

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Fall 2001 Camp Meeting Report

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.
POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor
83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055

Email: pastor@church-of-god-online.com
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461
Fax: 740-344-4737
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21; Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John. 17:11)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

CONTENTS

Choosing Safety in Christ	3
The City, the Church	7
Especially for Young People	14
The Secret to Living a Victorious Life	16
How Many Loaves Have Ye	22
Radio Log	26
Fall 2001 Camp Meeting Tape List	27

Website: www.godsacres.org

Vol. 31 October 2001 No. 10

"Lord, it is good for us to be here" These words of the Apostle Peter recorded in Matthew 17:4 well describe the sentiments of those who recently attended the Fall Camp Meeting here at God's Acres. Just as in the Scripture text where Peter was one of the "eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16), we were truly assembled together in "the holy mount" (2 Peter 1:17). As Peter, James, and John were in that mount and received a divine "vision" (Matthew 17:9), so we were privileged to receive a vision of Truth and to "hear . . . him" (Matthew 17:5). Every service offered an opportunity to see "no man, save Jesus only" (Matthew 17:8).

The meeting was well attended with many saints from throughout the states as well as brethren from Kenya, Nigeria, and the Republic of Honduras.

The first message of the camp meeting was a thought provoking one entitled "Isn't One Religion as Good as Another?" by Brother David Stegmeier from Canby, Oregon. Brother Jeremy Hupp preached a challenging message Monday afternoon entitled "They Are Fishers of Men." Following this rousing message, the altars were filled with saints desiring to be more effective in the area of personal evangelism.

Tuesday morning Brother C. H. Dickerson delivered an encouraging message from Romans 8:31, posing the question, "Who Can Stand Against the Saints?" The Spirit of God greatly inspired the saints through this service.

With the Tuesday night service, Brother Esau Brooks began as the evening evangelist. He delivered some very sobering messages concerning the times such as, "How Is the Faithful City Become a Harlot!" The Holy Spirit was faithful to reveal the application of these biblical words to the current day.

Wednesday afternoon we received a mission report from some brethren from the foreign fields where we labor. Brother Joseph Mbui gave an update of the work in Kenya, and Brother Augustus Edet spoke about the work of God in Nigeria.

A couple of afternoons Brother Earl R. Borders dealt with some prophetic and revelation truths to refute the false teachings of dispensationalism. Many good brethren filled the pulpit throughout the meeting and brought anointed messages of Truth.

Thursday night the Lord moved into the service in such a real way that the entire service was a praise service. Saints rejoiced, shouted, and praised God. A number of inspirational testimonies were given, and the church was greatly edified and blessed. Saturday afternoon the children and the young people conducted the song portion of the service. Afterward numerous candidates followed the Lord in the ordinance of water baptism.

Throughout the course of the meeting, many souls found a real experience of salvation. Testimonies were often of healing received during the meeting. Others testified to having "the eyes of . . . understanding . . . enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). Is it any wonder that two brethren said from the pulpit, "Lord, it is good for us to be here"?

If you were unable to attend this blessed meeting, we heartily encourage you to secure the tapes. We are certain that if you desire Truth, the messages will richly bless you. We trust that you will make plans now to attend our next camp meeting, which will be held December 26-30.

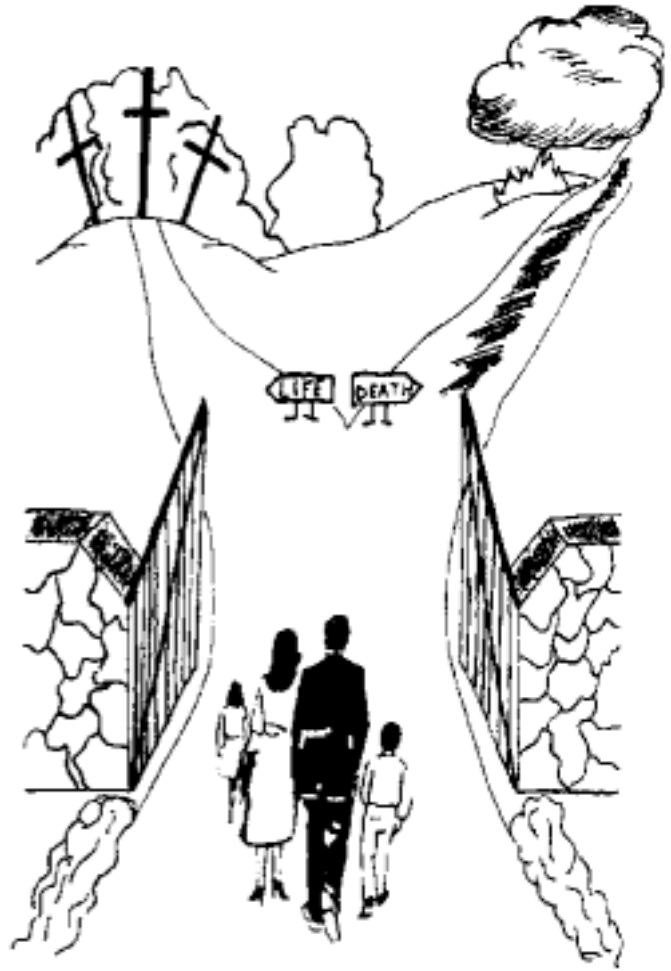
2002 Camp Meeting Dates

June 16-22
August 4-11
December 26-29

Ezekiel 18:32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

2 Peter 3:9 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.

Choosing Safety in Christ



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Cities of Refuge

We can see that these two verses of Scripture express the real attitude of God toward sinful man. God does not wish that any should perish, and He is long suffering. The Prophet Ezekiel wrote, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." The word *pleasure* in that Scripture means "desire." God has no desire to see anyone die lost. Peter said the Lord is long suffering, which means that He has long patience toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Often God gets blamed for what

some call an untimely death, but He is fair and just to all. He gives all people ample time to make their calling and election sure. A man or a woman can speed up his or her time for departing from this earth. For example, if you were to drive a vehicle down a highway at the speed of 100 miles per hour or if you were to go out and get intoxicated and then get behind the wheel of an automobile, you would be tempting the Lord.

In the Old Testament God had cities of refuge. He was not willing that any should perish, even under the Old Law. There were six cities, and they were at convenient

locations throughout the land. One could flee into one of those cities if he had committed involuntary manslaughter. As long as the death was not premeditated but was an accident, he was permitted to dwell in a city of refuge. The reason that one was permitted to go into a city of refuge was that the next of kin to the one who was slain was obligated by the Law to be an avenger of the blood. Therefore, the offender had a safe place to flee if he had accidentally killed someone.

Of those six cities of refuge, three were on the west side of Jordan, and three were on the east side. The three cities on the west side were

called Kadesh, Shechem, and Hebron. On the east side they were called Golan, Ramoth-Gilead, and Bezer. Each of those names had a meaning in the Hebrew: Bezer means "our salvation," Kadesh means "our sanctuary," Shechem means "our strength," Hebron means "our fellowship," Ramoth means "our elevation, and Golan means "our joy.

If the slayer fled into one of those cities, he was safe from the avenger of blood. Upon his arrival at a city of refuge, if, in the judgment of the city elders, they felt that the slaying was an accident, the man was allowed to remain there safely from the avenger until the death of the high priest.

Joshua 20:1-6 reads: "The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled."

Those cities were distributed on both sides of the Jordan River for easy access. God made it as easy as He could for those who needed to find refuge. If one was on the east side, he did not have to travel to the far west side. He could go to a city

close to him on the east side. Once a slayer was permitted to enter a city, he could not leave until the death of the high priest. If he chose to leave before that time, he was open prey for the avenger. He could not buy his way out or offer a ransom to the relatives of the deceased for the taking of life, even though it was accidental. The taking of life imposed a penalty that could not be paid by any other means short of death. The death of the high priest, though it was by natural causes, served to pay the debt. One man died in place of another. Once the high priest died, the man was free to leave the city and go to his home without fear of the avenger of the blood. He did not have to worry about meeting the avenger along the way.

The Antitype of Old Testament Mercy

Those six cities were taken from the forty-eight cities that were given to the tribe of the Levites for an inheritance. Numbers 35:6-7 states: "And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs." What do those verses mean? What do they have to do with us today? Those cities of refuge represent a perfect type of the refuge that we find in Jesus Christ. All of that pointed to a better day, a greater covenant, a better sacrifice, a greater Savior—Jesus Christ.

There were six cities in the Old Testament, and the seventh city (seven signifies completeness) is found in Jesus Christ. There were six under the Old Law, but we have access to the seventh today. It is not just on the east and the west sides, but it is wherever you meet God's conditions. When you flee to the arms of Jesus Christ, the avenger, or

Satan, cannot touch you. Christ is all and more than what those cities were to those under the old Law.

All the names of those cities are made manifest in Jesus Christ. He is our salvation. The Psalmist cried out in Psalm 38:22, "Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation." He is our sanctuary, our holy place. Isaiah 57:15 says, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Christ is our strength. The Apostle Paul, when going through extreme adversity and seeking relief from the Lord, prayed three times, and he received an answer—that God gives sufficient grace to stand. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 we read: "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Christ is our fellowship. There is no fellowship without Christ. The only thing that you can have without Christ is friendship. To have fellowship, ones must be in Jesus Christ. We read in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Christ is our elevation. Ephesians 2:6 says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Christ also is our joy. Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, said in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Christ is the antitype of Old

Testament mercy found in the cities of refuge. Why were those cities taken out of the inheritance of the Levites? Why were they not taken out of the tribe of Dan, Gad, or Reuben? The Levites were the tribe that the priests were taken from, and the priests handled the Law.

We still need to hear the law. I am not necessarily talking about the Law of Moses. I am talking about the law under the new covenant. We still have a law. Everyone does not do his own thing; we have a government in the Church of God, and it is a government that God set up. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. God has ordained that we hear the law through preaching the Gospel. Away with the idea that people do not need a pastor. That is contrary to the Word of God. No one is spiritual enough or holy enough to be without a pastor. We each need to hear the law. God has ordained the preaching of the Gospel; that is how we are judged. The same was in the cities of refuge, according to the judgments that God handed down.

As long as the slayer stayed in a city of refuge, he was safe; the avenger could not touch him. The avenger could go to the elders of the city, but he could not go any further. The slayer was given a place right in the city, a place that God had ready for him. Can you see in this a type of what Christ has done for you and me in placing us in the body of Christ? There was safety in the cities of refuge, and there is safety in Jesus Christ. What those cities were to Israel of old, Christ is to you and me today. The avenger could not touch one as long as he stayed in the refuge that God had chosen.

Our High Priest

We have a High Priest who died on the Cross for us. Sinner friend, if you will believe God's Word and believe in Christ, you can go free and the avenger cannot harm you. Your debt will have been canceled,

enabling you to be free to go home and enjoy life. Also, you will not have to worry about the Judgment, for your sins will have gone on to the Judgment. Your sins will have been removed as far as the east is from the west, in the depths of the sea, never more to be remembered against you. The avenger cannot touch you. Why? Your High Priest, Jesus Christ, has canceled your debt. If you will believe God's Word, just as people believed the Law in the days of the Old Testament, then you will be free to go, the same as the slayer was in the Old Testament.

If the slayer refused to believe God's Word, he was open prey, and the Law backed up the avenger. On the other hand, if he believed the Law and fled to a city of refuge, the elders were right there to greet him and give him a place to stay. Had the avenger then come knocking, he could not have touched that one.

Coming over into the New Testament dispensation, if you will believe that Jesus Christ is your High Priest and that He died for you, you will find safety in Jesus Christ, and the avenger cannot touch your soul. You can be free, once the debt of sin has been canceled. The High Priest died for your sins, a debt that you could never pay, just as one could not buy his way out back then. He could not offer money to the family, even if the slaying was an accident. Likewise, we do not have enough money to redeem our brother. However, if one will believe God's Word, there is safety in Christ and the debt will be canceled.

Today some are working on a terrible debt to God that can only be canceled by the blood of Jesus Christ. Sinner friend, if you will believe, you will become a new creature. You can walk away from an altar of prayer with the debt of sin canceled. There is joy and strength in salvation. He is your sanctuary. He will lift you up to heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I thank God for the Word of God! Again, the avenger could not touch

the slayer as long as he stayed in the city of refuge; but remember, it had to be a refuge that God had chosen.

Living Carelessly

People have many false refuges today. Isaiah, Chapter 28, talks about those false refuges. There is no refuge in church joining. That is not in the Bible, so it cannot be a refuge. There is no refuge in merely being baptized by water. That is not in the Word of God, so it cannot be a refuge. There is no refuge in speaking some unknown tongue. The false Pentecostal movement is a million miles from Truth. If you will read the Bible, you will see that Pentecost is not a church; it was a day.

Some have made a refuge of longevity. The military has what they call "hash marks" on the sleeves of the uniforms. They are signs of longevity. I believe every hash mark represents four years of service. However, there is no longevity in the Church of God. All brothers and sisters are equal. Each person must be born again and walking in the light. There are no more genealogies. The Old Testament genealogies meant something, but all genealogies came to an end in Jesus Christ. It is not important who your biological father was, but what is important is whether you have been born again. We have a High Priest who died on the Cross for you and me. Hebrews 3:1 says, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Numbers 35:25 tells us that the high priest was to be anointed with oil. Peter said in Acts 10:38, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." I repeat, there is safety under the blood of Jesus Christ.

Today too many are careless concerning that safety. They are

careless with the blood of Jesus Christ. It is almost as if they think the blood will cover anything. Remember, just as with those Old Testament cities of refuge, one had to go into them before he was saved. If one came out and the high priest was still alive, the avenger had every right to take his life and avenge the blood of the slain one.

When Israel of old was to leave Egypt, the last plague was the death of the first born. Israel was to kill a lamb, sprinkle some of the blood upon the lintel and the sideposts, and when the destroyer passed through, wherever the blood was, in obedience to God's Word, the destroyer passed by. That lamb was a type of the Lamb slain for you and me. Faith in the blood of the Lamb will keep us from the destroyer and the avenger. The enemy of souls is an avenger. He is out to wreck, ruin, and destroy lives. He has done that in many cases where ones step out of the ark of safety in Jesus Christ. The Bible says in Psalm 8:2, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

How is your soul? Are you dwelling in safety? Is your soul under the protection of the blood or are you living carelessly? While you have been reading this message, many souls have gone into eternity with an old spirit of eat, drink, and be merry. That is the reason the Word of God says in the Book of Ecclesiastes that it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. Why is that? It is so that the living will lay it to heart. When you go to the house of mourning, one thing that goes through your mind is, "I am going to be there one day." That has a serious effect upon your soul. On the other hand, when you are at the house of feasting, you are at a house of happy times and there is very little concern about your soul. You may be thinking that you are going to live forever.

Now, you would probably pick the house of feasting rather than the house of mourning; nevertheless, God is concerned about your soul. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the High Priest who died for your sins to cancel your debt? If you believe that, you can go free. If you do not believe it, you still have a great debt to pay. If you do not pay here, you will pay in eternity. How is your soul's dwelling? Is it in safety or under the attack of the avenger? Surely the Lord desires that you dwell safely.

Turn From the Life of Sin

Friend, God wants you to be saved more than you want to be saved. The Bible says He does not take any pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Therefore, He is pleading with you to turn away from the life of sin and live. It is God's desire that you choose safety in Jesus Christ. Now, you don't have to believe the message, any more than the slayer of the blood in the Old Testament times had to believe concerning the cities of refuge. He did not have to believe it, and he did not have to go to one of those cities. However, he was open prey to the avenger if he did not. More than likely, the avenger would track him down.

You do not have to believe the message. You do not have to believe one thing about Jesus Christ; that is your privilege. But remember, the avenger is tracking you down. The Bible says in Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out. Another translation says, "Be sure your sin will run you down." If you will repent and forsake your sin, God will cancel your debt, and you will be free. If you refuse to believe, you cannot be free. Are you dwelling safely in Jesus Christ? Colossians 2:10 says, "And ye are complete in him [all the things that those cities of refuge were to Israel of old we find complete in Him], which is the head of all principality and power."

Have you fled from the safety of Jesus Christ? If so, you are open prey for the enemy of your soul and you are not going to get along well. Christ bids you to return to Him. The Lord said in the Scripture text to "turn yourselves." Some people have gotten saved and then turned away from the Lord, yet they expect Him to move upon them just as He did in the beginning. However, the Bible says to turn yourselves and live. Do not wait for some miraculous moving on your soul as when you did not have much knowledge of salvation.

In all honesty, if you knew that you were to face Jesus Christ tonight, would you want to straighten out some things first? Would there be some things that you would need to repent of? Sometimes people procrastinate and put off salvation and put off making things right. The only way you will pass through the judgment in safety is through the blood of Jesus Christ. Your soul is more important than this whole world. It is more important than anything that you could obtain in life. Your soul is more important than your family, your wealth, and material gain. You are going to go through this life only once, and you need to do it right. Won't you finish your life under the blood of Jesus Christ?

(Cassette C-4666E)

THANKFULNESS

Thankfulness is being glad
For good things every day,
It's showing joy by sharing
In a kindly, thoughtful way.

It is remembering God gives
And cares for every need;
Thankfulness is loving God
In heart and word and deed.

Author Unknown

Revelation 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

The City, the Church



Brother Daniel Webster

Having the Glory of God

God has a city, a people who have the glory of God. As I read verse 11, the thought that really stood out was "Having the glory of God." The glory of God is only in the city of God, in God's church. There is no other place where it can be found. What brings about this glory is the unity of the people of God. If you read the Scriptures, you will find that one of the greatest burdens that Jesus had was to bring

people together as one for the glory of God. Read His final prayer right before He faced the Cross in John, Chapter 17. His burden was to see God's people united as one. The devil has really done a work in dividing. It grieves my heart when I see what most of the world calls Christianity. It is far removed from what Jesus prayed for.

Friend, being a member of a church does not mean that you know the Lord. There is a greater need than church joining. That is the

problem the world is facing today. We have a world full of religion, but God has only one faith. The Bible tells us that God has only one church, and there is only one God and one Spirit.

Jesus, praying in John 17:20-22, said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast

sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." First, we read in Revelation that the city was filled with the glory of God. Jesus said, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." In John 17:5 Jesus said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." What was that glory? "I in them, and thou in me" (verse 23).

There is no greater glory than the presence of God. The presence of God is the glory of God. If you read throughout the Old Testament, you will realize that when Israel finished the temple and had completed the various projects that God ordained to be done, the glory of God came down upon that place. Why? Because it was done as God had instructed them. God has a city yet today that has the glory of God. The people do what God says, in the way that God says. God has a government, or a rule; He has a way that things must be done to get the job done properly.

Jesus said in verse 23, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." The Amplified Version states: "Neither for these alone do I pray—it is not for their sake only that I make this request—but also for all those who will ever come to believe in (trust in, cling to, rely on) Me through their word and teaching; So that they all may be one [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

The devil has convinced many people that Jesus is not the Son of God, that He is not the Messiah. You may ask, "How is he doing that?" He is working to divide and destroy every work that God has ordained. He continually tries to destroy the things of God because he knows that the only way the

world is going to believe is through unity. In essence, that is what Jesus said. He said, in so many words, "That the world may believe that You have sent Me, that I am the Son of God."

The only way the world is going to know is when they see a people united as one body, walking in the light of God's Word. The only way that you and I can send this message to the world today is for each of us to walk in one accord in the light of God's Word. As I walk in the light and you walk in the light, the Bible says we have fellowship one with another. Fellowship is not something that one can work up, but it comes from God when we each walk in the light.

The Unity of God's People

Unity is not something that can be worked up either. It is not something that we have because we put our heads together and say, "All right, we will agree to have unity." People can have a union that way, but not unity. There is a vast difference between a union and unity. Today when we think of unions, often we think of labor unions. Many people belong to labor unions, and often union leaders make decisions that many union members are not in unity with. Therefore, you can see that a union is not unity. A union cannot bring unity to God's people. Unity comes down from God, when God is in me and in you. If Christ is in me and in you, we have oneness, or unity. There is no other way for God's people to have unity. We cannot work it up. We cannot organize and make agreements to say, "All right, this is how it is," because it will not work that way. God has not ordained it to be that way. The only way that it will work is when God has His way in each person's life. When each member of the body of Christ is led by the Holy Spirit, then we have unity. It is impossible not to have unity if each of us is listening to the Spirit of God, because that is God's way. We

all must be in agreement to the same Spirit and the same leadership. God has a body of people who do just that.

Friend, if you are searching for a body of people who is listening to the Spirit of God and being led by God, you will find them in the true Church of God. I am glad there are still some people who are willing to listen to the Spirit of God, who are willing to hear what "Thus saith the Lord," not what some man says.

There was a problem with having unity in Paul's day. Some would say, "Well, I am with this man," and others would say, "I am with that man." In essence, Paul said, "Hold it! Is Christ divided? Only One died for us, and that was Jesus; He is the One whom we must hear." Jesus said in Revelation, "Hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." We need to listen to the Spirit of God. We need to have discernment and a better understanding of what God's Spirit really is, of how He works, and of what He does and does not do.

Many people blame God for things with which He has nothing to do. This brings great confusion in people's minds, but it will not confuse one who is listening to the Spirit of God. The Bible lets us know that He is a faithful and true witness. If you really want to know Truth, nothing in this world can stop you. In the past, I have had many questions in my mind about things that seemed contrary to what I had heard. As I pondered those things in my heart for a while, soon the Lord showed me the truth.

If you intend to be led by the Holy Spirit and have unity with God's people, then you must ponder in your heart the things that you are unsure of and let God teach you and show you the answer to the things that you question in your mind. God is faithful to do that. I am so glad that God has a people who work together. Anywhere there is confusion and division, God cannot work. The Bible says that God is not the author of confusion. However,

God does work in places where His people are willing to be in one accord. The word *accord* means "in agreement, or to harmonize." Nothing is more beautiful than listening to voices singing in harmony together. God has a people who work together harmoniously.

If you can play a musical instrument or if you have an ear for music and one string is out of tune, you will notice it right away. God's people are in tune to the Spirit of God and the Word of God, which always lines up with the Spirit of God. Nothing in God's Word is contrary to what the Spirit says, and the Holy Spirit will not show you something contrary to the Word; that is not God's way. God's way is, as you read in John, Chapter 17. The Spirit and Word fit hand in hand. As soon as people start to force something into place to make it fit their doctrine, it is no longer God's doctrine. That opens the door to confusion and deception.

The Bond of Perfectness

Amos 3:3 asks, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Individuals must be in agreement to be part of the body of Christ. Each one in the body must be in agreement. When I thought about the word *accord*, I thought of the word *cord*. In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 we read: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

A threefold cord is not easily broken because the strands are woven together. The harder you pull on it, the tighter the bond becomes. One song says, "How sweet this bond of perfectness . . . a thousand cords our hearts entwine." A thou-

sand cords together is a massive cable. Solomon saw a threefold cord. In essence, God said, "I will show you what a real bond is." A real bond is God's church. No power of hell can separate it. Saint, be encouraged. No matter how much the gates of hell try to prevail against God's church, it will stand.

God's church has always stood throughout the ages. She is standing yet today, and one day we will be carried away to meet the Lord in Glory. In the Church of the Living God, we have a bond, and that bond is the love of God working in the heart of every saint. Nothing can separate or break that love. That bond is built upon the love of God flowing in every heart.

If you are married and you truly love your companion as you should, nothing in this world can break that bond. As long as love flows between the husband and the wife, the bond will remain, because that is how God ordained it. In order for a marriage to be broken, one of the two has to break it and say, "I don't want this anymore." God has a church that is so bonded together that nothing can tear the people apart as long as they are willing to listen to God and hear what the Spirit has to say.

There is no greater power than the power of unity. God has shown us that even in nature. One or two little raindrops do not amount to much, but a strong storm could wash away a city. God destroyed the whole world with water. The unity of all that water together generated great power. The unity of God's people working together creates great power! There is no greater power than to have God's people working together, and the devil knows that.

If you have ever played tug-of-war, you know that if only one team member is tugging, that team is never going to get anywhere. Everyone needs to pull together. So it is in the spiritual. The trumpet is being sounded today, calling God's people to pull to-

gether. If we will heed that call and work together, we all will be where God wants us to be, working together to see souls saved.

Dwelling Together in Unity

Nothing is more precious than unity in the eyes of God. In Psalm 133:1-3 David wrote: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Nothing is more beautiful and more precious than unity.

When I was courting my wife, I had an opportunity to spend some time in the mountains in the state of West Virginia. Early some mornings I sat out on the porch while the dew was still on everything. As the sun came over the top of the mountain, the dew glistened. It was a beautiful sight, and it caused me to think about that Scripture. The unity of God's people is beautiful. The Psalmist likened it to the dew that settles down upon the mountains of Zion.

The part that I really want to bring to your attention is in verse 2, which states, "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard." David was talking about the anointing oil used on Aaron for the special service that he was ordained to do. God had a special oil made just for that purpose. They were not to use it for any other purpose. You can read that in Exodus 30:31-32: "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you."

The point that I want to bring forth is that the oil was a holy anointing oil. It was not to be poured upon man's flesh. It was not something for man to fool with. They were not to make anything like it, because it was a special anointing oil. David said the unity of God's people was like that oil. It is nothing that man can create; it comes from God out of Heaven. As you and I listen to the Spirit of God and yield ourselves to Him, we have unity. God has ordained it. Man cannot manufacture it. God will not let him. God has one way to send out His message, and that is through a united people. He does not want any counterfeits, and He will not allow counterfeits. That is the reason nothing comes close to the Church of God. You may say, "Well, I know some people who live very close to what the Church of God teaches." In reality, they are miles away from the Church of God, because God's presence is not there.

When God moves in, we have the unity that God wants. I repeat, there is great power in unity. In Genesis, Chapter 1, in the very beginning, we can see the unity of the Godhead. God did not say, "I am going to do this." In Genesis 1:26 He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." From the beginning, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were in unity.

Working Together for One Cause

In Genesis 11:1-7 we see that man understood how unity worked: "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime

had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, and that they may not understand one another's speech." In essence, God said, "Let Us bring confusion on them because We are not going to allow man to work in this way." Often men get their heads together and realize that if they work together, they can get something done. However, if it is contrary to God's way, God is going to come in and confuse them. You can count on that. We read in verse 9, "Therefore is the name of it called Babel [it was later called Babylon, which means confusion, because God confused their language to stop that work]; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Because the people were one and spoke the same language, nothing could restrain them.

The devil knows yet today that if God's people get together as one, nothing can stop the Church of God. Therefore, the devil is doing everything he can to work against unity and to bring confusion. Nevertheless, I am glad that God is still in control. He has a body of people that is one. Friend, if you are not in agreement with the body of Christ, then you are not in the body. It is just that plain and that simple. If you are not in agreement with the work of God, then you are not in the body.

In the physical body, if one or two of my body parts were to quit working, I could not do all the

things that I need to do, because the body would no longer be in one accord. It is the same way with the Church of God. Friend, you are either in agreement, working in unity with God's people, or you are not in the body. I cannot make it any plainer; that is as plain as the Bible teaches it.

Receiving Forgiveness and Deliverance

The Holy Spirit is leading the people of God, working for one cause. Often when visitors come in and look on, they say, "My, this is amazing! They don't have a program or anything written down, yet it all works together just perfectly." That is what God wants with His people. If each of us will obey God, we will see that happen in every service. God will have His way. He will use different ones in different ways to convince the gainsayer, "This is the true Church of God! This is what I have been looking for."

Some people out in the world really do want to live right. I was one of those people. I had no idea that living right meant being a member in the Church of God. In fact, I did not have any idea that I could really do it, but I had a desire in my heart to serve God. When I learned that I could find salvation, I took hold of it, thinking that all I was getting was forgiveness. However, one day as the preacher preached, I found that I could have forgiveness and deliverance. I learned that I could be free to do what was right. God gave me the liberty to do just that.

God will deliver every soul who wants to do right. If you want to do right, God will make a way; He will lead you to where the Truth is so that you can. It is hard for someone to do right when a preacher tells them that they cannot live free from sin. Nevertheless, God can bring His people to a place where there is a good pastor, one who will tell you that you can live right, by the grace of God. You cannot do it in your

own strength, but as God moves into your heart, you can live right. You can do what God wants you to do and live a holy life.

It is a blessing to serve God and enjoy His presence. That is the glory that Jesus was talking about. There is nothing any greater than to be in the presence of God. It is wonderful when the glory of God comes in and floods the soul. You cannot buy that.

I tried so hard to pull myself out of the miry clay but could not do it, and then one day Jesus reached down and lifted me out. He said, "Now, keep your feet clean and do not go back into sin. I will show you the way." That is so wonderful! I appreciate that. I am glad that He is the God I serve and that He is not too small to do that. The religious world says God is a great God but that He cannot keep you from sin. Thank God, He can keep you, if you will listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Government of the Church

God has a government, but it does not have anything to do with man. God's government comes from above. The Bible tells us there is only one headquarters for God's church, and that is Heaven. All the commands come from headquarters, from God Himself. No man can make the right decisions concerning the government of the Church of God. God knows what is best, and He knows how to guide the church. In most cities there are ordinances, laws that must be obeyed. If you enter that city, you must obey those laws. If you go to another city, they might have different laws by which you must abide. The city of God has laws. When you enter God's city, you must abide by His laws if you intend to be a citizen of that city. I am glad we can. God has a people who listen to the Spirit of God.

The Book of Isaiah tells us that God is in control of His government. I am not a pastor, but if I were a pastor and someone started to com-

plain to me about things, I would say, "It is not my church; it is God's church. He is in control, so you need to talk to Him about it. There is nothing I can do except pray that God will work it out, because He is in control." In Isaiah 9:6 we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder." I thank God for that! I would not want to make the decisions that have to be made.

God is the One who sends down orders through His overseers. That is His chain of command. The Holy Spirit sends the commands to the overseers. The Bible says that pastors are overseers. They are not the ones who make the orders; they just deliver the orders so that God's people know exactly what to do. Friend, if you fuss and buck against the overseer, you are going to have problems, not only with the overseer but also with God. God is the One who is in control. If you do not like it, then you need to talk to Him about it. All the messenger is doing is delivering the message. As some have said, "The pastor is like a mailman; he is just delivering the mail. He is just bringing to you what God has sent to him." So, if you have a problem do not fuss with him. God is the One who sent you the message.

Again, Isaiah 9:6 states, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah was talking about Jesus. He is the Prince of Peace, the Mighty Counsellor. If you need counseling, you can go to Jesus; He can counsel and direct you. Then, if you still have some confusion, you should go to your God-called pastor, and he will give you godly counsel to direct you in the right way.

When God has His hand on a man, then he is the one to whom you need to listen. God has estab-

lished a chain of command, a way that things must work for the spiritual body to work properly, just as the physical body has to follow a chain of commands for all the members to move and work. If something blocks that chain, the body will not function properly.

Yielding Yourself to God

We each must be subject to the Head and allow Him to direct us in the way that He so desires. Many times the orders might not be just the way we want to go; nevertheless, we must heed the Spirit of God and yield ourselves.

Often God's direction is contrary to what the flesh wants to do. Galatians 5:17-18 says: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." The writer then went on to describe the works of the flesh.

Friend, if you listen to the Spirit of God, sometimes it will cause your flesh to get upset, because it will not always want to do the things that God wants it to do. For example, suppose that church starts at 9:30 a.m., and you live twenty minutes away. The flesh says, "I can probably get up at five after nine, be out the door by ten after, and make it in time." If you do that, the flesh is having its way. You need to have more time than that to prepare yourself for the service. We ought to prepare ourselves for the worship services, anticipating that God might use us in some way to help.

When you try to wake up, the flesh will say, "Just sleep for five more minutes." It is easy to get up and do whatever the flesh wants to do. However, to get yourself up to go to church is a battle. You need to go to bed early enough on Saturday night so that you can wake up on time Sunday morning. You need to be alert when you go to church, because you are going to receive

instructions for the next week's battle. If you sleep through the instructions, you will be in big trouble and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

God was talking about taking all those divided people and uniting them as one. If you study the history of Israel, you will find that when man got involved with ruling, division came about. Before the kings, God was the supreme King and ruled through His judges. That was the way He wanted things done. However, one day the people decided that they wanted a king. They wanted to be like all the rest of the nations, so He allowed them to have a king. Just one or two generations later, the kingdom was divided. Why? Because man got involved. Had they allowed God to rule, that never would have happened. Most of the bickering and fighting was between Israel and Judah, the divided kingdom. Had man stayed out of it from the beginning, there would have been only one King, and that would have been God.

In Ezekiel we read that God said, "I am going to bring it all back together one of these days, and David is going to be in charge." The David that He was speaking of was Jesus Christ. He was letting us know that He is the King; He is the Ruler over the church, the body of Christ. The New Testament Israel is a people who have had their hearts changed and are willing to live for God. They

have one King, and He said, "When My tabernacle also shall be in the midst of them, the world will recognize it." In the Old Testament, the tabernacle was where the presence of God was. This ties right in with our Scripture text, which tells us that the glory of God was in the midst of the city.

The Tabernacle of God Is With Men

We read in Revelation 21:1-3: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, [It is still that way today. It is God-built and God-sent. It comes from God right out of Heaven.] prepared as a bride adorned for her husband [He shows us the church as a bride and as a city, right in the same chapter]. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." That is the same thing that we read in Ezekiel. The tabernacle of God is with us. The presence of God moves right into our lives, and each child of God has the presence of God; they are a part of the body of Christ. The Church of God is comprised of people who are walking in the light, having the presence of God, or the glory of God, in their lives.

When Moses came off the mountain, his face shone so brightly that the people had to cover his face with a veil. They could not stand to look upon the glory of God shining on his face. In the New Testament it tells us that if this glory that Moses had was so bright, how much more we ought to be shining to the glory of God because of the message we have. We have a brighter and greater law today than Moses ever dreamed of, because we can carry it out by the grace of God. He was

given commandments that most of the people would never be able to keep. They had to constantly bring sacrifices, year after year, for their sins. Thank God, when Jesus came, that practice was done away with, because we no longer have to yield to sin. I am glad that God has a church filled with the glory of God, or the very presence of God. There is no greater honor than to have God in the midst and to dwell in you as you walk day after day. One songwriter said, "He walks with me, and He talks with me." Nothing is greater than having the sweet presence of God in your life. When He is in you, He will cause you to be just as sweet as He is; not a sticky sweetness but a good, clean, holy sweetness. There is something special about the people of God, and being a part of them is wonderful.

Again, I say, God has a government, and He runs it in a certain way. All the orders come from Heaven. Man does not have anything to do with it if it is working right. God is in control. God's man preaches "line upon line, precept upon precept," and when the Holy Spirit puts His stamp of approval on it, then we are obligated to obey what the Word of God says. If the Lord has shown you that something is lacking, I trust that you will obey Him. He is the One who sends the orders. If you buck against Him, you are in trouble, because He is the final authority. You can fuss with man if you want to, but if you fuss with God, you are in big trouble. God is in control. Won't you mind the Lord?

(Cassette C-3892E)

A Brittle Thing

A very brittle thing is speech;
Take care just how you bend it.

For anyone can make a break
But very few can mend it.



Les hooked one finger over the side of the box of nut shells and quickly passed it on to Howard without taking one.

At the end of the row Ernest took the box and rattled the one nut shell left around. "Who did we miss?" he asked as he scanned the group. But Les set his jaw and looked straight ahead. He hated these "Service in a Nut Shell" services, and this was not the first time he had passed the box of shells on, without taking one. In fact, the first service of this kind that they had had was the only night when he opened his shell. The little slip of paper inside said, "Lead song service." Whether it had said, "Lead testimony service," or "Give a three-minute sermonette," it would have been all the same. For it was the sad truth that Les lacked talents, and there seemed to be absolutely nothing that he could do-nothing, that is, but take up the offering.

Les did not have a musical bone in him, to quote Les himself; and a bright red wave swept up into the roots of his hair as he remembered the night he had consented to speak to the group. They were having three speakers that night, and Howard had assured him that it would not be half bad. But standing before the group that way, everything he had studied left his mind an embarrassing blank. Even his notes did not throw any light on what he had planned to say, and after blurting a few unconnected sentences to the sea of suddenly strange faces before him, he had sat down and wished a thousand times

during the rest of the service that the floor would somehow open up and swallow him. It was the same way when he testified or led in prayer too. Words just did not hover around Les Townsend's mind ready to be used when the time came; that was all there was to it. As he sat through the service, he found himself growing bitter toward the ones who took part and did their parts so well.

That was the reason he turned Howard down after church when he asked if Les was going to be able to make it to jail service the next night. "I'm not needed," Les shook his head. "I would be doing mores good at home studying than trailing along with the group."

"What makes you think you're not needed?" Howard wanted to know.

"What would I do?" Les drew himself up to his full height. "I could lead the song service in a monotone—or even better than that, perhaps I could sing a solo."

"Now listen," Howard backed away a step and looked at him. "Just because you don't happen to have that particular talent is no reason you're not needed. The Lord has a place for you at the jail service, and you know it."

But Les still shook his head. They would probably feel sorry for him and call on him to do something just as sure as he went, and he would rather not take the chance. Nothing Howard could say would change his mind.

However, as he walked slowly

on down the street after leaving Howard at the corner, Les was not as relieved as he thought he would be. "Lord," his heart cried as he walked along, "why is it that so many people have a lot of different talents, and I have none? What is there that I can do for You? Oh, let me do something."

A light shining from the dining room window as he came nearer the house, though, switched his thoughts. "I wonder what is up?" he thought as he bounded up the steps. "Surely the boys aren't still studying "Oh, a jigsaw puzzle," he laughed as he closed the door behind him and came into the dining room. "You boys would stay up all night to get one together, wouldn't you?"

His two younger brothers looked up. "It's a picture of an airplane," Tommy explained.

"And the pieces are cut so much alike, they're hard to fit," Ronald added.

Les pulled his tie over his head, and dropping it in the pile with the tablecloth at the end of the table, proceeded to help put the puzzle together.

Finally, it was all in but one piece, and that piece was nowhere to be found. The piece was a part of one of the propellers, too, and the picture was just ruined without it. "Oh, it's just a little one," Ronald decided as he rubbed his eyes. "Let's just forget about it."

But Tommy could not. "It just ruins the picture," he argued. "An airplane couldn't run with the middle

of a propeller gone," and he dove under the table to look.

"Oh, here it is," Les said a few minutes later as he poked his finger under a table leg that was not quite on the floor. He straightened up and looked at the picture with the piece gone. Then he slipped the piece in, and a feeling surged through him that he had never experienced before.

"Now I can sleep," Tommy said as he took a last look at the airplane and ran after Ronald. "I don't think I

could if we had not found that piece." Les stood there a long time after his brothers had gone to bed. It seemed that every time his eye scanned the big picture that he had helped to make, his eye fell on that tiny piece in the propeller—the piece that "the plane couldn't run without," as Tommy had said so emphatically. It was a little piece, that was true, and it was not a corner or an outside piece; but it was needed.

"Sorta makes me think of myself," Les mumbled. "We all can't

be the corners and outside pieces that keep the thing together, but we do all have a part in the Lord's work." He ambled over to the telephone. "If my part is taking up the offering, Lord, then that's what I'll do." He looked at his watch. Howard would not be in bed yet. He had planned to do some studying. "Yes," Les said into the phone. "I've changed my mind. I'll help in the jail service tomorrow night. I'll do my part."

Selected

A Parable

Behold, two men went to the house of God to pray—or so it seemeth. The first man calleth his neighbor before going and asketh, "What cooketh at church today?" They inspire each other by criticizing the church and pastor, but agree that it is important to attend the house of God to see that all goeth well. The children also hear the conversation and wonder, "What cooketh at church?"

The first man entereth the church with an air of importance which announces his presence. He singeth the songs, he prayeth the prayers, he placeth a penny in the plate. When the preacher standeth to preach, he listeneth to every word to see that all he saith agreeth with his standard of truth. Even the Pharisees did the same with Jesus, and they had their reward.

After the service endeth, he maketh a pretense of being friendly, but his spirit speaketh otherwise. Upon returning home, he calleth his friend the second time, and together they expostulate about the weaknesses of the service of the day. The whole church senseth this and is sad. The children also feel the effects, and they are sad. Behold, this man receiveth nothing because he giveth nothing. Behold, he shall have his reward.

The second man also goeth to church. However, before going he calleth his neighbor and saith to him, "Why not visit our church today?" The neighbor promiseth to think it over.

The second man, before leaving for church, calleth his family together for prayer. They pray earnestly for the neighbor and for the preacher. Then he leaveth with his family for the house of God. He entereth the church with a deep concern for himself and his neighbor.

Others also feel his concern, and a deep spirit of concern and prayer settles upon the church. He singeth the songs with zest, prayeth with humility, and giveth faithfully God's holy portion, and he is glad. He seeth his neighbor there, and he is glad.

As the preacher standeth to preach, he breathes a prayer to God for him. The preacher feeleth the effects of the prayer, and he is glad. He preacheth with freedom. As he preacheth, the man says in his heart, "I am glad my neighbor is here." At the close of the service his neighbor raiseth his hand for prayer, and again this man is glad.

When the service is over, all men feel the warmth of his Christian fellowship, and they are all glad. This second man goeth home blessed. He and his family rejoice together over the morning service, and all are glad. This second man giveth much, and he receiveth much. I tell you, he went down to his house justified. This maketh us all glad!

Selected

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

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

The Secret to Living a Victorious Life



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Living an Overcoming Life

I thank God that we can live victorious lives, every moment of every day, in every situation of life. What a privilege! Thanks be to God! The victory is not in our own strength or abilities, but our victory is in the Lord. When I was living in sin, I could not conquer many things in my own strength; there were habits that I could not overcome. I am thankful today that I can overcome in every situation of life—in the home, in the school, wherever I go, I can be victorious. We are so blessed, Church of God. We are the most blessed people in all the world. What a privilege to live a victorious life! Nothing is more beautiful than the Word of God; it is awesome! Verse 58 of our

Scripture lesson reads, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable." If ever there was a day in which we needed to be steadfast, it is the day in which we are living. We must be steadfast in the Truth and in that which we have been taught. Church of God, we are so responsible. With Truth and understanding comes responsibility. I want to stand in the Truth to the very end.

The Apostle Paul went on to admonish us to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." I like that. There is no greater work in all the world than the work of the Lord. We want to see souls saved, the Church of God furthered, and the cause of God spread and carried throughout the world.

We have a positive Gospel. Paul

continued in the same verse, saying, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Everything we do for God counts for good; it will stand, and it will last. Too many individuals are being defeated in the conflicts and the trials of life when God has provided us with the means to live overcoming, triumphant, victorious lives. The Church of God message is a message of victory in Jesus. So many people are taught that they have to succumb to sin, self, and the devil, but they do not. There is no greater message for the world than that which the Church of God has.

The very life of holiness, or sinless living, brings condemnation on the world. I thank God that we can live victorious lives every moment of the day, but the majority of peo-

ple are not. The thing that I prize most is living a victorious life and standing clear with God. That means more to me than anything else in life. The longer we live and the more situations we are involved in, the more grace we need. Obstacles in your road need not be stumbling blocks. They should be stepping stones, or milestones. A milestone is a significant point in your progress for God and in your development to be the vessel of honor that God wants you to be. God wants each of us to be vessels of honor.

The need of the hour is for men and women to have the same courage and determination that the Apostle Paul had. Although you have victory, no doubt you would have liked to have handled some situations a little better. Sometimes I say, "Lord, how shall I handle this? I need wisdom here." Certain situations in life take grace, wisdom, and understanding.

You may ask the question, "How can I live a victorious life consistently?" I believe there is a secret to it. The Apostle Paul gave insight into living an overcoming life. Again, our Scripture text in 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 reads: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Being Triumphant in Christ

What is victory? A very comprehensive definition says, "the overcoming of an enemy in a battle." Friend, do you have battles of life? Sometimes afflictions give us battles, and sometimes we have battles at work, at school, in the home, or financial problems. Victory is "the overcoming of an enemy in battle or of an antagonist in a contest; the gaining of superiority or success in any struggle or endeavor." I do not believe that we have to succumb to

habits of life that are not right. Victory is "amoral or spiritual triumph of any kind." Some synonyms of the word victory are these: a conquest, a triumph, or being successful. You do not have to be up and down when it comes to living a victorious life. One song reads:

*Must I in sinful bondage be,
Deprived of peace and liberty,
When in the promise I can see
The blood of Jesus cleanseth?*

*Must I be doubting, full of fear,
And gloom obscure my pathway here,
Be up and down in life's career?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I be under guilt and sin,
And hove its blighting force within,
Beset by wrong, no vict'ry win?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I suppose I'm right today,
Tomorrow think I've gone astray,
Let demons hold me in dismay?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*The blood, the blood,
The precious blood of Jesus,
The blood will work a perfect cure,
Will cleanse the heart and keep it pure,
The blood, the blood,
The precious blood of Jesus.*

When I was in the military service, I worked in the chaplain's office, and a chaplain said to me, "You know, men don't like to sing songs about the blood. That's why we are taking them out of the hymnals." However, without the blood there is no remission of sins. We can live victorious lives. The foregoing passage of Scripture is part of the instruction given by the Apostle Paul to the Church of God in Corinth. May God help us to be steadfast, settled, unmoveable in the Truth of the Gospel of Christ. I want to be unmoveable and steadfast. As children of God, we should be steadfast in our hope of the Gospel of Christ.

Paul said the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Christ destroyed that enemy, and through Him we

can be victorious, even over death. With this same faith and confidence in the Word of the Lord, you and I can have the same vigor and the same resolution that the Apostle Paul had. If we understand this, we will be more patient and more constant in the trials of life. Is your patience sometimes tried? Perhaps you would be stronger, more patient, more constant, and more persevering if you realized that your victory is in Christ and all is working for your good.

The Church of God has the most beautiful message in the world. It is a message of hope, comfort, assurance, and victory. False teachers and false religions teach you that you must succumb. We teach that there is victory for you in Christ. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Paul was not a defeated Christian.

The testimony that some people have is, "Oh, I have struggled. I have given in. Pray that I can hold out." That is a testimony of defeat. God's people have testimonies of victory, conquest, and success. Paul wrote, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" (2 Corinthians 2:14). Church of God people are different, and the world recognizes that difference. Within ourselves we are very small and weak; however, in Christ we can be strong and victorious. Moreover, in that victory we have joy and a strong confidence.

Having the Victory That God Requires

I like a song that Barney E. Warren wrote, entitled "Victory." The first verse of that song reads, "Hallelujah, what a tho't! Jesus full salvation brought, Victory, victory. Let the pow'rs of sin assail, Heaven's grace can never fail, Victory, vic-

tory." Let the powers of sin assail. Let them huff and puff as the wolf in the story of "The Three Little Pigs." Praise the Lord, I am on the winning side!

The chorus of that song says,

*"Victory, yes victory;
Hallelujah! I am free,
Jesus gives me victory.
Glory, glory hallelujah!
He is all in all to me."*

Can you imagine what it will be in Heaven with all of us singing victory? Sin and Satan cannot assail up there. We will realize ultimate victory.

The first half of verse 2 reads: "I am trusting in the Lord, I am standing on his word, Victory, victory." I have the confidence of Paul when I am standing on the Word. I know where I have been, I know where I am going, and I know where I am right now. Standing on the Word, I am not afraid to face any man nor any preacher. When we are standing on the Word of God, it is all powerful. When we are standing on the Word of God, we can be bold. The righteous are bold as lions. The second half of verse 2 reads, "I have peace and joy within, Since my life is free from sin, Victory, victory."

Verses 3-4 read: "Shout your freedom ev'rywhere, His eternal peace declare, Victory, victory. Let us sing it here below, In the face of ev'ry foe, Victory, victory. We will sing it on that shore, when this fleeting life is o'er, Victory, victory. Sing it here, ye ransomed throng, Start the everlasting song: Victory, victory."

The Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). What a claim! It is very likely that the Apostle Paul wrote those words from a Roman jail cell about A.D. 60. Saying that is easy when you are sitting amidst the saints in a Church of God congregation, but how about in a jail cell just before they are about to execute you?

Sometimes people say, "If I have

ever done anything wrong; please forgive me," and that is about as far as it goes. However, they know whether or not if they have said things that were wrong. If they have, then they need to ask forgiveness, and then they ought to go to every person to whom they have told that garbage and make it right. They need to clear themselves completely. Paul said, "What clearing of yourselves . . ." (2 Corinthians 7:11).

I have worked with a prisoner who found that it was needful that he confess to the murders that he had committed, and now he is in prison for the rest of his life. He had to go all the way to get the peace that he wanted, and that is the way it is. If you want victory, you have to go all the way with God. That is the secret to having the victory that God requires of you. If you have talked against the pastor, you need to go to every person to whom you have spoken concerning him and try to gather all those tales. It is very difficult to gather them all, but you must do the best you can. Then you will have more fear on you the next time you are tempted to say something out of order.

Paul was not a defeated Christian. Saint, you do not have to be defeated. You can live in strong confidence, with courage, with hope, and with a strong resolution. Paul was saying that, with the help of the Lord, he could face any situation. I believe that is the confidence that God wants us to have as the Church of God.

I was reading in the Book of Isaiah recently. You know, I always heard that a remnant was a small piece of material that was not good for much. However, Isaiah wrote about a very small remnant. I thought, that is what we are getting down to in these last days. Isaiah said, "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:9). My confidence is placed in God and His Word. If God and His Word are behind you,

no one can stand against you. You can be as David was against Goliath. I repeat, Paul was not a defeated Christian. He had great confidence, and you and I can possess the same courage, the same hope, and the same strong resolution. Nothing should overcome us. You should be able to turn your difficulties and your trials into victories. You may ask, "Do you ever have any trials or problems?" I encounter them often. God can help us to act right in every situation. I do not ask for many situations, but God allows them to come my way.

Being Radiant Amidst the Storms

In Philippians, I believe the dominant note in that letter is the expression of joy. God's people are a happy people, but sometimes we do not show it. We ought to be the happiest people in all the world. The Apostle Paul was radiant amidst the storms and the stresses of life. I like that. I like it when you walk up to an older saint and ask how he or she is doing, and that person says, "I am thankful." Some people give you an organ recital: "Well, my liver doesn't feel right, my pancreas is playing out, and I have a twitch in my leg."

You may say, "Paul didn't experience the things that I have experienced. He can say all these things, but he has not lived with what I have to live with." Second Corinthians 11:21-28 says: "I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

In all those things, the Apostle Paul was a man of victory. He is my hero. I want to be like the Apostle Paul. I believe I am on the same identical path. I have not suffered nearly what he did, but we do not know what the end will be. May God help us. Let us purpose in our hearts that we are going to serve God no matter what. We can have the victory in every situation of life. Do not justify yourself in wrong attitudes, wrong behavior, or wrong words; but be clear with God and all men. As far as I know, I am clear with all men and with God.

Standing Strong for God

Paul let us know there was a purpose, a design. God had a design for all that Paul experienced. To the church at Philippi, Paul wrote, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out [in other words, it turned out] rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12). We experience many things that we do not like to go through. Sometimes we struggle with hurt feelings, but those situations make us better people; it is purifying the church.

Paul wrote in Philippians 1:13-14: "So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, [What did he mean? He was saying that boldness, courage, confidence, and resolution are contagious. If you stand strong for God, it will give someone else

courage to stand strong for God.] are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

I can remember Brother Emerson Wilson saying years ago that when he was in the military service, if someone started feeling depressed and discouraged with the war situation, they isolated him, lest those feelings spread among the troops. We want to be strong in the Lord so that others will catch the same spirit, the same attitude. This confidence and boldness in God that Paul spoke of is what all Christians should possess. Paul said it was catching. Others were laying hold of the same assurance and trust in the Gospel of Truth. I believe we need a fresh baptism of hope, courage, and assurance in the Gospel of Christ. We need to have more confidence in God. Nothing could thwart Paul's progress in the work of God.

Someone once said this: "Christians seem to be thermometers rather than thermostats." A thermometer merely reflects the temperature around it, while the thermostat regulates and changes the temperature around it. Do you suppose that what that person said could be true?

In the Wednesday night prayer services, we sing at the top of our voices, "To Jerusalem the new Come the tried and faithful few." I have sung that since I was a child, but when we were in Honduras the last time, it gave me new strength when they sang it there. God is going to have a tried and faithful people. There is not a more beautiful city than Jerusalem, the Church of God; she is awesome. Walk around her and look her over really well. I am not talking about the Jerusalem over in Palestine; I am talking about the Church of God.

Following the Principles of the Gospel

Let us consider some of the underlying reasons for Paul's victorious living. First of all, Paul had a settled determination. He was resolved to follow the principles of the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. Those are principles that we cannot violate. Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to teach people principles that they should apply to all situations of life. As a pastor, I cannot go with people wherever they go, but the principles instilled in their minds and in their hearts should go with them. The Church of God is taught very high, beautiful, noble principles. Paul was resolved to follow the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously [not like King David in every situation, but like God], and godly, in this present world."

Paul made up his mind that he was going to serve God and do what was right no matter what the consequences were. Sometimes people make decisions based on what their friends or loved ones say or do. I say, "Look to Christ; look at the principles of God's eternal Word when you make decisions." Nothing that Paul did for the Lord was done halfheartedly. He put himself into the work of God wholeheartedly. That is what every Christian ought to do.

Paul made a complete break with the world and all its ways. The reason many people do not live victorious lives is that they have not made a complete break with the world and its ways and with relatives and friends. We must make a complete break. Our relationship with Christ should mean more to us than relationships with anyone else. Our relationship with Christ should mean more to us than our relationship with any other individual.

Paul made a complete break not only with the world, but also with its praise. We have to get beyond the praise of man, as well as worldly ambitions and the world's pride and fashions. In short, we can say that Paul was dead to the world. I

say again, he made a clean break with the world, and he was wholehearted in his walk with God. I like to see people serving God wholeheartedly. Whatever we do for God, whether it is mowing the lawn, washing windows, or cooking for the saints, we should do it wholeheartedly. Andy Byers wrote this about wholehearted service:

*I've turned from the world and its follies,
Forever forsaken all sin;
I've given myself unto Jesus
To ever and only serve him.*

*I'll put my whole heart in his service,
And do all he asketh of me;
I mean to live holy and blameless
A Christian indeed will I be.*

*Since Jesus gave all to redeem me,
Since only through mercy I live,
It now is my joy and my purpose
A wholehearted service to give.*

*O help me, dear Lord, to be ready
The task that thou givest to do,
Not shrinking from labor or duty,
Devoted and faithful and true.*

Maintaining a Confident, Positive Attitude

The Apostle Paul maintained a confident, positive attitude. Saint of God, you should have a constant, positive attitude. The Apostle Paul did not put his hands in his pockets and say, "I don't think I can do that." The Apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." His confidence was not in his own strength and ability, but in the Lord's all-sufficient power and authority.

There are many accounts in the Word of God where the odds were against the people of God. In the narrative about Elisha and the Syrians in 2 Kings 6:15-18, we have this report: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said

unto him, Alas, my master! How shall we do? And he [Elisha] answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. [If God is behind you, the ultimate power of the universe is with you. Because God was behind Elisha and the children of Israel, they ultimately gained the victory.] And Elisha prayed and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.

"And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." No matter what problem you face, you can have the victory. You and God can handle it. You do not have to be defeated. With Christ at the helm of your vessel, you do not need to be overcome by the storms and the waves and troubles in your life. A poet once wrote this stanza entitled "I Cannot Do It Alone."

*The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close all around,
And the light goes out in the sky;
But I know that we, too, shall win in the end,
Jesus and I.*

Submitting to the Plan of God

The last reason for Paul's victorious living is that he was totally surrendered and yielded to the will of God. He submitted to the plan of God for his life; he was totally yielded to God. Romans 14:8 says, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Your desire should be, "God, Your will be done, not mine." You should live to please Him and fulfill His purpose for your life.

There is a song that a dear friend of mine sang at my father's funeral,

and it is one of my favorite hymns. It reads:

*Whether I live or die,
Whether I wake or sleep,
Whether upon the land,
Or on the stormy deep,
When 'tis serene and calm,
Or when the wild winds blow,
I shall not be afraid
I am the Lord's, I know.*

*When with abundant store,
Or in deep poverty,
When all the world may smile,
Or it may frown on me;
When it shall help me on,
Or shall obstruct my way,
Still shall my heart rejoice
I am the Lord's, I know.*

*When I am safe at home,
Or in a foreign land,
When on an ice-bound shore,
Or on a sunlit strand;
When on the mountain height,
Or in the valley low,
Still doth he care for me
I am the Lord's, I know.*

*Nothing shall separate
From His unbounded love,
Neither in depths below,
Nor in heights above;
And in years to come,
He will abide with me;
I am the Lord's indeed
For all eternity.*

Christian friend, do you have inner peace, joy, and complete victory over everything? You can have it when you are totally committed and surrendered to God, willing to do His perfect will. When the Israelites had completely surrendered and obeyed the will of God, they escaped the hand of the death angel and the other judgments of God upon the Egyptians. They were undefeated by their enemies in their conquest of the Canaan land when they were fully obedient and compliant to the will of God.

Naaman dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, and he was healed. Could it be that you are

not yielding completely to the Lord? Victory can be yours today. You do not need to go on living a defeated life. You can reign over the flesh, the world, and the devil.

The last verse I would like to share with you is Romans 5:17, which says, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance

of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Many people are justifying themselves in what they have done. They speak sharply, act bad, say words that are not good, and then they justify themselves. God has the grace so that you can live a consistent, victorious life. If you are not victorious in every situation, you

can be. One songwriter wrote, "Do you triumph, O my brother, Over all this world of sin. In each storm of tribulation, Does your Jesus reign within?" Dear one, if you are not triumphant, won't you seek the Lord for the help that you need?

(Cassette C-4457)

One Verse and One Song

This is the story of Paul, whose field of labor was among the Mexicans in Texas. One Saturday afternoon, taking with him a Mexican deacon of the Mexican Baptist Church, he mingled among the Mexican woodcutters and mine workers who came to town on Saturday afternoons.

Mr. Bell and his deacon engaged an old man in conversation and found him a ready listener to the sweetest story ever told. This man, in his sixties was happily converted and then said, "Since I can neither read nor write, I want you to help me memorize John 3:16, the verse that you used to win me to Jesus. Also, since our people love to sing, I would appreciate your teaching me a Gospel song."

With painstaking care, Paul taught this old man the verse that he had requested and the first verse of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Then, carefully instructing the old man about baptism, Mr. Bell had him promise soon to come to the church, make his public profession, and be baptized. Three weeks went by and he did not appear at the church. However, on the fourth Sunday, in the midst of the morning preaching service, this man walked in, accompanied by five other Mexican men. He did not stop to be seated but walked down the aisle with his companions and said, "We all are here to be baptized." In that brief time, he had brought five trophies of the grace of God as the firstfruits of his Christian life!

During the following two years, this old man often brought men to church with him—men whom he had won to Jesus Christ—until the total was approximately fifty.

One day Mr. Bell answered a knock at his front door and a man said to him, "There is an old Mexican woodcutter at the point of death in the woods nearby who is calling for you."

When Mr. Bell arrived at the woodcutter's home, he found his friend near death, but fully conscious. The old man's face lighted up at the sight of Mr. Bell, and he whispered, "I am so glad to see you. Will you quote my Scripture for me?" As Mr. Bell began quoting from John 3:16, the lips of the old Mexican man followed, and when that was done, the old man said, "Please sing my song for me also."

Lifting up his voice in song, Mr. Bell began singing in Spanish, "What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!"

As he sang, he noticed the lips of the old man moving for a while, and gradually they ceased. At the end of the verse, he turned to find that the soul of the aged Christian had slipped away on the wings of the song. But in two short years, this illiterate old man had won fifty souls to Christ with one verse of Scripture, one verse of a song, and a great knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Selected

Mark 8:1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them

before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

HOW MANY LOAVES

HAVE

YE?



Brother Allen Polston

Christ's Compassion on the Multitude

Sometimes things are not what they seem to be. Have you ever run across those situations? Sometimes people have told me things, and later I learned that those things were not really that way at all. A good example of this happened to a young man when he went out to his

mailbox one morning and saw a set of footprints in the snow leading to the door of his car. Since he was not married and was the only one living there, he thought, "Oh, no! Someone has broken into my car!" Then he noticed that the footprints came from his neighbor's house, and he began to think how terrible it was that his neighbor had come over and broken into his car. However,

when he walked over and opened his car door, he saw a plate of cookies from his neighbor with a note wishing him a happy holiday season. Things were quite different from what he had first thought.

In verse 5 of our Scripture text, Jesus asked the question, "How many loaves have ye?" You may wonder, "If they had had fewer loaves, would Jesus have fallen

short of being able to feed that multitude?" They had seven loaves that day, and from those seven loaves and a few fish, Jesus fed more than four thousand people.

I want you to consider two questions as we study this Scripture text: First, did it really matter how many loaves of bread the disciples had in their possession? Second, was a mathematical formula used to determine how many people could be fed with those seven loaves? Since the answer to both questions is no, why did Jesus ask, "How many loaves have ye?" If you will read about the other occasions when Jesus fed many people with just a small amount, you will find that He asked them the same question. In one place He told them to go and count them.

In our Scripture text we find that a multitude of people and some disciples had gathered around Jesus, the Son of God. Looking out over the people, Jesus said, "I have compassion on the multitude." I am thankful for a God who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. When God looks down and sees a need in the life of a Christian or sees an unsaved individual, He is touched. He is moved with compassion when He sees people in difficult situations, facing problems for which they do not have answers. Friend, we all are going to face difficulties from time to time, and when we do, it causes God to be moved with compassion.

I am glad that God looks down upon us and is touched when He sees that we have been hurt. When He sees that we have tried to do our best to help others and to treat people right, yet they do not respond in the same manner, God is touched. He is moved when He sees the pain in our hearts at times such as that. Sometimes we face temptations and have things that we battle. God is touched when He sees that we are staying true to Him through difficult times. He is moved with compassion when He sees that His people are remaining faithful despite

the problems that they are facing.

Jesus said, "I have compassion on the multitude." Often when we face trials and troubles in life, the devil wants to make us think that it is our own fault. He says, "If you were closer to God, you wouldn't be dealing with such things." He tries to make you feel bad, and He wants to take your victory and the joy in your heart. The devil will try to accuse you and tell you, "If you would read your Bible more, you wouldn't be in this situation" or "If you had prayed more, you would be closer to God." However, when Jesus had compassion on the multitude, He was not dealing with those who were closest to Him, those who had been His closest confidants. He was looking on everyone who had needs that day, and He was moved with compassion as He saw their helpless state.

Brother, sister, God is still moved with compassion today. If you are facing trials and have become weary, God is concerned about your situation. He is looking on; nothing escapes His eye. He knows about your problems and He understands. Thank God, He knows what you are facing and what you are dealing with.

Overcoming Power

Many times the devil will tell you that God is not going to help you because it is your own fault. Friend, you need to learn that every time the devil speaks, he is telling a lie. He is after your soul, so do not put confidence in what he is telling you. Also, any thought that comes to your mind to persuade you to quit serving God is from the devil. Also, any thought that prevents you from yielding yourself to God or hinders you from growing closer to Him is from the devil. Whatever he says is a lie and not worth listening to. As the people of God, we need to learn how he is working against us. God created us, and when He did, He knew that the flesh would be weak. Christian friend, without

God's influence upon us, we would be no different from people in the world. Without God's presence we do not have the power to withstand sin and temptation. It is God in us that gives us overcoming power and enables us to live holy lives.

I enjoy being where the Spirit of God is present. The Spirit of God delivered me from sin. That took something beyond my own abilities. In my own strength I could not get out of the mess that I was in, but God's power enabled me to get out of sin and stay away from it. We need to stay consecrated and committed to God. Our flesh cannot live right and do right without God's power and His Spirit working in us. God knows that it takes something more than the weak flesh to rise above sin and temptation and live godly and holy in the midst of this world. He told us in Revelation 13:8 that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. When God created us, He knew that our flesh would be weak. Therefore, before the foundation of the world, it was already determined that men needed a sacrifice so that they could have their sins washed away.

Men could not have crucified Jesus had God not permitted it. They had no power beyond that. Pilate thought he had much power, and he said to Jesus, in so many words, "Do You not know who I am? Do You not know that I have the power to release You or to let them crucify You?" On the contrary, he did not have any power beyond what God allowed him to have. That was God's plan from the beginning. God knew that living in the strength of the flesh, we would be lost without hope. Therefore, from the foundation of the world, God planned that His Son would sacrifice His life and be crucified to atone for men's sins.

Brother, sister, do not think that you can let down on the Word of God, fail to attend worship services, and fail to do as God bids you to do and get by. The Bible states that Jesus was the Word made flesh. If

you reject God's Word, you are rejecting Jesus, and He is your only hope. God ordained that Christ would be slain from the foundation of the world so that we might be saved. God knew when He made man that he would fall and need a redeemer, because the flesh is weak. God has compassion upon us because of that.

As God looks upon those who are bound by alcohol, bad attitudes, or other conditions, God is filled with compassion. He wants all people to be saved. I know the religious world tells people that God has compassion and says, "You cannot help it. Just go on and do the best you can." No, that is not right. God has compassion in the way of saying, "Come to Me, and I will deliver you." That is the kind of compassion He has. He does not say, "Just go on in sin. I know that you cannot do any better." No, Jesus Christ gave His life so that we might be delivered from sin and set free to live holy lives, as God would have us to do.

God knows that man's ability in his own strength is limited. Therefore, we need God's power to live as He wants us to live. just as Jesus had compassion on that multitude, God has compassion today. Friend, if you have a need, God has compassion upon your situation. Verse 2 of our Scripture text reads, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat." God saw that those people had a need, and He was filled with compassion.

Saint, sometimes you will face difficulties; they may be physical, financial, mental, or spiritual. As you face those things, you may think, "If God doesn't help, what is going to become of me?" At times you may feel all alone and have no clues concerning how things are going to work out. The devil will try to impress upon your mind that you are the cause of this problem and that no one else has this problem. He will try to make you feel

there is no help in your situation. However, the Lord will always make a way for you to come out victorious.

Being Devoted to the Cause of Christ

Notice that Jesus said, "Because they have now been with me three days . . ." In several places in the Scriptures, three days seemed to be a persuasive amount of time. Jonah was in the belly of the fish about three days. Before that great fish swallowed him, his attitude was, "I am not going to Nineveh!" He had decided that he was not going to go and preach the Gospel in Nineveh, so he got on a ship to run from the Lord. Then a storm came upon them, and before long they threw Jonah overboard, and along came a great fish and swallowed him. No doubt, by that time Jonah was starting to think a little. Three days later, his excuses for not wanting to go to Nineveh became unimportant. What God had been dealing with him about was much more important than it was before. When he came out of the belly of that fish, he was ready to preach the Gospel just as God had told him to do.

Jesus Christ laid in a tomb for three days. According to Jewish custom, when one was dead for three days, then the Jews were convinced that one had really passed away. In other places in the Scriptures, the three-day period of time often caused people to be more committed or more devoted to something. When Jesus said the multitude had been with Him for three days, He was expressing how devoted they had been. They had not merely stopped by to listen for a few hours, but they had been with Christ for three days. They were committed to the cause of hearing what He had to say.

Christian friend, you need to be committed and devoted to the cause of Christ. It is the best cause to be devoted to. Today people are giving their lives, their talents, and their

energy to many things. However, living for God and laboring for God as much as you possibly can is the best cause in the world. You need to be devoted to the cause of Christ. As Jesus looked upon the people, in essence, He said, "These people have been devoted to Me for several days. They have followed Me out to this place, and they are facing a need."

All have needs from time to time, greater needs than we can supply. Difficulties will come. You may be in the midst of adversity. If so, God knows about your situation, and as long as you stay committed to Him, He will look upon your needs with compassion. Too often when people begin to have problems, they think the answer is to stay home from church for a few services. They say, "Well, I will stay home until I get this problem cleared up." Friend, that is not the way to resolve anything. You need to stay faithful to the house of God.

Brother, sister, when you have a need and it seems that things are not coming together as you think they ought to, do not back away. That is the time to dig in even more. The enemy of your soul will tell you to back off. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. If you back away and do not hear the Word of God, that will hinder your faith. It will decrease, and you will lose sight of the importance of being in the services, reading the Bible, and praying. This happens because your faith is not being inspired and encouraged. No matter what you face, the answer is never to back away, because you have to keep your faith right where God would have it.

One Who Sticks Closer Than a Brother

In our Scripture text Jesus looked upon the people and realized that they had a need. He realized that they needed something more than they had, something more than they themselves could supply. Because

they had a need, they were in a position that prompted something divine to happen. Sometimes when you get in such a place as that, you may begin to feel that you are all alone and that no one understands. You may begin to feel as though your situation is hopeless. Jesus knew exactly where those individuals were, and He knows exactly where you are today. In verse 3 He said, "And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way." He knew how much they could take. Jesus knew they would never make it home without something to eat.

Child of God, the Lord knows where you are, what you are dealing with, and how much you can take. The Bible tells us that He will never give us more than we can bare, and the only way He can hold true to that is if He knows all about your situation. Sometimes you may get confused, but God knows exactly where you are. If you stay committed and consecrated to God, He will bring you through in due time.

Sometimes when you face things, you may wonder just as Job did, "Lord, where are You? I don't see You anywhere." Nevertheless, He knows exactly where you are. Whether your need is physical or spiritual, God knows all about it. You are not alone. God is walking right beside you, and He will never leave you or forsake you. He will stick closer than a brother. He knows your fears, He knows how you are being tried and tempted, and He knows how the devil is trying to make you doubt. He knows all about these things. One song says, "You can't do wrong and get by," and you cannot. Thank God, there is a positive side about it also. God knows when you are doing right.

In our Scripture text Jesus knew that if He sent the people away without anything to eat, they were going to faint by the way and never make it back to their homes. God will not let His people get to the

place where they are left without any hope or help. He will come through just in time. Many times I have thought that I was at the very end. I have said, "Lord, I cannot take it any more." Then as I began to pray, God enabled me to go a little further.

In God's time deliverance will come, and you will know that God has come on the scene to do what needs to be done. Saint, just hold on a little longer; press the battle on. God is not going to leave you without help; He is right beside you, and He wants you to keep pressing on. I am glad that He has compassion when He looks down and sees your needs. He does not just say, "Well, it serves you right. You used to be a terrible sinner." No, He looks down with compassion and says, "There is one whom I love so much." He is ready to help you.

Jesus knew that those people had gone to their very limit, and He also knew where they had come from. He said, ". . . for divers of them came from far." God knows the trials that you have already had to face. God knows all about you, and He is there to help you. Nothing escapes His understanding.

Divine Intervention

The disciples were a little confused in our text of Scripture. As Jesus spoke of having compassion on the people's needs, the disciples asked Him, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" Some things require divine intervention. Although man has done many great things in the day in which we are living, there are some things that a man cannot do. Occasionally God allows each of us to have needs in life that men cannot do anything about it.

You might have a good pastor and saints in the congregation to encourage you, but at some point you will face issues that no man can resolve. When the disciples asked where a man was going to get any-

thing to satisfy those people, the answer was simply that no man could.

Saint, you need to remember to keep your eyes on God. Christ was crucified for your sins, wounded so that you could receive help in every situation. He was striped, beaten, and crucified so that we might receive deliverance from sin and live godly lives. There are some things that man alone cannot do, but God can do all things. He can do what man cannot do.

God can come to your rescue, no matter what you stand in need of. If you are unsaved, He can save you. If you have a religious profession without a real experience, God can do a work in your life so that you can have more than a religious profession. You can be saved by the power of God, delivered from the old life and be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

It is still amazing to me when I think of what God did for me. Sometimes I still wonder if this is not just a dream. Friend, God can do a miraculous work in your life. When He works out situations, He does it in such a way that you can hardly believe the outcome. You may be bound and have difficult situations to face. As a Christian, you will battle some things, but God can deliver you.

Once as a young convert, I was in a battle so heavily with the enemy over things in my past. Finally, I got to the place where I said, "Lord, I must have help. I can't handle this on my own." God let me know right then that He was going to help me. It has not been nearly as bad as it was before. I thank God that He can do what no man can do. I am also thankful for good pastors who can help and instruct.

In the Scripture lesson Jesus said, "How many loaves have ye?" It was not a matter of whether they had seven loaves or two loaves that determined what God could do. When He worked it out, it was not going to be according to what they had. He was going to do a divine, heav-

enly work. This miracle was going to be so much of God that He wanted them to know beforehand, "Here is what you had, and that could not have supplied your need."

Friend, when you bring what you have to God and let Him bless it, He can do with that what no other can do. If you have just a little faith, you can bring it to God and say, "Lord, this is what I have. I don't have enough to bring me through, but You can give me what I need." God can lift you and give you the faith you need so that you can walk on. If you are facing difficult situations and have only a little courage, bring what you have to God. He can take that little bit of courage and multiply it and work a miracle in your life.

It may be that you are a little short on strength. You may be facing difficult situations and feel, "I just don't have the strength for this." You can bring that little bit of strength to God. Count how many

"loaves" you have, bring them to God, and let Him put His blessing on them. When it is all said and done, you can say, "I know what the Lord did for me." God wants us to see how little we have and then bring it to Him so that He can work it out and our faith will be strengthened and grow. Sometimes you may think, "I am at the end of my rope," but God says, "No, you are not; climb a little more." Other times He may let you get to the end of your rope before He moves on the situation.

Friend, you need to bring what little you have to God, and He will place His blessing upon it. That is what Jesus did in our Scripture lesson. He took the seven loaves, which could not have begun to feed all those people, and fed four thousand; then they had some left over for their journey home.

If you have serious needs, bring them to God. He can supply whatever the needs may be. Once I was

in a pitiful condition. One night while sitting in a church service, I realized that I could not do anything about my situation. I took what little faith I had to God and said, "God, I have heard that You can take problems like I have and work them out." I took the little bit of faith that I had down to an altar of prayer and God delivered me from a life of sin. Since then, I have had other things to face. Many times things have gone so far that I could not resolve them. That is when I took what little I had, laid it down before God, and let Him put His blessing on it.

God can work a miracle in your life. You may say, "Well, you do not know my situation." Friend, if you will give what you have to God, He can resolve your need and work it out. May God bless you.

(Cassette C-4306A)

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!