

# **I Feel The Presence of The Lord**

**By Mychal Massie**

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Cover Photo By TGIV  
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This book is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who changed my life and without whom I would be nothing. I thank my wife and son for their love; and Siamesha, my Snowshoe Siamese, who adopted me as her own.

## PREFACE

*I Feel The Presence of The Lord* is a personal collection of devotions intended to encourage the reader to seek and see the Lord in every aspect of their life.

The enemy of our souls would have us subscribe to the mentality of being endlessly busy, and therefore it being excusable to relegate God to a Sunday morning church service, if that. Thus, many in our churches today are powerless Christians and/or Christians in whom faith and fellowship with God is sorely wanting.

*I Feel The Presence of The Lord* is not just a book to be read as part of our daily devotions. It is a collection of thoughts and instructions to inspire the reader to meditate upon the Lord and His Word.

It is important for us to keep in mind that Adam and Eve enjoyed fellowship with God as He walked in the cool of the day in the Garden. (See: Genesis 2:8 KJV) But as explained in the Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments: “A sad change [took place]! Before they had sinned, if they heard the voice of the Lord God coming toward them, they would have run to meet Him.” Sin entering in through disobedience caused them to flee from God, and man has been running away from God for fear of His wrath since that moment.

But, that changed when Jesus said from the cross, “*It is finished.*” Christ gave Himself as the Lamb of God sacrificed for our sin, so that we could once again walk in the presence of our Lord. We need not hide ourselves from God, because the Blood of Christ has made it possible for us to be restored to fellowship with God.

*I Feel The Presence of The Lord* is intended to open our eyes to being in the Glorious warmth of His presence.

My friends, it is my most sincere prayer, that this book will help every person who reads it to become more aware of the presence of the Lord in their life, that comes from being obedient to His Word.

All of the Scripture verses are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

I pray you will know the grace, peace, comfort, and the presence of God our Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, and the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

# Table of Contents

PREFACE .....	3
CHAPTER 1: THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE WITHOUT EQUAL AND CAN NEVER BE BROKEN .....	9
CHAPTER 2: THE GREAT SHEPHERD.....	10
CHAPTER 3: BEING KIND .....	12
CHAPTER 4: WHAT DO THEY SEE?.....	16
CHAPTER 5: WE MUST LEARN TO ACCEPT FORGIVENESS .....	18
CHAPTER 6: EVILDOERS WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED .....	21
CHAPTER 7: JUDAS AND PETER WALKED WITH CHRIST .....	24
CHAPTER 8: GOD’S GIFT OF GRACE AND MERCY.....	26
CHAPTER 9: WHO HAVE YOU TOLD?.....	29
CHAPTER 10: DELIGHTING OURSELVES IN THE LORD.....	31
CHAPTER 11: RESPECT FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD.....	35
CHAPTER 12: WHERE ARE THE GODLY MOTHERS? .....	37
CHAPTER 13: CAN WE SING IT WITH CONFIDENCE? .....	42
CHAPTER 14: GOD WON’T CHANGE HIS LAWS TO APPEASE SIN.....	44
CHAPTER 15: WHAT DID SAMARITAN WOMAN AND MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA BOTH DO?.....	46
CHAPTER 16: HOW LONG CAN AMERICA BE BLESSED?.....	49
CHAPTER 17: KEEPING OUR WORD.....	53
CHAPTER 18: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP? .....	56
CHAPTER 19: HONORING OUR FATHER .....	60
CHAPTER 20: SMUG OR CONFIDENT .....	62
CHAPTER 21: WHAT DO I THINK? .....	65

CHAPTER 22: JESUS LOVES ME .....	67
CHAPTER 23: THE COST OF SIN IS ALWAYS GREATER THAN THE INITIAL SIN .....	70
CHAPTER 24: QUESTIONS THE SAVED MUST ASK OURSELVES .....	74
CHAPTER 25: RESPONDING TO HATRED .....	76
CHAPTER 26: TOLERANCE DOESN'T MEAN MAKING PEACE WITH SINFUL BEHAVIOR.....	80
CHAPTER 27: IT REALLY IS ABOUT WHO WALKS WITH YOU	82
CHAPTER 28: I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND BUT I BELIEVE.....	85
CHAPTER 29: GOOD SAMARITAN'S IN THE SHOPPING CENTERS OF LIFE.....	89
CHAPTER 30: CHOOSING CANDY OVER CHRIST.....	92
CHAPTER 31: AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH.....	95
CHAPTER 32: WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO WE HAVE? .....	96
CHAPTER 33: IS IT A LACK OF FAITH, OR A LACK OF TRUST? .....	100
CHAPTER 34: DO WE REALLY LOVE OUR FRIENDS?.....	104
CHAPTER 35: TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GOD... ..	106
CHAPTER 36: SITUATION ETHICS AREN'T GODLY ETHICS..	110
CHAPTER 37: THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME SATAN HAS TRIED .....	113
CHAPTER 38: A PERSONAL RECORD OF CROSSING THE JORDAN.....	117
CHAPTER 39: ARE WE HELPING IN THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR CHILDREN?.....	120
CHAPTER 40: THE SUPER BOWL vs. GOD.....	123
CHAPTER 41: SCULPTOR AND FLEA MARKETS.....	128

CHAPTER 42: PRAYER.....	131
CHAPTER 43: GOD’S PROMISES ARE WITHOUT EQUAL.....	134
CHAPTER 44: PRAYING FOR THE WAYWARD CHILD .....	135
CHAPTER 45: ETERNITY WITH MY GOD, MY LORD AND MY MOM.....	138
CHAPTER 46: ALL SIN IS UGLY WHEN REVEALED.....	142
CHAPTER 47: JESUS IS RISEN...SO WHAT?.....	145
CHAPTER 48: ATHEISTS: THE ANGRY AND THE LOST.....	149
CHAPTER 49: SELFISHNESS IS A CHOICE .....	152
CHAPTER 50: IT’S NOT HOW WE LIVE, IT’S IN WHOM WE BELIEVE.....	155
CHAPTER 51: ANSWERED PRAYER.....	158
CHAPTER 52: THE PRESCRIPTION FOR ‘STANDING FAST IN THE LORD’.....	160
CHAPTER 53: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE 23 <sup>RD</sup> PSALM .....	165
CHAPTER 54: FAITH .....	168
CHAPTER 55: GOD IS GOD.....	170
CHAPTER 56: HE TOUCHED ME .....	173
CHAPTER 57: WHAT IF THERE ISN’T TIME FOR THEM TO ‘GROW OUT OF IT?’ .....	176
CHAPTER 58: THE CRUELEST THING TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE DIES.....	180
CHAPTER 59: WHY ARE YOU GOING TO CHURCH? .....	183
CHAPTER 60: THE SPIRITUAL FEAST OF BARMECIDE .....	186
CHAPTER 61: THIS IS THE DAY OF DECISION .....	188
CHAPTER 62: BILLBOARDS FOR SIN.....	191
CHAPTER 63: BORN AGAIN IS NOT ENOUGH.....	195

CHAPTER 64: REVERENCE FOR GOD BEGINS WITH HIS NAME .....	199
CHAPTER 65: 'MORAL RELATIVISM' IS MORAL DECAY .....	202
CHAPTER 66: WHEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS REJECT CHRIST .....	206
CHAPTER 67: BEING RELIGIOUS DOESN'T MAKE US A CHRISTIAN .....	209
CHAPTER 68: CHRISTIANS WOULD RATHER COMPROMISE THAN OBEY GOD .....	211
CHAPTER 69: IF YOU COULD HAVE HEAVEN.....	217
CHAPTER 70: A FEW QUESTIONS FOR CHRISTIANS .....	219
CHAPTER 71: BATHING IN THE WASH OF FORGIVENESS.....	221
CHAPTER 72: THE 'LAW OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION' .....	225
CHAPTER 73: HAVE YOU ANSWERED YOUR INVITATION? ..	228
CHAPTER 74: FORGIVNG AND NOT FORGETTING .....	231
CHAPTER 75: CHRIST IS NOT MY CO-PILOT, HE IS MY GOD.	233
Mychal Massie's Biography and Profile .....	236



# **CHAPTER 1: THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE WITHOUT EQUAL AND CAN NEVER BE BROKEN**

The promises of God are without equal and can never be broken. Even when it appears to us in our human minds that God has abandoned us, the truth is, that we are most likely dismayed because He is not doing what we want, the way we want, and when we want it.

God cannot lie and God does not deceive or toy with us. Yes, there will always be the dark days of trial and of the stretching of our faith. But faith isn't always about having things go as we desire. I have learned that many are the times that faith is more about believing God is God and that He will never leave His children nor forsake us.

Let us lift our voices high and proclaim that God is our helper and we shall not fear.

READ: Hebrews 13:5-6 (KJV)

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

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper,  
and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE GREAT SHEPHERD**

Earlier today, I was reflecting upon the 23rd Psalm; especially the fourth verse, which reads: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

We did not publicize it, but earlier this year I suffered a serious illness that had me bedridden for approximately seven weeks, but God was faithful. The tests for cancer were negative; yet despite that good news, it was deemed a certainty that I would need surgery to correct the problem. However, just days before the scheduled surgery date that too was found to be unnecessary.

My days of illness during that period were long and painful. But the one constant that I had through it all was that God is faithful. I knew that God would never break His precious promises, most specifically His

promise: "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
(Hebrews 13:5; KJV)

I share this to say that sometimes we go through trials and tribulations because God is getting our attention; sometimes we go through trials and tribulations for God to show forth His majesty; sometimes the things we go through are just the realities of life, and of course there are times when the trials and tribulations are a combination of all three. But the one constant is that God never changes and God never leaves us.

What a comfort to know that we have a Heavenly Father who is so full of grace, mercy, and love. What a comfort to know that as Christians and thus the children of God, we can say with confidence that "Yea, though I walk through the valley or the shadow of death," we need not fear.

Do you know Jesus as your Lord, Savior, and Shepherd? I share with you that there is no greater comfort in the midst of whatever trial or tribulation we face, than knowing without question that: The Lord is your/our Shepherd.

READ: Psalms 23 (KJV)

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **CHAPTER 3: BEING KIND**

Being nice is not cost prohibitive. I will frequently say to someone I am corresponding with or that I have been speaking with to, “do something nice for a stranger today.”

But what exactly does that mean? Do we know how to be nice to a stranger? It's not complicated and it requires nothing of us but to acknowledge a stranger. But what does that mean?

We live in a culture in which we hurry by people, consciously oblivious of them. Oftentimes we avoid making eye contact with people if we can do so for any one of a plethora of reasons. We brush by people and frequently ignore people because that's what we do. They're not like us, or they are homely or they are homeless and the list goes on.

Being nice to a stranger is sometimes simply smiling and saying hello and genuinely meaning it. Being nice to a stranger can be as simple as holding the door open for someone and acknowledging them as we do. Something as simple as a sincere "thank you" can make another person's day.

We do not know what burdens or sadness a person may be experiencing at any given moment and sometimes that random act of kindness can be a real blessing to someone.

Sharing of our resources with a homeless person may cost us only the change we drop in their cup, but for them it can mean the difference between a meal and a place to stay, and going hungry and sleeping on the street.

Are there times that we give to a homeless person and they take the money and spend unwisely? Of course there are. But if we are giving in the name of He who provides for us, that isn't necessarily our concern. I know a pastor who shared that a homeless woman once approached him and he took her into a convenience store and bought her and her children food.

Scriptures make clear that Christians do not live for themselves, they live to show forth Christ and to further His kingdom.

I attend a small church that, I refer to as the church at the "well of Bethesda." I refer to it as such because we minister to the people that sadly, many other churches will not. John 5:3 tells us that at the pool: "...lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered..." Christ ministered to a man at that pool. If we do not minister to persons like this, who will? It is

easy to give money for someone else to do it, but I contend that Christ set the example of doing it Himself. Should we not do same? We welcome the castoffs of society in and treat them as warmly as we do one another.

The world has become an uncaring insensitive place, but that is not how Christians are to behave.

If we say Christ is our Savior, then we are to live the examples He set. So I encourage you to do something nice for a stranger today. As we are told in Hebrews 13:2: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

READ: Hebrews 13:1-3 (KJV)

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

## CHAPTER 4: WHAT DO THEY SEE?

If we claim to be Christians what about us had changed? When old friends see us for the first time after we've supposedly "accepted" Jesus Christ as our Savior, do they see something different about us?

What sets us apart as Christians? Is it a strict dogmatic, legalistic view of everything, or is it something else? It should be more than just not doing what everyone else is doing. There should be ready evidence of a transformed life.

Maybe it is that we do not curse any more. Maybe it is that we stopped drinking. Those are good things if applicable, but our lives in Christ should be more than rigid religiosity.

Our lives should evidence the attributes of Christ and the Holy Spirit abiding in us. Our lives should outwardly and inwardly exhibit the "Fruit of the Spirit." We should be truth tellers; our love for our brethren should be tangible and our disaffection for willful sinfulness should be readily apparent by the way in which we comport ourselves. The demeanor of Christ should be our demeanor.



That certainly doesn't mean we should labor to project what will very quickly be identified as a lack of genuineness. Jesus never pretended to be what He wasn't, and neither should we.

If the "Fruit of God's Spirit" abides in us, the light of Christ shows forth vividly in our actions. If it doesn't, chances we are carnal Christians or even worse yet, Satan has fooled us into believing we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ when in fact we have not accepted Christ as Savior at all.

When people look at us, do they see a man/woman or child of Christ or do they see something else?

READ: Galatians 5:18-26 (KJV)

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

## **CHAPTER 5: WE MUST LEARN TO ACCEPT FORGIVENESS**

Being a Christian doesn't mean we do not fail miserably at times. It does not mean that there are times that we do not sometimes transgress in a way(s) that haunt(s) us for long periods of time.

I recall such a time in my Christian life, when for no explicable reason I told a lie to a complete stranger. Before the lie was completely out of my mouth, I felt gutted. I was ashamed. I was beyond angry with myself and I was crushed that I had failed God.

Even though I had immediately asked the Lord to forgive me for lying, I was haunted by my failure. I agonized over my failure for days and then I realized that agonizing over sin that God has forgiven me, can be the Enemy attacking my spirit, and it can also be a form of our saying God's forgiveness isn't enough for us.

Scriptures tell us that when God forgives, He also forgets: *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* (Hebrews 8:12 KJV).

This is not a license to sin, rather it is a cause to give thanks unto our merciful God in Heaven. It is inevitable that we will sin, but God's word assures us: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9 KJV)

Once God has forgiven us, we must also learn to forgive ourselves. The Apostle Paul did not wear the sin of his past like a shroud nor did the Apostle Peter

refuse to accept that he was forgiven for denying the Lord.

As Christians we are forgiven of our past sins, and the sins we commit daily by thought, word, omission, and/or deed – God will forgive as we ask. Praise God our Father in Heaven is willing to forgive if we ask. Let us be willing to accept His forgiveness when we receive it.

READ: Romans 7:15-8:1 (KJV)

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

## **CHAPTER 6: EVILDOERS WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED**

We are living in a day and time in which it seems there is no wrong, i.e., evil that a person can commit that will warrant their just punishment.

We see this from the highest levels of government, to dishonest business dealings to false teachers spreading blasphemy and heresy.

Virtually every day someone comments on one of my social sites or writes me directly that they are frustrated watching the ungodly go unpunished. Especially those who are unquestionably guilty of wanton criminal acts, be they high-ranking government politicians or the owner of a small shop on the corner.

Without exception, I tell all who express their frustration about this to me the same thing.

I tell them that we must keep our eyes on the prize. We cannot allow the sin of others to distract us. We are not to become spiritually and emotionally soured by focusing upon the wrong of others juxtaposed to the righteousness of God that we are to cultivate in our daily lives. We are not to wish evil on evildoers.

We are to pray for the lost and unsaved. Christians are to occupy our time on earth reaching others with the good news of Salvation, being about the work and ministry of the Lord.

We are to remember that the evildoers only appear to prosper. Their days on Earth are numbered, just as are ours. Their eternal future is as set as that of those who are the saved. The difference is where they will spend eternity if they do not confess, repent, and turn from their evil ways.

We should be praying and asking God to touch the hearts of the evildoers so they can spend eternity in heaven. The finality of eternal torment and damnation is something we should not wish nor desire for anyone to experience.

READ: Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 (KJV)

11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

## **CHAPTER 7: JUDAS AND PETER WALKED WITH CHRIST**

During a recent Thursday evening bible study, the observation was made that Judas Iscariot walked side by side with the other disciples throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus. This said, dare we honestly think that Jesus didn't know the secret that even Judas himself was unaware of at the time he was called by Jesus Himself?

Does anyone believe that Jesus did not know that Peter would deny Him three times even as He told Peter He would make him a fisher of men? (Matthew 4:19)

Scripture, in numerous places throughout the Old and New Testaments makes clear that Jesus knew what the two disciples would do. Jesus Himself also told both men as the hour of His crucifixion drew closer.

Judas was responsible for the "bag" (John 13:29 KJV), which was a position worthy of some merit. Peter at times could be impetuous.



What is my point, you ask? My point is that both men walked with Jesus and served in some capacity virtually every day of His earthly ministry. Both men ministered to those who flocked around the Lord. Both men sat under the personal instruction of Jesus. Both men witnessed the miracles that Jesus performed. It is a certainty that both men were outwardly obedient to the Lord's instruction(s).

We read that Peter was emphatic in his belief that he would never deny the Lord. In Matthew 26:35 (KJV) we also read that: "Likewise also said all the disciples."

However, there is a reason that the Apostle Paul warned the Corinthians to: "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith: prove yourselves." (2 Corinthians 13:5 KJV) Jeremiah said: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV)

It is important to follow these admonitions, because when our eyes close here on Earth and we awaken in eternity, we want to hear our Lord's voice welcoming us home to be with Him. We do not want to deceive ourselves into believing that being churchgoers and/or

having what we define as Christian values makes us a Christian.

READ: Matthew 7:21-23 (KJV)

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

## **CHAPTER 8: GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE AND MERCY**

Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The crucifixion of Christ without His resurrection would have made Jesus just another man who lived a moral life and then died. The method of his death would have mattered naught.

Jesus died as the sacrifice for our sins. *He is the only sacrifice that God can/will accept for our sins. But we*

*must receive Him. For the Word of God tells us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." (See: Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV)*

God, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, has shown us grace and mercy, and given us the opportunity to accept the resurrected Christ as our Lord and Savior. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (See: John 3:3,16-21 KJV)

This "Resurrection Day" it is important for those who have not received Christ as their Savior to take heed of the following words by Dr. David Jeremiah: *"Today we are living in the parentheses of God's patience; but one day the patience of God will be finished and the cup of iniquity will be full. And Jesus Christ the Judge of all the earth will come and through all of the scenarios in the Book of Revelation, there will be judgment upon the earth."*

This Resurrection Day, I remind those who have not accepted Christ as Savior that: "...behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (See: 2 Corinthians 6:2 KJV)

The Resurrection of Christ from the grave is not just about salvation; it is about the grace and mercy of time before the coming wrath of God. The question

that we must all answer is: Will we accept Jesus as Savior while we have time?

READ: Matthew 28:1-10 (KJV)

28 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

## **CHAPTER 9: WHO HAVE YOU TOLD?**

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gave what has been called His “Great Commission.” He instructed His disciples, and by extension, those of us today who claim to be saved, to go forth evangelizing the unsaved and edifying the saved. But are we doing that?

If you are a true Christian, stop for a moment and think back to how you were saved. Was it by someone witnessing to you of your need to be saved? Was it in church after hearing a sermon? The bottom line is that nearly every true born-again believer today is a

Christian because someone took the time to share Christ with them, regardless of the circumstances and/or venue.

So my question becomes: Who have we shared the good news of Salvation through Jesus Christ with this week; last week, in the past month, in the past year(s)? Have you shared Christ with your children at home or do you just take them to church, assuming you even attend church regularly as a family?

There is a reason Jesus gave us the “Great Commission.” It was for us to reach the unsaved with the plan of salvation that rests with and through Him, and Him alone.

How many of us who are truly born-again Christians would be saved today if another Christian had not been obedient to God and shared their faith with us, regardless of where it was and/or what the circumstances were?

If you are truly saved today, when you get to Heaven, who else will be there because you took the time to share the plan of salvation through faith in Christ with them?

READ: Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

## **CHAPTER 10: DELIGHTING OURSELVES IN THE LORD**

I have often said that God is not a Santa Claus, doling out gifts and presents to satiate the whims and gift lists of the unrepentant, nor the worldly self-serving desires of carnal Christians.

Now, some may be saying: “But Jesus said, whatever we ask the Father in His Name, He would give it to us.” (See: John 16:23 KJV) First off, we cannot cherry-pick by just jumping to John 16:23. We must take the

entire passage before it and specifically John 16:16 to John 16:33.

But even before that, we must closely examine the words of David in Psalms 37:4, where we are told to “delight ourselves in the Lord and do good.” This is not about a “good works” salvation as some suggest; it is about obedience to God.

When we “delight” ourselves in the Lord, we are thinking and meditating upon His word. We are being led by His Holy Spirit. We are sharing with our brothers and sisters in Christ what the Lord is doing in our lives. We are praising the Lord for what He has done and is doing in our lives. We are lifting one another in prayer and encouraging one another in the Name of Jesus. In brief, we are sharing the joy of the Spirit of God with one another and others. But we are also meditating, i.e., reflecting on what God has done and is doing for us.

My pastor and I, and a couple of other brothers in Christ who attend church with us, text and talk to one another several times each week on the things of God we read and the things that we witness and experience.



I am not remotely talking as one who has no struggles nor as one who doesn't drop the ball. I am speaking as one who is thrilled with my salvation. I speak as one who desires to serve our Lord and to be used by Him. I speak as one who reflects upon the goodness of the Lord and His presence.

My wife and I were talking recently, and I spoke of how my cat jumps into my lap each morning as I am praying and/or reading my bible. I said, that it makes think me of what it is like for us to not just be in the arms of our Lord, but to desire to be in His presence.

God answers our prayers according to His will and good pleasure and He has promised to do so. But in the Lord's prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray "...thy will be done." (See: Matthew 6:10 KJV)

Yes, my friends, God answers our prayers, and He will give us the desires of our hearts when our desires align with His will for us. Some things we are better off without if they are going to be more important to us than He is, and in other things we ask amiss based upon our lusts. (See: James 4:3 KJV)

It is when we delight ourselves in Him that we can rejoice in His presence and be thankful whether His answer to our prayer(s) is: “Yes,” “no,” – “wait,” or “I’ll give to you when you can handle it.”

READ: Psalm 37:3-8 (KJV)

3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

## **CHAPTER 11: RESPECT FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD**

I have a couple of questions for you. To make the point that needs be made, the questions may necessarily borderline the untoward. So here goes:

If a person claims to love and have the deepest respect for their wife, children, girlfriend/boyfriend, parents, relatives, ad nauseum, do they curse them publicly? Do they speak in coarse, crude, and vulgar ways about those they claim to love and revere, regardless of where they are? I would hope the answer to the questions would be an emphatic “no.”

Which brings me to my point. If a person claims to be a Christian, and to have the deepest respect and reverence for Jesus, why do they not see anything wrong with treating His name in a way that they wouldn't treat those of their loved ones? If Jesus is a person's Lord and Savior, how can they speak so crudely in using His name as a curse word? If a person says they love God, why would they use His name as a curse word?

In the Old Testament Book of Exodus, God said: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” Granted we are no longer under the “Law,” i.e., the Ten Commandments, but it was important enough for God to include in the Ten Commandments, and being under grace today doesn’t absolve us from the guilt of so using His name.

Using the Lord’s name as a curse word and/or as part of an adjectival clause, should be as objectionable to us as it is to God. If using God’s name as a curse word is a habit, it is one that needs to be broken sooner rather than later. If we wouldn’t speak in such terms about our earthly loved ones, we might think how much more so offensive it is to God.

Only a handful bowed at His birth, but the day comes when every knee shall bow at His Name—and it won’t be as a curse word.

READ: Philippians 2:9-11 (KJV)

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## **CHAPTER 12: WHERE ARE THE GODLY MOTHERS?**

Mother's Day celebrations date back to the ancient Greek and Roman festivals to honor their goddesses Rhea and Cybele. There was also a day known as "Mothering Day" which was celebrated throughout the world by Protestant Christians, the Church of England, and Catholics.

But it was not until 1914 that President Woodrow Wilson officially established the second Sunday of every May as America's official "Mother's Day." It was intended to publicly express "love and reverence for the mothers of our country."

But my question is: "What has happened to the Mothers of America?" The answer is the satanic lies of

feminism and Satan's full-out attack on the family. That may sound harsh, but consider the facts.

Today, mothers celebrate and demand the right to murder their babies. Today, women celebrate being lesbians and getting pregnant so they can raise children in that environment. Today, women, including teachers, bring homosexual filth and perversion into the classrooms to teach children in kindergarten through 5th grade about homosexuality. They teach children how to put condoms on fruit. Television programming presents what is depicted as normal families that have homosexual children featured as normal. Television has programming featuring transgendered children. Married teachers with children of their own are having sexual relations with school children they are supposed to be teaching. Often, based upon the way mothers dress and behave, it is difficult to tell who is the mother and who is the daughter. The vulgar, decadent, behavior of women who participated in the March on Washington showcased the most debaucherous forms of womanhood; many of those participating were mothers. Today, women have several children, all by different fathers. I could give more examples, but my point is made.

I submit that one of the problems in American homes today is the absence of the type of mothers originally represented by Mother's Day. America and the American family needs Godly women who are mothers to be Godly examples of righteousness.

We have witnessed what Hollywood and feminism calls mother's and we have witnessed what that has wrought.

Having a baby may by definition may make a woman a mother, but that doesn't make them good mothers, nor Godly mothers.

Today, I celebrate Godly mothers. And I think it is long past time that we return to the days when Godly mothers were revered and worthy of honor and respect.

READ: Proverbs 31:10-31 (KJV)

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.



22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

## CHAPTER 13: CAN WE SING IT WITH CONFIDENCE?

On Sunday morning, we sang a hymn by Natalie Grant, titled, "In Christ Alone." The final two stanzas of her powerful hymn are as follows:

*There in the ground His body lay  
Light of the world by darkness slain  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ*

*No guilt in life, no fear in death  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*

If we cannot sing these lyrics with the certainty that we belong to Christ we are either: A) Not a born-again child of God; B) We have fallen prey to doubt that

comes from not attending a Christ-centered, bible preaching church; and/or; C) We are not spending time reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word.

As we sang this hymn, I considered the great number of moral people who cannot sing these words with conviction and assurance. The most important question to be asked here is if not, what are you waiting for? As long as we are alive, there is time to repent, be converted, and stand in the power of "Christ Alone."

READ: Psalm 33:18-22 (KJV)

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

22 Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

## **CHAPTER 14: GOD WON'T CHANGE HIS LAWS TO APPEASE SIN**

Psalms 119:89 reads: *“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”* Simplistically put, that means, God’s word is *“immutable.”* The definition of *“immutable”* means: *“unchanging over time; unable to be changed.”* Ergo, when God said: *“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23 KJV)*, the consequences of disobedience to Gods’ Word haven’t changed, nor will the consequences change nor can the consequences be changed.

Many people today want to lead their lives in willful disobedience to God and ignore the fact that there are consequences for disobedience. It therefore comes as no surprise that the longer we get away with doing what we know to be wrong according to man’s law, the more impervious to consequences we feel. We do not always reap the consequences of our actions immediately. In fact, we often seem to “get away” with wrongdoing much of the time.

We get away with a lot of things and sometimes man’s laws never catch up with us. But that is man’s law. I saw an advertisement for a lawyer that read: “Just because you committed a crime, doesn’t mean you’re

guilty.” There may be loopholes and legal maneuverings that can be orchestrated in the courts of man, but let there be no doubt that there will be no such maneuverings when we stand before God. And let there be no doubt that just because we seem to be getting away with disobedience to God, it doesn’t mean that our day of judgment doesn’t await us.

The end of the verse *Romans 6:23* reads: “...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” That means the only way to escape eternal punishment for our sins is by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior. Christ died for our sins and His payment upon the cross is the only payment God will accept for our sins.

We can live our lives believing we weren’t as bad as other people. We can live our lives being moral. We can live our lives and never face the consequences of breaking man’s laws. But that amounts for naught when we stand before God. God’s Word is settled forever in heaven. It is immutable. We cannot change the laws of God and we commit a grievous error when we believe that God will change His law(s) for us.

READ: Romans 3:22-26 (KJV)

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

## **CHAPTER 15: WHAT DID SAMARITAN WOMAN AND MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA BOTH DO?**

I would think that few people both saved and unsaved alike are unfamiliar with the New Testament account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in the fourth chapter of John's Gospel. But what most

believers miss is the importance of what the Samaritan woman did after having spent time with Jesus.

We are told: *“The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith unto the men, come see a man, who told me all things that I ever did. Is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him.”* (John 4:28-30 KJV)

After her encounter with Christ she was unable not to tell others what Jesus had done. She in essence shared her personal experience with Jesus to others and then encouraged them, so they too could experience Him.

Likewise, believers and unbelievers alike are familiar with Jesus healing the man at the *“pool of Bethesda.”* (See: John 5:1-24) There are two takeaways I want to point out in this man’s personal encounter with Christ. The first takeaway is that Jesus gave the man a choice. The scripture says: *“When Jesus saw him [the man] lying there, and knew that he had been thus now a long time, He sayeth unto him, Wilt thou be made well?”* (John 5:6 KJV)

Jesus knew that the man had been taken ill for 38 years. (See John 5:5 KJV) But Jesus gave the man a

choice of being made whole by saying yes to Jesus' invitation or choosing to stay ill and depend upon himself and/or others, including myths and mysticisms to get well. The man in John 5:7 (KJV) first explained why he was unable to get well in his own strength nor through the help of others. But when he acknowledged yes, he wanted Jesus to make him well, we read in John 5:8 that Jesus healed him. But with the man's healing came a solemn warning, which we see in John 5:14 (KJV)

And finally in John 5:15, we read that "The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him well. Why the Jews? Because they were the unbelievers who were gathered in the man's sphere of association.

Here is my point: When we encounter Jesus in a meaningful and spirit-filled way, we cannot help but share our experience with others. We are called to be the "salt of the earth." We are instructed to "let our light shine." Without the sharing of what God is doing for us and is doing in us, it is hard to claim we are either salt or light, because it is by our "fruit" that we are known.



READ: Matthew 5:13-16

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

## **CHAPTER 16: HOW LONG CAN AMERICA BE BLESSED?**

Psalms 33 is referenced as a “Psalm of Joy” and in the 12th verse of this Psalm the Psalmist writes: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for His own.” (KJV)

My question this morning is: “If the Bible makes clear from Genesis to the Book of Revelation that God not only hates sin, but punishes sin, and that God turns His face away from sin, how long can America as a nation remain blessed?”

How much longer can the nation of America be blessed because of the obedience of those who identify as Christians? Sin in America today, unlike at any other time in our history, is unashamedly displayed for all to see. The most reprobate forms of debauchery and acts of paganism are no longer hidden behind closed doors in America; these practices are shamelessly displayed publicly and even worse, America is exporting these practices, insisting that other nations accept and embrace them.

America as a nation has reduced the immutable, i.e., the “unchanging Word of God” to “If it feels good do it; if doesn’t hurt anyone it’s okay, the times are different today, the Bible must be updated and changed so it is in line with today’s reasoning, and we must be tolerant of the ways/behavior of others.”

We can list many more of the kinds of examples from the preceding paragraph. But doing that only

reinforces my question in the second paragraph above: How long can America be blessed when it has changed its laws to embrace and appease sin of every description, when our children are taught to embrace and practice sinful behavior that should be unmentionable, when good is called evil and evil is called good and as America seeks to export these sinful practices for global consumption?

“Oh mighty, immutable and merciful God, full of grace; Lord may we be reminded that your patience has an end and the day of accounting and recompense for our behavior awaits us all. Father, help us to understand this truth and turn our hearts, minds and souls to Christ for the security of our eternity. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

READ: 2 Peter 3:4-14 (KJV)

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

## **CHAPTER 17: KEEPING OUR WORD**

As Christians, we should never cease to be amazed by what God does in answer to prayer. Earlier this week, I saw a brother in Christ who I've had on my prayer list since May 27, 2015. I remember the day that I had assured him of my prayers for his healing. He had shared with me that he was suffering from a disease for which the prognosis for recovery was not good. As he and I sat at the table in the board room of our club, he shared that he had resigned himself to prayer and trusting God for his healing.

We had seen one another perhaps twice since that day, but earlier this past week, we literally bumped into one another in the parking lot of our club. After the hugs and hellos, I asked the inevitable question: "How are you; how are you doing with the disease?" He said: "I'm healed!" I replied: "What? You mean

you're..." He stopped me in mid-sentence and said: "I'm completely healed." He said that he felt like he had been "born again." We had a "praise the Lord party" in the parking lot before heading inside our club.

I shared with my friend that I had kept him on my prayer list since the day I had assured him of my prayers. I also shared with him that I had been praying for him that very morning. God had saved my friend from a punishingly slow death sentence.

Here is the point I wish to make: Words have meaning, and when we make an oath God expects us to keep it.

Many times people without thought or consideration for their words casually tell another person that they will be praying for them. Then, not only do they not pray for the person, but they forget that they had even made the promise.

When we say to another person that we'll be praying for them, that is a promise made before God. When a person asks us to pray for them and we assure them that we will, that is an oath before God. If we fail to

keep said promises/oaths we make ourselves liars, and Scripture tells us that God takes a very dim view of those who do not tell the truth or keep their word.

An even greater indictment is when the person we assure of our prayers takes for granted that our words are nothing more than platitudes.

God has His reasons for how, when, and whether He answers our prayers when it comes to our desires. But through faith we can say, “Thy will be done, oh Lord” even as we lift another in prayer. People on our church prayer list, people who ask us to pray for them, and people whom we pledge to pray for are counting on us to keep our word.

God healed my friend in response to his prayers and the prayers of others, mine included. And earlier this past week God blessed me beyond measure as I hugged my friend and we said thank you to God for his answered prayer.

READ: Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 (KJV)

5 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

## **CHAPTER 18: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?**

We often hear people ask a child: "Who do you want to be like when you grow up?" Often the child will respond, that they want to be like some popular sports figure or some television personality.



Another question we frequently hear children asked is: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The child will almost always respond that they want to be everything from a cowboy to fireman to an athlete or actor, to something in the professional world like a doctor or stockbroker. Sometimes they say that they do not know what they want to be.

My question to us as parents is: When was the last time we have heard a child say that they want to be more like Jesus? When was the last time we have heard a child say “I want to be whatever pleases God”?

There are many who will scoff at what I have just asked, but their scoffing presents more questions that demand an answer. One such question is: Why don't we hear more children say that they want to be like Jesus when they grow up? Another question would be: Why would they not want to be whatever pleases God?

The reality is that our children say that they want to be like Jesus and be whatever pleases God every time they answer the question. We just do not understand that's what they are saying.

Children imitate what they see and hear. They do this both behaviorally and mentally. A child's understanding of how to imitate Christ is based upon how they see their parents live their lives. The extent to which our children want to please God is based upon the extent that we teach that in the home.

The problem is that, by their behavior, many Christian parents send children the message that being like some famous actor or athlete is cute and/or something to be desired. Parents also behaviorally send the message that pleasing God is not synonymous with our careers. Many times parents model obedience to God as an option, i.e., something they do when it is convenient.

Sadly, many parents by example show that there are things in life that are more important than church, prayer, reading and studying the Bible and modeling Christ to the best of our ability in everything we do. We show children that the pleasures and pursuits of the world are more important than God. We put ungodly pursuits before God. We put convenience before God.

It is a truism that in most cases, children become what they see at home. They are sponges that soak up both the good and bad. If we are permissive and smile at untoward behavior when they are young, why would we wonder where that behavior comes from when they are older? If they watch us live situational ethics in our daily lives, why would we be surprised when they model the same thing? If we model worldly pursuits to the exclusion of God, why would we be surprised when as adults our children do same? If we turn our children over to unGodly schools and teachers, why would we be surprised when our children become petulant and unruly?

Yes, there are children who despite the best attempts of their parents to be Godly examples turn away from the Truth. And while that can happen despite a parent's best efforts, I believe the reason it happens more today than in the past is because parents themselves have become more like the world than like Jesus.

READ: Philippians 2:5-11(KJV)

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## **CHAPTER 19: HONORING OUR FATHER**

The actor Sidney Poitier, once said: “I decided in my life that I would do nothing that did not reflect positively on my father’s life.” What a powerful statement and commitment of intent. But with that

said, should we who are Christians not commit to the same with regards to our Heavenly Father?

Imagine if we who are Christians lived the intent of Poitier's statement, i.e., "[To] do nothing that did not reflect positively" on our Heavenly Father. Imagine the impact we as Christians could have on the world if we were committed that ideal.

We ask of God and we expect of God, but should we not seek to please Him by obeying Him? Father's Day is the day we honor our earthly fathers, but should we not commit to honor our Heavenly Father every day to show our thanks for what He did for us?

Responsible earthly fathers love us, they provide for us, they exemplify love for us, and they exemplify propriety for us.

But only one "Father" loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to be the sacrifice for our sins so that through Jesus Christ, His Son, we could have forgiveness for our sins and spend eternity with Him in heaven.

We must ask ourselves: Should we not commit to live our lives to the best of our ability, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to bring honor to our Heavenly Father?

READ: Micah 6:6-16 (KJV)

6 Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

9 The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

## **CHAPTER 20: SMUG OR CONFIDENT**

There is a difference between being smug in our faith and being confident of our faith. Do you know how to tell the difference? The simple test is: If we feel our faith is better than another person's and/or if we feel that we have the idea of faith all worked out — the definition of smug probably fits us.

However, if a person firmly knows and believes that God is with them, that God loves them, and when they pray God hears and will answer according to His will — that is confidence in the Lord.

If a person who can look back at their life with Christ and reflect upon the times that God answered prayers that could not be answered by man, that is confidence. If a person is willing without a moment's thought to take whatever confronts them immediately to the Lord, that person has confidence and is dependent upon God. This is a sign of faith. A person who, when they pray can say "Lord, thy will be done according to what is best for me," is a person who is confident of their relationship with God. If a person is willing and determined to place all things in God's hands, their faith is strong not because of what they have done, but rather because they have submitted their all to God.

If, when we pray, we expect God to answer because we are praying according to His will, that is confidence not in our faith, but confidence in God, who hears from heaven. When we pray, if we have doubt lurking in our minds as to whether or not God will really answer our prayer, we need to spend time in the scriptures and spend time with God asking Him to correct that. If when we pray, we expect and believe that God will answer in a way that is best for us, and that if we are willing to place ourselves, our total beings in His hands, asking and trusting Him in total dependence upon Him, then our faith is strong.

However, if a person takes exception to that, and/or a person is unwilling to submit their lives to God, or if they are only willing to submit a small part of their lives to God, not only is that person's faith weak, but their walk with the Lord is far from what it should be.

READ: 1 John 5:9-15 (KJV)

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath



made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

## **CHAPTER 21: WHAT DO I THINK?**

People have asked me what I think regarding the continuing revelations of priests violating young boys. My answer is: "I think sin is sin and that God hates the sin of homosexuality and sexual perversion just as

much as He hates the sin of lying, cheating, or murder.”

God is not a respecter of persons, nor does He categorize sin. Sin is sin. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that God has a descending order of sin; i.e., one sin is not worse than another. That includes the “unpardonable sin,” i.e., blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 12:31 KJV) The consequences of that specific sin are the worst, but it is still sin.

I tell people who ask me about these recent revelations that the making known of this sin is not my greatest concern. My greatest concern is for the people of any church who claim that the exclusive authority of God rests with them. My concern is for the people who have been led astray by false teaching, and that is not limited to a particular denomination but is the condemnation of all churches, priests, or pastors who lead people into false belief with false teachings.

A brother in Christ shared with me that a sign on a church marquee in the town in which he lives read: “We believe in the Bible, but not literally.” The difference between the mainline church which

displayed that message is no different than any church that makes its own rules as it goes along in order to accommodate it's furtherance.

What do I think about priests violating young boys? I think sin is sin and it must be eradicated from top down, because as the saying goes: "A fish rots from the head down."

READ: James 1:13-15 (KJV)

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

## **CHAPTER 22: JESUS LOVES ME**

One Sunday morning as I was preparing for church, I heard a hymn that I sang as a child. The hymn was: "*Jesus Loves Me.*" You are no doubt familiar with it too. "*Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells*

*me so; little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong.”*

As I listened to the instrumental version of the hymn, I thought to myself that millions upon millions of children have sang that wonderful hymn. I thought of the more than 53 million children in America alone, who were denied the opportunity to sing praise to God as they lifted their voices to heaven with the chorus: *“Yes Jesus loves. Yes Jesus loves me. Yes Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.”*

But then it occurred to me that the tens of millions of children around the world who have been murdered by abortion were never given the opportunity to sing praises to God here, but every one of those murdered unborn children are singing praises to God face-to-face in glory. Their tiny limbs and bodies are restored, and they are not just experiencing the love they were denied here on Earth, but they are experiencing the love of Jesus in a way those who are responsible for their deaths will never know if they do not repent of their evil and turn to Christ for salvation.

Through Christ we can have forgiveness, but if we deny Him, He will deny us. If we reject Him, He will reject us. (Mark 8:38 KJV)

Amazingly enough, God gives us a chance to repent and seek forgiveness for our sins, even the sin of murdering our children. Children who have been murdered by abortion are in heaven with the Lord the moment life leaves them, whether in the womb or partially out of it; because they have not reached their age of accountability.

But what about their parents and the doctors responsible for killing them? The fact is that there is hope and there is forgiveness for them if they seek it. Imagine being able to join unborn children who have been made whole and who sing praises to our Holy God in heaven, not as their killers, but as a person forgiven of their sins.

Yes, Jesus loves us, and yes we know, because the Bible tells us so. And He loves us enough to forgive of the most heinous sins, if we repent, confess our sins, and turn to Him for forgiveness.

Now, that is a song worth singing.

READ: Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:8-2:2 (KJV)

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 John 1:8-2:21:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

## **CHAPTER 23: THE COST OF SIN IS ALWAYS GREATER THAN THE INITIAL SIN**

Those given over to that which God condemns would do well to know that you cannot change the laws of God and there are consequences for sin. It is also important to remember that the consequences of sin are never revealed before hand, but they are suffered afterward.

The price for sin is always greater than the sin act, because the initial sin only satisfies temporarily, which results in more sin and greater downfall.

Today, a person may fantasize a sexual fantasy; the next step is to explore the fulfillment of that sexual fantasy through Internet pornographic sites. What results from there is a life driven by more and more perverse deviance to satisfy the fantasy.

Marital relationships and homes are destroyed, because what started as a seemingly harmless fantasy has turned into a full-blown obsession; strangers to streetwalkers, to brothels, to experimentation that leads to even more harmful consequences. Today it is one drink to settle our nerves before an important meeting or because it makes one less inhibited on a date or when around strangers. Before long, life has turned into one continuous drinking session. It's the same with experimenting with drugs. A person who gets away with stealing something small eventually ends up stealing more often, which results in stealing things more valuable.

There is no sin that we purpose to commit that comes with the warning: “Danger—committing this sin will lead you to greater, more frequent and ultimately completely uncontrolled sin acts.” But there is one that tells us: “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23 KJV)

But, we have a God in heaven who so loved us so much that He sent His only Begotten Son; that whosoever would believe in Him would not only be forgiven for their sins, but through the power of the Holy Spirit can be delivered from our sinful practices.

Yes, we can be forgiven for our sins and we can be delivered from the sinful acts, i.e., drugs, alcohol, homosexuality, adultery, sexual deviancy, lying, ad nauseum; but the consequences of said sinful behavior may cause us to suffer long after, if not the rest of lives. Consequences such as disease, health issues, loss of certain privileges, loss of freedom(s), incarceration, damaged/destroyed relationships, and so on; these are the earthly wages for these sins.

I’m not saying that God cannot and will not make all things right in our lives when we accept Christ as our Savior and commit our lives unto Him. I’m saying;



Why wallow around in the sewers of sin when through Christ we can avoid certain destructive behavior(s) altogether?

Scripture tells us that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23 KJV) But scripture also tells us how to be free from the bondage of sinful behavior(s).

READ: Romans 6:11-19 King James Version (KJV)

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 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.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

## **CHAPTER 24: QUESTIONS THE SAVED MUST ASK OURSELVES**

As Christians, we should ask ourselves probing questions such as: What is different about us since we accepted Christ as our Savior? Has our behavior changed; if so, how and if not, why? Have our interests become more Christ-centric, i.e., are we becoming more interested in reading and studying our Bible and sharing our faith with others? Are we finding

that the Word of God (the Bible) is becoming the integral part of our lives, and are we finding that Christian fellowship and attending a Christ-centered, Bible preaching church is of paramount importance?

Do our family, our friends, our co-workers see something different about us, not based upon what we say or even claim, but because of the way we now live our lives? Not by living in a legalistic and hypercritical way, and not with a falsity of pretentious platitudes, words and phrases that are props used to pretend we have changed?

When we accept Christ as our Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us and begins the process of growth in Christ that leads us in changed lives. As we grow in Christ we want to be more like Him; but first we must know Him in truth, and that only comes from living lives consecrated to Christ. The Apostle Peter wrote: *“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”* (2 Peter 3:17-18 KJV)

We are either Christians committed to the Lord or we are Christian slackards who are carnal and satisfied to have what amounts to “fire protection” from the flames of hell.

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (KJV)

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

## **CHAPTER 25: RESPONDING TO HATRED**

People filled with hatred ignore two unimpeachable facts: 1) Their hatred consumes them, and no one else; 2) Hatred is not of God, and neither is the person who is consumed with hatred. (See: 1 John 2:1-11 KJV)

People consumed by hatred are often driven to blind outbursts of rage, verbalizing the darkness that possesses their souls. From the depths of their misery, these persons attempt to have others respond to them in kind to mitigate the guilt and inner pain that consumes them. Often, when their hatred is met with the love of Christ, it makes them even angrier, because they, i.e., Satan, was unable to cause the Christian to stumble.

Having viewed my appearance on a national television program, a woman was so consumed by her hatred for law enforcement that she wrote me the following: *“I feel that any black person who doesn’t feel that black people aren’t racially profiled is in denial!! I feel you are an Uncle Tom!!! I hope you’re pulled over, one day, by a white police officer, racially profiled, and treated horribly!!!!”*

I had a choice: I could be drawn into her hellish misery, or I could share Christ. I chose the latter. I

responded in part with the following: *“I have prayed that God will open your eyes unto salvation before you die. I pray in Jesus’ name that He will show you that the anger and animus you felt compelled to shower upon me is not turned back upon you. I pray in Jesus’ name that He shows you that your hatred serves only to separate you from God. I pray in Jesus’ name that He uses your intended insult to open your eyes to your need to accept Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. I pray in Jesus’ name that He shows you the darkness that consumes your spirit and the eternal abyss that awaits you if you continue to practice such hatred. I pray this and more in the name of Jesus, before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess He is Lord. Amen. 1 John 1:8-10 (KJV) ... You meant your words for evil but I believe that God is using your attempted insult to give you the opportunity to repent and turn from your hatred. (Genesis 50:20 KJV) Such is my prayer for you.”*

The woman did write me back with the anticipated torrent of ugliness, but there was no energy in her response. Just as hurricanes gather strength and energy from the warm air over an ocean, so too would this woman’s evil grow if met in kind. My response served to dissipate her ugliness.

She was forced to read the prayer I responded back to her with and repeat the petition “in Jesus’ name.” She will be haunted by my simple written prayer much longer than any words in kind that I could have written to her.

You and I have a choice to make regarding how we respond to insults and the unbalanced tirades of the unsaved. The first thing we must do is take a breath and ask the Lord to direct our response. The next thing is to be obedient to what He leads us to do. In so doing, we may be surprised to one day have a person tell us that they are Christian because we spoke Christ and not hate.

READ: 1 Peter 3:9-12 (KJV)

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

## **CHAPTER 26: TOLERANCE DOESN'T MEAN MAKING PEACE WITH SINFUL BEHAVIOR**

I'm reminded of two quotes by the late John Wesley: 1) *"What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace;"* and 2) *"Vice does not lose its character by becoming fashionable."*

We've all heard that we must be tolerant, the problem with the idea associated with being tolerant is that those calling for tolerance are defining it as making peace with that which God calls sin.

All too often the demands for tolerance come from those who bask in the darkness of their sinful behavior and their own self-righteousness. God shows mercy for the sinner, but He does not show tolerance for the sin. If God showed tolerance for sin, the wages of sin would not be death.



We are led to believe that tolerance means accepting the very thing(s) that God's Word tells us He hates. We are led to believe that unless we are willing to embrace in totality the very thing(s) that God calls sin and condemns, we are not behaving as Christians. When it is demanded of me to be tolerant, i.e., accepting of sinfulness — I ask what verse in the Bible tells me that it is my Christian duty to accept and be tolerant of sinful behavior?

We are inundated with messages that every form of sinful misbehavior is acceptable. These messages tell us that sinful behavior is okay as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. That is one of the great lies of Satan. Sinful behavior hurts the individual living in same the most. We overlook the fact that the wages of sin are death, and that is specifically death for the individual(s) indulging in it.

One of the questions I hear most often is the jeremiad of "how did our country become as it is today?" The answer is because we overlooked the fact that "Vice, [i.e., sin], does not lose its character by becoming fashionable."

Instead of turning away from sin/vice we embracing it by allowing ourselves to be desensitized to it. We worry more about what people will say if we do not embrace the sinful behavior than we concern ourselves with Godly, Christ-centered lifestyles. And the result is the condition we find America and the world in today.

READ: Proverbs 6:16-19 (KJV)

16 These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

## **CHAPTER 27: IT REALLY IS ABOUT WHO WALKS WITH YOU**

As I was waiting in line at the post office one recent Saturday morning, a meme on the back of the tee-shirt a woman standing immediately in front of me was

wearing caught my attention. It read: “It’s not where you walk, it’s who walks with you.”

Not wanting to take for granted what the meme meant, I said: “Excuse me but, I was wondering to whom your meme referred?” She replied, that it referred to “walking with your dog(s)” and pointed to the front of the tee-shirt, which had an image of a dog on it.

I paused for a moment as I considered to “whom” I initially thought the meme referred. Then I smiled and said: “I would be remiss, if I did not say that I thought it referred to Jesus.” She gave me an astonished look and fumbling for words, clumsily responded: “I guess it could, after all He can be in your dogs as you’re walking them.” I said nothing else!

It was clear that the woman was caught completely off guard by my comment. As she exited the post office, she gave me an uncomfortable smile.

In all truthfulness, I would never have guessed that the meme on her tee-shirt referenced walking a dog if it had been a cash prize quiz show question. My mind never went in that direction. When I think about who walks beside me and/or with whom I am walking, I

think of Jesus. It's a pretty safe bet that if Jesus is first in our life in respect to that reasoning, He is first in our life in all other areas; and if He isn't, it remains the desire of the individual for Him to be.

Personally, I believe God placed that woman in my path that morning. My prayer is that God will bring our brief encounter to her mind every time she walks her dog(s), and that through the same, she turns to Christ for salvation; or, if she is saved, — our exchange causes her to give Christ His rightful place in her life.

Christ wants to be first in our lives. The question is do we want Him to be first in our lives, or do we just want Him when it is convenient for us or needful for us?

READ: Psalm 1 (KJV)

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his

leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

## **CHAPTER 28: I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND BUT I BELIEVE**

Early morning this past March 29, the day before Good Friday, a very special friend was taken to the hospital by ambulance. She had been feeling increasingly worse since January of this year. Upon arriving at the hospital, after a series of tests were performed, she was admitted that same day and told she had five days to live. Her entire body including her spine was ravaged with cancer. The doctors and specialists told her there was no hope; she had five days to live.

Mid-evening on October 15th, as she and I talked on the phone, she told me that she was all but cancer free. Had I not known that she had been diagnosed with cancer and told she had five days to live only seven months before, I would never have guessed. She was home, she was ambulatory, she was gaining weight, it was no longer necessary for her husband to be her care giver. God had miraculously answered her prayers and the prayers of those praying for her.

I've become friends with a gentleman who owns a company that does work for me. This past August, he shared that a donor had been found for his wife, who had been awaiting a kidney transplant for a long time. But it was how the donor had been found that made the gentleman gasp for breath.

A friend of his wife, whom they had not seen or heard from in approximately 20 years had been sitting in church listening to the sermon her family's pastor was preaching and she felt the Lord instructing her to contact the business owner's wife and tell her that she wanted to donate one of her kidneys. The friend's kidney was a match and the transplant was successfully performed.

I spoke with the gentleman this past Friday morning. He is still in awe of what his wife's friend did, but he is even more in awe of the way it came about for her to do it.

The wife of my Pastor's best friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was placed on our church prayer list. Her doctors are unable to explain it, but the cancer tumor in her breast shrank and just disappeared before any radical treatments were needed.

But there were others at the very same time, who were also on our church prayer list who had cancer and the Lord took them home. One such woman had been strong and vibrant, who left a husband and children behind.

Over my many years as a born-again Christian and a minister, I have seen God answer prayer and heal people. I have also witnessed no few times that it was God's will for a person to not be healed. I'm not sure I want to know why God would heal one person and not another, but what I am sure of is that it is not for a lack of faith that one person is healed and another not.

It has to do with the will of God. It is my faith that makes me to know that God hears the fervent faithful prayer of the righteous, but it is that same faith that makes me too know that there are many times that God answers my prayer(s) differently than I think He should.

That is because when I/we pray, “Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name...thy will be done...” it is faith that enables me to understand that God knows best. My faith is not weakened because there are times when God does not do what I think He should do. It is not me that is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. It is not me who is the “Alpha and the Omega.” It is me that believes my God is those things.

READ: Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.



13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

## **CHAPTER 29: GOOD SAMARITAN'S IN THE SHOPPING CENTERS OF LIFE**

Sometimes I park near the entrance and wait in the car while my wife goes into a store. Such was the occasion the other day. As I sat waiting for her, I observed dozens upon dozens and dozens of people going in and out of this particular store.

They were people of every description, every size, weight and income bracket. I observed every combination of family (e.g., mothers with children, fathers and daughters, parents with infants, entire families, individuals, groups of friends) laughing and talking as they entered and exited the store. There were young and there were old. Some needed assistance walking. One couple was pushing their little dog in a baby stroller.

As I sat observing this hive of energy and constant motion, I wondered as I often do, how many of them if asked where they were spending eternity would be

able to truthfully say they would spend it heaven with the Lord because they had accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

I wondered how many would not see the next day, or how many would suffer injury and/or loss that very day. I wondered how many would suffer a family crisis in the upcoming days or weeks. I wondered how many needed a kind word; how many were carrying personal burdens and/or felt as if no one cared? I wondered how many would be caught up together in the air with the Lord should He have returned while we were all there shopping.

As I often do, I thought about reaching the people at that shopping venue with the Word of God and the message of salvation that can only come through Christ Jesus. I often think about those things when I am in a store or waiting for my wife, as I was that day. I think about the same thing when I am driving and observing people hurrying back and forth.

Those of us who profess Christ as our Savior should view those venues as Jesus did when He said: *“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and*

*look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” (John 4:35 KJV)*

Imagine the difference we could make in communities if every single one of us looked for the opportunity to share of the Lord with one person a day. What an impact we could make in our communities if we took Jesus out of the church and into the streets and stores. It is not up to others to share Christ with people, it is up to you and I. It is up to you and I to be “Good Samaritans” in the parking lots and shopping centers of life by sharing Jesus Christ. If we commit to do that, I know for a fact that God will bring us amazing opportunities to reach people in His name.

READ: Romans 10:8-15

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

## **CHAPTER 30: CHOOSING CANDY OVER CHRIST**

I continue to be amazed that people buy elaborate Halloween costumes to parade their children from door to door with bags for candy. Parents walk up and down the streets from house to house with their children dressed as everything imaginable. They

attend Halloween parties. Homes are clumsily decorated with various coffins, ghosts, ghouls, witches, devils and bats. But these same people will not take their children to Sunday School or church.

People take their children out and line the streets to watch a Halloween parade, but they won't consider taking their children to church.

I observe people out jogging on Sunday mornings as we are on our way to church. But these same people haven't got time to go church. People get up early on Sunday mornings to do yard work, play golf, go fishing, or to get ready for a sports game. But getting up for church is somehow inconvenient.

I'm pained by the number of people who have more important things to do than find a Christ-centered, Bible-believing church and attend it; that includes those who tell me they don't have to go to church because they watch a church program on television.

I wonder what thought these people have given to the reality of eternity. It's not just those who waste time on Halloween or those who have time to do everything on Sunday morning but go to church. It is also about

those who profess to being Christians, but who do not have time to spend with God or His people.

I cannot stress strongly enough that we can be absolutely certain that eternity is real and it is a place in which time has no end. Where we spend eternity God has left to us. We can decide to spend eternity with Him by accepting Jesus Christ, His Son, as our Saviour, or we can choose to spend eternity in hell because we didn't believe we needed a Saviour or when we were alive.

In reality we have only a short period of time to make a decision to accept Christ as our Saviour and live a Christian life, but we will have all eternity to rejoice that we did, or gnash our teeth and wail that we did not.

READ: Hebrews 9:27-28 (KJV)

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

## CHAPTER 31: AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

Thursday evening as we were talking before our Bible study started, I shared the following question that had come to me earlier in the week as I was thinking about Noah and the Ark.

The question was: *“If I had been living in Noah’s day, would I have been living my life pleasing enough before the Lord to have been on the Ark?”*

If we are a born again Christian, our salvation is assured thanks to our accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior. We who are saved have the confidence that whether we die before the Lord’s return or if we are alive at His return we will be gathered together in the air with Him.

But that doesn’t give us license to live as we want. In Matthew 24:26-39 (KJV) Jesus warned, that at the time of His return it will be: *“As the days of Noah...”*

Noah and his family were spared because, *“[Noah] found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* Today the grace of the Lord provides us the opportunity to choose to accept Christ as our Savior. Shouldn’t we turn to

Christ for forgiveness of our sins and salvation that we can only receive through Him?

READ: Genesis 6:5-8 (KJV)

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

## **CHAPTER 32: WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO WE HAVE?**

How often we treat God with a self-interested dishonesty. I call it “playing Christian.” We have all the right lingo, exhortations, and imagery (e.g., crucifixes, etc.), but we treat the Lord as a person who is only of value when they are needed. We do not seek a loving relationship with God as our Heavenly Father. The



worst thing is that the Enemy has blinded us to this central truth.

In many instances, even if we are regular and/or faithful churchgoers, we are indifferent to God. We can read daily devotionals and Bible verses and yet be indifferent to God. That is because we have a perfunctory relationship with Him. In other words, we perform daily, weekly, routine superficialities. The desire to bond in a true, loving Father son, daughter, child relationship that grows deeper and more reliant day after day and year after year is not the most important thing in our lives.

After all, we're busy. We have jobs, maybe we have illness in the family or we want to watch the big game. We're in a hurry to get home because we have a meeting later in the evening, or maybe we have to get our daughter to dance lessons or our son to music lessons.

Suffice it to say that many times God is only needed when He is needed. If there is a problem with health, finances or relationships, we turn to God, but even then, often He is not our first choice. We trust doctors, counselors, diets and what someone says at work

first. God is the last resort, and even then our prayers are limited in scope because for us faith has become a noun; it is not a verb.

That's not the kind of relationship I want with my Heavenly Father. I want a close loving friendship. I don't want God only when I need Him because I'm in trouble; I want God every minute of the day. I want to awaken in the morning with Him as my first thought and close my eyes at night with Him as my last thought. When I look at my wife and child, I want to see them with the love that is found in the Father's love for me.

I don't place my hope for a better world in a political party. I ask God to bring forth righteous leaders. I want Christians to step up and make a difference for God. Not according to the world's impotent view of God, but in the power of His Spirit.

We should want a relationship with God that is so close that we can tell Him anything; we can ask Him anything and we can trust Him for everything. We should want a relationship with God in which He is our all and our everything. We should not view God as a last resort or "something" we do on Sunday. We

should want God, our Heavenly Father to be first in our life in every capacity. We should want to sense His presence in our life every waking moment.

If we are so busy and/or preoccupied that He is excluded from our life, we are not living our lives for Him. We are living them for ourselves, and that is the formula for unfulfilled, empty lives.

READ: Psalm 16 (KJV)

16 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

3 But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

8 I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

## **CHAPTER 33: IS IT A LACK OF FAITH, OR A LACK OF TRUST?**

For many Christians, it is not a lack of faith that prevents us from seeing God work in our lives, it is a lack of trust. While we must have faith in God to be saved, having faith in Him doesn't mean we trust Him with our lives.

God's plan is for us to trust completely in Him for all of our needs. For a Christian, the definition of trust

means trusting God and not other things. Proverbs 3:5 tells: *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.”* (KJV)

Faith, on the other hand, is defined as: “An unwavering and unquestioning belief that doesn’t require man’s proof, approval, validation or evidence.” I define it as such, and I in no way feel that I’m diminishing or marginalizing the definition of faith as it is found in Hebrews 11:1, where we read: *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (KJV)

Some may feel that I am splitting hairs or that I’m making a play on words. I assure you that I’m doing neither. Whenever we lean on our own understanding, we are saying that we trust ourselves more than we trust God, even if we do not realize it. We can have faith to believe that Christ is the Son of God and God in the flesh. We can have faith that He was crucified, dead, was buried and resurrected on the third day, and that His is the only sacrifice God will accept for the forgiveness of our sins. Specific to that, we can have faith to be converted and accept Him for our salvation. But that isn’t the same thing as trusting Him with our finances, etc.

How often do people not tithe because they claim not to have enough money to give for the work of the Lord and pay the cell phone bill, the cable bill, etc.? If we trust God, we know He is faithful to His Word and that we cannot out-give Him. If we have a financial need, how often do we lean on our own understanding to figure out how to meet the need? That may result in going into more debt.

We'll never know how God would have worked things out for us if we didn't trust Him enough to find out. I'm not saying God wouldn't have directed us to get a loan, but we'll never know because we didn't ask Him and wait for His answer.

Both the saved and unsaved have heard Christians share instances of God's answering their prayers in dramatic fashion. People are amazed when they hear such things. Almost without fail, the person sharing what God had done for them is looked upon as having a special walk with the Lord and as being a "super Christian."

The reality is that those persons have a relationship in which they trust that there is nothing they cannot bring

before the Lord, and the faith to believe that He answers the prayers of His children.

READ: Proverbs 3:5-12 (KJV)

5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

## **CHAPTER 34: DO WE REALLY LOVE OUR FRIENDS?**

We say that we love our friends. At times we will even tell them that we love them. But if we know that one or more of our friends are not saved, do we love them enough to not want to see them die and go to hell?

If we are born-again Christians, this is an important question, and it is one that we need to ask ourselves.

Praying for unsaved friends to be saved is important, but if our reason for praying for them is because we are afraid of how they'll view our talking about Christ, then we are doing them a tremendous injustice.

Our friends may not want to hear about Christ or they may think that they are "religious enough." Some of our friends may even go to church, but we should never assume that because someone goes to church they are saved.

Sharing our faith with our friends is important. It is true; they may not want to hear what we have to say about their need for salvation, but that doesn't absolve us from finding ways to share our faith with them.



If we love someone, we want the best for them and that best is Jesus Christ. If we are unsure of how to discuss our faith with friends, we should ask God to provide the opportunities to do same.

Christmas is a good time to invite a friend or friends to a church service with us. Introduce them to members of our church family and then invite them back again. Ask God the Holy Spirit to touch their hearts and let them see their need for salvation.

If we love someone, we want the best for them and the absolute best for every person is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We shouldn't wait for someone else to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves.

READ: Matthew 5:13-16 (KJV)

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

## **CHAPTER 35: TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GOD...**

Suppose you were engaged in a casual conversation with a stranger and they asked you to tell them about your family; would it be difficult? Suppose a friend that you hadn't seen for many years asked you how your wife or child were doing; would it be difficult to share with them in intimate detail how they were? Suppose you had a friend ask you about a person that you both knew, but with whom you were actually friends; would you be able to share how they were doing?

The answer to each of these questions is that we would not have the least bit of difficulty sharing about those who are important in our lives and those for whom we genuinely care about.

But, let me change the wording of the questions. Suppose we say we are a Christian and in the course of casual conversation, a stranger asked us to tell them about our God. Suppose a friend you hadn't seen for a long time asked you a question about Christ; could you answer it? Just how much about Christ and being a Christian could you share if you were asked?

If someone asked us to tell them about our family, our children or a mutual friend, we could do so without a moment's hesitation. Why? Because they are our loved ones. They are the people who are closest to us. They are the people we are proud of, and we want others to know how important our family and best friend(s) are to us.

Which of course, brings us to the most important question: If we claim to be a Christian and someone asks us about our reason for hope or asked about God, why would it any more difficult to answer than if they asked about our family?

The answer lies in what type of relationship do we have with Christ. Would you want a relationship with your wife or husband in which you knew nothing about

them, or at best you could only stumble to find something to say about your wife or husband? Would you really consider yourself a friend if you knew nothing about the person you called a friend?

Thus, the question that begs an answer is: What type of relationship do we have with Christ? Is it a relationship similar to a person trying to convince a stranger that they know all about someone who attended their school and then went on to become recognized as an icon of success? Such answers offer nothing of substance and nothing that supports or even suggests that they know the person even remotely as well as they had bragged.

If we have a relationship with Christ, we should be able to tell others about Him just as we would tell them about other loved ones in our life. If we cannot, then we need to examine our relationship with Christ to see if we truly even have one.

READ: Acts 8:26-40 (KJV)

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

## **CHAPTER 36: SITUATION ETHICS AREN'T GODLY ETHICS**

We live in a world in which proper (i.e., acceptable) behavior is most often based upon situation ethics. The mantra we hear in association with acceptable behavior is that if what we are doing doesn't hurt anyone, it is perfectly acceptable. The other half of that mentality is that if a behavior is between two consenting adults it is okay.

The problem with the aforementioned mentality is that it is sinful man seeking to establish our own form of righteousness. Man's ideas of righteousness are not consistent with the righteousness that God accepts.

Sinful, fallen man cannot establish our own righteousness. According to situational ethics, it is okay to lie, cheat, steal, covet, hate, seek revenge and so on, based upon the perceived situational “right” of the individual.

That is not what God says in the Bible.

The right to engage in ungodly behavior because said behavior is deemed to be between consenting adults or because said behavior presumably doesn't hurt anyone is not consistent with the Word of God.

God's Word is not only immutable, it is unchanging from everlasting to everlasting. Righteous living is not based upon what we think; it is based upon being obedient to the Word of God. In order for that to happen we must know the Word of God, and we must submit ourselves to His will and the leading of the Holy Spirit. We cannot do this if we do not read and study the Word of God. It doesn't happen if we do not attend a Bible preaching, Christ-centered church pastored by a Godly man committed to God's word.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what we think, it matters what the Word of God says. God's word is

absolute. God doesn't accept sinful, disobedient behavior because in the moment we happen to find it acceptable.

READ: Romans 10:3-13 (KJV)

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;



9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

## **CHAPTER 37: THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME SATAN HAS TRIED**

The sin-consumed godless are quite full of themselves these days. They actually believe that they are effectively denying public acknowledgement of Christ.

Public school students are told they cannot read the Bible in any area where someone can see them. Apparently a student or students in these schools can

be deeply traumatized and emotionally haunted by the image of a person sitting quietly, minding their own business, reading their Bible. Who would have thought the day would come when that would be more psychologically disturbing than it would be to have abnormal sexual beliefs and practices forced upon these same children?

There are documented instances of persons refusing to sit beside a person reading their Bible. Public schools proudly proclaim their “holiday pageants” are free of Christmas carols and every form of reference to the birth of Christ.

Foolish unsaved persons make unimaginably ignorant and blasphemous statements such as “*God did not have the consent of Mary to impregnate her.*” Here, God is accused of being a sexual predator frightening a young pubescent girl into having an unwanted sexual relationship.

The list of acts intended to remove Christ from Christmas has grown in staggering proportions.

The single most important thing overlooked by Christians who wring their hands and chant jeremiads

based upon the Satanic attempt to remove Christ, is that this has been tried before.

It was tried in heaven — it resulted in Satan and his minions being cast out. Satan tried and failed to destroy the lineage of David to prevent the birth of Christ as prophesied. So-called learned and revered individuals have tried to deny the existence of Christ, but they too have failed.

It is important for Christians to remember that God's Word is immutable and His promises cannot be broken. There is nothing the minions of Satan can do to remove Christ from that which we celebrate as His birth, nor to remove Him from public square — it's been tried before with the same outcome – failure!!

As Christians, it is important to remember that Satan failed to prevent the birth of Christ when he had Herod murder all male children two years of age and younger. Satan's mission is to spread lies and entice people into sinful lives. But he is a failure.

Christians should not despair; we should rejoice because the greater the attempt to remove Christ the closer we are to His Second Coming. Those who are

not saved are the ones who should despair, because the day awaits them that they will stand before God and there is nothing written in Scripture that suggests this will be a pleasant experience for the unsaved.

READ: Psalm 53 (KJV)

53 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.

3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

5 There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

## **CHAPTER 38: A PERSONAL RECORD OF CROSSING THE JORDAN**

The last sentence of Joshua 4:7 (KJV) reads: *“And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.”*

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* explains that: *“The erection of cairns, or huge piles of stones, as monuments of remarkable incidents has been common among all people, especially in the early and rude periods of their history. They are the established means of perpetuating the memory of important transactions...Although there be no inscription engraved on them, the history and object of such simple monuments are traditionally preserved from age to age...it was that they might be a standing record to posterity of the miraculous passage of the Jordan.”*

In no less way is it to be with our prayer lists or prayer journals. I keep a prayer list that goes back many,

many years. It is a very simple, basic record. I start at the top of a page of paper and I put the date that I placed a specific prayer on the list. I underline the date and place the prayer(s) that I began petitioning the Lord for that date. I do not add to my prayer list every day. At times, days, weeks, or longer go by that I do not add to the list.

I pray through one of the columns each morning and when God answers the specific prayer or meets the specific need, I draw a line through it with the date and the answer to my prayer. Sometimes, the answer is that a person was healed, and in other instances I jot down the date a specific need was met. I have a record of my specific prayers over an extended period of years that I can look back over as a memorial to God's faithfulness and a record of prayers answered, even if the prayer was not answered the way I wanted (for example, when I was praying for a person to be healed and they passed away).

The point is I have a record or memorial if you will, of God's work in my life that spans years. I have a record of how long I prayed for a person, thing or need.

Prayer lists are our memorials as we've crossed the Rivers Jordan of our lives walking with the Lord. They are personal records of our relationship with the Lord. They are personal records that we can look back upon, sometimes to give thanks, and other times to remind ourselves that God answers our prayers because we have the memorialized record of it.

If we do not keep prayer lists or journals, how do we remind ourselves of God's faithfulness, especially when we are standing on the bank of the Rivers Jordan in our lives and wonder how we are going to cross over? A prayer list/journal marks all of the other times God has taken us across on dry land.

READ: Joshua 4:1-7 (KJV)

4 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

4 Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

## **CHAPTER 39: ARE WE HELPING IN THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR CHILDREN?**

Our children and young people are under attack mentally, emotionally and spiritually, every waking hour. The problem is that all too often we blissfully, albeit many times unwittingly, help Satan's emissaries



lead our children and young people into the practices that the Lord admonishes us to avoid.

It horrifies me that many, if not most of our children and young people are massively more familiar with the lives of so-called sports stars and entertainers than they are with the book of Proverbs and the Pauline Epistles.

Many children and young people can spew out the statistics of professional athletes, lyrics to songs on the radio and the latest on what's happening on the Hollywood/television scene readily, but they cannot quote the 23rd Psalm or the Apostle's creed. They understand and can discuss complex professional football formations, won/lost records and what is needed for their favorite team to make the playoffs, but they do not know how many books comprise the New Testament nor can they cite them in order. Worse still, they cannot share their faith with friends who are not saved and presume that they themselves are saved.

Cell phones and text messages have their undivided attention, but how many of our children and young people spend time on their own reading the Bible?

How many have Christ-centered lives exemplified for them in their homes on a daily basis? How many are taught that anything and/or anyone that is more important than God – is their God?

Many of our children and young people have a great capacity for everything but the Lord; tragically, many times it is our fault as parents. We indulge them in what the world tells us we should believe and how we should behave. They're told that Gucci, Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger are more important than Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The fact that some who are reading this are thinking it's enough that they take their children to church, and that they want their children to have fun without always having to think about the Bible proves my point. I've actually heard parents say they do not want to "impose" any form of religion upon their children. They fantasize that their children can decide for themselves when they are older, what they want to believe.

It is hard enough in Christ-centered homes where parents are committed to raising their children biblically. I have had many parents share with me the

heartbreak of their prodigal child. But, if we as parents are not living Christ-centered lives and instructing our children and young people in scripture, we are participating in Satan's destruction of them.

READ: Proverbs 22:6-8 (KJV)

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

## **CHAPTER 40: THE SUPER BOWL vs. GOD**

The so-called Super Bowl is upon America, and I say this is a perfect time for those who say they are Christians to examine themselves as to how important the "Word" and work of the Lord is to them.

If those who call themselves Christians are more excited about a football game than they are about sharing the Word of the Lord, football is their god. I get a lot of pushback when I say this, but people being

offended by my words makes what I have said no less true.

I'm not talking about the unsaved; they are expected to behave as unsaved persons do. It is those who claim to be Christians that I am challenging, and it is not because, I have no interest in or use for football. The truth is that I don't have interest or use for football, but I do for other activities, which means I must examine myself regarding those things and their place in my life. I am challenging those who say they are Christians to evaluate how much God really means to them in relationship to how much attention they devote to things other than God.

Being a Christian means having a relationship with our Heavenly Father through Christ His Son. We cannot have a healthy relationship if we put other things and other people before the "one" we claim to love the most.

Specific to that point; How often do you as someone identifying as a Christian, host an afternoon or evening of Bible reading at your home? There will no shortage of Super Bowl parties, but how often do we

invite people to our homes to read and talk about the Bible? What is our reason for not doing same?

How many Monday mornings do you go to your place of employment as excited about the message your pastor preached on Sunday as you do the morning after the Super Bowl? How often do you go to work or even go to church excited to share that you led someone to Christ during the week? How often do you go to church eager to share what the Lord has done for you during the week? How much personal time do devote exclusively to God, compared to the hours that you spend watching football, the Super Bowl and all of the hyped lead-ins, replays, etc.?

I'm not condemning football; I am challenging those who claim to be Christians, who place a higher importance on a game than they do on "being about the work of the Lord." It doesn't have to be about a game only. Anything that consumes us more than the Lord, is our god.

We can convince ourselves that our relationship with God is the most important thing in our lives, but if we are not putting God first — if we are not sharing God with more excitement than our preparations for the

Super Bowl or looking forward to discussing the Super Bowl, then God is not first in our life.

And if God is not first in our life, just what kind of relationship do we have with Him?

READ: 1 Corinthians 2:2-16 (KJV)

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

## **CHAPTER 41: SCULPTOR AND FLEA MARKETS**

Recently, as the lone clerk working the service counter of a particular store was assisting me, I noticed that the gentleman waiting at the counter next to me was a sculptor whose work is world renowned. As it happens, my wife knows the gentleman, which brings me to my “Thought for Today.”

My wife and her best friend visited the gentleman’s exhibit and gallery several years ago. I admit going to see a sculptor exhibit, be it known the world over or not, wasn’t on my “I can’t wait to do that” list. So, about three years ago when my wife decided to make visiting this sculptor’s exhibit a social outing with friends, I put on my happy face and went.

Secretly I was prepared not to like anything about the exhibit or famous restaurant located on the exhibit



grounds, where we would be having lunch. I could not have been more wrong. Since that time, I am the one each year that cannot wait to visit his exhibit. I've told friends about the exhibit and they also have enjoyed visiting the exhibit each year.

It is the same with flea markets and pottery exhibits. Not wanting my wife to miss one of the major flea market events in our area, I offered to go with her when at the last minute her friend was unable to go. I could not have guessed the pleasure I would experience attending the event with my wife.

However, my appreciation for the sculptor exhibit and outdoor flea market event paled in comparison to realizing after the fact how special my attending was to my wife. Therefore I had little interest in sculpture and even less interest in flea markets. And truth be told, I went grudgingly to the one and ambivalently to the other.

But, as I discovered, not only was my wife happy that I honestly enjoyed both events, but it made her even happier that I enjoyed the time at both events with her. There was also the unexpected blessing that came

out of same and that was the blessing of sharing time with her doing things she likes.

How often in our lives have we missed blessings and special moments together with loved ones because of our personal selfishness? More importantly, how often do we realize we are being selfish in refusing to enjoy the pleasure(s) of our spouse, children or parents?

Our time on Earth with our loved ones is at best fleeting. Do we really want to look back with disappointment and realize the moments we could have spent together and didn't, because we weren't able to dictate the moment? Or would we rather look back and say, I didn't like whatever it might have been, but I will never forget the joy I derived from knowing what it meant to the other person, that we loved them enough to be with them?

READ: Philippians 2:1-4 (KJV)

2 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

## **CHAPTER 42: PRAYER**

Society has become an “I want it, and I want it now” society. Many times, even when we pretend to be patient, it simply means we are not displaying the angst seething within us. But it is supposed to be different with Christians; after all, Psalms 37:4 tells us: “Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” (KJV) Which brings me to today’s “Sunday Thought.”

There are no few times that it may seem we ask and we do not receive that which we are asking for in prayer. Why is that we may ask; after all, doesn’t John 16:23-28 (KJV) seem to assure us that whatever we ask we will receive? Doesn’t Matthew 7:1-12 (KJV) seem to tell us to ask and keep asking until God gives us our desire(s)?

If you are thinking to yourself that maybe it's a lack of faith, because Matthew 17:17-21 (KJV) addresses faith the size of a grain of mustard seed; I remind you to keep in mind the context in which Jesus was teaching when He said that someone may be thinking that we ask and do not receive based upon the teaching of James 4:3 (KJV); i.e., we ask amiss that we may consume upon our own lusts.

The fact is that there are many verses in both the Old and New Testaments that speak to asking in faith and receiving that which was prayed. But I remind you that there is also one other verse that is frequently spoken, and yet seldom remembered.

That verse can be found in Matthew 6:10 (KJV). This passage of scripture is part of the Lord's prayer and the verse I reference reads: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

When we pray, yes we are to pray expecting and believing that our prayers will be answered, but when we submit our way unto the Lord, when we say "Lord here is my prayer and I am asking you in faith believing but Heavenly Father, I ask that they will be done. I ask that you receive the glory, praise and

honor.” That is asking with our hearts, minds and wills submitted to God.

There are many times that children of God have prayed and have not received the answer we believed we wanted. We have prayed for a person near death to be healed and they’ve been healed; at other times the person has passed away despite fervent prayer. Sometimes we’ve prayed years for a person to be saved and it appears that they passed away unsaved. Other times, we pray years for a person to be saved and we see them saved.

But when we can pray with humbled confidence, knowing that God hears our prayers and trusting Him to answer according to His will, that which is best for us, we have submitted our way unto the Lord, and born out of that relationship, we will see and experience God work in powerful ways.

READ: Philippians 4:4-7 (KJV)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## **CHAPTER 43: GOD’S PROMISES ARE WITHOUT EQUAL**

*The following is from my devotional book: “Alone With Jesus.”*

The promises of God are without equal and can never be broken. Even when it appears to us in our human minds that God has abandoned us, the truth is, that we are most likely dismayed because He is not doing what we want, the way we want, and when we want it.

God cannot lie, and God does not deceive or toy with us. Yes, there will always be the dark days of trial and of the stretching of our faith. But faith isn’t always about having things go as we desire. I have learned that many are the times that faith is more about believing God is God and that He will never leave His children nor forsake us.

Let us lift our voices high and proclaim that God is our helper and we shall not fear.

READ: Hebrews 13:5-6 (KJV)

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

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

## **CHAPTER 44: PRAYING FOR THE WAYWARD CHILD**

We live in a fallen world. Accordingly, no matter how hard truly Christian families may try, there are those families who suffer the pain of seeing a child grow up rebellious and go astray. To those families, I say, no matter how dim the prospects may appear, never stop praying for that prodigal child to turn to God.

It may seem like that child will never repent and turn from their wayward ways and invite Christ into their life. That does not mean we are to condone their sin; it means that we should never stop loving them and petitioning God to show them their need for Christ for

salvation. As we are assured in Scripture: “...*the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” (James 5:16 KJV)

Never compromise your walk with Christ. If a Christian family’s child goes astray despite being raised in a truly Christ centered home, we have the opportunity to see God work.

But, as we pray and petition God our Savior to save our child from their rebellious ways, we must do so in faith believing, never allowing ourselves to think God has abandoned them. Many times in such instances, the child must hit rock bottom before they come to the place of confessing their need for Christ.

That rock bottom may be the devastating effect of HIV, imprisonment or loss of their family if they are married. It may take a life-threatening event. The Holy Spirit may convict them by showing them the emptiness of a life lived without Christ. It may happen in a way or ways we cannot begin to imagine, but if we truly trust God, it will happen. It may be that we will not know until we get to heaven and see them there.



In situations like this, if we truly commit the wayward child to God, through the faithful prayer of a righteous family, God will hear and He will answer.

But, I am equally as convinced that our lives must be right with God. We must be willing to let God work in our own lives and bring us into conformity with Christ. If we have been slack and loved the world more than God, our prayers will be weak and ineffectual. If we have raised our children in a home where God is not first before all things and/or showing them that worldly activities are more important than church, then we have contributed to their disobedience. If we have raised them without discipline and absolutes then we have helped steer them off course.

Strong, Christ-centered homes with families that are obedient to God may not keep our children from going astray, but it will instill in our children the understanding that Christ is the only way to life.

READ: James 1:22-25 (KJV)

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

## **CHAPTER 45: ETERNITY WITH MY GOD, MY LORD AND MY MOM**

Today is Mother's Day, and I am blessed to have had the mother I did. She sacrificed mightily to raise me and to give me every opportunity possible. She instilled in me a love of learning and the DNA to stand for that which is right and just.

My mother went to be with the Lord September 20, 2013. She was 94 years old. My mother's struggle and sacrifice to raise me was not the result of bad decisions she had made. It was not the result of immorality, alcohol or drugs. It was because of the reality of life.

When I was 10 years old my mother had what called at that time, a complete nervous breakdown, and yet somehow by the grace of God she refused to let her illness define me. She never allowed her emotional illness to impact what she saw as her responsibility for me.

As I look back in hindsight, I realize that the single most important thing my late mother did for me was to accept Christ as her Savior. My reason for saying that is simple; because she gave her life to Christ, when I pass on, I will not only be in the presence of my Lord and my God, I will be reunited with my mother. She will be of a sound mind with a resurrected body. How great a gift. But I can only say that because I too have accepted Christ as my Savior.

We have our mother's here on Earth, but to share heaven with them for all of eternity is the most wonderful gift of God through Christ Jesus. My question to you today is; Can you say with confidence and assurance the same thing?

READ: Proverbs 31:10-31 (KJV)

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,  
so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of  
her life.

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly  
with her hands.

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her  
food from afar.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat  
to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit  
of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and  
strengtheneth her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her  
candle goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands  
hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she  
reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

- 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
- 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
- 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
- 25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
- 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
- 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
- 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.
- 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

## **CHAPTER 46: ALL SIN IS UGLY WHEN REVEALED**

I recently wrote an op-ed in which I graphically detailed the inhumane treatment that has been secretly practiced upon Islamic women. In response to said column, a friend and brother in Christ wrote me: *“The first part of your [article] was painful to read, but then the truth can be painful.”*

His comment was a powerful observation about sin. As long as sin is never called by its true name and never presented in its true appearance, the raw ugliness of the act is obscured. And as long as the true ugliness of the sin is concealed, the sin is viewed as acceptable not only by the unsaved, but tragically many who claim to be saved as well.

I am confident that the overwhelming majority of people who are accepting of homosexuality have never considered the raw ugliness of that sin. They view homosexuality as two people in a relationship that is the same as a loving relationship between a man and woman. It is not. It is a disease-driven sexual

practice that promotes and encourages gratification that would make most people ill if they truly reasoned the baseness of such “intimacy.” It is only the sin-driven nature that would allow a person to believe such depravity is normal and loving.

The murder of unborn children is acceptable as long as the specifics of how the children are murdered is obscured by references such as “women’s reproductive health.” Few people stop to ask the question: How does murdering an unborn child equate with a woman’s “reproductive health?”

The clever trick most often employed by Satan is to place the focus on the individual juxtaposed to the sinful act. Focus upon the individual(s) directs disapproval toward the person, and that becomes personal, where as keeping the focus upon the sin itself places attention right where God wants it.

That is exactly what the serpent did to Eve. It had her focus on the beauty (i.e., the physical appearance of the object) as opposed to God’s command. If men and women treated their bodies as the temple of God, the murder of children would not be casually called a “choice” (See: 1 Corinthians 6:19 KJV).

Homosexuality doesn't stop with abnormal sexual practices between two men or between two women. Sin consumes, and like fire needs oxygen to burn; aberrant sexual practices must become more and more extreme in order to temporarily satisfy. Hence, we see the evolution of aberrant sexual practices, into the disfiguring of one's body in the foolish attempt to change how we were born.

It is not until we see sin as God sees it, that we can begin to abhor sinful acts and practices in our lives and in the world. But that cannot happen until we receive God the Holy Spirit, which we cannot do until and unless we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

READ: 1 Corinthians 6:13-20 (KJV)

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.



16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

## **CHAPTER 47: JESUS IS RISEN...SO WHAT?**

Easter church services are come and gone. Most Resurrection Day services included songs and hymns about Jesus rising from the grave and sermons proclaiming the same. But, so what? Even if we believe in Jesus, so what if He arose from the grave?

However, the question isn't so much one of what if He "arose" from the grave as what if He didn't rise from the grave.

If Jesus hadn't arose from the grave, it would make Him just another person who spun convincing tales of deceit and dishonesty, and in His case, not even for personal material gain.

If Jesus were not risen, His body would be in the ground just like the body of every false prophet in the history of the world. It would have been possible to go and see His dead body. It would mean that in the millennia since Jesus was crucified, dead and buried, someone or some group would have found His body. If He did not rise, credible searches for His body would continue until this very day.

But there are no credible searches for His buried body, because His "is risen." Note, I said: "He is risen"; not "He was risen", as I indicated above. That is because if Jesus "was risen," it would offer no hope of His being alive today. It would mean that "He was risen" but not necessarily that "He is risen" still today.

Jesus is risen, and if He were not, our hope of victory over death, our hope of not just living eternally with Him in Heaven, but doing so in our resurrected bodies that will also be raised from the grave would be in vain.

The question is: Do we believe that? Because if we do not believe that, it means we are hopelessly lost, and the best it will ever be for us is our best moment while we were alive. It means that some of us will spend our lives “doing things” that we hope will make it possible for us not to spend eternity in hell when we die.

The question we might consider asking ourselves are these: Is this the way we want to live our lives? Do we want to live our lives and then die without the assurance and confidence of our spending eternity with God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?

Believing that Jesus “is risen” from the dead is as important as believing He is God the Son. Our eternal future is based upon whether or not we believe Jesus “is risen” from the grave and is alive forever more, because if we do not believe “He is risen,” we cannot believe He is God the Son. And if we do not believe He is God the Son, we cannot believe He is our Lord

and Savior. And if we do not believe He is our Lord and Savior we have no hope of forgiveness of our sins, and that is presuming we even believed we were sinners.

READ: Acts 1:1-11 (KJV)

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

## **CHAPTER 48: ATHEISTS: THE ANGRY AND THE LOST**

On the one hand, I feel sorry for atheists, and yet on the other hand, I pity them. I feel sorry for them because the best they will ever experience are fleeting

and circumstantial moments of gaiety disguised as happiness, and the false sense of peace they strive to experience in their lifetime.

I pity the atheists because they are truly a lost people. They have nothing to live for, and they have no “Hope” when they die.

It doesn't matter how hard an atheist works to maintain a belief that there is no God; the truth that God is real and does exist haunts them. That is the reason they fight so hard to convince themselves and others that there is no God.

We were created in God's image, and we have an innate God-consciousness and awareness of a “Creator.” That means the atheists can harden their hearts and they can be dismissive, but that only results in them being angry and empty.

The atheists can lie and claim none of those things are true, but that lie will not bring peace. How tragic it is to live one's life without Christ; suffering and enduring all of the realities of life. And then to find out upon your death that God is real and that the Word of God is true.

St. Augustine said: *“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”* Drugs, alcohol, sexual perverseness, the occult, work, ad nauseum will never sate our need for God.

Considering the fact that death and eternity are always just a breath away, shouldn't we make sure beyond any shadow of doubt that when we die, we will spend eternity with God in heaven?

READ: Revelation 20:11-15 (KJV)

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

## **CHAPTER 49: SELFISHNESS IS A CHOICE**

Of the many qualities that I love about my wife, the most endearing is her unselfishness. One of the ways her unselfishness is exhibited is particularly special to me because of the way she displays it.

I enjoy cigars. I particularly enjoy a cigar as I am driving. My wife has never smoked. But she enjoys when we spend time together as I enjoy my cigar, because she knows she is a part of something that is special to me. This was particularly evident recently as we were enjoying a mild, star -ined sky on our way home from the restaurant of a friend.

There was also the afternoon during the Christmas holiday past that she went with me to meet the guys at a “joint” we enjoy, one that is cigar-friendly and has outstanding bar food. She was the only wife who was not working that day, and it was the guys who insisted she join us over cigars and good bar food. It was special to me because she was with me, but it was



also special because the “guys” enjoyed her company and she enjoyed being there.

Going to flea markets, yard sales and flower shows has never been at the top of my “I cannot wait to do this” list, but spending the time with her at same makes me smile, because I know what it means to her having me take pleasure in what she enjoys.

A truly unselfish spouse is a blessing from God. The ability to enjoy something that you do not necessarily like/enjoy, if you like/enjoy it at all, because your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend enjoys it, is unselfishness.

If you're wondering where I am going with this “Sunday Thought,” I'm going to “the Cross.”

Jesus wasn't going to the cross for Himself as such, He was going for us. He was fully aware of the pain he would suffer. Pain, agony and separation so great that He would cry out: *“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

Jesus endured suffering on the cross for the “joy that that was set before Him.” That “joy” was the path of Salvation for us. Had He been selfish, both He and us would have missed being enjoined in a special relationship for now and eternity.

What Jesus did for us was the greatest act of unselfishness in the history of creation. He valued the pain/suffering He would endure as being of the greatest value for you and I more than He did any moment theretofore.

Perhaps the next time we choose to demand someone not do something they enjoy because we do not enjoy it, maybe we should think of Jesus and His unselfish act for us. He suffered so that we could enjoy a relationship with Him. For those who are saying “Yes but, that was different,” I say selfishness has but one definition with many examples.

Have a blessed Resurrection Day.

READ: Hebrews 12:1-3 (KJV)

12 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset

us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

## **CHAPTER 50: IT'S NOT HOW WE LIVE, IT'S IN WHOM WE BELIEVE**

I've heard it said that "It's how we live that determines how we die." That's only marginally true. What is true in toto is: "What we believe when alive determines where we will spend eternity."

There are people who live healthy lifestyles and discover they have serious life-threatening diseases. People who are not overweight, who supposedly eat the right foods and exercise, people who have never smoked and people who were not employed in industries that were dangerous to their health, have

developed diseases that rob them of their health and quality of life.

In brief, living the healthiest lifestyle possible doesn't guarantee we won't contract horrible diseases and ailments that completely debilitate and/or incapacitate us. We can live healthy, wholesome lives and die from an injury.

Ergo, the fact is that how we live only marginally determines how we die.

But it is a fact that what we believe and in Whom we believe determines where we will spend eternity when we die. What we must believe is that it's only through faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who was all man and all God, who was born of a virgin and who lived a sinless life, was crucified, died, buried, arose the third day, was seen thereafter by many, who ascended into heaven and who is returning again for those who by believing in Him are saved. What we must believe is that Christ is the only acceptable "Sacrifice" for our sins that God will accept to pay our sin debt. He alone is the only way to heaven.

I'm am not advocating nor suggesting that we should live unhealthy and reckless lives; I am stating with no fear of being wrong, that it is in "Whom" we believe that determines where and with whom we spend eternity. Accept Christ as our Savior, and we will spend eternity with Him. Reject Him and we will spend eternity in hell with Satan, demons and all others who rejected Christ.

We can live healthy lifestyles and go to hell when we die, or we can accept Christ as our Savior and spend eternity with God in heaven when we die.

READ: Romans 10:8-13 King (KJV)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

## **CHAPTER 51: ANSWERED PRAYER**

In the February 10, 2019, “*Sunday Thought For The Day*,” I shared a prayer request. In fact, the title of the “*Sunday Thought*” was “*A Prayer Request*.” Well, as an update to that devotion, today’s title can only be called: “*Prayer Answered*.”

You may remember my mentioning my son forwarded me a request for prayer for a young lady named Katelyn and her family. The family was allowing surgery that was needed to save her life — even though it was possible she would not survive the surgery, because the antibiotics that were intended to rid her body of the infection when her appendix burst, had failed after one month of trying.

On February 13, my son received the update so many had been praying for. My son said: “*I just found out that Katelyn had a complete surgical procedure where*

*they didn't have to open her up, but they were able to clean all scar tissue out of areas and allowed everything to heal and as of today she's home. They believe she's going to recover fully. [Everyone] should go back and read the previous email, [requesting prayer] and see how this one aligns with the original prognosis."*

The original email from my son included the surrender of Katelyn to God's plan for her, offered in her mother's prayer. God answered prayer and together, this family has been strengthened in a way that could only come through faith as they faced the death of their daughter.

Everyone who prayed for this miracle of healing should give thanks and praise to God for this answered prayer. However, I would be remiss if I didn't say that we should have given thanks and praise to God even had the answer to prayer not been what we asked.

When we can say "thank you" to God for answering our prayers according to His will and purpose, we can truly give thanks to Him for answering our prayers according to the desires of our hearts. Faith is not always receiving what we want, but rather, it is trusting

God to give us what we need, and answering us according to His plan and purpose.

READ: Psalm 9:1-2;9-11 (KJV)

1 I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

9 The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

## **CHAPTER 52: THE PRESCRIPTION FOR 'STANDING FAST IN THE LORD'**

At the very end of the verse of Philippians 4:1, the Apostle Paul exhorts his brethren saying: “...*So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*” (KJV)



I love this portion of Scripture for numerous reasons, not least of which because the verses of Scripture subsequent to Philippians 4:1 have been of such comfort and reassurance to me over the years of my Christian life. I have found this passage to be one intended for correction and a reminder of how we as Christians are to behave. This passage of Scripture also tells us that there was conflict between two women that wasn't being addressed properly, which if allowed to fester, would threaten the unity of the Body of Christ at Philippi.

Paul also entreated the true followers of Christ, i.e., "True yokefellow" to help those who had labored with him in the spreading of the Gospel in Philippi.

In this 23 verse chapter of the Book of Philippians, Paul tells the true followers of Christ at Philippi to be of the same mind in Christ; he reminds them of the mindset and character that is the secret to the peace of God. He puts them in mind once more that as Christians our sufficiency is through Jesus Christ.

But more importantly, Paul tells us the mindset we who are true born-again children of God are to have. Paul writes: "*Finally, brethren, whatever things are*

*true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8 KJV)*

This verse is critical for true Christians if we are to walk and labor together as one in Christ to reach a dying and decadent world. This verse is also critical because I believe it is the prescription for despair.

If we are filling our minds with the Word of God, focusing our thoughts on the eternal and immutable promises of our Heavenly Father, and standing firm on His promise that *“He will never leave us nor forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5 and Deuteronomy 31:6 KJV)*, we will not fall prey to doubt and despair based upon circumstances and the temporal things of this world.

True Christians belong to and serve the Creator of all there was, is and will ever be. We are the Children of God Almighty, who has and will keep every promise He has ever made to us. With that being the case, why would any true born-again child of God ever allow Satan and/or his demonic hordes to have us doubt the truth and promises of God?

The prescription for sound spiritual mental health and a Christ-centered character is that we stop complaining and start praising our God, and that we fill our minds with the truths of Philippians 4:8, not the lies of the secular world we live in.

READ: Philippians 4:1-19 (KJV)

1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

## **CHAPTER 53: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE 23<sup>RD</sup> PSALM**

Psalms 23 is one of the best known and perhaps most often-referenced Psalms. It is sung in hymn and it is the first Psalm many of us learned in Sunday School

as children. It is a beautiful and heartwarming portrait of Christ our Lord as our Heavenly Shepherd.

But as I was thinking about this Psalm the past couple of days, it occurred to me that as David composed this beautiful Psalm, he was able to express his emotions and his assuredness in the Lord because he was in a right place with the Lord.

When we are walking in faithful obedience to God, it matters not what happens around us: we rest in the arms of our Heavenly Shepherd. When we walk in faithful obedience with God, it matters not what storms rage around us—we have peace.

Peace is of the Lord. Chaos and insurrection are of the devil. It is a tragic truth that many Christians claim to have peace, but in reality absolute chaos rages around them and within their personal lives and homes. Often, this chaos has pursued their household generation after generation.

Even more tragic: It has been my experience as a minister that this is often accompanied by a belief within the family that everything is okay because they

go to church each Sunday—i.e., the family is in denial.

How does this happen, we ask. It happens because sin cannot be welcomed into our homes. When we welcome disobedience into our homes, we welcome chaos and familial pain. Today, if you are experiencing chaos and the absence of true Holy Spirit peace, I encourage you to turn to God our Heavenly Shepherd and ask Him what we have invited into our homes and lives that has given the chaos of the devil a place? “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Galatians 5:9 (KJV)

That involves humbling ourselves before God and admitting that we have in fact knowingly or unknowingly provided a comfortable space for Satan’s chaos to dwell. When we bow the knees of our hearts to God our Great Heavenly Shepherd, confessing that we need His help in repenting and truly turning to Him, we will experience His peace. It matters not what realities of life beset us, we will rest in the assuredness that “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want... I will fear no evil... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life... I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

READ: Psalms 23 (KJV)

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

## **CHAPTER 54: FAITH**

Praying is one thing, but praying in faith believing is another. You see it's not my prayer that I believe in as such; I believe in Him to whom I pray.



Sometimes what we are praying for isn't God's ultimate plan for us. Having faith means trusting God to know best, which means we must trust God unequivocally.

Answered prayer is not a roll of the dice. God is not some cosmic entity driven by human emotions like the television and make-believe beings. He is God. He is the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.

At times it seems that our prayer is answered before it leaves our mouth. At other times, we pray for years before we see our prayer(s) answered.

At all times, we must ask God to answer our prayers in a way that brings glory and honor to Him. I have found that there are times not having my prayers answered the way I think I want them answered is in fact he answer to my prayer. At times God strengthens our faith by having us wait to see our prayer(s) answered. But we must always be surrendered to the unwavering desire that our answered prayer will honor God.

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10 KJV) The writer of Hebrews wrote: "Now faith is the substance things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1 KJV)

Faith is communicating with God, and not just when we want or need something. Faith is trusting and involving God in every facet of our life and being.

READ: Hebrews 11:6 (KJV)

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Additional recommended reading: Hebrews 11:1 thru Hebrews 12:2 (KJV)

## **CHAPTER 55: GOD IS GOD**

In the Gospel of John, following the death of her brother Lazarus, we read: "*Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*" (John 11:21 KJV)

Martha went on to say: *“But I know that even now, whatever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.”* (John 11:22 KJV) The account ends with Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

One thing that I believe goes unnoticed to a certain extent is that Martha’s faith was limited by time, distance and space. She knew and believed that Jesus needed only to *“ask of God”* and He would have answered. In short, she had compartmentalized the authority/power of Christ to heal with a construct that was understandable to her.

In Gospel of Matthew we read, that Jesus said unto the centurion who came to Him seeking healing for his servant: *“I will come and heal him.”* But *“The centurion answered and said, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”* (Matthew 8:8 KJV)

The centurion understood the meaning of divine authority, as a comparison to the authority that he had over the men subordinate to him. I submit that because he understood the power of authority, his faith was not bound nor limited by time, distance, space or circumstances.

Now, of course it goes without saying that there is much more we have heard preached and taught about these two instances of healing by Jesus. But I believe the critical question that cannot go unaddressed is: What kind of constraints do we place upon our prayers?

When we pray, do we pray with the limitless belief (i.e., faith) that there is nothing Jesus cannot do—no matter the illness, need, circumstances or desire? God is God, and God is not limited. However, our faith is limited by the constraints (i.e., the limits) we place upon God because we fail to realize that God is God, and God is not limited.

READ: Matthew 8:5-13 (KJV)

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

## **CHAPTER 56: HE TOUCHED ME**

I have been a born again Christian for nearly 40 years and I have been an ordained minister for approximately 32 of those years. During that time I have been blessed to witness and experience the grace of God in many wondrous ways.

But of all the countless wondrous things I have witnessed God do in my life, there is nothing compared to what he did for me on a squalid August day nearly 40 years ago, when a totally broken man cried out to him in a simple six word prayer. (See: Romans 10:13 KJV)

I was that broken man. And when I got up from my half kneeling, half sitting position on the floor I knew that something had changed in my life. Something was different within me. A weight had been lifted from me that I couldn't explain. I had gotten down beside my bed a broken, miserable, wicked person, but when I arose from the floor, I arose a forgiven man made whole by the blood of Christ. It would take me a few days to fully understand what had happened to me (i.e., that I had become a child of God and new creation in Christ).

Some years after that I allowed myself to fall prey to the wiles of the devil and I became disobedient to God. I had taken my eyes off the Lord and became ensnared in the wickedness of this world. That happened because although I was saved and serving the Lord at that time, I had foolishly allowed areas of my life to exist that were incubation chambers for

spiritual cancer that metastasized at my most vulnerable moment.

But praise God, that the “Hound of heaven,” His Holy Spirit would not permit me to make peace with sin and ergo, I, the prodigal son, confessed and repented of that evil which I had allowed to exist in my heart.

As I have said many times, I am a testimony to the grace, love, and forgiveness of my God. I bathe in the warmth and security of forgiveness that can only be had through Christ Jesus.

That said, I am not an anomaly nor am I the exception. I am the example of what God will do for everyone and anyone who calls on Him. Confession and repentance are the only things I brought before God through Jesus Christ.

There is nothing that compares to the forgiveness of my sins and the assuredness of my salvation. I encourage everyone who doesn't know Christ as their Savior to receive Him while there is yet time.

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (KJV)

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

## **CHAPTER 57: WHAT IF THERE ISN'T TIME FOR THEM TO 'GROW OUT OF IT?'**

There are things that a true born again Christian should never think, believe or entertain saying, because most of the time, what comes out of our



mouths is what is in our hearts. Some of these things start out as harmless bromides, which often are made to appear to have biblical practicality to them, but as Scripture says in Luke 6:45 (KJV): “...for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”

One such saying is: “*They’ll grow out of it.*” As I said, sometimes the saying is intended to convey simple truths, but sadly the conveyor of such a seeming truism never considers the effect of “waiting to grow out of something.”

For instance, often we hear that a child will grow out of sucking their thumb. However, we do not hear how much it will cost in braces and dental work for the overbite that is caused by same. A child who wets the bed will “grow out of it” at some point, but what about the personal agony the child often secretly suffer until they do, as they grow older?

Many times we have heard this saying referencing behavior that is reasoned to not be that bad. This can apply to many areas of what should be viewed from the very beginning as unacceptable behavior(s).

Recently, while referencing the behavior of a young adult who was being disobedient on a number of

different levels, an older gentleman told me *“He’ll grow out of it.”* The older gentleman followed that up by saying *“You should have seen what I was like when I was his age.”* The young man we were talking about is 19 years old.

That is a thoughtless and reckless attitude because it doesn’t factor in eternity if the person dies before they confess, repent and turn away from the wrongful behavior. As I listened to the man who was trying to convince me that the behavior of the 19-year old was normal and they would “grow out of it,” the one question he never broached or remotely considered was: What if the young man dies before he does grow out of it? Nor do I believe the gentleman considered the true threshold of hell upon which he lived before coming to the Lord.

That’s the question we must all ask ourselves with respect to our children and other young people. The only guarantee of how long we will live is the very last breath we have taken. If we indulge disobedience and defiance from our children or young people that we know, we’re being irresponsible, and the mind and heart of Christ is not in us.

We are saying it's okay to be disobedient because a person "will grow out of it." But that mentality contains two questions that go unaddressed: 1) What if because we did not attempt to take corrective measures they reach a point that they'll no longer hear our words, and 2) What if the person dies before they repent?

If we ourselves believe we're being obedient to God, why would we want someone else to miss out on the abundance of life they should be experiencing while not being obedient to God?

READ: Matthew 12:33-37 (KJV)

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

## **CHAPTER 58: THE CRUELEST THING TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE DIES**

When trying to comfort someone who has had a loved one die, especially after suffering from prolonged illness, a person, maybe even a minister, invariably will make the observation: “Well, they’re in a better place now.” Perhaps we’ve said that very thing about someone ourselves.

However, unless the person who has died truly accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior when they were alive, they are not in a better place when they are dead.

We deceive ourselves and others when we voice those words about someone who has suffered terrible illness and/or disease before dying, if they were not saved in this lifetime.

The worst thing about saying something so patently false about a person who has died without accepting Christ as their Savior is when platitudes are spoken claiming that they have been “such a good person.”

The Word of God makes it unambiguously clear that no one is good apart from blood of Christ. The Scriptures make it unwaveringly clear that a person can only be saved while they are alive. After we are dead, it's too late to accept the Lord.

We do inestimable injustice to our friend(s) or loved ones when we say something so patently false about someone who has died without having received Christ as their Savior.

A person makes the cruelest of choices to suffer debilitating illness or disease here on Earth, only to die and spend eternity in the immeasurable pain and suffering of hell and separation from God.

It is a fact that every person who died without having had their sin forgiven by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior is not in a better place. It is a fact that they are in the absolute worst place they will ever be, and they will be there for all of eternity.

The only way to be “in a better place” when we die, is to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior while we are alive.

READ: Romans 3:10-12; 23-28 (KJV)

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

## **CHAPTER 59: WHY ARE YOU GOING TO CHURCH?**

I would like to ask you a deeply personal two-part question: 1) Why do you go to church? and 2) What good does it do you to go to church?

That's right: Why do you go to church? How often do you ask yourself why you go to church? Have you ever asked yourself why you go to church? How much do you think about church during the six days that separate Sunday worship? If your church has a midweek service, do you attend faithfully, or do you find that other things pop up that are more important than attending that service?

Regarding Part Two of this personal question: If you go to church every time the church door is open, what good is it doing for you? Is attending church not only

making a difference in your life, but is it making a difference in the lives of others?

Note that I said this was a deeply personal question. Your honest answer to these questions will tell you something about how important God is in your life.

I believe there is a direct correlation between a person's love for church, the anticipation of attendance and their relationship with God. I believe there is a direct correlation between attending church and how much a person exhibits Christ during the days between services.

That said, there is in fact a direct correlation between one's love for God and their selfless obedience to Him. If we are attending a Christ-centered church where the undiluted truth of the Word of God is preached, taught and lived, then we will impact our communities for Christ.

Which brings me to a brutally honest statement of fact. If we are attending church when it's convenient (i.e., when we don't have to sell cookies, do yard work, go to a game or whatever), and/or if we are faithfully attending church every time the door is open for



service but we aren't sharing our faith; faithfully praying for the people in our church and in our daily lives, if we are not sharing our personal account of how and why we came to Jesus Christ for salvation and if we are not being about Jesus Christ every day, then why are we attending church?

If we are just going to church because that is what we think we should do and if we are not sharing our faith and being about the Gospel of the living Christ, why are we going to church? Because, I tell you, if any of the above is true, that Satan himself is doing more in our church than we are.

And even more importantly, if we do not understand and grasp the meaning of the previous paragraph, I submit that we are spiritually impaired and in critical need of a spiritual tune-up, because we are either not saved at all. In such a case, we are simply going about fooling ourselves, or we are spiritually impotent.

READ: Deuteronomy 31:8; 12-13 KJV

8 And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

12 Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

## **CHAPTER 60: THE SPIRITUAL FEAST OF BARMECIDE**

Many religions are synonymous with the “Feast of Barmecide” (i.e., they are phony and empty).

According to a tale in The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments, a member of a noble family of Baghdad named Barmecide was besought at his castle by a beggar, who had been days with out food.

The outer appearance of the castle was surrounded by magnificent gardens and landscaping befitting a man of his presumed wealth. Inside there were lavishly-decorated rooms and seemingly every

comfort the heart could need or want in order to be fulfilled.

Barmecide lured the beggar into his castle, by promising him a great feast consisting of the best foods, meats and wine. However, upon being seated at the table, the beggar was served a meal of make-believe food and drink.

Barmecide gave a great performance of the imaginary food being served, pretending to carve and eat the meats and drink from the empty wine glasses. Fearing to offend, the beggar enjoined too, partaking of the imaginary foods and wine.

Depending upon which author you read, this tale does have an instructive ending. That is not the case with false teachers/religions. They invite people into their folds promising spiritual fulfillment, but the result is a journey down the primrose path to a table of nothingness.

As a born-again child of God, my eternal salvation is assured. I do not have to perform choreographed works and hope to receive favor after I die. I'm not required maim and kill people.

Jesus Christ forgave my sin and filled me with His Spirit. I am “guided into all truth;” I will never hunger for spiritual fulfillment again. I’m not just complete in Christ; I am a new man in Christ.

READ: John 6:31-35 (KJV)

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

## **CHAPTER 61: THIS IS THE DAY OF DECISION**

It's easy to claim to be a Christian, it's another thing to stand committed to being obedient to God's word.

If we are true born-again Christians, committed to being obedient to the Word of God, then we will love truth and righteousness. It's also true that we will hate that which God hates, i.e., sin.

We cannot claim to love Christ and rationalize there is such a thing as acceptable sin or truth outside of God's word. Sin is never acceptable, especially as a lifestyle in our lives. Christ died for our sins, and He died because God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him would not perish but would have everlasting life. (See: John 3:16 KJV) But we must not be deceived; God doesn't play games, nor does He rationalize sin. The wages of sin are death. (See: Romans 6:23 KJV)

As was discussed during our Thursday midweek Bible study at church, Christians must realize that we stand at a point in time that demands a decision. We will either follow Christ and His word, or we will turn away and make peace with sin.

We cannot invite sin into our homes and think that there won't be ramifications that hurt our families and destroy our witness.

Sinful behavior is being promoted as normal. We are told that in order to show we love one another, we must approve of sinful behavior and lifestyles. We cannot turn on the radio or television nor open a magazine without having reprobate sinful behavior being thrown in our faces.

We cannot close our eyes to the proliferation of sin, nor can we approve of it out of some false idea that we're showing the love of Christ by making peace with sin. God isn't a man who can be persuaded to justify sin. God loves the sinner but He hates the sin.

Today is the day of decision. As sinful behavior and the abandonment of God increases, so too must we realize the day of Christ's return draws nearer.

We're not deemed righteous before God because we declare ourselves same. We're deemed righteous before God when we have been born again, washed in the blood of Christ and make being obedient to His word the goal of our life.

READ: Romans 13:11-14 (KJV)

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

## **CHAPTER 62: BILLBOARDS FOR SIN**

Name-brand designer sports clothing, sneakers and eyewear, even if they are just good knockoffs, are important in most social settings our children face today. It is important for them to have the name-brand sneakers and warmup clothing, etc. It is important for them to say they shop at the right store in the mall.

Parents are only too happy to spend money on such things, even to the point of some parents telling me how bad they feel because they cannot provide their children with the “right” sneakers.

It's through the alliance by parents to placing high value upon name-brand items, that children are first educated that the right sneakers, sunglasses, jeans, organizations and/or cellular phones are more important than obeying God. Organizations such as the Girl Scouts are advocates of abortion and lesbianism; the Boy Scouts have embraced homosexuality. And yet many parents unwittingly and/or stubbornly sacrifice their children to these evil gods. Churches elevate the selling of Girl Scout cookies within the church to the level of mission outreach.

As parents, we have an obligation before God to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. We have an obligation to teach our children that there are absolutes. We have an obligation to live out the example of willingness to honor and obey God in all things. But first and foremost, we have an obligation before God to teach and example that nothing and no one comes before God.

We marvel at Daniel's willingness to go into the lion's den rather than dishonor God by adhering to the anti-God dictate of Darius the king. But specific to that point, Daniel had witnessed his companions: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego willing to go into



the fiery furnace rather than bow before an idol. And together they would all have been aware that Joseph went to prison rather than commit sexual sin with Potiphar's wife, to mention but a few. I'm sure that Mordecai and Esther would have been aware of the stance against sinful/worldly conformity that Daniel took. They were examples to one another that reinforced putting God first in extraordinary circumstances when adopting the lifestyle of the world would have been the popular and safe thing to do.

We as parents today must be Godly watchers on the walls of our homes and of the minds and character of the minds of our children. Sadly, for our children, many well-meaning but foolish Christians allow their children to decide what they cannot live without. Even more egregious is the fact that many well-meaning Christian parents reinforce lust of the eyes and the flesh because they see nothing wrong with making their children walking billboards that promote tolerance for those things which God hates.

Stores such as Target, companies such as Nike and Under Armour are a must in the minds and social strata of many, many Christian homes. But Target proudly supports the attack on family by homosexuals and places our family members at risk by endorsing

men in the same bathroom with our wives, mothers and daughters. Target boasts their promotion of clothing specific to homosexuality. Nike supports a person who promotes hatred and dissension, all based upon lies about skin color. Under Armour has just launched an aggressive ad campaign promoting transgenderism and homosexuality in athletes.

When we shop at stores like Target and wear products with the names of companies on them that support sinful lifestyles, we are saying we support what those stores and companies promote.

As parents, we have an obligation before God to do more than just pray for our children, we have an obligation to live what we pray. If we do not, we are living a lie, because we are saying it is okay to embrace sin if it is by wearing the right products, shopping at the right stores and joining the right clubs.

READ: 2 Corinthians 6:15-18 (KJV)

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God

hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

## **CHAPTER 63: BORN AGAIN IS NOT ENOUGH**

Roughly two years after I accepted Christ as my Savior, I had the idea to write a book entitled, *“Born Again Is Not Enough.”* To date, of the several books I have written, it has not been one of them.

As part of my personal study of Scripture, I’ve recently started the Second Epistle of Peter. The Apostle Peter wrote his Second Epistle to all believers. (See: 2 Peter 1:2 KJV) I do believe that Peter wrote the Epistle, contrary to what some naysayers wrongly argue. His purpose was to remind Christians to grow in faith and to be aware of false teachers.

In verse three of the Epistle, Peter tells believers: *“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” (KJV)*

But, in the verses following verse three, Peter tells believers that the “knowledge” alone of God is not enough. Peter tells believers that we’re to add to our faith with which we believed in Christ unto Salvation: *virtue, knowledge, temperance (self-control), patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity (love).*

I’ve read and studied 2 Peter many times since I’ve been saved and I’ve preached on it numerous times as well. But this time, the Holy Spirit impressed upon me that indeed, being born again isn’t enough.

Being “born again” means we have accepted Christ as our Savior and by so doing, we are saved from eternal separation from God, spending eternity in torment and suffering of hell. If we don’t add these seven things to our Christian life, we will be weak, ineffectual and/or carnal Christians. We may not completely behave like the unsaved, but there won’t be much discernible difference between us and the unsaved.

There is a difference between just being saved and God's divine power that hath *"given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness."* We are to increase, i.e., grow in our walk and knowledge of God. The word translated *"knowledge"* in 2 Peter 1:2 (KJV) is the word *epiginosis* in the Koine Greek, which means *"super knowledge or mature knowledge."*

Being *"born again"* is the only way to spend eternity in the presence of our Lord, but God wants us to be more than saved people waiting out our time before the second coming of Christ. God wants us to live godly lives in service to Him. We can only do that if we add what I have coined *"the seven essential additives"* to our knowledge of Him. Peter tells us we're assured by God, that if they abound in us: *"...they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (See: 2 Peter 1:8 KJV)

READ: 2 Peter 1:1-12 (KJV)

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

## **CHAPTER 64: REVERENCE FOR GOD BEGINS WITH HIS NAME**

In Matthew 6:9-13, we read the *“Lord’s Prayer.”* Verse nine reads: *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”* (KJV) But have you ever reflected upon what it means to call God’s name *“Hallowed?”*

Strong’s Bible Dictionary says the assignation “Hallowed” is: *“From hagios; to make holy, i.e., purify or consecrate; to venerate.”* I think the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says it best: *“Hallowed be, i.e., “Be held in reverence; regarded and treated as holy.”*

*“The name of God is a Hebraism for God himself, his attributes, and his works.”* (Benson Commentary)

When we call upon the name of the Lord our God, we are to remember to “Whom” it is we are speaking. We are speaking to the Creator of heaven and earth. We are speaking to “Him” who holds “existence” in His hand, and we aren’t to take that lightly or casually.

It is equally important to remember “Whom” it is we’re referencing when we start telling jokes about God and/or using His name as a careless exclamation of shock, anger, etc.

God’s name is absolutely and objectively “holy in itself.” When we pray, saying “Hallowed be they name,” we must recognize God is above all and that He has no equals and no peers, and we must speak to Him as such.

God is not the “big guy upstairs” and His name most certainly is not the prefix to “damn.”

If we are to have our prayers answered, we must remember to whom it is we are speaking. God’s name is not to be disrespected, and yet even Christians mouth His name in prayer with no thought or consideration whatsoever for Whom it is we are speaking to.



Sadly, many people who claim to be Christians show less concern for how they reference God than they do for their front lawn or new car. They speak to God as if they were ordering a pizza with extra toppings or as if they were talking to a drinking buddy.

It should be obvious to us that there is a significant reason Jesus said, *“Hallowed be thy name”* immediately after he said, *“Our Father.”* It is because God is to be preeminent and honored above all else. It is because we are talking to God.

And, how a person talks to God and about God – will tell us not only how much they respect God, but also to what extent they even believe in Him.

Read: Matthew 6:9-14 (KJV)

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

## **CHAPTER 65: ‘MORAL RELATIVISM’ IS MORAL DECAY**

Satan has not stopped trying to convince man that he can be like God, knowing good from evil as defined by sinful man, since Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden. And there is no greater evidence of this than “moral relativism.”

Most Christians are well-familiar with the words “moral relativism,” but how many truly know what the words actually mean and how this satanic heterodoxy has infiltrated Christendom, the Church and the home?

“Moral relativism” simplistically defined is: *The belief that ethical standards, morality, and positions of right or wrong are subject to a person’s individual choice. We can all decide what is right or wrong for ourselves.*

This belief started with Satan himself, which is why he was cast out of Heaven and why under his influence man was cast out of the Garden of Eden.

Billy Graham once said that in the midst of all the changes taking place, “the nature of God never changes.”

“Moral relativism” says there are no absolutes, and that right and wrong are positions of choice based upon each person’s definition of same. It also holds that the person’s view of right/wrong is ever-evolving and the more enlightened the individual becomes, the more they accept what is biblically wicked as being morally right.

The thing those embracing same overlook is that God hasn’t changed to adapt Himself to this generation. Moral relativists ignore that God said once and for all time that: *“For I am the Lord, I change not...”* (Malachi 3:6 KJV)

God’s holiness and righteousness is unchanging; He hasn’t redefined morality to fit immoral lifestyles. He hasn’t redefined lying to allow for instances when telling lies is acceptable. He hasn’t redefined the biblical role of men and women. He hasn’t redefined the Ten Commandments, the fact that we are under Grace notwithstanding. He hasn’t redefined who should be leaders in the church and He hasn’t redefined what is biblical truth.

But “moral relativism” does all of the aforementioned and more. We become our own god, deciding what we want to be right or wrong. We either do not believe in sin, or we marginalize it by subscribing to the lie that sin is acceptable as long as what we do doesn’t hurt anyone, as long as what we do is between consenting persons, as long as what we do is because we’re in love—and so on. In other words, as long as we have a morally-acceptable reason (in our eyes) for doing what we do, it matters not what the Word of God says.

How many who say they are Christians make “morally relative” decisions for embracing immoral and ungodly behavior in the world today because we don’t want to appear different? How many Christians embrace the sexual immorality of their children, family members and/or friends because they do not want to suffer their anger and/or disapproval?

God hasn’t changed the fact that Judgment Day is coming. Neither has God changed His way of salvation.

Christ spoke more about hell than He did heaven. That’s because God loves and wants none of us to perish. But on that day of judgment moral relativism

cannot save us. We are not forgiven our sins based upon our definition of what sin is, nor can we enter into heaven based on our belief that we are good or we're not as bad as others.

God hasn't changed to adapt to the millennia of moral decline. It is we who must change. God loves us, but we must receive Him, and that only comes through Jesus Christ.

READ: Malachi 3:1-7 King James Version (KJV)

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

## **CHAPTER 66: WHEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS REJECT CHRIST**

We all have family and friends who aren't saved. They've seen the difference Christ has made in our lives after we've accepted Him as our Savior. We've shared the message of salvation with them. We've spoken to them about the fate that awaits those who

aren't saved when they die. We love them and pray for them, yet they steadfastly refuse to accept Christ. They either don't see their need to accept Christ or they refuse Him because the Enemy has hardened their heart. Even worse are our family/friends who think they're saved and they aren't.

It's painful for us to know what awaits them, but ultimately they've made the decision to reject Christ. That said, we cannot allow their rejection of Christ to lure us away from God.

Thinking about family and close friends who are not saved reminds me of Noah. It took Noah between 100 and 120 years to build the Ark. During that time, his friends and the people around him witnessed the construction of a vessel unlike any they had ever seen. That sanctuary from the wrath of God was being prepared in front of their faces, but their defiant disobedience prevented them from repenting and turning to God.

In the end, only Noah and his family along with a male and female of each animal were spared God's wrath.

Like Noah and his family, we must be resolute in our obedience to our Lord and that begins with accepting His only plan of Salvation. It isn't easy watching people we know and love die without Christ. But we cannot overlook the fact that God has given us free will, which means that He will not force us or coerce us into accepting His only plan of Salvation.

That doesn't mean we stop praying for them or stop loving them, but it does mean that we cannot force them to accept the Truth. Just as we have made the choice to accept Christ and live our lives in obedience to God, so too have they made their decision not to.

READ: Genesis 6:5-8 (KJV)

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.



## **CHAPTER 67: BEING RELIGIOUS DOESN'T MAKE US A CHRISTIAN**

There are many people who conflate what they regard as being religious and/or being spiritual with being a born-again Christian. By definition, being religious does not make one a Christian any more than being spiritual makes or means that a person is truly born-again.

When people identify someone as being religious, they're saying that person exhibits an outward behavior that those enamored by same define as their idea of "something" representative of what they define and identify as religious.

Let me put what I am saying in context: The Pharisees and scribes were outwardly deeply religious and Jesus was unimpressed to the point of saying: *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."* (Matthew 23:27 KJV) Now, I ask you: Does that sound to you as if Jesus is impressed with people being religious?

Jesus had much the same to say about the outward appearance of being righteous (i.e., spiritual). He said: *“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”* (Matthew 23:28 KJV) In fact, Jesus said the following regarding the outward appearance of piety: *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 5:20 KJV)

The world at large (i.e., those who are unsaved) views certain outward “acts and displays of behavior” as being consistent with what they define as being religious and/or spiritual.

But Christ said: *“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3 KJV) Simply stated, Jesus means that unless you are saved, one doesn’t have a chance of going to heaven when they die, regardless of how religious and/or spiritual a person behaves or is believed to be.

The unsaved and the carnal world view an outward set of behaviors, as meeting their idea of religious

and/or spiritual – but that doesn't meet God's definition of being born-again. And in the final analysis, the definition that counts is God's and, as the Psalmist tells us in Psalms 119:89, God's word is "*settled in heaven*" forever and it is unchangeable.

READ: Matthew 23:1-5 (KJV)

1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men:

## **CHAPTER 68: CHRISTIANS WOULD RATHER COMPROMISE THAN OBEY GOD**

There is one inescapable reality about God that it seems many people who identify themselves as Christians either fail to realize or refuse to accept. That reality is: God does not compromise. This means that He does not say one thing and then make exceptions that are contrary to His Word and perfect righteousness.

Sadly, many of those who say they are Christians exchange the absolute Word of God for compromise with the world without a moment's thought.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused under threat of death to bow and worship the golden idol as King Nebuchadnezzar had decreed. (See: Daniel 3:1-30 KJV) They refused to worship the King's idol under threat of being burned alive in a fiery furnace.

Daniel refused to pray to the king and to the king only, as had been decreed with the penalty of being fed to the lions or not doing so. (See: Daniel 6:4-28 KJV)

In Daniel 1:8 (KJV), we read the record of Daniel making the decision not to defile himself with the food and drinks of pagan blasphemers as the king had directed.

In each of these instances and many more throughout Scripture, we're witness to men and women obeying God's word at the risk of personal harm and even death. They didn't make excuses for comprising, nor did they blindly disobey God.

We aren't under threat of death for not obeying the wicked and sinful ways of this world, yet without a moment's pause for thought, Christians today compromise God's absolute Word.

Christians buy and proudly wear the clothing of companies that openly support the very debauchery that God has condemned. By example we tell our children that having clothing with certain logos on it and paying exorbitant amounts of money for sneakers advertised by wickedly irresponsible athletes who epitomize that which God condemns is okay. Yet, these same Christians are the first not to tithe and the last to contribute/donate to Christian ministries.

Christians and even church groups spend money on vacations to theme parks that proudly boast of celebrating depravity and debauchery. Christians watch television programming that is nothing more than soft pornography. They ingest hours upon hours

of television and movies that depict unruly, disrespectful children and dysfunctional marriages and families. They laugh and talk about these things at work and even in the church. But many of these very same Christians would not think about sharing what they had read in their Bibles or discussing what they were studying in the church Bible study, and that assumes they read their Bibles and their church has a Bible.

I watched as churchgoing Christians insisted their children celebrate Halloween. The worst part of this being that many parents did so for their pleasure, not because their young child demanded it. I know of churches that claim not to celebrate Halloween. They give it another name and celebrate that instead, minus devils, goblins and superhero outfits. My argument is: Why emulate it at all? Calling Halloween another name and changing activities is like painting polka dots on a bicycle and calling it a cow.

We are either Christians or we are not. We are either obedient to God's absolutes or we are not. Compromising God's Word to fit into a world that curses God and celebrates the wickedness and evil that Christ died on the Cross to redeem us from, is practicing disobedience.

God didn't tell us to fit in; God told us to stand out as examples of obedience to Him. We cannot compromise the absolutes of God and truthfully claim to love Him.

READ: Joshua 24:15-17;17-24 (KJV)

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods;

17 For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

17 For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we

went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God.

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20 If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord.

22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel.

24 And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.



## **CHAPTER 69: IF YOU COULD HAVE HEAVEN**

The Reverend Francis Chan once said “A question for our generation and for every generation is this: If you could have heaven with no sickness and with all the friends you ever had on earth and with all the food you ever liked and all the leisure activities you’d ever enjoyed and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven if Christ was not there?”

What the question asks is: Are we who profess to be born again Christians really in love with Jesus, or are we in love with what we think (i.e., believe) we will derive from being saved?

This is a penetrating question that I honestly believe few Christians in America have ever asked themselves, or for that matter ever even considered.

How we answer this question will indicate the truth of how we view Christ. How we answer this question will tell us what type of relationship we have with Jesus. How we answer this question will tell us if we are truly in love with Jesus.

If we are serious about our relationship with Jesus Christ, this question will make many of us examine our lives under the microscope of the Holy Spirit.

Depending upon how we answer this question, it can also tell us if we're in fact truly saved, or if we're living a life in which we are deceiving ourselves.

You see, to fall in love with Jesus, we must first know Him—not superficially, but deeply and personally—and we cannot do that unless we are committed to having Him grow to be the longing of our hearts and having Him the basis for our hopes and the fulfillment of the affections of our heart.

READ: Philippians 3:7-10 (KJV)

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is

through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

## **CHAPTER 70: A FEW QUESTIONS FOR CHRISTIANS**

Why is it okay to arrive late for church every Sunday, but not okay to arrive at our place of employment late? Shouldn't we show God the same commitment for being on time that we show sinful man?

Why do people who say they are Christians think it is no big deal to miss church for a sporting event, because their daughters have to sell Girl scout cookies or their sons have a Boy Scout commitment? And, what does that tell our children about the importance of church?

Why do people place a higher premium on spending extra time in bed than they do coming to church early to gather with the pastor and other church members around the altar for prayer before service starts?

Why do we not faithfully tithe? Do we not believe God will supply (i.e., meet) our every need if we put Him first—especially with our tithing?

Why do we see people who profess to be Christians walking into church with dour, defiant and angry expressions on their faces expressions they manage to maintain through the entire service?

Do we go to church because we think it is “the thing to do,” allowing that we do not have something else we want to do that morning, or do we go to church to worship God, to receive sound biblical preaching/teaching and embrace the fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ?

Why is it not okay to go to work without the things we need to perform the job we are paid to do, but it is okay to come to church without our Bibles?

These are simple questions, but how we answer them will tell us a lot about our true reverence for God.

READ: Psalm 100 (KJV)

1 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

2 Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

## **CHAPTER 71: BATHING IN THE WASH OF FORGIVENESS**

I bathe in the warm wash of God's forgiveness and restoration every day. I know what it is to be forgiven. I also know what it is to backslide. But most importantly, I know what it is to be forgiven and restored.

I may have fallen, but God did not abandon me to myself. What do I mean – God did not abandon me to myself? Simply put, it means the keeper of my soul reminded me of what I was doing, why it was sin and what it would ultimately mean if I didn't heed the

correction of His Holy Spirit before I fell victim to being swallowed up by sin.

We may stumble; we may even fall, but praise God we have a deliverer. We have a redeemer. And most important of all, we have a Heavenly Father who not only wants to forgive us our sin – He waits to forgive us our sin and heal our broken lives.

Falling and/or backsliding doesn't keep us from God. Being blinded by self-righteousness, defiance and/or willful disobedience keeps us from God. It is the hardening of our hearts and the refusal to turn back to God that will and does keep us from God.

Today if you are a born-again child of God who has fallen and/or backslidden, God's warm wash of forgiveness through Jesus Christ is available to you. In fact, God's warm wash of restoration awaits us. We do not have to do repetitive chants or cut our skin or engage in some other sort of extreme behavior as a show of repentance. We just have to turn to God our Father and say: *Father, I have sinned. I have allowed myself to be blinded by Satan, the prince of this world, and I have fallen. Father, I ask in Jesus' name that you forgive me my sin, defiance and disobedience that*

*led me to this state and restore me to a right relationship with you through Christ Jesus.*

My friends, falling or backsliding isn't the end. Making peace with our sin, defiance and disobedience is the pathway to the end. Turn back to Jesus. There may be inescapable ramifications for what we have done, but there will be unconditional love and restoration that cannot be denied or taken away. I can tell you that God does not hold our sinful ways against us when we in the name of Jesus: confess, repent and return.

READ: Luke 15:11-24 (KJV)

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:



23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

## **CHAPTER 72: THE ‘LAW OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION’**

Theologian Charles Ellicott tells us there is a great law of Divine retribution, which is: *“The punishment for sin being often a greater facility in sinning, indifference to God becoming enmity and forgetfulness of duty or truth becoming violent recoil from both.”*

The noted Methodist theologian, Joseph Benson, who John Wesley personally appointed as classical master at Kingswood School, explained the great law of Divine retribution in referencing Hosea 8:7, *“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (KJV)*, as: *“A proverbial expression, to signify, that as men’s works are, so must their reward be.”*

I mention this to make the following point: Biblical ignorance, and worst still, biblical illiteracy, leads

those who profess to know Christ as Savior to despair, doubt and to be filled with fear.

How often do we see and hear those who profess to be Christians wringing their hands and espousing jeremiads of despair and fear because the world is increasingly evil and wicked?

Those embracing such feelings as if they were symbols of piety don't understand the reality of Divine retribution.

It's important that we realize and understand that sin begets sin and more sin begets the demonic thirst to indulge in more sin (i.e., repeated wicked acts become unquenchable thirsts). This is graphically spelled out in Romans 1:21-24 (KJV).

The Apostle Paul tells us: "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which they have done, and there is no respect of persons." (Colossians 3:25 KJV)

The secret that Satan blinds us to is: Sin blinds us to sin—and the deeper we fall into sinful behavior and

sinful lifestyles, the more we crave them. This is an important factor that is often overlooked in the Apostle Paul's witness to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:19-20 (KJV). In delivering Hymenaeus and Alexander (the coppersmith) unto Satan for the purpose of learning not to blaspheme, Paul was in effect giving them a purview of their end (i.e., "Divine retribution") if they did not repent and turn back to God.

We do well to understand that sin is like a fire spread by strong winds. The sin of a few often results in the sin of many exponentially. If you are experiencing hardships that it seems you cannot get away from, it might be God trying to get your attention to prevent you from receiving reward based upon willful disobedience and defiance.

READ: 1 Corinthians 2:12-16 (KJV)

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

## **CHAPTER 73: HAVE YOU ANSWERED YOUR INVITATION?**

Suppose you were struggling to make a living and your personal debt had increased far beyond anything you could ever hope to pay off? Additionally, your personal debt was literally multiplying with every passing day.

Then you receive an invitation from a person you have heard of but never met. The gentleman's invitation is very simple; it says: "You've never met me, but enclosed is my contact information; call me anytime day or night no matter the hour, I will personally take care of all your debt."

The question is: “Would you ignore this invitation if the same were to happen to you?”

That’s the question. The answer is: Every day, people with debt they can never pay off themselves receive that very invitation and they ignore it or refuse it for varying reasons. You may have received the invitation yourself, even today.

The debt that we as individuals can never pay off ourselves is our sin debt. The man you have heard of but never met is Christ Jesus. We’ve heard of Him, but until we believe that He died upon the cross as the only sacrifice (i.e., payment) acceptable to God to satisfy our sin debt, and accept His invitation—we are personally responsible for a debt we can never reconcile.

Many of us have accepted His generous invitation, to have our sin debt paid in full, so we can spend all of eternity with Him in heaven when we die. Not to mention the freedom we can experience from our sin-burdened lives once we have accepted Him as Savior.

Christ's invitation to receive His gift of salvation for the forgiveness of our sins is available to us only while we are alive. It can only be received by our personally accepting His invitation. It cannot be done through others.

READ: Romans 10:8-13 (KJV)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

## **CHAPTER 74: FORGIVING AND NOT FORGETTING**

Have you ever heard someone who professes to be a Christian say that they have forgiven someone for something, but that they will never forget? I certainly have.

Let me point out that this isn't being Christlike. I don't have a statistic, but in my life as a Christian, I've seen many relationships and homes destroyed—not because a particular offense wasn't said to be forgiven—but because it was never put behind.

It sounds counter-intuitive to say, but genuine forgiveness includes putting an offense(s) behind us, and in that respect forgetting it.

Spouses go through marital counseling to overcome a myriad of issues, but often the scars are never fully healed because the offended spouse believes they are unable to forget. My position is this: God forgave me and placed my offense behind Him to recall it no more and please don't tell me "that's different."

Dredging up the past and reminding someone about something they have done isn't Godly forgiveness, it's Satan's way of not forgiving (i.e., destroying relationships).

I've seen many incredibly strong and loving Christian relationships, and the one thing they all have in common is that they take being like Jesus seriously. And being like Jesus means not just forgiving, but putting behind (i.e., forgetting).

READ: Isaiah 38:15-17 (KJV)

15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

16 O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.



## **CHAPTER 75: CHRIST IS NOT MY CO-PILOT, HE IS MY GOD**

As I was driving recently, I glanced at my bible in the front seat next to me and was reminded of the old saying and bumper sticker: “Jesus Is My Co-Pilot.” While not seen on automobile bumpers as much today, the saying itself is practiced in the daily lives of many who profess themselves to be Christians.

The point I want to make is this: If Christ is our co-pilot, it is we who are in control of the vehicle called our lives, and He is along to attend to the ancillary things. That’s what co-pilots do.

In our minds, we may think and believe that God is in control of our lives, but the truth is that every part of our lives in which we have not given over to Him (i.e., Christ), we are retaining control. Often we do this out of a stubborn unawareness. That is why we must every day pray and ask God that He lead us, guide us and keep us in every facet of our lives through that day. That is why we must ask God to place in our hearts the desire to let Him be Lord of all of our life.

I tell you from the very core of my being that I personally want nothing more and cannot think of

another way I would rather live, than having Christ my Savior in control of all of my life. If I have surrendered every area of my life to Him, I am also trusting Him to protect me and lead me in the path of obedience, righteousness, safety/security and the desire to serve Him.

The question becomes: “Do we trust God enough to give ourselves to Him completely?” I can think of no way I would rather live than knowing that my precious, loving Heavenly Father is in control of my life. I can tell you that the best days of my life before I accepted Christ as my Savior and committed my life to Him were still a godless mess. I knew nothing of the peace and security that I experience in my life today.

READ: Psalm 121 (KJV)

1. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
2. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.
3. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
4. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
6. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

## **Mychal Massie's Biography and Profile**

Mychal Massie is an ordained minister who spent 13 years in full-time Christian Ministry. Today he serves as founder and Chairman of the Racial Policy Center (RPC), a think tank he officially founded in September 2015. RPC advocates for a colorblind society. He was founder and president of the non-profit "In His Name Ministries." He is the former National Chairman of a conservative Capitol Hill think tank and a former member of the think tank National Center for Public Policy Research. In his official capacity with this free-market, public-policy think tank, he has spoken at the U.S. Capitol, CPAC, participated in numerous press conferences on Capitol Hill, the National Press Club and testified in private session before the Chairman of the House Committee on Resources concerning property rights pursuant to the "Endangered Species Act."

Mychal's blog, "The Daily Rant" (<https://mychal-massie.com>) enjoys a widely popular and diverse audience of truth seekers worldwide.

He has been a keynote speaker at colleges and universities nationwide, at Tea Party Rallies, as well as rallies supporting our troops, conservative

presidents, and conservative causes across the country. He is an unapologetic supporter of our right to own and carry firearms.

Mychal is also a nationally syndicated op-ed columnist and former host of the top-rated talk show on the Righttalk Radio Network – “Straight Talk with Mychal Massie.” He is a self-employed business owner of 40-plus years. Mychal is an inspirational / motivational speaker and a regularly featured guest on TV / talk radio programs. The online version of his column is carried by WorldNetDaily.com and enjoys a loyal, supportive readership around the world.

Mychal has appeared on every major news-talk television and radio program in the U.S., as well as top international news programs. He is recognized as one of America’s most articulate, passionate, and outspoken conservative voices. America’s most popular program hosts and most listened-to programming nationwide quote Mychal.

Mychal successfully debated President Bill Clinton's advisor on Civil Rights, Dr. Ronald Takaki, at University of California Santa Barbara. Mychal argued against skin-color based affirmative action.

He has successfully debated Congressman Melvin Watt, D-NC, Geraldo Rivera, Rev. Al Sharpton and Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. He appeared in the documentary “What Black Men Think.” He also made an appearance in the independent motion picture “Life Fine Tuned.” His positions on a colorblind society, civil rights, education reform, self-sufficiency, individual responsibility, family, the judiciary, abortion, limited government, reparations, homeland security, immigration and war (both past and present) are forthright and unyielding.

Mychal is a provocative outside-the-box visionary thinker whom Al Sharpton has referred to as “fearless.”

In February 2011, Mychal hosted an “empty chair debate” at the National Press Club, after Al Sharpton, Marc Morial President of the National Urban League, and former Congressman and co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Walter Fauntroy refused to debate him, three against him on the merits of their accusations of racism directed at Glenn Beck’s Restoring Honor Rally.

While the recipient of numerous awards, he is most proud of the awards received August 9, 2006. At that time the Marine Corps League – Bob Swanson Det. 1102 awarded Mychal with Honorary Membership in the United States Marine Corps League, the United States Marine Corps League Distinguished Citizen Award, the United States Marine Corps League Distinguished Citizen Award Medal, and the United States Marine Corps League Certificate of Appreciation, for, among other things, his exemplary service in the interests of the United States Marine Corps and The Marine Corps League.

He is the recipient of the prestigious Conservative Man of the Year Award for 2008, presented by the New York State Conservative Party.

In December 2011, he was recognized as number 13 on the list of the top 20 most influential black Republicans in the nation, an award that he chided the presenters about regarding why it was necessary for him to be recognized as a color-coded Republican. He has since that time refused to accept any award based on skin color.

In addition to having hosted his own top-rated talk show, Mychal has also filled in as a guest host on some of the top-rated national and regional talk-shows.

Mychal holds degrees in sociology, English Bible and Theology, and pastoral counseling. He began his writing career in 1999 shortly after becoming an editorial board member on a suburban Philadelphia Gannett owned newspaper. He wrote the foreword for the re-release of Booker T. Washington's autobiography *Up From Slavery* (released by Pelican Publishing spring 2010). Mychal also wrote the forward to *Social Injustice: Exposing The False Gospel Of The Social Justice Movement* for The GK Publishing Company (2019).

Mychal is the author of *Random Rants: I Was Right Then And I Am Right Now, Blacks Are Victims: Because They're Told They Are*, and *Alone With Jesus*. His latest work is *I Feel The Presence OF The Lord*.



