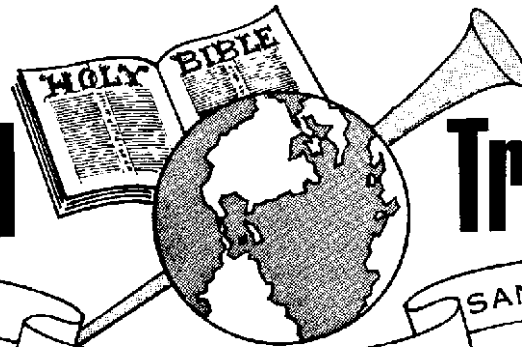


The Gospel



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 Mal. 2:13

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 40 April 2010 No. 4



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?"

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
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the local congregation.

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

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83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055

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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 (II 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 (I 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;
I Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (I 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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We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any
material for any reason. Not responsible for
unsolicited articles or items.

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Internet Address: GodsAcres.org

Vol. 40 April 2010 No. 4

Annual Financial Report

First of all, we want to take this opportunity to express a word of thanks
to our readers for their loyal support this past year. We surely appreciate
your prayers, your thoughtful giving, and the letters of encouragement that
you send to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

Many times letters from readers reassure us that the good news of the
Gospel is still doing a powerful work. Through your letters, we learn that the
Lord is continuing to speak to needy hearts by pointing them to deliverance
from sin. The perpetual sounding forth of the Truth is leading honest hearts
out of division, confusion, and sectarian bondage. These inspiring letters
have often brought fresh new courage and renewed enthusiasm to the
hearts of the workers.

We would like to share one such letter with you from a dear reader. It
states:

*You have no idea what a blessing it is for me to find my way back
to The Gospel Trumpeter! My older brother used to subscribe to The
Gospel Trumpeter years ago. As a young Christian, I read it also and
found it to be a staple diet from about 1985 to 1992 or 1993. Then
for some reason it ceased to come to us here in Ghana. As a
teenager, the paper helped me to become solid and grounded in the
Christian faith. Many in my generation and age group found it
strange. The discipline that the pure Word of God implanted in me
then is still the foundation for my life. I am now 34 years old,
married, and have a family of my own. Recently, I was wondering if
The Gospel Trumpeter was still being published. I thought to look on
the Internet to see if I could find it. You can imagine the joy I
experienced when I found your website. It was truly an emotional
moment for me. It was like finding a long, lost friend. I signed up for
a subscription and can't wait to receive the paper and share it with
my husband. God bless you all for the work you are doing. It is great
to be back, and I do not intend to lose touch again.*

This is one of the many letters that we have received from dear ones
who find and read this religious journal. It surely thrills the pastor's heart as
well as the other workers to hear how God is seeking and searching for
honest hearts. All the credit, the glory, and the honor belongs to the Lord.
We at *The Gospel Trumpeter* are only workers together with the Lord Jesus
Christ.

Without His guiding hand we would never be able to accomplish the
task that lies before us. When we think of how insufficient we are without
Him, our minds go to Joshua as he faced Jericho. The wall standing before
him could not be penetrated by any man. How small and incapable he must
have felt as he stood there gazing at that enormous obstacle. God had all
ready promised that Jericho would be theirs, but something had to be done
before the victory could come. The Captain of the Lord's host appeared on
the scene and the situation soon changed. The secret to success rested in
strict obedience to details. God gave the orders to march around the city
seven days. As Israel gave diligence in following God's command, the walls
came tumbling down. Today our victories do not rest in any human abilities
that we have, but they are in God's grace and power.

We want to leave those thoughts now and get to our report. For several
years we have inserted our *Statement of Condition*. We do this so that you
may be better aware of how your support is being utilized. Also, through
this means we can keep you informed of the expenditures involved in
operating a missionary effort such as this. You will find a breakdown of the
costs incurred below. These figures show how much was paid out, along

[continued on page 7]

1 *Corinthians 15:1* Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James;

then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God [or the body of Christ].

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

The Resurrection



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Message of the Early Church

Easter is a day when people celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is much commercialism during this time of the year. The stores know what the people want, so they line their shelves with Easter eggs and much more. It is a profit-

able time of the year for the merchants. I do not know how people can add these things to this holiday when they are supposed to be celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Think of what our world would be like without the love of God. It is bad enough now, but if the love of God were removed, our

world would be much worse. As difficult as it is to live in some areas today, I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to live without the love of God in our world.

The Resurrection is a fact—historically, biblically, and prophetically. The angels attested to it. In Matthew 28:6 we read, "He is not

here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." All four Gospel writers tell of the empty tomb. He was seen by many witnesses. We read in Acts 10:39-41: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was preached without fear or favor by the Apostles. The Resurrection was the main thrust in the message of the early church. It was an upsetting message to the Jews, especially to the Sadducees who did not believe in the Resurrection. First Corinthians 15:20 says, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ was the first to rise with an immortal, glorified body. Death had no more dominion over Him. Those who are united to Christ by faith and by His Resurrection are assured of their own resurrection.

Under the old covenant, or under the old Law, they had several feasts, but they had three main feasts: the Passover Feast, the Feast of the Firstfruits, and the Feast of Pentecost. The Passover Feast typifies salvation through the blood of Christ. The Feast of the Firstfruits and Feast of Pentecost were closely related. The Feast of the Firstfruits was for the first fruits of the harvest, and then they had the Feast of Pentecost, which was fifty days later.

The Seed of Christ

Jesus Christ was an acceptable sacrifice, and He was pleasing to God. Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren in Ephesians 5:1-2: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sac-

rifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." The first fruits of the barley and the wheat showed how God had blessed the crop, and with thankfulness they pleased Him. God had so blessed that seed and brought forth a crop that would feed the Israelites for many days.

We also have the seed of Christ. God raised up a seed that was planted in a tomb. When we partake of that seed, it supplies the needs of the soul. There is enough power in the seed of Jesus Christ to supply the needs of every soul in this world.

In 1 Corinthians 15:35-38 the Apostle Paul stated: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." What was he talking about? A seed is put into the ground. For example, you may plant wheat. When the seed comes forth from the ground, God gives it a body. It is still wheat, but it is in another form.

The same is true with Jesus Christ. He had a body sown in dishonor and raised in honor with a glorified, immortal body. It was sown in weakness but raised in honor and in strength. Verses 42-44 read: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

The seed, Jesus Christ, brought forth a harvest on the Day of Pentecost. About one hundred twenty believers were gathered there who witnessed God's power and the change that came into their lives by the Holy Spirit; they were dedicated and consecrated to the Lord.

Jesus Christ is not in a headquarters on earth. The Church of God does not have an earthly headquarters. Her headquarters is only where the Head is. Most denominations have a headquarters somewhere, but that is not according to the Word of God. Where is Jesus Christ now? Mark 16:19 states, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Colossians 3:1 reads, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Our headquarters is in Heaven. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.

Christ's Resurrection is of vast importance to the Christian. It would be impossible to have life with a dead Savior. How could the members be alive if their Savior were dead? Our Savior is alive, thank God, and so is His church. You may ask, "What makes the difference?" It makes all the difference in the world. Paul said if there were no Resurrection, our preaching and our faith would be vain. Paul let us know that we would be false witnesses and yet in our sins, and those who went before us would have perished. If in this life we had no hope, we would be of all men most miserable. If you have a miserable experience, you are only looking into this life. There is a life beyond this life.

"We Walk by Faith"

Anointed preaching is not vain. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Our faith is not in vain. It is by faith that the Christian walks. Thank God, there is feeling in serving God, but we are not saved by feelings; we are saved by faith. If

you go by feelings, sometimes you will not feel saved, and other times you will feel saved.

Second Corinthians 5:7 reads, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." You are saved when you believe the Gospel. You are not saved by magical feelings going through your body, by speaking in an unknown tongue, or by being baptized in water. You are saved by faith in the Word of God. You must have faith in God's Word. If you try to get saved any other way, the devil will talk you out of it. When you believe the Word – that the just shall live by faith – and put that into practice in your life, you are saved, and you can stand on that.

The Word of God lets you know that if you confess and forsake your sins, God will have mercy. Sometimes people do a lot of confessing, but they do not forsake sin. They must do both. You do not have to get down beside your bed every night and confess. God has something better for you than that. You can get down beside your bed each night and say, "Thank You, God, for keeping me another day."

We are not false witnesses. We join with the Psalmist, who wrote in Psalm 34:8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Every man who has tasted of the Lord has found Him to be good. The goodness of God leads to repentance. We are not still in our sins; thank God, we have been resurrected. We have been delivered from sin and from the power that sin had over us. We are no longer slaves to sin. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion [or rule] over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." We are not under grace to sin, but we are under grace so that we do not have to sin. How do we live free from sin? We have a living Christ, and He lives within us.

Commonsense will tell you that sin put Christ on the Cross. He cannot live where sin is. We have a living Christ, and He lives within

the heart of every child of God. Galatians 2:20 reads, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." You cannot live free from sin in your own strength. It is not because I am stronger than you are or because you are stronger than I am; that is not how you live free from sin. It is having the power of God that enables you to live free from sin.

Some individuals say, "I don't believe that anyone can live free from sin." What if a person wanted to live free from sin? What if one could have the power to do so? What if a person could have God living on the inside? What if he could have the same power in him that raised Jesus from the dead? Do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? The power that raised Him from the dead is the same power that gives you and me the ability to live free from sin.

Quickened Together With Christ

Let us read Paul's prayer for the church. In Ephesians 1:18-23 he said: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

The power that brought Jesus out of the tomb is the same power

that God looses in us and enables us to live free from sin. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:1-6: "And you hath he quickened [the word *quickened* simply means 'made alive'], who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places." He stated in Ephesians 1:20, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Paul was talking about the same Spirit, not two spirits. The same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ and set Him at the right hand of God, who set Him in heavenly places, is the same Spirit that resurrected you and me from trespasses and sins and made us alive. We have been raised to sit together in heavenly places.

Do you want to know why there is so much confusion today? Most people do not read the Word of God. Often they listen as the Word is being preached, but they hear only what they want to hear. In the parables in Matthew, Chapter 13, and in Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, let you know that he who has an ear should hear what the Spirit says. The Spirit and His Word are together. Colossians 3:1 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

All Things Become New in Christ

Now, the Christian can fall and commit sin. He is a free, moral agent; he has a right of choice. The possibility is there, but a real Christian does not want to commit sin; he turns away from it. He does his best not to get in a situation where he could commit sin.

Someone may inquire, "How do I take temptation?" You do not stand alone in your own strength in the temptation. You do not grit your teeth and say, "I'm not going to do it." In 1 Corinthians 10:13 the Apostle Paul wrote, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God 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, [In other words, the Lord will make a way so that you do not have to commit sin. If you were to give in to temptation, you would commit sin; but you can escape it.] that ye may be able to bear it."

The Christian does not want to do anything that would displease his Lord and Savior. You see, Jesus Christ can be hurt. Before He hung on the Cross, He suffered undue pain as you and I have never known. They placed a crown of thorns on His head, beat Him so severely that it actually took the flesh off His back, and they spat upon Him. Have you ever had somebody spit in your face? You need to think about that. He suffered for righteousness' sake. He committed no sin and no guile. He suffered as a righteous man; He was not guilty. Sometimes we have to suffer things because of our own faults, but He had none.

How is it possible for a Christian to live holy? In the world people are so mixed up about this. They wonder why nothing really changes when somebody joins a church. They get involved in religious activities, but there is no real change on the inside. Dear one, when I speak of coming to Christ, I am not talking about joining a church. You cannot

join the Church of God; you must be born again. When you are born again, you are a member of the Church of God.

When you are born again, a change takes place: the mind is changed, the heart is changed (I am not talking about the physical heart; I am talking about the center of your affection), and the spirit is changed; then God moves in with His Holy Spirit. This is how you can live free from sin. Again, it is not in your own strength. You become a new man or a new woman! Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

A New Heart and a New Spirit

In the Old Testament, let us read a prophecy. Let us bring Ezekiel to the witness stand and let him tell us what happens when an individual is saved. Ezekiel was an Old Testament Prophet, and he wrote in Ezekiel 36:25-28: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, [The clean water that he was talking about was not water baptism, because that could be dirty water. He was talking about the washing of water by the Word of God.] and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh [This is a heart that is pliable. He takes out the disobedient spirit and gives you a new spirit.]

"And I will put my spirit [God will move inside you. There is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; they all agree in one.] within you [God is not an old, gray-haired man sitting over in eternity somewhere; He is a Spirit], and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Salvation is not about what you

can do in your own strength. You cannot grit your teeth and say: "I'm going to do better. I'm going to quit doing this and start doing that." No, He will put His Spirit within you and cause you to walk in His statutes, to keep His judgments, and do them. Serving God is a great life. I spent about twenty-seven years in sin, so I know what people are talking about when they talk of sin. On the other hand, I also know what the Bible is talking about when it says, "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." God would rather lead you to repent through His goodness, but there is a two-edged sword: there is the goodness of God and the severity of God.

A resurrection actually takes place in the soul of one who becomes a Christian. In the Ephesians letter, Chapter 1 speaks of how the Spirit raised Christ from the dead and set Him in heavenly places. Chapter 2 speaks of how He has raised us up and set us in heavenly places. How? He does it by the same Spirit. This is how a resurrection takes place in the soul. One songwriter penned a song that reads, "*A resurrection I confess, has taken place within my breast; I've been awakened from the dead, And now I live with Christ instead.*"

"They That Hear Shall Live"

I want you to read a Scripture found in the Book of Revelation. People have come up with all kinds of literal applications, but the Book of Revelation is a spiritual Book written in symbolic language. Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The first death is in trespasses and sins, and the first resurrection is when He quickened you, or made you alive. What is the second death? When you die the second time, or when you die physically, if you do not have God in your soul, you will

experience eternal separation from God. The Scripture says if you have had part in the first resurrection (in other words, you have been born again in the first resurrection), the second death (eternal separation from God) will have no power over you. That is wonderful!

Jesus said in John 5:24-29: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is [right when Jesus spoke this], when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. [He was talking about those who are dead in sin. If they hear the voice of God (they could shut their ears to His voice), they will live.] For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

"Marvel not at this [He was talking about another hour coming]: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth [there will be no choice in this matter]; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." There will be one general resurrection. All who come out of the graves will have a glorified, or an immortal, body. Those who have done good will be resurrected to life, and those who have done evil will be resurrected to damnation.

Having the power of God in your life is more than knowing about Jesus' having a resurrection. You need a resurrection in your soul. Simply attending church services once or twice a year may appease your conscience and cause you to think that you have done something good, but it will never give the peace of God that being born again can give you daily. Being

born again can happen in an instant of time if you do what Jesus said: hear His voice and believe on Him.

Friend, you still have a choice. If you will hear the Word of God, you will live. On the other hand, you do not have to hear; you can turn a deaf ear to the Word. However, a day is coming (and you know how quickly time passes) when you will drop off the stage of action. A day is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth.

Then the right of choice will be gone.

Would you like to become a Christian? You should not be just a churchgoer or one who belongs to a church. Would you like a change to take place? You can have a new heart, a new spirit, and God's Spirit dwelling inside. Does God dwell in your heart? Now you have a choice. If you want God in your soul, you must do something.

(Compact Disc TR-417M)

[Annual Financial Report—continued from page 2]

with the amount of contributions we received to help offset the expenses.

We are truly thankful that the Lord is allowing this periodical to reach into many areas and find souls that we would be unable to reach. Although we see some results of our labors, we trust that God is doing an even greater work than we can see. We must never become weary in well doing. Be assured that if each of us will be faithful to the task that God has given us, we will reap in the joyful harvest. Yes, great rewards await those who assist in winning souls to Christ and His true church.

This coming year we would once again like to ask each of you to join with us in helping to spread the good news of the Gospel. Will you allow God to lay the work of The Gospel Trumpeter on your heart in a greater way? Will you pray more earnestly this year that this periodical will touch more hearts? Every effort exerted for Him must be saturated with prayer. Will you also consider giving more of your finances to the furtherance of this Gospel outreach?

Once again, we want to express our sincere appreciation to each of you for your faithfulness this past year.

Statement of Condition

for 12 months ending
January 31, 2010



	Income	Expenses
Supplies		\$ 30,017.06
Miscellaneous		763.74
Wages/Worker's Comp		54,690.89
Donations/Offerings	\$14,482.42	
Equipment Purchased		10,355.72
Equipment Repairs		3,484.24
Postage		58,382.25
Subtotals	14,482.42	\$157,693.90
<i>Balance paid out of the general fund of the Church of God congregation at Newark, OH</i>		\$143,211.48

"He Led Captivity Captive"



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Love One Another

The pronoun "he" in our Scripture text is speaking of Jesus Christ. We all can be free people, free to enjoy living. In John 10:10 the words of Christ are, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." I am convinced that God's people enjoy living more than any other people in the world. We are serving a great and wonderful God. It is a peaceful, wonderful life.

Christ came to set people free. He came to set the captives free. Ephesians 4:1 says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, [Paul was writing from a lonely prison cell

in the city of Rome. When God is with you, that is all sufficient. The saints are a help and a blessing; they refresh and encourage others.] beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

One word emphasized more than any other word in the Book of Ephesians is the word *walk*. Our walk is extremely important. The Bible says that Jesus' life was the light of men. What kind of life are you living? People are watching your life. They may not always hear what you say, but they are watching how you live. If you are not living right in the home, if you are not treating your spouse, your children,

or even the neighbor's dog right, people are watching. Do not go to church and say, "I am reigning, sweetly reigning over all." Your life ought to be the light of men. Let us walk worthily. There is no higher calling in the world than the calling to be God's people.

Ephesians 4:2-3 reads: "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We should work to tear down the walls of division, and we ought to love one another. If you are living a holy, godly life and I am living a holy, godly life, we have the same Spirit. God gives us different

gifts, but there should be no dissension in the body of Christ. I believe God wants unity among us. Let us work to that end. If you need to clear up some things or if you have something to make right, do not wait until tomorrow, next month, or next year. If you have something to make right, you ought to do it now, because your heart might stop at any moment; then it would be left undone, and it will meet you at the Judgment.

Commentators tell us that John the Revelator was the only Apostle to die a natural death; he died of old age. When he was a very old man, the young brethren carried him into the camp of the saints, and as he entered, he often said, "Children, love one another." During that time, apostasy was setting in, and their love was cooling off. First Peter 4:8 tells us that love covers a multitude of sins. As a minister, I am extremely responsible, and I need to listen and weigh everything.

My wife and I were raised in entirely different environments. She was raised in a very large congregation, and I was raised in a very small congregation. My wife was raised affluently, but I grew up poor. My family ate what was called Johnny Cakes for breakfast. She was raised in the east where there are all kinds of people. Easterners tend to be more withdrawn. Westerners tend to be more talkative to people. Therefore, we had many things to work out, but we never even considered separation. We loved each other, so we prayed and the Lord helped us. Saints, we all have different ideas and differences in our understanding, but God wants us to be together and to love one another.

The Perfecting of the Saints

Ephesians 4:4-12 states: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of

us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." In Matthew 5:48 Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." God wants a perfect people.

Deuteronomy 32:4 says His work is perfect. He can do a perfect work in you if you are willing to submit to Him. God is working to perfect us. I was not a perfect father, but I wanted to be, and I worked at it. I do not see where I made any sinful mistakes, but sometimes I was a little harsher than I should have been, and sometimes I was a little too lenient. We learn as we go. However, I can remember praying, "God help me to be a better father, a better husband, and a better pastor." We ought to listen and watch because God is perfecting us.

Ephesians 4:13-14 reads: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro. . . ." God wants each of us to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. People should know where we stand. I will tell you, as Paul said, "I am happy to answer for myself." I am going to stand where there is Truth.

I think of the picture of the man sitting on a porch going through all kinds of literature and cutting out articles and putting them in two piles. Someone walking by asked

him, "What are you doing?"

He replied, "I am searching for Truth. This pile is error." It was a huge pile. The other pile had only two or three short articles in it. There is much error permeating Christendom, but there is not much Truth going forth. The devil is out to destroy Truth.

Martin Luther said, "Peace, if possible, but Truth at any cost." Truth has cost many people their lives. The Book of Revelation is replete with battles that the church has been in, but Chapters 14 and 19 let us know that she is victorious! God has a victorious people, and that is one reason Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians. He wanted those people to see that they could be rich. They were relegating themselves to be paupers. We are kings and queens reigning in this life, and we are rich in heavenly treasures. Do I want to be a king? No, I do not want to be a literal king in the world. Nothing in the world attracts me, absolutely nothing. One song says, "I have found it, Lord, in Thee." I am fully and completely satisfied where I am and with my station in life. We have the very best!

All in This World Is Vanity

Ephesians 4:14-16 continues: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Every individual is important. What kind of inspiration would the pastor have if he were looking at empty seats? I like it when the

church gathers in and I can see their smiling faces and I have a message burning on my heart. I get to go to work for the Lord, and I enjoy it.

Verse 17 says, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, "All is vanity." All in this world is vanity. Solomon was searching for something in the world that was lasting, something that would satisfy him. He tried everything, but found it all to be vain. You ought to put yourself, your time, your assets, and your talents to work for God and to keep building up the Church of God congregation where God has placed you. One songwriter asks beautifully, "Are you building it up or tearing down the Church of God?" God forbid that anyone should ever tear down the work of God. We ought to be building it up.

Verses 18-19 read: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling. . . ." We need to feel for our brothers and sisters. As long as we serve God, we ought to have more feeling.

Many years ago we went through a very difficult time, and it was not easy for our children to see me hurt, so I cautioned them about the way to handle their feelings. Romans 12:19 says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." You must leave things with the Lord. Hebrews 10:31 states, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

A classic message in Christendom entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" was preached by Jonathan Edwards. It brought thousands of people to their knees. I believe that the terrible tragedy that happened on September 11, 2001, occurred because God is angry with some things that have been going on in this country and with some of the moves the Supreme Court has

made in the past. We need God.

"Neither Give Place to the Devil"

Ephesians 4:19-27 reads: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness [loose living], to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, [You do that when you get saved. You do not carry the old man (the person you used to be) on your back. When you are saved, you are completely new. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that all things become new.] which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil." Young person, that is a good Scripture to learn. You may say, "No one sees my thoughts." I am afraid to give the devil even a place in my mind. Your wife cannot see what you are thinking, and others cannot see what you are thinking, but God can, and so can the devil. The devil will put wrong thoughts in your mind, but you can be victorious! Christ led captivity captive. You can be victorious over those thoughts that used to bind you and overcome you. Paul was talking about your thought life when he said, "Neither give place to the devil."

Ephesians 4:28-30 states: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace

unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit. . . ."

The Church of God is a divine institution. We can help one another, but ultimately we need to get our directions from God. No one told me to go into the ministry. Some people encouraged me, and others discouraged me; but God called me, and I am accountable to Him. If every minister in the world would truly listen to God, we would not have the divisions that we have today.

Second Chronicles 10:6 tells us that Rehoboam "took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon." First, he should have gotten direction from God, but the old men gave him some good counsel. When I was a boy and we were without a pastor, I remember some people saying, "Send to the headquarters and have them send us a man." The old heads came forward and said: "Let's wait on God." That is still good admonition. When our former pastor came to us, God sent him. When one of the heads of the movement asked, "Who allowed you to get in there?" he said, "God did." The church is a divine institution directed by God.

Ephesians 4:30-32 says: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God [wrangling and jangling grieves God's Spirit], whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Are You Living to Please the Flesh?

Our Scripture text says in Ephesians 4:8, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Paul was endeavoring to impress those people with their status and tell them how rich the banks of Heaven are. Rather than to be relegated as paupers, we

Enslaved by the Flesh

should be living as kings and queens. I believe that people could live better lives if they would put in for it. They could live more victorious lives. Husbands and wives do not have to clamor and carry on with each other. They can have a sweet relationship in the home.

Brothers and sisters should not tear one another apart. I was taught as a child that we should not hurt one another. I remember as a boy praying for God to help me. I remember being taught all those types and shadows found in the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos, and Joel. Isaiah 11:9 says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." You do not see God's people wanting to do those things.

In God's heavenly bank, He has all kinds of wonderful things for us. The Word says we have been adopted, we have been redeemed and forgiven, and we have been endowed with wisdom from on high. We are blessed with the greatest inheritance that any people could ever have, and it is sealed with the Holy Spirit. We have been given life and peace. God has granted citizenship to us in the greatest kingdom in the world. We are truly blessed! People in my community have said, "Sir, you are the happiest person in the city." I am, and it is because I am a child of God, a member of the Church of God. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. Thirty-five times in this Book, we read the phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent. We are a blessed people, Church of God.

Jesus led captivity captive. What does that mean? Romans 7:18-21 reads: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing [you are either living to satisfy the flesh or you are living in the Spirit, one or the other]: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not [you have to stop pleasing the flesh]. For the good that I would I do not [and that is the way most of the religious world is]: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if

I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

In verses 22-25 Paul went on to say: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity [Our Scripture text says in Ephesians 4:8 that Jesus led captivity captive, but Paul said his flesh brought him into captivity. If you follow your flesh, you are going to be held captive to it.] to the law of sin which is in my members.

"O wretched man that I am! [There is an exclamation point. Christians are not wretched people, but those who are living in sin are wretched. No matter what religion you are in, if it leaves you in sin, you are in a wretched condition. Moreover, it is a wretched theology, and you ought to get rid of it.] who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

If you are truly a Christian, the old flesh is crucified, and you are no longer living to please the flesh (read Romans, Chapter 8). As a Christian, you are to live to please God, and you must be directed by the Holy Spirit. Yes, you have a fleshly body, and without the Spirit of God you cannot reign over the body. You must not give in to the flesh. The reason children go into sin is that the flesh is weak when it comes to temptation. You must be born again to receive the Spirit of God. It is like power steering in your vehicle. My son has a pickup truck that does not have power steering. Driving it is just the way it is when you are living in sin: You want to go to the right, but you have to go straight. You do not have the power to go the right way. You need to be born again so that you can have "power" steering.

The word *captivity* means "the state or period of being captive; the condition of being in prison; the condition of being held against one's will." I am not being held against my will. I love God's way of living. It is a wonderful way of life! The Amplified Bible says in Ephesians 4:8, "Therefore it is said, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive—He led a train of vanquished [beaten, defeated] foes—and He bestowed gifts on men." All the things that you had to do, such as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or chasing immoral women, you do not have to do anymore.

Second Corinthians, Chapter 7, speaks of real salvation and what it will do. Verse 11 reads, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." You can say, "Devil, you got me into trouble, but I am going to let you have it." Brother Emerson Wilson used to say, "Tell him to go where he belongs."

While you are serving the devil, he is torturing you and destroying you. He is holding you in captivity. Some people are captive to cigarettes, some to alcohol, some to drugs, and others to sexual vices. The devil wants to kill you, but the Bible says that Jesus led captivity captive." Jesus will set you free. Do you want to be free? God's people are free to do what is right, free to have a wonderful relationship with their companions, free to enjoy their children and grandchildren, and free to fellowship one another. I love to be with God's people. God makes us happy and satisfied wherever we are. Are you free? Are you enjoying life? You can enjoy life. In Psalm 68 the Living Bible says that Christ returned triumphantly to Heaven. Christ was the victor over

sin, self, the devil, and ultimately, death. He took into captivity everything that made you a slave. You do not have to be a slave. You do not have to carry around that heavy load of sin. In the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pilgrim laid his burden down at the Cross and never picked it up again.

As I was studying, I thought of Samson. You can read about him in Judges, Chapter 16. He played around. While he still had the Spirit of God, he told Delilah that if they tied him with seven cords, he would be as other men. They did that, and Delilah said, "Samson, Samson, the Philistines are upon you." The Bible says he tore those cords as though they had come in contact with fire; they disintegrated. Samson was a victor, but he continued to play around. That is a perfect picture of what can happen to you and to me. Judges 16:20 says that he "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." Too many people are unaware that the Spirit of God has left them. Friend, you are powerless without God's Spirit. You need the grace of God.

Samson lost not only God's Spirit but also his eyesight. Too many people have lost their spiritual eyesight, or their spiritual understanding. Today we need discernment more than we have ever needed it before. Then the Bible says Samson ground in the prison house. That is the way it is for those who once served God and played around with temptation. Are you free?

If God is not in control of your life, then your life is out of control. According to 1 John 2:16, a person in sin is enslaved by the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. I like to be free, don't you? Some people have become enslaved by envy. It has eaten them up until they have become crippled, and they are slowly dying. Others are enslaved by suspicion, jealousy, greediness, alcohol, drugs, and sex. Someone may say: "Money is the only interest I have in life. If there is no money in

it, don't bother me." That could be said about sex and many other things that cause humans to become enslaved. Christ will lead those things into captivity. He can control those things, and you can reign over them.

Jesus said in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Romans 5:17 says, ". . . they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." We are to bring glory to God.

Are You Truly Free?

My wife was told by someone that we were known as the "ritualistic" people. My wife asked, "What do you mean?"

"Well, you believe that you can live without sin, and so forth."

My wife replied, "We can."

She said, "Doesn't that make you feel proud?"

My wife answered, "No, it makes me feel very dependent upon God and very humble." Which way of living brings glory to God and credit to the grace of God: living up and down in sin more or less every day (which is usually more than less) or living a sinless life? The answer is the latter. May God help us.

Isaiah 14:2 says they will take captive those who were their captors and rule over those who oppressed them, speaking of literal Israel and also of New Testament Israel. You can reign over those things that held you captive. You can drive by a billboard that says to smoke cigarettes, but you do not have to. Once in a health class at school, I showed a film about a young woman who was pictured on billboards smoking cigarettes. She said, "I was cool all right, but then I got throat cancer." The doctor had to remove her voice box. She is not so beautiful anymore, and she speaks through a little device on her throat. She said, "Young people, smoking is not so cool."

I want you to read the words of a song in our hymnal entitled "I Am From Sin Set Free." The first line of the song begins, "*Let worldly minds the world pursue.*" Saint, you should leave it up to the worldly minds. We have more important things to tend to. We have a greater purpose and a greater cause. There is no greater cause than the cause of Christ. Verse 1 of the song reads:

*Let worldly minds the world
pursue,
It has no charms for me;
Once I admired its trifles, too,
But grace hath set me free.*

When I was in high school, my father was unsaved, but my mother was saved. We had a class meeting when I was a junior, and they passed out class rings. They looked so nice, so I bought one and put it on. I was the pianist at church, and I liked the way it clacked on the keys. I thought I was so smart. The pastor was really quiet, but while he preached, that ring burned a hole in my heart. I took it off and put it in a little box and kept it there. (Oh, the trifles that we admire!) Later I got married, and my wife and I moved to the mountains in Montana. We lived by a stream near a river.

While I was listening to one of Brother Emerson Wilson's tapes, he said, "Sometimes we have things hidden that we really haven't given up." The Lord said to me, "Do you remember the little box that you have saved?"

I said, "Yes, I remember."

"Is it still in your heart?"

I said, "I don't think so." I went on, but the Lord kept working on me, so I listened to that part of the message again.

After about five times of listening to it, my wife said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Well, I'm just taking care of a problem that I have." So that night we took a little drive to the river next to where I was raised, and I tossed that ring out in the middle of the river. Sometimes trifles can

get hold of us, but God wants us to leave all those trifles behind so that we can be free. God means more to me than trifles.

The song continues:

*Its pleasures can no longer please,
Nor happiness afford;
Far from my heart be joys like
these,
Now I have seen the Lord.*

*As by the light of op'ning day
The stars are all concealed,
So earthly pleasures fade away,
When Jesus is revealed.*

*Creatures no more divide my
choice,
I bid them all depart;
His name, his love, his gracious
voice,
Have fixed my roving heart.*

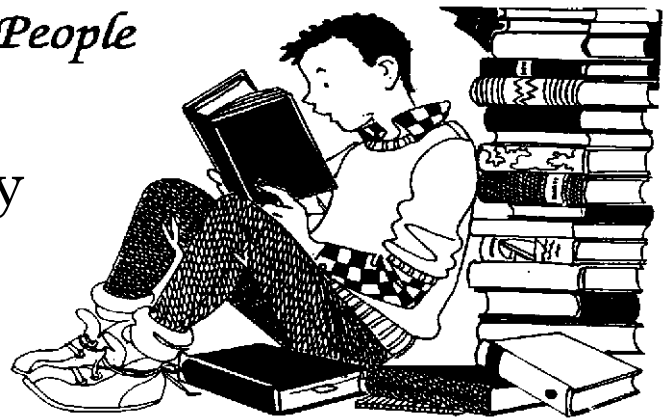
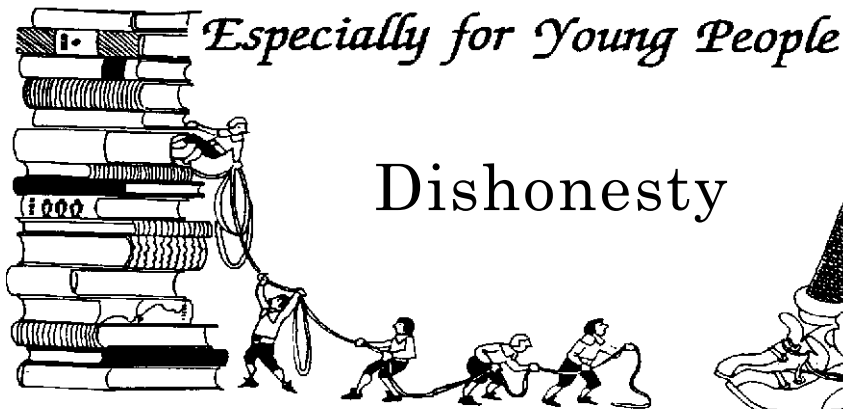
*Free! Free! Free!
I am from sin set free!
This world has now no charms for
me,
For Christ hath set me free.*

Are you free or are you in bondage? You can be totally free. Jesus

led captivity captive so that you can be free of anything that has you bound, and you can reign over those things.

(Cassette C-5264M)

**If you will be all God wants
you to be, then you can do
all God wants you to do.**



Some time ago a youth of about sixteen came from the country to Boston, to fill a subordinate situation in one of our first mercantile houses. The head of the firm received the youth in the most kindly manner and caused his son to take the stranger around town, and show him the principal places during the afternoon of his arrival.

While amusing themselves in this way, the stranger youth told his companion that in coming along in the train that morning, he had given a boy a bright cent for a pond lily, and that the coin having been mistaken for a five cent, the vender of lilies had paid four cents back as change.

The merchant's son questioned the honesty of the transaction, but the young man from the country defended it on the score of its smartness. Shocked at the absence of principle in his companion, the

merchant's boy told his father of the transaction, who next morning interrogated the young man from the country concerning it, and found that he was somewhat inclined to pride himself on account of the act.

"Was the cheating of the poor boy, who perhaps had a sick mother to provide for by his industry, not cruel, let alone its injustice?" queried the good merchant.

"It was his outlook," the boy replied.

"Was your conduct not dishonest?" asked the merchant.

"I don't know that it was. He ought to have been smart enough not to have given me the money."

"Young man," said the merchant, "I call your share in the matter stealing, and if the four cents had been so taken by me, I believe they would have burned a hole in my pocket."

The youth boldly replied, "They

have not burned a hole in mine, sir."

Disgusted at discovering such moral obliquity in the young man, the merchant told him it was impossible that he could employ one who exhibited such dishonest notions concerning a small thing, for in matters of great importance the possessor of such loose ideas of honesty would most likely give way.

With much good advice the youth was sent home to his father with a letter from the merchant relating the affair stated above and expressing regret that the circumstance had completely shut the boy out from his confidence. So the young man lost an excellent chance of succeeding in life; but it is hoped that the lesson may teach him hereafter that "honest is the best policy."

Selected

Mark 14:1 *After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.*

2 *But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.*

3 *And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box,*

and poured it on his head.

4 *And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?*

5 *For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.*

6 *And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.*

7 *For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.*

8 *She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

9 *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*

"She Hath Done What She Could"



Brother Daniel Webster

Giving the Lord the Best

The woman in our Scripture text had the opportunity to anoint Jesus before His death. She probably did not have much, but she had that precious ointment. The Bible says it was very precious. The point is, she gave what she treasured to Jesus. She gave the very best that she could possibly give to Him. Jesus said wherever the Gospel is

preached, she would be spoken of for a memorial of her. She did what she could. Likewise, God expects each of us to do what we can.

Some people found fault with this woman and said the ointment could have sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor. Jesus told them that they would always have the poor with them, but they would not always have Him. Jesus was so blessed by what she did for

Him that He wanted people to remember it throughout the ages of time. Why? She gave all she had, and it was the best that she could possibly give.

We can read of a number of examples in the Scriptures about those of whom God has taken notice and had them placed in the Bible for us to read about. One was a man named David. We can read in the Old Testament that as King David

was getting near the end of his life, he said that he had collected materials and had planned to build a house for God. First Chronicles 28:2-3 tells us: "Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood."

If you read through that chapter, you will find that David had set aside great wealth to build a house for God. Although it was in his heart to build it, God told him no; however, He said He would let his son Solomon build it. Sometimes you might have something in your heart to do for the Lord, but it is not in God's plans for you to do. As you get older, there might be things in your heart that you want to do that you are not physically able to do any longer. It is important to understand that, because the devil will work on you and say, "If you were really saved, God would use you to do that." The enemy will try to discourage you as much as he can. The Bible calls him the accuser of the brethren. He tries to accuse the saints and bring discouragement because they cannot do this or that.

Sometimes the devil causes people to give up because they feel they are useless in the Kingdom of God. On the contrary, every member of the body of Christ has a purpose and a function no matter how old they get. Your body may not work as well as it once did, but you still have a work to do in the Kingdom of God. I want to encourage you to do what you can. You need to understand what you can do and what you cannot do.

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." That is very true, but there are times when God says, "No, it is not for you to do this."

David had in his heart to build a house for God, but God said no. God told him that he could prepare all the materials and get everything ready, but he could not build it. You have to make sure that what you want to do is in the will of God.

Getting Beyond Duty

Many people do a lot of works, but Jesus said in Matthew 7:23, "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Many people do works today, but they are doing them in the flesh. The works of the flesh may seem to have a good purpose, but God is not in them. If God is not in them, then those works are of no value.

There are many things that we are able to do. One of the easiest things that each of us can do is pray. God has given us all the ability to pray. Even if you cannot speak aloud, you can pray. Did you know that you can pray without audible words coming from your mouth? Prayer is communicating with God. Sometimes when we pray, not a single word comes out because we are so focused on talking to God that our voice is not there. The Bible tells us that sometimes the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us when we do not have any words to say. It is the Spirit that prays to God for us. One thing we all can do is pray.

How could you make your church services better? One way is to walk around and greet one another and encourage one another. That is a great work, and it is something that you can do. God expects you to do what you can.

When David collected all the materials to build the temple, the people were willing to work with all their hearts. First Chronicles 29:1 says, "Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God." Verses 3-4 read: "Moreover, because

I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, Even three thousand talents of gold."

These are things that David himself did. Though David was the king and he had the authority to say, "All right, give this in the name of the king," he also had his own personal wealth, and he wanted to make sure that he gave a sacrifice to God; therefore, he gave of his own. Verse 9 continues, "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy."

When you do something with all your heart for God, you will have great joy. Not only will you have joy in your own soul for doing it, but you will bring great joy to others. Sometimes people feel that the things they do are their duties. We have to get past duty and do what we do because we want to do it for the Lord. For example, if you were to go around and shake hands with others because you felt it was your duty, people would notice that your effort was not sincere.

You should do what you do for the Lord willingly. If you pray only because you feel that you have to, there is no blessing in that. When you pray because you want to talk to God, then it is a blessing. When you pray before a meal, if you stop and recognize that God has blessed you with food and that He is worthy of your thanks for it, there is a blessing in that. You need to get beyond doing it as a form and do it because you are truly thankful.

The Bible teaches that we should adorn the doctrine, even concerning our dress standard. If you only do it because you feel you have to, it will not be a blessing to you, and no one else will see any joy in it. However, if you do the things you do because the Bible says so and you want to

please God and show God how much you love Him, there is a blessing in that. It works that way every time. You ought to do what you can, not because you feel you have to, but you should do it willingly.

Serving the Lord Wholeheartedly

Second Chronicles 31:20-21 reads: "And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." That is still the way it ought to work.

When you do what you can with all your heart, it will prosper and God will bless. You should not get up and sing a song because you feel that you have to. You should make sure God is in it. If God is in it and you sing it with all your heart, He will bless it and use it in a wonderful way. Doing it with all your heart is what is necessary. Hezekiah did those works with all his heart and prospered. You and I can do the same.

God is looking for willing people. I like to meditate on these thoughts every now and then and picture God sitting in eternity saying: "I would like to have someone with whom I can fellowship, someone with whom I can communicate and share My thoughts and My feelings. I am going to create a being, and in order to do this, I am going to first establish a world where he can live." So God made this world and created man, and He said: "I am not going to *make* man serve Me. I am going to give man a choice. If he chooses to serve Me, he will be able to enjoy My presence throughout eternity." The plan of salvation gives man the opportunity to spend eternity with God. Those who choose not to serve Him will spend eternity in hell. Allowing each individual to have a choice is a very fair way for God to have a peo-

ple who can have fellowship with Him and enjoy His presence without being forced to do so.

Salvation is not something that we are forced into. If you do the works that you do because you feel that you have to, you are not in the place where you need to be. Everything you do should be done because you love God. If you have any other motive, you are not being motivated in the right way.

When the woman in our Scripture text came and gave her gift to Jesus, she was showing her love and adoration for Him. She knew that He would soon be crucified and buried in a tomb. Rather than pouring that precious ointment on a corpse, she wanted to give it to Him as a gift while He was still living, and she gave Him the best she had. That is all that God expects from each of us. As you get older, your best might not be the same as it was when you were twenty years of age. Nevertheless, God is looking for the best you can do.

Psalm 110:3 says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." God wants people who are willing to do whatever He wants them to do. Sometimes we sing a song that speaks of going where the Lord wants us to go. I often ask the questions, "What if God asks you to go across the street to speak to your neighbor or to help him or her in some way? Would you do it? It is easy to say, "I will go to Africa," but what about going next door to your neighbor? Maybe you live in an apartment building and the person next door is just a wall away from you. How about that person? How do you treat him or her? You see, there is always something that you can do.

Being Willing to Give of Yourself

I have found that there are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who see work to do and

those who do not see anything to do. God wants us to always be looking for work to do in the Kingdom of God. Paul said we have to give of ourselves. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia [he wanted them to look at what the church of Macedonia had done and how the grace of God had worked in those people]; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

First, the people gave of themselves, and then God used them in a special way. If you want to be used of God, then first you have to give yourself to Him. If you wait around, you may just continue to wait. God wants people who are willing to give of themselves, and then He will use them.

As I read the Scriptures, sometimes it reminds me that when these were written, those people did not have previous examples to follow. There was not another woman who came and gave of herself as she did. No one taught her to do that. She did it from her heart; that was all she knew to do. At home, she probably thought, "What can I do to show Christ how much I love Him?" Possibly she looked around her home and saw that box with the precious ointment in it.

Maybe she was saving it for her own burial. I do not know the history of it, but let us say that was why she was saving it. No doubt, when she saw it, she thought, "I will give Him my own precious ointment. This is all I have." So that is what she did. That is the reason

Jesus said she did what she could; she gave all she had. When you look around at your own life, what do you see that you could do? If you give of yourself, God can use you.

First Give to God What He Asks

As I was meditating on this message, I thought of the widow woman and Elijah, in 1 Kings, Chapter 17. There had been quite a famine in the land. There was not much food around, so the widow woman was getting ready to fix her last meal for herself and her son. After that, she would have no more, and they would have to starve to death. However, Elijah came along and asked her what she was doing. She said she was getting their last meal together, and when it was over, they were going to die.

Elijah told her to fix a cake for him first. She was willing to do that because he was a man of God. She went ahead and gave him the last meal she had. Do you know what happened? The Bible lets us know that every day she got more meal from the barrel, but we do not read that God ever filled the barrel. In my mind I can see that every day she would reach down in the barrel and get that last cup out, but when she would go back the next day, God would add enough to meet her need. We walk by faith, and sometimes it is the bottom of the barrel, so to speak. As long as we are willing to give God the first of it, God will continue to provide. This widow woman was sustained through the entire drought, along with Elijah. The point is, she had to give of herself, and she gave all she had. Think about this. Suppose it was your last meal and your only child's last meal, yet you were asked to give it away. Afterwards, God said: "That was wonderful! Now you can have plenty, and you will have enough to meet your needs every day."

If you are willing to first give to God what He asks, He will take care of you. That is how tithing works.

Some people fuss about tithing. I do not believe the saints do, but some individuals do. They say, "I can't afford to tithe." In reality, they cannot afford *not* to tithe. When you tithe in obedience to God's Word, He will bless. I have seen it happen over and over. When you give the tenth part that God wants you to give, sometimes it really seems to cut deep into your budget; nevertheless, God will bless what is left. On the other hand, I have seen people try to keep that tenth, and it cost them many times over because things broke down or whatever. Sometimes it was their health that broke down. Why? They kept back for themselves what should have been God's.

When you willingly give to God what He asks, whether it is monetary or time or whatever, He will bless. Many people do not want to come to camp meeting because it takes up too much of their time. If you come with the thought on your mind, "I wish I could be somewhere else," you have missed out on a blessing. However, if you come because you want to be with the saints, to hear the Word of God, and to be a blessing to others, God will bless you in a wonderful way, and you will have a wonderful time. If you are willing to give of yourself to God, He will give you grace, and He will give you what you need. You should not be afraid to do what God wants you to do, but you need to make sure God is in it first, and then do what God would have you to do. The widow woman gave all that she had, and God blessed her.

Abide in Him

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul said, "For the love of Christ constraineth us. . . ." His motive was the love of Christ. You need to make sure your motives are right. You should not put works before faith. Faith should come before works, and faith will produce works. Many people have works without faith. James said he would show you his faith by his

works (James 2:18).

Paul continued in verse 14, ". . . because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." In other words, we all are equal. There are no big I's and little you's in the Church of God. Once we were sinners, and now we are saints of God. That is glorious! God has placed overseers, or pastors, over congregations, but that is the only higher authority outside of God. There are no big I's because Jesus died for all.

Verse 15 says, "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We quit living for ourselves and start living for Christ because He died for us, and now we live for Him. That is what Paul was relating. Verse 16 states, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

We should not have favorites in the Church of God. Different ministers have various ways of delivering the messages that God has given them. We should not prefer one preacher over another. When people start preferring a certain one after the flesh, they say: "He is my favorite. I don't care to listen to this other one." Paul summarized that line of thinking in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 3, when he told the people at Corinth they were yet carnal. One said, "I am of Apollos" and another said, "I am of Paul." We are not to follow men. We are to follow Jesus Christ, the Word of God. When we do that, we will be blessed. We will not have divisions if we each follow Jesus Christ.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Paul wrote in Galatians 6:15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." You become a mem-

ber of the Church of God when you are made a new creature. As a new creature in Christ, you abide in Him and follow after the Spirit. You will do what God shows you in every way because you are a new creature.

Being Reconciled to God

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Our ministry is to share with the world the ministry of reconciliation. We have been reconciled to God, our sins have been taken away, and we have been delivered from the bondage of sin; that is the message. You do not have to know a lot of Scriptures to share the Gospel with someone. When someone asks you, "Why are you so different from other people?" you can tell them: "Jesus lives in my heart. He has changed me from the way I used to be. Because of that, I have joy in my soul. With that joy I can face every day with gladness in my heart because I have been reconciled. My sins are forgiven and I am free from the bondage of sin. Would you like to have this experience?" Saint, God wants you to share with people what He has done for you. You should not preach a message to them, but you can tell them what God has done for you. You should help them to see what God has done in your life. People will be interested in that.

I thought of the story of Hannah, recorded in 1 Samuel, Chapter 1.

She desired with all her heart to have a child. She wept and mourned and prayed for a son. She said, in so many words, "God, if You will give me a man child, I will give him back to You to use for your glory." God answered her prayer and gave her a son, and the Bible says that she loaned him back to God. That is wonderful! She gave God the child for whom she had longed.

Hannah's husband Elkanah had two wives. His other wife had many children, but Hannah did not have any. Her husband loved and cared for her, and he was very concerned about her when she was weeping. He asked her why she was weeping and why she was grieved. She wanted to have a child. I am sure that is the desire of all godly women who are married. God gave Hannah a son, and when she gave him back to God, He blessed her with three more sons and two daughters. She gave the best that she had to God, and He gave her more. The Bible says she went to Shiloh to see her son and gave him a new coat every year.

One reason people get discouraged is that they go through things that they feel they should not have to go through. Most of us do not feel that we deserve the hardships we endure. Nevertheless, the Bible lets us know that we may go through many hard places, and one reason that we go through them is so that we can help others when they go through them sometime in the future.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:1, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." God has given us an abundance of grace. A songwriter wrote that His grace is as free as the air we breathe. We all can have the grace that we need, and we should never run out.

Paul said, "We then, as workers together with him. . . ." What is our work? We are to be the ministers of

reconciliation and to work together with God. We have been given grace. We should not receive the grace of God in vain. Verse 3 says, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." He was talking about the ministry of reconciliation. You should not get to the place where somebody looks at you and says, "If you are a Christian, I don't want anything to do with that."

Many people claim that they are saved by grace, yet they are still sinners. That brings a reproach to the ministry of reconciliation; that is receiving the grace of God in vain. That is not what it was intended for. You can read that all through the Scriptures. This grace is given to us to show forth the ministry of reconciliation in a greater way.

In verse 4 Paul said, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses." Paul mentioned patience. Let us be patient. God can give you patience. You do not have to ask for it. You can use what He gives you, and He will give you more. Paul also mentioned afflictions. We are going to go through afflictions, but those afflictions should show the world that God can take us through until He does heal us. Also, he mentioned "in necessities." Not all of us have everything we want in life. Some of us may not even feel as though we have what we need; nevertheless, God is there in our necessities. If we will show Him that we can be content in whatever state we are in, we can do a great work.

Many people today complain all the time. God's people should not be complainers. We should not complain as the rest of the world does. Again, he said, "in necessities." You may say, "I need this" or "I need that." God promised that He would take care of us. We might not have some of the things we think we really want, but God knows what we need.

Faith in the Living God

In the Bible we can read of a man named Lazarus who was a beggar. He laid at the rich man's gate. While he was there, he was content, and he made it into Heaven. He did not have much of anything. In fact, he hoped that he would receive some crumbs now and then so that he would have food to eat. Also, the dogs came and licked his sores. This does not sound like anyone that I know, thank God. We have much to be thankful for in our necessities and in our distresses. By going through these things, we can show the world that we have faith in the Living God.

Paul continued in 2 Corinthians 6:5-10: "In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." This is the reason we need God's grace. We can go through all those situations and still wear a smile and have praise for God.

I thought about how Job lost all that he had in this world. Even his wife said, "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). He would not do that because he understood that all those things were given to him by God. If God saw fit to allow them to be taken away, then He could do so. You must learn these lessons also. You might have good health one day, but there is no promise that you will have it tomorrow. You might have a right mind one day, but you have no promise that you will even know your name tomorrow. God knows all these things. You must accept

what comes your way. God's grace can work through those who accept those things and can work the ministry of reconciliation to others. Others will look on your sorrows, your heartaches, and your grief and see the grace that you have, and they will hunger for that.

Others looking on will say, "I wish I could come through that as well as you are." It is the grace of God that helps you. These are things that you can do. God allows things to happen from time to time for the work of His ministry.

Conforming to Christ's Image

Romans 8:28-29 tells us: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, [If you love God, whatever happens to you will work for good. It will not always look good or feel good, but somehow, because God's grace is involved, it will work for good. God is in control.] to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Whatever we are going through is to make us more Christlike. All things work together for that purpose so that we might conform to the image of His Son. Why? Jesus Christ was here as an example for us. I often think of this: since Jesus came here as an example, does that not make us examples to others? Since He came as an example, and we are to follow in His steps, we, too, ought to be examples to others so that they might desire the things of God.

God has blessed His people; therefore, we need to let Him work His will in our lives without complaining and without murmuring. As you get older, there will be less that you can do physically, but God still has a work for you to do. I suppose all of us would love to stay young, but we all have to age. From the day we are born, we start getting

older. As we age, the body starts to break down. That is part of God's plan. He is trying to prepare us for eternity, to get us ready to shed the body. If you did not want to leave it, it would be difficult to leave. The plan is that by the time you are old enough to go, you will be ready to shed your body. You will be glad to leave.

We need to learn to age with grace. As we age and accept these things, we can show the world that we are still worshiping a Living God who can take us through all the stages of our lives. It is a blessing to be around older saints and to listen to them. God has given us His grace, so it is up to us to use that grace. He has given us gifts, so we have to use them if we intend to be a blessing to others.

God's Covenant With Us

God made a covenant with us, and it is found in Hebrews 8:10, which reads, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." The first thing that He said was that He would put His laws into their minds and their hearts. That is what God expects from each of us. You should not override it and say, "I don't want to do that, Lord." If He puts something in your mind to do, then He will help you to do it. Next, He said He would be a God to them. You need to stop and think about that for a minute.

Look at all the gods that people have today, the things that they worship. Sometimes people practically worship their automobiles. If there are a few specks of dust anywhere, they go and wipe it all off and make it shine. If something were to happen to their automobile, they would go ballistic, so to speak. People worship many things. You can tell they worship them by the way they act. Those things are all

they think about and talk about.

I met a man once who told me that he was getting in trouble with people at work because he talked about God so much. He said that people would come to him and say, "Can't you ever talk about anything else except God?" He sees God in everything. When he looks at the sky, he sees what a beautiful sky God gave us, and so on. The happy people in the world see that God is everywhere. Whatever your god is, that is what you are going to talk about. Whatever is down in your heart, that is what you are going to think about, talk about, love, and care about. The problem is, people do not let God write His laws in their minds, so they do not think much about God or the things of God. When they do not think on Him, He cannot be their God.

God said He would put His laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and He would be to them a God and they would be His people. There are many religious people, but if God is not their God, they are not His people. God's people are the people who worship Him, who truly adore, love, and worship Him.

God wants us to be what He would have us to be. Being what God would have us to be is easy when we do what He says. A preacher could preach a message, and we could ask each person to write down what He preached about, and there is a good chance that each one would write something different. Why? God writes things on our hearts as the message goes forth. There are things that God sends that one person will hear and another may not hear. God writes His Word in our hearts. We can enjoy the blessings of God. As long as we are doing what God wants us to do, we are His children.

Yielding Yourself to God

Romans 6:13 says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield

yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." You must yield yourself to God to be used of God. He does not force Himself on anyone. Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." I have seen a painting of an artist's depiction of that Scripture, and there is no knob on the outside of the door. The one on the inside must open the door. Jesus will not force that door open for anyone. You must yield yourself to God so that He can do with you as He sees best. God wants you to let Him do what He wants with your life. It will not always be convenient to do some things that God wants you to do, but if you are willing to yield yourself, God will use you in a glorious way.

The Apostle Paul said to yield yourself as an instrument of righteousness. If you were willing to yield yourself to the devil, why not yield yourself to God? That is what He wants you to do.

Romans 6:14 tells us, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." God will give you all the grace that you need. The Old Mosaic Law said "thou shalt not," but the people did not have any grace or power with it. God sent Jesus, who is full of grace and Truth, so that we could have the grace to yield ourselves to Him.

First Corinthians 6:19-20 says: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." God will give you the grace and the ability to glorify Him with your body.

Romans 12:1-2 reads: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." How can you prove God's will? You must give yourself as a holy, living sacrifice to God.

In the Old Testament the people took the sacrifice, killed it, and laid it on the altar. A dead animal could not get off the altar, but we are laid on the altar of sacrifice as living sacrifices. We can get off anytime we want to. However, the love of Christ constrains us, so we yield ourselves as Jesus gave Himself for us. He could have walked away from the Cross easily, but He chose to stay there for us. Now we yield ourselves to Him. We must deny our wants and our will so that God can receive glory and so that others might be drawn to Him.

"Why Dost Thou Judge Thy Brother?"

Romans 14:7-13 states: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. [Jesus came to help others; that was His whole mission in life. As saints, you and I have that same mission. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

You should not do anything that would cause your brother to stumble. Is your decision going to encourage others to walk straight and

help them or is it going to cause them to stumble? The Bible tells us not to do anything that would cause someone to stumble along the way. The Hebrew writer said to make straight paths for your feet. You must be careful that a root of bitterness does not get in. That will make your path crooked, and someone trying to follow you may become bitter and fall.

You should not look at your brother and say, "You ought to do more." Your business is not to force someone else to do something, but rather it is to look in the mirror and ask yourself what you can do. What can you do to help and encourage someone? You should not look at your neighbor and say, "If he would do more, I would do more." Verse 13 says not to judge one another. This is something that is very dangerous for those who are working together. Sometimes the devil tries to put wrong opinions in your mind, and then you may get a bad attitude. It is not for you to judge. All you need to do is make sure that you do what you can do. If you do what you can,

you will be able to rejoice. When you are rejoicing, maybe those who could do more will suddenly see that they ought to do more. However, it is not for you to judge others along these lines. God is the One who is going to judge us, so we ought to leave it with Him and let Him work things out.

Are you doing what you can? That is all God wants. He is a fair God. He does not expect a ninety-year-old person to do what he did when he was twenty. On the other hand, a ninety-year-old person can do things that a twenty-year-old person cannot do. He can gracefully endure hard times and show the world that it pays to serve Jesus regardless of the good times or the bad times.

We all will go through hard times in life; not everything will be easy for us. People's lots in life are different. Some people go through one hardship after another. You may think, "How are they going to get through that?" Because it is their lot, God has given them the grace for it, and He will take them through. God

knows what He is doing. He allows things to happen to certain people for a reason. All we have to do is rest in God's Word, which lets us know that all things work together for good. God will use those things for His glory. We do not know exactly how, but we know that He will. We need to believe, trust, and take it with the grace of God so that others might be led to the things of God.

You do not need to get discouraged when the devil says you cannot do what you used to do. You should have the attitude, "I will do what I can." When you do that, God will bless you and encourage you. You can be a blessing and an encouragement to others. Sometimes you can allow the devil to talk you out of doing things that God would have you to do. If you will listen to the Holy Spirit and do what God wants you to do, then you will be happy and able to help others.

(Compact Disc TR-258M)

Because I Live

If the Christ who died had stopped at the Cross,
His work had been incomplete.
If the Christ who was buried had stayed in the tomb,
He had only known defeat.

But the way of the Cross never stops at the Cross,
And the way of the tomb leads on
To victorious grace in the heavenly place
Where our risen Lord has gone.

Selected

Psalm 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an

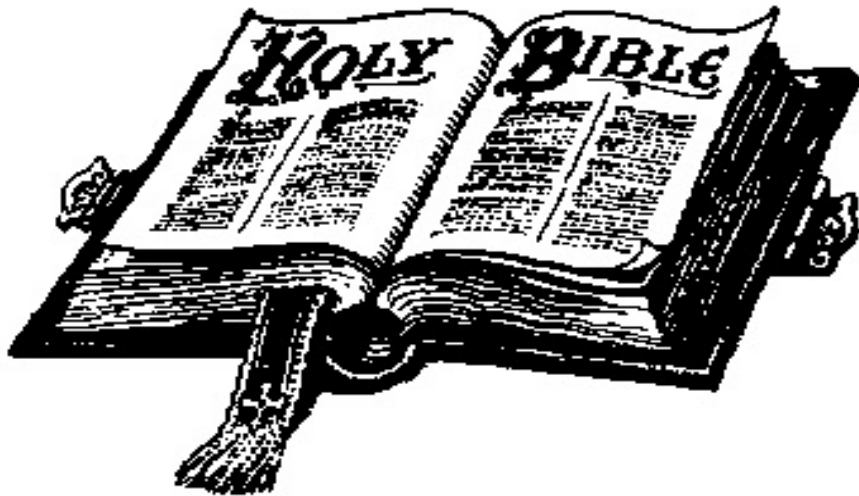
instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

The Word of the Lord Is Right



Brother Larry Dishman

The Word of God Lives and Abides Forever

I am so glad that in a world of uncertainty and confusion, "the word of the LORD is right." Second Peter 1:19-21 says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as

they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Scripture says in Psalm 12:6-7: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." James 1:18 speaks of the Truth in this way: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." First Peter 1:23 reads, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

Do you realize that history proves that the Word of the Lord is right? Throughout the Bible are prophecies that were to take place in the future. You can start in Matthew, Chapter 1, and continue all

the way to the end of the Bible and read, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken." You can see that the fulfillment of prophecy has taken place exactly as it was prophesied hundreds of years before; therefore, "the word of the LORD is right." Friend, from the Book of Genesis all the way through to the Book of Malachi, you can read of many prophecies and find their fulfillment in the New Testament.

"By Him Were All Things Created"

I would like to deal with several things in this message, and the first is this: The Word of the Lord is right about Creation. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The public schools and most colleges in our country do not tell the truth about Creation, but thank God, the Word of the Lord is right concerning Creation. John 1:3 states, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Multitudes of people say they believe in the theory of evolution. The truth is, man was "devil luted" and not "evoluted." He went down and not up. Colossians 1:16 reads, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

Hebrews 11:3 states, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork."

I believe that every time the sun rises it tells us the Son has come,

and I believe that every time the sun goes down it tells us that the Son has died for us and every time the sun comes up it tells us that the Son rose from the dead. He rose from the grave victoriously over death and hell and notified the devil that "I am the One who was dead, but I am alive forevermore."

God placed two lights in the sky, the greater light to rule by day and the lesser one to rule by night. He called all the stars by name. God does not need something to make something. He can make something from nothing. That is what He does for each of us who are saved. We were nothing, but God makes something out of nothing. Yes, my friend, the Word of the Lord is right about Creation. I would like to say it like this: He stood on nothing and reached down where there was nowhere to reach, and He caught something where there was nothing to catch, and He hung something on nothing. He took the hammer of His own will and struck the anvil of His omnipotence and sparks flew from there. He caught them on the tips of His fingers and threw them out into space as He decked the Heavens with stars. My friend, when God created this universe, no one said a word, because there was no one to say a word. God said, "Let there be . . ." and everything that God said was created instantly.

"Neither Is There Salvation in Any Other"

The Word of the Lord is right about salvation. I would like to tell you some things that the Bible says about salvation, beginning in Acts 4:12, which reads, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no salvation in the pope, in water baptism, in joining a church, or in a preacher. The Bible lets us know there is no salvation in any other except the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is right about salvation. Friend, if you want

to be saved, it is not complicated.

Many have knelt around an altar of prayer and have found salvation. Isaiah 35:8 says, ". . . the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Romans 1:16 reads, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Verse 13 declares, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thank God, that includes you. If you are without God, you can call upon His name. Whosoever (anyone, anywhere) will meet the conditions and call upon the name of God shall be saved.

We read in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." I repeat, the Word of the Lord is right about salvation. Hebrews 2:3 asks, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. . . ?" Thank God, it is not just salvation, but it is "so great salvation." If you are without God, how are you going to escape the judgment of God? How are you going to escape if you neglect this great salvation?

You may ask, "How do I obtain salvation?" The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Friend, it takes more than worldly sorrow; it takes godly sorrow. To have godly sorrow is to be sorry that you have sinned against God and sorry that you are a lost, wretched sinner on your way to hell. Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation. You will not regret that you have repented if you really go to God with godly sorrow. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is

the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Being Justified Freely Through Redemption

The Word of the Lord is right about justification. Job 25:4 says, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" How can that take place? How can a man who is lost and undone and on his way to a devil's hell be justified with God? The question is answered in Romans 3:24, which reads, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:1 states, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I thank God for justification. Verse 9 continues, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The Bible is right about justification.

The Word of the Lord is right when it speaks of redemption. What does the Bible say concerning redemption? Ephesians 1:7 states, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Hebrews 9:12 tells us, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Thank God, Christ obtained eternal redemption for us.

Paul, when writing to Titus, said in Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity [not from *some* iniquity, but from *all* iniquity], and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." You may ask, "How does redemption take place?" You can read about it in 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without

spot." We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Praise God!

Understanding Sanctification

The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to sanctification. Second Thessalonians 2:13 tells us, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Sanctification is an operation of the Spirit of God. It goes to work on an individual before he is saved, and it works on him at the moment of conversion and for the remainder of his earthly life. Many people do not rightly understand sanctification, but the Word of the Lord is right about sanctification. In John 17:17 Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." He said in verse 19, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

The chief means of sanctification is found in the Word of God. The Psalmist of old recognized the power of the Word of God in his life when he wrote in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." The question is asked in verse 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." In Acts 20:32 the Apostle Paul talked about sanctification and what it means to us when he wrote, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Our sanctification is in doing the will of God. It is the will of God that each of us lives a sanctified life.

The Apostle Paul penned in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his

vessel in sanctification and honour." Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." One reason that religious people have so little influence over the world is that the world has so much influence over them. A good question to ask yourself is, "How much influence does the world have over me?" This is where sanctification comes in.

First Thessalonians 5:23 states, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What good would it be for your soul and your spirit to be sanctified if you were to continue to live in sin? Paul prayed that we would be sanctified in spirit, soul, and body. To be wholly sanctified means to be sanctified completely, in every part. Friend, it is always proper to pray that God will make His people entirely holy. In the experience of sanctification one's whole being is involved. Paul was talking about the whole man being sanctified: in spirit, in soul, and in body.

Christian Perfection

We are called to labor and strive for perfect holiness, because God our Father is holy and perfect. Matthew 5:48 tells us, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Christian perfection is required by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you profess to be saved, you must be holy as He is holy. Christian perfection is possible for weak and imperfect people. I am not talking about perfection in mental or physical performance, but rather perfection of the heart and the way that we live — always perfect in love, desire, and motive. Sanctification will correct the ups and downs in your experience. It will take the wobble out of your spiritual walk and give you constant victory. Every evil force in this world is opposed to holiness. Every force, even if it is a religious force, that is opposed to

holiness is an evil force.

There are two steps in sanctification. First, when one is sanctified and becomes a Christian, immediately there is a sense of regeneration, whereby the old life of sin is crucified and a holy disposition is imparted. This experience marks the beginning of sanctification. The second step in sanctification is growth in the Christian character. When one becomes a Christian, he is a babe in Christ; therefore, he must grow and develop into full Christian stature. This is the relationship between regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration is a birth, and sanctification is a growth. Sanctification is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which that holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened throughout the Christian's life. One becomes a child of God in the experience of regeneration, but one grows as a child of God in the experience of sanctification.

The growth is more rapid in some than in others, but the general direction of Christian growth after you are saved is upward. The Christian's growth should always be upward; there should never be a leveling off. It should never go down or backwards, but should always grow upward. It is only through the long grinding on the wheel that precious stones are brought to their full beauty and perfection. Likewise, it is only through grinding on the wheel of divine providence that the Christian's character is brought to its full beauty and perfection.

In the experience of salvation there is a divine side and a human side. The individual who wants to be saved must meet God's conditions, which are to count the cost, to pay the price, to repent, and to believe the Gospel; that is the human side. In like manner, there is a divine side and a human side when it comes to sanctification. The human part can be called dedication: the individual dedicates his life to God and then the Holy Spirit sanctifies

him. The sanctification is in proportion to how much an individual yields to God. How much have you yielded to God? James 4:8a says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Again, your sanctification is in proportion to how much you have yielded to Him. The Word of the Lord is right about sanctification.

"Love Not the World"

The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to separation. We need to be separated from modern influences. Communism has failed repeatedly, but something worse than communism is humanism. Communism says, "There is no God," but humanism says, "You are your own god." The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to separation. The Bible says in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

As Christians, we are not to love the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. Can a Christian fully identify himself with anyone or anything that hates or is opposed to the Lord? Absolutely not! Can a true Christian take sides with those who do not love and honor the Lord Jesus Christ and who do not follow Him? No, he cannot do that! There is so little difference between many "professing" Christians and non-Christians. The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to separation.

Instead of the church going out into the world and being a light, the world has come in among some of God's people and hindered the work of the church. Second Corinthians 6:17-18 reads: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Again, the Word of the Lord is right when it comes to separation.

First Timothy, Chapter 2, is right. Verses 9-10 read: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to modesty and how Christians ought to dress.

In 1 Peter 3:3-4 we read: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." The Word of the Lord is right concerning modesty.

The Word of the Lord in Deuteronomy 22:5 is right when it declares, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." The Word of the Lord is right when it tells us as the people of God how we ought to dress.

First Corinthians 11:14-15 is right when it states: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." I still believe that is right.

Has Your Love for God Waxed Cold?

Psalms 101:3 is still right, where the Psalmist stated, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." I thank God for the Truth! It will set you free, and you will be free indeed! Deuteronomy 7:26 lets us know something else that is right: "Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt

utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing."

James 4:4 says, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." What are we not to love that is of the world? We are not to love all that is outside of or opposed to Jesus Christ. All that is not of the Father is of the world. Allow me to pin it down so that we will be careful that we are not loving the world. We are not to love all that is in the world that would alienate us from God, whether it be ungodly people, material things, or bad influences. It is the sum total of all that is opposed to God and makes obedience to Christ difficult.

Someone may say: "I do not know what I am not supposed to love. I do not want to love the world, but what is the world?" If you are doing things that make your obedience to Christ difficult, those things are of the world; that is what He said not to love. If you love the world, my friend, the Bible says the love of the Father is not in you. The love of the world includes those fleshly, unlawful desires, the lust of the eyes, and the desire to have all that you see around you that dishonors Christ. Just about everywhere you look, you can see things that dishonor Christ. Those are the things that the Bible tells us not to love. They include the pride of life, the world's pleasures, copying the world's habits, speaking the world's language, dressing in an immodest fashion, and sharing the world's ambitions. The Christian does not want to have any part of those things.

John wrote in 1 John 2:17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." It is a tragedy to live for this world only, because all that one has lived for in this world will pass away at the moment of death, but he that abides in the Lord will live forever. Your love for the Lord Jesus Christ will determine your love or your lack of love for the

world. The measure of one will reveal the measure of the other. If your love for God has waxed cold, you will find that the pull of the world is strong, and it may become too strong for you to resist.

Choosing to Escape the Damnation of Hell

Last, but not least, the Word of the Lord is right concerning damnation. Matthew 23:33 says, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" What the Bible has to say about hell and damnation is right. On the day of resurrection only two groups of people will step forward: those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. Matthew 25:41 says, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Verse 46 reads, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." What you think may not be right, and what Doctor So-and-So thinks may not be right, but the Word of the Lord is right. You can count on the Word of the Lord.

Someone may say, "I just do not know what is right." I can tell you what is right: the Word of the Lord is right. If annihilation were right, then the Word of the Lord would not be right, but the Word of the Lord is right, and the doctrine of annihilation is a false doctrine.

The Word of the Lord is right concerning eternal punishment. Mark 9:43-48 tells us: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The Word of the Lord is right when it comes to damnation.

If you profess Christianity, how is your sanctification? Your sanctification is in proportion to how much you yield to God. In Romans 12:1-2 the Apostle Paul was talking to Christians when he said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

You are sanctified in proportion to how much you have dedicated and consecrated your life to God. I believe that every Christian can have a closer walk with God. There are deeper depths and higher heights for every child of God. If you want to be more like God and to be closer to Him, then you can draw nigh to Him and He will draw nigh to you.

If you are saved, you need to consider those thoughts. If you are unsaved, salvation is right for you. The Word of the Lord is right concerning salvation. The Word of the Lord is right about justification. The Word of the Lord is right concerning redemption. Again, the Apostle Paul asked the question in Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. . . ?" A great price was paid so that we could obtain salvation. Now is the appointed time, and today is the day of salvation. What is the condition of your heart? You cannot escape the damnation of hell if you neglect this great salvation.

(Compact Disc TR-354E)

Meeting Announcements

NEWARK, OH
April 9-11

YOUTH REVIVAL: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
Evangelist: Brother Chris Wakefield, Canby, Oregon
Service times: Friday-Saturday 7:00 p.m., Sunday 10:45 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43025. Telephone: 740-344-2543

KENSETT, AR
April 16-18

REVIVAL: Kensett Church of God, 409 Southeast 2nd Street, Kensett, AR 72082
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas
Telephone: Church 501-742-3006 or Home 501-742-3961

MT. PLEASANT, PA
April 17

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.
MOTELS: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.); *Super 8 Motel in New Stanton*, 724-925-8915 (on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge*, 724-628-9600 (on 119N in Connellsville).
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

CANBY, OR
April 19-25

REVIVAL: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Ave., Canby, OR 97013
Evangelist: Brother David Watson, Lenoir City, Tennessee
Service times: Monday - Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday: 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 552 NW 2nd Ave., Canby, OR 97013. Telephone: 503-266-9297

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
April 19-25

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Allen Polston, Mechanicsburg, Indiana
Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.;
Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Visit our website @ www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at telephone: 304-872-4047

NEWTON, KS
April 21-25

REVIVAL: Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio
Service times: Wednesday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.;
Sunday 10:45 a.m. For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil @ 316-842-5127

MEDINA, OH
April 26-May 2

REVIVAL: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Evangelist: Brother Don Evans, Medina, OH
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Daniel Webster, 92 W. Main St., Seville, OH 44273
Telephone: (Home) 330-435-6490 or (Church) 330-725-5993

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