

The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:38

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 37 August 2007 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

Psalm 122:1

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

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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; I Cor. 3:11)
Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
God admits members (I 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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CONTENTS

When Judgment Is Poured Out	3
Are You Filled?	10
Especially for Young People	16
The Lord Wants You to See Your True Condition	17
Faithfulness	22
Oregon Camp Meeting Announcement ..	26
Fall Camp Meeting Announcement ..	27

Vol. 37 August 2007 No. 8

20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Many saints remember when Brother Roger and Sister Roxanne Decker first came to the Church of God at the corner of Sixth and Locust Streets in Newark, Ohio, in 1967. As they sat in the service, they heard the message of salvation and holiness preached. Listening intently, conviction began to grip their hearts. After some struggles, Sister Decker fully surrendered her life to the Lord. She determined in her heart to serve God and to be true to Him regardless of the results. Brother Decker resisted for a while, as he wandered aimlessly on the broad way of sin and destruction. However, the chaste conversation and godly example lived by his wife soon won his heart. This dear brother humbled himself before God, repented of his sins, and was gloriously saved. Brother and Sister Decker became "new creatures in Christ," as the Apostle Paul related in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Brother and Sister Decker began to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord. After Brother Decker's conversion, unbeknownst to him or anyone else, God started grooming this man for a special work that He would need him to do. A vacancy was coming in the ranks many years later. God, in His wisdom, knows how to set men into place and set the affairs of His church in motion to accomplish His purpose. Man can only look at the present, but God sees far into the future. As Brother Decker progressed in his experience with the Lord, God began to use him. Every successive move Brother Decker made brought him closer to God's intended plan.

In 1969 he was given the six-year-old boys Sunday school class to teach. While as a layman,

Brother Decker was active in the congregation, working closely with Brother Wilson as a helper. He was willing to do whatever was asked of him. He visited sick people in their homes and in hospitals, as well as visiting individuals who had been missing from the services. Taking care of these matters was a help to Brother Wilson, allowing the pastor more time to attend to other needs in the congregation.

Sometimes Brother Wilson called upon Brother Decker to deliver a message to the people here at God's Acres. On other occasions Brother Wilson asked him to go out to preach to other congregations. The time came when Brother Wilson felt it necessary for Brother Decker to be ordained as a minister in the Church of God. His faithful labors and efforts have proven to be fruitful for the Lord, for the Kingdom of God, and for the local congregation.

Several years passed, and God saw fit to take Brother Emerson Wilson home to Glory. His death on April 11, 1987, suddenly left the Newark congregation without a leader. The loss of having someone to guide God's people created a threat. Many serious problems could have arisen from this void. Bereaved hearts wondered what would happen to them. Who would care for their souls and continue to teach God's true way and preach the Word? Would a godly man take up the "torch of Truth" and faithfully carry on as before? Was there a man on whom God could lay the "mantle" at this extremely important time? The answer was yes! The Lord had been preparing a man for that

[continued on page 9]

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses

the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of

the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.



When Judgment Is Poured Out

Brother Roger L. Decker

"A Great Wonder in Heaven"

In most places today the thought of judgment being poured out causes people to want to back away. The enemy is doing his best to eliminate judgment preaching wherever he can. He would like to work where the Truth is going forth to stop the judgments of God from going forth.

Revelation 12:1-3 says: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns,

and seven crowns upon his heads."

Revelation, Chapter 12, talks about "a great wonder in heaven," and Chapter 15 speaks of a "sign in heaven." If you are not careful when reading these verses of Scripture, the first thought that will come to your mind is the final resting place of the saints, the Heaven where God dwells. However, this is not the heaven to which the Scripture is

referring. In Revelation, Chapter 12, we read of two wonders: one was the church, and the other was the great red dragon, or pagan Rome. The heaven in which John saw the two wonders was an exalted position, and it was in full view of the inhabitants of the earth. He was not speaking of an ecclesiastical heaven or the Heaven where God dwells, but he was talking about an exalted position right here on this earth. God exalted one, and Satan exalted the other through the minds and the works of men.

That which John saw was taking place here on the earth. A war was in that heaven; in other words, a war was going on in the minds of men and women. That is where the battle is. Satan works on the mind, or a person's thoughts. He is working to seal individuals in unbelief.

In the morning-time church, all that many men and women knew was paganism. In the pagan Roman Empire, the people worshiped many gods. Many people dwelt in unbelief. When the message went forth, Michael and his angels (speaking of Christ and the Apostles) went forth proclaiming there is one God, or one Father, and that His Son, Jesus Christ, died for our transgressions. They told people, "You should not bow down to any other gods; you should believe in the one God." That created a war, and it took place in the hearts and minds of men and women right here on the earth. This same battle is going on yet today.

"War in Heaven"

The devil likes to harass the saints. Child of God, he likes to tell you that you are not saved and that you are not going to make it. He will tell you all kinds of things to draw you away and to draw you into unbelief. You need to stand against the devil and stand for what is right. You know what God has done for you. You know where you once were and where you are today. You did not get there in your own strength. You did not start doing

better, or turn over a new leaf, so to speak. Jesus Christ came into your life. You have been saved and sanctified, or set apart. You did not do that on your own. If God is not in your life, a church service is the last place you want to be.

The devil never dwelled in the Truth. Sometimes when he harasses a child of God, he does it in a subtle way by putting the thought in a person's mind, "I don't know whether I am saved or not." If the devil attacks you in that way, I would like to ask you some questions: Have you committed sin? If you are unsaved, how did you stop sinning? Let us deal in common sense. If you are unsaved, then how are you living free from sin? You could not do it before you were saved. The devil is a liar. He will tell you things that cross up good common sense. If you are living for God, if you are not going out into sin and turning your back on God, how are you not doing it? You must have Christ. You must have the power of God inside.

Do not believe the devil. If he had his way, no one would be standing for what is right and going to Heaven.

Revelation 12:7 says there was "war in heaven." There has never been war where God dwells. God would not step back and say, "Go ahead and fight it out." There is only purity and godliness where God dwells. When the Scripture speaks of "war in heaven," those verses are not talking about the saints fighting with carnal weapons. They went out with the Gospel message; they went out with the Word of God, anointed by the Spirit of God, and that caused a battle.

When the Word of God goes forth, it still causes a battle yet today. When you witness to your in-laws and friends, what happens? Often a war breaks out. Suddenly, they do not want to talk to you. They could care less whether or not you are in their midst. It is the same war, and the weapons are the same: the Word and the Spirit.

If you have been saved for any

length of time, you have learned that not everyone likes the strait and narrow way. Perhaps you thought they would fall right in line as you did. "That is just your idea," they say. No, it is not your idea. Your idea was not working. No doubt, you were doing the best you could before you were saved, but that was not good enough. It takes God to deliver a person.

Despite a war going on, you ought to stand for what is right. That which John saw was taking place right here on earth. When we talk about battles breaking out, do not get in your mind thoughts of tanks and guns and warships. When John saw a war break out, he saw men preaching the Gospel, standing for the Truth, and being thrown into prisons for doing so. The Scriptures are talking about that war. Men may not cast you into prison today, but the war is just as heated as it was in the morning time.

The Judgments of God

Revelation 12:7-10 reads: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, [It was not the devil, or Satan, but rather it was an instrument used by the devil, or by Satan. Today he is using those who carry Bibles under their arms.] which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out [of his exalted position] into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, [When was the kingdom of our God come? Right at the time when there was warfare in the morning-time church. When paganism was cast out, then the Kingdom of God was exalted.] and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,

which accused them before our God day and night."

In this Scripture Michael, or Christ, and His ministry fought against the dragon, or the pagan Roman Empire. In Revelation 15:1 John saw a sign in heaven, not a wonder, and it was great and marvellous. He said, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

They were not great and marvellous because they were judgment angels, but rather because of what judgment produced. Judgment produces something. If you were to take away judgment preaching, you would have careless living. What did the judgments of God produce? Again, Revelation 15:2-3 reads: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God." Here judgment preaching produced victory. Oh, how sweet victory in Jesus is! You are not going to have victory without judgment being put forth.

The Song of Deliverance

The saints had victory over the beast, over his image, and over the number of his name. When you have victory, then something is going to follow: praise to God. Praise began to go forth. Verse 3 states, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God." What was that song? It was a song of deliverance. You cannot sing the songs of deliverance until you have been saved and delivered.

Israel had just crossed the Red Sea after having been pursued by the Egyptians, their enemy. Exodus 14:30-31 reads: "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses." I want you to notice this: the work that was done by God in deliverance was a work that people could see. Today many people say, "God looks on the heart." Well, there was more than the heart to look on there. Some dead bodies were lying behind.

When you come to Jesus Christ, the "old man" dies, and you can see the death of the old man. You can see that the deeds of the old man are gone. The old man used to smoke, drink, curse, and carry bad attitudes. The old man had bitterness. When Christ moves in, the old man dies and is buried, and you can see his carcase. Praise God for His goodness!

Israel saw those dead bodies. They saw the chariots, the horses, and the lifeless bodies floating on the sea. Israel, safe on the other side, did not even get their feet wet. That is what happens when you get saved. What do you have to do? You have to look back to see the old life. You should only look back in remembrance of what you were before Christ came into your life. You should not look back and long for the old life. Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." You should never look back and long to go back.

I want you to read a little of the song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-3: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, [To whom were they singing? They were singing to the LORD.] and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name."

Nothing is like old-time

salvation; it never wears out. The body gets tired, and one of these days it will drop over, but not my salvation. It will be good throughout eternity. The inward man is renewed day by day. I praise God for His goodness! Sometimes the body gets sick and tired and weary; nevertheless, the inward man keeps trudging along, wanting ever more of God.

The inward man is not looking for a way to escape or a way to cut corners. He wants the fullness of God. However, that is not so with the outward man. That is the reason Paul said you have to crucify the flesh and bring it into submission. The flesh does not want to come into submission willingly.

Judgment Preaching

Isaiah 1:27 states: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Judgment brings the fear of God in the midst of people. What do you hear in judgment? You hear what God likes and dislikes. I like what God likes, and I dislike what God dislikes. Judgment exalts holiness. Revelation 15:4 reads, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest [or known]."

When judgment is declared, the vision of the church gets brighter and brighter. Do you want to know why some people's vision has faded? They went where there is no judgment preaching. They went where the pastor tickles the ears of the hearers and tells them what they *want* to hear. When judgment goes forth, it is not always what people want to hear, but it is what God knows is best. Most of the time when people leave a congregation, holiness slips out of their lives. They no longer want to hear judgment preaching. They do not want to hear a man of God cry out against the evils of television. They no longer want to hear what the Bible says

about long hair and modest apparel. When the man of God brings forth those doctrines, they pack up and go somewhere else.

In some places ministers have backed away from the Bible standard and then tried to bring the standard back up where it ought to have been, but the people would not have it; instead they threw out those ministers. The people would not put up with judgment preaching. The Bible says that Zion will be redeemed with judgment. There is a move in sectarianism and that which calls itself the church to eliminate judgment preaching because it is too offensive to them.

Sin is running rampant in our nation, yet people expect God's people to be tolerant and not to get offended. I read in one newspaper that in New York the ban on gay marriages was lifted by a liberal judge who said the ban was unconstitutional. Who cares whether anybody is offended by that decision? The liberal judges do not care that the Christian is offended. If the Ten Commandments are displayed in a public building, the atheists sue to get it removed. Why? They say it is offensive. Why is it offensive to them? It reminds them of their pernicious ways. It reminds them of their perversion; therefore, it becomes offensive to them. A minority is made up of atheists and feminists. The feminist movement is anti-God. It is the complete opposite of the Bible's standard for the woman. The housewife is in an exalted position, and she has an awesome responsibility.

God's Standard for the Home

The Bible standard for the woman is to raise children and keep the house. Today what do many young ladies talk about? They want to attend college to earn a degree so they can pursue a vocation just in case the husband dies or becomes disabled. If people would live for God, He would take care of them. God is not going to go against His Word.

Some young ladies do not even know how to keep a house or how to cook a meal. You cannot live on fast food. Too often their mothers make their beds for them and their food is always on the table. Mothers should teach their daughters to do these things. A man likes to have a good meal on the table. Also, a woman should keep a clean house. There is no excuse for a woman to have a dirty house all the time. Now, there is a big difference between dirt and clutter. You might get a little behind on housework during a revival or an emergency or another occasion, and things may not be exactly as you want them, but that is not the same as being neglectful and dirty.

Young lady, do you know how to sew a button on a shirt? I am not talking about taking it to the dry cleaners and paying to have someone else do it. Do you know how to iron clothes? Those things are needful in a marriage. You cannot always go out and take clothes to the cleaners and get them pressed. You cannot always eat in a restaurant. When you are married, you will find that the funds are not always as available as they were when you were single. You need to learn to conserve a little. Sometimes you might have to do without certain things.

Many young couples want the same amount of possessions their parents have. They want to start with a beautiful home, but they cannot afford it unless both of them work. It has not been too many years ago since men totally supported their wives. My wife never worked outside the home, even when I was living in sin. We did not have every luxury, but we had good things.

My father always worked; my mother did not work outside the home until he passed away, but that was later in her life. We did not always have everything we wanted, but we learned to conserve. We raised a vegetable garden, which seems to be outdated today. Also,

we raised our own cattle and had our own dairy cows. Although we had to conserve, it was good for us.

Today many people want things just handed to them on a silver platter. In foreign countries people do not have unemployment benefits. I am not against helping those who need help, but often public assistance programs tend to cause people to become shiftless and lazy.

Young man, when you get married, you ought to provide for yourself and your wife. You will have to buy the groceries, the clothes, and everything needed in the house. You will no longer have it handed to you freely by your parents. If you are seeking a wife, you should ask her to prepare a good meal for you, not something her mother has fixed. Sometime you should take a shirt or a jacket that has some buttons that have fallen off and ask her to fix it for you. However, you need to watch that she does not hand it to her mother to fix.

The Pouring Out of the Plagues

Today people have many things topsy-turvy in our nation, and it is getting into the church. Isaiah 5:20-23, which begins with a woe, states: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!"

Today many people call evil good and good evil. Sad to say, that is getting into the church. When people try to live right and adhere to the message of Truth, oftentimes they are the ones who are targeted for persecution. Many times judgment becomes offensive to people. When the temple was opened in Revelation, Chapter 15, once again

Truth had its right of way in the lives of men and women. John saw people coming out of Babylon having victory, standing in the light of the new covenant. They had victory over the false systems of worship. They had victory over the beast and its image, his mark, and the number of his name. They stood on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

I want you to notice in verse 6 of our Scripture lesson that this was seven angels and the seven last plagues. The time period for those plagues is in the sixth and seventh seals. Someone may ask, "Why was it not back in the second, third, fourth, or fifth seal?" They were not able to pour out the plagues. Those plagues were not poured out until people came out of Babylon and took a stand for what was right and stood on the sea of glass. You have to stand on the sea of glass, (the Word of God) to pour out a plague.

Why are the plagues poured out? They are poured out for disobedience. If you become disobedient, you are going to be plagued. God is not going to put up with disobedience. Leviticus 26:14-16 reads: "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it."

People are going to hell by the droves. False religion is causing more people to go to hell than all the barrooms and the brothels in our world. Then there are those who worship the beast and his image, and the number of his name. Nothing is almost as good as the Church of God. You need to get your eyes anointed.

The woman whom John wrote about in Revelation 12:1 was clothed

with the sun, the moon was under her feet, and upon her head was a crown of twelve stars. There is not another woman described as she is in the Word of God. This verse of Scripture is describing the Church of God. The brightness of the sun represents the new covenant. The moon under her feet symbolizes the foundation: the Law and the Apostles, which also brought the new and the old covenants together with the Apostles. The sun, the moon, and the stars are forms of light.

The Sea of Glass

We read in Exodus 8:1, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me." Speaking of Babylon (false religion), the Prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 50:13, "Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues." These plagues were sent to produce ones who would stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire. What is the sea of glass? Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The sea of glass is the Word of God. When you look into the sea of glass, it changes you. How does it work? Let me illustrate it to you this way: Brother, when you get up in the morning and look in the mirror, you make some changes to your outward appearance. Surely you do not go out in public looking the same way you did when you got out of bed! How do you make those changes? You look in the mirror and see that you need to shave, shower, comb your hair, and brush your teeth; so you groom yourself. Next, you might get a tie to match your shirt and trousers and fix your tie just right. The sisters look in the

mirror and see that they need to shower, brush their hair, and brush their teeth; so they take care of those things.

The principle is the same when you look into the sea of glass, or the Word of God. When you look into the Word of God, it reveals to you the things you ought to do and the things you should not do. James said in James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeith himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Saint, if you have an experience with the Lord that is crystal clear, you will not mind the clear Word of God. When those plagues are poured out, something came out with the plagues. Again, Revelation 15:2 reads, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Something came out that had not been there for quite a while, and it came out when they stood on the sea of glass. The harps were brought out.

The Rivers of Babylon

You cannot sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. What is a strange land? It is a land that is foreign to a child of God. Have you ever traveled to a foreign land? Because you do not know your way around, you do not feel comfortable. While you are there, you may count

the days until you can go home. When you get there, you might be excited at first, but soon you find yourself counting the days when you can go home. Why is that? You are not comfortable in a foreign land. Likewise, a child of God is not comfortable in a foreign land, or in Babylon (false religion). He or she does not want to take up residence in Babylon.

In Exodus, Chapter 2, you can read that Moses fled from Pharaoh and dwelled in the land of Midian. Moses stayed with the priest of Midian, and he married his daughter Zipporah. Verse 22 says, "And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land."

Psalm 137:1-4 reads: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down [no activity at all], yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?"

Babylon is a strange land. The songs of Zion are songs of victory. They are songs of deliverance, and these songs can only be sung in Zion among the people of God. We are not strangers to the songs, so we can sing those songs of deliverance and songs of victory among our own brothers and sisters in Mount Zion. Ephesians 2:12 says, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." You cannot sing the songs of Zion with aliens. We were once aliens, but now we have come to Mount Zion, the Church of the Living God.

The judgments of God produce the church. The judgments of God cause the church to stand head and shoulders above any other sectarian organization. It is the Church of God

that is in the battle today. It is a warfare between right and wrong, holiness and sin.

God's Way Is the Way to Victory

The people in Revelation, Chapter 15, had victory in their souls. Do you have victory? Those who had victory thought the plagues were great and marvelous. They thought His way was just and true. Do you feel that God's way is just and true? Today too many people moan and groan, especially when the Bible standard is preached. Not many people rejoice when you get into that. If you are in agreement with the message of Truth, why would it not bring rejoicing to your soul?

Many people feel that God's way is too hard, too demanding, and too old-fashioned. Some people complain, "God is so unfair. It seems like I can't do anything." Well, God does not want you to do anything that is wrong. If you are truly a Christian, you do not want to do wrong. God wants you to do that which is right. If you have things in your life that should not be there, you ought to get rid of them. If you lack things in your life that you desire and you are living right, God will help you to get them. As Christians, we want to do right; we want to live right. We might go through struggles and hard places, but we still come out with victory because we want to do right.

God's way is for all nations to worship Him in spirit and in Truth. He will declare a message of judgment. Going back to our Scripture text, after the judgments were manifested, John looked, and once again the Church of God was made visible. There was no visible Church of God back in the dark and cloudy day. In the days of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, from the second seal on up through to the fifth, there was no visible Church of God. God did not have a church where He could just bring her out in public worship and say, "This is my

people. This is my body, the Church of God."

Many people were in sectism, and much anarchy was going on. Do not get me wrong. There were children of God, but as far as a visible church, that did not come until people came out and took a stand on the sea of glass and stood for what is right. They stood with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, the Church of the Living God. There was the darkness of Rome, and then came her harlot daughters, Protestantism, which distort the Truth.

We read in Revelation 11:8, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom [which is bondage] and Egypt [sin], where also our Lord was crucified." In every age of time people have lived for God. People would not have come out of Babylon had they not been living for God. However, there was not a visible church as in the morning time.

What happened to the visible church? People went into apostasy. The same condition is taking place yet today. Revelation 8:8 tells us, "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood." Today the devil is trying to take away the visible church. John saw the people standing. John saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven opened. In other words, he saw a visible church. He said he saw those who had gotten the victory and who sang the song of Moses, or the song of deliverance.

Too often the world and some who claim to be the church look alike. In too many cases, you cannot tell where the world leaves off and the church begins. Revelation 15:8 states, "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." God's presence was once again in the midst of

the church. No one could enter the temple until the plagues were poured out. Why? It takes the plagues, or judgment, to call men and women out of false systems of worship. Also, it takes the plagues, or judgment, to reveal the true body of Christ, the Church of the Living God.

Wherever you find the true Church of God, you will find judg-

ment preaching. It is not just to make people feel bad or to put people down, but to show men and women their true condition and to call them to greater heights and greater depths in Jesus Christ.

If you lack an experience with Jesus Christ, do not turn a deaf ear to the message and go your own way. If you do that, it will work a hardening process upon your heart.

The next thing you know, it will take a great event in your life to turn you to Christ. You do not want that to happen. You need to keep your heart soft and tender. You can do that by adhering to the Word of God.

(Cassette C-5359M)

[20 Yr. Anniversary – contin from page 2]
very time.

The Father was watching over this situation. His ear was open to the cries and the earnest prayers of His saints. He was aware of the many precious souls at stake and the divine intervention that was vitally needed. Not just anyone could step in and assume this tremendous responsibility. Some might have been qualified, but it was not up to men to make this decision. God reserves such matters for Himself. He chooses the one whom He sees fit. The Lord does not want man to do the choosing, because He knows men can make a mistake.

In 1 Samuel 16:7 the Lord told the Prophet, "... for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." This Scripture reveals that God chooses and places men in the body as it pleases Him. When the Lord has His way and sets a person in a position of authority and responsibility, the work will progress. He also confirms His move to others so that there will be no confusion or misunderstanding. The Church of God is still a divine institution, divinely ruled and divinely governed. She is not just a church among churches that is run by boards and committees.

After several weeks of the saints seeking God's face over the matter, God miraculously answered prayer and revealed the direction He wanted the congregation to go. Brother

Decker began to feel the burden and God's call on his heart for this work. Although God has a plan and a purpose for every individual, He must allow each one to accept or refuse. Brother Decker gave serious consideration to the great responsibility that lay ahead of him. He weighed all the costs involved, realizing, too, he must abandon a good place of employment to accept this high calling. Our brother willingly laid aside a financially secure job to receive what the Lord wanted him to do.

May 31, 1987, Brother Decker was placed in as the pastor of the Newark congregation. With fear and trembling he embarked upon his new mission and duties with a firm determination to be true to God and His people, regardless of the cost. It is a blessing to see that our Heavenly Father still answers the cries of His children! It is such comfort to know that He will not forsake us in troublesome times. One song says, "I have never seen God's children forsaken." The Apostle Paul said in Hebrews 13:5 that the Lord "will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The Lord's eye is ever on His people. He is very interested in the welfare and continued success of His saints.

Brother Decker has truly committed his life to the service of God and to the people. His time and efforts have been dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel to the lost. As the watchman on the wall, he tenderly cares for and protects the

souls entrusted to his keeping. He has not shunned his duty to declare all the words that the Lord has given him. For the past twenty years he has conscientiously held high the banner of Truth. He has not failed to declare the whole counsel of God, carefully teaching the principles, precepts, and standards found in God's Word. The congregation has been greatly blessed to have him as a leader.

During the time of his pastorate, there have been many precious souls won into the Kingdom of God. Through his ministry, the local congregation has grown in grace and knowledge. His greatest joy is seeing precious hearts take hold of the Truth and walk in it. The Apostle John described it this way: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4).

Brother Decker has gone on many missionary journeys into foreign lands. His travels have included the Grand Cayman, Cayman Braux, Honduras, Haiti, the Philippines, and Kenya, East Africa. He oversaw the purchase of a plot of ground on which to build a tabernacle in Embu, East Africa. He sent several brethren from the congregation there to help erect that house of worship. Helping others has often brought great joy to his heart. In addition to his other duties, he oversees three major camp meetings each year, as well as keeping a watchful eye on the publishing of *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

[continued on page 15]

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Are You Filled?



Brother Allen Polston

A Terrible Tragedy

Not far from where I live, a very tragic accident occurred. A van of college students and instructors were returning to the university after a trip, and a semi-driver crossed the highway median and ripped out the side of the van. It was a very bizarre accident, and there were several fatalities. Those who were not killed were seriously injured. The traffic was backed up for a long time, and the State Highway Patrol had to close the Interstate, except for emergency vehicles. There was much confusion and chaos.

The local coroner was called to the scene and pronounced several people dead at the scene of the accident. Some injured were taken to a larger hospital with better facilities to treat trauma injuries. Some were wounded very seriously and were hardly recognizable. One young woman who was admitted to the hospital was mistakenly identified as a young woman whom the coroner had pronounced dead at the scene, and the young woman who died was identified incorrectly as the young woman who was hospitalized. The parents of the supposedly deceased daughter entered the

grieving process, and the body of their supposed daughter was transported to their home state. They had her funeral and burial, while the other young woman (who was really their daughter) was in the hospital in Indianapolis.

The badly injured young woman in the Indianapolis hospital had much of her face and body wrapped in bandages. There was little of her to be seen, but the real parents of the young woman who was deceased were there for approximately six weeks, sitting by the bedside of this young lady, thinking they were nursing their

own daughter back to health. Slowly but surely, the injured young woman began to respond and come out of the coma. As she became more alert and aware of her surroundings, those involved came to the realization that this young lady was mistakenly identified as the one who was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident.

The report in the newspaper told of this bittersweet situation. It was sweet news to the parents who had buried a young woman to learn that their daughter was still living and recovering from her injuries. On the other hand, it was bitter for the parents who thought they had a living child to come to the realization that their daughter had died and was buried in a grave in another state.

This was an innocent mistake; however, getting such matters right is very important. As I thought about that, my mind went to an even more serious matter than that: the importance of being right with God in your soul.

In that particularly sad event that I mentioned, the two families involved suffered much grief because of this tragedy, but how much greater the grief will be when a lost person finds out at the Judgment that he or she has not been living right before God.

We can look at situations where errors have occurred and analyze them and think about possible ways to prevent them from reoccurring, but no matter how educated or how intelligent people are, mistakes will occur. I am not talking about committing sin or living in sin, but I am talking about human error.

You do not have to go to the Judgment with the tragic mistake of not being right with God. You do not have to face eternity in a condition where you will hear these fateful, frightful, dreadful words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). You can avoid that terrible tragedy.

The Foundation of God Stands Sure

Unfortunately, not many people are choosing the right way, but God has made it possible that we all can go to Heaven if we serve Him in this time world. Friend, you can make Heaven your home one day. You do not have to die lost. The Bible tells us it is not the will of God that anyone should be lost. God does not want you to perish. He wants you to be filled with righteousness. He wants you to be right and to be with Him forever.

According to the words of Jesus in the Scripture text, it is a blessed condition to be filled with righteousness. This proclamation would indicate that those who are not filled are missing a blessing. The very fact that Jesus stated that it is a blessed condition to be filled lets you know that you are missing a blessing if you are anything less than being filled. Something is absent.

You do not have to wonder about the accuracy of the words found in the Bible; they are true. Sometimes I seriously question the validity of articles that appear in the newspaper and other worldly publications. I believe they often have a liberal slant to them, and many times the facts have been twisted. On the other hand, when it comes to the Word of God, that is something you can trust and base your life upon. God's Word will not fail you. You can build your future on the principles found in the Bible.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:89, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." God's Word is not going to change. It is forever settled. You can have confidence in the Word of God. It is accurate, and it is true.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy concerning many things, but one specific topic that he wrote about was regarding some people who had erred. Also, they were in the process of leading others astray. In 2 Timothy 2:19 Paul said, "Never-

theless the foundation of God standeth sure." Others may stray from the Truth, and they may even draw others away with them; nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure. This very thought is presented throughout the Scriptures. God will not fail you. His Word will stand sure.

You can see the sureness of God's Word in the symbols of the Revelation. Revelation 15:2-4a states: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God [that sea of glass was something they could stand upon]. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

In order for people to join those who are portrayed as playing their harps, standing on the Word of God is necessary. You have to stand on the sea of glass so that you can get your harp in tune with God and begin to play it. Only through the Word of God can you see Christ and then see yourself.

The sea of glass lets people see themselves as God sees them. If you want to make Heaven your home, when you see something amiss in your life, you ought to deal with it without hesitation. You should not allow it to go on indefinitely. In other words, do not put it off, or procrastinate. The Word of God allows you to get a vision of Christ, and it also allows you to see yourself as God sees you.

You should not say, "God, You need to change Your ways." You need to change. When something is lacking in your life, you should say, "Lord, help me to overcome this." The flesh will work on you and try to hinder you and prevent you from moving to higher ground. However,

if you will ask the Lord to help you and give you strength, He will.

The Word of God Is Powerful

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Understanding why people who have allowed wrong things in their lives do not want to attend church services regularly is not difficult. The reason is that the Word of God is quick and powerful.

The Word of God will get right down to the very root of the problem, and people do not like that. It gets to you before you can even think of a reason to justify yourself. It is quick and powerful. This world was spoken into existence by the Word of God. As the Word is going forth in a church service, you may sit back and try to occupy your mind with something else, but the Word of God is powerful. It will penetrate past that.

The Hebrew writer also said that the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword; it is piercing. People in the world pierce their bodies all over, but when they get a little poke from God, so to speak, they are ready to run off. Many people engage in foolish behavior by piercing their ears, their eyebrows, their tongue, and other body parts. However, when God pricks their heart a little with His Word, they get upset, and some even become bitter and run off. Some people have said, "He was preaching at me," when the man of God was just delivering a message from God. If you receive a bill in the mail, you do not get upset with the mail carrier. It is your bill. Likewise, the man of God is just the delivery man.

People go to all kinds of extremes to be like the world. I am reminded of the Old Testament account concerning the prophets of Baal in Elijah's day. You can read

about it in 1 Kings, Chapter 18. They cut themselves until the blood gushed from their bodies. They went to extremes in an attempt to gain the attention of their false god. That is going on in our world today.

Many people do not want to be around where the Word of God is being preached. In Isaiah 28:19-20 the Prophet Isaiah said: "From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. [What was he saying? He was saying that the Word of God will trouble you when you know how you ought to be living yet you fail to live that way. You know you are not going to make it to Heaven living that way. You know the end result.] For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."

In other words, you can pull the covers up to your chin to get warm, but your feet will get cold. Therefore, you cover your feet, and the next thing you know, your shoulders are shivering. It is a constant trouble. My friend, the Word of God troubles people. That is the reason they do not want to come around. God has their number, and He knows all about them. They may make all kinds of excuses, but God knows them. Unfortunately, many people have gotten away from standing on the Word.

Are You Meeting God's Conditions?

We are living in a time when people are failing to stand on the Word of God, much to their own destruction. They will become as the Israelites whom the Psalmist described in Psalm 137:1-4 when he said: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. [They felt that it was not worth going on, so they just sat down and wept. Why?] We hanged our harps upon the wil-

lows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?"

If you stray from the Word of God, you are wandering in a strange land, and you cannot sing the songs of Zion, or the songs of victory. You must hang your harp on the willow. I have often wondered if that is how the willow tree got the name "Weeping Willow."

I am glad that, as the saints of God, we can still get out our harps. We can get together and harp on our harps and rejoice in the good things of God. Thank God, we do not have to become lukewarm or turn away from the Truth and become spiritually dead. We can be filled with righteousness and be blessed. I like the song that says: "*I am blessed, I am blessed, Every day that I live, I am blessed. When I wake up in the morning, till I lay my head to rest, I am blessed, I am blessed.*" Thank God, we can be blessed by being filled by God.

The Hebrew writer penned in Hebrews 6:8-9: "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

Again, Jesus said in our Scripture text, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." You must meet certain conditions to be filled. God will not force you to serve Him. These blessings are contingent upon your meeting certain conditions in your life. These blessings are riding upon your reaction to God's goodness. God gives His goodness to mankind, and then He allows each individual to make a decision. He gives you life and breath and opportunity, and then you must decide from there.

Matthew 13:12 reads, "For

whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." The blessings of God are contingent upon your desire and how much you hunger and thirst after righteousness. I believe that paraphrasing this verse in this manner would be very appropriate: "Whosoever has a hunger and a thirst for God, for Truth, and for righteousness shall be filled."

It is very important to be right when it comes to matters of eternal life. When it comes to your soul and your experience with God, you need to be right. You need to have the right attitude, the right conduct, and the right spirit. Also, having the right doctrine is important. As a saint of God, you should want to have the right kind of behavior and dress modestly.

Walking According to God's Will

I want to be where God would have me to be. I believe that God has called me to labor in state of Indiana. If I think about going anywhere else at this time, it brings a dark cloud over me. Someone may say, "You could make a lot more money in the construction business if you were to move down to Florida." Maybe so, but I want to be in the right place, the place where God has called me to labor. No matter what opportunities may be available, I want to be exactly where God would have me to be.

There is a blessing in being right. Now, I am not talking about self-righteousness; that is as filthy rags in the sight of God. I am talking about being right with God and being right where God would have you to be. That is what I want. I lived too long with things wrong in my life. I went to the wrong places, kept company with the wrong people, and engaged in the wrong activities. I thank God that one day He helped me get things right, and I want to remain right. What is more, I want to be with people who are

living right. Is that your desire? Do you want to be everything that God would have you to be, even if it is a little discomfiting at times or even if it means standing alone in the workplace or in a family situation? Whatever the cost, if you really want to be right, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness and really have a desire to live for God, you will be filled.

The Lord will give a person the opportunity to be right. He will give instruction and say, "This is the way; walk ye in it." If people really want to be right, God will bring them in. He may use a dear old saint who is barely making it financially. Suppose his car breaks down. That saint of God knows that God is in full control, so when he goes to the mechanic, he does not moan and complain and carry on. He is not happy that his car needs repair, but he sees an opportunity to witness to the mechanic. Perhaps the mechanic is longing to be right with God, but he does not know how. What happens? God sets up an opportunity for him to meet a saint of God so that saint can witness to him and invite him to church.

If you really hunger and thirst to be right, God will fill you abundantly. Often people neglect to seek God's direction and move too quickly; then they have a problem to deal with and correct, but pride stands in their way. It is better to pray and think things through before acting.

Keep Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness

As I mentioned earlier, Matthew 13:12 states, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Sometimes people start to lose their hungering and thirsting for what is right, and when they lose their desire, they begin to lose their ability to see spiritually. Next, they lose their hold on the Truth. Many people who once had a vision of the church have lost their vision. Their desire is gone.

Many people who once stood for Truth have now yielded to compromise. They have allowed something to change or interfere with their desire for what is right. Dear one, just because you do not drink alcoholic beverages, carouse, party, or use drugs, do not think for a minute that the devil is going to give up on you. Just because you totally avoid many vices will not prevent the flesh from rising. The flesh will try to be exalted, maybe in a more deceptive way. The devil will use anything he can. He may cause you to get cross with everyone who disagrees with you. The flesh will try to get you to think, "I think things ought to be done this way." Well, you are entitled to your own opinion, but God will direct His church.

If you are not careful, your flesh will get offended and become elevated in a way that it should not. You should not allow the desire for fleshly gratification to replace the hungering and thirsting for what is right. Oh, how carefully you must watch the desires of the flesh! It is designed to avoid suffering and pain. When this flesh feels something that hurts, it draws back from it. It is that way by the design of God, but you must be careful not to allow the flesh to get out of place and replace the desire for what is right. You need to keep hungering and thirsting for righteousness. You should want to be right with God and the church and be right where God would have you to be.

Someone may say, "Look, if I line up with that, it will cause problems in my marriage." Your problems are only going to increase if you get out of the order of God. The devil likes to tell people, "Things will be much better if you go this way," but your problems will be amplified if you get out of order with God. You should not allow the flesh to cause you trouble by wanting to be exalted and elevated. The desire for fleshly recognition can easily move in and replace your hungering and thirsting for Truth.

My burden is to inspire and encourage you to keep hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

You may think you have everything right in your life and everything in order. Well, you need to beware, because the devil will come along and try to confuse you. He will try to cause something to happen to get you off balance so that you are unsure of things. You must have that hungering and thirsting for what is right. You must keep that. You have to want to be right with God, and then be right. Above everything else, such as pleasing your companion, satisfying your children and their wants, being loyal to your friends, and all other things, you have to keep that desire and that hungering and thirsting to be right with God.

"Be Filled With the Spirit"

God can fill things that need to be filled. He knows how to fill the soul with peace, joy, love, and satisfaction. He can fill any void that may be in your life. God knows how to fill a pulpit, and He knows how to fill your cup. One songwriter said, "I am drinking from my saucer, because my cup has overflowed." God knows how to fill your cup.

If you intend to labor in the work of God, you must be filled. Too many unclean spirits are working against the Truth. They are working to hinder the progress of the saints. If you want to see more people saved and see the church move forward, you must be filled with the Spirit of God. You cannot do the work of God when you are empty, or even partially filled.

You should not be satisfied as long as you have loved ones, friends, neighbors, and coworkers who are unsaved. Even to stay saved yourself, you must be filled with the Spirit of God continually. Do not think the devil is going to say, "Well, they are running on half-way or a quarter capacity. I will be merciful to them." The devil is never going to be merciful. You must be

filled with the Holy Spirit to stay saved. We all are tempted, but to resist temptation and stand against the wiles of the devil, we need to be filled. Friend, you cannot do it on your own. You must be filled with the Spirit of God to discern right from wrong.

Young person, when you are in situations where temptations are strong, you need to be filled with righteousness so that you can choose the right. When passions begin to work, you may make mistakes that you will regret for a lifetime. Anyone can make mistakes they will regret; therefore, your being filled with the Holy Spirit is imperative so that you can resist those things.

Joseph loved God, and he was put in a very tempting position from which he fled. Dear one, sometimes you must flee from your situation. When you see that your passions are getting stirred and beginning to pull you the wrong way, do not linger. Flee! You need to be filled so that you can make that decision, because if you do not, the flesh will dictate your actions.

Ephesians 5:15-18 instructs: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." What does this Scripture say? "Be filled with the Spirit." God wants you to be filled with His Spirit. It is too dangerous not to be filled, and not only that, but you are missing blessings when you are not filled.

Being Filled Afresh Daily

Jesus said in our Scripture lesson, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." If you are not filled, then you are missing a blessing. Are you filled? You need to be filled regularly. How long would your automobile function if you filled it only once? How long

would your stomach be satisfied if you filled it with breakfast and never ate anything else? What do you do after you get your stomach filled? You receive strength to labor. Likewise, when you get filled with the Holy Spirit, you press forward to labor for God.

You can read in the Book of Acts that the early morning brethren were filled with the presence of God repeatedly. It was not just once. Those brethren continually sought the Lord to fill them afresh. Those brethren saw three thousand souls saved in one afternoon, and they still needed to pray to be filled. When they gathered together and prayed in unity and in one accord for God to come down and inhabit them afresh, God responded in such a mighty way that it even caused the elements in the earth to respond.

Are you filled? Going on anything less is too dangerous. We each need to be filled with the presence of God. Many people used to thirst for the right, but sometime or other, they ceased to do so. The Scripture says, "Blessed are they which do hunger." That means it is ongoing; it is continually wanting to be right where God would have you to be, not off one step to the left or to the right. It is far better to be right where God would have you to be and be filled.

As I bring the message to a close, I want to present the connection between hungering and thirsting after righteousness and being filled. What it takes to address that hunger and thirst is also what is available to bless your life abundantly. Luke 11:11-13 reads: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Before Jesus went back to Heav-

en, He said He would send the Comforter, the Spirit of God, to guide us into all Truth. In other words, the Holy Spirit will lead and guide us in the right way. He also brings the fruit of the Spirit: the joy, the love, and the peace that the world is longing for. God has all that people out in sin are looking for, but He has it in a better way, a righteous way. Oh, how they need to be filled with the Spirit of God! Friend, how you need to invite the presence of God into your life to fill you afresh and to grant you the

blessings of His presence.

The Scripture lets you know that the Holy Spirit will help and guide you into that which is right and lead you away from what is wrong. Too many people want all the blessings of God with no commitment. Are you living your life filled with the Spirit of God? Are you filled with joy, happiness, and satisfaction? If you will be honest, no doubt, you need to put other things and thoughts aside and say, "God, fill me afresh so that I might rejoice in the God of my salvation. Fill me

with Your presence so that I do not start looking to worldly sources." These days many people lean much toward the entertainment industry, and that is a result of not being filled by God.

God wants to fill His people. He wants to be all to you in your life so that you can be all that He would have you to be. Are you filled?

(Cassette C-5607M)

[20 Year Anniversary – continued from page 9]

Along with the good times in his ministry, he has had to walk through dark places and deep waters, times when severe heartache, trials, and disappointments came in to obscure the sunshine. Every true man of God faces troublesome times in his journey along the way of life. Such times are never enjoyable, but they always prove profitable to the one who has endured them. Brother Decker has had his share of grief. However, amid those periods of heartache, pain, suffering, and sorrow, he has never permitted his vision of Christ to become dim. He has counted it all joy.

Through these trying circumstances his heart has tendered, his spirit has mellowed, and his love for God has become richer. He can join others and sing the old song that says: "*Sweeter gets the journey every day. Serving Jesus really pays.*" When men and women are in the center of God's will, troubles are sure to come their way, but the Lord is always near to bring hope, cheer, and victory. Paul spoke in Romans 8:18, saying, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Knowing that our trials will pass, we can truly sing the song, "*Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.*"

Sunday, May 20, 2007, Brother Decker celebrated twenty years as the pastor of the Church of God in Newark, Ohio. We, the people, desired to honor our pastor and his dear wife for the faithful years they have devoted and for their labor of love given to all. The Apostle Paul gave words of admonition in 1 Timothy 5:17, saying, "Let the elders that rule well be

counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

After the morning worship service, the saints gathered in the dining hall for dinner. At that time Brother and Sister Decker were presented with many tokens of appreciation from the congregation. There were also many expressions of gratitude spoken for their faithful, loving service. You may visit our website to view pictures from the Pastor Appreciation Day service: www.godsacres.org/pg.scrapbook.html.



LABOR DAY

Fellowship Meeting

September 3

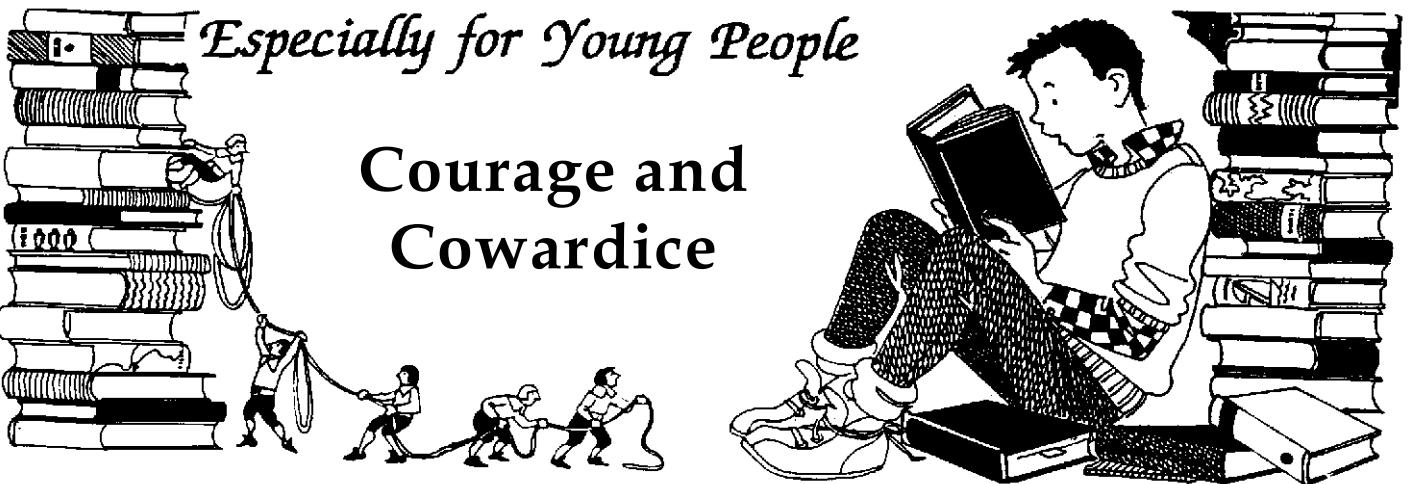
TWO SERVICES
10:00 A.M. 2:30 P.M.

**The Church of God
6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH**

Meals provided by the local congregation.

For more information contact:

**Pastor Daniel Webster
92 W. Main St. Seville, OH 44273
(330) 435-6490 or (330) 725-5993**



Especially for Young People

Courage and Cowardice

Boys are very apt to get wrong ideas about courage and cowardice. They often confound the two, calling that courage which is cowardice, and that cowardice which is courage. Two or three illustrations will make this plain to all our boy readers.

George came into the house one day, all dripping wet. His mother, as she saw him, exclaimed: "Why, George, my son, why are you so wet?"

"Why, mother, one of the boys said, 'I dare you to jump into the creek,' and I tell you, I am not to be dared."

Now, was it courage that led George to do that? Some boys would say it was. They might be inclined to think that he was a brave and courageous boy. But no, George was a coward, and jumping into the creek was a very cowardly act. He well knew that it was wrong for him to jump into the creek with his clothes on, but he was afraid the other boys would laugh at him, if he should stand and be dared.

Edward came strutting along up to James, and putting his fist in his face, said, "Strike that if you dare!" just to see if he couldn't get him into a quarrel. Now, which would show

the most real courage, for James to give him a hit and have a brutal fight and both get wounded or to say, as he did: "Edward, if you want a quarrel, you have come to the wrong boy. I never fight, because it is wrong. You may call me a coward if you will, but I will show you that I have courage enough not to be tempted by your ridicule and do what I know is wrong!" That was brave and courageous.

Well, a great man, Mr. A., a member of Congress, said something that offended Mr. B., another great man. Mr. B. sent him a note and dared him to fight; that is, he challenged him to fight a duel. Mr. A. accepted the challenge, and they met with deadly weapons and sought to take each other's life. Now, some said Mr. A. was a man of courage, because like the foolish boy who jumped into the creek, he wouldn't be dared. Mr. A. accepted that challenge, probably through cowardice. He knew it was breaking a positive command of God to attempt to kill the man who dared him, but he had not courage enough to bear the tauntings of those who would say he was afraid to fight. He was a coward!

A good definition of courage is

"not to be afraid to do what is right and to be afraid to do what is wrong." The stories of Daniel and his three friends and of Joseph give us fine examples of those who possessed true courage. They were not afraid to do what was right, and they were afraid to do what was wrong.

*Dare to be honest, good, and sincere,
Dare to be upright, and you never
need fear,
Dare to be brave in the cause of
the right,
Dare with the enemy ever to fight.
Dare to be loving and patient
each day,
Dare speak the truth, whatever
you say.
Dare to be gentle and orderly too,
Dare shun the evil, whatever you do.
Dare to be cheerful, forgiving,
and mild,
Dare shun the people whom sin
has defiled,
Dare to speak kindly, and ever
be true,
Dare to do right, and you'll find
your way through.*

Selected

**There is a way to stay out of hell,
but there is no way to get out!**

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the

law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcases were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Psalm 52:1 Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.

2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all devouring words,

O thou deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.

The Lord Wants You to See Your True Condition



Brother Irwin Sesher

Making Eternal Decisions

Perilous times are upon the church and upon the people of God. It is very evident everywhere you

go today. Many people are making eternal decisions concerning whether they want to accept God or reject Him. I am not talking about a minor decision such as what you are going

to eat, what you are going to wear, or where you are going to spend the day. I am speaking to you about eternity. Friend, when you reject the Lord and His mercy, you are placing

yourself in very dangerous territory. Also, you are placing yourself on unfamiliar ground.

We read in our Scripture text in Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" According to the dictionary, the word *woe* has a very distinct meaning, and it was used to get people's attention. The word *woe* means "overwhelming sorrow, grief, heavy affliction, calamity, disaster, a condition of deep suffering and misery, ruinous trouble." None of these definitions is uplifting or cheerful.

Bringing this Scripture up to date, we could say, "Woe unto those who once stood for Truth and then turned away from it." If you have turned away from Truth, you are going to face calamities, friend. If you let down your guard when it comes to the things of God, you are putting yourself on unfamiliar ground. Woe to those who once claimed to be true Church of God but now feast at Babylon's table. Woe to people who were once gloriously saved but have backslidden and have gone deeper into the things of the world. Sinner friend, backslider, you have turned away from the precious mercies of God, and you are walking on very treacherous ground. Once you have known the mercies of God and have tasted of His goodness and turned away from what God wants you to do, the Bible pronounces a "woe" upon you.

The enemy of your soul wants to destroy you, and he will stop at nothing to accomplish this. He will do all he can to get you to let down on the precious Truth. The enemy of your soul does not care how long you have been living for God, how many Scriptures you know, or who you are. He is determined to destroy your soul. He will try to convince you to stay home from the church services. However, God's Holy Spirit will draw you to attend the services. God is concerned about

you.

Child of God, when you were living in sin, perhaps Saturday night was a night that you once got in on the party scene, but now that you have a changed heart, you want to be with the saints of God and you adhere to His precious Word. What a glorious change happened in your individual life when God took control! You should not allow the enemy of your soul to cause you to think you cannot live a holy life. You can do it by the help of God.

The true child of God wants to be in the worship services where he or she can receive help and strength. You can get additional strength from the prayers of the saints. The Word of God will strengthen and fortify your soul. It will help you through trials when nothing else will. It is a good place to receive help. You need to be some place where you can get your soul fed. No doubt, you feasted for many years out in the old world. The world thought it had a full platter for you, but nothing is like the goodness of God to make you grow strong spiritually.

Has Something Hindered Your Walk With God?

The enemy knows that church is the place where you can receive help for your soul. You are not going to get help by sitting on a bar stool or by playing bingo. You can get your soul fed in the true Church of God. The enemy does not like that. He would like to cause the lights to be turned off and the doors to be closed, but I thank God that He sent His only Son so that we can enjoy riches from Heaven. This is something that will cause you to get excited and rejoice!

When you were out in the world, you had your agenda. You got yourself dressed up and went out to look for a good time, but thank God, now you can go to the house of God to praise God for all He has done for you. The enemy of your soul knows that, and he wants

to keep you away. You have to put down your flesh and say, "Devil, I am not going to do what you want me to do, because the things you want me to do are not uplifting spiritually." The Spirit of God cannot deal with you as effectively while you are out shopping. The devil wants to draw you away from where the Spirit of God is.

You cannot negotiate with the enemy of your soul, no matter how strong you think you are, no matter how many Scriptures you can quote, or no matter how long you have been in the Church of God. You cannot compromise with the enemy. You should not even entertain the thought, "Well, I can handle it." Too many people have said that and found they were no match with the devil. He does not want you to be in a good Church of God service.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. If you have turned away from the Truth, the enemy does not want you to see the things you once stood against. He does not want you to see the wrong in those things anymore. He will cause you to think that men of God who preach the whole Gospel and stand for the Bible standard are speaking their own opinions. It was Truth forty years ago, and it is still Truth today. You should not allow the enemy to tell you that it is no longer Truth. The enemy will fight you hard every day.

The Truth will reveal your true condition to you. The Holy Spirit will send His convicting power to your heart to check your life. If your life is not where it ought to be, how can you help others? You need to do a personal evaluation of your life.

Many individuals are in need physically and spiritually. There are many spiritually depleted individuals, and they need God. Sad to say, many people who once tasted of God's goodness and knew the Truth are gone. What happened in their lives? They allowed something to hinder their walk with God. The Spirit of God will help you to check your spiritual condition, friend. I do

not want anything in this world to hinder me. Nothing in this old world is worth going to hell over. Jesus Christ has provided a way of escape. If you should decide to go your own way, on the Day of Judgment you will not be able to say that God did not provide a way of escape for you. Some people say, "God would not send me to hell." No, if you end up in hell, you will have chosen to go there because you rejected the Word of God. Do not let those weights drag you down.

Cast Off Every Weight

Hebrews 12:1 states, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." You need to cast off anything that is dragging you down spiritually. If Jesus has shown you that you need to get rid of something, I plead with you, do not continue on the path that you are traveling. Jesus has made a way of escape, but woe to you if you continue in your own way. Woe, calamity, despair, and grief will be your companions. It does not have to be that way.

Backslider, you have been away from the goodness of God for too long. Nothing in sin can please your soul like Jesus Christ. It is time for you to come back home, but woe to you if you continue to go your own way. What happens to individuals when a spirit of self-righteousness and self-confidence comes over them? They believe they are invincible and that the Lord will excuse their actions. Friend, you cannot do wrong and get by. The Lord knows all about you.

In the Bible you can read of an individual who knew better than to do what he did, and you can also read of the penalty that he suffered. Daniel 5:1-6 reads: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar,

whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

"They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. [Nothing is written about their praising God. Idol worship will get you in trouble every time. Today people are worshiping things that they ought not to be worshiping. Those things have become gods to them.] In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." You see, God has a way to shut down the party early.

Those individuals were making a mockery of God and His ways and the things of God. Friend, you cannot make light of the Truth or make fun of God's man or His people without God taking notice of your actions. No matter who you are, if you make a mockery of God's precious Word, you are walking on treacherous ground. When God came on the scene, King Belshazzar's fun time was over. The laughter stopped, and the king's countenance changed.

When God wants to get your attention, your countenance will change. Friend, if God has shown you a need in your heart, you should not wait until you are lying in a hospital bed in a serious condition to try to get right with God; then it might be too late.

Stand Firmly on the Principles of the Word of God

First Corinthians 1:21 states that it "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." You may ask, "What makes people turn away from the mercies of God?" They do not stand firmly on the principles of God's Word. If you stand where you are supposed to stand and do all you can to please God, you are going to be on the Rock that cannot be moved. You will not be swayed by other people's decisions. You will stay with the basic principles of Truth. We are living in a time when many people are easily swayed. No wonder they do not have a definite commitment to Jesus. It is time to go with what God has shown you and to get deeply rooted in the things of God. You ought to live the Truth and love the Truth.

Proverbs 23:23 admonishes, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." The Truth saved me and brought me to the true Church of God. It is the Truth that keeps me, and it is obedience to the Truth that will take me to Heaven one of these days. I want to get everyone I can to go with me. When people run down the true Church of God, it stirs me and angers me, because I know what the dirty, rotten devil is trying to do. He does not want the church to prosper, but as long as Truth is being preached and we stand behind the man of God and obey the Word of God, Truth will continue to be preached. Do not think that you can dabble with sin and get by. Sin will take you all the way down. Friend, it will be just a matter of time until it engulfs you entirely.

First Corinthians 5:6 reads, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Child of God, you need to stay as far away from sin as possible. You were once in it, but now you are free. You should not have any desire to get involved in sin anymore, because you know what sin will do. It will lead you

around by your nose, take you places you do not want to go, and cause you to do things you do not want to do. Thank God, in Christ we have the power to say no to sin.

Our Scripture text says in verses 20-21, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; [The enemy of your soul wants you to be in darkness. He does not want you to see the true light of the Gospel. He wants your spiritual eyes to become adjusted to the darkness. Once your eyes get adjusted to the darkness, you will not see the light as you once did.] that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

The word *prudent* means "sound judgment." There is much danger if you become wise in your own eyes and prudent in your own sight. You cannot make it without God. You should not become high and lifted up in yourself and think that you are something. You need to put God first.

Seek That Which Is Good

Many people are claiming darkness for light. Babylonians call darkness light. Their prayer breakfasts are placing darkness ahead of light. Someone may say, "They surely can sing." What spirit do they manifest? Is it of Christ or is it a worldly spirit? Is it merely a performance? The most beautiful singing is that which the Spirit of God directs and is being sung for the glory of God. Are those Gospel singers truly born again or do they go behind the curtains and get out a fifth of whiskey? Are they truly singing about a testimony that is in their hearts or are they singing for the money? If they are truly born again, they will look like saints of God. I have seen pictures of some Gospel singers on their albums, and they are not dressed saintly.

Whatever is going on down in the soul will radiate outwardly. If

Christ is in your heart, others are going to see that He is. Salvation will clean you up and keep you clean. Many people who claim to be Christians want to be worldly, but there are no worldly saints. You are either of the world or not of the world. You are either a saint or a sinner. You are either right or wrong. You are either walking in darkness or walking in the light. There is no middle ground. You cannot ride the fence, so to speak.

Our Scripture text states in verse 20, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil." Sinner friend, the Lord wants you to seek that which is good. You need to be careful of the company you keep and of those with whom you associate. They could easily sway you. Without Christ you do not have the mercies of God to protect you, and you are wide open to the things with which the devil wants to bind you. He wants you to hold grudges and to have envy and strife. You need to be careful of what you listen to. There is too much talk that is not encouraging, uplifting, or spiritual.

Some people make statements about others that are hurtful, cutting, and damaging to their reputations. You must be careful of what you say. Philippians 1:27 reads, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

I have often told students at school, "If you do not have anything positive to say about someone, you should keep your mouth closed." If you do not have anything good to say, do not say anything at all. Friend, we are nothing without God. Do not get so wise in your own understanding that you miss the mark totally. Too many people think they have a better way or an easier way. There is only one true way. Living as a child of God is not hard. To a true child of God, it just comes natural. When you were living in sin,

you worked at sinning. You have to put forth effort to be a child of God, but the benefits are glorious. Before you were saved, you did not want to do things for God, but now you want to because you have changed kingdoms.

Seek Christ—Before It Is Too Late

The devil does not want you to do well. He hates that. He is going to come against you and fight you. The devil is going to work on you, but you do not have to listen to the enemy of your soul. As a child of God, you have a power within you that is greater than that of the enemy. God will be there to fight your battles if you will do what is right. Living for God is the best life on this side of eternity. You ought to tell others about the goodness of God. The richness of His presence is beautiful.

The enemy will tell you that you are missing the pleasures of this old world. Well, look at what you are missing: drug addiction, alcoholism, filthy talk, lying, cheating, illicit sex, and many other undesirable things. The devil would love to see you live a perverted lifestyle. Chat rooms on the Internet are a preying ground for evil spirits out in this old world.

Someone told me about a young woman who often visited a certain chat room on the Internet, which the authorities were monitoring. Also, they watched the house where this young woman lived, and they observed fifty to sixty people entering that house within an hour or two. They ran checks on the license plates and found that lawyers, doctors, and teachers were among the predators. That is sad, isn't it? Sin is everywhere.

The enemy will try to get you involved in a perverted lifestyle. You may think you would never do that, but you do not know what you will do without God's protection. When you turn away from God, you are open prey for the enemy. When the Lord saved you, He took away the bad spirits that wanted fleshly,

ungodly habits. You have a new spirit within, a spirit that wants to do right. I thank God that Jesus Christ was crucified willingly on the old Cross of Calvary. He bore the sins of this whole world. He can take away your sins if you will repent. You must admit, sinner friend, backslider, your way is not working, and it is not supposed to go well for you.

You cannot live this holy life without God. Living in sin is a

terrible life. What a wasted life to live many years and then to die and go to hell! Woe to those who think that joining a church is all there is to living the Christian life! You must be saved. Sinner friend, the Lord is giving you an opportunity to get your heart right. Do not reject Him. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Are you ready to meet God in the condition your soul is in right now? If you say,

"I don't want to think about facing an angry God with the condition my soul is in right now," then you need to do something about it right now. This is not a time to put off your salvation. The enemy wants you to put it off, but Jesus Christ wants you to seek Him now, before it is too late.

(Cassette C-5543E)

The Telltale

"Are you sure your mother won't mind?" Ralph asked anxiously, as Guy started across the field holding his brother's BB gun securely in front of him.

"She won't even know I took the gun," Guy bragged, a crooked smile playing across his rosy, red cheeks. "We won't be gone long."

"But she told you not to go to the woods. I heard her say she didn't want you taking Ray's BB gun without permission," Ralph reminded.

"Aw! C'mon!" Guy exclaimed. "I'm not a baby anymore. It's time Mom and all the rest of the family realized this!"

"But . . . but . . . you're being disobedient!" Ralph stuttered, "and God hates disobedience."

"Just once won't do any harm!" Guy hurled sharply at his cousin.

"Just once is all you need to get you into a peck of trouble too," Ralph reminded, stalling.

"Stay here then; I'm going. I know John's trap route. I'm going to surprise him this morning. I'll make the route. By the time he's through helping dad with the barn chores I'll be home again. Are you coming?"

Without saying a word, Ralph followed Guy across the meadow to the marshes beyond.

"Not a single muskrat!" Guy exclaimed in disgust. "John's going

to be disappointed. He needs a new coat; the pelts were to help buy him one."

The boys walked on and on, pausing just long enough to make sure John's traps held no animal and weren't sprung.

"The muskrat likes more cloudy skies," Ralph said, after they found all the traps empty. "Usually the foggy, cloudy weather seems to make them come out better. What would you do if John had had something in his traps? A BB gun is not the best thing in the world to have around then."

"Just wait and see," Guy boasted. "Ray's gun is powerful." He pointed it at a young sapling and pulled the trigger. Zing-g-g! It rang. "See there!" he said, as the BB embedded itself in the tender sapling.

"We'll go to the woods now," Guy said, beaming proudly. "John's got traps there for skunks, opossum, and fox. Maybe there'll be something in one of these traps."

The boys followed John's route from trap to trap, tree to tree, without success.

"I'm not going any further." Ralph moaned. "Let's go home. I'm tired."

"There's one more trap," Guy insisted. "It's along a little trail up the mountainside. Let's finish the route, Ralph. This is the nicest walk of all. Find a walking stick. It'll

make climbing easier for you."

With a sturdy walking stick held securely in each of the boy's hands, they started up the narrow, winding trail. Before they reached the spot where John's trap was anchored securely to a stout stake in the ground, Guy whispered in eager excitement.

"John's got something! See! It's a skunk! What a beauty he is!"

"But how will you get him? I . . . I mean . . ."

"Watch and see!" Guy bragged, stepping dangerously near to the frightened creature who was being held captive by the strong, stout jaws of the thick metal trap.

"Pow! Pow! Zing-g-g! Zing-g-g!" The BB whistled as Guy released the small hard lead balls toward the helpless animal.

Poor Mr. Skunk! He hardly knew which way to turn nor what to do, the BB's poured at him so fast. Quick as a wink, he released his God-given weapon of defense upon Guy.

"Help! Help, Ralph! I can't see! The skunk got me in the eyes! Oh, I believe I'm blind!"

"What'll we do?" Ralph asked, nearly panicking. He wanted to help his cousin! He did! He did! But if he did, ugh, he'd smell like a skunk all over too, exactly like Guy.

"Get me home to Mother," Guy begged. "She'll know what will

[continued on page 25]

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

Faithfulness



Brother Calvin Foster

God Is Faithful

The word faithfulness denotes trustworthiness, dependability, and surety. When it comes to the things of God, a faithful person is someone who fears God and dreads the thought of disappointing Him. I often say, "I don't worry about failing people; I worry about failing God." I do not want to fail the Lord. He has never failed me.

Our Scripture text tells us that God is "the faithful God, which keepeth covenant [He is going to keep His Word, church] and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." As generation after generation come behind us, God will be faithful to them just as He is faithful to us. Church of God, we ought to encourage one another.

As Christians, we attend the

worship services to learn how to be better children of God and to encourage others. Hebrews 10:23-25 reads: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Verse 23 encourages us to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering . . . he is faithful that promised. . . ." God is so faithful! Therefore, we ought to be faithful to Him and to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The Hebrew writer also admonished us to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as

the manner of some is; but exhorting one another [encouraging and edifying one another]; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

God is dependable. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I want you to think about that for a moment. If you confess your sins, God is faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. I thank God for that!

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful [people have no excuse for not serving God or for being unfaithful to Him, because He is faithful], who will not

suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

A Faithful Man

Let us read about the brother of Nehemiah, the intern governor of Jerusalem. Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall, and he met with opposition; nevertheless, the wall was finished. Nehemiah 7:1-2 states: "Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many."

When Nehemiah looked to decide whom he was going to put in charge over Jerusalem, what kind of person did he look for? Nehemiah 4:9 says they had to watch the wall day and night. They had to watch for Sanballat and Tobiah, their enemies. In Nehemiah 4:3 Tobiah said even if a fox were to go upon the wall, that would break it down. Nehemiah had to watch diligently for the enemy; therefore, he wanted to put a faithful man in charge who feared God above man. He did not want to put a man in charge who would be undependable or untrustworthy.

It is a blessing to be faithful. God wants you and me to be faithful. We cannot do away with faithfulness. God wants His people to be faithful to Him, just as He is faithful to us. I want to stir up your pure mind concerning faithfulness. I believe you can use this counsel to help build up the place where you worship and to be what God would have you to be.

A faithful person is someone who fears God and dreads the thought of disappointing Him. We read in Proverbs 11:13-14: "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." A talebearer will reveal secrets. If you tell a talebearer to keep a secret, that

secret will burn on that person's lips to tell it. One who is of a faithful spirit will conceal the matter. A faithful person is one whom you can trust and one on whom you can depend. That person will not backstab you or talk about you behind your back. You can tell that individual a secret, and he or she will keep it.

We read in Proverbs 20:4-7: "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."

This verse reminds me of Proverbs 31:10, which states, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" Who can find a faithful man? Pastors can relate to this in a great way. Having a faithful person around is refreshing. Some people are so faithful that you can set your watch by them, and others are not so faithful. Some people are habitually late for church. Some are a little late for the services every Sunday.

Proverbs 25:13 says, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters." We must learn to serve God faithfully. Many people have learned how to be faithful and have learned how to be what God would have them to be. Being faithful in the things of God is a blessing. When you are faithful to God, you will also be concerned about His work.

Being Faithful to Your Duty

Telling people that you are a Christian means something. Some people are more faithful to their jobs than they are to God. I have seen men who took pride in their work and in not missing a day all year long. God wants you to be faithful to Him. When you punch the time clock or sign in on the job, you ought to be faithful. You belong to your employer for a certain

amount of time. When you profess to be a Christian, you ought to live right. People are watching you. Are you faithful to whatever you are doing for God? You ought to be faithful to your duty. A faithful man will be richly blessed. Proverbs 28:20 reads, "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."

Jesus said in Matthew 25:14-30: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strayed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In these verses you can see that the faithful man received a blessing. The talent was taken from the unfaithful man and given to the man who had ten talents. I often wonder how many people in the body of Christ are hiding their talents. They have gifts that God has bestowed upon them, but they are letting fear freeze them. Fear will freeze you. If God has given you a talent, He wants you to use it and to develop it. You should not sit on your talent. You can brighten up the corner where you are by letting God use you. Small congregations need people to use their talents.

Christian friend, you need to use what God has given you. If you do not use it, you will lose it. If a snake were to start to slither down the aisle in a church building, fear would cause most people to run away from it, but others would freeze. Do not let the devil freeze you when it comes to using your talent for God. He wants to use you, but you must be faithful.

Being Faithful Stewards

I want to encourage you to be faithful and to obey the Lord. Luke 16:10-13 says: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another

man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [or money]."

God has promised that faithfulness will bring blessings upon you. God is faithful to the world in which we live. He is faithful to sinners. The Scriptures say that God is good to all. If you do not know Christ, you are living beneath your privilege. You are missing the greatest blessing of life. If you come to God and ask Him to forgive you for your sins, He will forgive you for everything you have ever done wrong, and He will clean your record. He is faithful. All you have to do is ask Him. No matter what you have done, God will forgive you if you meet His conditions.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Church of God, we understand the things of God, and we are stewards of the mysteries of God. Therefore, God does not want us to treat people just any way. God will hold you responsible for what you say and for how you treat others, especially those of the household of faith. They belong to God.

First Corinthians 4:2 states, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." God wants you to be faithful. In whatever you are doing for God, you ought to be faithful. You may think that what you are doing is a little thing, but you ought to be faithful in doing it. Every congregation appreciates having someone who is faithful to arrive at church early to turn on the heat or the air conditioning. Also, someone needs to be faithful in cleaning the church building. God will bless a person for that. The wonderful thing about God is that He does not forget when you are faithful.

Young person, you need to learn to be faithful, to keep your word, to be dependable, and to be trustworthy. Can your school teachers and others testify that you are depend-

able, faithful, and trustworthy? Do not worry about what the other students say. They may laugh at you or talk about you, but be faithful. Your faithfulness can grow, and God will bless you.

In 1 Corinthians 4:17 the Apostle Paul said of young Timothy, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church." Can your pastor recommend you and say that you are faithful?

Does God Count You Faithful?

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:11-13: "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

Paul thanked Christ Jesus our Lord, who enabled him that he counted him faithful and put him in the ministry. If you are a minister, did God put you in the ministry or did man put you in? Paul said that God counted him faithful and put him in the ministry. If you are in the ministry, you must be faithful.

Many preachers get their calling from people. God counts one faithful whom He calls to the ministry. If He has called you to the ministry, you need to stay humble before Him. It is a great responsibility and a sacred position. The sacred desk is nothing to play with. Titus 1:7-9 says: "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker [he must not be a violent person], not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

I love to preach the Gospel. I do

not want to be anything but a minister for the rest of my life. Some people will make you feel that being a minister is gloom and doom. I enjoy serving the Lord. God counted me faithful when He called me into the ministry. Many people encourage their children to become doctors, lawyers, or astronauts, but I am encouraging you, young person, to be inspired about the ministry. There is a great world out there that has never heard the Gospel. They do not know the Truth. There is no telling where God might send you.

If men put you in the ministry, they will bend the rules and God's laws, and you will end up not being a true man of God. Often false prophets cover for one another. They know if they put judgment on another preacher, that same preacher will come around and catch them doing the same thing. If a fellow minister does not cover for them, their attitude is, "You were not so nice to me, so I'm going to get you for that." This is what is going on. I thank God this does not go on in the true Church of God.

If you want to be a minister, you must be faithful, and then others can speak for you. How have you been living? What kind of spirit do you manifest in the home and at work? Are you a good worker?

Be Not Weary in Well Doing

I do not know about you, but I do not want to mess up my life. I do not want to lose my salvation. This salvation is truly the pearl of great price. If it were not for God, I would be dead, in jail, or messed up with drugs. I thank God for Jesus! The Church of God took me in and raised me.

Second Timothy 2:1-3 reads: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

First Peter 4:19 states: "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." God is a faithful Creator to us. How long should we be faithful? In Revelation 2:10 Christ told the angel of the church of Smyrna to "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." How long should you be faithful? Do you want a crown of life? You must be faithful unto death.

When church time comes around, the pastor is looking for

you to be in your place, whether you are in a small congregation or a large one. During Sunday school, the pastor is looking for you to be in your place. Some people do not even call when they are not going to show up. They have not been taught to be faithful. They have not been taught the value of this. There is great value in faithfulness. Your reputation is at stake. The choir director wants you to be faithful to the choir. Christ told the angel of the church of Smyrna to be faithful unto death.

If you are faithful, you may get a little weary from time to time. Sometimes it might seem as if your back is against the wall. It can get stressful. Galatians 6:9-10 says: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Do not be weary, saint. Keep up the good work. I want to be faithful to God. I do not want to fail Him. I know that if I do not fail God, I will not fail me. You can count on God, but can He count on you?

(Cassette C-5457E)

[*The Telltale – continued from page 21*] help me. Oh, Ralph! I'm suffocating from this horrid odor! Can't you help me, please? Oh! Why did I disobey? Why? Why?"

"I wish we hadn't disobeyed," Ralph said, feeling suddenly helpless and awful.

"Let's get home," Guy begged, "You'll have to lead me. I can't see a thing. My eyes are burning like fire."

Ralph held his nose all the way home. Like someone leading a blind man, he led Guy down the narrow path, across the fields and meadow to the yard.

Before either boy was on the porch, Mother was at the door.

"O-o-o-o! Ugh!" she exclaimed. "Don't come in here," she warned. "Go down to the spring house by the well and get out of those clothes . . . both of you. I'll be down with basins of clean water and soap and some different clothing. Hurry!" she ordered.

"Mother, I . . . I . . ."

"I know. You have been disobedient again, Guy."

"But . . . how did you know?" Guy asked, not daring to open his eyes.

"Sin always has its 'telltale' marks, Son. Yours is exceptionally potent, well-marked, and strong. It's all too obvious, Guy. I know what happened without your tell-

ing me."

"I'm sorry, Mother. I'm really sorry this time. All the way down the mountainside I told the Lord how sorry I was. I asked Him to forgive me. Mother, I promise I'll never disobey again! Never!" Guy was crying as Ralph led him down the rose bordered pathway to the spring house.

"Well, this is worth all it costs," Mother said softly, as she gathered the clean clothing together to take to the spring house. "If an ass could talk to Balaam, I'm sure God can use a skunk to teach obedience to a disobedient boy." And He did!

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