

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

**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.

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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)

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**Vol. 36 March 2006 No. 3**

# Guest Editorial

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)."*

*Hebrews 10:23*

*"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."*

*Hebrews 4:14*

## Hold Fast

We are living in perilous times that are full of uncertainty and turmoil. The enemy of souls is diligently working to discourage, confuse, and destroy as many souls as he possibly can. In almost any direction one looks, there seems to be nothing but problems, troubles, heartaches, and strife. Nation is rising against nation, and tension, disagreement, and discord are surmounting on every side.

Although the worldly picture may look dark and dismal and the economic situation becomes more frightening every day, let me assure you that God is still in control. It may seem that situations are getting out of hand, but our great God in Heaven sets the bounds of all things, and nothing can go any further than He allows. With sin and ungodliness on the upsurge, many hearts are failing for fear of those things that are coming on the earth. Too often people look on surrounding circumstances instead of looking to and trusting in God. Because of this lack of faith, many turn back from following and serving the Lord. This world and also the church is in a shaking time. It is time for the people of God to get a tighter grip on God's unchanging hand. This is not the time to give up the battle or quit the race.

The words of the Prophet Joel come to mind, when he proclaimed that "the Lord will be the hope of his people" (Joel 3:16). The Lord has never lost a battle, and He never will. It is the responsibility of each child of God to stay close to Him. What encouragement that ought to bring to our hearts and minds! Dear one, many things in life are beyond human control, things that we are unable to do anything about physically, but God is still the Master of this universe. He is the only One who can calm the storms of life. He still has the power to calm the troubled

sea. One old song says, "Sometimes God calms the storm, and sometimes He calms me." We must not allow our hearts to be overly troubled about things that are happening all around us. This will only bring a restlessness in our hearts that will rob us of our peace with Jesus Christ, and it can mar the hope we have in Him. David said in Psalm 42:5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God. . . ." Now, as never before, we need to hold fast our connection with God and refuse to be moved by things that are going on around us.

The secret to having real victory and power lies in staying true to God and living obedient to His Word and His will, trusting in Him despite how things may look or seem to be going. An old song states, "Hold to God's unchanging hand." Your doing so will assure that you never fall. Child of God, you must keep your confidence fixed securely in the Savior. He is the only One who can see you through this troubled world victoriously. Men may fail and fall in the battle, and nations may be defeated by oppression, but there is victory in Jesus! Keeping your faith fixed in Him who is invisible is so important. Psalm 91:7 reads, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it will not come nigh thee." Why will it not come to you? It will not come near you because you have a tight grip on God's hand. You are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Being in Christ is the only safe haven for the soul of man. When you hold fast to Him, He will hold fast to you.

Paul shared some very important  
*[continued on page 21]*

1 Kings 13:1 And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

4 And it came to pass, when king

Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

6 And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

7 And the king said unto the man of

God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

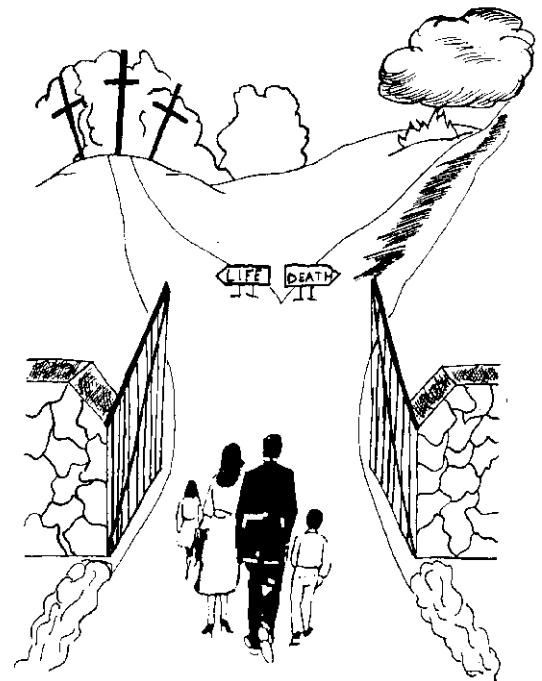
9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

2 Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

# PARTIAL OBEDIENCE AND FINISHING YOUR COURSE



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **A Divinely Sent Messenger**

The Scripture text in 1 Kings tells us a little about a certain man of God, but this incident is all that is known about him. In the Chaldean language he was called a prophet, and in the Hebrew he was called a

divine person, one who was wholly devoted to the service of God. It does not give his name, but the Word of God lets us know that he came out of Judah and went to Bethel. God sent him there with a specific message and implicit instructions, and he was told what to

do when his mission was accomplished. He was a divinely inspired messenger. Again, verse 1 says, "And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense."

Second Peter 1:21 says, "For the

prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The man of God in our Scripture text came in the strength and the power of the Word of God, and he uttered the divine revelation he had received from God.

King Jeroboam was practicing idolatry. First Kings 12:32 reads, "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto and the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made." Since King Jeroboam was caught up in idolatry, the man of God was sent to Bethel from Judah with a message. He was to cry out against the altar, and he did it right in the presence of King Jeroboam. He said the altar would be destroyed and the ashes that were upon it would be poured out. That was quite a message to proclaim in the presence of the king, but God gave the man of God boldness and divine inspiration. The Prophet received the Word of the Lord from God Himself.

King Jeroboam became enraged and stretched forth his hand against the prophet to try to seize him. When he did, his hand dried up, or became rigid. He asked the same prophet against whom he cried out to pray for him. (You know, you need to be careful along that line. If you speak against a man of God, just remember, you might have to call upon him and ask him to pray for you. That would be a humbling experience.)

The man of God sought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored. Next, King Jeroboam offered the prophet a gift, which was common in that day. The king wanted the man of God to go home with him, be refreshed, and receive a reward. However, the man of God, who had received explicit instructions, said to the king, "If thou wilt

give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD [the man of God had received a charge, a distinct command from God], saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest."

The man of God was not to accept any hospitality from anyone at Bethel due to the idolatry that was going on there. God was stirred. The Scripture text says in verse 10, "So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel." However, this prophet's course was not finished yet.

The Apostle Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." You may make a good start in serving God and in obeying the Word of God explicitly, but you need to always keep in mind that your course is not finished yet. That is where the enemy works on you, saint.

### **Seduced by a False Prophet**

In our Scripture text the man of God's mission was not yet completed. His divine charge was going to be challenged. The Scripture says that an old prophet dwelt in Bethel. His sons probably told him about the man of God and told him which way he went, so he started out in search of him and found him resting under an oak tree.

Right away, the old prophet invited him to his home, and the man of God quickly explained the divine instructions that he had previously told King Jeroboam. This man of God was about to be seduced. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." To be seduced is to be misled, to be deceived, or to be confronted by an imposter. The old prophet who approached the man of God was an imposter; he was in a backslidden condition. How do we know? Had

he been up to power with God, then God would have used him against King Jeroboam, but God had to call a man of God out of Judah. We read in 1 Kings 13:18 that the old prophet said, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

What is the deceptive part that the devil uses on you? It is right in this Scripture text, and you can read of a similar deception that took place in the beginning of the Book of Genesis. The devil challenged the Word of the Lord. That is what got Adam and Eve into trouble. In Genesis 3:1-5 we read: "Now the serpent was more subtle [or crafty] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die [that is the first message of 'once in grace, always in grace']. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The old prophet challenged the man of God with the charge that he had received, but the Scripture says that he lied to him. (Dear one, let me give you some advice. To make it into Glory, you need to obey what God says. You must be careful of people who run around and claim they are neutral, not for or against. Jesus said you are either for Him or against Him.) Oh, this is a sad text. The lie was so convincing that he laid aside his divine revelation from the Lord and went back with the old prophet. No doubt, the man of God was hungrier and thirstier and more tired than he was when he started that mission. The old prophet knew

the condition of King Jeroboam. He dwelled right in Bethel, but he never cried out against his idolatry. The old prophet was in bad shape, and the devil used him.

### **Be Careful of Partial Obedience**

First Kings 13:19-20 tells us: "So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table [the man of God went back with him and did exactly what God told him *not* to do], that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back." What else stands out in this Scripture reading? The old prophet was so deceptive that the man of God was unable to discern him.

You need to be careful of Bible-carrying false prophets who can quote the Scriptures. First Kings 13:21-22 read: "And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers."

Here the old prophet spoke the truth. He did not say that an angel spoke to him. God spoke through the old prophet to the man of God concerning the punishment for disobeying the charge that God had given him. Dear one, let me warn you: you cannot partially obey God and get by. God used the man of God, but he did not finish his course. You need to be careful of partial obedience.

You may say, "Oh, I don't think God cares if I do this or that. He knows my heart." God does know your heart, but He also cares about what you do. Man looks on the outside. That is the reason you need to keep both the inward man and the outward man in good shape.

Everyone has an opinion, but what about what the Word of God says? You may say, "I will dress the way I want to dress. I have my opinion of what is modest." Well, if your opinion does not line up with the Word of God, it will cause you to be lost. Many people want Jesus, but they want Him *and* their own way. Jesus does not satisfy all the whims that people have. Dear one, you need to get deeper in the things of God, and then you will find fulfillment in Christ. Only He can satisfy your soul.

The enemy will try to talk you into disobeying God. In our Scripture lesson you can read how quickly the old prophet got out of there when his sons told him about what took place and how quickly he sought the man of God. The devil used him to turn that man of God away from obeying what God had told him to do.

### **The High Cost of Disobedience**

First Kings 13:23-26 reads: "And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him."

Disobedience carries a terrible price. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans in Romans 6:23, said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through

Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, I know the Scripture applies to spiritual death, but many people have gone out of this world committing sin in physical death, and they ended up in eternity lost. It pays to obey God completely.

Some people commit murder and suicide all because of the culprit of sin. It is amazing that some serial killers were raised under the influence of the Bible and got away from the things of God. They thought what God said did not make any difference. Often they began to mess around with pornography, and it kept growing until they actually committed an ungodly act. Then they went from one act to another, and they kept going until finally they got caught, and then they ended up on death row, taken out of this world before their time.

Sin is nothing to fool with, dear one. God wants 100 percent obedience, not partial obedience. God wants you to fight the good fight of faith and finish your course. Many people die before their time because they have chosen the road of sin.

The man of God in our Scripture lesson was seduced and deceived by an old lying prophet. The man of God from Judah already had his message, and he got it by the Word of the Lord.

What did the Apostle Paul say in the Book of Galatians? He said in Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In our Scripture lesson, if God was going to change the message that He had spoken to the man of God, He would have changed it and told the prophet Himself, just as He gave the original message to him. He would not have used some old backslidden prophet to change the message. God did not use him to give the king the message to start with, and He certainly would not have used that old prophet to change it. The Word of God does not contradict itself.

How many people are living in

disobedience to God? Are you knowingly walking against the Word of the Lord? Let me remind you, when God sees in your heart a desire for the things of the world, He will remove the restraints and let you go.

### **Satan Attacks Your Weaknesses**

God could see down in the heart of the man of God that he really wanted to eat and drink and go with that old prophet. This was the same man of God who had turned down King Jeroboam when he offered him reward and refreshment. However, when the man of God became tired, hungry, and thirsty, he gladly accepted the old prophet's word when he said that God had changed His mind and was going to allow him to go and get refreshed; but out ahead of that man of God was death. Oh, how the enemy knew what to use on him. Friend, the devil will attack you in your weak places. He knows what your weaknesses are.

God did not want the man of God to eat or drink in the city of Bethel with anyone. By the time the old prophet caught up with the man of God, the man of God had weakened considerably since his encounter with King Jeroboam. In 1 Kings 13:9 I want you to notice that the man of God said, "For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." Then in verse 17 he said, "For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest." The first time he stated this, he expressed it as a charge, or a commandment, from God. Friend, when you definitely know the will of God, you dare not turn from it.

The old prophet did not have the authority to change God's Word. Today people put out too much of their own opinions concerning the Word of God. One may say, "Oh, I know what God said, but I don't

believe it's a commandment." When it comes to the ordinance of feet washing, some say, "Oh, I believe that's okay, but I don't feel it's a commandment." They are deceived. A child of God will rebuke those thoughts and obey even though he or she does not understand it.

Others say, "I believe you can do this or that. It doesn't make any difference to God. He doesn't care about the outward appearance." On the contrary, God does care about the outward appearance, and He certainly spoke enough about it. Why do many pastors back away from the message of holiness? They do it because it is a people's church. When the people do not like the message, then the pastor changes it rather than lose them, despite what the Word of God says. There is a danger in changing the message, and it will cost you your soul, just as it did the man of God in our Scripture lesson.

There is a deception to sin, and the deception is that you think you will not reap it. I want to remind you again that God is not as we are. He does not forget. He can remember what happened a thousand years ago as if it happened today. God does not have trouble remembering anything. The Bible lets you know that the very hairs of your head are numbered. Proverbs 3:1-2 says: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

Ecclesiastes 12:13 reads, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Dear one, your only protection against the enemy of your soul is to obey the Word of God.

### **Divine Retribution**

What was out ahead of the man of God? Again, 1 Kings 13:24 tells us, "And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way,

and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase." This was divine judgment, because the lion was not even hungry. Had the lion been hungry, it would have eaten the man of God and the ass, but it did not. It stood there like a sentinel over the man of God. It is against nature for a lion to attack and not devour its prey, but that lion stood there. Verse 25 reads, "And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt." The old prophet knew right away that it was divine punishment for disobedience.

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:6-8: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you [you need to always keep in mind, dear one, that God does care for you]. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The devil will devour you if he can get you to disobey the Word of God. The man of God in our Scripture lesson disobeyed; he only partially obeyed the Word of the Lord. His course would not have been finished until he returned home.

How many begin serving God like a blaze of fire, but not far up the road something comes along, and they turn away. Dear one, you are going to be tested in your experience. You have some weak areas in your life, and God will allow the enemy to go there, not to cause you to backslide but to reveal those weak areas to you. When God reveals those weak areas to you, He wants you to take them to Him so that He can fortify and strengthen those areas.

The man of God was not killed because the lion was hungry, but he was killed under divine retribution. It was punishment for disobedience. Ezekiel 18:4 states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Dear one, you cannot disobey the Word of God

without paying the price. When one disobeys and dies spiritually, men pass by and they look in amazement. What do they do? Just as the men in our Scripture lesson did, they go and tell others.

### **Are You Fully Obeying God?**

Your only hope of not being devoured by the enemy is strict obedience to the Word of God. You may say, "Well, I may not be measuring up 100 percent, but I am getting by." Are you really getting by? What does the Bible say? Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily [in other words, because God does not visit your sin quickly], therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." When judgment tarries, you should not get the idea that judgment will not come.

Numbers 32:23 reads, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have

sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." God knows where you are located. He does not have to get the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to find you. He knows exactly where you are. When God is so good to show you the evil of a thing, then He expects you to refrain from it and keep His Word. When you keep His charge, or His commandments, you are showing your love to God. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The story of the man of God in our Scripture lesson started as a great success, but it ended in an untimely, unnecessary death. Perhaps you are under the judgment of God, and the only reason judgment has not been carried out is due to the mercy of God. Are you obeying God 100 percent or are you living in partial obedience? If you are living in partial obedience, you need to turn

from your sin immediately. You must turn from that which is wrong and turn to Jesus Christ. He will rebuke the devourer, and you can have victory in your soul.

You have not finished your course yet, and you do not know when your life is going to come to an end. If you are in partial obedience, it would behoove you to move from that position to 100 percent obedience. If there are things you need to confess and forsake, you need to get it done while Jesus is still on His throne of mercy. Do not tarry, as the man of God did under the oak tree. Had he kept moving, he would have delivered his soul; but while the man of God tarried, the enemy caught up with him. There is a work to do, and a charge has been given. You need to complete it. You can do it by the grace of God.

*(Cassette C-5394E)*

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## **2005 Mission Trip to Africa**

Brother Jan Romine, from Newark, Ohio, and Brother David Stegmeier and Brother Jeremy Boyd, both from Canby, Oregon, were privileged to spend two weeks in Kenya, Africa, with Brother Joseph Mbui to attend the 2005 Church of God Convention.

The morning after we arrived, we began traveling with Brother Mbui to various congregations. The first congregation we visited was the Kiraro congregation. Brother Eliphas Nkonge is the pastor of that congregation with seventy members; this congregation is eighty kilometers from Embu.

The next day we traveled 170 kilometers to the Mathiamene congregation, where Brother Gabriel Lmwithe pastors 150 members. The same day we also visited Brother James Mugundi's congregation of sixty members. The Mbukomi congregation is eighty kilometers from Embu. Monday we drove 145 kilometers to worship at Igoji with Brother Erastus Kamene and his fifty-five members. We ended at Siakago Town where Brother David Njiru Njoroge pastors fourteen members; this congregation is twenty-seven kilometers from Embu.

The Muthatari camp meeting started Wednesday morning and ended on the following Sunday afternoon. During the camp meeting, Brother Stegmeier spoke on the Book of Revelation in each morning service. The people were eager to learn the truth concerning the Revelation.

Before the meeting, Brother Joseph Mbui had a friend paint

a beautiful Revelation chart for him that hung at the front of the chapel. This was a real help to Brother Stegmeier, not only in teaching but also for the people to visualize what he was explaining.

During one service, Brother Stegmeier's heart was touched when he saw a little boy on crutches who came forward with his offering. Brother Stegmeier felt led to pray for him and asked to see him after the service. They found the little boy outside playing with the other children. Upon returning, someone informed Brother Stegmeier that the young boy had contracted polio and was thought to be fifteen years of age.

Saturday during the camp meeting, we had a baptismal service. It was a beautiful sight to see all the saints standing at the banks of the river singing while thirty-one people were baptized.

Approximately 650 people were present during the camp meeting. Among those present were twenty-two ministers and about 150 children. Some people came from as far away as 500 kilometers, or 310 miles.

The church sits on a hillside that overlooks the valley of Embu. Above the valley is a beautiful view of Mount Kenya. God has blessed the people with a wonderful one acre plot on which the church sits. The people named their meeting place "God's Acre." The landscape outside the building is gorgeous and

***[continued on page 13]***

Luke 19:38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold

their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon

thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

# If People Could Just Know



*Brother David Watson*

## **The Terrible Cost of Sin**

As I studied for this message, I thought about the many things Jesus had said and done before the people, yet they did not believe that He was the Son of God. Matthew 13:14 says, "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." Think about the many times people were in Jesus' presence and He preached to them and healed the sick. He performed many miracles before the eyes of the people. They listened to Him and

looked upon Him with their natural eyes, but they did not know that He was the Messiah, the gift of God from Heaven. They failed to realize that He was the remedy for man's sin and the very peace for which they were looking.

Jesus, in Matthew, Chapter 23, looked at the Pharisees and the scribes and charged them with many things. He mentioned the proselytizing they were doing and let us know they were deceiving the hearts of men under darkness. Verses 37-38 tell us that Jesus looked at them and said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest

them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Had they only known what trouble lay in store for them because they were rejecting the Son of God, surely they would have listened to Him! Today often people hear the Word of God preached and see God move on souls and save people, see people healed, and see people finish their course with the testimony that they are going to a better place; yet they do not know God.

In Jerusalem the people did not know what Jesus was really saying when He said their enemy would compass the city. In Matthew, Chapter 24, Jesus told the Jews that when they saw the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, to flee to the mountains. He also told them in verses 17-21: "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Jesus forewarned the Jews that great destruction was coming upon them. If they had only realized what Jesus was weeping about when He beheld that city! Jesus knew the sorrow that would befall those people.

Josephus said when Titus brought his troops into Jerusalem, he dug trenches and put troops in the trenches around the city. The people had no way to escape. After a period of time, starvation, pestilence, and diseases set in. A woman even killed her baby and cooked it in an oven to feed her hungry stomach because of the desolation that had taken place in that city. Today I say with a weeping heart, oh, if people could only know what trouble they are getting into by turning down God and saying no to salvation; then surely they would love Jesus Christ!

What destruction came upon the city of Jerusalem! Titus' army marched inside that city and began to take the people's lives with their swords. Josephus said they threw the dead bodies over the walls of the city, and the blood ran from those bodies as a river. Friend, it means something to heed the Word of God and to know Jesus Christ. Any nation that turns its back on God has a

payday coming. It means something to honor the One who created the heavens and the earth, who placed us here for His glory and honor. As sure as you are living, one day Jesus will call you too, sinner friend, and you will know what it means to turn down Jesus Christ. If you could only know what the cost of sin is, surely you would not want to fool with it. The people who have experienced sin and then tasted of the good things of the Lord do not want to go back to the things they used to do if they have really settled it in their hearts.

### **The Cunning Craftiness of Satan**

I think of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God fixed such a wonderful place for them, loved them, and gave them everything they needed to make them happy, but Eve listened to the devil, and that is where the trouble started. The devil is a sly, cunning, crafty old fellow. Just as sure as you lend him an ear, he will lie to you. What he says may sound true, but he will lead you to destruction if you listen to him.

Genesis 3:3-5 states: "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

I want you to see how cunningly Satan fixed his testimony to this woman. Eve partook of the fruit, and then gave it to her husband; then he partook of it, and their eyes were opened. Therefore, they ran and hid themselves. You see, there is guilt in the conscience when one sins. No one has to tell you when sin is involved; you will know. Adam and Eve went running and got some leaves and sewed them together because they suddenly realized they were naked. The voice of God spoke to them in the cool of the day and

said, "Adam, where art thou?" Adam had to give an account, so he blamed the woman, and the woman blamed the serpent; nevertheless, it cost them. Oh, the high price sin has cost people since it entered the world! Oh, what it has done to souls from that day to this!

If Adam and Eve had only known what sin would do and what trouble they were getting into, surely they would have abstained from the forbidden fruit. Sin will take you further than you want to go, and it will hold you longer than you want to stay. It will blind your eyes and defile your conscience. If you stay in sin long enough, it will sear your conscience until sin will no longer appear to be sin. Sin is still just as dirty in the eyes of God today as it has ever been. Oh, if people really knew what sin could do to them, surely they would want no part of it.

When Cain killed his brother Abel, oh, what sin really did to Cain! Oh, what a price he had to pay! Sin got into his heart because he was trying to go his own way. He refused to give God the offering that God required of him, so he became jealous of Abel, because God had accepted Abel's offering. Therefore, sin got hold of Cain, and one day in the field as they talked, Cain killed his own brother. If Cain had really known the stain that sin would put within his soul, the guilt of his conscience, and the grief he would have to bear for the rest of his days, surely he would not have killed his brother.

Some individuals have murdered their entire family because of sin. Some parents have killed their children because of sin. Some have broken up their marriage because of sin. Children have walked out on their mother and father because of sin. Other people are trying to hide among this world because of guilty consciences caused by sin. However, there is only one hiding place, and that is in Jesus Christ. Friend, you need Him more than anything in this world.



## **The Marks of Sin Will Follow You**

Consider David of old. He should have been on the battlefield with his men, but he stayed at Jerusalem. As David looked over his housetop, he saw a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, bathing. Lust began to fill his heart, and he sent for her. She came to David, and he filled the desire of his lust. When Bathsheba conceived, David sent for her husband, Uriah, who was on the battlefield. When David brought him in, he tried to get Uriah to go home to be with his wife. David wanted to cover his sin, but Uriah was more faithful than David was. He would not go home because his fellow soldiers were still in the field, battling the enemy. So Uriah lay at David's door all night. He was faithful, not only to the king but also to God and his brethren.

Friend, old-time salvation causes people to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to one another. David saw no other way out, so to cover his sins, he wrote a note and sent it to Joab, the captain of his army. He told Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and then withdraw from him so that he would die. Joab did that, but did that stop the sin? No, David just added sin to sin.

Isaiah 30:1-2 reads: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!" Those people went down to Egypt to take a covering, but that was not of the Lord. David took a covering, no doubt, thinking everything would be all right. He probably thought, "I am the king; I can hide this. Everything will be all right." If you put a snake in a box, as surely as someone kicks that box, that snake will let someone know it is in there. Likewise, it is the same way with sin. As

sure as you try to cover it, somehow it will be revealed. Numbers 32:23 tells you, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

God sent the Prophet Nathan to David, and he told David a parable concerning a little ewe lamb. David became enraged until Nathan pointed his finger at him and said, "Thou art the man." Then David came to himself and repented, but from that time forward, sin plagued David's house. The Prophet said, in so many words, "God will forgive you, David, but sin will never depart from your house."

Friend, the marks of sin will follow you to your grave. God may forgive you of the sin, but when the devil lays his hand on you, his mark will stay with you until you leave this world. If you have committed adultery, the mark of adultery will be on you, though God has forgiven you. In Matthew 21:31 Jesus told the chief priests and the elders that the publicans and the harlots would go into the Kingdom of God before they would. He was talking about the marks that sin had put upon them. If you have murdered a person, people will look at you and say, "You are the one who killed that person." God might have forgiven you, but people will still point their fingers and say, "He's the man who did that" or "She's the woman."

If people could just know what they would be getting themselves into and could foresee what sin will do to them, surely they would not want to be in sin. Consider what David had to reap. His son, Amnon, lusted after his own sister and committed incest. He forced himself on her; then his brother Absalom killed him. Next, Absalom took his father's concubines and shamed David openly before the whole city.

### **Sin Has a Payday**

I want to tell you that sin has no stopping place. Sin has a payday as sure as you fool with it. You will pay and pay and pay. The best thing you can do is stop where you are,

throw up your hands, and say, "Jesus, I'm coming Your way. I want old-time salvation in my soul. I don't want to go to hell."

Sin will lead you further than you want to go. Oh, what destruction sin has! You can read in 2 Chronicles, Chapter 36, that God's people mocked the preachers and the priests and wagged their heads at them. Had they only known what was lying at their door! The devil has a reason for trying to blind your eyes. He does not talk to you just to waste time. The devil is not in love with anyone. He would take you to hell today if he could. He does not care who you are, how old you are, or how young you are as long as he can ensnare you. He will take you to hell if you listen to him.

Whenever God's people became so rebellious that they refused to listen to the prophets, what did God do? He caused Babylon's army to march on Jerusalem and take that city into captivity. They stopped their worship. When they caught people worshiping, they killed them. The soldiers would tie a person behind a horse and drag that individual through town. They made them pay for water from their own springs and pay for wood from their own forests. You may say, "Well, preacher, that is unfair." Sin has no sense of reason about it. It hardens hearts and brings people to the place where they have no compassion, not even for helpless children. It drives mercy out of the heart. Who wants to fool with sin? If you could just know what sin is, surely you would not want it. Sin is destructive.

### **"Jealousy Is the Rage of a Man"**

I want you to consider jealousy. If folks could just know what jealousy can do to them, they would want no part of it. Jealousy is a terrible condition. I have seen it work on people, and there is no end to what it can do. Proverbs 6:33-34 reads: "A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped

away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance."

Oh, what jealousy will do when that spirit gets hold of a man or a woman! What rage it causes within people when it gets hold of them! When the Apostles met a lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple at the hour of prayer, he needed something besides money. In Acts 3:6 Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Peter helped the man to his feet, and the man leaped up and walked into the temple, leaping and praising God, and all the people saw this. However, the religious leaders refused to accept that God had done this work, and they raged in their souls.

Jealousy turned those religious leaders against the Apostles, so they put them in hold and threatened them. You see, they despised them. Jealousy will cause you to despise the one of whom you are jealous of. It is cruel to good people. It is cruel not only to the one who is jealous but also to the one whom that person envys. The elders and the religious leaders of that day envied the Apostles. You see, those leaders were trying to be in the church business, but they could not produce the results that God worked through the Apostles, because they did not have the power of God working in their lives. The spirit of jealousy will cause one to go to any means to carry out his objective, and it will not spare anyone. When jealousy sets in, it will avenge to the very end.

I have seen singers become jealous because they thought others received more praise than they did. People such as that are not singing for God's glory. A spirit is working on them that should not be there. If a person sings for God's glory, it does not matter who gets praise as long as God receives the glory. I have seen preachers become jealous of one another, thinking that one could preach better than the other. If

a man is in God's hand, he will preach according to his ability and no greater than his anointing. I have seen jealousy get among preachers and tear works apart, scattering the people this way and that way. God does not want that to happen among His church. He wants people to dwell together in unity and love and to have fellowship with one another, embracing one another. If the spirit of jealousy gets hold of you, it will destroy you.

### **Guard Against Becoming Resentful**

Another spirit that you need to guard against is resentment. I have seen people become resentful and then give others the cold shoulder. They refused to shake hands with certain people and would rather they stayed out of their sight. Have you ever watched a cat and a dog? I was raised on a farm, and I have seen a dog turn on a cat when the cat was not expecting it, and every hair on that cat's back stood up. The cat would back up and throw up its front paws and hiss at the dog; then the dog would stop in his tracks. The dog knew the cat was getting ready to scratch its nose if it did not stop and back away.

Sometimes people remind me of that when they are resentful. They feel good until they see someone they resent, and then their countenance changes and their spirit falls. Friend, if you could only know the end of resentment and realize how much it hurts God! If you could just know the One who had the nails pierce His hands and feet, the crown of thorns upon His head, and the spear in His side. If you could only know the One who died upon the Cross for all your sins. Christ can conquer all things. He can bring people together and bring peace in the midst. If the spirit of resentment is present, others are going to see it.

Sometimes people say, "Well, it won't hurt anybody but myself." Romans 14:7 reads, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth

to himself." If you go home from the church services pouting and talking to your children concerning something that you have become disgruntled about, and then you talk to your friends about it, you will see that you have hurt others.

Each of us has an influence with others. You do not live to yourself, and you do not die to yourself. There is no end to the destruction that bitterness and resentment will bring. I have seen mothers and fathers, after they have gotten caught up in these things, come back to God and make it right with God, weeping and asking the church for forgiveness. However, their children heard such things talked before them and sown in their lives, and they hardened their hearts and said, "We will never go back to church. They hurt my mom and dad." Friend, these things ought not to be. Peace, love, joy, and happiness should be in the hearts of God's children.

### **The Effects of Sin**

If you could only know the effects of sin! In Luke 15:11-24 you can read the account of the prodigal son. The younger son asked his father for his portion of their goods. His father gave it to him, and he went his way. In time he wasted all that he had and ended up among strangers, finding no one to care for his soul. That is what sin will do for you. If you think that people you find in the honky-tonks or on the dance floors care about you, you are wrong. If you think the gamblers or the drug dealers care about you, you are wrong. Young person, if sin gets hold of you, it will take you away from home, put you in the gutter, and strip you of your good name, your virtue, and everything that is decent and honorable. You will end up as a spiritual pauper, and maybe in jail somewhere. Sin will destroy you.

When the prodigal son left home, he had good food and fine clothes. He had a loving family and good friends, but he ended up in the

hogpen. That is the way of sin. When people begin to live in sin, they do not know what they are heading for.

I want to relate to you a true story that may help someone. Someone told me that as he was going to a neighbor's one time, he found a still in a barn. He said when he found that still, a spirit came upon him, and he wanted to run it. He talked to several people until he found someone who agreed to show him how to run it, and he sold the liquor. He said he enjoyed the money he was making from it. He did not think that he would get caught and spend time in prison. When he was released from prison, that spirit was still there. He started making liquor again, and again he went to prison. He went to prison five times for bootlegging liquor, and he lost his family and everything he had. At one time he had a good-paying job and a home. He sold the home and got drunk that same night, and someone robbed him and stole every dime he had. He was a pauper when he died, all alone. Sin took him further than he wanted to go and robbed him of every good thing that he could have had. Friend, I am warning you to help you realize how destructive sin is. You need to take a good look at what sin is doing to people's lives. It has ruined many talented men and women.

The prodigal son finally came to himself and went home. His father ran out to meet him, just as you would do with your own child, because a parent still loves a wayward child no matter what he or she does. You do not love what he or she does wrong, but you love your child. When the father ran to meet his son, the prodigal son repented and said, "I have sinned against you and against Heaven." His father killed the fatted calf, put a robe on him, put shoes on his feet, and put the family ring on his hand. Soon there was music in the house. Then the elder son came in from the field and heard the rejoicing. He inquired

about the noise he heard. One servant told him that his brother had come home and his father had killed the fatted calf. The elder son became angry and began to have self-pity. No doubt, he started to think about all the things he had done and wondered why his father had never given him a kid and allowed him to make merry with his friends.

Friend, if you are in God's family, God takes care of you, and you need to give Him the glory and be satisfied with whatever God does. If folks could only know what sin and jealousy and rage will do.

### **The Awfulness of Hell**

The last thought that I want you to consider is this: if folks could just know what hell is like. No one can tell you what hell is really like. I cannot fully describe to you the awfulness of hell, but I have read enough about hell in God's Word to know that I do not want to go there. Friend, you are going either to Heaven or to hell; there is no place between. This world is the testing ground. This is the place where you must get ready to meet God.

Revelation 20:12-14 reads: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

The vision that John saw gives an account of the great Judgment and the souls that will stand before God on that day to hear their sentences. If you could only know that you are making your case right in this world for what your sentence will be when you stand at the great judgment bar of God. It is so sad to

hear so many people give excuses such as, "If it were not for So-and-So . . ." or "If it were not for my wife . . ." or "If it were not for my dad . . ." or "If it were not for that hypocrite at the church . . ."

Friend, if you go to Heaven, you are going to have to get things taken care of here in this life. No matter what the problem is, God can move it. If you could only realize how awful hell is, these things would not matter to you at all. If you could only see the tormented souls in the parching flames of hell, you would want to be diligent to make your calling and election sure.

The Bible tells us of a rich man in Luke, Chapter 12, who talked of building bigger barns to store his goods, but he gave no consideration to his soul. That night his soul was required at God's hand. You do not know when you will be required to meet God. It could be before daylight in the morning. The thing that is most important is that you make your case right before Jesus Christ.

You can read of another rich man in Luke, Chapter 16, who in hell, "lift up his eyes, being in torments" (verse 23). In hell he was not concerned about the riches he had gained in this world, but he was concerned about his brothers, who were yet living and on their way to hell. Friend, you have time in this life to fix things as they need to be so that you do not have to go to hell. In verse 24 he said, "I am tormented in this flame."

Can you close your eyes and imagine a place of total darkness, yet there is a flame of fire, and the heat of which is torturous, and the sins that sent you there are rehearsed repeatedly in your mind, tormenting you? If you go to hell, you will be saying, "Had I only listened to the preacher and prayed through and done what I knew it took to go to Heaven, I wouldn't be here!" Then sadly you will realize, "I am tormented not only now but forever!" Your tongue will be parched, and you will remember your loved ones who are yet living and heading toward hell. Oh, if you could only

understand what eternity is and realize how terrible hell is, surely it would make a difference in how you respond to the Gospel.

### No Mercies in Hell

I do not believe that any soul who thinks about hell can lie down on his bed at night and rest easily. If you are saved, you may rest concerning your own soul, but if you have parents, children, or friends who are lost and on their way to hell, that will cause you to lose some sleep. I have preached many funerals, and the saddest ones have been when I knew the saved family would never again see their loved one. Once after I closed a revival in Atlanta, Georgia, I stopped in a town on the way home, and someone said, "Did you know that So-and-So was killed this morning?"

I said, "No, what happened?"

"Well, one of the man's daughters or his wife shot him."

I held that funeral, and in the service the dead man's beautiful little girls and the man's wife did not want anything good said about him, but other family members wanted to hear comforting words. That man fought with his family all night, and when he finally went to sleep, one of the man's daughters put a bullet between his eyes and sent him into eternity, lost without God.

My friend, you cannot fully understand what hell is! The daughter who killed her father still weeps and cries over what happened, but who can take away the stain? Who can take away that kind of hurt? Dear one, the place to stop sin is now. The place to do something about it is here in this life. You need to heed Jesus Christ, give up to Him, repent, and turn away from sin and the world. You need to say yes to Jesus Christ, because He wants to save you. Surely you do not want to go to hell. Can you imagine all the people from Adam up to this day who have lived on the face of this earth and the people who will probably be living from now until Jesus

comes again? Oh, the multitudes of people!

The Bible says the way is strait and narrow, and only a few will find it. Can you think what hell will be like with people screaming in torments? I have seen prisoners who had done heinous crimes sticking their hands through the bars, looking for freedom and desiring a better place than where they were. Some were swearing and taking the name of God in vain, and they were on their way to a devil's hell, where it will be far worse than any prison. Friend, there is a worse place than the worst places of this world. In hell people are lifting up their eyes, screaming, crying, and pleading for the mercies of God, but there are no mercies in hell. If you go to hell, you can pray as long as you want to pray, but no prayer will ever reach God there. It is only in this world that you will find mercy and peace and righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Think of what hell will be like. If folks could only realize how terrible hell will be! Sinner friend, you are heading down the wrong road. The devil is trying to deprive you. Please, you need to consider your future. Christian friend, it could be that you have only a few more steps to go. You need to hold on to God and be faithful to Him. It will not be long until you will make it to the goal. Thank God, you will have a

better place to go, a better place to live.

I do not want to go to hell, do you? I do not want anyone to go to hell, but some people are cutting themselves off from God. As God knocks at their heart's door and pleads, they refuse Him, just as Jerusalem did. Oh, what destruction came upon Jerusalem. Consider the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah and how they went down because they rejected God. If they had only known that God was ready to rain fire and brimstone on them, surely they would have humbled themselves.

Friend, something terrible is awaiting just out ahead of you unless you give heed to Jesus Christ. If you could only know what lies ahead, would you continue to do what you are doing? You need to plead your case before God now and get it settled, and then you can live every day of your life knowing that when you have walked your last mile and you stand before Him, you will hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." That is what I want to hear Him say to me when I come to the end of life's race. If I could save you, I would just reach out, put my arm around you, and save you; but I cannot do that. Only Jesus can save you if you invite Him into your heart. Will you let Him in?

*(Cassette C-4807E)*

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#### *[2005 Mission Trip to Africa—continued from page 7]*

contains many vegetables and fruits, from which they feed the people on different occasions. God has blessed the work in Kenya. Brother Joseph Mbui currently oversees thirty-eight congregations in Kenya.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Brother Roger L. Decker and the Church of God at God's Acres, Newark, Ohio, for making it possible for us to travel to Africa. What a wonderful opportunity and blessing it has been to minister to these people! We have seen much spiritual growth since the first mission trip in 2000.

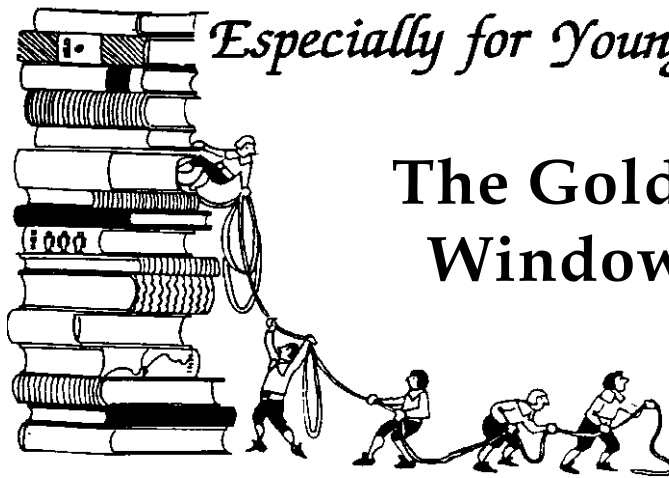
If it is the Lord's will, we hope to travel to Africa again. In the meantime, let us uphold Brother Joseph Mbui and the other brethren in our prayers.

Brother Jeremy Boyd

*Note: You can view the pictures from this mission trip, the camp meeting, and the church building in Embu at our Web site: [www.GodsAcres.org/pg.missions.html](http://www.GodsAcres.org/pg.missions.html)*

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*Especially for Young People*



## The Golden Windows



"Oh dear!" exclaimed Ruth impatiently, as she put the library to rights. "I do wish we could have a new carpet this spring. I never liked this at all, and now it is so faded and worn it is simply dreadful. It makes me miserable every time I look at it."

"Then, since you say you cannot very well have a new one just now, why do you look at it?" asked Aunt Rachel, smiling. "There are a great many unpleasant things in our lives—we find them every day—some of which we are unable to prevent. If we persist in thinking of them and keep fretting about them, we make ourselves and everybody about us miserable."

"It seems to me we might all learn a lesson from the bees. I have read that when anything objectionable that they are unable to remove gets into a hive, they set to work immediately to cover it all over with wax. They just shut it up in an airtight cell, and then forget all about it. Isn't that a wise way for us to manage with our vexations and troubles?"

"Someone sent me a post card the other day with this motto: 'The secret of happiness is not in doing what one likes, but in liking what one has to do.' It is not in having and doing just as we like, but in being determined to make the best of the inevitable. When you find an unpleasant thing in your life that cannot be removed, learn to seal it up and forget it."

"And then I think that many times it helps to get a different view of things. You remember the fable of the golden windows, do you not? A little boy who had very few pretty things in his own home because his parents were poor, often used to stand in his own doorway at sunset time and look longingly at the big house at the top of the opposite hill. Such a wonderful house as it was! Its windows were all of gold, which shone so bright that it often made his eyes blink to look at them. 'If only our house was as beautiful,' he would say, 'I would not mind wearing patched clothes and having only bread and milk for supper.'

"One afternoon his father told him he might do just as he pleased, so he trudged down the hill from his house and up the other long hill. He was going to see the golden

windows, but when he reached the top of the other hill, he stopped in dismay. His lips began to quiver, and his eyes filled with tears. There were no golden windows there—nothing but plain, common windows like his own. 'I thought you had beautiful golden windows in your house,' he said to the little girl in the yard.

"Oh, no!" she said; 'our windows aren't worth looking at, but stand beside me and you will see a lovely house with truly golden windows. See?' The little boy looked. 'Why, that is my house,' he said, 'and I never knew we had golden windows!'

"You see, much depends on your point of view."

"I have lived to be an old woman, my dear, and I have come to feel that the most heroic lives are lived by those who put their own vexations and troubles out of sight, and strive by every means in their power to ease the burdens of others, who leave always behind them the influence of a brave, cheery, loving spirit."

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### *Trust Always: Never Fret*

*Trust in the Lord, and do good;  
Dwell in the land, and follow after faithfulness:  
Delight thyself also in the Lord;  
And He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

*Commit thy way unto the Lord,  
Trust also in Him,  
And He shall bring it to pass.  
And He shall make thy righteousness to go forth  
as the light,  
And thy judgment as the noonday.*

*Rest in the Lord,  
And wait patiently for Him:  
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,  
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.  
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:  
Fret not thyself; it tendeth only to evil doing.*

PSALM 37:3-8

*Jeremiah 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,*

*2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.*

*3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work*

*on the wheels.*

*4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.*

*5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

*6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*

# A Lesson at the Potter's House



*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## The Way of Holiness

We are living in a time of confusion and uncertainty. Many people are confused about what to do, where to go, and what is right. This is also true in the spiritual sense. People have all kinds of standards today, ranging from liberal to fanatical, but there is only one God, one Bible, and one Holy Ghost. Most confusion today is due to people refusing to obey God.

In Isaiah 35:8 we read, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the

wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." The Prophet Isaiah said there will be a way, and it will be called "The way of holiness." Jesus clearly stated in John 14:6, "I am the way." I want you to realize that to get on this way, it takes obedience to God's Word on your part. Unless you do what you are supposed to do, you will never get on the way of holiness. The way has already been made for you to get on this highway, but you have to do your part.

Proverbs 3:1-3 says: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: [If you are going to get on this highway, you

must have more than a head knowledge of God's Word, and you must do more than think about it, talk about it, and read about it. When you hear or read God's Truth, you must keep His commandments. What will the results be?] For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart."

The writer was simply saying that if you are going to get on the way of holiness, then you have to let Truth and mercy become a part of you. Also, you must keep His commandments, not because of what

someone else says, but because it is right. Unfortunately, some people are keeping God's commandments simply because they want to please others. Friend, you need to keep His commandments because it is right. This is the only way you can make Heaven your home. In doing so, you will find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and men. You may not please everyone, but you will please God and the saints of God, and that is all that is necessary. Christian friend, it does not make any difference what people think of you if God has written your name in the Book of Life. The only one you have to please is God. If you will do that, you will keep God's commandments and hold onto His eternal Truth.

### **In All Your Ways Acknowledge Him**

Truth is getting scarce in the religious world today. Whenever you hear the Truth, you need to let it go down into your heart and become a part of you; bind it about your neck. Proverbs 3:5-6 states: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding [not what you or other people say or think]. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and [if you do this], he shall direct thy paths [that you may always be in the Truth]." You will stay in the Truth if you let God lead you. He will never lead you any place other than where the Truth is, my friend.

Jesus made it quite clear that going back to the Father was necessary for Him, and He said He would send the Comforter. He said the Comforter would teach us all things, give us the Spirit of Truth, and reprove the world of sin. In other words, our lives will convince others that they need more than a profession; they need a possession to please God. You must always acknowledge Him, let Him direct your steps, and be motivated by the Spirit of God.

Throughout God's Word He has

given examples of those who were in the right way when they sought God's divine direction. On the other hand, when people go astray, they never find the answers they seek. I will give you an example of what I am talking about. God told Abraham to take his only son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham journeyed for three days, and when he saw the mountain that God directed him to, he went upon that mountain and placed his son on the altar. When he raised the knife to slay his son, God stopped him, and when Abraham turned around, a ram was caught in the thicket. Had Abraham gone somewhere else other than where God told him to go, the sacrifice would not have been there.

When Paul went down the road to Damascus, he was on his way to persecute the saints of God. However, as he was traveling there, God struck him down, and when he arose, Acts 9:6 tells us that he was trembling and asked God, "What wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go on into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." God showed Paul exactly what He wanted him to do.

God is still directing His saints. The same Spirit of God who was back in Paul's day dwells within God's people today. I want to emphasize that if you receive the Spirit of God, He will direct your paths in all ways. God will show you exactly what He wants you to do, where He wants you to go, and what position to fill in the body.

The first statement Jesus made when He began His ministry and called His disciples was, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19). God is still calling honest hearts from the life of sin, changing their lives, and setting them free. Christ has one message, and that is, "Follow Me." If you will follow God, you will find an experience that will keep you, and you will enjoy it. Also, you will enjoy the saints of God, the Word of God, and everything God has for you. Then when you have finished your

course, He will take you to your long, eternal home in Heaven. On the other hand, if you do not follow Him and you follow a man, it will bring you to nothing but catastrophe. Sad to say, that is what is happening to many people today. God's people are divided simply because some do not want to follow God and the Spirit of God. They have decided to follow men. God is saying, "Do what I tell you to do; follow Me."

If you follow God, you will see good results. The people of God in Moses' day needed the Law when they were brought out of Egyptian bondage, and they also needed someone to direct them. At Mount Sinai God called Moses up into the mountain and gave him the Ten Commandments.

### **How to Be a Peculiar Treasure to God**

Exodus 19:3 and 5 reads: "And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying [had he gone to another mountain, he would not have received the Law to direct the people]. Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; . . . Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." In other words, God was saying, "If you will do as I tell you to do, you will be a special people to Me." When you have something special, you take particular care of it. For example, when a child receives a toy that is special to him, he will take particular care of it. Other toys may be strung around here and there, but not the one that is special. God was saying in these verses of Scripture, "If you will listen to Me and do what I tell you, then you will be a particular treasure to Me."

All creation belongs to God. Jesus said in Matthew 10:29-30: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall

on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Since God is so careful to number the hairs of your head and cares for every sparrow that falls, then you can be assured that He watches over you closely. Jesus said in verse 31, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." If you will keep God's commandments, you are so special to Him that in everything you do and everywhere you go, He has His eyes on you. He watches over you, and He will give you power so that all the devils in hell cannot move you off track, if you will listen to Him.

The Israelites received the Law that would have led them to certain victory. The Scripture lets us know that when Moses went up the mountain, God gave him the Law. The Apostle Paul stated in Galatians 3:24 that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." When they got to the end of that era, Christ was there, and He took over where the Law left off. When Christ came, the Jewish people refused Him and failed to recognize Him as the Son of God. They said, "Who is this man?" Why? They did not do what God told them to do. Friend, if you do what God tells you to do and keep His commandments, He will lead you each day. When the preacher gets up and preaches something that you do not understand, if it is God's Truth, it will register in your heart that it is Truth, and you will walk in the light of it. That is what God wants. God has a standard. He has always had a standard, and He always will.

God told His people they were going to cross many countries on the way to the promised land. He said many enemies would battle against them, but if they would keep His Law, He would give them victory over every one of them. When they came to the land of Canaan, He said He would remove every obstacle so that they could live in that land of plenty.

I want you to understand that God has given His Word and His

Spirit to guide you, if you will keep His law. Friend, many enemies will try to defeat you, but God can give you victory over them. You can have victory over every enemy, my friend, and in the end you can make Heaven your home. However, it all depends upon whether you do as God tells you to do.

Israel was disobedient, and as a result, they did not recognize Jesus when He came. If you walk in the light and allow the Spirit of God to guide and direct you, you will recognize Truth. God will show you if someone tries to lead you away from His eternal Truth. Many people are of the persuasion that an antichrist will come in the future; however, the Apostle John stated in his day that many antichrists had already come.

Christian friend, when you take a stand for God's eternal Truth, some will try to pull you away from Truth to an old Babylonian, man-made organization that has no power of God. All they want to do is draw you away, and they will work hard on you. You need to take a solid stand for God's eternal Truth and let the Spirit of God lead and guide you each day. None of us is smart enough to direct our own lives. We each must have the Spirit of God on the inside.

Some people are very slick talkers. The devil has much experience, but he cannot fool the Spirit of God. God said the very gates of hell cannot prevail against you, if you will let God have His way in your heart and life. He will walk with you daily, and you can enjoy fellowship with the people of God when you have the Holy Spirit. Friend, nothing compares with being with the saints of God in camp meetings and revivals. When people come home to Zion, souls receive help, backsliders return, and sinners get saved. What a glorious time it is!

Jesus said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." When you allow the Spirit of God to direct you, it will not be

the way man wants it, but the way God wants it. When God directs you, man-made organizations will not upset you. Many people have become entangled in them, but those who allow the Holy Spirit to lead them will stay true to God.

### **God's Requirements Are Clear and Concise**

In the Old Testament we find an example of a man who did not want to do what God told him to do. In 2 Kings 5:1 we read, "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." Can you picture in your mind how great a man he was? He led the people until they were delivered from the countries that kept them in bondage. He had many good qualities, but he was a leper.

Verse 3 tells us, "And she [a young maid to Naaman's wife] said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Verses 5-6 read: "And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

Verse 10 states, "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Naaman was a man of great standing. Most people would have thought, "Oh, this is a great man, the mighty Captain Naaman who delivered all those people"; then they would have gone out to meet him, but not the man of God. He simply sent his servant out



with a message, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times."

Verses 11-12 read: "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage."

God's message to Naaman was quite clear. When the man of God sent the message to Naaman, it did not matter who Naaman was, how mighty he was, how brave he was, or that he was a captain. God had only one message for him, and it was the same message He would have had for anyone in his condition. The message was that he had to do what God told him to do to be cured of his leprosy, which was a type of sin. You see, it is not who you are or what you have accomplished, but rather you must meet God's conditions and do what He tells you to do to receive help from Him. If you need to be cleansed, you must pray and ask God's forgiveness, obey Him, and then you will be cleansed.

The trouble today is, people feel that because they are high in authority, they do not need to do what the Truth says. They do not want to humble themselves at an altar of prayer and confess that they are sinners heading for hell. They think they are too important to have to do these things.

The Word of God lets you know that if you are going to make Heaven your home, you must first acknowledge that you are a sinner; then you must confess your sins and ask God for forgiveness. When you meet God's conditions and He saves you, you will be a changed person. You will walk differently, talk differently, and look differently, because you will be a new creature in Christ Jesus. The only way God can do anything for anyone is through

obedience to Him.

Naaman said he would rather go to the clean waters of Damascus than to dip in the muddy water of the Jordan River. Why could he not do that? God told him to go down to the Jordan River. He had to get rid of his proud spirit to receive help from God. He told Naaman to go down and dip seven times, not six times. When he finally obeyed God and dipped seven times, he was cleansed of the leprosy, just as God had said he would be.

Naaman could not have gotten that message from just anyone, and the only place you can get the message of salvation is from a true man of God. You may say, "I know someone who got saved down in Babylon." Friend, if that person ever got saved, he got past the preacher and got down on his knees and sought God wholeheartedly. One must acknowledge his lost condition and get hold of God. When a person truly gets hold of God, then He will direct him to one place. God will not let a person stay where he will be fed Babylonian food, because it is not good for the soul. He will lead a person to where Truth is preached, not error.

### **Disobedience Always Spells Trouble**

When Jonah failed to go where God told him to go, it brought trouble. Jonah 1:2-3 reads: "Arise, go to Nineveh [God told Jonah to go to a specific place and nowhere else], that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it."

I want you to realize that God has called man to the highest apex, or the highest position there is. He has given us a law, and that is exactly why He called Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he did not want to go there. Friend, if you

are a saint of God and you fail to do as God has commanded you, you can only go one direction, and that is down. If you disobey God, you are going down. Often when a person gets saved, people start to work on them to draw them away from Truth. They sometimes say, "Why don't you come down and worship with us?" That should tell you something right there.

Jonah did not want to cry out against the people of Nineveh, so he went down to Joppa and boarded a ship. He was looking for a way to escape the presence of God. When a person does not want the Truth, God will allow him to go another direction, but it will be down. God will permit that person to have exactly what he wants. The reason people are in Truth today is that they want Truth; it is not because of who they are. Someone may say, "I have been brought up in a Christian home." No matter where you were brought up, you are where you want to be. If you are on fire for God, it is because you want to be. If you are on the sideline, criticizing and finding fault with others, it is because that is where you want to be. If you are not interested in serving God, it is because you do not want to be. When God called you, Christian friend, He put you on the apex.

Jonah did not want to do what God commanded him to do, so he went down to Joppa and found a ship, and he paid the fare. If you walk against light, my friend, you will pay the fare; that fare is expensive, and it is not something you can cancel. If you pay the fare to go any place other than the highest apex, you cannot cancel and get your money back, but you will keep paying the fare. Furthermore, your children and grandchildren will be affected by your decision to disobey God. When you refuse to walk with God, do not think for a minute that you can walk in disobedience and God will bless you. Friend, you may prosper materially and financially, but nothing can take the place of Truth. Your money will not do you

any good in eternity. If you are going to work for God and be what He wants you to be, then you must walk with Him, obey Him, and be where He is.

### **Failing to Obey Will Bring You Down**

After Jonah paid the fare, it was not long until he went down into the ship and fell fast asleep. As he was sleeping, a great storm arose and so shook the ship that all those hardened sailors began to fear. With such a tremendous storm, they began to throw cargo overboard to lighten the ship so that it would not sink. They knew something was wrong, so they went down and found Jonah in the lower deck fast asleep. When they awoke him, they questioned him. Finally, they threw him overboard, and the sea became calm again. God had prepared a big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah had a price to pay, even though he had already paid the fare.

Friend, if God throws you overboard, He still has something that will swallow you. If you fail to walk in the light and cause trouble and disruptions in a congregation, you will not get by. If you disobey God, you may still hang around a congregation, but God will throw you overboard if you persist in going your own way. The devil will be right there to swallow you up, and he will cause you to think you have something when you do not. Jesus said in Revelation 3:17, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

It is a serious matter if, when Truth is preached, you get an independent spirit and will not walk in the light. You may not like someone in a congregation and choose to go somewhere else, but remember this: God placed you in the body, and the only place you will ever prosper spiritually is where God has placed you. You cannot go just anywhere

you please. You need to seek God earnestly if you get that thought in your mind. God placed you in the body as He saw fit, and when you get out of that place, you are out of God's care, and you are on your way down. You are on your way to your own "ship," so to speak, and the fare you will pay will be expensive.

I want you to consider David and his act of disobedience to God. Second Samuel 11:1-2 reads: "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that . . . David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house." If you continue to read down through this chapter, you will find that David saw Bathsheba and lusted after her. Then he sent for her and committed the act of adultery, and in the end he committed murder. Why? He was not where he should have been. He did not plan for any of that to occur, but another spirit took over. My friend, you cannot disobey God and keep His Spirit. If you disobey Him, you will receive another spirit, and that spirit will take you down, just as it did David.

### **The Church and How She Is Built Up**

Jesus asked His disciples in Matthew 16:13, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" They gave Him numerous renditions of who others thought Him to be, but He said in verse 15, "But whom say ye that I am?" Verse 16 reads, "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter did not say, "I think You are . . ."; he said, "Thou *art* the Christ."

In verses 17-19 Jesus said to Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall

not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Christ is the Rock. In essence, He was saying, "Upon My teachings, upon Me, I will build My church." John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Friend, you must meet God's conditions to be the church. You may say, "Everyone says they are the church." Well, let us see what the Word of God teaches us. Bible conditions must be met to be the bride of Christ. What are some of these conditions? Jesus said, "I will build my church," not churches. Let us consider the origin of the church. Second Samuel 7:12-13 states: "And when thy days be fulfilled [speaking of David], and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom [not Solomon's kingdom, but Christ's kingdom]. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." You may say, "Solomon built a house." Yes, he did; but if you study it, you will find that it was not a type of the church. David's tabernacle was a type of the church. The ark was set in the middle of one room with only one door, not with many doors.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:15, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Notice that Paul said "in heaven and earth," not somewhere else. God makes it quite clear to us that Jesus said, "I will build my church." On the Day of Pentecost, He built that church, and since that day, He has added to it. Who did Jesus add to the church? Everyone who wanted to be saved from sin, man-made religion, and the enemy of souls, if they met God's conditions. He is still adding to the church yet today. He will continue to build

upon it until He declares time to be no more. The church is built up when a person gets saved and is placed in the body of Christ as it pleases Him. Do you want the teachings of God or do you want to hear what man says? It is up to you. If you want to hear what God has to say, He will show you where you can go to hear Truth.

### How the Church Functions

In Colossians 1:18 Paul stated that Christ "is the head of the body, the church." In Ephesians 1:22-23 Paul said that God "gave him [Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:18, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." He does not ask you where you want to be or what you want to do, but He places you in His body as He sees fit. Just because you are not a pastor, a singer, or a pianist does not mean that you have no place in the body. If you are saved, you are in the body. You have a place, and each member of the body has a work to do. Just as your fingers, arms, eyes, ears, legs, and feet have work to do in your physical body, unless you do the work where God has placed you in the body, the body is going to suffer.

Ephesians 4:11 tells us, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelist; and some, pastors and teachers." God has also called some to be helpers. I want you to realize that the helpers are just as important as the pastor. Pastors need help. You need to pray for the pastor, the singers, the instrument players, the choir director, the song leader, and the youth leader; but above all, you need to pray for the preacher.

If God placed you in the body as a helper, but you merely sit back and claim that you have nothing to do, one Sunday you may decide to take a little joy ride to see the scen-

ery. If you do that, friend, you are neglecting your duty. At times we may go away or have to work, but I am talking about just taking a joy ride or missing the services for no reason; then you are neglecting your post of duty, and you will not have a payday. Remember, God is the timekeeper, and He knows whether you can be in the service. Also, He knows whether you pray for the song leader, the choir director, the instrument players, and the special singers. He knows whether you pray to rebuke the devil. Unless you do these things, you are neglecting an essential part of your duties.

Do you think your body would function as efficiently if four of your fingers were chopped off? If you do not do your job in the family of God, you will hinder the work of the body. The Apostle Paul used the physical body as a type of the spiritual body. He places the members in the body as it pleases Him. Each of us has a work to do, but if someone sits back and does not do his part, then it becomes more difficult for the rest of the body. Certainly illnesses or other circumstances may hinder you. I do not want you to let the devil press you down over necessary situations or circumstances beyond your control. I am talking about when one *can* be at the house of God and *can* pray but simply fails to do so. If you fail to do these things when you can, then you are neglecting your duties.

### "A Kingdom Which Cannot be Moved"

We read in Micah 4:1, "But in the last days [Hebrews 1:2 lets you know that the last days are since Christ came] it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains. . . ." Hebrews 12:28, speaking of the Kingdom of God, reads, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." The writer let us

know that we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved. God has settled it. He set the standard and made it the law, and it will not be changed in any way. We are living in a world that has been modernized in every aspect. Nevertheless, God's Truth is still the same as it was on the Day of Pentecost. As it was before the foundation of the world, it is still the same today. The only thing we need to do is call upon God for grace to measure to the Word and do what the Word tells us.

In Isaiah 33:20 we read, "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities [in other words, a peaceful people]: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation [no wars were going on there], a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." Through the Prophet Isaiah, God was simply saying that not one word would ever be changed or taken out of the Word of God; it will always be the same.

Micah 4:1-2 says: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it [signifying unity]. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Many people think these verses of Scripture refer to literal Jerusalem, but you need to examine the Scriptures to understand what the truth is. First of all, Matthew 24:35 tells us that when the end of time comes, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." There will not be any earth left. Second, all the generations of God's people since the beginning of time will gather into the heavenly Jerusalem. The literal city of Jerusalem located in Palestine has a population

of approximately 250,000 people. People talk about trillions of people occupying that little town. How absurd can that be? This text from Micah says that God will call His people and gather them home. Where will He gather them? Hebrews 12:22-23 states: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

### **Yield to the Gentle Molding of the Potter**

Our text of Scripture states in verses 2-4: "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels [in other words, he preached a message under the

anointing of the Holy Spirit]. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter [not because God marred it, but because the people would not do what He wanted them to do]: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it [in other words, one that pleased God]."

God is still telling people to go to the potter's house, which is a type of going to where the Word of God is preached. God is only where His Word is taught and practiced and where people do His work. That is exactly what Micah said in Micah, Chapter 4, and what Isaiah said in Isaiah, Chapter 2. Isaiah said to go up to the top of the mountain, far above the rest of the hills, and when you get up there, he said in verse 3 that "out of Zion shall go forth the law." God's Word is not what I think. I do not preach what I think; I preach the Word of God.

When a man of God preaches the Word, people must conform to His blueprint or they will be marred,

just as the vessel was in Jeremiah 18:4. What did the potter do? He made another vessel, one that would yield to the gentle molding of the potter. That is what God wants. Friend, all kinds of congregations call themselves the Church of God. Some uphold the standard and some do not. Others talk in gibberish, but that is not what God wants. God wants people who will let Him reign in their hearts and give the Holy Spirit preeminence.

The Prophet Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 11:19-20: "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes." If you have God's Spirit dwelling in you, my friend, when the Word of God goes forth, you will want to obey it. You will hunger for it, and then God will bless you. May God help you.

*(Cassette C-5260M)*

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#### *[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

information when he stated: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). What was he conveying with these words? Satan may hinder or hedge in God's people in many ways, but not beyond the point of finding help and relief. Oftentimes we lack understanding on certain matters and we are puzzled about finding a way out, but we are never driven to a place of despair or hopelessness. No matter how dark the surroundings or how great the burden or the problem that is crowding in on us, God is still on His throne, and He greatly cares for each and everyone. Let me remind you that our Heavenly Father is vitally interested and concerned about every minute detail of our lives. We must hold fast, for He knows how and when to calm the storm that is beating against our frail vessels.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter

4:12-13). The Lord deems it necessary for every one of His children to go through trials and hard places. During these times of testing and proving, God allows Satan to exert pressure on us. He permits this so each individual can become stronger and more perfect and mature for the Lord's use. Patient endurance in these times of tribulation and reverse will surely bring strong growth in the soul. This proving will cause your life to shine even brighter to the lost souls looking on. You should never forget that people are watching your life. Many times when the pressure is put on you, they will watch to see how you react and respond in the situation. You must hold fast and never allow yourself to cave in. Victory is offered through the grace of God.

We must never overlook the fact that God proves us through His Word. We should not be discouraged when the Word of God comes close with searching. God has chosen this method to reveal any flaws or defects in the lives of His children. We ought to be extremely thankful that God loves us enough to awaken, reprove, and correct. God's desire is not to hurt or destroy, but to perfect each of us. Hebrews 12:5-7, 11 admonishes: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of

the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Therefore, whether you are undergoing a heavy trial imposed on you by Satan or God is correcting you through His Word, I encourage you to hold fast to Him. You should never let go of God's hand. You need to do whatever God requires of you to keep the victory and His glory in your soul. Whatever your situation may be, just remember "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). Jesus said "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mark 13:13).

Selected

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his

life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

# What Value Does God Place Upon Your Immortal Soul?



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## Man Is a Living Soul

I want to focus on verse 36 of the Scripture text, which reads, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Notice that is followed by another question in verse 37, which asks, "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" By the help of the Lord, I want to attempt to answer these two questions. Verse 34 from *The Living Bible* reads: "If any of you wants to be my follower," he told them, "you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross, and follow me closely." God is looking for people

who will carry their crosses and be true men and women for God. We are living in a day of great opportunity.

One songwriter penned the words, "It's a pleasure, an honor, to serve You, Lord." That is putting it mildly! I thank God that I can be a child of God and live for Him in this terrible, wicked world. I enjoy living, because I have discovered the way of gladness; it is in serving Jesus Christ. He is my life!

When it comes time for church, we ought to lay aside everything else and get there. I have absolutely no tolerance for people who put pleasure and worldly things before

the house of worship. I try to be long-suffering, kind, and loving. Nonetheless, I was brought up to attend the worship services in all types of weather. Sometimes our family drove a long way to church. Even if we did not get home until one or two o'clock in the morning, it was worth it. We were putting the interests of our souls before anything else. I realize the value of my soul, and I do not want to lose it. You must put aside your own pleasures, shoulder your cross, and follow Christ closely, not at a distance.

Jesus said in verse 35 of *The Living Bible*, "If you insist on saving

your life, you will lose it [this sounds like a paradox, but if you give up your life and put God's will and His way first in your life, then you will discover what it means to live]. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live." I feel sorry for people in the world. They go through life with seemingly no direction, no joy, no peace, and no satisfaction. I am fully saved and fully satisfied. Are you?

Verses 36-37 of the same version read: "And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process [he does not benefit anything]? For is anything worth more than his soul?" No! You need to consider what value God places on your soul. You need to look at it as God looks at it, with His perspective.

### **The Importance of Your Soul**

When I was in college and going out to student teach, they required me to write down the goals of each lesson, such as what I expected to accomplish in each classroom hour. One thing I would like to accomplish in this message is to stir you to a greater realization concerning the importance of your soul. The first thing in the morning, you need to pray and read the Bible. Some people are more concerned about their coffee than their never-dying souls.

Christian friend, you need to read the Bible more, pray more, put more time into helping your soul grow and remain strong, and be true to God in temptation. All of this takes work. If you are unsaved, I want to stir your mind to the realization that you may lose the most important part of you, and that is your soul. You need to do something about your soul today. Seeing people enter the house of worship and putting God first is beautiful. I appreciate that, but God appreciates it far more. Serving God is the right choice.

When most people begin the

routine of their day, they think of having breakfast. First and foremost on your mind each morning upon rising should be your relationship with God. Your prayer should be, "God, I need You today. Only You know what I will face." You could face a horrible accident. The thousands of people who died when the twin towers came down in New York lost their lives, but that tragedy did not do a thing to their souls. Their souls live on, but their eternal destiny was sealed that day. No physical power on earth can do anything to your soul; it will live on when your body ceases to live.

What about your spiritual man the first thing in the morning? You are a twofold being. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:16, ". . . though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." You should be really concerned about the inward man.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-34: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed [the Scripture says to take no thought of those things, but they are foremost in most people's minds]? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things [God knows your every need]. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

What is the Kingdom of God? Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is not made up of those physical things, but it is righteousness, working hard to be right with God, peace, and joy. Before I speak, I always weigh my thoughts and my words to consider whether I should say what is on my mind. Why? I want to be right with God.

You should do your best to live peaceably with all men. Sometimes you have to make decisions, and you need wisdom. You should try to get along with your neighbors. Should a problem arise with a neighbor, you need to think about it, pray about it, and be sure that you act right. As a Christian, you cannot act the same way the world does. You should be very careful to act the right way and do what is right according to the principles of the Word of God. You need to do those things that benefit your soul.

### **Your Soul Is the Real You**

The things that build up the human body, such as meat and drink, should come after the things that benefit your soul. Man is a living soul. Genesis 2:7 says, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." A certain false religious group thinks that a man is no better than an animal. I do not study into those false religions; I study the Truth.

Some people have really weird ideas about man. They feel that man is about like a goat or a cow, but Jesus taught the Pharisees that man was better than the animals. In Matthew, Chapter 12, you can read about Jesus healing a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees found fault with Him. (There is always someone around to find fault.) In so many words, Jesus asked them if they had one sheep and it fell into a pit on the sabbath day whether they would get it out. A man is worth much more than a sheep, a goat, a dog, or a cat.

I sometimes wonder about the way some people treat their pets. There are even burial grounds for cats and dogs. Some churches have a certain Sunday of the year when the members can take their pets to church and the pastor blesses them. In general, society has gotten so bad that the laws of our land permit the killing of little, innocent, unborn

babies; yet it is illegal to kill a little bird, and if one does, he will be ordered to pay a very hefty fine. We are living in a sick society.

Your soul is the real you. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "Then [at death] shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." God gave you something that neither you nor your parents had anything to do with. He gave you a living soul. A part of you is earthly and a part of you is from Heaven, from God. When the body of man dies, his soul continues to live.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 49:15, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me." Your soul can continue to live without your body, but your body ceases to live when your soul departs. I have heard of people experimenting, and they weighed a man while he was alive and then after he was dead to see how much his soul weighed. That is ludicrous! The soul is the part of man that comes from God and returns to God.

Genesis 3:19 tells us, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Second Corinthians 4:18 tells us that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

### **Why Is Your Soul So Valuable to God?**

God created your soul when He created you. By rite of creation, He has ownership of you. Ezekiel 18:4 says, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine."

Jeremiah 1:5 states, "Before I formed thee [the antecedent of *I* is God] in the belly I knew thee [you see, God knows all about you]; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." In reality, you cannot put yourself in the ministry or in the body of Christ; God must ordain it. Many young men who get saved

want to pastor right away, but most of them are not qualified. God puts men in the Gospel work. It is not up to individuals to choose. If you are to be in the ministry, God chose you before you were ever born; therefore, you need to leave it to Him. One reason our world has such a horrendous mess today is that too many ministers are not God-called. If a man is working division and discord, that is a sure sign that he has never been divinely called by God into the ministry.

You ought to labor wherever God has put you and do your best for Him. There is a place for each of us. A wife should be happy and satisfied where she is. The husband should take his position and be happy where he is. Husband, when it is time to go to work, you should get your lunch pail and get on your way and be happy.

You should leave the choosing of your life and your position in the church to God. Do not be so quick to push. A person's gift will make room for itself. It is beautiful when members submissively, quietly, and humbly take their rightful positions and labor within the body. You should not envy another person's position.

Your soul is valuable because it is immortal; it is eternal. The rich man and Lazarus both died physically, yet they are still alive spiritually. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: [If you live for God and stand for God, do what you should do, you do not have to go around being afraid of people. You need to fear God and do your best to live clean and holy before Him. When you get in a tight spot, you can say, 'God, I am depending upon You.'] but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

*The Living Bible* in Matthew 10:28 says, "Don't be afraid of those who can kill only your bodies – but can't touch your souls! Fear only God who can destroy both soul and body in hell." No physical force can de-

stroy your soul. The soul is the person in you that reasons, ponders, thinks, feels, makes decisions, and acts according to those decisions; it is the real you. People can see only the outward man, but God weighs your thoughts.

Your soul is valuable because your Heavenly Father gave His best to redeem you. Heaven gave its very best. Have you ever heard of a worldly leader giving his only son to redeem his whole kingdom of rebellious subjects? No! I have often thought about how God gave His only begotten Son and watched Him come into the world only to see Him humiliated, spat upon, slapped, betrayed, and denied. People do the same to Christ today. If you do it to a man of God or a brother or a sister in Christ, it is the same as though you are doing it to God.

If you were to say, "Oh, he doesn't amount to anything," you are saying it to God. I will just give you an example. A family moved into a neighborhood where a certain sister lived. The new neighbors were not of the Church of God, but they were of another faith at that time. They dressed very modestly and very beautifully, but the neighbors began to make fun of them. This dear sister stood for what was right and treated them right. The people in the neighborhood were wrong for the way they were acting toward the new neighbors. This sister would not join in with them, and she won the new neighbors to the Church of God.

Young person, in school do you stand up for other fellow Christians or do you deny that you know them? When they are going through hard places, do you have the attitude, "Oh, I would rather not notice." All of this comes down to the godly principles you need to live out at school and in the community.

### **"Ye Are Bought With a Price"**

God gave His best to redeem us. Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time

Christ died for the ungodly." You were not a very pretty person when God found you, and neither was I, yet He loved us. You should not look at a person the way he is now, but consider what he *could* be if he gets saved. When you work with someone, you should not look at him as being a drunkard or a man from the gutter, but you should look at him as an individual whom God can clean up and make his life beautiful.

When you think about the great price that Jesus paid to purchase your soul, that should show you how valuable you are to God. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Paul said: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Your body and your soul are God's. You should use your body to glorify God; therefore, you ought to keep it clean and holy. There is so much ungodliness in the world today. You need to keep your mind and your soul clean and holy. God created your body and your soul to bring glory to Him. Young man, you should use the strength that God gives you to bring glory to Him. Young lady, you should use your virtue, your beauty, and your womanhood to glorify God.

Revelation 4:11 states, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." One song says, "He bought my soul at Calvary." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:23, "Ye are bought with a price."

Again, our Scripture text reads in verses 36-37: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" One soul is worth more than this entire world. The soul of your father, the soul of your mother, the soul of your husband or wife, the souls of your

sons and daughters and your grandchildren are worth more than this entire world. God places great value on a person's soul.

### **Choices That Impact Your Soul's Welfare**

When it comes time to die, most people forget the plans they have for the future. They forget their wealth and their earthly possessions. Foremost in their minds is, "What am I going to experience beyond this mortal life?" In approximately forty years of preaching the Gospel, I have seen many people down at the end of their lives turn to God when throughout their lives they wanted nothing to do with Him. Some of them really struggled to believe that God would save them, because they had squandered all those years and had done their own thing.

Many years ago when Brother Emerson Wilson was alive, we were asked to visit an older man in the community. He had cancer, and his family asked if Brother Wilson and I would visit him. We went and worked with him, and he said, "I have a terrible time believing that God is pleased and that I am ready to go. I went to church, but I was never really serious about serving the Lord."

I have seen people get saved down at the end of their lives, and I think that is beautiful. Not many years ago, a man who was terminally ill started coming to church, and he got a wonderful experience. I believe the man made it. Your soul is far more important when it comes time to die.

Those who have had the privilege of hearing the Gospel are taking a chance if they become careless in their experience and do not take this business of serving God seriously. They stand a greater chance of being lost at the end of their lives than someone who has not had the same opportunities. I am not going to take any chances.

*The Living Bible* in Psalm 49:6-7 says: "They trust in their wealth and

boast about how rich they are, yet not one of them, though rich as kings, can ransom his own brother from the penalty of sin! For God's forgiveness does not come that way." You cannot receive God's forgiveness by paying the preacher or by giving away everything you own.

Many years ago I remember a man who told Brother Emerson Wilson that he would give everything he had if he could get audience with God again. He went to the altar, and about one hundred men in the congregation gathered around him to intercede on his behalf. I do not know whether the man ever prayed through, but that is a *very* sad place to be in. The only way one can receive forgiveness is through the blood of Jesus Christ.

I try to reason with parents who are making choices that will impact their souls' welfare. I counsel them, "If nothing else, consider the souls of your children. Are you doing that for your own sake? Are you doing this because you want your own way? Do you realize that you could cause your whole family to be damned and yourself too?" Too many people hold out for their own way. They are as stubborn as a Missouri mule, so to speak. They do not care about their own souls or the souls of others.

### **Where Will You Spend Eternity?**

When preaching the Gospel, I try to weigh every word I say very carefully. Sometimes I go home and spend a whole week struggling with the words that I said for fear they might have offended someone. We are responsible for other souls. You can turn someone away from the Gospel by what you say or do. You need to be aware of your facial expressions and be careful that you do not speak an unkind word. Sometimes people can be so stubborn. Someone may say, "Well, I think I should be the Sunday school teacher. If I'm not, then I'm out of here" or "If I can't do this or that, I'm going to



take my family and move." They do not even consider their souls' welfare. What will you give in exchange for your soul and the souls of your children?

Psalm 49:8 in *The Living Bible* reads, "For a soul is far too precious to be ransomed by mere earthly wealth." This verse states it in a very profound way. You need to guard your soul. Revelation 3:11 states, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The Psalmist said in Psalm 49:9 of *The Living Bible*, "There is not enough of it [wealth] in all the earth to buy eternal life for just one soul, to keep it out of hell." Nothing is stronger than the Word of God.

To many people, their wealth is their hope and their god. The Psalmist said, in so many words, "All the money in the world cannot redeem a soul, because a soul is worth much

more than that." Only the blood of Christ can ransom a soul. In the hour of death, neither money, prestige, education, personal beauty nor anything else will mean anything. What you meet after you expire is what will occupy your mind. Your soul was made for the Spirit of God.

As I said earlier, God values the soul of man much more than anything else, no matter what it is. In Mark, Chapter 5, you can read that Jesus saw a demoniac man. Those demons asked to go into a herd of pigs, and Jesus said, "Go." Why? That man needed help. His soul was far more valuable than a herd of swine. Your soul is more expensive than your vehicles, your homes, or what someone may think of you. What people think of me does not concern me a great deal. Most importantly, I want to be very sure that God is pleased with me. Friend,

if you should lose your soul, you will have lost everything.

In closing, won't you consider your soul, dear one? You need to consider where you will spend eternity. There is an adage that says, "Drive carefully. The life you save may be your own." I have heard that changed a little to say, "Live prayerfully and carefully. The soul you save may be your own."

How about your soul today? Are you clear with God? There needs to be a reviving of prayer, of Bible study, and of carrying burdens for souls. Saint, you need to do your best to share the Gospel with others. Dear one, are you clear with God? What is the condition of your inner man? Won't you seek the Lord earnestly?

*(Cassette C-4930E)*

## Mechanicsburg Church of God

(The church is located at 9297 West US 36, just West of Mechanicsburg, Indiana.)

*Revival Meeting & Special Fellowship Service*

*March 13-18, 2006*

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman

Service Times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m. & Sat. 10:00 a.m.

***Special Fellowship Service will be held on Saturday at 10:00 a.m., with a meal provided by the local congregation.***

**Everyone Welcome!**

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