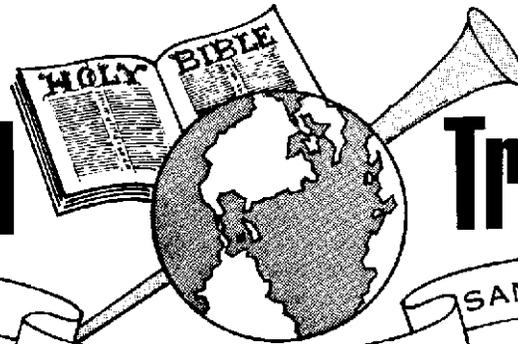


The Gospel



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. 32:33

"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 August 2010 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

Spring 2010 Camp Meeting Report

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

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

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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

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Psalm 145:1-12 reads: "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."

We praise the Lord for making the Spring Camp Meeting such a wonderful meeting! Much spiritual help was received. Verse 2 states, "Every day will I bless thee." Each passing day gave new opportunities to bless the Lord and tell of His excellent ways.

The meeting was well attended. Brother P. T. Granil and Brother Jesus Granil from Philip-pines were with us. We were very happy to see them again. They expressed that they enjoyed the meeting very much.

Verse 4 of Psalm 145 declares, "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." The camp meeting is one way for a generation to praise God's works to another. The children's program

was held Saturday morning. The children sang several songs that they learned in the barn services. The young people's choir sang a song written by Brother Reggie Stegmeier about "the best thing I've found in life." We truly thank the Lord for faithful young people who are giving their hearts and lives to God. They are truly an asset to the Church of God.

Brother Decker felt impressed to use a variety of ministers in the evening services each night. We rejoiced as many souls found deliverance. We thank God that He is still changing lives and working miracles today. God used the many outstanding messages in a mighty way. It would be difficult to single out any one message among those preached, because they all were so very good. Brother David Stegmeier from Canby, Oregon began the meeting by preaching a message on instilling an appreciation of our heritage in our children. Brother Allen Polston preached an enlightening message entitled "The Movies." Brother David Stegmeier taught an excellent seven-part series in the afternoon services on Christian ethics. On Sunday evening Brother Larry Dishman finished the meeting by speaking about the difference between "can't" and "don't want to."

You will find a list of the recorded messages that are available on page 26. If you were unable to attend, we encourage you to send for these messages. They will be an encouragement and a definite help to your soul.

In closing, we thank God for His marvelous presence in the meeting. Psalm 145:21 reads, "My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

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

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

20 Teaching them to observe all

things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them [this is precisely the same command], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Water Baptism



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Time of Reformation

Water baptism is an ordinance of the church, but there is much confusion concerning this ordinance. As we look into the Scriptures, we must take the Word of God as the final authority on all doctrinal and spiritual matters. The Word of God is settled, and we cannot change it. Psalm 119:89 says this: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am

the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

The Word of God is very explicit; it is understandable if divided properly. If you have a hard time understanding the Bible, do not quit reading it. I do not know of any individuals who can automatically understand everything that they read in the Word of God. If you do not understand it, you need to pray and ask the Lord to help you to gain understanding. God works by reve-

lation, and through His Holy Spirit, He will give you knowledge and wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures.

Second Timothy 2:15 states, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The phrase "rightly dividing" means to divide it right, and it also means to make a straight cut. When I was a child and my mother cut a cake, I wanted to

make sure that mine was not smaller than my brother's and sister's. I wanted an equal share. Even though I was smaller, I believed that I should have received an equal share.

In the Old Testament there was a tabernacle, a type of the church that Jesus built; it was a shadow of the reality. They had ordinances instituted by God. Luke 1:5-6 says: "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." They were walking in all the light that they had at that time. This verse of Scripture says that walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, they were blameless.

Hebrews 9:1 reads, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." Dropping down to verses 8-10 we read: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

The word *reformation* means "setting it straight; making things anew." It is amazing what you learn when you study the Word of God. The phrase *carnal ordinances* means "regulations of the body; external rules imposed on them." In other words, they had no choice.

We read in Exodus 18:20, "And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." This was imposed on them until the time

of reformation. Someone may question, "Do you think these things are important?" I know they are important or God would not have included them in His Word. Many people do not truly understand water baptism. Some people think it is a saving ordinance, so I want to clarify that.

Colossians 2:14-17 tells us: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

The time of reformation was a time when God was going to make all things new, a time when He was going to set things straight. There were ordinances, shadows, and types, and these things were in effect until the time of the reformation.

Our Example in All Things

Does the New Testament church have ordinances? Yes. The Bible states in 2 Thessalonians 2:15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." We read in 1 Corinthians 11:1-2: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." The words "traditions" and "ordinances" used in 1 Corinthians and in 2 Thessalonians are translated from the same word. An *ordinance* is a direction or command of an authoritative nature. The authority is from the Head of the church. Ephesians 1:22 says, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." The Head commands us

to baptize. You read it in the Book of Matthew.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." The phrase "Go ye therefore" is a command. Let us see how it is worded in Acts 1:1-2: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Christ had the authority, and He gave the authority. He commanded it, and He instituted it personally.

Let us see how Jesus was baptized. Is He not our example in all things? Let us see if He was sprinkled. We read in Matthew 3:13-17: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? [Where did they go? They did not go to John's house for a pitcher of water; they went to the Jordan River where there was lots of water.] And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water [notice that He had been in the water]: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

You may ask this question: "If I commit sin, do I need to be baptized again?" If you turn your back on God and go out into the world, you should be baptized again. Water baptism is an answer of a good con-

science. If you slipped and fell, but you did not turn away from God, then you should not have to be baptized again.

Is Water Baptism a Saving Ordinance?

Does water baptism save you from sin? No. Just as washing feet does not make you humble and partaking of the Lord's Supper does not make you remember Christ, being baptized does not cleanse you from sin. To wash feet, you need to be humble first. To partake of the Lord's Supper, there needs to be remembrance first of what Christ did for your soul in delivering you out of sin. To be baptized, first you must have your sins washed away. Jesus Christ was the Son of God before He went into the water. He is our example. The water did not make Him a Son of God. Water baptism does not make you a son of God. According to Ephesians 5:26, it is the "washing of water by the word." It is the Word of God that cleanses you.

What can wash away sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. First John 1:7 states, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." When you are saved, God automatically puts you into the church, and you automatically have unity with the saints. We did not start the unity, because before we were saved we did not even want to be around church people. When you are saved, you love everybody. Why? The Spirit of God brings unity through the blood of Jesus Christ. Your job is to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Revelation 1:5 states, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Colossians 1:14 reads, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgive-

ness of sins." It is always the blood that cleanses from sin. Without the blood there is no forgiveness and there is no cleansing from sin. The blood is applied by faith. None of us got literal blood on us. There would not be enough literal blood from Jesus' side to touch everybody, but it is by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ that we are cleansed from sin.

Romans 3:25 tells us, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." I want you to notice that this Scripture says "sins that are past." When you go to an altar of prayer or wherever you get saved, you are only saved from the sins that are past. You need to read the Scripture right. Why? When you are cleaned up, you are not a sinner anymore. There is where the Holy Spirit comes in to help you walk the strait and narrow way so that you do not have to sin anymore. The blood is for forgiveness; it washes away every sin when you repent; Then you are not guilty of one sin. You have a clean record. Your record has been expunged. From that moment on, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is a Comforter and a Guide, He leads you into all Truth, and you walk the strait and narrow way under His direction.

What else does the blood do? It purges your conscience from dead works—works that are worthless. It cleans up your conscience, and you have no more conscience of sins. Hebrews 9:14 reads, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve [you must get rid of the dead works to serve] the living God?"

"The Answer of a Good Conscience"

Does water baptism put you in the church? This is where the controversy comes up. The answer

to that question is no. It is by the new birth and spiritual baptism that you become a member of the church. First Corinthians 12:13 states, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." How do you get into the church? Through a spiritual baptism, a spiritual induction.

In Psalm 87:5-6 the Psalmist said: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." You are in the body of Christ through the new birth, through the Spirit of God.

Should people who are saved want to be baptized? Absolutely. After you get saved, you should be baptized. First Peter 3:21 says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Water baptism is the answer of a good conscience. The Hebrew writer said you have a good conscience through the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism does not give you a good conscience, but it is the answer of a good conscience. It is the blood that gives you the good conscience.

Water baptism does not make you a member of God's church. Sometimes people get saved and want to get baptized immediately when they have not truly sold out. Now, God is working with them. Before you are baptized, you should make sure that you are walking in the strait and narrow way. You need to make sure that you have truly counted the cost. There is a cost to being saved, and there is a cost after that too. We do not have a baptismal service just to put people in the water.

Water baptism should not be administered to babies. There is a reason for that. Mark 16:16 says, "He

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Babies neither believe nor disbelieve; they do not understand. The Bible does not say that babies should be baptized or even sprinkled. Speaking of the eunuch, when he desired to be baptized, Philip said in Acts 8:37, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

We do not baptize infants. Now, some children come to an age of accountability sooner than others, depending on how they are raised. However, after a small child goes to an altar of prayer, I believe you should let him walk a little while to see if he understands the strait and narrow way.

Although some parents may want their little child to be baptized right away after the child moves to an altar of prayer, I believe they should wait until the child gains an understanding of what salvation is. Some people hang their salvation on the fact that they were baptized as small children when often they do not even remember it. We need to be careful and make sure that the child is living right and make sure that he believes with all his heart, just as the eunuch did, and truly understands what salvation is all about.

How Should One Be Baptized?

One should be immersed completely to be baptized, not sprinkled or have water poured on him. Being sprinkled with water or having water poured on the head is not scriptural baptism. Scriptural baptism is being immersed. In other words, you go under the water completely. Your entire body gets wet. In Matthew 3:16 we read, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

Mark 1:9-10 states: "And it came

to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him."

The Word of God is very explicit on these things. Acts 8:36-39 reads: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? [He was not talking about a basin of water. He did not say, 'Here is a canteen full of water' or 'Here is a basin of water.' Notice that it was enough water for both of them to get into. Read carefully what he said.] And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

What Is the Standard for Water Baptism?

Water baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is the formula? The word *baptism*, when referring to water baptism, comes from the word **baptisio**, which means "immersion." Matthew 28:19 commands, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Why do we baptize in the name of all three? There is a Trinity, and all three had part in your salvation. First of all, you sinned against God. All sin is against God the Father. Second, you had to go through Jesus Christ; He was the atonement. Third, the Holy Spirit troubled your heart, and you came to God through the Holy Spirit. No one came through the

Father.

What is the standard for water baptism? One who has been born again and is living a life free from sin is a candidate for water baptism. Someone may say, "I'm not living free from sin." Then you are not saved, and you are not a candidate for water baptism. Jesus came to save you from sin. If we had to continue in sin, then Jesus would have died in vain. Why? Because they had sacrifices in the Old Testament that atoned for sin. The High Priest only had to come once a year. (That is better than confessing sin every night.) We could have stayed under the old Law. Jesus Christ is the sacrifice for sin, and we can have fellowship with Him through the blood after being born of the Spirit of God. God can keep you from sin around the clock. We are not boasting in ourselves; it is in God that we boast. We give God the glory.

When you are baptized, the minister must be a preacher of holiness. Also, you must be baptized in the name of the Trinity, not Jesus only. All three were before this world was ever created. Way back in the council hall of God, there were all three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Christ took on the body of Jesus, but Christ has always existed. Genesis 1:26 says, "Let *us* make man in our image." To whom are the pronouns referring in this verse? God was not talking to Himself. At the tower of Babel, God said, "Let *us* go down" (Genesis 4:7). Who was He speaking of going down? They were the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Abraham entertained a couple of angels. I believe that they were the Word (Christ) and the Spirit. There were three involved there: Abraham was talking to God, and the two angels went into Sodom—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Again, we do not baptize in Jesus' name only, and water baptism must be total immersion to be scriptural. Baptism

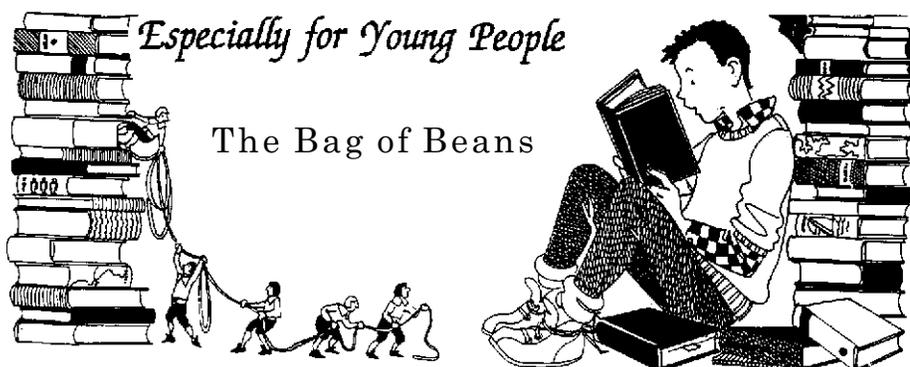
was not nailed to the Cross because the commission to baptize was given after the Cross and the Resurrection. Those things that were against us and contrary to us—the animal sacrifices and the old temple—were nailed to the Cross. Some people like to quote Colossians 2:14, which says, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

You must keep in mind that water baptism is not against us. It is an outward ordinance of something that has already taken place within the heart. Once your heart has been changed, then you can go through the ordinance of water baptism as an outward sign to other people, as a witness, that you are a child of God.

Other ordinances are feet washing and the Lord's Supper. The church has ordinances, and they are

very important. If you are saved and you are old enough to understand holiness, old enough to know about the strait and narrow way, then you should go on and be baptized. According to the Scriptures, when you are baptized, you should go under the water completely. Again, water baptism is not a saving ordinance, but it is an ordinance for those who are saved.

(Compact Disc TR-580E)



On a summer Sunday evening many years ago, a young man walked the streets of London, downcast and weary. He had been living a fast life with the usual result of a tarnished character and an empty purse. He was to sail for New York the following morning. A Christian friend who had vainly sought to restrain him in his downward course pleaded with him to spend his last night in England hearing someone preach.

The church was filled that evening with an eager crowd brought together to hear the faithful (but often unusual) preaching of that earnest man. It might have been curiosity that led the young man there, but at any rate he found himself seated in the congregation. The preacher's text was, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

After reading it, he abruptly proceeded: "I was walking along the street the other day and saw a drove of pigs following a man. This excited my curiosity, because pigs are in-

variably difficult to handle." He continued: "This man seemed to have no difficulty; the pigs, jostling and grunting, followed after him as eagerly as possible. I followed on, and to my surprise, I found that they were going to the slaughter house. They went in, and the door was closed behind them. I waited till the man came out and asked him how he had managed to lead them so easily. The man laughed and said, 'Maybe you did not see the bag of beans under my arm. I knew I would have a pretty morning's work taking them there if I didn't humor them a bit, so I got some beans and dropped them along the road. You saw how they scampered along picking up the beans, never thinking that they were going to their death!

"And this is the way," continued the preacher, raising his voice and turning his penetrating glance right on the pew where the young prodigal sat, "that the devil is leading some of you captives at his will down to hell. He knows full well

how to please and lead you on. He drops his beans right along the road, and very soon for you, the last bean will be picked up, and then the gates of hell will close behind you."

The young man sat spellbound. The story of the beans with its striking application to the wiles and devices of the devil in ruining souls by scattering the world's follies in their paths, carried the arrow of conviction to his soul. The next day he sailed for New York. Anxiously his friend waited for news of his safe arrival, and at last it came. With joyful surprise he read the letter.

"I am glad to tell you that I am a converted man. The words of that earnest preacher, especially the opening words about the devil's beans, arrested and awakened me. I saw where I was going, how Satan was luring me on, and what my doom and destiny must be. By the grace of God I am saved, to follow a better Leader and walk in a new path. I shall always thank God for that good man's words that arrested me and for the words of further help from one on board the ship by which I was led to the Savior."

Selected

If you wouldn't write it and sign it,
then you shouldn't say it.

John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Dying in Sin



Brother Larry Dishman

Life's Greatest Tragedy

Beyond a shadow of doubt, Jesus spoke of the worst tragedy that could possibly befall a human being, and that is the loss of the soul. It is a tragedy not to know the Son of God as your Savior. Can you think of anything worse than losing your soul and missing Heaven? Jesus spoke of the eternal separation of a lost soul from the pure, compassionate Savior who died for the sins of the whole world. He referred to that impassable gulf between Heaven and hell that no soul can cross. The words found in verse 21 of our Scripture text are soul searching and tragic words: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

The loss of the human soul is definitely life's greatest tragedy.

I want you to notice some things about the people to whom Christ was speaking in our text of Scripture. First, those people were lost despite their religion. They were not without religious form and ceremony. They were well schooled in the Mosaic teachings. For many centuries, their forefathers had been known as God's peculiar people. However, like millions, even today, they substituted religion for regeneration, ritual for righteousness, and human tradition for divine commandments. They were lost, and they were blind and prejudiced. They were so steeped in unscriptural religion that even Jesus held no hope for them.

Second, they were lost in spite of their nearness to Jesus. They came in contact with Him from time to time, and they had heard Him forgive the sins of an adulteress woman. Jesus said in John 8:11, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." They heard His offer of either Heaven's life or earth's darkness. They heard Him say in verse 12 of this same chapter, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Nevertheless, those people refused Him, and even worse, they sought to stone Him.

The third thing that I want you to notice concerning this Scripture text is that the people were lost despite such wonderful access to Truth. Those people were not

Gentiles, to whom the Gospel had never been preached. They were not in a nation that was sitting in darkness, to whom the Light had never come. Friend, they were not living in a remote land in to whose language the sweet Gospel story had never been translated. They were God's favored people. God had spoken the Living Word to them, and He had walked among them. In spite of all these advantages, they were still lost.

Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Those people despised the Truth just as many people do today. They rejected the Light and gambled with their souls. Why did those people refuse the Son of God as their Savior and Friend? Why do millions of people in our generation die in sin, forever cut off from Christ and Heaven? Millions of people have left this world unprepared to meet God.

You Must Believe

In our Scripture text Jesus was clear that if you die in your sins, you cannot go where He is. Why do people die in sin? First, I believe that in some cases it is due to their unbelief. That is the case in our Scripture lesson. We read in John 8:45-46: "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Unbelief is the most horrible, wicked, fatal sin of all. It will block you from entering Heaven's door, and it will open the wretched chasm of hell. Unbelief is what drove Adam and Eve from the garden and plunged multitudes beneath the judgment waters of the flood. It kept Israel out of Canaan for forty long years and hindered the fulfillment of God's wondrous promise to His people.

God's Holy Book teaches us that an individual is saved by believing. You must believe. This is very clear in Acts 16:30 when the Philippian jailer asked the question, "Sirs, what

must I do to be saved?" In verse 31 Paul and Silas answered that question by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Romans 10:9 reads, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Being saved without faith in the glorious person of Jesus Christ is impossible. We are saved by believing; we are damned by disbelieving. God's Word says in John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

God is omnipotent, but there are some things that God cannot do and will not do. For example, God will not save a man, a woman, a boy, or a girl who refuses to believe the divine record of this unspeakable gift. Matthew 13:58 tells us, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Jesus cannot perform the mighty work of regeneration in the human heart until there is a willingness in that heart to believe. We are saved by believing, and Satan has many subtle maneuvers to keep lost men, women, boys, and girls from believing. It has been said that in one of Martin Luther's great conflicts with the devil that Satan asked him if he felt that his sins were forgiven. Martin Luther said to the devil, "No, I don't *feel* that my sins are forgiven, but I *know* they are because God said so in His Word."

The Bible does not say, "Believe and feel saved"; it says "Believe and be saved." I am not saying there are not feelings in salvation, because there are. However, feelings will not always be there. If you have met God's conditions and you are walking in the light of God's Eternal Word, you are just as saved when you have no feelings as you are when your feelings are bubbling up. You can believe and receive, but you must believe. One of the greatest promises in the Bible is found in

John 6:37, which states, ". . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Lost soul, look to God today with hope and confidence. Sometimes people want to be saved, but they have a fear that they will arise a sinner and that God will not save them after all. Friend, the Scripture says ". . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Christ will not cast you out if you go to Him. He promised that He would save you, and He is no respecter of persons. Thank God, He saves the old, the middle-aged, the young, the rich, and the poor. Romans 10:13 tells us, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The Folly of Procrastination

The second reason that I believe that people die in their sins is due to procrastination. Throughout the Bible God urges the lost soul to make haste and come to the Savior. Exodus, Chapter 12, speaks of the passover and expresses the urgency of eating it. Verse 11 says, ". . . ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover." The people who were in bondage in that day, in the servitude of Egypt, were not to delay. God's provision had been made for their escape and deliverance, and the Lord instructed them to do it in haste. Friend, that is still the message today. The way has been made for you to be saved and go to Heaven. You can escape the damnation of hell. You can have your sins forgiven, but you must not procrastinate. You need to make haste while the door of mercy is still open.

Isaiah 1:18 urges, "Come now [not tomorrow or next week], and let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." God says, "Come now," not some time later. Perhaps the most subtle trick the devil has ever used is that of procrastination. While God says today, the devil says

tomorrow.

Proverbs 27:1 states, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." None of us knows what a day may bring forth. We learn from many Scriptures that life offered and continually rejected may bring the judgment of God. That is in the Bible. Turning away from God and saying no to the Holy Spirit is more serious than many people believe. Hebrews 3:7-8 says: "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Oh, the awful tragedies which have fallen to those who have put off salvation! They planned to get right with God, but they put it off until it was too late.

In 2 Corinthians 6:2 we read, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The time will come when it will no longer be an accepted time with God, and the day of mercy will be closed. Men, women, boys, and girls are going to be removed to a place where there is no mercy shown, where there is no compassion. Today is the day of salvation; now is the appointed time.

In the New Testament you can read that Felix decided to put it off and said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). As far as we can tell in the Bible, that convenient time never came for Felix. Dear one, the convenient season is when God is calling for you. When God is dealing with your heart, or when you feel that drawing, God is letting you know that *now* is the time when you need to move. If you are lost, you are gambling with your soul. It may not be a convenient season while you are lying on a hospital bed. Often it is too late then. It may not be a convenient time if you are in a wreck on the highway. During tragedy of any kind is not a convenient time. Today is the day of salvation.

The Urgency of Answering God's Call

I remember a young man who was in a service many years ago who got under conviction. He was only seventeen years of age. The Holy Spirit came down in a mighty way that night. That young man could have easily argued with God and put off his salvation while he was standing there in that church service. He could have said, "God, I'm a young man. I've got my whole life out before me, and I want to go out and have some fun. I want to find out what living is all about." No doubt, many things could have come to his mind, but do you know what he did? He listened to God; he obeyed the Holy Spirit, and God saved him.

Just thirty-one days from that day, he was working and got hit in the chest and knocked back a few feet. His co-worker went over to him and asked, "Are you okay?"

He replied: "Yes, just let me get my breath. I'll be okay in a few minutes." He did not know that when he got hit in the chest, it broke the main artery completely loose from his heart, and he was dying. Finally, they called an ambulance, but before the ambulance could get there, he was dead. I believe that young man is shouting the hills of Glory because he did not put off his salvation.

Many young people do not make the wise decision that he made. He made a wise decision the day when he chose to give his heart to God. That day he decided: "I am going to get this thing settled. I might have a lot of time to get right with God, but I am not going to gamble with my soul any longer. I am not going to procrastinate." Thank God, he made his way to the altar of prayer and fully surrendered to the Lord. How sad it would have been had he gone the other way! It could happen that way with you, dear one.

King Agrippa procrastinated and said, "Almost thou persuadest

me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). He was almost ready to be saved. Possibly one thing was holding him back. Maybe it was one sin that he was in love with. It could be that one sin had wound its frightful coils around his life. No doubt, Agrippa thought, "One day I am going to take care of this matter and get saved." As far as we can tell from the Word of God, he never had another opportunity to get right with God.

To be almost persuaded is to be altogether lost. Being almost persuaded once in your life will not cool off hell one degree for you. I believe that if we could interview precious souls in hell right now, almost every one of them would say: "There was a time in my life when I came to the crossroads and had to make a decision. I was almost persuaded to become a Christian, but I put it off." Life's greatest blunder is to put off accepting Jesus Christ until it is too late. There is no remedy for this tragedy. Once death overtakes you, this tragedy is fatal; it is final, and it is irrevocable. May God bless through the Holy Spirit to help the unsaved to see the urgency of salvation and to realize how important it is to answer when God calls, because when death comes, there is absolutely no forgiveness for continuously resisting the Holy Ghost.

The most crucial moment that you will ever face on this side of eternity is when God's Spirit speaks to you. When you feel the gentle knock of the loving Savior at your heart's door and the wooing of the Holy Spirit, that is the most crucial moment of your life. I plead with you, sinner friend, do not turn Him away.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

Another reason that men die in their sins is that they grieve the Holy Spirit. Many Scriptures tell us that God's sweet Holy Spirit can be grieved. He can be hurt to the

degree that He no longer pleads and convicts your soul. Genesis 6:3 says, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." This verse is easily understood. God says that a time will come when the Holy Spirit will no longer tolerate unbelief, procrastination, and defiance against God.

I believe there comes a time when God sets a deadline and says, "This is as far as you can go." An old song says: *"There's a line that is drawn by rejecting the Lord, Where the call of His Spirit is lost. Even now it may be that the line you have crossed. Have you counted, Have you counted the cost?"* You can cross that line by rejecting the Lord. The Lord withdrew His Spirit back in Noah's day. What makes you think that He will not withdraw His Spirit in our day when sinners deliberately close their ears and refuse to respond to the Holy Spirit?

The Bible says in John 16:7-8: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin. He is in the world to testify of Jesus; He is speaking to hearts who are unsaved. He is holy, sensitive, and personal. He can be grieved by constant rejection. My mind goes to Exodus 10:3, where the Lord asked the question, "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" If you are unsaved, He is asking you that question, dear friend. Some people were raised in the church and have heard the Gospel time and time again. God has been faithful to them year after year and revival after revival.

God has been faithful. Friend, if you are lost, you know that you need to be saved. If you go to hell, it will not be because God was not merciful to you. How long will you refuse to humble yourself? How long do you think God is going to let

you continue to harden your heart and resist the Holy Spirit? The time may come when God will no longer deal with you. He may give up. That would be a fatal moment for your precious soul; then prayers and tears would no longer avail.

Coming to a place where you are past feeling is possible if you are an unsaved person and the Holy Spirit no longer speaks to you. If that happens, the Father will no longer listen to the prayers of your loved ones who are praying for you. This would mean that you have crossed the line. Friend, be not deceived. God's patience can wear out.

In Romans, Chapter 1, we can read three times of the awful expression that God gave ones up. My prayer for you is that you will not reject the call of the Holy Spirit until God takes His Spirit away. Do not wait until your soul becomes deafened to the tender call of God's Spirit. How long are you going to trifle with the influences of His Spirit?

Satan's Master Plan

Another reason that men die in their sins is due to the work of Satan. I would like to say to both the saved and the lost, Satan's master plan is to cause every soul to go to hell. Dear one, the devil plans to cause you to go to hell, and he will use all his satanic, cunning tricks to keep you out of Heaven.

If you are unsaved, he has many cunning devices to keep you from repenting, to keep you from believing, and to keep you from being saved. Satan has schemed and deceived and blinded the eyes of millions of people from the Truth of the Gospel. Satan has power to blind the unsaved and to keep them in the dark. Is that what happened to you, sinner friend? Has Satan blinded your mind?

Second Corinthians 4:3-4 states: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the

light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Satan has deceived many people, and I believe that even the people to whom Jesus was speaking in our Scripture text had been deceived, because Christ said, "Ye . . . shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." It is difficult to understand why intelligent human beings would want to be one of the devil's children any longer.

The devil is a poor provider. You cannot depend upon his word because he was a liar from the beginning. You cannot trust the devil. His poison is sugarcoated, and all his pleasures are only for a season. The devil cannot comfort your heart when it is broken. As Christians, our hearts are broken, but we have God who can heal our broken hearts. Sometimes God comes right down and dries our tears, but the devil has never dried one tear. Sometimes as Christians we have heavy burdens, and God lifts our burdens, but the devil has never lifted one burden, and he never will. He offers you no hope in death and no hope in the life to come. The devil's schemes may sound good, but he is just leading you down the road that leads to destruction. As one of God's preachers, I beg you to turn your back on the devil today. I urge you, do not be misled and deceived any longer by the devil to follow him. Listening to him means being lost forever.

Jesus speaks of two great things in the Scripture text: death and Heaven. When He said, "Ye shall die in your sins," He spoke of death. When He said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come," He spoke of Heaven. If death should come upon you before He comes, how wonderful it would be to die in peace and to have the hope of Heaven. Dying as a Christian means dying in the Lord. Being absent from the body is being present with the Lord. The thief on the cross lived all his life in sin, but he turned to Jesus before he died and was wondrously saved. We know that because Jesus said to this

individual, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). You do not have to die in your sins. Christ made a way so that you can escape the damnation of hell.

The Uncertainty of Life

Last, but not least, people die in sin because of sudden death. If they had time to think about death, perhaps they would have made different choices, but death came suddenly. The Bible speaks about the uncertainty of life. In Ecclesiastes 8:8 the ancient preacher Solomon said this about death: "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death." No power on earth, no amount of money, and no influence can prolong life one breath longer than the will of God dictates. Death enters all abodes. Every minute he is directing his darts with unerring precision. We are living on the borders of the grave, on the margins of eternity. Hebrews 9:27 reads: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Each of us has an appointment with death, and since God says "it is appointed unto men once to die," then how unwise it is to take needless risk with your soul. Which year are you going to die? Which month are you going to die? Which week or day will it be? Will you finish out this month? This is something that you do not know. Your name could appear in the obituary column tomorrow. The clothes in which you will be buried could be hanging next on the rack. You may say, "But I'm young." Your casket could possibly be at a funeral home right now. Your grave may be opened two or three days from right now.

First Samuel 20:3 says, "There is but a step between me and death." One step is mighty close. Everyone knows how short one step is and how quickly one individual can make one step! Friend, you are only a few heartbeats from eternity. How

can you so proudly and arrogantly act as though you are the captain of your own soul when every step brings you nearer to the grave? It is only a matter of time until you will have to bid farewell to every earthly tie. Death is slowly overtaking each of us. Every heartbeat and every tick of the clock is bringing you nearer to eternity. The clock of life is wound only once. No one has the power to say when that hand is going to stop, at an early or a late hour.

Do you know what happens to many folks? They die suddenly, and they are ushered into the very presence of God without advance warning. If you are unprepared, you should consider how near death could be. Death is nearly always unwelcome. Death may come with a lingering illness, or it may come with the crash of an accident. Death always comes as an unwelcome intruder to the unconverted. Every sinner who dies without God, if he is in his right mind, will see death as a glaring monster, unwelcome and unexpected. It may not be long until the undertaker is going to pump you full of embalming fluid.

Will You Wait Until It Is Too Late?

If God were to pull back the curtain and let you see how close you really are to the coffin, no doubt you would turn pale. Young people, middle-aged people, and older people are going to have this year's date written on their tombstones. I say this reverently, but more lies are told in funeral services than any other ceremony. Almost everyone who dies, whether the person is a drunkard or a drug addict, will be preached into Heaven; but the condition of the soul at death determines the destiny of the soul. A man will not die any better than he has lived. If you live as a sinner, that is the way you are going to die. A man who dies cannot come back and make preparation for eternity.

How dangerous it is for a person

to defy God and gamble with eternity! No wonder God often pleads for the sinner to come with haste and without delay. If you are unsaved, may God help you to come to Him while the door of mercy is still open. How quickly the death sentence comes, but how long is eternity! Every sinner who dies will be just as the rich man spoken of in Luke, Chapter 16. He will lift up his eyes in hell. The human mind cannot fathom what an awful awakening is awaiting the sinner on the other side of death. Every sinner who closes his eyes in death lifts his eyes in hell, just as the rich man, praying and weeping, but to no avail. There is a song that reads:

*Oh, what is this that I cannot see,
Whose icy hands take hold on me;
I am Death, none can excel;
I open the door to Heaven and hell.*

*O Death, O Death, how can it be,
That I must go with thee!
O Death, O Death, how can it be
I'm unprepared for eternity.*

*Oh, yes, I've come for to get your soul,
Take your body and leave it cold;
I'll drop the flesh from off your frame;
The earth and worms both have
their claim.*

*O Death, O Death, please let me see
If Christ has turned His back on me.
When you were called and asked to bow
You wouldn't take heed
And it's too late now.*

*O Death, O Death, please give me time
To fix my heart and change my mind
Your mind is fixed
Your heart is bound
And I have the shackles to drag you
down.*

*Farewell, Farewell,
To all farewell,
My doom is fixed
I'm summoned to hell.
As long as God
In Heaven shall dwell,
My soul, my soul, shall scream in hell.*

When Death with icy, cold fingers, frigid eyes, and pale cheeks enters the room to get to his victim, he never leaves without carrying out his dark assignment. When God sends the death angel after you, he is going to take you away. Doctors cannot keep him back, nurses cannot keep him back, medical life support machines cannot keep him back. Every time the death angel comes to get a victim, he does not leave until he carries out his assignment.

I want you to think about yourself, whether you are young, middle-aged, or old. Imagine that you are on your deathbed, your face is pale, and you are gasping for breath, surrounded by weeping relatives and friends. You realize that a cold dew is making its way down your feverish, scorched brow. You can begin to feel the death rattle in your throat as the doctor is summoned and declares your case hopeless. He lets your family know that you have but a short while to live. You are lying in that position, and suddenly you will awaken to the fact that all the faces of your loved ones are beginning to fade. Everything in the room is fading

from your vision. It is like a dream. A moment ago you could hear people telling you, "I love you," but their voices are fading like the chime of evening bells.

Next, you will awaken to the fact that the room is filled with legions of devils from the underworld, in plentiful gloom of the eternal night. It is settling in like a pall, and you realize that you have lost the power of utterance. Your tongue cleaves fast to the roof of your mouth. Suddenly there is a strange sensation that creeps over your meager frame, and that dart of death flies through your fading heart. One sob, just one faint struggle, one long groan, and your spirit takes its flight to the great beyond.

One day Death will turn down the street where you live. The undertaker will be called, and you will be laid quietly in a coffin. Someday there will be another funeral at the church where you attended, but this time *you* will be the one in the casket. Your family and your loved ones will stand around the casket with breathless awe, tear-bathed cheeks, and breaking hearts; but you will be gone until the heavens fade

away and the Judge of all the earth shall come.

At last, the funeral hour will arrive, and a black hearse will move slowly up to the door. Pallbearers will carry out your lifeless form. (Dear one, you may not have time for God now, but you will find time to die.) Then the funeral procession will march away to the lonely city of the dead. The grave will be opened, your body will be lowered into the cold bosom of the earth. There, you will be sealed in a Christless coffin and lowered into a Christless grave. This is the consigning of the body to the cold, dark grave.

Oh, sinner, dying without God is the entrance into hell. Immediately after you die, you will pass into that eternal world. Your destiny will be made known to you, because death will seal your destiny. Will you die without the Savior? Will you lose your precious soul when you cross death's chilly river? Will you miss yon brighter goal? How long will you refuse to humble yourself? Will you wait until it is too late?

(Compact Disc TR-214M)

Who Can Doubt It?

Have you ever doubted God's love for you or doubted that God is involved in your life on a daily basis? You can be reminded of God's omnipotence through the beauty of a majestic sunset, the refreshing feel of cool, clean water, and the dawn of a new day bringing with it new life. God connects us to the power of His creation. He surrounds us with its beauty, immerses us in the glory that the message of nature brings forth, a message of hope and of peace. It stirs the soul to worship. Psalm 113:3 states, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised." Who can doubt God's sovereignty in a world so rich and full of One who created it?

Selected

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was

sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41 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:

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

"Ye Blessed of My Father"



Brother Allen Polston

True Repentance

When Jesus said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," in verse 34 of our Scripture text, He was describing the Christian, one who has given his heart to God, one who has held

back nothing, one who has surrendered himself completely to Almighty God. In repentance he has turned away from sin, placed his faith in Jesus Christ, and become a part of the great family of God. As I thought about the act of repentance,

I thought about what Paul had to say to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 when he wrote: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 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."

True repentance will cause some changes to come about. It produces godly qualities in your heart and life. You will no longer be the same person. The lesson of our Scripture text in Matthew defines what it really means to be a child of God. To many people, being a Christian is simply a matter of attending church services occasionally and living a fairly decent life. No doubt, you have met religious people with many different ideas concerning Christianity. Once I met a man in a store who was a faithful member of a denominational church. When I asked him how he was doing, he replied, "Well, I'm very nervous, but I'm sober today." I thought, "My, how sad that is!" He was someone who attended a mainstream denominational church faithfully, and that was his reply. That was not something he said in humor. He was serious. He is generally found at the local tavern.

There are many different theories and doctrines in the religious world, but the Bible clearly informs us of what it really means to be a genuine child of God. Some denominations put emphasis on tithing and the giving of money as the basis for accepting members. False religion has deceived many individuals into thinking that all they have to do is join the church of their choice and put their time and efforts into it. However, God has given us many passages of Scripture, including the one in Matthew, to enlighten us concerning what He requires of one to be a Christian.

A tremendous task is laid upon true Gospel ministers in this day and age to preach what it really means to be a child of God. Why is that? Almost everyone seems to

think he is a Christian no matter how he lives. Many people are deceived. They have been duped into believing that they are all right when they are still living in sin. A great responsibility rests upon God's true ministry to reveal to people in false religion that they are in a deceived state and to show them by the Gospel how to become saved. That is what God is looking for. By God's Word, people need to see that what they have been trusting in is vain. That is what has to happen, in many cases, before people can really begin to receive help.

I want to point out what the Bible is saying in our Scripture text. This study will help you to understand more thoroughly what it really means to be a Christian and to be called "ye blessed of my Father." We read about two different groups of people: those who are blessed of God and those who are cursed of God. I am sure it is easy to decide which category you would rather be in. Our Scripture text reads in verse 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

"Despised and Rejected of Men"

I want you to notice that the words of our Scripture text are printed in red in the Bible, which shows that they are the words of Jesus Christ. He was speaking to His disciples privately that day of a time that was ahead of Him. We know about all the many mighty miracles that He performed while on this earth. As we think of those things, we esteem Him very highly and feel very indebted to Him. If you are a child of God, you will exalt Him. However, that was not exactly the way most people felt toward Him when He was walking on this earth. He was not exalted, glorified, or lifted up as He should have been.

John 1:11 says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Friend, He came to the Jews, whom He had brought all the way

from Abraham to that day. Although Jesus Christ came to them, they did not want anything to do with Him. He was a disappointment to them because they were looking for someone to come with pomp and splendor.

The Prophet Isaiah prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ in more than one instance. Isaiah 53:2-3 states: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." That was what Jesus faced on this earth.

Jesus was a disappointment to the Jewish nation because they were looking for a Messiah who would come and give them earthly power through an earthly kingdom. They wanted a literal establishment where they could rule and reign and have all the things that their flesh desired to have. Contrariwise, Jesus came as the lowly Lamb of God. This Man from Galilee did not live up to their expectations.

Today we have the Bible that tells of all the wonderful things that He did — healing the sick, raising the dead to life, and all the miraculous works of salvation. We think very highly of Him, but most people in that day were not like-minded. When Jesus died on the Cross, every one of the disciples forsook Him. They did not glorify Him or exalt Him as He really should have been.

Our Scripture text says in verse 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory. . . ." This verse lets us know that a time is coming when Jesus will be exalted. The Jewish people despised and rejected Him and hung Him on the Cross, but the time is coming when every knee will bow down to Him. After Jesus was crucified and put in the grave, He arose and appeared to His disciples and others, and then He went

home to Heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father. Now Jesus comes to us by way of the Spirit of God.

The Coming of the Comforter

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples before His crucifixion, He said in John 16:2-16: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

"But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

Soon after Jesus' resurrection

from the grave, He was going to go to the Father, but He was going to send the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Ghost, people were going to see Him. We still see Jesus through the Spirit of God, Who comes into our midst through the preaching of the Gospel. Through the moving of God, the Spirit of God comes into our midst and we get a revelation of Christ. We receive fresh understanding. He speaks to us through the Spirit of Truth.

I want you to notice that John quoted Jesus in saying that "He shall glorify me." When the Spirit of God comes to you, what is He going to do? He will reveal the wonders of Jesus to you. Also, He will glorify and lift up Christ. God's Spirit will not stay around when compromise begins to take hold in people's lives. When they toss out their modest clothing and start putting the flesh on display, the Spirit of God will exit their lives. God does not want His people to wear immodest clothes with the backs cut out and the hemlines raised.

Friend, God wants to reveal Christ to you. Why? That is the only way you can be saved; there is no other way. You cannot be saved by merely going through the ordinance of water baptism. You must be born again, and Jesus is the only way that you can be saved. He is the propitiation for your sins. He has all ready made the sacrifice, and all you have to do is repent of the way you are living and believe the Gospel. Friend, Jesus has made a way for you to be saved and become a new creature. It is really very simple. Nevertheless, the devil will try to make it complicated in your mind and provide you with all kinds of reasons concerning why you should not follow the instructions in the Scripture.

Each of us has things that we are gifted in, areas where God has called us to serve, whether it is preaching, singing, praying, or whatever. Some may be able to do things better than others. You have

to watch that you do not begin to push forward in a desire to show off. If you do, you will be in direct conflict with what the Spirit of God is trying to do. When He sees that kind of thing prevailing, He will depart.

The Holy Spirit Will Teach You All Things

John 14:26 states, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Spirit of God, or the Comforter, will bring to your remembrance all the things that Jesus has said and all the things that He has done. He will cause you to know that Jesus Christ is wonderful. The Spirit of God brings that understanding, enlightenment, and knowledge of how awesome Christ is!

We can see that the Son of Man has come in His glory by the giving of the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God came, His purpose was to exalt and glorify Jesus Christ, to show men and women the Savior. Many people have Bibles, but just having the Scriptures alone without the Spirit of God will not reveal Truth to them. Some people read a lot of Scriptures, but their spirits are not right. You can see in their daily living that they do not have the Spirit of God working within. When the Spirit of God is present and the Scriptures are being declared, He will glorify and lift up Christ. When an individual has God's Spirit, he will be concerned about lifting up Christ. The Spirit of God will come down and challenge you by asking, "Is this thing that you are doing really going to exalt Christ or is it going to exalt you?"

Again, our Scripture text says in verse 31, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. . . ." God has angels other than heavenly beings. The Bible lets us know that the angels of God are His messengers,

or His ministry. God certainly does not have unholy messengers. They are holy messengers. God does not use people who are not called into His ministry and who continue to live in sin. First, they must be delivered from their sins. They must have their sins washed away by the blood of Jesus, and then He calls them to serve in different places in the body of Christ. God sets the members in place according to His will.

In this Gospel dispensation the Spirit of God has been given and God has holy messengers who are declaring His Word. God's messengers are not living in sin. Many people in the world claim to be ministers, but many of them have been caught living in adultery, committing fornication, and other sinful acts. I repeat, God has holy messengers, and they get the Word from God and bring it to the people. They have a calling from God.

Dividing the Sheep From the Goats

Verse 32 of our Scripture text states, "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The anointed preaching of the Gospel has been going forth for hundreds of years, and it does a separating work. The preaching of the Truth still separates men and women yet today. When it is declared, what you do with it determines which category you will end up in. When God's Word goes forth and the Gospel is declared, it separates those who are obedient from those who are rebellious. Those who embrace Truth will measure to it.

We do not have to wait until the end of time to be divided. God is dividing people right in this day in which we are living. Every message that God sends down is sent to do a dividing work. Thank God, you do not have to be put in the wrong group. As long as you keep yourself consecrated to God and walk in the light of His Word, you will not be

separated from Christ.

First John 1:7 reads, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is imperative that you walk in the light and keep your mind open to the Word and the Spirit of God. We have to be careful. We are living in a time of seducing spirits. The devil is working in many deceitful ways to allure God's people. Therefore, we have to keep ourselves open and subject to God's Word and His Spirit. Preachers have to do that as well.

Preachers have to stay open to greater light and understanding. We have to walk in what God has given us, preach what He has given us, and teach what He has given us. Realizing that our ways are not God's way is important. Many denominations in this world were founded on some truths, but they failed to go any further. Maybe they rallied around Martin Luther, John Wesley, or another reformer of the past, but they refused to go any further. I repeat, we have to keep ourselves open to God's Word and His Spirit. A separation is taking place. God is separating the good from those who choose not to be good.

God's Love Abiding in the Heart

In this Scripture lesson we find that Jesus tells of some activity that He commended. Our Scripture text says in verses 35-40: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall

answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Jesus was conveying something very important in those verses of Scripture. You could ask yourself, "What would cause me to help and comfort another, even the least desirable person, even if he or she could never repay the favor?" Only the love of God in your heart would cause you to behave in such a way. If you have God's love abiding in your heart, it will cause you to do good for the least as well as for the greatest. The love of God within an individual constrains and inspires him to do what he otherwise would not do.

Loving those who love you is easy. Sinners do that. Doing something for someone in anticipation of his returning the favor is not difficult. However, the love of God goes beyond the human love that is shared between sinners. God's love is far greater than pen can ever tell. God commended His love to us even while we were yet in an ungodly state, while we were yet sinners.

God's love for us caused Him to send His only begotten Son to die on the Cross for us, and it goes far beyond the love shared between people of this world. Those who possess God's love and extend it to others are pronounced, "Ye blessed of my Father."

You must love God to make Heaven your home; it is a requirement. Many people say: "I'm a Christian. I believe in God, and I love Him," but they fall short of being able to line up with God's Word. The question is, do you have the love that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25:35-36? He said: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

When you think about Jesus, no

doubt, you think: "Surely I do love Him, and I have His love within me. I would do these things for Him." However, Jesus brought it down just a little closer. In essence, He said: "If you are not doing these things for the least around you, it is as if you are not doing it for Me." What He was trying to tell us in this lesson was this: "If you do not have God's love to give and to help the least, you do not have it in your heart."

Your having the love of God in your heart is required, no matter who the recipient is, even if the person is a stranger. You ought to be willing to help no matter what the need is. If someone is hungry or thirsty or needs visitation, the love of God in your heart will prompt you to give, even to the least, as if the person were Jesus Christ Himself. I am sure that you would be quick to say, "Certainly I would help Christ. I would give Him whatever He needs and assist Him in any way that I could." Jesus is turning it right back around and saying, "If you have the proper love to help and assist Me and to love Me as you should, then it will also cause you to love even the least of these My brethren."

Having Greater Consecration

God has directed you in His Word to examine yourself. We are living in a time when people have become very self-centered. In most circles the things that they have going on for themselves is taking away any ability, time, or talent to give to someone in need. They are embracing and engaging in so many things in these last days of time that they have very little time. I read about some older brethren, and it was common for them to give up everything they had to work in the Gospel field. Often they would leave families, homes, careers, and great opportunities to labor fervently in the work of God. Where are you in this day and time?

God is still in need of vessels that He can really work through

who are willing to sacrifice more than just the time and the resources that it takes to attend revival services and weekly meetings. God still needs vessels who are willing to sacrifice their lives and really put themselves on the altar and say, "Lord, here am I; send me." God needs young people who will make that decision: "Lord, I will surrender my life in a greater way. I could be this or that, but I will give You my life and let You do with it as You please."

Friend, God still needs people who are willing to pour out their hearts to Him and let Him have them entirely for His work, sacrificing themselves so that He may call them to various tasks in the work of God. He still needs those who are willing to give themselves even for the least, even for something that will not be all that well known or recognized. Whatever part you do in the work of God will cause you to gain a reward if you are willing to labor for the cause of Christ.

Friend, do you want to be in that number considered to be the blessed of the Father? Part of the require-

ment is that you get the love of God flowing in your life. It will cause you to do things even for the least. You will want to help, even those who could never repay you. You can have that kind of experience and love. Thank God, you do not have to live as the world does. They do things only to receive something in return. You can have such a burning love in your heart for God that it will motivate you to be a living sacrifice to build up the precious Church of God.

Do you have the kind of love that will cause you to sacrifice your time and your life, the kind of love that will send you out to the least to offer help? God can help you to be consecrated in this way. God's power can help you to become that kind of person. God would not put this in His Word and make it an impossibility. Jesus paid the price for your sins. He was willing to consider you and to die for you. Won't you consecrate your life to Him?

(Cassette C-4986E)

REASONS FOR GOING TO CHURCH

Some go to church to take a walk;
Some go to church to laugh and talk,
Some go there to meet a friend;
Some go there their time to spend;
Some go there to meet a lover;
Some go there a fault to cover;
Some go there for speculation;
Some go there for observation;
Some go there to doze and nod;
The wise go there to worship God.

Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

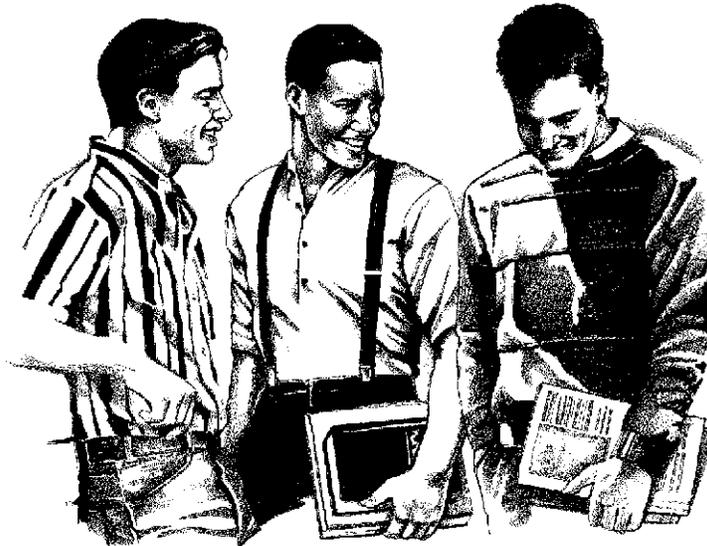
4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city

on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.

THESE LEWD FELLOWS



Brother Calvin Foster

"Lewd Fellows of the Baser Sort"

I want to call your attention to verse 5, which talks about these lewd fellows. I want you to notice that they were of the baser sort and how they were called upon to come in and set the city on an uproar. These lewd fellows were men of low morals. Today we might call them loafers, or men who would be called in to do the dirty work that someone else wants done. It is good to think about this subject and teach it to our children. We are living in a wicked

world, and the world is waxing worse and worse.

Mark recalled the time when our Lord Jesus Christ was delivered to be crucified, and Matthew also mentioned it. Mark 15:6-7 reads: "Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection." Pilate let the people decide between releasing Barabbas or Jesus. Barabbas

was in a revolt against Rome, and he had committed murder.

Verses 8-11 continue: "And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them."

Matthew recalled the same thing. I want to call your attention to

the lewd fellows in Matthew 27:19-26: "When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

"And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

Barabbas was a fanatical man. He belonged to the Jewish sect called the Zealots. They resisted the Roman rule in Palestine during that time. Barabbas was a man who was charged with murder, and they released him instead of Jesus. Barabbas was a violent man who caused trouble in the country. Jesus had done nothing but good. He went through the world healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, feeding the hungry, and raising the dead.

Take Heed to Yourself and to the Doctrine

Many people in the world today are of the same character that these lewd fellows were. God does not want anyone to be as they were. First Timothy 4:11-16 reads: "These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou

an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Paul told Timothy to be an example of the believers in word and in conversation. The word *conversation* can be interpreted "in your lifestyle, the thoughts in your mind, the way you talk, or the way you carry yourself." He admonished Timothy to be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Also, he said to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. We need to instill these truths and godly principles in young men and young women to keep the truth marching on.

Young person, you need to do these things, and by doing so, you can encourage yourself in the Lord. You must give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. If you will do these things, you will be the best that God would have you to be. A teenager is a person between the years of thirteen to nineteen, but an adult is a person who has reached the age of maturity, as defined by law, which is usually the age of eighteen, or for some things, the age of twenty-one.

Once you are considered to be an adult, you must accept full responsibility for your actions. You cannot run to your parents to get you out of trouble. You cannot blame your wrongdoing on the way you were raised, you cannot blame your mother or your father, and you cannot blame the preacher. An adult is one who has reached the legal age, and he or she should make mature decisions. Eventually

a child's judgment should mature with age.

As a young person, you should want to be like Timothy. Paul told Timothy to be an example of the believers. You should not be lazy or be as a lewd fellow, just hanging around. The word *lazy* means "to be resistant to work or exertion, conducive to idleness." Laziness and craftiness often work together. Some people roam around from church to church to try to get a free handout and to try to take advantage of somebody.

As we study the Bible, we can see that Adam and Eve were created in an adult stage. They made a very bad decision when they disobeyed God. They listened to Satan, and they were put out of the Garden of Eden. It was a sad thing to be put out of the Garden of Eden, which was a place of rest, a place of peace, and a place where they enjoyed fellowship with God. You need to take these things seriously and truly love God with all your heart and not just say that you love Him. You should appreciate God. If you are not careful, you, too, could leave the ark of safety and lose your soul.

Acting Responsibly

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." The time comes in life when you have to take responsibility for your actions and be a man or a woman. It is true that a person's judgment matures with age and experience. Sometimes a person reaches the age of maturity, but he does not act mature. He has come to an age of being legally responsible, but he does not act responsibly. We are living in a time when responsibilities can crush you, but by the grace of God, you do not have to be crushed. You can stay focused and stay close to God.

In the Old Testament you can read that Cain rose up and killed his

brother Abel. Genesis 4:8-12 states: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

What is a vagabond? A *vagabond* is a homeless person who moves from place to place aimlessly, just drifting; irregular in course or behavior, and very unpredictable. We have such people today. They try to trick you in many ways. They may go to church and pretend to be saved and look pious and sweet. Some people go to as many local churches around town as they can to ask for handouts.

I heard about one lady in a college town who would stop college students in the parking lots and ask for ten, fifteen, or twenty dollars from them. Finally, she was warned to stay away from there and told not to do that any more or she would be arrested. That is what we are facing today. Many people are vagabonds, moving around and drifting aimlessly. A bum is a lazy person who avoids work and tries to live off others by begging and relying on the generosity of others. God does not want anyone to be a bum.

I had quite an experience before I got married. I was dating the young lady who is now my wife, going to church, and doing the right thing. One day I decided to take off work. I told my wife, who was my girlfriend then, that I was not going to work that day. She asked me, "Did you call in?"

I said, "No, I didn't call in."

She said, "What? You didn't call

in?" She made such an impression on me that I have never done that again. She was looking out for her future. I was just a young man, and I had a lot to learn. Sister, if your boyfriend does not want to work now, do not fool yourself.

Consider the Ant

In the Book of Malachi you can read of the prophesy of John the Baptist's coming, how he was coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, and how he would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. One way to tell when a brother really gets saved is that he will want to obey God and see how his children are doing. He does not just serve God to get blessed.

There are men sitting in jail right now because they did not pay child support. A godly man will stand up and face his responsibilities and be a man. You must take care of your offspring and be a godly influence on them. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and his message was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and to get families straightened out.

Proverbs 6:6-9 reads: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?" How long are you going to stay in bed, brother, when you know you need to be looking for work?"

Verses 9-11 say: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." The ants are insects that live in organized communities. They are known as social insects. Ants are perhaps the most highly developed social insect. The ant has no ruler, or overseer, to drive it to

do what it does. It just goes out and does what it is supposed to do. That is what God is trying to get each of us to do.

There are about ten thousand different kinds of ants. In spite of their small size, ants are amazingly strong. Most ants can lift objects ten times heavier than their bodies, and some can lift objects up to fifty times heavier than their bodies. Have you ever seen an ant carrying a piece of bread? That ant will be struggling with a crumb of bread. Through the writer of Proverbs, God said to go to the ant and consider her ways and be wise.

Everything that God has created is doing what it is supposed to do, but man does not want to do what he is supposed to do. God created us to serve Him. We are supposed to serve God; that is the reason we were created. I thank God that when we serve Him, He does not overlook anything that we do.

Hebrews 6:10 states, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." God will not forget your labor of love. Thank God for that.

Be an Example of the Believers

To be an example of the believers, you should not have pride in the evil sense of the word, having an overly high opinion of yourself, being haughty, and looking down on other people. God does not want you to be that way. That is arrogance. That kind of pride says, "I am so much more important than others." God does not want you to be boastful.

Now, there is nothing wrong with having the proper respect for yourself, having a sense of dignity and believing that you are worth something in the eyes of God. You should have self-respect. When you go out and do a job, you should do a good job and delight in the satisfaction of your achievements. You should always do your very best.

God has saved many people who were once lewd fellows. Many individuals can look back upon their lives and see where God has brought them from. They know what it means to be lewd fellows, but thank God, He changed their lives.

We are living in a time when high morals and respect are fading away. Many people do not respect their pastor, the government, the laws of the land, the authority of the law, or the law enforcement officers. As morals and respect are fading, the world is becoming more and more wicked. Today many people do not care how they look or how clean they are. They do not care how well they work or where they go. They just bum around. Many people are very irresponsible today. God wants us to be an example of the believers.

I grew up with lewd fellows. After I was saved, I was highly honored when the dean of the school honored me on my graduation day. Before I was saved, I was expelled from the public schools; no public school would accept me. However, I was highly honored when I got back in school and the dean of the school said, "Calvin, I want you to lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag." That was downtown where all the people could see. I know what God can do! I learned how to be a godly husband and a godly father by sitting under the Word of God. What God has done for others, He will do for you. You just need to stay around the Word of God.

I have worked with men who took great pride in the fact that they had never missed a day of work in a year. Today so many people are irresponsible. You cannot depend on them. They want a job, but they miss work when they want to, they dress the way they want to, and they are very negligent.

Be the Best You Can Be for God

The moment you open your

mouth and say that you are a Christian, you have to live up to something. You ought to say: "I thank God that I am a Christian. I am not looking down on anybody, but I am thankful that I am saved. I am proud that I quit smoking, quit drinking, quit lying, and quit stealing. By the grace of God, I can gain back my self-respect." Now you can look in the mirror and say, "Thank You, Lord, that I don't look the way I used to look, that I don't dress the way I used to dress, and that I don't talk the way I used to talk. Praise God, I am saved!" You do not have to go around those lewd fellows anymore.

When I got saved, I would get my Bible and go back to the old neighborhood because I wanted my old friends to get saved so much. I wanted to tell them what Jesus did for me, and I wanted to get them to go to church. I did my best to talk to them and preach to them. One time I walked into an old friend's house and he had marijuana all over the table. My mother had all ready told me to leave them alone. She said, "You have all ready talked to them and prayed for them, so leave them alone." With the table full of marijuana, something happened at the door, and someone reached for a pistol. Right then, my mother's words came to my mind. I realized that, although I wanted to help them and try to get them out of that, and I did not want to be caught in the middle of a shootout over drugs.

Young person, you had better listen to your parents. You may think your parents are old-fashioned, but the same devil that was working then is still working today. He is out to kill, to steal, and to destroy. He does not care anything about your being a pretty young lady or a nice, handsome young man. The devil wants to mess you up.

You should not have a half-hearted attitude. You need to stay in school, get your education, work hard, and try to use your talents for the glory of God. You should not

put God out of your life. In whatever you do, you should aim high. If you are a janitor, you ought to be the best janitor that you can possibly be. If you are a painter, you should be the best painter that you can possibly be. If you are a carpenter, you ought to be the best carpenter that you can be. You should go to work with the attitude that you are going to do your job well.

If you are married, you should be the best wife or the best husband that you can possibly be. If you have children, you need to ask God to help you to be the best parent that you can be. As a Christian, you should strive to be the best Christian on the face of the earth. I am not responsible for how you treat me, but I am responsible for how I treat you.

Let people go out and say what they want to say, but if they tell lies about you, you know how you have been walking in the light. Now, if you have been cutting corners and lying, God knows it, and He will pull the covers off you. However, if you are really doing your best to live for God, let them find fault, but do not let it be true. People may run off and say this and that, but God is challenging you, whether young or old, to be an example to all people.

God's Challenge to You

Your life speaks volumes of words. When you work on the job, you can go to work with a Bible and a lot of tracts, but it is your life that speaks volumes to the people. They may never read the Bible, but they can see how you live your life.

Have you ever read the Book of Job? God did not ask Satan if he had considered His written Word. He asked if Satan had considered His servant Job. People may never read the Bible, but they are watching your life if you claim to be a Christian. One man at work was always talking about God, but one day I heard that he cursed the manager. That would not be right for a Christian to do. One moment he was talk-

ing about God, and the next minute he was cursing the manager.

God is challenging you to live a life that is an example of the believers. When the Word of God comes close to your soul, you ought to have the attitude of heart that you are going to improve yourself. You should not become angry at the preacher. You need to improve yourself, get closer to God, and seek to be more like Christ.

First Corinthians 6:9-11 states: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such

were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Lewd fellows want to live off you. They want to start taking control of your house. Some individuals do not mind living with others, but they can hardly get them to empty the garbage. They will stay with you, eat your food, and enjoy the warmth of your house, but they do not want to lift a finger to help with anything. Do you see what kind of world we are living in? Do you see what is happening? They are living on the generosity of others, but they will not listen to the Gospel. When God gets hold of a man or a woman, that person willingly does what is right. He or she does not mind working. Again,

verse 11 says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Christ did not come to call the righteous to repentance, but He came to call sinners, lewd fellows. He came to save them. I was one of them, and He saved me. I thank God for that! In Matthew 9:12-13 Jesus said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." You need to confess your sins and turn away from them, because sin will destroy you.

(Compact Disc TR-467E)

Should I Force My Children to Go to Sunday School?

You may ask, "Should I make my child go to Sunday school or church?" Yes! And with no further discussion about the matter. Are you startled? Why?

How do you answer Junior when he comes to breakfast on Monday and announces to you that he is not going to school anymore? You know Junior goes.

How do you answer when Junior comes in very much besmudged and says, "I'm not going to take a bath." Junior bathes, doesn't he?

Why all this timidity then, in the realm of his spiritual guidance and growth? Are you going to let him wait and decide what church he will go to when he is old enough? Quit your kidding! You did not wait until you were old enough! You do not wait until he is old enough to decide whether he wants to go to school to start his education. You do not wait until he is old enough to decide whether he wishes to be clean or dirty, do you?

What shall we say when Junior announces that he does not like to go to Sunday school and church? That is an easy one to answer. Just be consistent. You ought to tell him, "Junior, in our house we all go to Sunday school and church, and that includes you." Your firmness and example will furnish a bridge over which youthful rebellion may travel into rich and satisfying experiences in personal religious living.

The parents of America can strike a telling blow against the forces that contribute to juvenile delinquency if mothers and fathers will take their children to Sunday school and church regularly.

J. Edgar Hoover

My Personal Testimony



*"Let the redeemed of the
LORD say so."*

Psalm 107:2

No matter how hard I try to describe an enthusiastic, exciting personal testimony, I cannot avoid the fact that a life of sin, although pleasurable for a season, causes one to reap long-lasting consequences.

I had a good Christian mother to guide me, but she had to leave me to many of my own devices to enter the workplace after my father left. We lived in the country, and my mother and I walked about two miles to a small church three times a week. Occasionally, her cousin would give us a ride. Sometimes a traveling preacher would come through and hold two-week revival services, but generally the women directed the affairs of the congregation.

God began speaking to my heart as a young boy. I felt the pull of the Holy Spirit and went to the altar to ask God to forgive me for stealing some watermelons. He touched my heart, and I knew that I needed to make restitution. I was able to pay the farmer, and he granted forgiveness to me. I went away with a heavy burden lifted. I will never forget how good I felt, but I needed a godly man to look up to, to answer my questions, and to be an example to me.

All around, even in our little congregation, I observed dishonesty, cheating, and lying. Soon I began to hold contempt inside, which started me down the road to rebellion. Before I was eighteen years of age, I was consuming alcohol, using tobacco, cheating, and lying. I was openly committing these sins. Being ashamed of those who were avoiding military service, I boldly joined the Marine Corps, and as Brother Decker has often described, I "hit the deck running" when I arrived in San Diego, California.

Since I was a small guy, I had to learn how not to get clobbered, and I lived a very wild life. I married at a young age, but that marriage failed because of sin. After struggling for many years, I began to desire to find the Lord, who had beckoned to me years earlier. I obtained a camper and fled to the mountains of Arizona, trying to get away from the alcohol and the medical drugs that controlled me. During this time, I

endured the long hours of withdrawal as tremors wracked my body.

Whenever I experienced a moment of peace, I sat outside in the evenings and watched the magnificent sunsets. Although I did not have a personal relationship with God, I knew that only He could have made something so beautiful. I desired that unblemished quality in my life. I was forty years of age by then. I did not know much except that the way I was living would cause me to go to hell, so I asked God to keep me from going there. I know God saw the desire of my heart, and He protected me from numerous events when I almost lost my life.

God started me back on a long journey to where I turned myself in to the law and served time for things that I had done in anger. I was allowed work release, but I returned to jail to spend my nights there. Upon my release, I married and attended church with my wife and many of the people from my childhood.

The same background opinions and personal interpretations permeated the services, which became sessions of bickering and arguing, from the pew to the pulpit. I was ready to turn my back on anything spiritual, but I believe that God saw my need for salvation and sent an army of brethren from the Church of God, men who lived what they preached.

To this very day, I thank God for each one of them who took an interest in me and my need of salvation. I became very close to some of these dear saints and started making changes in my life. I had an awfully lot of crooked tracks to straighten out, and it took some time to take care of those things that I could correct.

One restitution that encouraged me to press on involved a county sheriff who owned a store where I had transacted business. I had hated that man and had stolen from his store. I assumed that he had retired or was no longer alive. However, I decided to make an attempt, and then I would be relieved of restoration. When I knocked on the door of his house, an elderly woman answered and said that he was out back at the picnic table. He was a big man, and I was concerned about how he would react to my confession and what would result from it. When I approached him, he looked up. So I told him what I had done and held out some money. He stood up, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, he replied, "Nobody has ever come to me for something like that." When he reached for the money, he put his arm around me and said, "Son, if you ever need anything, would you please come to me?" When he called me "son," I crumbled and thanked him. I loved being called "son" by that big man! Since my salvation, I now have a Heavenly Father, and I am called His son.

When Brother Ira Amburgey, one of the Church of God ministers who worked with me spiritually, went to Kentucky to pastor, we knew we needed to be

where the Truth of God's Word was preached. We put our house up for sale, and it sold quickly. Then, with God's direction we found the perfect place to live, which was close to the Church of God, God's Acres, in Newark, Ohio, where I could reestablish my business and be a part of the wonderful Church of God. Here we have a pastor who is standing on the wall and watching over us. Here I can live a happy life and be a good example to my children and grandchildren.

You may not have many years to waste in sin. So when the devil tries to entice you to stray from God, you ought to run for your life. I love the Lord, and living for Him is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

Brother Ralph Town

The Shady Dozen

"I heard . . . "
"They say . . . "
"Everybody says . . . "
"Have you heard . . . "
"Did you hear . . . "
"Isn't it awful . . . "
"People say . . . "
"Did you ever . . . "
"Somebody said . . . "
"Would you think . . . "
"Don't say I told you . . . "
"Oh, I think it is perfectly terrible . . . "

Meeting Announcements

Canby, OR

August 16-22

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Avenue, Canby, OR 97013
Service times: 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. The first service begins Monday morning at 10:30 a.m. We welcome everyone to come and worship the Lord with us!
To make lodging reservations contact Brother David Stegmeier by calling the telephone number listed below. Please make reservations in advance, if possible.
For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 522 NW 2nd Avenue, Canby, OR 97013. Telephone: 503-266-9297

Medina, OH

September 5

LABOR DAY MEETING: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
A meal will be served by the local congregation.
For further information contact: Pastor Daniel Webster, 92 W. Main St., Seville, OH 44273
Telephone: (Home) 330-435-6490 or (Church) 330-725-5993

Newton, KS

September 13-19

REVIVAL: Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother Irwin Seshier, Heath, Ohio
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil, 415 SE 6th St., Newton KS 67114
Telephone: (Home) 316-842-5127; (Church) 316-283-1830

2010 Camp Meetings at God's Acres

August 1-8

(See page 27 for information concerning the above meeting)

December 26-29

Spring 2010 Camp Meeting Recording List

Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-625	6-20-10	Instilling an Appreciation of Our Heritage in the Hearts and Minds of Our Children	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-626		How Is Your Relationship With God?	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-627	6-21-10	The Blueprint for the Destruction of a Congregation: Schism	Bro. Daniel Webster
TR-628		Christian Ethics, Part 1: Our Standard	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-629		The Condition of the Heart	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-630	6-22-10	The Miracle of Salvation	Bro. Leamon Whitehead
TR-631		Christian Ethics, Part 2: The Golden Rule	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-632		This Is the Day of Good News	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-633	6-23-10	The Movies	Bro. Allen Polston
TR-634		Christian Ethics, Part 3: Your Innate Desire	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-635		The Family of God	Bro. David Watson
TR-636	6-24-10	Discernment	Bro. Earl R. Borders
TR-637		Christian Ethics, Part 4: Character and Accountability	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-638		The Rescue Business	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-639	6-25-10	Take Heed, Lest You Fall	Bro. Paul Prinkey
TR-640		Christian Ethics, Part 5: Compromising Ethical Principles	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-641		What Will the Verdict Be?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-642	6-26-10	Shackled and Unshackled	Bro. Charles Ferguson
TR-643		Christian Ethics, Part 6: Maintaining Moral Excellence	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-644		How Can You Get From the Broadway to the Highway Of Holiness	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-645	6-27-10	The Joy and Grief of a Pastor	Bro. Richard Talbot
TR-646		Christian Ethics, Part 7: Stay Focused	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-647		The Difference Between "Can't" and "Don't Want To"	Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-224	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-225	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-226	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #3	
TM-227	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #4	
TM-228	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #5	
TM-229	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #6	
TM-230	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #7	
	2010	Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 1 (1 CD) & Choir Songs # 2 (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Morning Spring Camp Meeting Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Evening Spring Camp Meeting Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Afternoon Teaching Messages & Youth Services in MP3 Format (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Songs for the Spring Camp Meeting in MP3 Format (1 CD)	

All messages and music recordings are available only on regular CD's or MP3 format. The suggested donation for regular CD's is \$3.00 each. The suggested donation for MP3's is \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0 .35 for each additional. Recordings may be ordered by writing The Gospel Trumpeter, Tape Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling (740) 366-1009, Brother James York. If no answer, call (740) 345-1312, the Print Shop. Make check or money order in U.S. funds payable to The Gospel Trumpeter.



A Cordial Invitation...

to attend the
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August 1-8

Three Services Daily

10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

The first service begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday.

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