety, fear, and concern are not necessarily sinful. They may be caused by physical or demonic factors, completely outside one's control. There is no promise of God that all stressful and anxiety-causing things will be removed. Instead, He promises that our resources in Christ and in Christian fellowship will be more than sufficient, and so we can bear up under the trials.

The key to the Christian's victory is **HOPE**, and the ability to wait with **PATIENCE** for hope to be realized. Our hope is not (necessarily or only) in the present world and circumstances, but for eternity. The difficult thing for the Christian is to wait without losing **FAITH** in God and in the ultimate victory that is in Christ. Jesus says, "*He who endures (whose faith endures) to the end shall be saved*" (Matthew 24:13. Perhaps the emphasis here is on soon-coming trials they would face, but the principle certainly applies to the end of life as well in Revelation 2:10).

You and I, working with the Lord and with each other (2 Corinthians 6:1-2), must exhort and encourage each other, and so much the more as we draw closer to the final day, the end of all things, etc. (Heb. 10:24-25). Until the end we are encouraged to, "Bring Christ your broken life..." The promise is that eventually we will all be made new, whole, conformed by His Spirit into His perfect glorious image (Romans 8:29-31, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:20, 1 John 3:1-2).

¹ For more detail on this point, see John Krivak's article, *Living by the Spirit*, later in this issue.

² For more on this topic, see Keith Stonehart's article, *Things Which Should Be Restored: Confessing Sins One to Another*, later in this issue.

RESTORATION MOVEMENT HISTORY:

Mission Work Among Indians

Jimmie Beller

NOTE: Jimmie Beller passed away in 2015 after a decade-long battle with cancer. He had done extensive work on a history of the church of Christ in Oklahoma, and compiled it into a 300-page book called *Oklahoma Dream Makers*, which he planned to have us publish when he made final tweaks. Unfortunately, he passed away before finishing. This article is one of the chapters in his book.

Oklahoma, in the Choctaw Language, means: "Land of the Red People."¹ This name was not officially attached to the Indian Territory until 1866. In 1834, part of Indian Territory was attached to Arkansas while the remainder was held for the Indian tribes that were forced to move from other states. Soldiers at forts, along with workers and families that came with them had a seed—the gospel of Christ. The coming of the Indians, forts, missions, cattle trails, and railroads helped the seed of the gospel to grow.

Some of the tribes went voluntarily, while others were forced to leave their homes. The Trail of Tears (1838) led many to the Indian Territory known as Oklahoma. The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole were Indian nations that came to this land with their own beliefs and systems of government. Other tribes were also sent to this territory after 1866.

The Chisholm Trail, the West Shawnee Trail, and East Shawnee Trail were routes used by the settlers. The first towns officially incorporated by the Cherokee Nation were Ft. Gibson and Downingville (now Vanity) in 1873, Webbers Fall in 1885, Chelsea and Claremore in 1889. The Cherokee law, however, sanctioned sales of town lots only to members of the Tribe. There are no accounts by members of the church recording these times.

People of all walks of life and with various occupations participated in the race to claim a part of Oklahoma.

On the morning of the state's opening, about fifty

thousand people had assembled on the four borders of the "Oklahoma County." All along the borders, North, South, East, and West, thousands of prospective homesteaders on horses, in buggies, wagons, and some on foot, were ready for the gun to sound. The claims would be rewarded to those who could first set stakes. At Exactly twelve o'clock, on April 22, 1889, buglers sounded and the race was on for the dreams and hopes for all that were there. When the day was over, nearly every section and town lot in Oklahoma County had been claimed.

The citizens of the new towns instantly settled into normal life—normal for *those* days. In just a few days, the prairie town sites had become frontier cities and there was a need for the gospel. Christians came to take part in this new hope, this new dream. Some of the homesteaders had to live in dugouts, dug in the hillsides and roofed with structures of logs and branches covered with earth.

Christians began to meet for worship, using homes, brush arbors, shade trees, barns, school buildings, saloons, and any other place they could find. Into this new territory came pioneer Christians with their dreams. They were members of the church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Church. At this time these three names described one body. They believed in the following slogans:

*"Where the Scriptures speak, we speak;
where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."*

*"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty;
in all things, love."*

*"No creed but Christ,
no other name but the Master's,*

¹ Kent Steckmesser, THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT, p. 151

no book of authority but the Bible."
"We claim not to be the only Christians,
but we want to be Christian only".
"Bible things should be called by Bible names".
"The Bible only makes Christians only, in the
Church of Christ only".

They believed that the Bible was the only guide for to how to become Christians, how to live a Christian life, and how to worship God. So they moved to this new land with this mindset.

Life was hard for both the Indians and the settlers during this period of time, because of fear of each other and because it was new way of life. There were claim jumpers, thieves, and robbers. The Indians had lost their rights and lands and were forced to move to this new land. As a result, the Indians did not trust the white man. But the white man also did not trust the red man. The earliest history of the church of Christ in Oklahoma begins with the Indians, before they came to this new land.

A large portion of the Disciples were never able, or willing, to expend the funds and effort necessary to work with the Indians. But some of the Indians had been taught the gospel before being relocated to Oklahoma.

"According to tradition, both Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone preached at a Christian Church in Athens, Alabama, which included both white and Indian members."²

Barton W. Stone apparently spoke the Cherokee language. Several of his sermons written in Cherokee are extant.³ This shows that some of the members of the Church knew their responsibility for preaching the gospel to all people and took it seriously.

We need to understand what was going on at this time with the efforts to restore the gospel. This was before the division between the Church of Christ and the Baptists. At that time Campbell and his associates were aligned with the Baptists. Their separation took place in 1830.

Joseph Thomas, Rice Haggard, and Rueben Dooley were early Christian preachers who worked

among the Indians.⁴ In 1805, Barton Stone wrote to Richard M'Nemar:

*"Brother Dooley is among the Cherokees again—His last route there was successful—some poor Indians received the gospel—He was solicited to return—He is truly an Apostle of the Gentiles."*⁵

Such independent work among the Indians apparently stopped in the 1830's. This was when President Andrew Jackson determined to move the Indians to the Indian Territory. This hardship suffered by the Indians is known as the Trail of Tears. Fear came upon the missionaries. During this government disturbance of the Indians, bloodshed was common, and some of missionary families were killed. There was a great need for missionaries to work with the Indians, but only a few preachers and their families were willing to bear the hardship required to take the gospel to them.

There was 41,000,000 acres in the Territory, and nearly 26,000,000 had been surveyed and set apart as reservations for the Indians. The Indians were gathered from all parts of the country—from Oregon to Florida—in pursuance of the general plan of congregating all the Indians into one territory.

The Creeks and Cherokees were originally from Georgia, their removal being completed in 1838. The Choctaws and Chickasaws had occupied territory on the Gulf of Mexico from the Mississippi to the Atlantic. The Natchez, Arkansas, and others were from the same neighborhood. The Pottawatomies, Sacs, Foxes, and Illinois had lived in vast territories in Illinois, Wisconsin, and the Northwest. The Miamis were from Ohio, the Iowas came from the State which now bears their name, and the Seminoles had been from Florida. The Arrapahoes and Cheyennes had dwelt in Montana and Wyoming, and the Modocs in Oregon.

The only significant Disciple missionary among the Indians during the anti-bellum period was James J. Trott. In the 1835 census of Georgia, James Trott was listed as three-fourths Cherokee. Trott began working among the Cherokee of Georgia as a Methodist missionary in the mid-1820s. He denounced the effort of the state of Georgia to strip the Cherokee of their land (as did most of the missionaries working among them), he refused to leave the Indi-

² David Edwin Harrell, Jr, QUEST for A CHRISTIAN AMERICA, p. 208

³ Harrell C. Biard (typed memorandum concerning Barton Stone and the Cherokee Indians, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee).

⁴ Thomas, Life of the Pilgrim, p. 115

⁵ KENTUCKY REVIVAL, p. 78

an Territory when ordered to by state officials, and as a result was "arrested, chained, imprisoned, condemned, reprieved, and banished [from] the territory of the state."⁶

His wife had died, leaving him with two small children. While in prison in 1831, he began writing to Alexander Campbell about his doubts regarding his faith in the Methodist Church. He saw the need to change and obeyed the gospel on October 29, 1831. James J. Trott was a missionary working among the Cherokees in Georgia from 1831 to 1837, the years of the forced "Trail of Tears."

After he was released, he married a Cherokee woman named Sallie (Thompson) Adair. Trott was determined to continue his work among the Indians. In 1856, he came to the Indian Territory and proposed the establishment of a mission in the Indian Territory.⁷ Brother Trott's mission was never regularly supported, and by the end of 1860 there were only a few converts among the Indians.

Some other preachers visited the territory to check on the work with the Indians. Brother Trott tried to help the Indians by starting schools. His work was great, but the Civil War came and support disappeared, causing him to discontinue the work. Brother Trott left the Indian Territory and died shortly after the Civil War.

A few other feeble efforts were made to establish churches in the Indian Territory. In the 1870's a missionary named John Ellis apparently established several churches among the Chickasaw, but they did not survive long. The General Missionary Society entered the field briefly, starting in 1885. For two years the society furnished partial support for Isaac Mode, a Cherokee Indian. Though discouraged, he was still determined work among his people around Prairie City. However, in mid-1886, Mode resigned and his work had no apparent lasting result.

The most successful missionary work in the Indian Territory began in 1880 with a man named R.W. Officer. He labored in Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Kentucky, and Texas before coming to the Indian Territory. He preached what the people needed to know—what they had to do to be saved. People were set in their ways and he knew it. He was blunt and right to the point. While preaching among the Indians, they gave him a name: "White-Man-

Not-Afraid-Of-Thunder."⁸ This was characteristic of his preaching.

He preached about a man providing for his own family, and other sorely needed subjects (2 Tim. 4:1-2). F. D. Srygley said that Officer rebuked the men sharply for their indolence and worthlessness, and taught them the way of God more perfectly by precept and example in the matter of Christian kindness and helpfulness toward the women.⁹

With the success Officer had with the Indians, interest in the work picked up. Officer sent for evangelist Murrell Askew, a preacher of Indian descent from Alabama. Subsequently, Askew converted a considerable number of Chickasaws. In September, 1883, Officer attended the Indian Council at Tishomingo, Chickasaw Nation, for the purpose of obtaining permission to plant a mission and establish an industrial school. When permission was granted, Officer requested that some church sponsor the project, but no funds were received. Early in 1884, Askew suddenly died and Officer was alone again with the work that most of the white men were prejudiced against. On 1866, discouraged, but still determined to do what he could do for the Indians, he discovered a provision which allowed 640 acres to any religious body which would build and conduct a mission or school on said property. However, when Texas churches again failed to heed his plea, Officer left the Indian work and went to West Texas.

Since churches were not responding to the financial need of the work in the Indian Territory, preachers were not able to remain for very long. Some of the preachers that worked with the Indians during this time were W. F. Ledlow, J. C. Estes, J. H. Lawson, Nelson, and others. These few, and others whose names only God knows, laid the groundwork to make the churches of Christ one of the leading religious forces in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma was fast becoming a "red island in a white sea." People from all around looked to the rich land of the Indians for their hopes and dreams.

At the time of Oklahoma's first land opening, there was a great need for more men to preach, and many preachers answered the call. They were not "full-time preachers" but Christians that went everywhere preaching the gospel, like in Acts 8.

⁶ MILLENNIAL HARBINGER, Feb. 3, 1832

⁷ David Edwin Harrell, Jr, QUEST for A CHRISTIAN AMERICA, p.209-210

⁸ Srygley, Fletcher Douglas, BIOGRAPHIES AND SERMONS, p. 318

⁹ Srygley, Fletcher Douglas, BIOGRAPHIES AND SERMONS, p. 320

WHEN ILLNESS STRIKES...

Kyle D. Frank

In our beloved United States, we all hope for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—in fact we revolt mentally when we feel something has impeded upon these “sacred” principles. Social media is often aflame with displeasure at whoever or whatever might be the trouble maker. We are adamant about our “rights.” Society is now aflame over various rights which some feel have been either ignored or violated. This is not a political article in any way, but I hope to make you pause over some very basic ideals that we, each and every one, face.

One facet of our lives is so basic and elementary to every single thing that we do. It should be included with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That is our health. It is vital to waking up in the morning and everything that occurs until we are tucked into our bed at night. How is your health? Is it good? Do you have allergies, maybe dry eye or some small uncomfortable affliction? I am here to see that you thank God for every single breath you take and every clear thought that passes through your God-given mind.

Being healthy is nothing short of a gift from Almighty God. Unfortunately, you enjoy it, most likely, thoughtlessly. It is basic to your relationship with your spouse, your job, your ability to do anything. Without your health, you are nothing but reliant upon the goodness and charity of others to accomplish almost everything. Imagine losing your health and descending into that helpless situation where you need everything.

Walking is taken for granted. Imagine having to rely upon a wheelchair, or to some less extent, a walker or a cane. Suddenly, you are unlike other people, you rely upon the chair, but also upon the charity of others, in most cases, to push you up hills or across busy thoroughfares. All these things hap-

pen to you in a non-stop, never-ending process. You once could run in a marathon, but now you depend on someone to help you just cross the street. Is just the simple ability of walking not a beautiful gift from our Heavenly Father? Remember that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1:17, ASV).

Your health is a gift from above, given to you in love and trust by our loving Father. What are you doing with it? Are you abusing it with drugs and alcohol? Beware!!!

But, that isn't the gist of what I am trying to say.

I am trying to warn you that illness can very well come into a healthy life, tearing it asunder and making you a shadow of what you once were. When it comes, it is very unlikely you will be including thanks for what you do have. By then, prayers will have changed; they will be specific, asking for relief from something that has be-

come very unpleasant and noisome. What will you pray for, my brother, my sister? Will you be seeking a return of “when things were good, times were easy and we could enjoy our situation?”

Having descended from being a very strong, healthy, and confident youth, I now look at life in a completely different light. I have come to no longer want those things back that I had. In fact, the situation has changed 180 degrees from those days of health and vitality. I consider it as a gift from God that I seek to enjoy each and every moment of each day, because it surely could be my last. (It could yours too, but that is a horse of another color.)

What I am trying to say, but not doing very well is that as surely as illness is unpleasant, it can also be seen as a gift from God. It is the gift of reliance.

*...illness is unpleasant,
[but] it can also be
seen as a gift from God.
It is the gift of reliance.
You have to rely on
God...*

You have to rely on God, because there is nothing that anyone could do to help you, even if they wanted to. It has brought me into a very close relationship with our Lord. I now realize that the healthy young man I used to be was want to not be in duty. There were too many distractions to follow, too many things to do. This world is full of distractions that draw us away from what is really important—serving God. Our bitter enemy is behind many of them and we really need to recognize this while there still is time. My situation has come to the point where there is no distraction that can take my eyes off of God. I am here to tell you, that is a blessing of the highest degree. Could you thank God for a disease that gradually will take you away from the world and the beautiful life that you have? Believe it or not, I have thanked him because my chances of being a faithful Christian were low—heading south. I require oxygen now (I cannot emphasize enough how unpleasant that is), but even in suffering I can

see the tender hand of our Father caring for me. I cannot do what you can in 99% of situations, but that 1% belongs to God and you would never believe what He can do with that small number!!

So, having rambled on aimlessly, let me get to the point. When you pray, thank God for your health, your life, your all. It can be taken away in an instant—or in my case, over twenty-seven years. Whatever it is, it has come down from God. Remember that God never does anything without a reason or purpose. In my case it has served to focus my mind, my life, my all on him and his purposes. My prayer is that I don't fall short in whatever purpose he has for me. Let that be your theme in health or in illness. I have also learned to praise and glorify him every situation. THAT is a true gift. Remember, part of our purpose is to glorify him, and anything that assists us in that task is a royal blessing. So, when illness strikes, glorify God in any way that you can.

The Holy Hills of Heaven Call Me

*The holy hills of Heaven call me
To mansions bright across the sea
Where loved ones wait and crowns are given
The hills of home keep calling me*

*I see loved ones over yonder
Tears are gone and hearts are free
And from the throne king Jesus beckons
Oh the hills of home are calling me*

*(chorus)
This house of flesh is but a prison
Bars of bone are holding my soul
But the doors of clay are gonna burst wide open
When the angel sets my spirit free
I'll take my flight like a mighty eagle
When the hills of home start calling me
I'll take my flight like a mighty eagle
When the hills of home start calling me*

(by Dottie Rambo)

POLITICS, RELIGION, AND RACE:

An Interview with John DeBerry

[John DeBerry has served as Tennessee State Representative for 26 years, and has been a gospel preacher for over 50. He lives in Memphis.]

What I've got in mind to talk about are three non-controversial topics: politics, religion, and race.

[Laughter] Okay, it don't get more uncontroversial than that!

Personal History

Where did you first hear the gospel?

I've heard the gospel all my life. My dad was a gospel preacher. I was born into the church twice. I was born into the church as a child in my parents' family. My great-grandparents, brother and sister Enos and Mary Garrett were Christians, my grandparents, Starling and Susie Hall, and my mother and father, John and Pearl DeBerry were Christians, so the church was just part of my life from my first waking moment.

Being a preacher and a Christian was just part of my normal desires in life. I wanted to preach the gospel ever since I was in first grade. So I was introduced to the gospel as a child in my parents' house. There was reading of Scripture in the evening before we went to bed. The prayer at the table. The talks my mother and father gave us about what's right and wrong, and what was moral and not moral. That's my introduction to Christianity.

When did you start preaching?

I actually started preaching in 1967 in the 10th grade. I gave my first formal sermon in the 9th grade, but I had been preparing to preach the majority of my life.

I tell folks all the time I had a little church in one of the big closets in my momma's house when I was growing up. My grandfather built me a little pulpit,

and I say my little church broke up because my brothers and sisters and cousins said I preached too long [laughter]. So that was my first church.

But I started preaching, I think my first sermon was at the Lincoln Street church of Christ in Alamo,



TN, 1967. And I've been in the pulpit almost every Sunday since then.

Civil Rights and Protests

What do you remember about your personal interaction with the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s?

I remember my first interaction with the Civil Rights Movement, again, from my family. Civil rights, as the way it was taught to me, with the leadership of my family, was really a continuation of what we taught as Christians. My father did not believe in violence. He marched in Memphis with Dr. King. He went to the speech that was made in Washington DC in 1963. My family, I understand, raised money for him to go; he was going to be the representative of the entire family. So civil rights was the right to have the constitutional rights that my father, as a Korean War veteran, had fought for and had stood for. We were always taught to give respect so that we receive respect. We were never taught that anything was free. We were never taught that everybody had an entitlement. We were taught that we had to work, but that the country had to be fair, to give us a chance to work, a chance to achieve, to learn, to educate ourselves, and to be successful. That's what our parents taught us—they never taught us that anything was free, that there was a free lunch, that we were supposed to wait on anyone to take care of us. We were always taught that we had a right to the opportunity to work and achieve and find success. So civil rights was not a "We're kicking the door down because of something that we want," Civil rights was peaceful protest, saying that it was time for the country to change. It was time for us to grow up, to mature, to realize that we have various cultures and ethnicities, and give everybody a reasonable and equal chance. That's what it was about.

Do you think, had it been violent, the changes would have happened? Or do you think it was the "peaceful" part that made people willing to listen?

Well, peaceful protest changed the world. I did an interview earlier, and I said that America is a child of controversy. We began in controversy. America began in revolution. So revolution, change, protest is part of our DNA as Americans. We change things that are wrong—we fix things that are wrong. That's why our constitution is so malleable. There were a

lot of things that weren't necessarily up to speed and right in America. We had our flaws, our failures, our faults, but America's faith always carried its problems. We had the Constitution, the greatest document written by man, because it was based on the greatest document *ever* written—the Word of God. Therefore, because we were Christians, peaceful protest was the only thing we knew; the only thing we would accept; the only thing we would be part of—we would not be part of anything else, because it wouldn't be Christian, and it wouldn't be Christ-like. So if more folks would think, first of all, before you protest—which is an American right—before you have your free speech, before you do what you have to do to change things in America, because America has been in change and revolution and growing and maturing for 200 years—folks have to first of all check their faith, look introspectively, and ask themselves, as the Lord said one time, "Are you building or are you tearing down?" If you're not building up, then you're tearing down. If you're not being peaceful, if you're not being respectful, then you're being destructive.

I think that folks need to realize that peaceful protest ends peacefully, and when there is anarchy and chaos, it only breeds more anarchy and chaos.

You had a well-publicized speech against the rioting going on in several cities.

That speech was entirely because of that issue, of watching what was happening in Chicago, and Washington, and Portland, and other places around the country. Watching the anarchists tearing down statues, defacing public property, burning down people's livelihood, burning down their stores, their cars, their homes—that was what initiated that speech.

That speech was no more than a continuation of some of the things that I had said in the past that led [my former party] to the decision that I couldn't associate with them anymore. [My ouster] was about my vote on the heartbeat bill and my vote on parental choice.

Do you attribute the violence today in the riots to a removal of God from the public sphere?

I've said over and over and over, we have the most spiritually illiterate, the most historically illiterate generation in the history of this country. We have folks who don't know who Jesus is, don't

know who Adam or Moses or David or Solomon are; and they don't know who George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Mary Bethune Cookman, Dr. [George Washington] Carver, or even really who Martin Luther King is—they don't know either, because they've been taught *not* to have allegiance to America. Not only has God been put out of the marketplace, but American history has been put out of the marketplace, the Pledge of Allegiance has been put out of the marketplace, true American history that shows the heroic value of men and women who put everything they owned, and everything they were on the line to get this country started—that has all been thrown away! Now our monuments are offensive—the Washington Monument is offensive, the Lincoln Monument is offensive, the Jefferson Memorial is offensive. *Why?* Because they haven't been taught to love the country—it's just the opposite! We have allowed foreign teachers and professors in our colleges and teachers in our schools who have no allegiance to America to change an entire generation of young people into anarchists instead of patriots. That's what we are suffering right now.

What is the remedy for that?

One of the things we have to do is start opening our mouths, stop sitting by the wayside and allowing the atheists, the agnostics, the evolutionists, the revolutionists from other countries who want to create their own revolution in America—it's time for folks to open their mouths and speak up. Speak up by their vote. Speak up by their activities. Speak up by the rearing of their children. Speak up by being strong in their faith. And speak up by electing men and women who fight for what we fight for and what we believe. We have sat by the side of the road, and just as the Lord said in His parabolic teaching, "While men slept..." We have slept. And all of us know the old adage, "The only thing it takes for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing." And that's what we've done—we've done nothing. Folks say, "Well, I'll pray about it." Well, the Lord prayed, but the Lord also got up from His prayers and changed the world, and that's what we've got to do—we've got to change the world. The Lord didn't send us to go along to get along. He didn't send us out to say "don't rock the boat, don't

shake the tree, don't cause no problems, don't make folks mad at you—the Lord sent us out to change the world, and we are not doing that. We are letting the world change us, and we need to change that before it's too late.

It seems like we think we ought to be meek, quiet, not saying anything when challenged.

I've preached this for 50 years: *meekness is not weakness!* Meekness is power under control. A horse with a bridle is not weak, but he is under control—that *power* is under control. When the Lord tells us to be meek, He isn't telling us to be weak, He isn't telling us to be docile, He isn't telling us to lay down and let folks walk on us, He's not telling us to allow folks to poison the minds of our children with propaganda, He's not telling us to allow the

*You do not help a man
when you tell him he
deserves something that
he has not worked for.*

greatest country that has ever been created to just be given away to those who don't love her, who want to simply dismantle her, and who want to take all of her resources. The Lord never told us to do this. He told us to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves—meaning you need to

know when to fight, and you need to know when to run. We have just been running, and we need to turn around and fight.

Politics and Entitlements

What caused you to want to enter into politics?

It's my upbringing in general. It's my mother and father's activism. My great-grandparents and grandparents' self-sufficiency—they were all business people, they owned their homes, they went to church, they worked every day. I never had a hungry day, because somebody was cooking, making biscuits, making pies, or whatever. In other words, I saw what character, what virtue, what faith was first-hand. And then I, as an adult, I see the country in a totally different direction. I see children being unraised, I see families falling apart, I men absent from the homes, I see mothers who are doing the best they can to rear the children with their meager resources, but unable to do everything that a man and a woman would be able to do. I saw politicians become corrupt—smiling, styling, and profiling instead of doing the people's business. I watched this as I grew up, and worked in television, and

preached the gospel, and at a certain point, I felt like I had to be part of the change, just as my daddy made that decision in the early 60's. He had to be part of the change, [and] I could not just stand by the side of the road any longer.

Why did you choose the Democratic Party when you went into politics?

My grandparents and great-grandparents were Eisenhower Republicans. My parents were the first to depart, when John Kennedy ran. They were a young couple, fresh out of the military. And Kennedy won the debate, and so they voted for Kennedy. Over the years, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party were only split by style of government. Remember a lot of folks who are Republicans now used to be Democrats back in the day. So it was style of government, big government, little government. It's not what it is today. Now the split is over social issues, the belief in God, the belief in life, the belief in the family, the belief in marriage—all of those things. So, when I ran in my district in 1995, it was an extremely conservative district. It had been a Republican district up till 1995—that was the first year it was a Democratic district. It was drawn Democratic, but there was a very good, healthy mix of Democrats and Republicans, and the majority of them were very conservative on these issues. So that was fine, but all of that started changing about 12 years ago [2008].

Do you think the lack of entitlements brought you up into the person that you became?

The trickiness of that subject is that the media, the liberal politicians, and (in my opinion) the propagandist and the poverty pimps—excuse the expression—have styled it toward people. What they have done is wrapped up a loss of self-sufficiency, a loss of self-esteem, a loss of self-worth—they have all wrapped it up in a nice pretty package of entitlement. And that's wrong, because one thing that characterized the people of the last generation—whether they were black or white, Native American or whatever they were—one thing that characterized them was they believed in working for what they got. They got up in the mornings, many of them in the farms or the factories, some put on white uni-

forms or blue uniforms or green uniforms, caught the bus, many of them in the rain, went and worked. They built nice communities, nice schools, raised their children, and a whole generation, like my generation, were the first to go to college. *Why?* Because they believed in working and pulling themselves up and being self-sufficient. You do not help a man when you tell him he *deserves* something that he has not worked for. You do not help a person when you tell them to expect someone else to take



care of them if they are able to take care of themselves. The sad thing about it is this: that our elderly, our sick, our disabled, our veterans who have been injured and hurt in war, many of the children who are born with birth defects—these are the people who suffer when the money is going to able-bodied people who could get off their sorry ends and go to work every day, instead of sitting around expecting someone else to take care of them. Nobody's saying that people who need help shouldn't get help—and that's what help used

to be. That's what the projects used to be. That's what the food handouts used to be. That's what welfare used to be. It used to be a hand up, "We will help you; we have a great country, and we will help you while you're down so you can get up on your feet and make it on your own." I have so many friends that those programs helped get on their feet. They eventually became homeowners, business owners, educated their children. You know why? Because they used the help, the food, the projects, whatever the government offered to stand up on their own feet, and they were proud that they didn't need it anymore. That's not what we have right now. Now we have a perpetuation of entitlements where we have generation after generation after generation that have never had a job. We have created a subclass, and we have created a permanent underclass with these entitlements.

Have Christians turned over their responsibility to help people to the government?

Let's talk about something novel. What if every family took care of their own family the way it was; where if a person had a fire, lost a home, if they lost their jobs, the family came in and took care of that person? What if the church did like it used to do?

I remember our house burned down when I was in third grade, and the church surrounded us with love. They brought us clothes and food, and they helped my parents get back on their feet while the house was being rebuilt. They brought furniture, the women made curtains—it was *wonderful*! What if we went back to the family of the church and the natural family that God gave us?

Because of the breakdown of the family—both in the church and in the home—we see folks out there with no safety net, no teaching, no upbringing, no counseling, no religion, no faith—they’re lost. The walking wounded. If the church would go back to the preaching of the gospel, the way the Lord said—the Lord told the folks to sit down, He fed them, and then He taught them. In His teaching, He taught them how to love themselves—He said “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” He taught them to love themselves, in other words, *I will help you. If you’re sick, I will heal you. If you’re ignorant, I will teach you. And when I’m finished, you get up and take care of yourselves.*

And I hate to prolong this, but remember when the Lord protected the woman who was caught in sin? She had a death sentence; in a few minutes they were going to bludgeon her body with stones, and she was going to die that day, because of her own sin—caught in the very act. Jesus saved her life, and then said, “I don’t condemn you.” But the words he said at the end of this are often forgotten from some of our contemporary teachers. Jesus said, “Go and sin no more.” In other words, *You go change your life. Don’t let me find you in this position again.*

What if we helped people, taught people, strengthened people, encouraged people, gave them skills, and taught them how to fish—what if we did this and said, “we don’t want to see you in this position again,” and actually gave the tough love that the Lord gave?

What do you think brought the changes in social policies within your old party?

I think what brought it on was what was happening with the national issues. With the legalization of abortion in 1973—that sent a signal throughout the country that America was certainly not the same place anymore. I remember my mother campaigning against abortion until her death in 1970, when I was a freshman at Freed-Hardeman College. I remember some of the things they were saying about abortion. I remember learning how Planned Parenthood start-

ed, who the people were that started it, and what was behind them starting Planned Parenthood. I learned all this stuff in the late 60s and in the 70s. So when abortion was approved in 1973, that signaled that America was gradually changing, right then and right there. Twenty years before, or let’s say 1963, in spite of all the turmoil that might have been going on in the country, when MLK made his speech in Washington in 1963, I guarantee you the majority of the people—black and white—would never have thought that ten years from now, we would be killing the unborn. I guarantee the majority of them never would have thought that would happen. But it did happen ten years after that speech, in 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States of America took away the constitutional right of life from the unborn. And now millions and millions and millions and millions of babies have suffered for it. Because of this, we have categorically changed the culture and the faith and the religion and the character of this country to where now, it’s all about whatever we want. It’s not about what the Bible says, it’s not about what’s right, it’s not what faith dictates, it’s just whatever we can get the majority of the vote for. That’s why we have that, we have the desecration of marriage, we have the killing of children, and the disrespect for parenthood and the home, and our aged and the veterans because of it.

Christians as Politicians

Do you think more Christians ought to serve in public office?

Oh, I absolutely do. Especially now. There was a time when you had the Dwight D. Eisenhowers, and you had men of character, the Ronald Reagans, the Jimmy Carters—whether you agree with them, Republican or Democrat, whether you agreed with them on everything or not, you knew they were good men who loved the Lord, who loved the country, and you knew they were going to do their best. That’s not what we see now. We see politics turning into the biggest racket in town, and the racketeers are those who run for office, the propagandists who feed people what they want to hear, not what they should be told.

Christians need to take a long look—in my opinion, of course—take a long look at Ephesians chapter 6, when the Apostle Paul was saying to the church at Ephesus, in the middle of the Roman Em-

pire, with all that the Caesars and others were doing—Paul said fighting people, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” What was Paul’s solution? *Stand!* Somebody needs to stand in the legislatures. Somebody needs to stand on the board of education when they’re trying to push these books and all of this rotten education upon our children. Somebody needs to stand in the Congress, stand in the Senate, when it’s time to put people on the Supreme Court who will make a decision based not on what is popular, but on what is right. Yes, I think Christians need to stand wherever the Lord deploys us so that we can fight the fight that we’ve got to fight. The Lord wasn’t killed at church. The Lord was killed on a garbage heap on the outside of Jerusalem as a political obstructionist by a Roman politician and a Jewish politician. *Why?* Because He stood against their politics, and for that reason, they put Him to death.

If a Christian decided to run for office, how would he prepare himself mentally and spiritually for that, and what are some dangers he would need to look out for as he is running and then serving?

First of all you got to prepare your mind, meaning, you’ve got to be a Christian. If you’re not a Christian, don’t do it. You got to be someone who has a fortified faith that is rooted and grounded. A tree is rooted, a building is grounded, and neither one of them are shaken very easily. A Christian who has a faith that is going to lead them, that’s going to give them sight, that’s going to give them vision, that when it is time to sit down and make the tough votes, you can decide between character and popularity. And those are hard decisions. I’m not going to sit here and tell you that they’re not, but I had to make decisions on voting for the heartbeat bill, I had to make decisions on voting for education that gave parents the right to educate their children as they see fit. I understood the implications, I understood the consequences. I knew that the very next day I would be called everything but a child of God in the newspaper, on radio, on billboards, or wherever they could stick my name with something negative—and that’s exactly what they did. But I was ready for it. I was ready for it, not because of my strength, but I was ready for it because of the strength of the Lord. Because He fortified me to

know what is really important, and what is really lasting.

I encourage young people to educate themselves, know what a great country this is, understand, don’t listen to the folks that are trying to teach you a changed history. They’re *revisionists* who want to make our country something that it is not. I was talking to someone the other day, a teacher, who said “Well you know, Christopher Columbus was this, that, and the other.” I said, “Ma’am, in 1492, if my memory serves me right, when Christopher Columbus sailed and found that new land, there wasn’t a democracy on planet earth—no such thing as democracy. America created this democracy. They created the one-man, one-vote, everybody-can-speak, free-speech, right-to-religion, right-to-have-your-doors-locked, right-to-carry-your-weapon system—America created this! So when the revisionists want to tell you how sorry America is, we need to go back 300 years—go back 250 years—and you won’t find anything on the planet earth like America. What’s the relevance? It’s worth fighting for.

I was like a lot of folks. I was ready to throw up my hands and say, “You know what, it’s not worth saving. It’s too far gone. I’m really tired of these crooks and politicians and liars and propagandists.” I was in that boat, brother, and you know what God did? He put a grandchild in my hands. And when that grandchild wrapped her little hand around my finger, I went back to the day that my first child and my second child [were born], and the energy I had about giving them a life, and I said, “My grandchild deserves the same thing that I had and my children had—I gotta fight for this.” And I wish more grandparents and big sisters and big brothers and uncles and other family members decided, “You know what, the children have a right to a good country. We need to fight for this country or we’re going to lose it.”

What dangers do elected Christians face?

You have to make sure you don’t sell out. It’s takes a lot of money to run for office. When people send me money, I have a pretty good war chest. You know why I have one? Because first of all I lay it back. I have learned from the church to lay by in store. At the same time, I war a good warfare, so people send money—[people] who I have fought on the floor, because they know I fight with integrity. They know what I’m fighting for. So don’t be a sellout. There are a lot of folks who want you to sell

your principles, to sell your virtue, sell your morality, sell your faith. They want you to sell out. And if you don't know who you are, what you are, and *whose* you are, that temptation will be there. They know one thing, they can send anything they want to, I'm going to put it in the bank, and use it to get reelected so I can come back and fight you again. My vote is going to stay the same. My character is going to stay the same. If I fought against your bill in 2019, I'm going to fight against it in 2020. It doesn't matter what you send. So people have got to have a resolute, rock-solid understanding of who they are, and what they intend to be, whatever the changes [around them] are.

Another thing is, you have got to have some tough skin. I've had billboards put up with my face on it, with curse words, big electronic billboards with curse words and my face on it. I've had mail-outs, nasty mail-outs, one with me on one side and President Trump on the other. And at that particular time, I had not even met President Trump. "*DeBerry and Donald: Too Conservative, Too Dangerous*." And they sent that out all over my district. I've had all types of attacks on radio. I've been called an "Uncle Tom," or "Stepin Fetchit."¹ I've been called all those things on the radio. But you know what, each time, when I don't flinch, don't change, don't alter, don't capitulate, don't compromise, my people reelect me and send me right back up there to continue to stand. That's what they've done thirteen times, regardless of what they've called me or said.

So I say to young people, have a tough skin. Know who you are. Because right always wins. Light always overcomes darkness. And God has already promised, Jesus has already promised, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." I lift up Christ in my life, in my politics, and wherever I am, and they've got to do the same.

Choosing a Candidate

What do you feel a Christian should focus on when choosing a political candidate? (And you can pass if you want to on this)

Oh I'm not going to pass on that. What we have allowed the American media to do is bombard us with personality. "Oh, you don't like this person, do

you. You don't like the way they talk. You don't like the way they dress. You don't like their hair. You don't like their mouth. You don't like their wife. You don't like their children." We have allowed the American media to make these [elections] issues of personality instead of issues of principles and platform. What I advise a Christian to do is remember what God has commanded: Don't allow yourself to be part of another man's sin.

First of all, we know that we're not electing saints. Many times, they're not even members of the church—we know that. But at the same time, the Lord commanded us "Judge a tree by the fruit it bears." What's the fruit when you look at a political office and a political candidate? The fruit is not how well they speak or dress or look. The fruit is the platform. What's the platform they're standing on? Are they for abortion or against it? Are they for the biblical standard of marriage or against it? Are they for parental responsibility in the home, parental choice, or against it? Are they for a strong military? Are they for First-Amendment rights? Are they for Second-Amendment rights? Look at the platform—that's all you can do. We aren't electing men to be elders of the church, we know there's a totally different standard there. But when you come to politics, the Lord let us know, in Romans chapter 13, "I'm involved, and there is no authority that I do not ordain." So what God is saying is, as a godly person, look at that platform and decide who you want to run your country. Because God has commanded us—He has commanded us—you go on and elect the fool if you want to, but every foolish law they pass, you've got to follow it.

Is this the reason you were...not retained...in your former party?

Oh absolutely. I don't represent them anymore. They kicked me out because I don't represent them. They said it very plainly. They had a Zoom call in the middle of a pandemic, with 24-hours' notice that they were going to talk to me about throwing me out of the party, a 26-year veteran with a good record, with good rapport on both sides of the aisle—they decided they didn't want me associated with their party anymore. That was their decision. It wasn't based on *I'm a wretched, no good person*, or that I've done something that was crooked or slanderous, it was because they said, and I quote, I "don't uphold the virtues of the Democratic Party anymore, i.e. abortion, and other social issues." So therefore, I

¹ Stepin Fetchit was the first black actor to earn \$1 Million, and was a star during his heyday, but his career slowed dramatically when many black Americans began to view his persona as echoing negative stereotypes. —Editor.

am running as an independent because of that.

Race in the Church

Getting away from political topics...

In some cities, there are both black and white congregations, and (in what experience I've had), it is often the case that the white congregations have no idea when the black congregations have an event (gospel meetings, singings, etc.), and vice-versa. I'm sure you would agree that this shouldn't be the case. What can we, who all agree we are one body, do to bridge this racial divide that sometimes makes it feel like we have two different brotherhoods?

My answer is probably going to sound rather strange after the narrative you just gave—and I agree with you wholeheartedly on the things you said: *I think we need to continue to do what we're doing.* In other words, we are opening up doors—maybe not as fast as some folks would want—but we are opening up our doors. When people visit us, they are welcome. When folks come to Coleman Avenue [church of Christ, in Memphis], whether they're black, white, red, yellow, or polka-dot, they are welcomed with open arms and loved, and they are treated well, and they leave and say “I had the best time I've ever had.” You know, they may not come back for a while; they may just have been passing through, but we open our doors.

Where we were in America, we were separate; we closed our doors, we made it law, we made it legal, we had two separate societies because the law said so. When we changed the rules, the laws, the morays, open the doors, build the bridges, open our arms and say “You're welcome,” then you just have to let what happens happen. We integrated the schools in Crockett County in 1968. It was one of the best experiences I've ever had. Now, just my family, just us, one black family, went to that integrated school for the first time in that entire county. After we went, the next year I think five or ten other black kids came. Then the next year maybe fifteen or twenty. When I go up there now, they have a whole new consolidated school—both of the segregated schools are no more. I think one of them may be an elementary school, and the other one may be an adult class school. But the fact of the matter is, once the doors were opened, people of right mind and faith welcomed each other, and the natural progression of integration happened.

The worst thing we did in America was force

bussing. That was the worst thing we could have done. Instead of simply removing the laws, saying, “You can go to whatever school you want to go to, you can be educated wherever you want”—and guess what, people of like faith, of like desires, of like economic means, logistics—the schools would have been naturally integrated, and they would have been in a lot better shape than they were [by] throwing kids on busses, riding them out to the end of town, dumping them out, and making them lose all their culture, and all their background, and all their history.

So what do I think the church ought to do? People need to be Christians. They need to be Christians. If you send an invitation to one congregation, send it to all congregations [in your area]—black or white. Send them and let them know they're welcome. If they didn't come, you can say, “We sent you an invitation. We're looking for you.” Invite preachers over. “Can your preacher come and preach for us so we can get to know you? I'll go to your church so you can get to know me.” Just act like Christians. And if we did that, that would be something that hopefully our children won't be talking about these same issues that we've been talking about for fifty years.

I know some who don't like the black preaching and worship style, and balk when anyone even comes close to it. On the other side, I know a black preacher who wanted his youth to visit a white congregation so they would understand that just because a congregation worships or sings differently doesn't mean they aren't Christians.

It goes both ways. I heard in the 1970s from many so-called “elite preachers” that there was a white theology and a black theology. There is a way white people sing, and there's a way black people sing. There's a way that black preachers preach and a way that white preachers preach—I heard all this from black people, from black preachers, from black churches, from black elders and deacons. “There's just a difference, there's a cultural difference, and we prefer this style.” That's the way it is.

The problem is it's been styled as just one-sided. That the church is not integrated because white people don't want black people to come into their churches. Well, that's equally the other side. So, the churches have not been integrated because both sides have become comfortable with their culture,

with their way of doing things, their way of singing, their way of preaching. But at the end of the day, all of us have got to preach Christ and Him crucified. All of us have got to let brotherly love continue. All of us have got to be forbearing, longsuffering, and love our brethren. You can't get around it. You can't build walls where the Lord built bridges, and still claim to be Christ-like and Christian. So all of us, black white, red, yellow, polka-dot, pin-striped, whoever we are, we've got to do an introspective examination of ourselves, and ask: *Am I being what the Lord wants me to be, for the betterment and the strength of the Kingdom?* Because right now, the church of Christ is shrinking. We're the last man standing. Everybody else

already sold out. They sold out to the abortionists, they've already sold out to women in positions that are against the Scriptures [elders, preachers, etc.], they've already sold out to the destruction of marriage, the removal of parental responsibility. The majority of these churches have already sold out. The church of Christ is the last man standing—and if we don't stand together, then they're going

to pick us apart and tear us down. The one thing the apostles preached over and over and over before they were all martyred and died, with the exception of John (but John preached it too), was unity. "Let there be no division among you." And when there is division among us, we set ourselves up for the devil to destroy us.

We have had a "Round Robin" gospel meeting, with a different congregation hosting each evening, both white and black congregations.

That's the way it ought to be. I do more gospel meetings at what we have deemed as "White congregations"—I've gone places that were known as the hotbeds of segregation, and prejudice, and hatred, maybe 30, 40, 50, 60 years ago, and found the absolute friendliest, most loving, kind people—and many times, I'm the only black face in the room! Why? Because of that community. I've gone to places where there are no black people there. If not, there's only a handful of them. Am I supposed to

say, "You know what? You don't have any black folk in here, I'm not going to come and preach"? No sir, I go and preach the gospel, and have had some of the best experiences that I've ever had. Many times [it is in] farm country, and little rural churches, little up-in-the-woods churches. Folks love on you, love the gospel—cook, man, like nothing you've ever seen. You know, good vegetables, cornbread, and I leave there feeling refreshed. At a certain point, you don't see black and white, all you see is Christians—that's all you see. And that's the way it ought to be.

[In] the Bible, race had to do with various cultures and land... the Philistines, and the Ethiopians, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and the Danites, and the Levites—and none of those signified color, none of them did.

You spoke about one of the main reasons America is in the shape it is in being that they've forgotten their history. Do you think that the church does its members a disservice by not teaching about the history of the church, especially in this country?

Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I think we need to know more about the history of the church, and we need to know more about the history of the country, because if you just go

back 300 years, you find religious oppression. You still find folks able to go to church as they see fit, even with denominationalism becoming so prevalent, folks still had a religious choice. And that originated here in America. I think it is important for folks to know about their country, and to know how many things were first in America. They also need to understand the history of the church, the sacrifices that were made, the men and women who gave their life, Jesus who gave His life for us on the cross—that this thing [the church] didn't just happen. It was planned in the mind of God. The scheme of redemption was fulfilled and perfected by our Lord's suffering, by our God's love, by the Holy Spirit's inspiration—and we need to embrace it. God provides, we possess. And a lot of us are not necessarily possessing the wonderful blessing that God provided.

Systemic Racism

Do you believe there is systemic racism in America? If so, what are some examples, and how can it be changed?

We created race. In other words, when you go to the Bible, race had to do with various cultures and land, you know, you talk about the Philistines, and the Ethiopians, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and the Danites, and the Levites—and none of those signified color, none of them did. We created color prejudice. Color prejudice is only about 500-700 years old at the best.

“Systemic racism” has been used to say that there’s a problem that can’t be solved, a breach that can’t be bridged, a break that can’t be fixed—I don’t believe that for one second. When I went to Alamo High School in 1968, there had never been a black kid in that school. Never, ever. I was the absolute first, me and my brothers and sisters. At the end of my 3 years (10th-12th grade), the principal of that school, who had never educated a black child in a formal fashion at his school, he came to me and he

shook my hand. His name was Mr. Strange. And another young man named Conley said the same thing to me. He said, “Everything that I have ever thought or believed about colored children,” (that’s the term that was used at that time), “you have changed it in two years.” In essence, regardless of what that man may have thought about black children before I got there, my daddy said, “You give respect, you’ll get respect.” He said, “You carry yourself like a man.” I’ll tell you exactly what he said, he said, “You don’t scratch your head when it ain’t itching, you don’t grin when it ain’t funny, you just be a man. If you act like a man, folks will treat you like a man.” And that’s exactly what happened.

So what if folks stop scratching their head, and grinning, and lying, and using excuses like “systemic racism”?—Yes, there is racism, but it is racism whenever there are folks who choose to pre-judge a person rather than getting to know them, regardless of what color they are. If we stop doing that, we’ll end this racism, and we’ll start judging each other by the content of character, and not the color of skin.





HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

Bill Howard

Harken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him (James 2:5).

An heir is one who is a beneficiary or inheritor of a gift or bequest which has been bequeathed or set aside in a trust to be executed at a predetermined time. In the above reference to James' writing, we note first of all that he is addressing brethren, those believers and followers of God. It is they who will be the heirs of the kingdom. It certainly was not an arbitrary statement choosing one Christian over another. The promise of inheritance is given to all who are baptized believers, whom Jesus has added to his body: the church. To be an heir then, as James alluded to, means we are in a proper relationship with God, thereby receiving that which is promised from father to child. The God in heaven who is the creator of all that exists and is the source of every blessing offered to mankind has always intended that man would follow his instructions and mold for himself, from God's desire, blessings, and promises,

a great life in this world as we prepare for the next. Peter referred to this as God giving unto us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises by which we can be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:3, 4, paraphrased). Those promises began a long time ago. In fact, they began at the time God decided to create the Universe. A caring and loving God created a marvelous habitat, referred to in the text as the Garden of Eden, and promised to Adam and Eve a magnificent place to call home: A dwelling place which contained all the necessities to build and maintain a beautiful life.

When His people were trapped and enslaved in Egypt, God said:

I have surely seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt; and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver

them out of the hand of the Egyptians and bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites (Exodus 3:7-8).

A land, Moses said at another time, with large and beautiful cities which they did not build, houses full of good things which they did not fill, hewn-out wells which they did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which they didn't plant. All these things the Israelites would inherit: Freedom from slavery and new lands and homes.

Throughout all of history, there has never been a promise made by God that was not fulfilled. As we read above, God promised to free the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, and He sent Moses and Aaron to do that. He promised to pass over the houses of the Israelites if they put the blood of the Passover lamb on the lintel and doorposts. God struck the Egyptians and left the firstborn of the Israelites untouched. After almost forty years of wandering in the desert, Joshua prepared for the crossing into Canaan, and the promise of God was fulfilled. As the twelve men appointed to convey the Ark approached the Jordan, the waters parted, and they crossed, and all the people followed until all had crossed. Joshua 4.

There are countless examples of people benefiting from the promises of God, but we will let these few suffice for the purposes of this writing. We will move on with our thoughts on preparation and inheritance to more about the promises that we hold as exceeding great and precious: the greatest and most important of which is the promise of living forever with God in heaven.

When considering the overall meaning and purpose of life and our existence in relationship with our creator, we know without a doubt there is only one truly important outcome for which we should be concerned. That, of course, is eternity, where we will be for all time after the judgment. Eternal life is something in which each of us live, time unending. In reality eternity for each of us began when we were conceived. What we now consider as death is the separation from physical life to the next phase of eternity. We know from God's word there will be no exception to this; it is for all.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

No doubt, no exclusions, no do-overs, the verdict will be unchangeable. The relationship we have with God when this physical life is done is the position in which we will be when we face judgment. Paul wrote:

...for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

As we pointed out in the beginning of this writing, God, because of his unlimited love, has always been vitally concerned with the wellbeing of His creation. This began with Adam and Eve, Moses, Abraham, etc. and on to this present era when Jesus came to earth to be sacrificed for the sins of mankind: God has expressed His love by blessings poured out to man.

Under the first covenant, a system of laws was enacted to direct man on the course of obedience to God. (Exodus 24:3-9) Various sacrifices were required to keep the people in the proper relationship with God, but in these, there was no forgiveness of sin. As the writer of Hebrews states, the old system under the Law of Moses was only a shadow of things to come; the sacrifices simply reminded them of their sins year after year. In His infinite wisdom, God decided to make a better covenant; this He would establish by and through his Son Jesus. In the new covenant with all of mankind, He would institute a means of forgiveness for all who would choose it. In this, mankind could be freed from sin once and for all.

Nearly all sacrifices in the old law required the shedding of blood. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). We know from Leviticus 17:11 that life is in the blood. We also know that animal sacrifice, animal blood, was not capable of pardoning sin. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). This is the reason that God made a way for sin to be forgiven.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:17).

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7).

And for this cause he (Christ) is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

Two things we learn from this last passage of scripture. The reason for the new testament, and the assurance that those who were in a covenant relationship with God under the old law would be part-takers of the promise of the eternal inheritance. The new was ushered in, the old done away with. Paul stated that those ordinances were against us and contrary to us and were taken out of existence and nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). Again, the words of Paul:

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:4-5).

Receiving the adoption of sons/family makes faithful Christians heirs of the eternal inheritance. Peter states of this: “an inheritance incorruptible,

and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). Jesus is the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2); Christians are God’s family; “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:16-17a). Even King David, the psalmist, had an understanding of things to come.

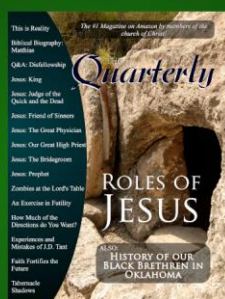
For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever (Psalms 37:28-29).

The righteous: those faithful in the kingdom. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9). The unclean will not inherit the kingdom (Ephesians 5:5). Jesus promised: “be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10b). The crown being here used figuratively as a reward that will be received. A hint of the magnitude of this inheritance Jesus revealed as recorded by John.

Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and also trust in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s house. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going (John 14:1-4).

The only true reward of value when everything pertaining to this physical life is finished: that longed-for inheritance, living with our God in that promised heaven where there will be no reckoning of time.

DIGITAL BACK ISSUES—FREE!



COBBPUBLISHING.COM/QUARTERLY

JESUS: OUR ADVOCATE

Roger Russell

[NOTE: This article was intended for the previous issue, and was accidentally omitted by the editor. Our apologies to both Roger and our readers.]

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The theme of the Bible is the redemption of man. We are told in Isaiah 59 that our sins have separated us from God. Because we are human, we cannot live our lives without sin. As Paul states in Romans 3, all have sinned. Man not only lost his earthly communion with God, but he also placed himself in danger of eternal condemnation. By himself man could not redeem his own soul and renew that relationship with God. Because of His great love for us, God devised a plan whereby man could have his sins forgiven and once again be in a relationship with God and have the opportunity for eternal life.

Through the death of Christ on the cross by the grace of God, and our willingness to respond to that sacrifice in obedience, we can be redeemed and given a place in the family of God. Once we obey the gospel and became a member of the church, we have the responsibility to live as God would have us to live in accordance to His will. As our text says above these things are written so that we may not sin.

We strive as best as we can to live above sin. As humans that is not always possible, and we are going to fall short sometimes. I John 1:8 says that if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and truth is not in us. As a result of that, our text also says that “*if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” What does this mean to you and me?

First, we need to know what the word *advocate* means. The meaning of the word advocate here is one who appears in a court setting and speaks for

the cause of another. Romans 8:34 says that Christ is at the right hand of God interceding for us. In Hebrews 9:24, the writer says that Christ appears in the presence of God on our behalf. This is all contingent on our being faithful children of God who are willing to confess our sins and then repent of them. We cannot live in brazen opposition to what Christ tells us to do and expect Him to intercede for us.

I want you to get a picture of a courtroom in your mind. Present are the judge, the prosecuting attorney, the defense attorney, and the defendant. As they stand before God, the defendant is you; the devil as the prosecuting attorney is making accusations against you regarding the sins in your life. As you listen to him, you know that you are guilty and deserve to be punished. Then you hear Jesus as the defense attorney say, “He is one of mine and he is forgiven.” As long as I am one of God’s children, Christ will continue to be my advocate and plead for me before His Father.

Jesus is the perfect advocate for several reasons. First, He is perfect. Christ never once gave in to the temptations of sin, living a perfect life. Second, He is the perfect advocate because He understands what we are facing. Hebrews tells us that He “was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin.” When you are facing the temptations and wiles of the devil, Jesus understands, because He has been there. Satan opposed Him just like he opposes you, and He knows what you are enduring. Third, He is the perfect advocate because His mercy and grace never end. You cannot get beyond the reach of His grace and forgiveness as long as you are willing to respond. The only thing that can keep you separated from God is you. Jesus loves you so much that He died for you and He is willing to do all that He can to see that you get to heaven. Salvation is not received because of some one great thing that we do, but as a result of a life of service and commitment to God and His kingdom. We cannot do this alone and one of the greatest helpers we have in this endeavor is Jesus Christ: our advocate.

THINGS RESTORED *and* THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE

Restoration. There are so many areas in which this word is used, from kitchens to cars, relationships to reputations—and in each one, the idea is always positive. Many in the church of Christ are familiar with what we call “The Restoration Movement,”¹ but many more don’t realize what this restoration was all about.

In a land filled with many different religious bodies, all claiming to be Christians, all claiming to follow Jesus Christ, but all holding different teachings, different practices, different methods of salvation, different organizational structures, different names—in face of all this, many brave men in different places (including, but not limited to, the United States) set about to do away with all denominational party names, creeds, doctrines, and practices. Their rallying cry was always the Bible—let the Bible speak on these issues, and accept what it says, while rejecting anything added by man.

In a time when a large majority of the people were *practicing* their religion, this movement eventually met with fierce opposition—mostly peaceful (if by it, you mean no physical violence), but sometimes not (look up Joe Blue sometime, and read about the bomb that someone hid in his pulpit).

We owe a lot to these men who went before us, for they saw things which needed to be restored to the biblical pattern, and they acted on it. It took courage and hard work and study and the willingness to open themselves up to criticism and rebuke—all to make sure that they were following God’s way, and not man’s.

Unfortunately, there has arisen a generation that seems to think that all the work is done, that the process of restoration of biblical faith, practice, and worship is completed, and that (in essence) we have nothing left to learn or improve on. They think that “the church of Christ” is doing everything perfectly—and any suggestion that we might still need to examine things, or God forbid, *change* something we are doing to conform better to the Scriptures, is considered *heresy*! And worse than this is the fact that some of the things which were once a given in the Lord’s church have disappeared from use in many (and in some cases *most*) congregations or in the lives of Christians.

The articles in this section are designed to help us appreciate and understand some of the areas in which restoration took place, but also to challenge us to look at other areas in which restoration is still needed.

We hope you find this section encouraging, enlightening, and challenging. And please, *please, please, PLEASE* don’t pass judgment on Michael Shank’s article just because of the title... Give it a read.

-The Editor.

¹ The movement, in academic circles, is misnamed “The Stone-Campbell Movement,” a historically inaccurate moniker. This misnaming, by definition, removes anyone who worked independent of, or prior to, Stone and Campbell as being a part of our history. It also misleads people into thinking that there was a singular movement created by Stone and Campbell, when the truth is that there were several independent movements which all had the same goal: to restore the church to its biblical roots and purity. This is why we at *The Quarterly*, as independent researchers, refer to it as “The Restoration Movement.” It must be noted, for full disclosure, that Campbell and some who worked with him, called what they were doing, “the current reformation.”



THINGS RESTORED: *God Authorized Mechanical Instruments in the Church of Christ*

Michael Shank

Do you find the title strange? Controversial? Maybe such a false idea that it borders on (or leaps headfirst into) heresy?

Go with me for a moment down an unusual thought-path that will, I assure, prove that God did, indeed, authorize mechanical instruments to be used in worship within the Lord's church. Just please be kind enough to read the entire article before you turn me over to Satan.

PREFIGURING

Have you heard of the term "prefigure"? Prefigure means to show, suggest, or announce by an antecedent type, image, or a likeness.¹ It is a type of prophesy established in a representation of a thing, and usually revealed from one biblical age to another. God, through His magnificent foreknowledge and mastery of engineering, used prefigures from the dawn of time.

Prefigures at Creation

Here's an example of a prefigure of the cross found within the beginning of creation: Genesis 2:16-22 reveals two opposing trees in the garden: the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with a fruit that brought death, and the Tree of Life with a fruit that brought life eternal.

The fruit of the Tree of Life was a prefigure of Jesus Christ, as He was the seed of woman in the

prophecy of Genesis 3:15, and the fruit of her womb (Luke 1:42). Eating of this fruit brings eternal life (Rev. 22:14, John 6:53-55).

The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil brought eternal death. Peter alluded to this when he wrote that Jesus bore our sins in his own body "on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24) – the tree being the prefigure of the cross, which Satan meant for evil, but Jesus used for good.

Tabernacle Prefigure

Many things that were prefigures were earthly, limited, imperfect, and time-restricted.

The tabernacle (also referred to as sanctuary and tent of meeting), the priest, and the elements organized an amazing compilation of mystery and symbolism that prefigured the coming Messiah and His blood-bought kingdom.²

God provided Moses with specific instructions for the construction of the tabernacle, along with the inner sanctuary (referred to as the Holy of Holies and/or Most Holy Place (Exo. 25-27). God said:

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it (Exodus 25:8-9).

God dwelled with His people in a tabernacle

¹ 1. "Prefigure (transitive verb)." To show, suggest, or announce by an antecedent type, image, or likeness. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Retrieved September 15, 2020 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prefigure>

² Pitre, B. 2011. Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper. Image Publishing, pp.93-97.

made with human hands – the tabernacle being the prefigure of Jesus’ blood-bought church—the glorious body of Christ—as a whole. Jesus said:

Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

Stephen said: “Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48).” Paul posited, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Yes, we are the tabernacle. This is critical to understand as we approach my original premise: God authorized mechanical instruments in the church of Christ.

Instruments were introduced in Genesis 4:21, but (unless I am completely mistaken) we find nothing of their use in worship to God in the tabernacle before David’s command found in 2 Chronicles 29:25, which says:

And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.

2 Samuel 6:5 says:

And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

God’s people used external, mechanical instruments in worship prior to the New Testament church – the instrument being the prefigure of the human vocal cords. Vocal cords are a *bio-mechanical* instrument made without hands, and are housed within God’s tabernacle, the church. The cords consist of non-linear, bio-mechanical “vocal fold tissues” that react to cyclic and finite strains of tension, compres-

sion and air-flow,³ all perfect in design to make sounds for communication and praise.

Man-made instruments of music were earthly, limited, imperfect, and time-restricted (in relation to the worship and “music” that would please God in the coming New Testament age); replaced by the fulfillment of all things made by Him, through Him, and for Him (Jo. 1:3; Col. 1:16).

Do the churches of Christ use instruments of music? We certainly do. We use *bio-mechanical* instruments made by the hands of God. Our instruments are portable, and need little to no training to use. Almost every part of the tabernacle has one, and many are, sometimes (mis)used too much (Prov. 10:19).

Solomon wrote, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (Prov. 18:21).

Friend, bringing an imperfect, man-made instrument of music into worship is going backwards – it’s trading the perfect for the imperfect; and why would any right-thinking person want that? We can’t look back (Gen. 19:26; Luke 9:62).

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18), and added to His body, the church (Col. 1:18; Acts 2:47) when you broke thru the surface of the watery grave (Rom. 6:3-6).

I am sincerely thankful and for this opportunity to write to you given to me by my brother, Bradley Cobb. We hope that you might pray for him, his family, and his every effort to teach, edify, reprove, rebuke and exhort?

If you have found any of my thoughts or understanding of scriptures to be in error, please kindly correct and help me by writing to me at: michaelshank2020@gmail.com

³ 3. Journal of Biomechanics, Sept. 18, 2020. T. Co-chereau et al. Mechanics of Human Vocal Folds Layers During Finite Strains of Tension, Compression and Shear [abstract]. Science Direct Publishers. Retrieved September 22, 2020 from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0021929020303791>

THINGS RESTORED:

Shepherds Among the Flock

Andrew D. Erwin

The organization and government for the church has been provided by God. Such an organization consists of independent local congregations, each being overseen by a group of elders. The minister facilitates in the teaching of the gospel, and the deacons assists in serving the congregation. Each congregation is made up of men and women who have obeyed the gospel and have been added to the church by God Himself (Acts 2:42, 47).

The following New Testament passages are provided to show that the will of God is for a plurality of elders¹ to oversee each local church:

- 1.) And when they had ordained them **elders** in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended **them** to the Lord, on whom **they** believed (Acts 14:23).
- 2.) Take heed therefore unto **yourselves**, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
- 3.) And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the **elders** were present (Acts 21:18).
- 4.) Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons (Phil. 1:1).

¹ In the biblical sense of the word "*pastor*," the words *elder*, *bishop*, *overseer*, and *shepherd* are synonymous. The pastor and the evangelist clearly had two different positions in the early church.

5.) For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee (Titus 1:5).

6.) Remember **them** which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of **their** conversation (Heb. 13:7).

7.) Obey **them** that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for **they** watch for your souls, as **they** that must give account, that **they** may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

8.) Is any sick among you? let him call for the **elders** of the church; and let **them** pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (Jas. 5:14).

9.) The **elders** which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. 5:1).

Elders (also called bishops, presbyters, pastors, and overseers) are to be ordained in every congregation (Acts 14:23). The qualifications for elders are also found in the Bible (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). The work of the elders is also found in the Scriptures. These men are to feed and oversee the flock (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). They are to guard against "wolves" and "gainsayers" – shepherding the flock as examples and not as lords of God's heritage. They are to look to the Chief Shepherd, Christ Jesus, as an example in all things (1 Pet. 5:4).

Concerning the churches of Christ as they existed in the First Century, the overwhelming testimony of church history has been succinctly stated by the venerable church historian John Lawrence Mosheim. He states:

“The churches of those early times were entirely independent; and none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each was governed by its own rulers and its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles had the particular deference shown them, that they were consulted in difficult cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no form of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among primitive churches; nor does there even appear, in the first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches, from which councils and metropolitans derive their origin.”²

Moreover,

“There reigned among the members of the Christian Church, however distinguished they were by worldly rank and titles, not only an amiable harmony but also a perfect equality... Nor, in this first century, was the distinction made between Christians of a more or less perfect order, which took place... The rulers of the church were called either presbyters or bishops, which two titles are, in the New Testament, undoubtedly applied to the same order of men.”³

Thus,

“Such was the constitution of the Christian Church in its infancy, when its assemblies were neither numerous nor splendid. Three or four presbyters, men of remarkable piety and wisdom, ruled these small congregations in perfect harmony, nor did they stand in need of any president or superior to maintain concord and order where no dissensions were known... Let none, however, confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church with those with those of whom we read in the fol-

lowing ages... A bishop during the first and second centuries was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at the time, was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house.”⁴

Jesus Christ is the “good” Shepherd (John 10:11) and the great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20). Of the passages in the New Testament provided to confirm the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies, it would be difficult to find one which does more to fix an application of the “shepherd” prophecies and metaphor of the Old Testament than does the tenth chapter of John’s Gospel (vv.1-38).⁵ The text presents the familiar concept of false shepherds similar to those condemned in the prophets. During the ministry of Christ the Jewish religious leaders had come to rival the wicked shepherds of the time of the prophets.⁶ The Good Shepherd who is Christ, in comparison with the Shepherd Father of the Old Testament, is the rightful leader of the scattered flock (cf. Matt. 2:6; 9:36; 10:6; 15:24; Mark 6:34). Jesus has the familiar voice the sheep recognize and follow (John 10:3-5, 16, 27). He leads them out and goes before them just as the Father has done for Israel (Ps.23:3; 31:3; 68:7). Jesus is contrasted against the wicked shepherds considered to be thieves and robbers (John 10:8). In contrast to the thief who comes to kill, to steal, and to destroy (John 10:10), Jesus has come to save, to rescue, and to give life (John 10:7, 9, 10). Unlike the false shepherds who, as mere hired hands, abandon the flock flee at the sight of danger (John 10:12-13; cf. Ezek. 34:1-10), Jesus is willing to die (to lay down His life) to protect and save His flock (John 10:11-15; cf. Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31-32; Mark 14:27-28).⁷

Jesus is the Servant Shepherd through whom God would lead His people and do His will (John 10:14-15, 18, 38; cf. Ezek. 34:11 ff.). He is the Shepherd which will gather all the sheep into one sheepfold

⁴ Ibid, 85-86.

⁵ In recognition of this correlation, Klink relates this passage to Ps. 23, musing, “Because Christ is my shepherd, I shall not want.” He sees this to be the main idea of the passage. For further reading see, Edward W. Klink III, *John* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 455.

⁶ G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 461-2.

⁷ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 586.

² John Lawrence Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol.1 (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1959), 86.

³ Mosheim, 81.

(John 10:16; cf. Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 37:22–24). His protection is sure and strong. No one can snatch the sheep from the hand of the Good Shepherd (John 10:28).⁸ Thus, Jesus is depicted as a Shepherd to His flock, leading His flock, going before them, and protecting them. The relationship Jesus has with His disciples is central to His leadership effectiveness as the Good Shepherd. The imagery emphasizes the care and compassion of the Shepherd and the dependence of the flock upon Him.⁹ The sheep know Him (cf. Amos 3:1–2), recognize and hear His voice, and faithfully follow Him.¹⁰

Pursuant to the shepherd imagery of Christ over the flock is the imagery of under-shepherds to follow His example in caring for the church. Just as the Father did not want Israel to be left as sheep without a shepherd upon the death of Moses (Num. 27:17), Christ did not want the church to be left without pastoral care upon His ascension to His throne in heaven (Acts 20:28–29; cf. Jer. 23:4).

It is in the utilization of under-shepherds that we find a combination of elements of strong directive leadership, elements of collaboration, elements of participation, and elements of apprenticeship leading to the spiritual transformation of the disciples.¹¹

⁸ Carson agrees that the focus of the power in this statement is on Christ's power to protect His sheep. For further reading see D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 392.

⁹ Leland Ryken, et. al., "Sheep, Shepherd" in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 785.

¹⁰ George R. Beasley-Murray explains the concept of an intimate relationship denoted in this passage, in particular in vv. 14–15. "In vv 14–15 we have a good example of how concepts in different languages can draw close, yet still require discrimination. In the Greek tradition knowledge is thought of as analogous to *seeing*, with a view to grasping the nature of an object; for the Hebrew, knowledge means *experiencing* something. In the area of religion, therefore, knowledge of God for the Greek is primarily contemplation of the divine reality; for the Hebrew it means entering into a relationship with God. This latter is vividly, if not shatteringly, illustrated in Amos 3:1–2. On this background vv. 14–15 have a clear meaning: the mutual knowledge of the Shepherd and his "sheep" denotes an intimate relationship which reflects the fellowship of love between the Father and the Son. (In 17:21 it not only *reflects* but is *rooted* in that relationship, expressed in terms of the Son being 'in' the Father and the believers being 'in' the Son." George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 170.

¹¹ Walton has keenly observed one modern practice exempted from the shepherd leader model. He writes, "Politi-

In truth, it appears that modern church leadership theories have been comprised of certain elements of the biblical shepherd model, while discarding other key elements. Only when all of the principles set forth in the New Testament are included can the complete picture of shepherd leadership be viewed.

As an under-shepherd, Peter was entrusted with the responsibility to feed the sheep (John 21:15–17).¹² Peter's work of feeding centered upon teaching and preaching, or "the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). While tasked with feeding the flock, and granted a measure of authority, the apostles continued to view Christ as the Chief Shepherd and supreme Overseer of the church (1 Pet. 2:25; 1 Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:20). The apostles recognized that the Lord added to the flock the souls who were being saved (Acts 2:42, 47; Col. 1:13). Moreover, the Lord called and sent the preachers (Rom. 10:14–17) who were commissioned with preaching the gospel whereby calling men to Christ (2 Thess. 2:14). The apostles recognized their work was to serve as humble stewards of the flock and the work entrusted to their care (1 Pet. 4:10–11; 1 Cor. 4:1, 6). Sometimes the apostles were even required to shepherd one another, as was the case with Paul and Peter regarding fellowship between Jewish and Gentile brethren (Gal. 2:11–14), and as is the case in congregations which have accusations brought against an elder (1 Tim. 5:19–20).

Just as Jesus received the work of shepherding from His Father, He handed over the task to Peter and the rest of the apostles. Peter then passed along the function of shepherd leader to elders in the churches.¹³ To ensure faithful nurturing, guidance, and protection for the flock, the Lord gave qualifications and stipulations for shepherd leaders in every congregation (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).¹⁴ Just as

cal wrangling does not take place in Yahweh's council, and his rule is supreme." John H. Walton, *Old Testament Theology for Christians: From Ancient Context to Enduring Belief* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 41.

¹² The New Testament passages noted must be considered against the backdrop of the wicked shepherds during the time of the Old Testament prophets as well as during the time of the ministry of Christ.

¹³ Gert Breed, "The *Diakonia* of the Elders according to 1 Peter," *Die Skriflig* 50, no. 3 (August 2016): 4.

¹⁴ The New Testament depicts *elders* (pl.) serving as shepherd leaders within each congregation. See Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 28–29; 21:18; Titus 1:5; Heb. 13:7, 17. Elders were also called bishops, presbyters,

Jesus was a constant companion to the twelve, elders are to remain among the flock (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:2), caring for, encouraging, and guiding the church.¹⁵ Yet, the shepherd's ongoing challenge was teaching the flock to obey the Lord's commands.¹⁶ Breed observes, "If 1 Peter 5:1–4 is seen as a description of the service of the elder, it is firstly clear that it is rooted in the authority of Christ; secondly, the service or ministry of the elder is intended to assist believers to persevere amidst suffering and temptations."¹⁷

A shepherd leader directs the flock and helps the flock to navigate a faithful course in the world, determining direction for the flock, while following the lead of the Good Shepherd.¹⁸ As shepherd leaders follow the example of Christ,¹⁹ the church follows them (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3). But, just as Christ did not lead by example *only* (cf. John 14:15; 15:10), elders are not to lead *only* by example. The flock is commanded to obey and submit to those who are watching over their souls (Heb. 13:17). The elders have been entrusted with "charge" over the flock (1 Thess. 5:12). If the shepherd leaders are faithful in communicating the word of God, the flock must obediently follow them as they follow Christ (cf. Phil. 4:9).

The shepherd leader is a servant leader who oversees the flock as a voluntary service to the flock (1 Pet. 5:2), hoping to protect the sheep from harm.²⁰ His interest is not in lording over the flock (1 Pet. 5:3), like the wicked shepherds from the prophets or from the ministry of Christ. He *serves* because it is his desire to serve and to teach those whom he leads to be servants as well. By serving the flock, the shepherd is imitating the shepherd

leadership of Christ (cf. Mark 10:43–45). Shepherd leaders are active participants in the ministry, serving as pedagogical models of proper behavior and desires.²¹ Such leaders are desirous to see their flock involved in the ministry and mission of Christ and to use their talents and abilities to fulfill their respective ministries and thereby bring glory to God.

The desire to see the spiritual maturity and health of the flock realized prompts the development of relationship, discipleship, and biblical education. Sheep become transformed as they come to mimic the faith of the shepherd.²² Through ongoing discipleship and a constant state of spiritual mindedness, the sheep are transformed and develop the mind of Christ. Shepherds must lead the flock to an environment conducive to encouragement and edification, both individually and collectively. In such an environment spiritual growth will be achieved and numerical growth will occur (Eph. 4:11). The flock will be safe and multiply.

From Father to Son, Son to apostles, apostles to elders, elders must also encourage shepherd leadership among the flock. There is a point to which every Christian is called to provide pastoral care to one another, which is borne out in the numerous "one another" passages of the New Testament.²³ The mutual edification of the body of Christ consists of love, encouragement, forgiveness, fellowship, teaching, and care. Each of these actions should be considered aspects of healthy shepherd leadership. Various relationships within the flock will also require direction and guidance to come from one another (see Titus 2:1–8). Each Christian should desire to be a shepherd leader when the situation calls for it, looking unto the example of the elders of the congregation, and ultimately Christ as the "Chief Shepherd and Overseer of our souls."

pastors, shepherds, and overseers depending upon the passage and the given translation of the Bible. For an orthodox discussion of the duties of elders from the perspective of a scholar among churches of Christ in America, see Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 318 ff.

¹⁵ K. Thomas Resane, "Leadership in the Church: The Shepherd Model," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 70, no. 1 (May 2014): 1–6.

¹⁶ Resane, 2.

¹⁷ Breed, *Diakonia*, 4.

¹⁸ Resane, 4.

¹⁹ For Gunter, shepherd leaders must not only follow the techniques used by Christ, but even more so, His motivation for shepherding. See Gunter, "For the Flock," 9.

²⁰ Breed, "The *Diakonia* of the Elders according to 1 Peter," 7.

²¹ Gregory E. Lamb, "Saint Peter as 'Sympresbyteros': Mimetic Desire, Discipleship, and Education," *Christian Education Journal* 15, no. 2 (2018): 203.

²² Such is the premise for Lamb's article. Gregory E. Lamb, "Saint Peter" 189–207.

²³ "One Another" passages in the New Testament include: John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 12:10; 12:16; 13:8; 14:19; 15:14; 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; Eph. 4:2; 4:25; 4:32; 5:21 Col. 3:9; 3:13; 3:16; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 4:18; James 4:11; 5:9; 5:16; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8, 9; 5:5; 5:14; 1 John 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5).



THINGS RESTORED: THE LORD'S SUPPER

EACH AND EVERY FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Chris Gardner

Each Sunday as members of the Lord's church, when we gather with our fellow brothers and sisters, the main purpose of our gathering is to partake in remembering the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We do this with the remembrance meal, also known as the Lord's Supper. In this meal we, as followers of Christ, acknowledge what Jesus accomplished on the cross (that He willingly died for our sins), while also reflecting on the high price (Jesus' life and blood) that it took to make such a thing as salvation possible.

We read in the book of Acts that just weeks following this monumental event in human history, certain religious principals were being taught to the first Christians. Immediately following Peter's sermon (Acts 2:14-39) in which three thousand Jews were converted to Christianity (v. 41), we read in v. 42 the first mentioning of the church's acts of public worship: the preaching God's Word, maintaining fellowship, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and prayers. When we couple this verse with what is later written in Acts 20:7, showing that these first century Christians gathered every first day of the week and partook of the Lord's Supper, we have all the evidence a person needs to understand what God's will is on the matter. God clearly indicates, as recorded by Luke, that His desire is for all those who have been placed into Christ (His spiritual body—the church, Eph. 1:22-23) are to gather each and every first day of the week (Sunday) to have fellowship with one another, hear God's Word pro-

claimed, offer up prayers of thanks and supplication, and collectively, while still assembled, partake of the remembrance meal (Acts 20:7).

So maybe a fair question that needs to be answered is why did Christians in the first century meet to take the Lord's Supper? And why do members of the church of Christ continue to do it today?

In order to answer these questions, one needs only to look back to the gospel accounts when Jesus (on the night He was betrayed) instituted this important act of worship for His apostles to teach to the church going forward.

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:14-20, NKJV).

As we read here this remembrance meal (instituted by Lord Jesus) was done following their ob-

servance of another meal: the Passover. The Passover meal was to be eaten by every Jew each year to remember how God freed His people from the clutches of Egyptian control. But maybe one of the more important aspects of the Lord's Supper being instituted during the Passover, is that it helps us verify what was used by the Lord in above passage.

The Passover was also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Mk. 14:1), due to what was eaten during this meal. We are given all the details in the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus of what was to be eaten, when this meal was to be eaten, and how the meal was to be eaten. A lamb (sheep or goat) without blemish was to be taken from each family head (v. 4-5) and roasted in fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (v. 6). And the Jews were to eat this meal with a belt around their waste, with the sandals on their feet, staff in hand and in haste (v. 11) for the night they first ate it they were commanded to be ready to leave immediately when they were given the word.

So using what they had that night following the observance of the Passover feast, Jesus used unleavened bread and wine which was commonly drunk with their meals as the emblems to be used in the Lord's Supper.

We also need to recognize that at that time when Jesus instituted this meal, He had not yet gone to the cross and the new covenant about which He speaks in this section had not yet been enacted. Jesus here was foreshadowing the events that would happen that very next day. But the significance of this meal continues on to this day as Christians remember each and every first day of the week what was accomplished by Christ on the cross. For that is what Jesus instructed these men to remember.

We later read in the book of First Corinthians the apostle Paul relaying what He was taught by the Lord and the significance of this act of worship.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink

this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:23-29, NKJV).

Paul taught this to the Christians in Corinth due to how they were mishandling the meaning of the meal. They were making the Lord's Supper into just another meal, completely devaluing its entire importance (v. 17-22). So Paul shames them and tells them if they cannot understand how to keep this remembrance meal separate from their times of feasting, it would better for them to eat at home and just eat the Lord's Supper when they met.

But Paul echoes the Lord's instruction as given to the twelve men that were gathered for the Passover meal. Each individual who is in Christ is responsible for eating the bread, which represents the body of Christ that was given for our sins, and drinking of the cup with its contents (the fruit of the vine), representing the blood that was shed for our sins. We also read further that if the Lord's Supper is taken in an unworthy manner (like reducing it to a common meal), the warning (as Paul was instructing those in Corinth) was their worship would be in vain and they would be guilty of putting Jesus on the cross and shedding His blood.

So the simple answer to why Christians took part in remembering the Lord's Supper in the first century, and why we still do so in the Lord's church today, is because Jesus (the Son of God) who now has all authority in heaven and earth has commanded such.

Jesus took the opportunity He had with their observance of the Passover meal to implement another meal of great significance going forward—a meal to reflect back and remember the sacrifice, the pain, the humility, and the high price Jesus paid, all so that man could be granted the gift of salvation (Eph. 2:8).

But, despite the evidence from the Bible and what the first century church did, there are many religious organizations today who claim to be followers of Christ, that do not adhere to the practice of keeping the Lord's Supper each and every first

day of the week.

For example: The Baptist church only partakes of the Lord's Supper once a month, the Methodist church practices the Lord's Supper quarterly, the Presbyterian church partakes of communion once a year. While the Adventist church deems the taking of the Lord's Supper as being not all that important and has no regular date.

This leads me to an important question that needs to be asked and answered: *Why is something that was so important to our Lord being played off as being not all that important by people who claim to follow Him?* Remember that Jesus knew He was going to die in less than 24 hours, yet He took the time to give these instructions to the very men He knew would go teach it in His church.

This event is so important, in fact, that it is recorded in the Bible by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul.

I have heard it argued by those in these denominations that the reason why they do not partake in the Lord's Supper each week is because doing such would only degrade its significance. To that, I would in rebuttal ask: "Why then do people gather each week to worship at all, if there is a fear that doing such will devalue its significance?"

I have also heard, from those with firsthand experience, about the effects of not remembering the Lord's Supper each week as commanded by our Lord. Someone once relayed to me that one time, when attending a Methodist service, by chance it was a service in which the Lord's Supper was offered. This individual shared with me how the youth, not understanding the significance of the meal or the emblems and what they represent, were taking the wafers (that represent symbolically the body of Christ given on the cross) and throwing them at each other during the service. How sad!

If the Lord's Supper was taken each week, and a member of the congregation was given the honor to explain each and every week what the bread and fruit of the vine represent (the body and blood of Christ), and the congregation were taught how incredibly important it is for us each and every first day of the week to remember the monumental sacrifice that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did for us—then perhaps it wouldn't be seen as some joke to amuse the youth.

That brings us back to the theme of this issue, *Things Restored*. Being a member of the Lord's

body requires us to adhere to not only the teachings of the New Testament, but the examples that were set for us as seen in the early church, recorded in Scripture. And according to the book of Acts, the church in its infancy meet together (fellowship) on each and every first day of the week (Sunday) and broke bread (partook the Lord's Supper).

"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..."
(Acts 20:7)

When we read in the book of Acts how the early church partook of the Lord's Supper each and every first day of the week, the thought that the Lord's Supper could be devalued and taken quarterly or monthly or even once a year seems *unthinkable*. And reason is... it *was*.

This year has seen a lot of churches, including many churches of Christ, close their doors due to Covid-19, and many denominations have yet to open back up their doors. But if we have learned anything from that experience, it is that worshipping God is a blessing, and never something we can undervalue the more we do it.

And the same goes for partaking the Lord's Supper. Each week we as Christians are to come together to worship and offer our thanks, love, gratitude, and respect to God. And during this time it doesn't seem too trite to remember and reflect on the single greatest moment and accomplishment in human history. For our part in receiving the greatest gift of love ever given to mankind, the one who gave Himself for our salvation asks us to remember His death each first day of the week.

Thankfully there is a church that does this. Its members, coming out of many different denominations, restored the teachings and practices of the New Testament church. All of God's commands are put at the forefront, and we speak and follow what the Scriptures teach and are silent where they are silent. Things commanded by God in His word have been restored in this church—the church of Christ, the same church we find written about in the New Testament (Rom. 16:16).

Since the first century church remembered the Lord as He commanded, and they did so with the right attitude and understanding, we are without excuse if we are not doing the same today.

A photograph of a man with glasses, wearing a dark t-shirt, sitting at a desk and reading an open Bible. He is looking down at the text with a focused expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk with some other items.

THINGS WHICH NEED TO BE: BIBLICAL LITERACY

Adam Cozort

Literacy –

“The quality or state of being literate, especially the ability to read and write.

A person's knowledge of a particular subject or field” (Dictionary.com).

In our normal sphere of discussion, especially in the realm of education, a discussion of literacy would revolve around the first definition in the above statement. However, in our discussion, our consideration will not hinge on the ability of individuals to *read* the Bible, but as is stated in the latter definition, on their *knowledge* and *understanding* of it.

Having knowledge of the Bible requires far more than simple acknowledgement of its existence. It entails knowing what is contained within it and the ability to communicate its content to others. For one to truly be considered knowledgeable, it necessitates more than vague assertions and simple affirmations. It requires the ability to discuss the details and intricacies of its contents with understanding and discernment.

Therefore, the idea of Biblical literacy should be regarded as *the level of knowledge and comprehension of what is found within it*. It gauges a person's acuity to discuss and instruct from its contents accurately and effectively.

Within the confines of Scripture, God has continuously declared the necessity of Biblical literacy and the dangers of ignorance. Of Abraham, the Lord stated:

For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him (Gen. 18:19, ESV).

The patriarch was acknowledged by God as being one who would command his children and household in the way of the Lord by means of righteousness and justice. This first required him to have sufficient knowledge of God's commands to communicate and exemplify them.

As Moses is preparing the second generation of Israelites to enter the Promised Land, he commands them to retain the literacy of each generation by regular teaching and instruction. In handing down the commands of God, he acknowledges:

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, ESV).

Within the confines of the New Testament, similar refrains are heard regarding the knowledge and use of God's Word. Paul wrote in his letter to Timothy:

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer (2 Timothy 2:14-17, NKJV).

Paul's admonishment to his preaching companion emphasizes the need for handling the Word of God correctly. It requires not falling prey to the unknowledgeable fighting and pandering that distracts and ruins those who are involved in it.

In each of these passages, and many more like them, the Scriptures declare the necessity for God's people to be Biblically literate, and to prepare the next generation to be the same. Alongside those admonishments in Scripture are many statements illustrating the dangers of Biblical illiteracy. In the days of Israel, God said through the prophet Hosea:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children (Hosea 4:6, NKJV).

And in the New Testament:

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil (Hebrews 5:12-14, ESV).

Given the preponderance of evidence in Scripture for the necessity of God's people to be knowledgeable and interactive with the Bible, it is often frustrating and disheartening to see the lack of Biblical literacy among Christians. I have spent a great deal of time in many congregations over the years. Within our congregations we have good Bible students. They know the Bible well, converse in it fluently, and teach it regularly.

However, there are many, far too many, in our

congregations who know extraordinarily little about the Bible. They never are seen teaching others because they do not know the answers themselves. They rarely read their Bibles, instead relying on snippets of sermons, occasional Bible classes and internet-generated sayings to direct their paths. Their children struggle to grasp the concepts of Scripture and are often unreliable in their attendance at activities of a non-entertaining spiritual nature.

How do we raise the bar on Biblical literacy? How do we help people move from the quicksand of Biblical ignorance to standing on a firm foundation of faith and understanding?

While it is unfortunate, the primary place of emphasis resides in a location we cannot forcibly enter – the heart and home of the individual. In the earlier passages of our discussion, the Lord discusses the need for daily, regular interaction with the commands and principles of God. These can only be accomplished at home, with the diligent approach and enforcement of the individual. No individual can stand over another and force the reading and absorbing of the knowledge of Scripture. Until the desire is cultivated in the heart of an individual to want to know more and understand better, no amount of begging, pleading, or cajoling will have an impact.

That being understood, there are many areas in which the church can improve in cultivating a heart that desires Biblical literacy. It begins in the place we often give the least amount of directed thought and preparation to – our Bible classes. However, instead of beginning with our children's classes, it is the adult classes which are often the most ignored and in need of the initial impact of our attention.

In my experience, most congregations formulate their adult Bible classes in one of two ways: either the teacher selects whatever topic/Scripture he desires, continues until he has exhausted what he wanted to say, then it repeats with a new teacher; or there is a selected 13-week study that is utilized to overview whatever text/theme the author examined, and the text is read in class with minimal additional input.

While neither of these approaches is inherently wrong, the method with which they are often presented leaves much to be desired. In most adult classes with which I am acquainted, Christians have become accustomed to the lecture approach. There is often little interaction beyond the occasional question or comment. There is also little expected of

the student other than to sit and listen. In fact, one of the fastest ways for a preacher or Bible class teacher to get in trouble is to try to give a test over what has been covered or survey the student's knowledge in a particular area.

I have been told on numerous occasions, in multiple congregations, that the adults stopped going to school a long time ago and could not be expected to continue "education" now. One friend told me of an instance where the congregation nearly fired a new preacher because he had the audacity to hand out a quiz to the adult class over the passages of Scripture they had been covering. If you have never walked into an adult class with a stack of questionnaires for them to fill out about their studies, the looks generally range from shocked, to comical, to angry.

It is amazing that we generally expect our men who desire to preach to attend a college or school of preaching to become Biblically literate enough to be able to communicate the Scriptures to us, but then balk when they come back expecting the members to put in some of the same type of work to reach Biblical literacy. How can we expect to fulfill an expectation of God that requires toil and effort with a minimum level of either? Yet, once an individual gets past the age of thirty, that seems to be what we expect. It is also why so many members who have been in the church for thirty years know little more than what they did when they began.

However, our struggles in Biblical literacy also extend to our children's classes. It is unfortunate that today when you open most teachers' packets for children's material, there is a great deal of filler, fluff, and activities—but extraordinarily little Bible. Now, I understand and value activities and illustrations for children, but far too often the curriculum placed before our teachers and students is short on Biblical literacy and long on emotional affirmation. Many high school Bible class curricula (which are the children's classes I normally teach) spend most of their time illustrating being kind to everyone, being joy-filled and honest, and not giving in to temp-

tation. This is generally accomplished by taking a single verse or short teaching of Jesus as a proof-text. While those things are important, far too many students have left our Bible classes for the world unable to explain why the principles they have been taught are important or why they matter beyond the fact that the Bible said so; they do not understand why God's Word has authority. They have asked hard questions in Bible classes only to be met with teachers who are unprepared to answer them and, consequently, tell them to ask their parents (who are, too often, equally unprepared to answer for the aforementioned reasons).

Because of our inability to properly prepare our children, they grow up with only a smidgen of the Biblical literacy they need to fight a world bent on their destruction. Parents then wonder what happened when larger numbers of each progressing generation leave the church.

You see, it all goes back to one primary factor – Biblical literacy. The fact that God stated about His people in days gone by, "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" should scream to us the immense importance of ensuring we are Biblically literate to God's standard. It is not enough to be satisfied with our own level of competency in Scripture, nor is it sufficient to be able to say I know more than someone else. Each of us must know God's Word well enough to stand on our own two feet, with our own understanding, to be sufficiently able to prove to the world why we believe and practice what we do.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil (1 Peter 3:15-17 NKJV).

WWW.SEARCHTV.ORG

THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *Stricter Judgment*

Jim Mitchell

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” – James 3:1, 2 (NKJV)

While there are a multiplicity of subjects which may need to be addressed regularly with regard to “restoration” in order to keep us from drifting away from “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), the subjects of teaching and communication seem to fall through the cracks. Perhaps you have, as have I, witnessed classes (of young people especially) dwindle and die as a result of teaching which does not relate to the questions students have about Scripture, the information which they desperately need (of which they may not even be aware), or the practicality of living for Christ in a culture which is becoming more and more anti-Christian. Teaching involves more than just knowing what Scripture contains, it must also include the ability to relate the Word of God to the listener/student in understandable, applicable ways.

When Paul writes to the Christians in the city of Thessalonica, he, in a very practical way, describes

vital qualities and characteristics of the heart and attitude of one who is instructing others in spiritual matters. He begins the second chapter of First Thessalonians with a reminder of their dedication to the Gospel and the boldness with which they shared the message.

“For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict” (1 Thess. 2:1, 2).

Enumerated in verses 3 through 12 are qualities which should be found in everyone who shares God’s Word with others. Within verses 13 through 20 Paul states the positive results of those listening and applying the message from the teacher who possesses the qualities he has mentioned in this passage.

Teaching involves more than just knowing what Scripture contains, it must also include the ability to relate the Word of God to the listener/student in understandable, applicable ways.

FAITHFULLY TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD INVOLVES THE...

THOUGHT BEHIND IT – *“For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as*

pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts” (1 Thess. 2:3-4).

The motive of the heart is very much involved in the way the teacher prepares the blessed task of instructing others. For one to fail in faithfully and accurately proclaiming the gospel would, short of ignorance, involve the fostering of a personal agenda in which fraudulent, impure motives (*error or uncleanness*) would amount to manipulative trickery (*deceit*). The thoughtfulness which goes into the teaching process must be anchored in the preciousness of being “*entrusted with the gospel*” given to those who proclaim the “*glorious gospel of the blessed God*” (1 Tim. 1:11) which, as Paul wrote to Timothy, “*was committed to my [our] trust.*” Those who are privileged to instruct others need to view their task with such significance that adequate time is spent in preparation of what will be shared with those being taught. It has often been stated that the teacher, with the thoughtful study and research done in preparing for the class to be taught, learns more than the students. Such should always be the case.

EXPRESSION OF IT – “*...even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness – God is witness*” (1 Thess. 2:4b, 5).

More than knowing the facts, Paul includes the manner in which the message is proclaimed. HOW something is stated is as significant as WHAT is stated. To the Christians in Corinth, Paul wrote that his manner of teaching was “*not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Cor. 2:4). The “*cloak of covetousness*” in 1 Thess. 2:5 would indicate motives of the teacher were self-serving rather than God-fearing, and suggests a thought similar to what Paul wrote in Second Corinthians, noting that some were “*peddling the word of God*” rather than proclaiming it from sincerity (2 Cor. 2:17). Thoughtful preparation and a concern for the way the Truth of God’s Word is expressed hinges upon what Paul mentions in 1 Thess. 2:6 – the...

ATTITUDE IN IT – “*Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ*” (1 Thess. 2:6).

A focus upon the eternal significance that God’s Word will have upon the students, and the desire to remove any selfish motive or intent from both the preparation and the proclamation of those eternal

truths to those we teach, demands that the attitude of the teacher be focused on the students, not self. In writing of his desire to send Timothy to the congregation in Philippi, Paul stated:

“...I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:19-21).

The significance of Timothy’s attitude of sincere concern for the condition of the Philippians, along with his vital concern for the things of Christ, made him the perfect individual for Paul to send to Philippi. Seeking the well-being of others, placing their needs above our own, and maintaining the attitude of a servant entrusted with the Gospel of Christ, are as necessary in the life of the teacher as both one’s knowledge of the truth of God’s Word and the words used to express that truth.

CARE & CONCERN IT SHOWS – “*But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children*” (1 Thess. 2:7).

Of all of the qualities listed thus far, perhaps this one needs more emphasis than its predecessors. Our approach in answering questions and dealing with the concerns of our students needs to follow the instructions Paul gave Timothy concerning the demeanor and care the “*servant of the Lord*” has for others.

“But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,” (2 Tim. 2:23-25).

Gentleness and humility toward our students goes hand in hand. They are not options, but necessities. Paul not only states the gentleness shown to those in Thessalonica, but instructs Timothy to have that same gentle, patient, humble care even when “*correcting those who are in opposition.*” Our care and concern for our students is shown, in part, by the way we answer questions and the way we help them come to a knowledge of the truth. The tone in which those answers are given or those concerns are addressed says much to the student about the level of

care and concern the teacher has for them.

HEART IT POSSESSES – “*So affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us*” (1 Thess. 2:8)

Not only is it the case that Paul spent time in Thessalonica, limited as it might have been (Acts 17:1-9), he also wrote two letters to that congregation to further encourage and instruct them. If the instruction, fellowship, and influence ends after a class time of 45 minutes, and there is no interaction of any sort until the class resumes once again – does the teacher really possess the heart for each student which Paul suggests in the above verse? How might involvement and/or encouragement of the student outside of class-time impact their life? I know there are many important things which vie for the teacher’s time, but perhaps those of us who are charged with sharing the most precious message in the world with souls given into their care need to frequently reflect on how our influence can extend to those students beyond the formal time of instruction. Paul wrote letters back to those he had taught. He sent other teachers to them. He was always anxious to receive word about what challenges they faced and how they were growing in Christ. Perhaps we should make it a point to do the same.

EFFORT IT INVOLVES – “*For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God*” (1 Thess. 2:9).

Verse nine blends into what Paul stated in verse eight. The significance both of the message being proclaimed and the people with whom that message is shared is, in part, known by the activity of the teacher among those being taught. Brief as his time in Thessalonica might have been, Paul made a positive and lasting impact upon the Christians in that community. The effort of which Paul writes would serve as a visible reminder of his commitment to the Thessalonian Christians and to the Gospel of Christ throughout their lifetime and for every generation which has followed. The goal was to never be a burden to any of them in any way, but to faithfully preach “*the gospel of God.*” Paul’s effort “*night and day*” was apparent, his commitment to “*the gospel of Christ*” was without question, and such devotion and focus carried much weight in the impact Paul had on the way the Thessalonian Christians embraced Christianity.

RIGHTEOUS LIFE IT INCLUDES – “*You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory*” (1 Thess. 2:10-12).

One of the greatest lessons any teacher can share is to live in such a way that the students see the practical application of what they have heard in the classroom mirrored in the life of that teacher. Those lessons cannot be seen unless the teacher spends time “*among you who believe.*” Encouraging, exhorting, comforting, and charging students to follow the lessons learned is only effective if the application of those lessons is very visible in the life of the teacher.

THE IMPACT OF THE TEACHER UPON THE STUDENTS – (1 Thess. 2:13-20)

In the last part of the chapter, the impact Paul and those with him had on the residents of Thessalonica is well noted. “*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus*” (1 Thess. 2:13, 14a). “*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing: is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy*” (1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

Truly the greatest joy a teacher of the Gospel of Christ can possess, in connection with teaching, is seeing students of God’s Word believe it, embrace it, obey it, and continue to live by it. Please never take the task of teaching lightly for, as teachers, we shall indeed “*receive a stricter judgment*” (James 3:1). May we endeavor to always possess the qualities of the teacher which Paul beautifully lays out before us in this letter to Christians in the city of Thessalonica. May we always be aware of the precious charge we have been given by God to faithfully teach His word, and may we endeavor to always pursue that task with the humility and gentleness of a servant’s heart.

THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE:

CONFESSING SIN *One to Another*

Keith Stonehart

When I hear someone talk about “confessing sin,” the first thought that comes to mind is someone – who has committed some major indiscretion – responding publicly at the end of a sermon. There is a time and place for that type of confession.

However, what is even more important is the ordinary, day-to-day, informal confession of sin to one another.

Sadly, I’m afraid this is almost non-existent in the lives of many Christians. And the fact that many are not confessing sin to one another should concern us in the church.

Over the years, I have both heard and even presented lessons on the various aspects of “Keeping the church faithful.” What I have discovered from my own experience, however, is that there are many congregations that suffer from unfaithfulness already, yet do not realize it. Not because they don’t dress the part, show up to services, check off all the acts of worship, etc. It has more to do with the fact that they don’t engage in true fellowship. It’s not that they need to *keep* faithful, but rather they need to get back to a lost fundamental to actually first *become* faithful.

You see...

...We draw lines.

...We keep secrets.

...We are funny creatures.

On one end of the spectrum, there is a mindset

that shares everything in our lives publicly via social media, and on the other end of the spectrum we share nothing with anyone and keep major secrets.

What makes the difference?

I believe for the most part, when it comes to things we know are wrong, or a horrible mistake of sorts, we keep those things pressed down either due to shame or guilt.

As human beings—the so-called “top of the food chain”—admitting weakness and asking for help almost becomes a phobia.

The fact that we’re not confessing sin to one another is not evidence we’re not sinning; it is evidence we’re keeping our sin a secret.

Why This Should Concern Us

The fact that we’re not confessing sin to one another is not evidence we’re not sinning; it is evidence we’re keeping our sin a secret.

Chances are there are Christians in your congregation who regularly look at pornography, abuse pain medications, or are engaged in sexually immoral relationships. Or perhaps they’re struggling with more “socially acceptable” sins like greed, gossip, or pride. Either way, their sin is destroying them spiritually and emotionally.

They may be fully aware they have a problem, but they’re not saying a word. But then again, maybe you are the one secretly struggling with sin, terrified to confess it to anyone.

Every Sunday, people ask, “How are you?” You smile and say, “Doing good.” But inside you’re say-

ing, “I’m not doing good at all. I’m a mess, but I’d be devastated if anyone knew that!”

This is not healthy.

More importantly, it is not Christ’s plan that Christians struggle secretly and silently with their sin, terrified to confess it to anyone.

I would go so far as to say, a congregation in which there’s little to no confession of sin is a congregation in which there’s little to no understanding of the gospel or what it means to be a church family.

CONFESSION IS THE PREREQUISITE FOR EVERYTHING THAT GOD WANTS TO DO IN OUR LIVES

No Justification without Confession

The church is a group of people who are in the state of “being saved” *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).*

We are not being saved because we are good people. We are being saved because we realize our need for forgiveness and are clinging desperately to the cross of Christ. Our ongoing need for cleansing is something we must continually bring to the forefront of our minds through confession. If we don’t confess our sins, we become self-righteous...

And the self-righteous will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 5:3 – Sermon on the mount).

The apostle John wrote:

“If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 1:8-2:1).

But I’m sure someone is saying, “But that doesn’t say I have to confess my sin to another per-

son. Why can’t I just confess my sin privately to God? Why can’t I just say, ‘*God, be merciful to me a sinner*’?”

You can and you should confess your sin privately to God. But you need to ask yourself this question, “Do I want to confess my sins privately to God because I want others to think I’m better than I really am?”

We often say, “No one needs to know about my sin except me and God,” because we want to keep others in the dark about who we really are. If we’re not careful, this can easily contribute to a cycle of hypocrisy and self-righteousness in ourselves and in our congregations.

Emboldening Others to Confess Sin

When a Christian friend confesses sin, they are usually wondering, “Will I still be loved and respected? Will they think less of me?”

The truth is, I always love and respect them even more. I admire their courage and their humility. Their confession makes me want to be like them.

Confessing your sin to someone else isn’t just about you. It’s also about them. Your confession gives them the courage to expose their true self.

When a congregation has Christians who are regularly confessing their sin to one another, it creates an environment of courage, grace, and healing. People know they don’t have to struggle in secret. People understand they will still be loved even when others know who they truly are. Again, I’m not talking about going in front of the whole congregation necessarily. I’m talking about you building relationships with a handful of Christians with whom you can be real.

And when you confess your sins to them, you give them permission to do the same. Someone has to be courageous enough to go first.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he

[A] congregation in which there’s little to no confession of sin is a congregation in which there’s little to no understanding of the gospel or what it means to be a church family.

is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load (Galatians 6:2-5).

Without confession, I can bear nothing with you—I can't bear anything that I don't know about. Without that, we cannot fulfill the law of Christ.

We don't confess because "we think we are something" – but Paul says don't deceive yourself. Confession begets confession. And then burdens can be shared .

United in the Battle against the Flesh

Don't get the impression we should create an environment where we all simply sympathize with each other's sins. Sometimes another person's confession comforts us because we can walk away saying, "Good, I'm glad to know I'm not the only one who struggles with that."

We need sympathetic ears, but we also need brothers and sisters in Christ who will join us in a holy hatred for our sin. We need to be Christians who will not just say, "Thanks for sharing that."

We need brethren who will join us in the fight against our flesh so we don't just admit our sin, we STOP it.

When we confess our sin, we need to think of it like going to a doctor, saying, "Cut out my cancer. Destroy it. I don't want this in me."

We need to realize our need to be taught, encouraged, and admonished.

If a young man says, "I'm struggling with pornography," he doesn't just need to hear, "Aw, I'm sorry." He needs to be given advice on how to get rid of the problem. He needs real love. He needs accountability...

He NEEDS PRAYER

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be

healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:13-20).

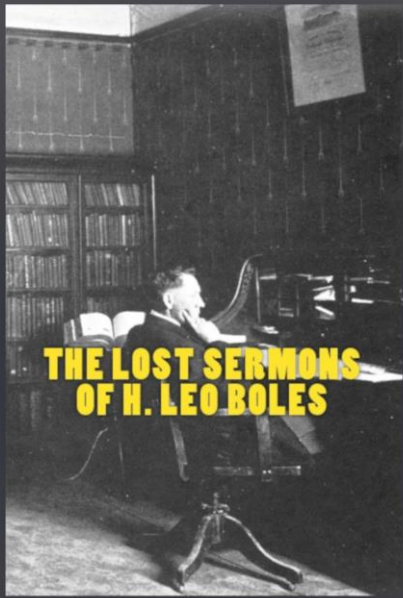
The Bottom Line

We need to seek out Christian friends to whom we can confess our sins, who will sympathize with our struggle, and who will join us in holy hatred for our sins.

As a Christian you must take the initiative to form intimate relationships with other Christians and regularly "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another" (James 5:16).

This is God's plan for His people.

This is how to keep the church "Faithful".



**THE LOST SERMONS
OF H. LEO BOLES**

THE LOST SERMONS OF H. LEO BOLES
\$12.95

CobbPublishing.com



THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE: **FELLOWSHIP** *Outside the Church Building* Joseph McWhorter

A discussion like this must have seemed alien in the first several decades of Christ's kingdom. By modern archaeological accounts, the establishment of church buildings did not come until the mid-second century. In Acts 2:46, Luke records that the new converts were meeting in the Temple grounds and in private homes. Through the book of Acts, he also records apostles sometimes meeting and preaching in synagogues during their travels.

The reason this is even a discussion surrounds a union of the ideas of fellowship and the church building itself. Once a month, many churches have a "fellowship meal." Many congregations have a "fellowship annex" or "fellowship hall." "Fellowship" has become a word relegated to designated spaces and times. This is much the same as what has happened to the concept of worship in modern Christianity. We should see a distinct problem if we do not see both fellowship and worship in the daily lives of average modern Christians. We should be concerned if the majority of Christians only see each other on church property.

In the early church, fellowship was a lifestyle. The word translated "fellowship" was used in the context of the time the Christians spent together (Acts 2:42), the intimate relationship with God (1 Cor. 1:9), approval of Christian leaders for other Christians (Gal. 2:9), financial contributions to the needs of others (Rom. 15:26), and the mutual experience of persecution (Phil. 3:10). Fellowship was not an activity that was reserved for a specific time and place, but a dominating lifestyle shared between members of the community of faith.

Elements of that lifestyle are found at the end of Acts 2. Luke records, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the*

breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). He later wrote, "*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved*" (Acts 2:46-47).

Fellowship meant that they took care of each other. In Acts 4, we read about the extent to which the disciples in Jerusalem were willing to go for their brothers and sisters. This attitude went so far that they didn't view their personal property as personal any more, but now corporate. The majority was not stingy in any way but gave to each other abundantly as there was a need. The most amazing statement is found in verse 34, "*there was not a needy person among them.*"

Fellowship meant community teaching and worship. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:16, "*let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*" Nowhere in this context is Paul exclusively talking about special Sunday assemblies of worship. They are certainly not excluded from the conversation. But these verses are about everyday Christian life.

Acts 2 makes it clear that Christians met together in each other's homes on a regular basis. The reasons seem to be for studying, worshiping, and eating together. The writer of Hebrews talks about the benefits of this regular meeting (Heb. 10:24-25). Keep in mind how often we interpret this to exclusively talk about our modern Sunday worship meetings, and how we often misapply this verse as a condemnation to hell-fire of anyone who misses a single

*We should be concerned
if the majority of
Christians only see
each other on
church property.*

worship service, regardless of the reason. The verses read, *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together; as is the habit of some, but encourage one another; and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* The purpose of this passage was not to guilt Christians into an obligatory hour of worship each Sunday (or three hours if you are really faithful). It was to remind them to be active participants in the family of Christ.

All this has become so important in 2020. We have lived through “the year of COVID.” Many church leaders have made the difficult decision to temporarily cease the worship assembly in person and meet online or in small groups in homes. I want to personally thank all the leaders who have been trying to make good decisions during this time and with incomplete information and no precedent. Each leadership’s decision looks different. There is no “right answer.” Thank you for your prayerful decisions, for the shepherding of your flocks, and for the efforts towards devotion toward God and safety for your sheep. All that said, most of us have become acutely aware that Christianity, and particularly fellowship, must go farther than our church building assemblies.

We mustn’t let meeting for coffee, sharing dinner, making phone calls to check on each other, and hav-

ing family game nights be something of the past. And I don’t mean any of these as organized “events” on the church calendar. I mean being an actual family. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to talk about the church in terms of a human body. I don’t know of any human body that is only together once or twice a week. That tends to be a constant sort of situation. Yet we try to be the body of Christ with only periodical and obligatory fellowship.

Fellowship is a lifestyle of faith. And it starts with leadership. If we want our churches to look more like the church of the first century with the support, unity, and love of a functional family, then we need to lead by example. We need to set up those dinners, coffee dates, and game nights with our Christian family. We need to not get caught up in the trap of only “fellowshipping” with the people we get along with best or when we “have to” with the rest of the church. That will be more difficult as COVID-19 lingers on as do its effects. But fellowship doesn’t need to be within six feet. We can fellowship through many of the tools God has blessed us with like Zoom or Skype. We can make phone calls; we can spend time in parking lots. But regardless of how we do it, let’s make sure we do not neglect the beautiful fellowship God has given us.

[Amen! – Editor.]

FREE BIBLE RESOURCES
ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANY DEVICE.

Our high-quality video Bible classes, sermons and devos give your church access to a Bible teacher whenever you need one.

Search BibleTalk.tv on:

Apple YouTube Twitch Vimeo Spotify Google Alexa Prime Soundcloud Roku

BibleTalk.TV



THINGS WHICH
SHOULD BE:

FASTING

Jason Floyd

It's so hard to stay focused! Look around you right now. How many distractions do you see? Perhaps there's a TV in the corner, a laptop nearby, music playing, and a whole stack of books on that ever-present "to-read" list. Maybe your phone just alerted you to something, or kids are screaming in the background. Distractions are everywhere, and they make focusing on one thing for any length of time extremely difficult. I wonder how many of you that are reading this article will take the time to read it all the way through, simply because it is longer than a post you might read on social media.

In each issue of *The Quarterly*, you'll find articles that are chock full of scripture references, because they were written by men that believe His Word is the only source of truth; yet, even among those who take the time to read the articles, I wonder how many just glance over the references? I know I, for one, am guilty of just reading the content, getting the gist, and skipping over the most important part – the scriptures. Does this sound like something you do? If it does, I would suggest that it's not because you are a heathen on the cusp of apostasy, or that your life is not centered on the priorities a Christian should be focused on. I would propose that in our day and time, we simply have an overload of information, making our ability to focus on one subject for any length of time extremely challenging.

Pick a topic. Any topic. I mean, literally ANY topic. A few keystrokes and you can have an entire library of information from both sides of the argument. Oh, you weren't thinking of a controversial topic? Too bad, someone disagrees with you anyway! We are bombarded with information from everywhere in ways that our grandparents never could

have conceived. Long gone are the days when the only voices we heard were those of our family and friends, and the only words we read were from the collection of books in the study.

Therefore, I would suggest that although fasting has become uncommon in the Lord's church today, we need fasting now more than ever before. When done the Biblical way, fasting allows us to slow down, clear our minds, and more properly submit to the will of God.

One example of fasting in the Bible, found in 1 Kings 9, recounts the struggles of the prophet Elijah. He had many distractions in his life too, not the least of which was Jezebel planning his gruesome demise. Elijah listened closely for the voice of God, assuming that an omnipotent God would speak to him through strong and powerful forces. But wind, earthquakes, and fire, as powerful as they are, did not contain the voice of the Lord. It came only in the stillness of a gentle breeze, after the noise around him had ceased. Similarly, God told David to "be still and know" in Psalm 46:10.

Even under the new covenant, God puts a high priority on being alone and quiet with Him. As a matter of fact, Jesus began His ministry with 40 days of alone time and an extended fast (Matthew 4). Fasting is also the only reason ever given for a husband and wife to withhold their bodies from each other (1 Cor. 7:5).

God knows that we need time without distractions to seek Him completely. Fasting removes one of the biggest distractions in our lives and helps keep us in a humble state of mind. We all must have food to survive, and the ability to eat is a basic human right of existence. To withhold it from ourselves is to withhold the basic control we have over

our lives and to turn over our very beings to God. It is during these times that God is often best able to “speak” to us – not in the same way as He spoke to Elijah, but with our minds opened and our hearts humbled by fasting, we can become more aware of and encouraged by God’s truth. 1 Peter 5:6 says, *“Humble yourselves, then, under God’s mighty hand, so that He will lift you up in His own good time.”*

Christians’ methods of fasting can be as unique as the individuals participating. No scripture requires a specific length of time or place. We only know it is to be done privately, and not to make others think better of us (Matthew 6:16-18). Most of us certainly could not survive, much less benefit, from 40 days without food like Jesus did. It is important to remember that the purpose of fasting is to bring us closer to God and His will, and that participating in ways that would adversely affect our health would never accomplish this. Likewise, fasting at a time we were going to abstain from food for other reasons, or when it is particularly convenient, such as just before a medical examination, may not offer spiritual benefits either. If we do it at a convenient time, we have probably missed the point. Some, for health reasons, will not be able to skip meals at all; however, as we have already briefly noted, there are more ways to fast than to skip meals. Again, in 1 Cor. 7:5, spouses abstained from sex for a brief time to focus on prayer and fasting. It may be that spending some time away from Facebook, TV, the internet, favorite hobbies, or all the above are even more important for you than a fast from food.

Fasting is often used at the start of great endeavors. We certainly need to spend time in prayer over insignificant decisions and events, but difficult decisions or events with far-reaching consequences require an extra level of devotion to prayer – and this emphasizes the beauty of fasting. Fasting allows us to slow down and truly seek God’s counsel and wisdom. Barnabas and Saul not only fasted and prayed before their missionary journey in Acts 13, but the men sending them away did so as well. Making a major decision, especially one with eternal ramifications, deserves more than a few moments in prayer. Before we purchase an expensive product, we will undoubtedly spend time on Google, researching to be sure we are making a wise choice. We should be devoting *much* more time talking to God about decisions that will purchase our valuable time and effort.

Some momentous events in life we control, but many negative situations arrive without warning. Death, sickness, family problems, and financial issues can all destroy our peace. When we face these hurdles, we must lean heavily on God and beseech Him with more than a passing prayer before we fall asleep at night. Just as fasting and prayer is often used together, so also fasting and mourning frequently accompany each other in the Bible, especially under the old covenant. Extending this correlation into the new covenant, Jesus said that after He left, His disciples **would** mourn and fast (Matthew 9:14-16).

In whatever manner we fast, or with whatever methods we use, having an appropriate mindset of prayer and humility is crucial to being effective in this process. A dear sister once told me that when fasting, every time you feel hunger pangs or urges to eat, you will remember to pray. Fasting is irrevocably linked to prayer; to fast without spending most of the time in prayer would be like trying to exercise without moving your body. Although we can pray without it, fasting can enrich our prayer lives in unexpected and glorious ways!

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON FASTING

We partake of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week because of a biblically approved example (Acts 20:7), and rightfully so. And we stand firm against anyone who would say this practice is “optional.” But there are more passages in the New Testament that discuss fasting, give examples of fasting, and give instructions on the proper way to fast than there are on taking the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week—yet for some reason, almost every Christian and preacher I have met believe it is an “optional” thing.

Jesus never said, “If you fast...” but “When you fast...” (Matthew 6:16-18). He said that it was inappropriate for His disciples to fast while He was on earth with them, but that when He left, “they will fast (Matthew 9:15).

If Jesus said His disciples would fast, and He gave instructions on the attitude we should have when fasting, and we have divinely-approved examples of the early Christians fasting—why is it that most Christians today don’t do it?

-Editor.

THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Jamie Beller

Among the dangers presented by the world is that of minimizing things that are essential. Often regarded as being irrelevant are the Bible, faith, worship, and the church, just to name a few. Yet, not only does the world minimize such things, far too often, by proclamation practice, are such things minimized by the religious world that professes to be followers of God.

One area in which the world has adversely influenced many is in the attitude of church discipline. Part of this influence has resulted in some congregations being afraid to proclaim what Scripture says concerning the subject, much less practice what Scripture says concerning the subject. Further, the adverse influence has often led to objections toward the practice of church discipline.

1. ***“If we discipline one, we must discipline all, because we all sin.”*** There is a difference between one who is walking in the light, but sins and repents, and the one who is walking in darkness.

2. ***“Church discipline is unloving and unkind.”*** Is it more loving and kind to allow someone to continue in sin without correction? Is it more loving and kind to compromise the purity of the congregation by not practicing church discipline?

3. ***“We just won’t use them.”*** Whether they are used or not, they are still lost.

4. ***“They have already withdrawn themselves***

from us.” The responsibility of the church does not end nor change because of the sinner’s attitude and actions to withdraw themselves. Whether they stay or seek “refuge” at another congregation, they are still lost. What saves them is not a change of location, but a change of life brought forth by repentance.

5. ***“Someone may cause trouble if we discipline them.”*** We must obey God no matter the cost (Acts 5:29). Are we any better off to forsake God’s command for church discipline than we are to forsake His command to believe and be baptized?

6. ***“We have no right to kick someone out of the church.”*** Church discipline is a matter of the church withdrawing itself from a member who refuses to repent; not a matter of kicking such a member out of the church.

At times, the ignorance and indifference of the world toward church discipline has adversely influenced “Christians” to become equally ignorant and indifferent toward the subject. Despite this ignorance and indifference, church discipline is among the “things restored and things that need to be.” But why?

BECAUSE THE CHURCH MATTERS!

While so much of the religious world diminishes the importance of the church, Scripture certainly

expresses the importance of the church. Consider the various things found in Scripture that express the very thought of how much the church matters.

- The church is according to the purpose that is eternal (Eph. 3:8-11).
- The church is according to the prophecies that are of old (Is. 2:1-2; Dan. 2:44).
- The church is according to the promises made by Jesus (Matt. 16:18; Mark 9:1).
- The church is according to the purchase made by Jesus (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23ff).
- The church will be presented to the Father as a glorious church (Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:24).

The refusal to Scripturally practice church discipline diminishes the importance of the church just as much as those who deny the identity and importance of the church.

BECAUSE THE CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE MATTERS!

It may very well be that the practice of church discipline has become such a forgotten and forsaken practice to the extent that we no longer understand, nor appreciate the cause for why church discipline is to be practiced Scripturally. In his first Corinthian epistle, Paul declares,

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Cor. 5:11).

Brother Wade Webster comments,

Although members of the same spiritual body were supposed to be mingled or joined together (12:12-27; cf. 1:10), this fellowship was conditional. If a brother walked disorderly, as this brother at Corinth was doing, fellowship was to be withdrawn from him (2 Thess. 3:6; cf. 1 Tim. 6:5). Notice that they were “not to eat,” or to intermingle socially with this brother (Rom. 16:17; 2 John 11; Matt. 18:17).

It should be noted that practice of church discipline is not limited to the spiritual context of fellowship, it has a bearing on the social context as well. The effectiveness of church discipline depends

greatly on understanding this. As brother Webster observed,

...church discipline is only effective to the degree that members personally disassociate themselves from the one disciplined. If the congregation, as a body, withdraws, but the members continue to fellowship socially with the brother, the discipline will not be effective. Those who continue to associate with the brother become partakers in his evil deeds and are in need of the discipline themselves (1 Tim. 5:22; 2 John 9-11).

While the consequence of church discipline ultimately demands withdrawing from the brother walking disorderly, Paul seems to indicate several causes for which church discipline must be practiced.

The first cause for church discipline is to save the soul of the erring brother (1 Cor. 5:5). While this is certainly true with the withdrawing of fellowship from the erring brother, we must understand that saving his soul is the cause for which the other two components of church discipline—preventive (Matt. 28:19) and corrective discipline (James 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1)—are to be practiced.

Another cause for church discipline is to sustain the purity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6). When Scriptural discipline is neglected, among the things at stake is the purity of the church. This thought seems to be under consideration when Paul uses a proverbial statement concerning leaven (1 Cor. 5:6-8). Brother Robert R. Taylor, Jr. notes,

The old leaven (the incestuous man) is to be purged. This needed action would allow them to be a new lump and minus the leaven of lasciviousness now in their compromising midst. During the Jewish Passover they made doubly sure that all leaven was removed from their house in order that they might observe the annual Passover as Jehovah had prescribed in the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 12:15-20). Christ is the Christian’s Passover. He has been sacrificed. In feasting upon Him (the service, love, honor and worship we extend Him) we are obligated, Paul avers, to keep the spiritual feast without old leaven or minus this man’s licentious fellowship.

Essentially, the sustainability of this spiritual feast and fellowship with Christ depends a great deal on

keeping the church pure. Thus, to sustain the purity of the church, so as to enjoy spiritual feast and fellowship with Christ, church discipline must be practiced.

Another cause for which church discipline must be practiced is to strengthen the church. Church discipline, when practiced scripturally, ought to strengthen the church in its reverence for God, and respect for the head of the church—Christ (Eph. 1:18ff; Col. 1:18ff). Following the punitive discipline against Ananias and Sapphira, “great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things” (Acts 5:11). Can the church truly be strengthened in her reverence for God if she rejects the Word of God by forgetting and forsaking church discipline, even when discipline is difficult? A congregation that refuses to practice church discipline when discipline is Scripturally right and required, will only be further weakened by such refusal.

A further cause for the practice of church discipline is to demonstrate to the church, and to the world that we stand with God. In the case of discipline, recorded in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul speaks to the authority for discipline by which we demonstrate our standing with God. Paul declares, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (v. 4). Rather than tolerating the sin that is under consideration, Paul declares that by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the unrepentant sinner is to be “delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). Can we truly demonstrate to the church, to the world, and most importantly, to God, that we stand with God when we forget and forsake church discipline?

We must always keep in mind that the cause for church discipline is always about the salvation of the soul of the disciple as well as the salvation of the souls of those who must do the disciplining. The cause for church discipline must never be about us “showing the sinner who is right.”

BECAUSE THE COMMAND FOR DISCIPLINE MATTERS!

Are there any commands, applicable to Christians today, that we can reject and still be pleasing to God? If so, which ones? Sadly, it may very well be that church discipline has become to the “forgotten command” because brethren have treated it as optional for so long. Yet, what does a refusal to practice church discipline say to the world? To the sinner? To the church? To God?

If we treat the command of church discipline as optional, on what basis can we honestly say that the denominational world is wrong for treating the command of baptism as optional?

We must appreciate every dynamic of church discipline that is to be practiced. First, the *instructive* dynamic of discipline. In Matthew’s account of

the Great Commission, Jesus instructs, “...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20). Our task in teaching others does not end when they obey the Gospel. “Teaching them to observe all things” is part of developing disciples. As brother H. Leo Boles notes,

“Three things are commanded in the commission to be done, namely: (1) make disciples; (2) baptize those who are disciple; (3) then teach them to be obedient to all the com-

mands of God. These three things are enjoined upon the disciples; they are joined and none of them should be omitted or neglected.”

Too often the instructive dynamic of discipline is neglected.

The next dynamic of discipline that must be practiced, is the *corrective* dynamic. Within Scripture we read of this being a matter of precept as well as practice. Concerning the precept for such, Jesus declares,

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every

*If we treat the
command of church
discipline as optional,
on what basis can we
honestly say that the
denominational world
is wrong for treating
the command of
baptism as optional?*

word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto as an heathen man and a publican (Matt. 18:15-17).

If a private matter between brethren is serious enough to warrant the practice of the corrective dynamic of discipline, how much more do more public matters demand the practice of corrective discipline? Such seems to be the intent of Paul's declaration that, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). Notice that the goal of the corrective discipline is restoring the soul to fellowship with God and God's people.

Further, James declares, "Brethren, if any of you do err for the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). Again, notice that that the goal of corrective discipline (i.e. correcting and converting the one who has erred from the truth) is to save their soul.

Still another dynamic of discipline is the *punitive*, which is the dynamic of last resort. That is, when the instructive has not been heeded, when the corrective has not been heard, what remains is the punitive. Recall what Paul commanded, as recorded in 1 Corinthians, concerning discipline toward a brother in fornication. Paul declares, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat...But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:11 &13). The punitive dynamic of discipline that was to be practiced toward the "wicked person" was to be the wicked person taken away from them (5:2), delivered unto Satan (v. 5), purged

out (v. 7), withdrawn from (v. 11), and put away (v. 13).

Not only does the punitive dynamic of discipline involve what is to be done toward the unrepentant brother, it also involves what is to be done *because* of the unrepentant brother. To the church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" (2 Thess. 3:6-7). As difficult as it may be, withdrawing ourselves from those who walk disorderly is not limited to those times we gather at the church building. Again, like the instructive and corrective dynamics of discipline, the punitive dynamic is designed to bring the wayward brother home to God and to God's people.

CONCLUSION

It may very well be that among the reasons church discipline has been forgotten and forsaken is because the challenges and consequences that result in its practice. Sadly, the practice of church discipline is often ineffective when it is either neglected, or practiced for the wrong purposes. The desired consequence of discipline that is practiced Scripturally is that repentance will follow. As brother Wade Webster observes,

"The book of Second Corinthians, what was written about six months later [than First Corinthians], records that both the disciplined brother (2 Cor. 2:5-11) and the church repented (7:9-11). I am convinced that the same result can be achieved today."

For the same consequence of discipline to be achieved, the practice of church discipline must be among the things restored and things that need to be.





Living by the **SPIRIT**

JOHN KRIVAK

Living “by the Spirit” means living by power as the Holy Spirit works in the heart. The Spirit is received in water-baptism¹ into Christ Jesus that brings a Christian into the New Covenant. The event that made supply of the Spirit available, Jesus predicted, was the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost:

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

For long ages, the Spirit was not available as He would later be to Christians—but only after Jesus was glorified. Jesus was glorified when lifted up in crucifixion (John 12:21-34) and the Spirit was outpoured soon after (Acts 1-2). Jesus and His disciples (along with John the Baptist) had baptized before this outpouring. But only after Pentecost do we hear this in Christian preaching: “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you

and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (Acts 2:38-39; see also John 3:3-5, Acts 19:1-5, and Titus 3:5-6).

The Power That Is Ours

At baptism, the Spirit enters our heart² (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6). The Spirit placed within the body of individual Christians (1 Cor. 6:19) and within Christians collectively in fellowship (1 Cor. 3:16) qualifies them, one and all, as the temple/sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 2:19-22). The inner Presence of the Spirit determines the sort of “power” available to a Christian who lives “by the Spirit”:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

The magnitude of this power—inside us!—is

¹ In my book on the Holy Spirit, I devote two full chapters to linking water-baptism to the receiving of the Spirit by a Christian. See John Krivak, *Filling The Temple: Finding a Place for the Holy Spirit* (self-published 2013; available on Amazon.com), pp. 29-65.

² Conversely, hearts that fail to receive the Spirit are said to be “filled with Satan” (Acts 5:3) or “stiff-necked and uncircumcised” (Acts 7:51).

breathtaking. Earlier in Ephesians, before telling us that we had it inside through the Spirit, Paul specified that power: “...*what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places*” (Ephesians 1:19-20). By all means, tell me if I have this wrong—but as I read it, the power the Spirit gives us is precisely the power that energized the Resurrection! This power—that we carry inside by the Spirit—is the power that exalted Jesus from Cross-killed King of the Jews to reigning Lord over all Creation. Can you begin to wrap your mind around that?

A Tale of Two Power-Ready Houses

Why? Nobody knew. The Filsons (who lived by the flesh) had a house that was fully wired for power and the utility applied the power. Every switch and outlet was energized. But the Filsons never flipped a switch, never plugged into an outlet. Next door, the Smarts (who lived by the Spirit) had it all going on. While the neighbors’ place was strangely dark, this house was lit up—full indoor illumination and exterior lighting that shone into the darkness of night. The Smarts used power appliances for cleaning and maintenance—dishwasher, vacuum, washing machine, and lots more kept their home in tiptop condition. The Filsons tried to keep house with push-broom and doing dishes by hand. Cleaning chores never stopped and wore out the family with exhaustion, yet the place never felt clean. The Smarts accomplished major projects using every manner of power tool—saws, drills, you name it. They also used power for devices of technology that afforded many advantages from being “connected.”

Lively imaginations could read many meanings into or out of the tale of the Filsons and the Smarts, but I only intend to contrast—in terms of power—living by the flesh against living by the Spirit—nothing more.³ Weakness comes through the flesh because you have no power other than what you carry inside. But the power at your disposal—if you live by the Spirit—augments your native potential with the power of Christ’s Resurrection! Judaism was never “power-ready.” The Law was an impos-

sible challenge for people living by the flesh. Christianity is power-ready. A Christian may apply this great power.

Fulfilling the “Requirement of the Law”

Paul spoke of love when describing how the power in the inner man would show itself, and he spoke of faith (see the passage from Ephesians 3, above). Elsewhere, Paul speaks of using the same power to fulfill the Law: “*so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*” (Romans 8:4). In his mind, the two—love and Law-keeping—are one and the same:

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8-10; also Gal. 5:13-14, James 2:8)

You arrive at a completely different spirituality if empowered by the Spirit. That difference is contrasted dramatically in people—by either the “works of the flesh” or the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-25). We must go further. The “requirement of the Law” draws in the whole variety of spiritual concerns. Without the Spirit’s power, it is impossible:

- To be the person and to live the sort of life that pleases God.
- To steer clear of sin to become holy, righteous and godly.
- To break the grip of Satan and end slavery to sin.
- To replace disobedience with obedience to God.
- To transition from being a sinner in Adam to being a saint in Christ.

You can do all of that, but only with extra power. You’ll not do it on your own, by the flesh. Paul himself tried and failed (Romans 7).

An unhealthy and unbiblical spirituality has risen to prominence and popularity. You will readily encounter this in the Reformed Protestant perspective

³Let me put at ease any who might suspect me of being a “Pentecostal” making claims for modern miracles or new revelations. Emphatically, no!

(specifically “evangelical” authors). Spiritual weakness is embraced. Claims to powerful achievement of personal victory over sin attract scoffing and disbelief. The denial of perfectionism shuts down pursuit of holiness, or even the possibility of such pursuit. It is claimed that those who are most spiritual are most aware of dark stains of sin and failure in their best attempts to serve God. Chapter Seven of Romans is interpreted, with its weakness and enslavement to sin, to be the normative state of Christian spirituality. Some will say there is no qualitative difference between believers and unbelievers; Christians differ only in being forgiven their sins. But Christians cannot and do not sin less than others. There is much to be learned from evangelical scholars, but just here is a clash with Bible teaching that we must escape. We must recover the possibility of “sanctification” by empowerment from the Holy Spirit—which is truly Paul’s aim when Christians fulfill the “requirement of the Law.”

Two Approaches to Sanctification

Consider two approaches to sanctification⁴. The first is commonly known. One is sanctified when sins already-committed are forgiven. This is initially at baptism, but continues afterwards as one walks “in the light” (1 John 1:7). Someone is lying and untruthful if he claims sinless perfection that requires no such sanctification. The best of saints still sin (1 John 1:7-10; Gal. 6:1; Hebrews 12:1). We all require this cleansing of soul and conscience, but there is another way to deal with defilement from sin—taking action and preventing sin before it starts.

A Christian may achieve sanctification (personal holiness) by simply turning down opportunities to sin. Find Power, and just say no! Although this sin-rejecting sanctification is all over the New Testament, few in the modern day even think it possible. The contest against sin has already gone to forfeit: “*Nobody’s perfect! Everybody sins! To err is human!*” The claim to ‘win over sin’ is self-righteous and marks a modern Pharisee—at least, this seems a common sentiment. And yet, passages from God’s Scripture discuss this sanctification often and de-

clare it essential to salvation. Still these texts are de-clawed and de-fanged, stripped of authority and rationalized away under the foggy shroud of “nobody’s perfect!”

We know we shouldn’t throw out the baby with bathwater. No one seems aware that when we give credence to our culture’s sophistry against perfectionism, we have declared “living by the Spirit” to be as unworkable as walking on the ceiling. Make no mistake, this spirituality insists not merely that we can win over sin—it insists that we must: “*So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*” (Romans 8:12-14). The flesh is a loser against sin and the Spirit imparts power for victory—we had better embrace that power and say no to sin (and to its satanic promoter)!

Which is better? Would God prefer to forgive your sin and to wash it in the Cross-shed blood of His Son? Or, would God prefer you to use His power to avoid sin, and thus to not require atonement for more sinning? Which approach better resolves the problem caused by the Fall of Adam? Which fulfills the requirement of the Law?

A Covenantal Solution

We have already rejected perfectionism. However, it is a false dichotomy that otherwise demands that we Christians grovel like weak slaves before the invincible power of sin! We may find it impossible to reject each and every sin, but we still—with power from the Spirit—can reject a huge number of potential sins. We would have fallen to those also if we still were living by the flesh—but now our hearts are energized! The Spirit of God is active inside!

Christians are expected to live differently after conversion than before (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Their lives should differ in holy quality from pagans (1 Cor. 5:1). The expectations for Christians when pressured by sexual temptations differ from the wider populace (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8). We deny perfectionism based on texts like 1 John 1:7-10. But the same epistle, the same apostle, gives us statements like these: “*And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*” (1 John 3:3). “*No one who abides in Him sins; no one who*

⁴ Sanctification is also categorized as “initial” and “progressive.” At conversion, initial sanctification cleanses away the entire past record of sin. From here, the Christian grows in spiritual strength to better resist temptation and sin in progressive sanctification.

sins has seen Him or knows Him” (1 John 3:6). “No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9).

We are left with a dilemma between the impossi-

bility of perfection and the expectation that we fulfill the requirements of the Law. The only solution may be found in the relational dynamics that enable a successful covenant.

LIVING BY THE FLESH

John Krivak

Why should a faithful Jew, in Paul’s day, undergo a conversion to become a Christian? It was Paul’s audacious assertion, especially in Romans and Galatians, that Jews not only failed to meet God’s expectations for righteousness and holy living (as expressed in the Law)—they not only were failures; Judaism was incapable of success. Some might think: *Just give us another shot at this; we will do better next time!* Paul would not be at all sanguine about those prospects, no matter how many do-overs were allowed.

However, claimed Paul, Christians could face that challenge and be successful! Or, a Christian might also fail the test. But only Christianity offered the possibility of living before God with His approval. And, Paul would assert, any Christian failure would have repeated the same spiritual mistake as befell the Jews. The same trouble that caused a Jew to disappoint God would cause a failing Christian to do the same.

Way back in Romans 2, the failure of the Jew is contrasted with the success of Gentiles who, even though they lack the Jewish advantage of having the Law, manage to successfully meet the righteous demands of the Law. How could the disadvantaged Gentile succeed? Let’s try a different reading. We usually think that Paul, in 1:18 to 3:20, encompasses humanity comprehensively as he asserts universal condemnation under sin and wrath—for both Jew and Gentile. In this reading, the successful Gentile is simply a non-Jew who is able to best the Jew at his own game. However, on closer inspection, the successful Gentile set forward by Paul is actually and definitely a “Christian” Gentile:

For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become un-

circumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God (Romans 2:25-29).

What sets the success and the failure apart is much bigger than the difference between any Jew and any Gentile—this Gentile is succeeding because of activity of the Spirit in the heart! As that working of the Spirit is the hallmark of Christian spirituality, we are correct to identify this success as a Gentile *Christian*. The same emphases emerge later in Romans. Though not under Law, Christians are able to meet the Law’s demands—and do so precisely where Jews had failed. There, as in Chapter Two, the instrumental means to success is the activity of the Holy Spirit within the heart.

Flesh and Spirit

Flesh and Spirit battle one another as opposite approaches to spirituality. Notice that Spirit is capitalized, because this spirituality is energized by the Holy Spirit. The key distinction with “flesh and Spirit” is not between our inner being (spirit) and our outer being (body), each pulling us in a different direction (yet such tension is a factor in this battle). By flesh, the reference is not simply to humans being corporeal—to having a body (made of flesh). All people experience living by the flesh. This is the default human condition, the place where we all

start (Eph. 2:1-3). But only a Christian can shift into living by the Spirit.

We differentiate “flesh and Spirit” in this way because the key distinction is one of power, of capability—of *spiritual* power, of *spiritual* capability. Leander Keck¹ describes the difference:

“In the flesh” is the counterpart to being “in the Spirit” as Romans 8:9 clearly says: “You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit.” It is the Spirit as a sphere of power which has suggested that its opposite, flesh, is also a sphere of power.

What gives flesh a quality that is inferior (or even blameworthy) is its weakness. The flesh is not evil; it is weak. In contrast, the Holy Spirit brings power. And power here is not understood as performing miracles that demonstrate superhuman abilities that are endowed by God.² Discussions contrasting flesh and Spirit always focus on moral and ethical responsibility which is crucial to spiritual function. To the point, can we measure up to God’s holy and righteous standards? Do people have the power to please God? Will struggle end with sin’s victory over us? Or, will human efforts actually achieve holiness and sanctification through spiritual power?

The problem is not that the flesh is evil (as certain false teachings of Adamic, hereditary sin might suggest). Even before living by the Spirit had emerged as a possibility, Jesus correctly identified the chief fault of the flesh: *“Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (Mark 14:38, NASB). Here, the desire of the human spirit (the “inner man”) is to do the right thing toward the agonized Messiah, but that desire is offset by the constitutional weakness that Jesus calls “the flesh.” Struggling according to the flesh to please God always fails. Paul experienced the same weakness of the flesh and describes his helpless agony:

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. (Romans 7:14-19, NASB)

This was Paul’s experience as a Jew under the Law³ and vividly describes the powerlessness of living by the flesh: “...because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:7-8, NASB). There is the sincere desire to please God and do His will, yet utter impotence to make it happen.

The simplest way to understand what it means to live “by the flesh” is trying to be holy before God using your own power—your own goodness, your own wisdom and intelligence, your own endurance and strength of character. It is measured by your ability to withstand temptation and to resist sin—using only the inherent power that you draw from within yourself. Spirituality “by the flesh” means relying on the power of self, unaided and without God’s help.

Judaism demonstrates the futility of finding righteousness according to the flesh. The historic failure to keep the Law was not to be blamed on any defect in the Old-Covenant legislation. In Romans 7, Paul shields the Law from criticism and, speaking representatively, pins blame on human weakness:

¹ Leander Keck, *Paul and His Letters*, in *Proclamation Commentaries*, Gerhard Krodel, ed., revised and expanded (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 102.

² Of course, the NT bears witness to miraculous power (usually tongues) received from the Spirit at conversion and through the laying on of apostolic hands (Gal. 3:5; 2 Cor. 12:12). This power was occasional rather than normative for all conversions, thus such power is not essential to living “in the Spirit.” See John Krivak, *Filling The Temple: Finding a Place for the Holy Spirit* (self-published 2013; available on Amazon.com), pp. 55-65 and 81-92.

³ In Romans 7, Paul is clearly not describing his failure while a Christian. This crisis he had experienced beforehand while yet under Jewish spirituality. Three clear indicators make this obvious. (1) This situation takes place while He was under Jewish Law—and Christians are not under the Law (Romans 7:4-6; cf. 1 Cor. 9:20, Gal. 2:19). (2) Paul’s experience occurs while he is still in the flesh (Romans 7:4, 14, 18, 25). Although it is indeed possible for Christians to live by the flesh, this is an aberration outside of reasonable expectations (1 Cor. 3:1-4, Gal. 5:16-21). (3) Paul describes his state as in slavery to sin (Romans 7:1, 14, 23).

“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin” (Romans 7:14, NASB). The Law offered a valid approach to God, but people simply lack power to live out the Law:

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3, NASB).

Living by the flesh was historically characteristic of Judaism and now serves as a foil against which the distinctiveness of Christian spirituality is powerfully displayed.

Conversion to Christ Jesus

The weakness of the flesh may only be offset with power from God. That is why Jesus was sent and that is why the Spirit was sent. Christians would be empowered in a new way to live before God: *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). As Jesus received power when anointed with the Spirit, the same power is availed to Christians in the baptismal new-birth of water and Spirit. That potential is theirs, but it is not an automatic guarantee. That choice must be exercised to unleash the power. Look at the two spiritual options: *“I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification”* (Romans 6:19). The Christian may choose to live in power if they “present their members” to righteousness so as to be sanctified. That failing, a Christian will easily revert to the weakness of the flesh.

It always represents disappointing failure but, in the New Testament, Christians are sometimes depicted as living in the weakness of the flesh. Do you remember Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1 ff.)? They opted for flesh over Spirit and fell to weakness. Paul expected to find either the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:22-23) or the *“works of the flesh”* (vs. 19-21) among Christians in church fellowship. Disappointed by the latter, yes; but surprised, no. We are given the choice to choose either option: *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do*

the things that you please” (Galatians 5:16-17). Paul detected Corinthian Christians living out fleshly weakness rather than strength through the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Christians have the choice, but they have no more immunity against spiritual failure than did the Jews—unless they purpose to live by the Spirit.

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) spoke a truth which would serve well as the theme of Paul’s letter to the Romans: *“Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.”* I take the early chapters to be concerned (as with later chapters) with establishing legitimacy for Gentile Christians within the Roman church. For long ages, the Jews (with rare Gentile exceptions) had been the exclusive people of God. And, at the start on Pentecost, Jews were the only Christians in the church. And, relative to the time of Paul’s writing, Jewish Christians had, until recently, dominated membership in the Roman church.⁴ Thus in 1:16 to 3:20, when Paul speaks of Jews and Gentiles, he is largely thinking about Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles as they fellowship together in Rome.⁵ This was a totally new situation, and significant membership in the church at Rome was apparently not happy with the arrangement.

Paul is eager to set forth the revealed righteousness of God (1:17), because this is revealed in the gospel which is *“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Romans 1:16). But first, he establishes both Jew and Gentile under sin, thus under the revealed wrath of God (*“every saint has a past”*). Gentiles were not the only ones with a sinful past—Gentile and Jew stood on equal footing here. Even with possession of the Law, the Jews had fallen short of God’s glory because they pursued the Law’s demands according to the flesh. In sheer irony, Gentiles were able to meet the demands of the Law simply by allowing the Spirit to work in their hearts (*“every sinner has a future”*). Gentile Christians found a spiritual power never found in Judaism.

⁴ See Paul Pollard, Ph.D., “Why Did Paul Write to the Romans?” *The Quarterly* Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 2018): pp. 9-11.

⁵ The history of the interpretation of Romans has shifted away from viewing the epistle as a “compendium of the Christian religion” (see Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate*, revised and expanded edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) p. xli. The concerns of Romans, first of all, must be understood relative to those immediate concerns faced by the church in Rome.

**BIBLE-CENTERED MEDIA
@BIBLEWAYMEDIA.ORG**

**PODCASTS, BLOGS, BIBLE
STUDIES & ONLINE CLASSES**

**OVERSEEN BY THE
OOLOGAH CHURCH OF CHRIST**





BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHY:

JAMES, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE

Bradley S. Cobb

It is time to focus our attention on the men who writers call Jesus' "inner circle"¹ of the apostles: Peter, James, and John. These men enjoyed a close relationship with Jesus, and as such, the Bible gives us more information about them than any of the other original apostles.

James and His Relations

James is unique among the "inner circle" in that every time he is mentioned in the Bible, he is always mentioned in connection with at least one of his relatives.

He is known as one of the "sons of Zebedee." In part, this is to distinguish him from another apostle, "James, the son of Alphaeus"; but there is also something noteworthy about Zebedee himself. Zebedee was almost certainly a very devout child of God. He raised two sons who later became apostles, and who left their business at a moment's notice to follow Jesus. His own wife was a firm (though misguided) believer in the coming kingdom,² most likely a personal financier of Jesus' ministry,³ and was present at the crucifixion of Jesus.⁴ These facts point to the likelihood of Zebedee being a very faithful child of God who worked hard to instill a love of the Lord in the hearts and minds of his family.

There is not a single passage in Scripture that mentions James without also mentioning his brother John. And with only one exception, James is always mentioned first.⁵ This shows that these two brothers

worked well together. They were fishermen together,⁶ they were sent out as a pair to preach the gospel together,⁷ they were told together about the suffering they would endure for Jesus,⁸ and were in Jerusalem together until James was put to death.⁹

James was most likely Jesus' cousin. Matthew 27:56 lists three women who were at the cross:

- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joses [also known as Mary, the mother of Jesus],¹⁰ and
- The mother of Zebedee's children.

John 19:25 mentions four women:

- Mary, the mother of Jesus,
- Mary's sister [Salome],¹¹
- Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and
- Mary Magdalene.

The mother of Zebedee's children (his wife) could not be the same as the wife of Cleophas.¹² Thus, the only other possibility is that James' mother was Salome, the sister of Mary.¹³ Therefore, James and John were cousins of Jesus and His brothers.

James the Apostle

James was one of the first disciples to be called

and John and James" to the mount where He is transfigured. Both Matthew and Mark, when describing the same event, say "James and John." There are also some Greek manuscripts which also have James listed *after* John in Luke 8:51 and Acts 1:13 (see ESV at those verses), but the manuscripts that God saw fit to providentially preserve throughout the past two millennia read "James and John."

⁶ Matthew 4:18-22.

⁷ See Matthew 10:1-4, and Mark 6:7.

⁸ Matthew 20:20-23.

⁹ Acts 8:1, 14; 12:2, 12; 13:13; Galatians 2:1, 9.

¹⁰ Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 do not describe Mary as "the mother of Jesus," because Jesus had died, whereas John 19:25 mentions her *prior* to Jesus' death, thus calls her "His [Jesus'] mother."

¹¹ See Mark 15:40.

¹² John refers to himself as one of "the sons of Zebedee." It is beyond credulity to believe that he would then identify his mother as the wife of some other man when his father was in all likelihood still alive (see Mark 1:20).

¹³ As discussed in the chapter on "James, the Son of Alphaeus," the Catholic Church wants to make Mary, the wife of Cleophas, the same as the sister of Mary (mother of Jesus). This suggestion has been thoroughly disproven both in that chapter, as well as in writings from other individuals, and as such is not even mentioned as a possibility here.

¹ *The King James Commentary*, on Luke 9:28, says, "Peter, James, and John made up the inner circle of disciples. At the outer perimeter was the group of five hundred who saw Christ after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6). A bit closer were the seventy disciples who were sent out two by two to preach and heal (Luke 10:1, 17). Still closer were the Twelve, of whom these three were specially selected to witness this event [the transfiguration], the raising of Jairus' daughter, and Jesus' agony in Gethsemane."

² Matthew 20:20-21. More will be said on this passage later in this chapter.

³ Matthew 27:55-56 shows that Mrs. Zebedee (whose name was Salome) was among those who "followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him." Luke 8:2-3 describes certain women, and "many others" who ministered to Jesus out of their own substance. Most likely, then, Salome was one of the women who personally financed Jesus' ministry. See also the *Dictionary of Christ in the Gospels*, ed. James Hastings, "James" (second footnote).

⁴ Matthew 27:55-56.

⁵ That one exception is Luke 9:28, where Jesus takes "Peter

to be a permanent follower of the Lord.¹⁴ The fullest account of his calling is given by Luke:

It came to pass, that as the people pressed on Him to head the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret [Sea of Galilee], and saw two ships standing by the lake. But the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and asked him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught [a catch]."

And Simon, answering, said to Him, "Master, we've toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at your command, I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, "Fear not; from now on, you shall catch men." And when they

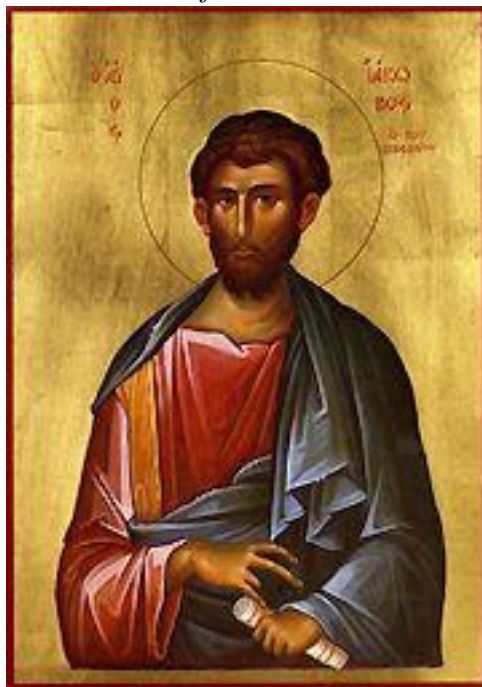
*had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.*¹⁵

Matthew and Mark both record that James was "called" by Jesus at this time.¹⁶

James, along with his brother John, followed Jesus to Capernaum, entered with him into the synagogue, and listened to Him teach with authority. James must have turned with surprise when a man in the synagogue screamed out, "Leave us alone! What do we have to do with you, you Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know you, who you are, the Holy One of God!" And James watched with amazement as Jesus said, "Hold your peace and come out of him," which was immediately followed by the man convulsing¹⁷ as a demon fought a hopeless battle to keep from being cast out of him.¹⁸

The same day, James accompanied Jesus as they went to Peter and Andrew's house, where the Lord healed Peter's mother-in-law. That evening, James saw a crowd of people coming to Jesus from all over Capernaum, bringing all the sick, and all the demon-possessed people to Him—and Jesus healed them. The next morning, James awoke from sleep and found that Jesus had left, so he accompanied Peter and looked until they found Him on a mountain where he had gone to pray.¹⁹

Some days later,²⁰ James was called by Jesus to come to a mountain, and was selected to be part of a special group of twelve men, whom Jesus named "apostles."²¹



¹⁴ See Matthew 4:18-22. It is generally believed that, like Peter and Andrew, the two sons of Zebedee followed Jesus prior to their official calling. Many think that John (the brother of James) refers to himself in John 1:35-37, and that after being told that Jesus was "the Lamb of God," he would have run to tell his brother. Behind this supposition is the fact that John never mentions himself or his brother by name in his gospel account, though it is obvious (based on the other gospel writings) that both were present.

¹⁵ Luke 5:1-11.

¹⁶ Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20.

¹⁷ Mark 1:26, Modern Literal Version.

¹⁸ These events are recorded in Mark 1:21-28, as well as Luke 4:31-37.

¹⁹ These events are recorded in Mark 1:29-36, as well as Luke 4:38-44.

²⁰ We are not told how much time elapsed between the events in Luke 4 and in Luke 6. It could have been several months, considering that Jesus went around Galilee preaching in the synagogues prior to selecting the apostles (Mark 1:39, see also 2:1, 3:13-19).

²¹ Luke 6:12-16.

The Correction of James

There are two specific incidents in the life of James (and his brother John) where he has to be corrected in his thinking. The first is found in Luke 9. Jesus determined to go to Jerusalem, because His time was nearing, and sent messengers²² to go before Him into a village of Samaria. But the Samaritans would not receive Jesus because His plan was to go to Jerusalem.²³ As a result, James and his brother (living up to their name, *Boanerges*, or “Sons of Thunder”) came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, like Elijah did?” But Jesus stopped, turned around, and rebuked them both, and said “You don’t know what manner of spirit you are, for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save.”²⁴

The second incident occurs in Mark 10:35-45. James, along with John, approached Jesus (Matthew 20:20-21 tells us that they had their mother ask for them):

Saying, “Master, we desire that you should do for us whatever we shall ask.” And He said to them, “What do you desire me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Grant to us that we might sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left hand, in your glory.”

But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink of the cup which I am drinking? [Can you] be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

And they said to Him, “We can.” And Jesus said to them, “Indeed the cup I am drinking, you shall drink; and the baptism with which I am being baptized with, you shall be baptized. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand

²² The Greek phrase is ἀπεστέλεν ἀγγέλους (*apesteilen angelous*), which is the verb form of “apostle” followed by the plural for “messengers” (or “angels”).

²³ It must be remembered that the Samaritans rejected the idea of worshiping in Jerusalem (see John 4:5-20, especially the first and last verses of that section). So it shouldn’t be surprising that they weren’t very interested in preparing to welcome a religious leader whose practice contradicted their own.

²⁴ Luke 9:54-56. The quotation from Jesus is missing in some corrupted manuscripts, and because of that, most modern translations leave it out. However, it is in the majority of Greek manuscripts, and was providentially preserved by God through the ages. The same is true for the phrase “like Elijah did” in verse 54.

is not mine to give; but for whom it shall be prepared.”

Of course, as a result, the rest of the apostles were very upset with James and John for asking for superiority over the rest of them.²⁵ In this statement is a prophecy of the martyrdom of James and John, for Jesus was enduring the baptism of suffering, the cup of sorrow, the rejection that would lead to His death.²⁶

Then, Jesus told them (and the rest of the apostles), “Whoever shall be great among you shall be your servant; and whoever among you shall be the greatest shall be the servant of all.”²⁷

James of the “Inner Circle”

The idea of an “inner circle,” a group closer to Jesus than the rest of the apostles, first appears the next time James shows up in the biblical record. There are three times where Jesus specifically separated James, Peter, and John from the rest of the apostles and had them join Him for an important event.

Jairus’ Daughter Raised

Jesus returned to Galilee where a crowd of people had been waiting for Him,²⁸ and a man named Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, fell to Jesus’ feet and begged Him, “My little daughter lies at the point of death; come and lay your hands on her so that she might be healed; and she will live.”²⁹ Jesus, along with His disciples and a mob of people, followed Jairus towards his house; but then Jesus stopped, turned around, and said, “Who touched me?”³⁰ James looked around at the massive crowd

²⁵ Perhaps, as part of the inner circle, and having known Jesus the longest (they were cousins after all), they thought they were entitled to it. But they showed their cowardice (not a good trait in your right-hand man) by having their mother ask Jesus for them, while they stood there with her.

²⁶ It is understood that most Bible scholars claim John died a natural death around 100 years old. However, it is almost universally agreed that when James was beheaded in Acts 12, it was a fulfillment of what Jesus said to him in Mark 10 and Matthew 20. If the death of James fulfilled that passage, then John had to die as well, otherwise Jesus was only half-right, and was therefore a false prophet. We will deal more with it in the chapter on John, but James’ brother was murdered prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

²⁷ Mark 10:43-44.

²⁸ Luke 8:40.

²⁹ Mark 5:21-23.

³⁰ Mark 5:30 shows Jesus turning around and asking this

that was “thronging” Jesus, and in effect said, “What do you mean? *Everyone’s* touching you!”³¹ But Jesus saw the woman who had touched the hem of His garment, and told her “Daughter, your faith has made you whole; go in peace, and be whole of your plague.”³²

Then someone from Jairus’ house came and said, “Your daughter is dead, why trouble the Teacher anymore?” Jesus responded by telling Jairus, “Don’t be afraid, just believe.”³³ It is at that point that Jesus hand-picks James, his brother John, and Peter to be the only ones who are permitted to follow Him to the house. And when they got to the house, finding people weeping and mourning, Jesus told them “Why are you making this noise and weeping? The damsel didn’t die, but is sleeping.” When the people mockingly laughed at Jesus, He sent them all out, only allowing James, Peter, John, and the girl’s parents to come into the room and see what He would do. Then He took the girl by the hand and said, “Maid, arise.” And she came back to life. This was followed by a command not to tell anyone what happened.³⁴

The Transfiguration

Some time later, Jesus took James (along with Peter and John) up to a mountain where He prayed. Then something happened. Jesus’ face began to shine like the sun,³⁵ and His clothing was white as

question, but there the quotation is “Who touched my clothes?” Luke 8:45 gives the quotation as “Who touched me?” There is no contradiction here, for it is very possible that Jesus said, “Who touched me? Who touched my clothes?” Or it could also be that Luke records the exact quote while Mark gives the more exact meaning—since the woman didn’t actually touch Jesus, but touched His clothing. In both accounts, the disciples asked why Jesus said “Who touched me?”

³¹ Mark 5:31. This statement was made by all the disciples, and as is seen a little further in the narrative, James was indeed there.

³² Mark 5:32-34.

³³ Mark 5:35-36. Most translations render it “only believe,” which is a legitimate rendering, but “just believe” carries with it the same meaning and is more in keeping with modern speech.

³⁴ This paragraph is an amalgamation of the accounts given by Luke (8:49-56) and Mark (5:35-43). Matthew adds that Jesus’ fame spread because of this event (Matthew 9:23-26), probably from the people who had mocked Him just minutes before.

³⁵ Matthew 17:2 is the only account where this description is given. Luke simply says “His countenance was changed,” which is quite the understatement!

the light.³⁶ But James, John, and Peter were extremely tired and had fallen asleep while Jesus was praying. When they woke up, they “saw His glory” and they saw Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus, talking to Him.³⁷ James was silent, but he watched as Peter said to Jesus, “It’s good for us to be here. If you want, let us make here three tabernacles; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”³⁸

*Then a [bright] cloud overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son, [in whom I am well-pleased]. Listen to Him.”*³⁹

*And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were very afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, “Arise, and don’t be afraid.” And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man except Jesus only.*⁴⁰

*And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen until the Son of man was risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.*⁴¹

On the way down the mountain, James and the other two asked Jesus about the scribes’ contention that Elijah must come first. After hearing the Lord explain that the scribes were right, but that Elijah

³⁶ Mark 9:3 adds “like as no laundryman on earth can bleach them.”

³⁷ Luke 9:32 is the only place where this information is given to us. We aren’t told how exactly the three apostles knew that the two additional figures were Moses and Elijah. Most likely it was due to overhearing part of the conversation that they were having with Jesus. Perhaps they called each other by name as they talked.

³⁸ It is interesting that with Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, God Himself was responsible for their deaths. God killed Moses on Mt. Nebo, and buried him in Moab (Deuteronomy 34:5-7); God took Elijah in the whirlwind, ending his physical existence (2 Kings 2:11); and God was the one who caused the death of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-23). Moses was buried, Elijah ascended, and Jesus Christ did both.

³⁹ Luke 9:34-36. The bracketed material is found in Matthew’s account, Matthew 17:5.

⁴⁰ Matthew 17-6-8. Matthew is the only writer to include this information.

⁴¹ Mark 9:9-10. The other writers do not give us the information about Peter, James, and John’s conversation.

had already come, understanding washed over the “inner circle” and they understood that Jesus had reference to John the Immerser.⁴²

Inquiring About the Temple

After Jesus tells His disciples that “There shall not be one stone left upon another that shall not be thrown down,” James (along with Peter, Andrew, and John) ask Him privately, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?”⁴³ Jesus proceeds to give them, in some detail, information about the destruction of Jerusalem, including the events leading up to it.⁴⁴

The Garden of Gethsemane

After the Last Supper, Jesus took the apostles with Him to Gethsemane, and instructed eight of them to “Sit here, while I go and pray [over] there.” But He took with Him Peter, James, and John, and told just these three men, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. You wait here and watch with me.” After going a bit further and praying, Jesus returned to find the inner circle sleeping, and woke them up, saying (primarily to Peter, but also to James and John),⁴⁵ “What? Couldn’t you watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray, that you do not enter into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁴⁶

Jesus again went off to pray, and when He re-

⁴² Mark’s account reveals for us that it was Peter, James, and John who asked this question (see Mark 9:2-13, and put with Matthew 17:9-13), and it wasn’t until after Jesus answered that they came to the other disciples (Mark 9:14, Matthew 17:14).

⁴³ Mark 13:1-4. That Andrew was part of this company is not surprising, since he was (1) Peter’s brother, and (2) is always joined with the other three in the listings of the apostles.

⁴⁴ See Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13.

⁴⁵ Matthew 26:40 shows that Jesus spoke to Peter, but he uses the plural “you” (“ye” in KJV) to show He is referencing the three of them. It appears that even at this point, Peter was viewed somewhat as a leader among the apostles, for Jesus said this to Him.

⁴⁶ Matthew 26:36-41.

turned, they had fallen asleep again. He said something to them, but then He went back to pray some more.⁴⁷ After this third time, He told them (perhaps sarcastically), “Sleep on now, and take rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let’s be going. Look, He who betrays me is at hand.”⁴⁸

The Inner Circle

Each time Jesus specifically called Peter, James, and John to come with Him, He had something important in mind. First was to show His power to raise the dead. Second was to His transfiguration where His superiority to Moses and Elijah was spoken from heaven. Third was to watch with Him (apparently to keep an eye out for Judas and the soldiers) while He was deep in prayer. But just moments after this last event, the entire inner circle ran in fear as Jesus was taken prisoner by the band of soldiers led by Judas.

The Death of James

James is specifically mentioned just three times after the resurrection of Jesus. He’s among the apostles who spent

all night fishing, catching nothing until Jesus (the next morning) told them to let the net down on the right side of the ship. Then they caught so many fish, they couldn’t bring the net into the boat. James was one of the apostles who helped bring the boat to shore, dragging this massive catch with them. Then Jesus invited James and the others to “come and dine,” which they did.⁴⁹

Just a matter of days later, James watched as Jesus ascended into heaven after telling all the apostles to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. He went into an upper room with his fellow-apostles and other disciples where a replacement

⁴⁷ When Mark records this incident, He says that the three men “did not know what to answer Him” the second time He came back (Mark 14:40).

⁴⁸ Matthew 26:42-46. That this is possibly sarcasm is seen in that Jesus tells them to “sleep on,” and almost immediately says “rise up.”

⁴⁹ This incident is recorded in John 21:1-14.



was chosen for Judas. Then, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon James and the other apostles, and they all began to preach the word of God in different languages. No doubt, James spent a large part of that day happily baptizing some of the 3,000 who gladly received the word of God.⁵⁰

But things didn't continue on their positive streak. Saul of Tarsus and the Jewish leaders stirred up the people in antagonism against the church. Herod the king, who wanted the Jews to like him, began to persecute the church.⁵¹ Some of them he arrested,⁵² and James was among them. Since James was a leader of the church, Herod had him killed with the sword.⁵³

So ends the life of a man who was Jesus' cousin, Jesus' disciple, and Jesus' friend.

Traditions About James

Since his life ended in AD 42-44, and the Bible records it, there's not much in the line of traditions about this member of the "inner circle." One writing says that "Zebedee was of the house of Levi, and his wife of the house of Judah. Now, because the father of James loved him greatly, he counted him among the family of his father Levi, and similarly, because the mother of John loved him greatly, she counted him among the family of her father Judah. And they were surnamed 'Children of Thunder,' for they were of both the priestly house and the royal house."⁵⁴

A writing that claims to be written by Clement (the man mentioned in Philippians 4:3) records this incident:

But a certain Samaritan, speaking against the people and against God, and asserting that neither are the dead to rise, nor is that worship of God to be maintained which is in Jerusalem, but that Mount Gerizim is to be revered, added also this in opposition to us, that our Je-

*sus was not He whom Moses foretold as a Prophet to come into the world. Against him, and another who supported him in what he said, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, strove vigorously; and although they had a command not to enter into their cities, nor to bring the word of preaching to them, yet, lest their discourse, unless it were confined, should hurt the faith of others, they replied so prudently and so powerfully, that they put them to perpetual silence. For James made an oration concerning the resurrection of the dead, with the approbation of all the people; while John showed that if they would abandon the error of Mount Gerizim, they should consequently acknowledge that Jesus was indeed He who, according to the prophecy of Moses, was expected to come; since, indeed, as Moses wrought signs and miracles, so also did Jesus. And there is no doubt but that the likeness of the signs proves Him to be that prophet of whom he said that He should come, 'like himself.' Having declared these things, and more to the same effect, they ceased.*⁵⁵

The Acts of James in India says that James and Peter went to preach to the Jews in India, where they healed a blind man, were imprisoned, were released, and converted the people.⁵⁶

The Martyrdom of James says that the son of Zebedee preached to the *diaspora*, the twelve tribes who lived outside the Promised Land, convincing them to give their "first-fruits" to the church as opposed to Herod, which then led to the murder of James by Herod.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ These events are recorded in Acts 1 and 2.

⁵¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18-19, says that this Herod (Herod Agrippa I) was zealous for the Jewish law. He, like his grandfather, Herod the Great, wanted the Jews to like him. This is why he persecuted the church, and why he continued when he saw that killing James please the Jews. See Chuck Northrop's comments on Acts 12:1-2 in *Preaching School Notes (Bible Institute of Missouri)* for e-Sword. Available at TheCobbSix.com.

⁵² See The NET Bible footnotes on Acts 12:1.

⁵³ Most likely, this means that he was beheaded.

⁵⁴ See *The Genealogies of the Twelve Apostles* in Budge, *Contendings of the Apostles*, Vol. 2, page 49.

⁵⁵ *The Recognitions of Clement*, Book 1, chapter 57. This writing is classed among the *pseudo-Clementine* literature, because its authenticity is rejected by almost all scholars. It can be found in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 8, page 92.

⁵⁶ See *The Acts of James in India*, in Budge, *Contendings of the Apostles*, Vol. 2, pages 295-303. This work, among other things, seeks to elevate the status of Peter, having James call him "my father" multiple times.

⁵⁷ See Budge, *Contendings of the Apostles*, Vol. 2, pages 304-308. This writing is shown to be a forgery because it is historically inaccurate. James was killed between AD 42-44, yet *The Martyrdom of James* claims that James was teaching people not to serve Nero—who was at that point no more than seven years old, and who wouldn't become emperor for at least another ten years. See also *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, "James."

NEW

FROM COBB PUBLISHING

THE
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN REVIEW

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL,
DEVOTED TO
THE DEFENSE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

CONTAINING
Sermons, Essays, Reviews, Queries and Answers, Progress
of the Gospel, and Important Items of News.

EDITED BY
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

VOLUME 1
1856

The American Christian Review (Volume 1)

The historic journal by Elder Benjamin Franklin (relative of the Founding Father of the same name), now available for the first time in over 150 years! Franklin was a stalwart conservative

Christian who stood firm and strong against those who tried to take the church into liberalism and denominationalism.

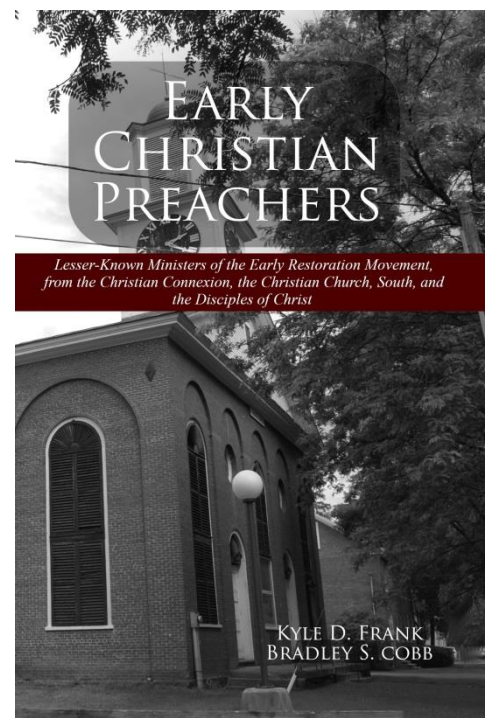
Paperback, 392 pages
\$19.99

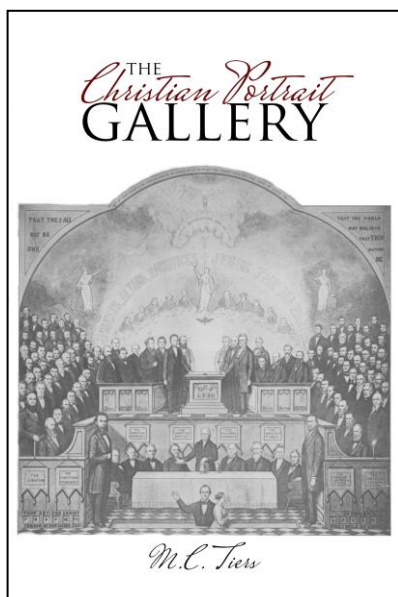
Early Christian Preachers

Brief biographies of lesser-known ministers of the early Restoration Movement, from the Christian Connexion, the Christian Church, South, and the Disciples of Christ.

Compiled and Edited by
Kyle D. Frank and Bradley S. Cobb

Paperback, 276 pages
\$15.99





The Christian Portrait Gallery

By M.C. Tiers, this book features biographies and portraits of 60 preachers from the Restoration Movement, from Alexander Campbell to Moses E. Lard to John T. Johnson, and many others—you won't be disappointed by this one!

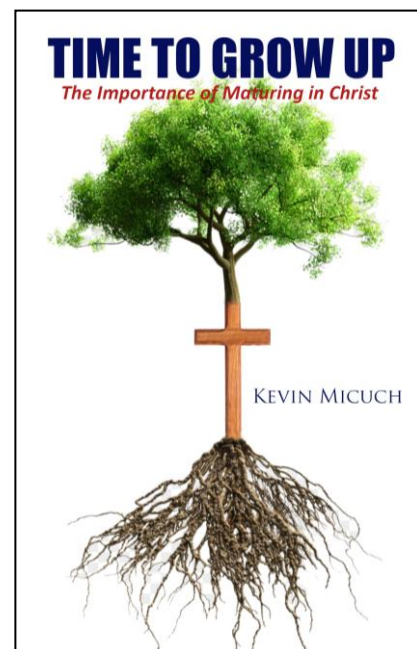
Paperback, 319 pages
\$15.99

Time to Grow Up:

The Importance of Maturing in Christ

The worst part about maturity is that people don't seem to realize how important it is. Kevin Micuch addresses the necessity of growth, the benefits of growth, and the results of not growing—all in his easy-to read, conversational way.

Paperback, 56 pages
\$7.99

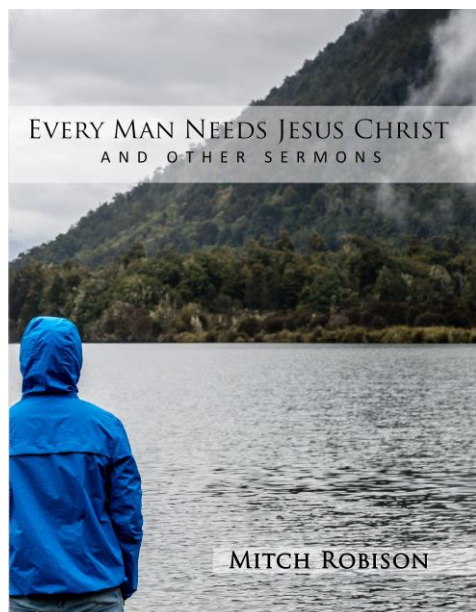


Every Man Needs Jesus Christ (And Other Sermons)

Mitch Robison is a Christian who loves people and loves preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. This book contains a year's worth of full-length sermons, with a few extra as a bonus.

(See his sermon in this issue of the *Quarterly*, which came from this collection.)

Paperback, 220 pages
\$12.95



THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT:

Experiences and Mistakes of J.D. Tant

J.D. Tant

[EDITOR'S NOTE: J.D. Tant wrote a series of letters/articles for the *Gospel Advocate* beginning in 1897 to help young preachers learn from his "Experience and Mistakes." The first four letters appeared in the previous issue, and are reprinting the final six of those letters here]

Experience and Mistakes—Advice to Young Preachers. No. 5.

My last notes left me with \$47.30 on a ^- borrowed pony going West. I came to Hamilton, found a small tract of land for sale, and met a good brother who loaned me \$100 to make first payment. With this amount, I began again to build up a place I could call home, trying, if possible, to live on the inside of my income and never buy more than I was able to pay for, and only buy those things I was compelled to have. I found that some brethren had preached in Hamilton before me who claimed that we are only a movement, and not the church of Christ. They endeavored to show all people that they could be saved where they were, but it would be some better to come with "us as a people." This idea I fought all along the line, showing that we were not a denomination or a sister church, but were either the church of Christ or not the church of Christ. If we were the church of Christ, all other churches were not scriptural, and, as I began to attack sectarians boldly, they had to rally to the front. Two years' preaching brought me into fourteen debates, with over three hundred baptized, which showed our labor was not in vain.

For these two years my brethren paid me \$950, an average of \$475 a year, which was all I was

worth and all my brethren were able to pay. These ten years at Hamilton have been the busy part of my life. My remuneration has been from five to seven hundred dollars each year during the last ten, less \$125 a year for traveling expenses. With this remuneration and what help I have obtained from my little farm, I have managed to live, pay my debts, and have a place to call home.

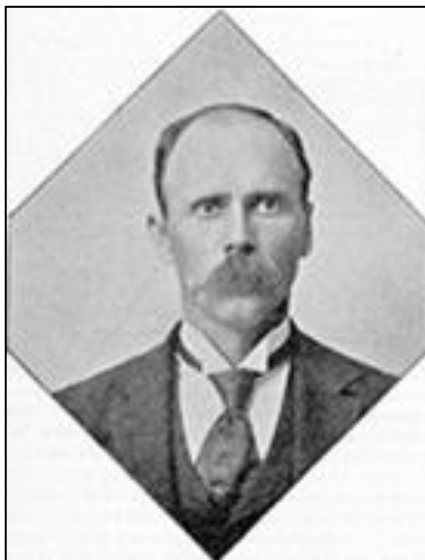
In this connection, I want to say loud enough for all young preachers to hear me: I have not spent an idle day during these ten years. While my visits home have not been many, yet I always found work to do on the farm during the few days I would be at home. As business would sometimes call me to Hamilton, I often saw brethren who had time to stand, day after day, on the street and argue politics and talk about hard times; yet for ten years I have not found time to engage in such things.

Many years of observation have taught me that nine-tenths of the poverty, want, and hard times for

my brethren is brought about by idleness and indolence upon the part of brethren who don't spend over half their time at work. Such is demoralizing in the extreme, and sinful in the sight of God. No young preacher can afford to be an idler or trifle away his time walking around the streets talking about the general affairs of the day.

Thus, I have briefly noted some of the ups and downs of a preacher's life, hoping young preachers may read, and not become discouraged if any difficulty crosses their way.

While life has had its trials and troubles, yet it has been full of pleasures. Along the line of sorrows, four times I have been called upon since living at Hamilton to stand over the graves of loved



ones. Father, mother, sister, and wife are all sleeping the long sleep of death side by side in the old Hamilton graveyard. Yet such seems to bring me closer to the city of our God, and causes me to feel like heaven is not so far away, after all. In all these sorrows, God has been merciful, and given me another true companion to walk with me in all the conflicts of life; to share our sorrows as well as joys; to be a preacher's wife, and help to perform her part in being truly a preacher's wife, and help to properly direct the minds of the children God has put under our control.

Notwithstanding, life has had so many cares, I have had time and opportunity to help six young men start out to preach the gospel of the Son of God. In all these things, I have tried to record them as they occurred, hoping many may be benefited.

I shall now write two letters on mistakes, and three of advice. I hope many of my young brethren may be admonished by one who has traveled the road before them, and avoid the rocks I have run against in trying to do my Master's will.¹

Experience and Mistakes— Advice to Young Preachers. No. 6.

Having examined the line of march in my five former articles, and actual experience up to the present time, which shows the many obstacles a man must surmount to do the work of an evangelist, I now come to call attention to some mistakes young preachers often make, some of which have been mine. I hope all will take earning from the things I shall say. As a word of consolation, I will say: No young preacher's conduct will be above criticism by the mixed multitude with whom you associate. Paul says: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Some will think you are stuck up; others will think you haven't pride enough; some will say you

are too awkward in the pulpit; others will say you give more attention to how you preach than to what you say; some will say you are too hard on the sects; others will say you are not plain enough; some will say you are too familiar with the women; others will say you are too friendly. Some will say you are flirting with the girls; while some will say you are crazy to get married.

MISTAKE NUMBER ONE.

These are only a few of the items that will be brought against you in almost every meeting you hold. Then mistake number one will be when you write a letter to anybody denying any charge or asking about anything you may have heard that has been said of you.

It makes no difference what you may hear that people say about you; for the Lord's sake, make no reply. If what they say be true, try to humbly correct the wrong in your own life. If what is said be untrue, nine-tenths of those who tell the falsehood will tell twenty more to sustain what they have said. Then never—no, never—think of making any reply to what some evil-hearted man or woman may say about your conduct. The less attention you give to what may be said about you, the less it will harm you; and the more it will harm those who make the talk.

Along this line I have made some of the most egregious

mistakes of life.

While I would look back over bygone years and draw the curtain of forgiveness and forgetfulness, yet I can call to memory sometimes when I have acted indiscreetly by writing to someone who had spoken unkindly of me. I would stir them up to be still more bitter enemies and cause them to use all their extra powers against me to injure me. They have even written to places where my work would be, to prejudice the brethren against me.

All this might have been prevented had I paid no attention to them, gone on preaching as I had been doing, and treated them kindly. Yet following the

Some will think you are stuck up; others will think you haven't pride enough; some will say you are too awkward in the pulpit; others will say you give more attention to how you preach than to what you say; some will say you are too hard on the sects; others will say you are not plain enough;

¹ Gospel Advocate, Vol. 39, No. 25, June 24, 1897.

other course I have made them life enemies; and while I can freely forgive all wrongs done, still I think no circumstance can cause me to ever have any confidence in them. I suppose they look at me from the same point of view.

Then remember, dear young brother, your conduct is watched far closer than what people may say, and all things said about you will soon be forgotten, and your life of earnest work, in the minds of good men and women, will prove the accusation a lie, if you don't keep it stirred by writing and denying the charges made against you. Don't make the first mistake by writing the first letter on hearsay or what "they" may say; the second you will never have to write.

MISTAKE NUMBER TWO.

Young preachers often express themselves on any trouble before hearing both sides. Then learn not to draw conclusions till you hear the whole matter.

Often, when you go to places, you will be told of some great crime that old Brother A or Sister B is guilty of. You will be told of some great wrong that has been done your informant, and you will be asked to give your advice. Treat their statement with courtesy, but refuse to express yourself till you hear the other side; for frequently said parties are only telling you so much to get you to commit yourself that they may use it in their own favor to the downfall of the other parties. In all local troubles, have no pets; examine closely both sides before you speak, and then act as a man of God. Rule righteously, regardless of the influence that may be on one side and the prejudice that may exist on the other.

MISTAKE NUMBER THREE

Some try to preach so they will not hurt anybody's feelings by crossing their religious faith. I often see reports of meetings in papers, where the reporter is careful to say: "Brother A is a grand preacher, and all the sects love him, and love to hear him preach."

I thank God that in all my meetings reported, no one has ever reported such a meeting. Neither do I believe any man beneath the sun can preach the gospel in all its plainness and purity and have such a report of his meeting. Christ never had such a report, nor Paul nor any of the earlier Christian writers who preached the gospel as God ordained they should do. If you go out to try to please men, you will not please God; if you preach in such a manner

that the sects all love to hear you, then there is something wrong, either with the sects or with your preaching. In kindness, earnestness, and love preach the word, and don't neglect to preach it straight. It is much better to preach it so it will save men than to preach it so it will please the sects. Let God be your teacher, his word your guide. Seek to please him whether it pleases men or not.

This brings us to the fourth mistake, which will be examined in our next.²

Experience and Mistakes— Advice to Young Preachers. No. 7.

MISTAKE NUMBER FOUR.

Many young preachers, in trying to put themselves forward as debaters, challenge all they meet for debate before they are prepared to meet the doctrines of men. Even Paul exhorts Timothy to avoid this. Alexander, the coppersmith, claims he had greatly withstood even the words of an apostle. (2 Tim. 4: 14-15.)

It being true that there were men of ability who opposed the truth so much that an apostle could write to a young preacher to beware of certain ones, our young brethren should take heed and not too soon overestimate their ability and want to meet some man in debate when they are not able to do so. It is not every man that is a good preacher who can debate; and while I am strictly in favor of debates, I visit many places where debates did no good. They were brought about by unfavorable surroundings, by one side bulldozing and old Adam on the other, by a spirit of controversy rather than a seeking for truth. Also, I have been to places where one man was unable to meet his opponent, and, as a result, harm came to the church there.

Again, I would say that one of the most fatal mistakes a young preacher can make is to try to meet a man on all low, vulgar positions he may take. While ridicule and vulgarity may take with some people, it will never take with that class who build permanently society or the church of God. So, above all things in debate, keep yourself above the low and vulgar. It makes no difference if your opponent goes there, tell him you are a Christian, must give an account to God for your conduct, and cannot afford to stoop below what is written. This kind of debating may not suit some, but will win in the end, and also be

² *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 39, No. 26, July 1, 1897.

more acceptable to him who called you to be a soldier.

MISTAKE NUMBER FIVE.

You fail to teach the brethren their duty concerning the support of the ministry. I am well aware that nine-tenths of our young preachers make fatal mistakes at this point. It is not necessary for you to say something about money in every sermon, but in all meetings have one or two good sermons on scripturally spreading the gospel. Let the brethren plainly understand that if God has called you to preach the gospel, he has also called them to support you in so doing, and while condemnation may come to you in not preaching, equal condemnation will come to them in not supporting you while preaching.

Don't try to visit all mission points at your own expense, for such will soon close you out, and you will become discouraged in not being supported; whereas had you done your duty at the beginning in teaching the brethren, there would have been no necessity in your quitting.

Some ungodly man or woman may accuse you of preaching only for money. Don't regard the accusation. No true man or woman will ever fall out with you for teaching them their duty. Along this line I have made some grave mistakes, which I am trying to correct as I grow older.

Error is killed out only by the practice of truth, and had our brethren always been as faithful in teaching the people on giving as they have in preaching baptism for the remission of sins, there would have been no occasion or place or time for the organization of the different societies that have infested the church.

So, dear young brother, from the beginning teach them that the fellowship is of as much importance as prayer, apostle's doctrine, and breaking of bread.

MISTAKE NUMBER SIX.

Jealously toward other preachers. The first thing every young preacher should learn is that God never made any two men to occupy the same place in the church of Christ. After learning that, it will not be hard to understand that our brother is not in our way, but only as a member filling his place in the body. I have found some preachers who did not like for an-

other brother to come on their territory, and especially if some of the home brethren spoke kindly of the visiting brother. I have also seen many preachers who could never speak a kind word of another preacher, showing they were jealous of the other man's influence. No difference what evil report they heard of their preaching brother, they never lost an opportunity of telling and magnifying the same.

Dear young brother, your preaching brethren are not in your way, but only companions doing their part in the great conflict, as God has ordained. Then let them be your friends, and not your enemies. Speak well of them; be not jealous of them, even if they can preach better than you. Do the best you can, and leave the consequences with God, knowing that an angel can do no more.

Our next will be advice to young preachers.³

Experience and Mistakes—

Advice to Young Preachers. No. 8.

Along the line of advice, it may be well to say in the beginning that preachers are born, not made. Perhaps there are men preaching today who should be in the penitentiary, and men in the penitentiary who should be preaching.

Paul shows, in Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, and Eph. 4, that there is one body, and all the different members

are fitted together in that one body to make all complete in Christ. In all well-organized and well-regulated bodies, one member never gets in the way of another, neither are there too many members for one body, neither are there any provisions made for dead members to be carried about by that body. In all cases where a member becomes dead, they are

only carried about by putting double work on some other member. Should some member become dissatisfied with its place, and try to take the place of some other member of that body, nothing but confusion would follow. If you should sit down at the table and the foot fly up on the table, take hold of your fork to convey your food to your mouth, all could see the failure at once, and realize how ridiculous the performance would be to look upon. Again, if you sit down to write a letter and the foot fly up, take the pen and begin to write, where could you

The first thing every young preacher should learn is that God never made any two men to occupy the same place in the church of Christ.

³ Gospel Advocate Vol. 37, No. 27, July 8, 1897.

find a place for your hands? Should your head jump to the ground and begin to walk, what service would your feet be? These thoughts suggest the propriety of carefully considering the position God has ordained we should occupy in the body.

Then every young preacher should ask himself the question: "What position has God ordained for me to occupy?" To that question you can almost be sure to find an answer by reading Rom. 12. There you find all have different gifts, and you will see which one of these gifts you can best fill. After you prayerfully decide, and that decision is that you are to be a minister, remember you have taken upon yourself to fill the most solemn and responsible position that God has ordained man to fill upon the earth; remember you have become the Lord's servant, and are expected to go forth among the children of men to do his will; remember, you are become a co-laborer with God to build lively stones into the spiritual building that was established by God, not by men; also remember that Paul warns you in thunder tones to take heed how you build thereupon, for every man's building shall be tried at the last day. This being true, every thought should be studied with caution, and every step taken with care. One wrong idea developed, one wrong step taken, may cause you to branch off the main line and be sidetracked by the wayside. A life of usefulness may be destroyed almost before the star of hope begins to shine.

These thoughts, given by Paul, well considered and well developed, will safely guide any man through life as a preacher, and enable him to do the work God has ordained for him to do: First, "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2); second, "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22); third, "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3).

If these three thoughts are well developed and strongly fortified from every standpoint, no young man need have any fear of failure as a preacher in the church of Christ. But at the beginning of these thoughts many young men are met with the difficult problem: "How am I to prepare myself to preach the word?" To many this seems hard; to others, they see nothing difficult along that line.

To all I must say there are no insurmountable difficulties to that man who is willing to labor and to wait. I often notice calls in the papers from so-called noble young men asking some church to help them by sending them money that they may go to school.

They desire an education that they may make a preacher. To these calls I give no heed, for not one of the young men in ten who make such calls will ever succeed. They are not willing to endure hardships as a good soldier, and only desire to be educated at the expense of someone else. If I were a stout, healthy young man, eighteen to twenty-five years old, and had been working for myself from two to five years, before God I would be ashamed to let people know I was so worthless as to have to call on someone to help me go to school. Almost any able-bodied young man can get work on the farm from \$125 to \$150 per year, and \$25 to \$40 of this money will clothe him decently. If he will spend his nights at home studying, instead of running around with the gay and frivolous, he can come to the last of the year with \$75 or \$100. With this money he can go to school six or eight months, then work and go again. When he shows that he is worthy of help, almost any community has some good man or woman who is willing to help him pull through. If there is nothing in him, help will do harm instead of good.⁴

Experience and Mistakes— Advice to Young Preachers. No. 9.

My last left me on the education of young preachers. While I am strictly in favor of educating young men for the ministry, I only favor this education so far as it goes to develop the powers for good that the young man may already possess. When you educate a young man as a professional minister, to make a "pastor" of him, about nine times out of ten you lose a good plow hand, make a fool of the boy, and injure the cause of Christ. There have been many honest, earnest, godly young men who were doing good by preaching the word and converting men and women to Christ. God was blessing their labor; they were enduring hardships as good soldiers; they went to college, came back educated fools, had no piety, little love for the Master's cause, had made professional preachers of themselves, and were hunting a job. They were seeking to take charge of some church, desiring a place in all societies to make themselves popular, first-class young pastors, worth \$1,000 to any church, and could not disgrace the profession by preaching for less. They generally fall in love with some church, and know from one to three other places which are anxious for

⁴ *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 39, No. 29. July 22, 1897.

their services at \$1,000, but on account of the great need of the place where they are, they will work for \$1,000, but will contribute \$400 of that amount in preaching, provided the congregation will raise the other \$600. I well know a young preacher in Texas who, in bygone years, was earnest, zealous, and a grand young preacher. Like Paul of old he was set for the defense of the gospel; he had good meetings, and it seemed the power of God was with him; but he was not satisfied in his humble, godly position. He went to college, and first became an advocate of societies in the church, because the popular current was on that side, and he could not say: "No." He never made a great sacrifice to become "pastor" of a church—that is, two congregations about thirty miles apart wanted him all the time, and had offered him \$900 a year. He had only a few days to give them an answer; but on account of the great need of the church where he was, and on account of his great love for his dear little wife, from whom he could hardly stand to be separated two weeks at a time, he agreed that if the church would raise him \$900 he would preach for them. He would much rather lose \$300 than to be separated half his time from his wife. All the poor men who were controlled by their wives, and all the dear sisters with their societies, went to work not to lose this great man. The time came, resources were exhausted, and \$500 was the greatest amount they could raise; but this man accepted the \$500, and lost \$400 to get to stay all the year with his wife. This young brother has lost said charge, and is located today, preaching for a small town church, and almost forgotten to the brotherhood, and, I fear, to God who called him to the ministry of his word. Another brother was once known for the great work he did; he became pastor, went off with the popular current, got \$1,000 a year for two years, then suddenly got two calls, one for \$1,200, the other for \$1,500; but on account of the great need of the place where he was, he would make the sacrifice and preach for them another year for \$1,000, and they accepted his call. He got the church greatly in debt by causing them to build a new church house. They were unable to pay the \$1,000, and he had to quit to go into secular em-

I know of some preachers in Texas today who have women for wives that are dragging their husbands' souls to hell.

ployment; but finally he got another call for \$800, where he is working now.

I only mention these things to show the dangers that come out before our young men. I am greatly in favor of an education, and never fail to impress upon young men the importance of going to school. I need to thank God today that we have a grand Bible School for young men, at Nashville, where the Bible can be prayerfully studied without addition or subtraction; that here young men may fit and prepare themselves to better proclaim the glad tidings of salvation; but should this school, like many others, seek to become popular, to turn out "pastors" instead of godly young men for the Master's use, then I will be an enemy to that school as much as I am to some others.⁵

Then, dear young brethren, if you are any account and worth educating, and it becomes necessary for the Master's cause that you should be educated, don't become discouraged at disappointments

today, for success may come to you tomorrow. All who fight may expect defeat at some point. But profit by defeat; watch yourself more closely; work, fight, watch, and pray; and He who doeth all things well will finally come to your relief, and crown you with reward.⁶

Experience and Mistakes— Advice to Young Preachers— No. 10.

Dear young brethren, as this is our last letter, I wish to speak of home and its surroundings.

1. It is well for preachers to marry.
2. Preachers should act sensibly and marry one who will make a preacher a companion, not a heathen.
3. All preachers should live within their income.
4. All should strive to get a home.

But, you ask, when should I marry?

More young preachers kill their influence in mar-

⁵ This Bible school in Nashville later became David Lipscomb College, and is now Lipscomb University. It has become exactly what J.D. Tant wrote about, and has left the faith once delivered. —Editor.

⁶ *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 39, No. 30, July 29, 1897.

rying too young than do those in waiting too long. Very few young men are fitted to marry during the growing period of life. In our growing stage what we are this year we are not that next, and few girls who suit you this year would suit you next. Then, never think of marrying under twenty-five years old. It is much safer to marry from twenty-eight to thirty-five than it is from eighteen to twenty-five. If you get a good woman, she is well worth waiting for; if she is mean, you will have long enough to live with her, anyway; so don't be in a hurry to marry. Don't be fearful that all the pretty and good girls will be married before you are twenty-eight, for I am sure we will have a supply of marriageable girls on hand at the last day. You are hardly competent to decide all the affairs of life so young; you are not able, and have not become settled enough, to become the husband of a good, Christian girl. Wait till you are developed in mind and body, then you will have more judgment to choose a companion who will be suited to you in all the conflicts of life.

Again, you ask, whom should I marry? I would say you should never marry a frivolous, giddy, lightheaded, selfish girl; neither a sectarian. On an average, all women are good enough for all men, but preachers' wives are few. I know of some preachers in Texas today who have women for wives that are dragging their husbands' souls to hell. I see no hope for such a preacher, unless he does as Abraham of old—leave his country and his wife's kin behind; and he might go farther than Abraham, and leave his wife behind, too, if he ever expects to do his Master's will. Only a short time past I stayed all night with a preacher whose wife seemed to think she had been called to abuse preachers (her husband in particular, because he left home and went off to preach the word). It took me only a short time to give her a few suggestions, which I think she will not forget soon.

Young brethren, don't fall in love with only a beautiful form, but court a girl on account of her sense, zeal for the Master's cause, and desire to be-

come a preacher's wife. If you cannot find that kind, my advice to you is to never, no, never marry.

And now, as for your support, it is always safe, if we cannot pay for what we need, to put up with what we have. Many times since I have been preaching, I have felt the need of more food than I had; many times I have gone into the pulpit feeling embarrassed on account of my old clothes; yet I pulled through with what I had, paid my debts, and lived honest before all men. Don't go in debt depending on your brethren to pay, for many things come up to drive your brethren from you. They don't pay, you have to suffer the blame, and your influence is crippled thereby. I know of preachers

Don't go in debt depending on your brethren to pay, for many things come up to drive your brethren from you... I know of preachers now whose influence is forever crippled on account of their dressing finer and eating more than their income could supply.

now whose influence is forever crippled on account of their dressing finer and eating more than their income could supply. Don't think because you hold a good meeting and are paid well for it that such will always be true, for you may have to hold many without any pay at all. Finally, don't make it convenient to move every change of the moon, but find a good community and buy you a home. A farm is better; if no more than five acres, it will be a home, and the rents you would pay in five years will pay it out of debt. Such a course will encourage your dear wife. She realizes that all improvements made are on her own, not another's, home. Above all, don't

give occasion for people to say you have the meanest children in town. Properly direct the home. Try to buy a home. You may not need it now, but after a while, when the winter time of life comes upon you, you can lie down to rest, not an object of charity, but as a wise servant in the Master's vineyard, having a home for your declining days, and the promise of a better home in that city whose builder and maker is God.⁷

⁷ *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 39, No. 31, August 5, 1897.

POWER IN HUMBLE SERVICE

Mitch Robison

Let us begin by looking at John 13:1-5:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Who Is Greatest?

This remarkable scene unfolds in the upper room following the Passover meal and the institution of the Lord's Supper. According to Luke's account, there has been another discussion of greatness. *"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest."* (Luke 22:24). So, in the middle of the solemn Passover meal, the meal Jesus forever changed by declaring the bread to be His body and the cup His blood, His disciples start bickering about who was the best disciple!

In this atmosphere Jesus gets up and begins to do the work of the lowest slave in the household. The washing of feet was a job given to the least servant in the home. It was considered the worst kind of work to have to do. But the Christ, the Son of God, gets up and begins to wash feet. We can only imagine the startled looks on the faces of the men who may have been right then arguing about who was the greatest.

Jesus, here, is washing the feet of men He knows will desert Him. One will betray Him, one will deny Him and the others will run away from Him. Yet,

Jesus humbles Himself and washes all the feet of the very men who were going to let Him down in a few hours. The disciples cannot yet grasp the full meaning of this, but Jesus has an important lesson to demonstrate.

Not My Feet!

Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:6-8).

When Jesus came to Peter, the apostle stopped the Master. It is not hard to imagine Peter's discomfort. Imagine a person you admire and respect above all others stooping so low as to wash feet. What if it were Abraham Lincoln who did this, or George Washington or some other man or woman you admire? Peter has the same struggle we would have. How can someone I look up to kneel before me to do the dirtiest kind of work?

It is even more interesting that Peter didn't seem to mind that Jesus was washing the feet of the other disciples. Maybe Peter thought they needed cleaning. Maybe he thought it was all right for the Messiah to clean up the other followers, after all they were not as great as he was. We cannot be sure of Peter's thoughts, but we know he didn't object until Jesus got to him.

For Peter this is a challenge, as it is for us. Jesus compelled Peter to submit, to accept that the role of the Christ was to serve, not to be served. This was what Jesus had said the first time the discussion of greatness came up. *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matt. 20:28). Peter did not like to see His Master serving, because of what it meant to Peter himself. It was okay to wash the feet of oth-

ers, but not Peter's!

Give Me a Bath!

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean" (John 13:9-11).

Once Peter understood that if he did not participate in this foot washing he was out of step with Jesus, he jumped to the other extreme. Now he wants Jesus to wash him all over, his hands, his head as well as his feet. In other words, if Jesus wants to wash, He can wash all of me.

Peter sees this event unfold, but misses its point entirely. The reason Jesus was washing feet was not to clean dirty feet! It was to model the type of behavior that should characterize His kingdom and its ministry. The kingdom is not about power or greatness, it is about humble service. Peter didn't need a bath, he was clean enough spiritually. What he needed was to learn that being a follower of the Christ is not about greatness and status, but about humbling yourself to serve other people. The mystery of this event is not in cleaning, but in giving yourself away, giving up your rights and privileges and kneeling to serve the needs of others.

I'm Supposed to Do THAT?

Look at John 13:12-17 now.

"So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

The hardest part of Jesus washing Peter's feet was the realization that this is what Jesus wants Peter, and all of His followers, to do as well. Peter's struggle had as much to do with Peter as anything, because Jesus is asking him to give up his place,

take the role of the lowest servant and serve the needs of people. If the Master does it, so must the follower.

The greatest challenge is that we are to serve the needs of people who may be acting their worst. Some may be planning to betray us (as Judas was). Some may be in the process of planning to deny us, or will not have the courage to stand up for us when we need them. We are to look into the faces of people who are failing, who have failed and who will fail and still wash their feet. We are to kneel before those who are misusing us, abusing us and arguing about who is greatest, and still wash their feet in humble service.

No wonder Peter had such a hard time with this event. Jesus is asking him (and us) to learn to give up our privilege and rights and status and serve people who don't deserve it and who will let us down.

The Power of God

Even today Christians and churches have a hard time with this great principle. Jesus showed us how to overcome Satan. It is not with smarter thinking. It is not with modern methods. It is not with more brilliant tactics. We overcome Satan and his power the same way Jesus did. By emptying ourselves and serving others, who don't deserve it.

This is the great principle of church growth, of establishing righteousness, of turning enemies into friends. These tasks of every Christian and every church will not be accomplished because we are the "greatest." They will be accomplished because we capture the power that is found in humble service.

Paul wrote to a church in Philippi that was having some internal dissension. Listen to his teaching about how to handle differences in the kingdom.

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Phil. 2:1-4).

Paul wants the believers in Philippi to get along. He tells them to be united in spirit and purpose. He warns them not to be selfish but to put others first.

Many object to this, saying how hard it is to yield to cruel people, or to those who have not been kind or have been unfair. In other words, if you had been through what I have been through you wouldn't ask me to put that person first! So how do we learn to serve, to be unselfish, to yield to those who may have injured us?

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

Paul says we are to develop the same attitude (or mind) that Jesus had. We are to empty ourselves and be willing to accept the role of lowest slave in the kingdom, if that will minister to the needs of people. That includes the people who betray us, the people

who deny us, the people who abandon us. When we capture the mind of Christ and learn to serve in humility, we will have captured the power of God to change the world.

Submit Today

Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it'' (Matt. 16:24-25).

It should not surprise us to learn that the first step in following Jesus is surrender. Each of us must give up our wants, our ways, our desires and surrender to Jesus. In the act of submission to His will, there is power to overcome sin and Satan. Submit, and be baptized into Christ today. Surrender your will to Him. Then, learn to serve in the lowest places with full humility. You will lay claim to the greatest power of God, the power to defeat Satan in the world.

DIAZ BROTHERS PRINTING

CUSTOM DESIGNS QUALITY PRINTS

Owned & Operated by Adam & Eric Diaz

members of the Morris Road Church of Christ in Gulfport, MS

**We would be happy to supply your
congregation or business with anything printed:**

- Flyers
- Brochures
- Rack Cards
- Doorhangers
- Bookmarks
- Mailers
- Banners
- Pop-up Displays
- Printed Table Cloths
- Yard Signs
- Decals & More
- Custom Design Available

228-467-5833 | mail@228print.com

4323 Leisure Time Drive | Diamondhead, MS 39525

QUOTES TO CONTEMPLATE

"I have found a large class of men, professors, too, who will sit for a year rather than rise up crooked. They are conscientious men; but they do nothing right lest they should do something wrong."

Alexander Campbell

"I do not mean to say that there are two different human natures, but all humanity is made the same, sometimes belonging to God and sometimes to the devil. If anyone is truly spiritual they are a person of God; but if they are irreligious and not spiritual then they are a person of the devil, made such not by nature, but by their own choice"

Ignatius

Our author thinks all *denominations* that have ever attempted to go by the Scripture, as the *rule* of government, have met with their difficulties, and were *driven* to the necessity of fixing some *human* plan. I could wish he had have told us how all those *denominations* came into the Christian world. Was it not effected by departing from the Scripture, and carnally following of men instead of Christ?

James O'Kelly,
Vindication for the Apology

Would to God that all the party *names*, and unscriptural *phrases* and *forms*, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot

John Wesley
Founder of Methodism

There are more religious men now among us, who urge the benefit of different or distinct churches, formed on different orders, and called by different names; that people having a choice of churches may be without excuse. However, this is a doctrine I cannot believe, because different *creeds* are not all right and pure, and sure I am, that God never directed *error* that men might embrace the truth. Truth is always the same, every where.

James O'Kelly,
An Address to the Christian Church...

Let us not consider every *notion* of the *brain* as an established article of our faith, or creed.

James O'Kelly,
An Address to the Christian Church...

[W]hat's the big deal about being mature? Why should we grow when most people aren't? It's because most people settle for what they think they're worth. They only seek after things they think they can afford or will give them pleasure. This life is so much more than that, though. We don't have to just "settle for whatever," but look to be better and excel still more. We weren't created to merely exist, but to live great lives. Reach higher than you've ever reached before and seek to obtain things you only wish you could have. Yes, you can do it! The immature ones though have the mindset that they never will, so they never even try.

As Christians though, we ought to be mature and grow because we are to live above the influence of the world. We are called to be greater and commanded to not be like the world (cf. Romans 8:5; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). To be like the world is the immature way of thinking.

Kevin Micuch
Time to Grow Up!
The Importance of Maturing in Christ

[T]he reading that is not pondered, is nearly worthless.

D.R. Dungan,
Hermeneutics

The story is told of a Welsh minister who preached for two churches, one a Welsh speaking and the other an English speaking people. Someone asked him how he supplied sermons in both languages. He said he took the Bishop's sermons and translated them into Welsh, and read them to his flock. "But," said the querist, "how then do you supply the other congregation?" "Oh," said the ingenious divine, "I translate them back into English, and the Bishop himself would not recognize them by that time."

D.R. Dungan,
Hermeneutics

Covenant

Bob Haley

The Hebrew term for covenant is *berit*, **meaning** “to bond or fetter.” It is translated into the Greek as *syntheke*, “binding together” or *diatheke*, “will, testament.” In the Bible, then, a covenant is a relationship based upon mutual commitments. It typically involves promises, obligations, and rituals.

Forgiveness is a key to covenant. In the marriage covenant, forgiveness is not contingent upon what the other person does or does not do. In order for a marriage to work, each must have a forgiving spirit. Both parties will fall short at times in keeping their part of the covenant.

Contract is based upon *performance*, but covenant is based on *commitment*. Putting the rights and well-being of the other person ahead of our own is what matters. Keeping the promise made is what counts. God expects both parties to keep the promises they make to one another, and repentance is in order when they break those promises.

We should understand clearly the difference between contract and covenant. When a wife or husband withholds favors because the other does not live up to expectations, that is a *contract* mindset. A *covenant* mindset is when one or the other keeps the promises they made, regardless of what the other might do.

God says marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman.

Covenant is a key to understanding family. We spend our lives searching for a place to belong, a place to be accepted (as the song goes, “Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came”). Rejection does harm to our self-esteem and we try to avoid rejection. We long for others to like us, want us, and love us. This need is to be first fulfilled in bonding with our parents, and later with our mate. God created family to meet this all-important need.

Family was created by God (Gen. 1-3) and must be as God intended for it to function correctly.

In the Old Testament God’s prophet wrote:

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant (Malachi 2:13-14)

Is marriage old fashioned, as some say? Would it be better to live together rather than commit to a marriage relationship?

Marriage is not a contract between two people, nor is it supposed to be. A contract is a bargain for goods. It is written, signed, and contains contingencies. Contracts have a beginning date and an ending. The parties involved expect the other to do what is stated in the contract and, if one side doesn’t, the second party can refuse to follow through with his or her part.

Marriage, by God’s design, is a covenant. A covenant spells out the basis for a long-term involvement between two people—and not just two people, but one man and one woman. Before God, they make promises to each other and to God. They do this before God and other witnesses. They promise to do this in sickness and in health, until death. That is called covenant.

They ask nothing and expect nothing in return. They promise to each other with no contingencies stated. Each anticipates the other keeping his or her promises, but they will keep their promises regardless. That is marriage, as God would have it.

TABERNACLE SHADOWS THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE

Mark McWhorter

The Altar of Incense is discussed in Exodus 30:1-10, 34-38; and 37:25-28. It was made of shittim (acacia) wood and covered with gold. It was 1 cubit (1 foot, 9 inches) long and broad. It was 2 cubits (3 feet, 6 inches) high. There was a crown of gold all around the top. There were four horns on the four corners.

The Altar was seen directly in front as the priest entered the Holy Place. This put it on the West side in front of the Veil.

There were only 2 gold rings for the 2 staves. There was one ring on opposite sides (corners – the Hebrew word is ‘rib’ or ‘side’). The staves were shittim wood covered with gold. The wood and gold still representing the humanity and deity of Christ.

The Incense

No strange incense could be offered on the Altar. The incense mixture was commanded by God. It was made of the sweet spices of stacte (the finest myrrh), onycha (sweet smelling shell), galbanum (a gum resin), and frankincense (dry resin aromatic gum). All had equal weight.

It was to be tempered together, made pure and holy. It was to be beat to a very small consistency. The finer it is beat the better the fragrance when burning. This shows the importance and minuteness of inspection that God gives the prayers and praises of men.

The incense was made for God, not for man (Exodus 30:38). It did not matter what man found pleasing, it was only accepted on the Altar if it was what God commanded. It not only had to be made of the proper ingredients but also the proper con-

sistency.

John 4:24, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” God will not accept worship if it is only given in spirit. Nor will he accept it if it is only given in truth. Both aspects must be fulfilled for God to accept worship. The right heart and attitude must be balanced with truth.

The incense was kept in the Holy Place. This shows that our prayers and singing should never be taken away from God and given to another god on that god’s altar. In Israel’s history, they not only worshipped Jehovah, but worshipped false gods. It is impossible to worship two different gods. God is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14; and Deuteronomy 4:24; 6:15). He requires all worship come to him.

Perpetual Incense

It is called a ‘perpetual incense,’ (Exodus 30:9).

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Pray without ceasing.” Christians need to communicate with God as much as possible. ‘Without ceasing’ was used in the Greek language for a persistent cough. The cough was interrupted, but persistent.

The church must offer prayers and singing while in the Light. They must be offered according to his word. They must not be trivialized since Christ, the Light, is present when they are being offered.

Spoons

The spoons used for the incense were probably the ones used at the Table of Shewbread, since no instructions are given for such in association with the Altar.

This shows a close association between the Altar and the Table. The spoon used with the bread, making his body a sweet smelling sacrifice to those eating it, is also what aids in making the prayers, songs, etc. smell good to God.

Through the Veil

Our prayers and singing into Heaven (the Most Holy Place) go through the Veil. John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The veil will be discussed under the Holy of Holies.

"Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," (Psalm 141:2). Hebrews 13:15, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

1 Peter 2:5, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints," (Revelation 5:8).

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand," (Rev. 8:3-4).

Acceptance

It is the altar of acceptance. Ephesians 1:6, "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Without going through Jesus, without sending our worship through him, the Father will not accept the worship.

Intercession

This altar is one of intercession. The incense can only go through and upon Christ into the Most Holy Place. The prayers and praises to God must be burned on the Altar. There is no other name. They cannot be given to Mary or any Catholic Saint.

Jesus is our Intercessor, Advocate (Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1), and Mediator (Hebrews 12:24; and 1 Timothy 2:5).

The intercessor was involved every morning and evening as the High Priest burned the incense. The High Priest represented the people in presenting

their incense. Christ as our High Priest takes our prayers, etc. and presents them to the Father.

Morning and Evening

The incense was burned in the morning and evening at the same time the High Priest dressed and lighted the Candlestick (Exodus 30:7-8).

This shows the importance of remembering God at the beginning and the ending of each day.

Psalm 55:17, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."

Psalm 92:1-2, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

Drink Offering

No drink offering was allowed at this Altar (Exodus 30:9). There was no blood shed by Christ after the cross. As the Altar of Incense he is the risen Savior. Thus, no drink offering was needed at the Altar of Incense.

Horns

The four corners of the Altar each had a horn. The four horns represent his authority, strength, honor, and victory over all the earth.

Prayer acknowledges God's authority. Prayer aids in giving strength. Prayer is an honor bestowed upon the righteous. Prayer leads to victory over sin.

The four horns also represent his access to anyone from anywhere.

Slaughter Sacrifice

No sacrifice of slaughter was permitted on this Altar (Exodus 30:9).

However, once per year on the Day of Atonement, the blood of the sin offering was put upon the horns of the golden Altar (Exodus 30:10). This told of sacrifice offered elsewhere bringing sanctification to the Altar of Incense.

While only done once per year, it had to be repeated annually. Christ took care of it once and for all. He died on the cross, the Brazen Altar, and took his blood to the Altar of Incense, Himself. His sacrifice sanctified him as the one who Christians can take their offerings to the Father.

If the High Priest sinned an ignorant sin along with the people, he was to put blood on this Altar (Leviticus 4:1-7). Christ never committed sin, therefore he has never been required to do this. He did

however, fulfill all types.

Most Holy

The Altar is called 'Most Holy' in Exodus 30:10. Jesus is Most Holy. He is deity. He lived the perfect human life.

Before the Lord

In Leviticus 4:7, 18; and 16:18, the Altar is called the Altar 'before the Lord.' Revelation 8:3 references the Altar before the Throne. This indicates the intimate relationship during worship.

When the Veil was split at Jesus' death, the Altar of Incense had a direct and open view of the Throne.

Strange Fire

No strange fire could be used at the Altar (Leviticus 10 – Nadab and Abihu). The fire had to come from the Brazen Altar. That fire came from God. This fire was referenced as the 'fire before the Lord' (Leviticus 16:13).

Our prayers and songs must be burned with the fire from the Lord. This means it can only be presented through Christ. Any worship done in any other name is unacceptable to the Father.

The Crown

This Altar had a crown. The Brazen Altar did not have a crown. With this is seen the deity of Christ and his royal authority.

Hebrews 2:9, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." This crowning is at the Altar of Incense.

The crown demonstrates the reward given to those who live the righteous life. The Christian will share in Christ's inheritance (Colossians 3:24).

In Front of the Holy of Holies

The Altar was directly in front of the Holy of Holies. Except for the Day of Atonement, this was as close as a Priest could get to God.

One cannot get closer to God presently, than when one is engaged in prayer and praise. The non-Christian does not have this intimate relationship and cannot have it.

The Christian should desire this intimacy. The Christian must enter the Holy Place to gain access to the Altar of Incense.

Free CDs!



*Please visit our
website to request.*

AudioEvangelism.com

Daily Bible Studies in MP3 & Full-text Format

**Visit AudioEvangelism.com
for an archive of over
1700 lessons on a variety
of topics and texts that
you can listen to or read.
Most are around 5 minutes
in duration. Great for
personal study, sermon
starters, & bulletin articles!**

About the AUTHORS

Jamie Beller has been a preacher in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and South Carolina. He presently works with the church of Christ in Prague, Oklahoma, while also working full-time at Tinker Air Force Base. He loves discussing the Bible with friends and strangers alike.

Jimmie Beller loved to smile, even though he suffered for over a decade through cancer brought on by his service as a medic in Vietnam. He loved reading, studying, and listening to sermons. He told the editor he looked just like Jeremie Beller (Jeremie and the editor both disagree with that assessment).

Gerald Cowan earned degrees from Freed-Hardeman College, Lambuth University, and Harding Graduate School of Religion. He has preached the gospel to which he is committed for a bit more than 60 years. He is also committed to short-term missions, focusing for the past 22 years on the European country of Albania (Biblical Illyricum). He and his wife Neda have produced children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Though he was a late comer to the gospel and a late bloomer as well, an underachieving writer, and is considered a lame duck by many, he steadfastly resists retirement, is still a student, and glad to be called a preacher.

Adam Cozort works with the Lakeside church of Christ in Springfield, IL. Over the last 15 years, he has preached full-time with congregations in Illinois, Mississippi, and Georgia. He is a licensed high school sports official in football, basketball, and baseball. He and his wife Shea have five sons who they have been homeschooling since before COVID-19 made homeschooling a requirement.

John DeBerry is a Christian, a minister, and a 13-term Tennessee State Representative from Memphis. In addition to his local work, brother DeBerry also speaks at several brotherhood lectureships. He would appreciate your prayers as the election nears.

Andrew D. Erwin preaches for the West Fayetteville church of Christ in Fayetteville, TN. He is also the editor of the *Gospel Gleaner* (GospelGleaner.com), which can be ordered for free. He is also the author of several books, including *Each One Reach One* (a book on personal evangelism), *Select Studies in the Restoration: 1700-Present Day*, *Truth: Plan and Simple*, and *The Lord's Church*.

Jason Floyd still talks about the weather, due to job requirements, but he now also preaches full-time for the church of Christ in Bennington, Vermont. He likes to write, read, and spend time with his family.

And if you ever need information about where to get elderberry syrup, he's your guy.

Kyle Frank is a disabled workaholic whose idea of fun is spending twelve hours a day reading the American Standard Version (of 1901), Restoration Movement biographies, sermons, and seeing how many writing projects he can keep going at once. He also runs So and So Publishing.

Chris Gardner sends a poem: "Preacher for life; married the perfect wife; has four great kids; likes to raid the fridge; favorite season is the fall; the Cards are gonna win it all." He also thinks he's a Jedi Master.

Bill Howard is a former elder, preacher, and restaurateur who spends his "retired" time writing detective novels and study books for new Christians, as well as encouraging others.

Ted Knight has been preaching the gospel for over five decades. In addition to doing mission work in Romania, Ted and his wife Barbara have traveled large swaths of the United States, doing gospel meetings. But they both agree, there is no place on earth better than Arkansas.

John Krivak is a constant student of the Bible and church history, especially the Restoration Movement and Alexander Campbell. He studied Bible and Biblical Languages at Harding University. He can be contacted via email by using jkrivak@zoominternet.net.

Joseph McWhorter is, at last report, surrounded by farm animals of some kind, while he lives and preaches in Texas.

Mark McWhorter is an extremely knowledgeable medical expert who assisted with heart transplants, and developed protocols which today are standards. In addition to writing for the Quarterly, he also sells used books at affordable prices, and tries to help people be rational in the face of medical crises.

Jim Mitchell recently purchased the copyrights to Ivan Stewart's Open Bible Study program, and has been using it to great success. He and his wife Jennifer live in Oklahoma City, where he works with the Cherokee Hills congregation.

Mitch Robison preaches the gospel and does what he can to be helpful to those who are in need. He is the author of two books of sermons (*Every Man*

Needs Jesus Christ, which came out last month, and *A God Who Rejoices*, from 2019) as well as a teaching study called *Genesis: Origin of God's Chosen Nation*.

Roger Russell is the pulpit minister for the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ in Van Buren, Ar. where he is in his 16th year. He has been a preacher of the gospel for over 40 years and has preached in 7 states. He is a graduate of Alabama Christian School or Religion where he received a Bachelors and Masters Degree. He has been married to his wife, Greta for almost 43 years and they have 2 daughters and 4 grandchildren.

Jake Schotter loves studying the Bible, reading books, preaching (since 2009), and writing about the Truth. He has been very fortunate to grow his library to over 2,500 books and loves ordering them cheaply. He is a Bible major at Freed-Hardeman University.

Michael Shank is a former electrician who wrote a book called *Muscle and a Shovel*, describing his conversion to the Lord, and another, *When Shovels Break*, that shows that Christians who fell away can come back to the Christ. He is currently getting acclimated to the higher elevations since moving to Colorado.

Keith Stonehart has been married to Kelly for 20 years. They have 2 children, Kiah and Kole and a "son born out of due time," Carlos, who is 30. Keith was the lead singer and guitarist in a touring rock band until 2001 when he was taught the truth. Keith is the full time Evangelist at the Fultondale church of Christ in Fultondale, Alabama, just north of Birmingham.

Jefferson Davis (J.D.) Tant is dead. Though, if he were still alive, it is likely that a segment of the American population would demand his name be changed because they would call it "racist."

Bradley S. Cobb wants to kick his computer sometimes, because...well, there isn't room to explain here. When he isn't frustrated by electronics, he can sometimes be found building bookshelves while in quarantine, traveling to Alabama, visiting cemeteries, loading lots of brown boxes onto brown delivery trucks, and sleeping when he should have been finishing *The Quarterly*.