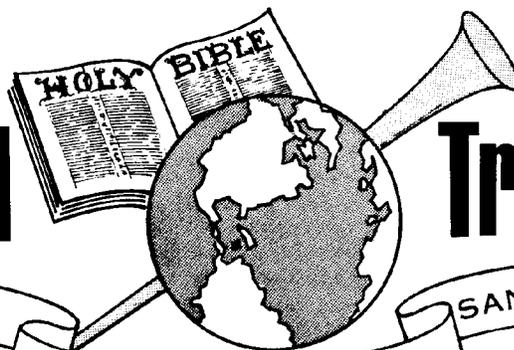


# The Gospel



# 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. 32:39

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

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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 49 February 2020 No. 2



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

**THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER**  
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)

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

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Vol. 50 February 2020 No. 2

# Winter 2019 Camp Meeting Report

*"And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."*

Luke 24:15

*"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"*

Luke 24:32

## WARMTH OF HIS PRESENCE

In these verses of Scripture, two disciples were walking together to Emmaus, communing about the things of Christ. Jesus drew near to them to hear their conversation. As they walked and talked together, He saw that their hearts were heavy, He inquired about why they were so sad. They did not recognize Jesus, so they replied that He was a stranger there and asked Him if He knew what had taken place. Jesus asked what they were speaking of.

The disciples related how the Lord had been unmercifully crucified and let Him know that their hearts were greatly distressed over the situation. Jesus voiced His disapproval over their lack of faith; then He began to comfort, strengthen, and relieve their troubled spirits.

Upon arriving at Emmaus, the disciples asked the Lord to tarry and eat a meal with them. As Jesus broke bread with them, He opened their eyes to reveal Himself to them. After He departed, they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" It is just like Jesus to renew hope and faith.

This is what took place during this wonderful camp meeting. The Lord's precious presence warmed and cheered our hearts once again. We have often stated that we live in days of trouble and uncertainty, However, when Jesus appears and speaks to us, we are lifted; our spirits are strengthened, comforted, and encouraged. Our hearts were set aglow by the words the Lord spoke through the men of God, just as those two disciples who were troubled when they walked along the road to Emmaus.

Thursday evening, on December 26, the saints gathered in for the final camp meeting of the year. We were able to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This wonderful atmosphere caused our spirits to rejoice at the sound of God's Eternal Word. Although the meeting was short, the Lord blessed and warmed our hearts over and over as His presence moved about. Great things things were accomplished: souls were saved and others received help.

The preaching was on target  
*[continued on page 7]*

*Genesis 37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*

*2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*

*3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*

*4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*

*5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

*6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:*

*7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*

*8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*

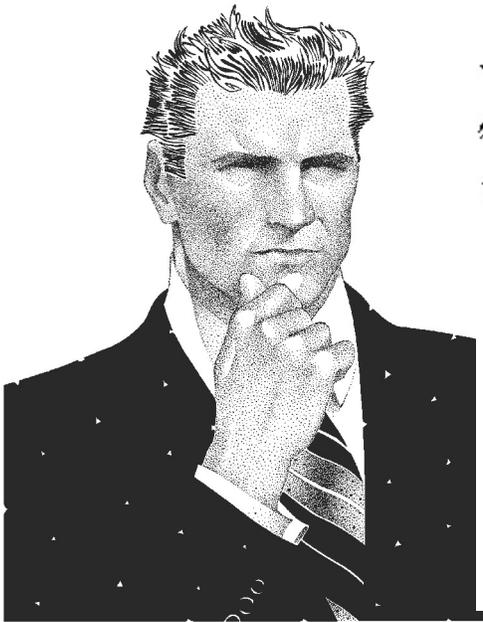
*9 And he dreamed yet another*

*dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.*

*10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?*

*11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.*

*James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*



# HOW DO YOU ACT IN A TRIAL?

*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **Joseph, the Favorite Son**

The story of Joseph begins in Genesis, Chapter 37. Joseph is a type of Jesus Christ. From Chapter 37 forward, Joseph is mentioned in every chapter of this Book but the subsequent one, and he is the leading figure in almost every one of those chapters. In the beginning of this chapter, we have what turned out to be a very hectic journey

for this young man. Joseph and Benjamin were the only two biological children of Rachel. As Rachel was giving birth to Benjamin, she passed away. As we break into our Scripture text, we find that Joseph was approximately seventeen years old, and his brother Benjamin was about four years of age.

Verse 3 of our Scripture reading tells us that Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children

because he was the son of his old age, so he made him a coat of many colors. This infuriated his brothers, and when they saw this display of love from their father, the Scripture says they hated Joseph and did not speak peaceably to him. In other words, they did not have anything good to say about Joseph or to him. His brethren had much malice in their hearts against him, and this malice kept building up and

turned into extreme hatred.

Joseph's brothers envied him, and another reason they had malice and hatred toward him was that he was a tattler. He informed his father of their wickedness. Our Scripture lesson reads in the latter part of verse 2, "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Joseph told his father everything his brothers did that was bad. This was the start of their malice, and also they hated him because their father loved him more.

What else caused Joseph's brothers to have malice in their hearts toward him? Joseph's dreams of having dominion over them caused them to hate him even more. He had two dreams. The first dream was about Joseph and his brothers, and the second dream took in Joseph, his father and mother, and his eleven brothers.

The rest of the chapter deals with the design Joseph's brothers had to get rid of him. The brothers got into a private conversation among themselves about how they were going to put an end to this dreamer. The brothers planned to throw Joseph into a pit. The only reason they threw him into a pit and did not kill him was that Reuben, the oldest brother, stepped in and stopped them from killing him. Instead, they ended up selling Joseph as a slave, but they made their father believe that he was torn to pieces by a wild beast. Eventually he was sold as a slave in Egypt. He became a servant to Potiphar, yet all the while Joseph was going through these things and suffering, God was with him.

In Genesis, Chapter 38, Joseph is not mentioned, but it talks about Judah. Then, in Genesis 39:1 we read, "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the

hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither."

Joseph was once again favored by God and became a ruler in Potiphar's household. He was elevated to a high position in Potiphar's household because Potiphar could see how everything Joseph did prospered. Joseph became the overseer of Potiphar's household and over all that Potiphar had.

### Wrongfully Imprisoned

During Joseph's stay in Potiphar's house, he was faced with temptations, which he stood against. Next, he became falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. Genesis 39:11-13 states: "And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business [he did not sneak in there so he could have a little rendezvous with Potiphar's wife; he was there to do business]; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

"And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand. . . ." What happened? Potiphar's wife had to come up with a reason for having Joseph's garment and a reason for why he took off. He was not in the house to have anything to do with her; he withstood her. He withstood all temptations. Potiphar had placed Joseph in charge of everything except his wife. In the latter part of Genesis 39:9 Joseph said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and in anger Potiphar threw Joseph into prison. Never once do we read that Joseph cried of being mistreated or that he wanted to retaliate. He was abused by his brothers, sold into slavery, false-

ly accused, and thrown into prison, but we do not read that he rose up and said they would get theirs.

First Peter 4:14-16 reads: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

What was Peter talking about? If you suffer as a Christian, God will be glorified, and you will receive grace and strength to withstand. If you suffer for your own faults, there is no glory or praise in that. You will have to suffer for it unless God has mercy.

Joseph was favored in prison. Although he was imprisoned wrongfully, his attitude and his actions were those of a true child of God. Even the one who was in charge in the prison could see that God was with Joseph. I am sure he did not go to the keeper of the prison and tell him how wrongfully he was treated. He went to that prison to serve his sentence and to do that which was right. He still served God.

Joseph did not have a get even spirit. He did not whine and complain to everyone. He did not try to get anyone to lend an ear to him, but he suffered wrongfully, just as the Scripture says. He did not quit serving God or get bitter even though bad things happened to him. He stayed true to God in the midst of adversity.

First Peter 2:21 and 23 tells us: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his

steps. . . . Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

### **Serving God Through Adversity**

Joseph, by his actions through the tests that he went through, was a perfect type of Jesus Christ. Tests, trials, and temptations are revealers of the true condition of the heart. If something wrong is laying dormant in the heart, a test will bring it out. Only what was in Joseph's heart came to the surface. What was in his heart? He loved God more than anything else, and he was willing to suffer. Joseph kept doing right and living as he had always lived.

Today too many people have wrong attitudes. Yes, they might have been hurt. I do not know of too many Christians who have not gone through that, but what they do about that hurt is the revealer of what is in the heart. When you get hurt, do you get angry and quit or tell other people about it? Do you whine around? Do you quit serving God? Eventually, every one who is a Christian suffers wrongfully, but what do you do about it?

Joseph committed himself to the Lord. While he was in prison, he was elevated and put over the rest of the prisoners. The prison keeper put him in charge of handling the prisoners because he knew God was with Joseph. We read in Genesis 39:22-23: "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him and that which he did, the LORD made it

to prosper."

I want you to notice how God is with His people. Joseph went through one trial after another, suffering wrongfully, yet he still served God. While he was in prison, some things began to happen. Genesis 40:1-6 reads: "And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

"And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad." Why were the chief butler and the chief baker sad? They each dreamed a dream, and neither of them knew what his dream meant. Each one told his dream to Joseph. Joseph told the chief butler that he would be restored to duty. When the chief baker saw that the chief butler was given good news, he asked Joseph to interpret his dream also, but his dream was not good. His dream revealed that he was going to be hanged.

Joseph asked the chief butler to tell the king about his situation when he was restored to duty, but when he returned to duty, he forgot about Joseph. Verse 23 says, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Although that way of communication was out, God

has so many ways that He can use to bring His will to pass.

### **The Providence of God**

Two years passed, but the chief butler had not said a word to the king about Joseph; therefore, he was still in prison. Next, Pharaoh dreamed two dreams, and they were similar, so Pharaoh's spirit was troubled. The providence of God began to work in two ways. God moved to advance Joseph and to preserve Joseph's family in the time of the upcoming famine.

Naturally, as most pagan kings did when they needed guidance, the king sent for the best he had. He sent for the magicians and wise men. Pharaoh told them about his dreams, but none of those men could interpret the dreams. No doubt, he became a little agitated that none of those intelligent people could tell him what his dreams meant. All of a sudden, the chief butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh about when he and the chief baker were in prison. He told the king that they both dreamed dreams and were troubled, but a man there interpreted their dreams. You can see in these Scriptures how the providence of God worked.

Genesis 41:12-13 states: "And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

According to their dreams, Joseph interpreted; therefore, Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him the dreams. God gave Joseph the interpretation of the dreams, and he told of what the dreams meant and how they were connected. Pharaoh's

dreams told Pharaoh of seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine that were to come upon Egypt.

Joseph suggested that Pharaoh appoint a wise man to oversee the land and to appoint officers to gather the harvest during the seven good years, to build warehouses, and to store all the grain they could in preparation for the seven lean years. This saying really pleased Pharaoh.

What did Pharaoh do? He did not know anyone wiser than Joseph, so he put Joseph in charge of the project and made him second in command to himself. Joseph was over everything except that which pertained to the throne itself. People bowed down to him as his chariot went through the streets, just as they bowed before the king. He had power over all of Egypt.

The providence of God worked in Joseph's behalf. In this story you can see how God takes people and circumstances and molds them and bends them around His will. If Joseph had reacted differently and displeased God, this story would not have turned out the way it did. Joseph stayed humble and submissive, and he suffered wrong patiently and stayed close to God so that God could talk to him and give him the gift of interpretation.

### "Divers Temptations"

We read in James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James set before us what happens when a Christian falls into divers temptations. The word *temptation* here actually means "divers tests." James never suggested

that Christianity was going to be an easy way. He warned people that they would find themselves involved in divers temptations.

The Greek word translated as temptation is *peirasmos* in this verse. It is not speaking of temptation in the sense of being tempted to do wrong, but rather it means falling into a test. The word *peirasmos* means "a trial or a test directed toward an end," and the end is that he who is tested should emerge stronger and purer from the test. The idea is not that of seducing one to sin, but rather of strengthening and purifying him. One has said this: "The Christian must expect to be jostled by trials on the Christian way."

All kinds of experiences are going to come to you and me. This is a common salvation. Although you may feel that your test or your trial is different from anyone else's, that is not so. God takes you into trials, temptations, and tests. Why? He does it so that you can be perfected and purified and so that you can grow spiritually.

Tests of seductions will seek to lure you from the right way. There will be dangers, sacrifices, and unpopularity in the Christian way. These are not meant to make you fall, but rather they are meant to make you soar. They are not meant to defeat you or to make you weaker, but they are meant to make you stronger.

What will the temptations and the tests accomplish for the Christian? Do you remember what James said? He said to count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Such temptations are not trials or tests that you ask for because you feel that you are getting a little lean in your soul. You do not say, "Lord, send me a test." These divers temptations that James was speaking of have great rewards. They make you perfect, complete, and deficient in nothing.

Again, James 1:4 says, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Sometimes when one falls into a test or a trial, he turns away from God, gets a wrong attitude, becomes bitter, and then he becomes a complainer. Next, he starts to back away from his duties in a congregation. Eventually, that one goes out the door. The test is a revealer of the condition of the heart, and the heart is getting lean.

I want you to read James 1:4 from the Amplified Bible. It does not change the meaning, but it amplifies the verse. It states, "But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing." This is exactly what Joseph did. He let the trials and the temptations that came upon him do a perfect work. He was advanced, and God used him to preserve his own family from the famine.

God knows you would not ask Him to give you a test, but when a test does come (and they will come), do not shrink back in your experience. You should not withdraw from God and the fellowship of His people, but let it do its perfect work. Let the trial or the test advance you in the Kingdom of God. Let it strengthen, purify, and perfect you so that you are deficient in nothing.

### Staying True to God

Joseph did not get a wrong attitude or seek retaliation, although it was in his ability to do so. When he became second in command to Pharaoh, he could have shown wrath to his brothers. He could have said: "I remember you rascals! Now it is payday. I am in charge now." No, he did not do that. He committed

the situation to God, and God used him mightily.

When you go through a test or a trial, whatever it may be, you can come out better on the other side if you will stay true to God. You can be purified, grow in your experience, and be perfected. God takes you through trials so that you know how to handle situations and so that you can help others who have to go through similar trials.

We do not live in a perfect world, nor do we live separate from adversity. We live in an imperfect world, and it is full of adversities, temptations, and trials of all kinds. Do not let the adversities cause you to get a wrong attitude or to seek retaliation.

I can remember when I went through a severe test one time. I did not tell anyone except my wife, but I stayed true to God. Now, I did not enjoy what I went through, and you are not going to enjoy the tests that you go through when you suffer wrongfully. Nevertheless, I stayed true to God, and God brought me through it. I came through it a

better Christian than I was when I went into it. That is what God wants to do for each of us. God used Joseph in many different ways. At Potiphar's house, God used him, and in prison He used him in a different way. Finally, Joseph was second in command over all the land of Egypt.

As I mentioned earlier, too many people carry wrong attitudes. Oh, they say they do not, but the problem keeps surfacing. They may feel that they were mistreated, but I doubt that you were treated as badly as some of the prophets and Jesus. Isaiah was sawed right through the middle. He suffered wrongfully, but what did he do? He committed everything to God.

If you have been in a trial or tested severely, what has the trial or the test done for you? Has it made you a better Christian? Has it made you stronger or have you become weaker? Have you been perfected or have you been weakened because you have not committed it to God. Have you lost your grip on the things that you know are right?

What a lesson the account of

Joseph brings before us. Joseph was an Old Testament brother who was inspired and led by the Holy Ghost. How faithfully that brother stood in the time of adversity! Daniel purposed in his heart, and Joseph purposed in his heart. Look at the outcome of their lives.

If you are going through a severe trial or a severe test, how are you handling it? If it is not going well, maybe it is due to your own fault. Have you truly committed it to God as you ought? You need to understand that He is for you, not against you. God knows exactly what you need. If He sees a leanness coming to your soul, He may allow a test or a trial to come your way. Hopefully you will handle it the right way. Joseph did. James said to count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, or different tests. Why? When you are suffering as a Christian, the glory is going to go to God, and you will receive help.

*(Compact Disc TR-1667)*

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*[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2]* as God's servants faithfully sounded forth the Gospel. Brother Calvin Foster was the evening evangelist for the camp meeting. Brother Foster expounded the Truths of the Gospel in a simplistic manner so that all could understand. Brother David DeVoll, Brother Allen Borders, and Brother Richard Talbot also challenged our hearts with stirring messages.

Through the preaching of God's Word, men and women were delivered from sin and error. We witnessed new converts being born into the Kingdom of God. We received greater understanding as the messages were presented to us. Brother David Stegmier taught a series of teaching lessons each afternoon that stirred our hearts. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, those

recordings are unavailable.

If you would like to order CDs, MP3s, or DVDs, please write to *CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055* or you may call the print shop at 740-345-1312 to place your order. A list of the available messages and song recordings can be found on page 17 of this issue.

**Dost thou love life?  
Then don't squander time; that's the stuff life is made of.**

*—Benjamin Franklin*

# Do You Have a Strong Spiritual Immune System?



*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **How Is Your Spiritual Health?**

In 3 John, verse 2, John expressed his concern for Gaius' physical well-being. Implied is the excellent status of Gaius' spiritual well-being. Spiritual vitality and strength are attained only through effort. I appreciate the song entitled "Be Strong and True." The first verse reads: "*Be strong and valiant for the truth, Resist the tempter's luring power; Shun all the avenues of sin, And trust in God each day and hour.*"

The only way you can be

strong and valiant for the Truth, resist the tempter's luring power, shun all the avenues of sin, and trust in God each day and hour is to have a strong, spiritual immune system. Just as physical health requires a proactive approach to wellness, so it is with spiritual health. What is needed to maintain a good level of spiritual health? Friend, no matter where you go, where you eat, or where you walk or run, viruses will find you. They search for the vulnerable, and so it is spiritually.

The devil seeks the vulnerable, those who do not have a strong, spiritual immune system. He is after each one of us, but he is especially after those who have a weakened spiritual immune system. Viruses probe for the weak and hunt for a suitable host wherein they can thrive and multiply. You cannot hide from them. Some people are infected and do not even know it. Others think it can never happen to them, but it can happen to anyone.

There are many physical vi-

ruses. One that we all are familiar with is HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), which has plagued mankind at every turn. Spiritual viruses seek to plague the minds of Christian people. What are these spiritual viruses? How do they spread among God's people? Why are these spiritual viruses so deadly? How do they infect you? How can you become immune to these spiritual viruses?

Friend, you cannot allow these questions to go unanswered. The body's immune system responds by producing chemicals that cause the body temperatures to increase, so you get a fever. Some symptoms may include congestion, coughing, sore throat, and other symptoms. The immune system's job is to eliminate the virus from the body. Just as there are many physical viruses, Christians are at risk from a variety of spiritual viruses, such as wrong attitudes, wrong conduct, wrong use of speech, unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, and wrong teachings or hearsay. These viruses have destroyed many saints of God in the past. If you are not careful, they will destroy you.

The Bible speaks of Satan as the god of this world in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Satan will try to use these viral strains to poison your thinking and to destroy your life. The devil constantly searches for ways to trip you up and to veer you off the path that leads to God's Heaven. The devil wants you to veer off the strait and narrow way.

### **Guarding Against Spiritual Viruses**

Throughout church history, many tens of thousands have failed to actively guard their minds from the poisonous venom of spiritual viruses. The prince of the power of the air broadcasts bitterness, envy, jeal-

ousy, and self-righteousness to get people off track and to cut them off from God. Satan hunts for whoever is most vulnerable. If your spiritual immune system is not what it ought to be, you are vulnerable.

Satan's goal is to infect your mind with wrong attitudes, wrong thoughts, wrong desires, and wrong feelings. If he succeeds, his many spiritual viruses will incubate within your mind and begin to grow. Unless these are repented of, they will lead to even more carnal attitudes. Sooner or later, the infected host will pass on his sickness to whomever he comes in contact with. The virus will then spread from one Christian to the next, infecting the body of Christ and weakening the church.

Did you know that unforgiveness and bitterness can spread among the people of God? The Bible teaches that. In Hebrews 12:15 we read, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." One can become bitter, and because of that person's bitterness, many others will end up being defiled. In fact, entire congregations have become bitter. In some fellowships, almost entire fellowships have become bitter, hateful, and harsh.

Dear one, you have to be careful to guard against these spiritual viruses. These viral agents come in various disguises, such as gossiping, whispering, backbiting, rumors, and debates. They will eventually manifest themselves in words of action, course jesting, and foul language. Friend, it can lead to lies, false accusations, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, which the Bible says are the

works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21.

Some physical viruses manifest themselves right away, but others may not show symptoms for several years. Likewise, some are infected with spiritual viruses, but the symptoms are not clearly visible. They may not show up for a while; however, when they do, you need to watch out because the infected will go off like spiritual homicide bombers. Suddenly and without warning, they will maim and destroy those around them. Friend, a person's immune system is designed to eliminate viruses from the body.

### **Withstanding Threats**

The Apostle Peter warned that our adversary the devil is as a roaring lion, and he walks about seeking whom he may devour. Nature teaches us that when a lion hunts for prey, it always goes for the easiest prey. Do you know why? Though the lion is incredibly strong, powerful, and swift, it lacks an important attribute, which is endurance. It cannot muster enough sustained energy to chase after prey for a long distance. As a result, it hunts for prey that can be caught easily, and so does Satan.

Satan walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He hunts for easy targets. He hunts for the spiritually weak, for the weary, and for the babes in Christ. Although he wants each of us, he is especially looking for those who have a weak immune system, spiritually speaking.

I would like for you to look at the Great Physician's desk reference called the Bible for a prescription for spiritual health. Both physical health and spiritual health require a strong immune system to ward off disease. Without a healthy immune

system, relatively small threats can be deadly.

How strong is your ability to withstand threats such as strong temptations, false teachings, and persecution? Friend, it does not take very much to knock some people out of the race. This is an indication that something is wrong with their spiritual immune system. Temptations and spiritual hardships are inevitable because we cannot live in a bubble. Going out of the world to avoid all contact with temptation is an impossibility. In John 17:15 Jesus said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

God has a spiritual immune system whereby you can be kept in the world. You can rub shoulders with the world and not be affected in a negative way if your spiritual immune system is where it ought to be. You can go to college and not be affected by the ungodliness there. Instead you can be a light. You can go to a factory where there is much ungodliness all around you, and you can be a light. First Corinthians 5:9-10 reads: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."

With an immune system that God wants you to have, that wicked one cannot touch you. You are going to be tempted no matter how long you live for God and no matter how spiritual you are, but you do not have to be affected in a negative way. You do not have to yield to sin if you have a spiritual immune system that is built up.

First John 5:18 states, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth

him not." Friend, the only way that is possible is when your spiritual immune system is where it needs to be. Spiritually speaking, you need to build up your resistance. James 4:7 tells us, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

With a strong immune system you will be able to take heed lest you fall. First Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You will be able to live circumspectly with a strong immune system. Ephesians 5:15-17 reads: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

If you walk circumspectly and with the spiritual immune system that you need to have, you will be able to resist the devil and withstand the wiles of the devil. In Ephesians 6:10-11 Paul wrote: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord [have a strong, spiritual immune system], and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Friend, you do not have to sin every day. You can stand against the wiles of the devil.

### **Maintaining Good Works**

Also, contributing to a strong immune system is exercise. The physical body thrives only when a person is active. This is true spiritually as well as physically. It has always been a sad thing when people sit down, quit singing in the choir, and become inactive. It is not good for a Christian to become inactive. There is a danger of becoming spiritually sluggish if you become inactive. God wants you to stay busy for Him. There is a job for every

Christian, and God does not want you to be sluggish. God wants you to be about your Father's business.

Hebrews 6:11-12 states: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful [or sluggish], but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." As the people of God, we have been created unto good works. We read in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." There is a work to be done.

The Christian should not become inactive in the work of God. The devil wants you to become inactive. If you become inactive, the devil is going to attack your spiritual immune system. Titus 3:8 says, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." Verse 14 continues, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

We have been saved in order to serve. Jesus said in Matthew 20:27-28: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This lets us know that we have been saved to serve. Each of us has a work to do.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:16-18: "And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the

members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

God has a job for every Christian. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:20-21: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." You need to exercise yourself unto godliness. Do you want a strong immune system? If you do, you need to get out of the bed and exercise yourself. You need to get to work for God.

First Timothy 4:7-8 reads: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

You must work for God while you have the opportunity. Jesus said in John 9:4, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." You can work most effectively within the framework of a local congregation, fulfilling the needed roles of evangelism, edification, benevolence, personal work, soul winning, Bible classes, ministering to the sick, and teaching. There is much work that needs to be done.

### **Alternating Work and Rest**

While there is much work that needs to be done, also conducive to spiritual health is periodic rest. You need to rest once in a while. Energies and resources need replenishing. In the physical realm, you can work and work and begin to feel awful after a while, so you need to rest. When much productive work has

been done, you need rejuvenation to continue. Sometimes you have to stop and sharpen the saw. Ecclesiastes 10:10 says, "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct."

If you do not get some rest, you are going to be exhausted, and that is what causes people to suffer from spiritual burnout. Periodic rest is even found in the Lord's ministry. Mark 6:30-31 tells us: "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Jesus taught this. You need some rest once in a while.

Sometimes you need to have some downtime. There is value in rest and solitude so that you can meditate and reflect. We all function best by alternating work and rest, spiritually as well as physically. The Lord designed us to function best within the round of cycles and seasons that alternate between work and rest. The Lord Himself took time off to pray. Mark 1:35 reads, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Luke 5:16 says, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."

Spiritual rest does not mean that you do nothing. It means doing something different that will refresh you and restore your energy. It allows time for quiet prayer, Bible study, meditation, releasing anxiety, and enjoying the peace of Christ. Philippians 4:6-7 states: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made

known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

You need to feed your mind with things of virtue and of a good report, as the Bible tells us in Philippians 4:8-9: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Whatever the content of your usual activities, you simply cannot remain strong spiritually without significant periods of restful change. Pastors also need a break once in a while.

### **How Is Your Spiritual Diet?**

A healthy diet is needful for a strong immune system. Jesus taught in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Lord's words are the words of life. In John 6:63 Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Verse 68 tells us, "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

We read in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Verse 32 says, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." The Word of God's grace is able to build you

up spiritually and give you a strong immune system if you will take in the Word of God and apply it to your life. We grow by virtue of meat and the milk of God's Word. First Peter 2:2-3 reads: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

My friend, having a strong, spiritual immune system also consists of avoiding spiritual junk food. Some are feeding on so much junk that they are not craving the things of God. If you feed on the junk of this world, that is the reason you are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Literally speaking, you are not going to have a strong immune system if all you do is drink soda pop and eat potato chips, bologna, and sweets. Spiritually speaking, you cannot be strong if you eat too much junk food.

The Bible refers to sound doctrine. Do you know what sound doctrine is? The Apostle Paul wrote to Titus in Titus 2:1, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." It takes sound doctrine to give you a good, spiritual immune system. Compromising God's Word and watering down the Word of God always leads to doctrinal unsoundness, and it lays the fertile groundwork for sin. Wrong teachings give birth to wrong conduct, and wrong conduct is iniquity.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Satan hunts for the doctrinally confused. The multiple Internet message boards and chat rooms are a testimony of the doctrinal confusion that has poisoned the minds of many. Many people no longer believe or understand that the church is the spiritual mother that feeds and nurtures and protects God's

begotten children.

Too many have been fed indoctrinated poison by organizations and even some that call themselves the Church of God. Friend, never forget that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Likewise, leaven, or hearsay and wrong Biblical teachings, spread until they fill the host, just as cancer spreads until it kills its host. Likewise, Satan uses the virus of false doctrines to infect whomever he can, rendering those infected spiritually diseased. Unless they repent and return to the full Truth, those infected will meet a horrible fate. That is the reason the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:17, "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus."

The opposite of sound doctrine will tear down your immune system. What is the opposite of sound doctrine? It is anything that teaches contrary to the blessed Gospel. Some may appeal to those with itching ears. Paul stated in 2 Timothy 4:2-4: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

### **How to Build a Strong Spiritual Immune System**

Health giving nourishment involves both the stimulation of nutritious food and the avoidance of toxic substances. It is really not that difficult. If you want a strong, spiritual immune system, it takes a healthy diet, periodic rest, and regular exercise. That is what builds a strong immune system. Just as a virus

cannot thrive and multiply without a suitable host, spiritual viruses cannot thrive and spread if people are spiritually immunized and inoculated. How can you do that? You must study the Bible daily to receive God's approval, regularly looking at God's spiritual mirror and studying to seek His will. You have to allow the Word of God to correct and straighten your path. The Bible reflects the mind of God; therefore, you need to study it so that no one can deceive you with false doctrines.

What else do you need to do? My friend, you need to pour yourself out in fervent prayer daily. You must make it a point to talk to God about your attitude. If bitterness is knocking on the door of your heart, you must talk to God about it. If unforgiveness is working on you, you need to talk to God about it. You should ask Him for more wisdom and understanding and mercy. If you ask God to help you, He will. Also, God wants you to meditate on the things of God. You need to take every petty thought, feeling, and attitude and compare it to the glorious future that God has for you in His kingdom. Then, take all the wrong thoughts, wrong attitudes, and wrong feelings and bring them into the submission of Christ.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

You should resolve never to

trust your feelings or personal opinions. Never trust yourself, but rather trust God's Word and apply His Word to your heart and life. Diligently apply the tools of Christian growth, and you will powerfully boost your spiritual immune system. That will ward off and destroy the viruses of the devil. Though physical viruses can cripple and destroy physical lives, spiritual viruses are far more deadly. Those spiritual viruses can destroy a person's chance for eternal life in Heaven. Many do not take the danger of spiritual viruses seriously enough. They can destroy your chance for eternal life in Heaven. How is it in your heart and life?

I believe that people have at least two types of needs. First, their spiritual immune system needs to be built up. Are you unable to resist the devil? Do you find yourself, time after time, asking God to forgive you for the same thing? That means something is wrong with your spiritual immune system. You do not have the power that you need to fight off the devil and resist temptation. Do you keep giving in to temptation, and then hate yourself for it? Perhaps you vow, "I will never do this again." However, before you know it, you have fallen into the same trap. If you have been overcome by the disease of sin, you need to look to the Lord for healing and renewal.

Psalm 103, a psalm of David, says in verses 1-5: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the

eagle's."

The second need is, every sinner needs deliverance from a terminal blood disease, spiritually speaking. Did you know that, sinner friend? If you do not receive the only cure for that disease, that disease will kill you. Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sinner friend, you have a deadly disease that no doctor on earth can help you with. A psychiatrist cannot help you with this disease. Sin is a subtle, fatal disease. It kills those who have it. Some are dying with this disease and do not even realize it. The good news is that God has provided a cure for this disease. However, it will not help

you if you do not partake of it. I tried it, and it works a perfect cure. You can be delivered from sin. God has deliverance for you. He does not do a halfway job. He will work a complete work on you. In Luke 5:31 Jesus said, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick."

Spiritually speaking, if your immune system is not what it needs to be, you need to talk to the Great Physician. I recommend Jesus, because He has never lost a case. If you have the deadly disease of sin, you had better seek Jesus, because He is the only One who has deliverance for you.

*(Compact Disc TR-1223E)*

### ***Rules for Daily Living***

***BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD,***

*Kneel down to Him in prayer;  
Lift up thy heart to His abode  
And seek His love to share.*

***OPEN THE BOOK OF GOD***

*And read a portion there.  
That it may hallow all thy thoughts  
And sweeten all thy care.*

***GO THROUGH THE DAY WITH CARE***

*Whate'er thy work may be,  
Where'er thou art, at home, abroad,  
He is near to thee.*

***CONVERSE IN MIND WITH GOD,***

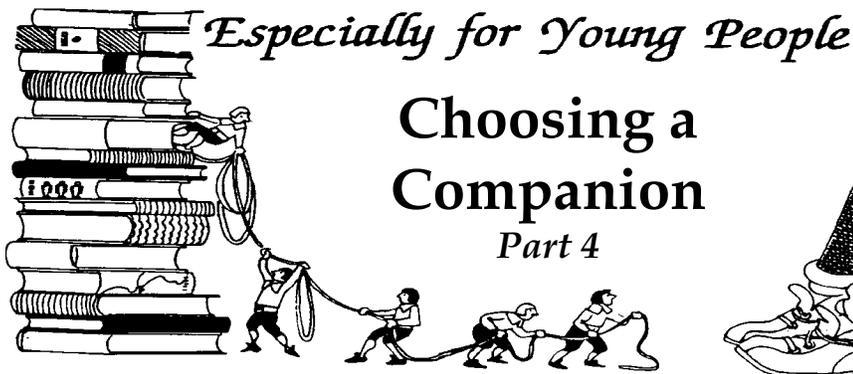
*Thy spirit in heavenward raise;  
Acknowledge every good bestowed,  
And offer grateful praise.*

***CONCLUDE THE DAY WITH GOD,***

*Thy sins to Him confess;  
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood,  
And plead His righteousness.*

***LIE DOWN AT NIGHT WITH GOD,***

*Who gives His servants sleep,  
And when thou tread'st the vale of death  
He will thee guard and keep.*



*Especially for Young People*

## Choosing a Companion

Part 4



Genesis 24:1-9 states: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?"

"And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."

In the previous issues, I

covered six points dealing with choosing a companion. The first point was looking in the right place to find the right companion. Second, you need to marry in the Lord. Third, you should not force the issue. Fourth, you need to talk to God about this; pray much. Fifth, you need to be an obedient servant to Christ. Sixth, you should meditate daily. Obtaining the right companion takes much time spent in prayer, personal devotion, meditation, and faithful attendance to the house of worship.

The seventh point regarding seeking a companion is, you must be diligent about serving God. Genesis 24:40 in our Scripture reading tells us that Abraham's message to his servant concerning God giving Isaac a wife was, "The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way." The *Amplified* version reads, "The Lord, in Whose presence I walk [habitually], will send His Angel with you and prosper your way."

Are you habitual about your service to God? Young person, habits are formed early in life. I want to encourage you to make serving God and getting to church a priority in your life. A necessary habit is being in every service that you can possibly attend. If you are diligent about serving God, He will hear and answer your prayers. James said in James 1:6, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of

the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

The eighth point revealed in our Scripture lesson is, you must ask God. You should not seek a companion out in the world or on dating sites. Do you think God has someone in mind for you? Young person, it starts with the simple belief that God has someone for you.

Genesis 24:2-3 tells us that Abraham (Isaac's father), who was a type of God the Father, was actively seeking a wife for Isaac. Isaac was forty years of age, and in essence, Abraham was saying, "Go into the country where my people dwell and get my son a wife." Abraham was actively seeking a companion for his son. He cared about his son, and he was concerned about him even though Isaac was forty years of age. What about Isaac's mother? She had died. Had Sarah been alive at this juncture, no doubt, she would have been involved in this as well. Genesis 24:44 states, "Let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son."

Why should you seek God about this business of companionship? You should do so for many reasons, but one big reason is that people can put on a show and make themselves look very pleasing and pretend to be something they are not. However, the Bible lets us know that God sees the heart. Only God knows if an individual is truly saved, and

only God has the ability to see that individual twenty years from now. No man can see that, but God can; therefore, you need to ask God.

Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." You need God's help on this most precious and important issue. Young person, you need to keep asking God.

The Bible says to ask. Matthew 7:7 in *The Amplified Bible* reads, "Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking and you will find; knock and keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you." You must be persistent about seeking God and keep asking Him. The same God who created the universe, Who hung the stars in space, Who numbered them and calls them by name, certainly can find a mate for you. Young person, God has someone for you.

The ninth and final point of this Scripture reading is, you need to trust God and trust His promises; trust His Word. God has given many promises in His Word. Psalm 84:11 is a promise that you can hold on to. It says, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Proverbs 18:22 states, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." That is a promise of God, so trust God's promises. Truly He will fulfill every promise.

When should a young person seek a companion? When is the right time to seek a companion? Let me give you some thoughts to consider, and then you should talk to your pastor and the Lord about this. Dating and marriage are very serious. In most states you cannot obtain a driver's license until you are sixteen years of age, but you are not legally an adult until you are eighteen years

of age. Now, while we preach against consuming alcohol, the world says you have to be twenty-one years old to buy it. In order to rent a vehicle, some rental companies will not allow you to rent one until you are twenty-five years of age. Dating is far more important than any of these things.

This business of dating is not something to trifle with. You have affections. The Bible lets you know in Proverbs 6:27 that if you take fire into your bosom, you will get burned. Fleshly desires are strong, and without a strong knowledge of God and His Word, no matter how strong you are, when physicality gets involved in dating, it is a slippery slope.

Dating is not a game. It is intended to lead to marriage. I would not recommend that someone get married at thirteen years of age, so I am going to say that you probably should not be dating when you are around that age. Think about this. Jesus was thirty years of age before He began His earthly ministry, and the Bible lets us know that He was subject to His parents. We do not have any record of His leaving home until He commenced His ministry at thirty years of age. Isaac was forty years of age.

Personally, I do not believe that dating should be serious until you are out of high school. I have worked with middle school students, and now I work with high school students. I can tell you, there is a big difference between the age of thirteen or fourteen and the age of seventeen or eighteen. Your desires, your likes, and your interests are very different.

It is wise when dating to start in a group and to stay in a company of people. I do not believe that it should start with a couple being singled off alone. Also, I believe it should start with friendship. It is advisable to be

friends and to get to know each other and to take your time. There is no rush. Married life is wonderful, and God ordained it to be for the rest of your life. You should not just jump out of it. Marriage should be taken very seriously.

My parents were very strict about who I dated. In high school I had some young ladies who were interested in me, and I was interested in them, but my parents very strongly stated, "She is not the right one." I am glad that my parents cared, because I could be lost with an unsaved companion. My parents were very careful, even after I entered college. I still lived at home, and they gave me godly advice, even when I started dating my companion.

I was twenty-four years of age when my wife and I officially started courting. I was twenty-seven years of age when we married. I am not saying that you have to be that age. You should talk to your pastor and talk to God.

Influence, peer pressure, desires, and fleshly appetites, if given the right scenario, can cause you to let down your guard and fall; therefore, you need to be careful. This business of dating is very serious because of where it leads. In years past, many people got married young. If you are married and you have a good home, that is awesome.

Many examples are in God's Word where God led men and women to get married at an older age than you might think. If you study the brain, you will find that mind and brain development is still occurring in the twenties. That is the reason studies show that alcohol consumption should be held off until the age of twenty-one. To be clear, the Church of God stands against consuming alcohol, but I bring that as a worldly example of stages of development. Young

person, marriage will come, but you should not rush into it. Often a daughter will seek a young man like her father, and a son will seek a wife like his mother, so that behooves parents to take an inward look at their own lives.

Marriages generally abound most with love and faithfulness that are preceded by a long courtship. If you study Jacob and Rachel, you will find that he labored and waited seven years for her, and he still did not get her. He had to labor seven more years. The Bible says it seemed as nothing to Jacob because he loved her so much. I wonder how many young men today would be willing to wait that long?

The right relationship will not distract you and draw you away from God. If the courtship is God ordained, it will not take you away from the things of God. In this business of courting, there is safety in the company of the saints. The devil would love to get you off by yourself, but I am warning you to be careful.

Someone once said, "A good marriage is not a contract between two persons, but a sacred covenant between three." Too often Christ is never invited to the wedding and finds no room in their home.

When it comes to advice, young person, people who mean well may offer a lot of advice. Some may say: "Why not marry this one or that one? I think he or she is the right one." When it comes right down to it, you must seek God on your own, because you will be the one who lives with this person for the rest of your life. I am not saying that you should turn down godly counsel. As far back as I can remember, I have made it a practice to take in every bit of godly counsel that I could possibly get, store it in my mind, and then let God apply it to my life.

Some counsel may not be good for you or may not work for your situation. Maybe you do not feel that God is telling you to do a certain thing, but keep it in your mind and let God lead you. I would suggest that you look at the individual who is counseling you and see how his counsel worked for his own life. You should be hesitant to take counsel from someone who has been up and down and does not have a happy home. Now, someone may warn you and say, "Learn from my mistakes," and that is good, but I would just as soon take counsel from someone who has found success with his own counsel. You should look to your pastor and to older, godly saints in the congregation. Often they have much good that they would love to share with you, but so often people will not listen.

You have probably heard the statement that opposites attract. Do not be too alarmed if you handle things a little differently than the person you are courting or if you find yourself with little differences. However, it is important that you agree along Biblical lines.

When it comes to innate qualities, some differences may attract you to each other. Often opposites do attract. For example, if you tend to be too frugal with your money, God may send someone along to you who has no problem spending it. If you tend to procrastinate, God might have someone for you who knows how to prioritize. If you are disorganized, God might have someone for you who knows how to organize things. If you are a hoarder, God might send you someone who cleans out.

If you tend to respond to a situation too quickly, God might have someone for you who knows how to remain silent. If you tend to be a little argumentative, God might have someone

for you who knows how to avoid confrontations. If you tend to be assertive, God might have a companion for you who is very meek. Can you imagine how bad it would be if both spouses were big spenders? A real problem would arise in that home. You see, you need not worry about these things if you will follow God's plan, because He has it all planned out. God has someone appointed for you.

God really does care about you. You need to talk to God much about this before you make a decision, and He will help you. When you are dating, you fix yourself up to win that one over with your cologne, and you buy her flowers. Do not forget to do these things in marriage. When you get married, young person, remember to keep the love flowing. Do not allow your love to become stagnant. This is important. A Christian, above all people, should have a happy home, so think back to when you first started courting and how you won him or her over to you.

It is the same way with serving God. When you were born again, think about the things that attracted you to Christianity and the way you got your start with God. Do not forget those things. As you go down the road awhile, you might have a tendency to become bored with the things of God. You need to keep God's presence fresh every day. Do you remember the excitement that you had when you first got saved? You should still be excited about serving God. It is a wonderful thing! I would not trade it for anything. Going to church is the best thing in the whole world! You should never lose that excitement.

Spouses should not lose their excitement in marriage. It is possible to still be in love after many, many years of marriage. Once you get married, you should keep doing the small,

considerate things. You should plan little special occasions. For example, you could meet for a ten-minute coffee break or buy her a bouquet of flowers. Ladies like to get fresh flowers once in a while. That can help to keep your home happy. These little things are important.

The final consideration is that in the home, the husband and wife should agree upon the Truth. This starts in courting. In Matthew 12:25 Jesus said that a "house divided against itself shall not stand." It will not last. You must agree upon the things of God. Again, you must look in the right place to find the right companion and marry in the Lord. You should not force the issue, but pray much, be an obedient servant, meditate daily, be diligent, seek God, and trust His promises. I want to encourage you to press on.

You may say: "Well, there is no one for me right now, and I

am not seeing anyone. What should I do?" You need to keep serving God, be faithful, attend church, and be active in the work of God, whether you preach, pray, sing in the choir, sing specials, or teach. Look for ways to serve God. Waiting for a companion does not mean that you sit down and twiddle your thumbs.

When you are waiting for God to send you a companion, you should be active in the work of God. Through church activities, attending revivals, camp meetings, and other services, God will send the right one at the right time. God is no respecter of persons. What God did for Isaac, He will do for you.

If you are in a relationship that you know is not right, do not hold out for your own way. It takes a real man or a real woman to say, "I am going to cut off this relationship." Once I was in a relationship, kind of a light-

hearted one, but I remember composing an email saying, "I do not believe God would have me to be with you or to be in this friendship." She shed some tears, but I was sure that she was not the right one for me, and she was not. You may come to a time in a relationship when you must acknowledge God's moving and directing and cut off a relationship. If God is telling you to cut it off, you need to do that, because it could mean your soul.

If you are not saved, when are you going to get saved? When are you going to turn your life over to God? You do not know what the future holds or even if you will have a future beyond this day. You need to come to Jesus. If you will do that, you can experience the blessings of salvation and enjoy the benefits, one of which is having a saved companion.

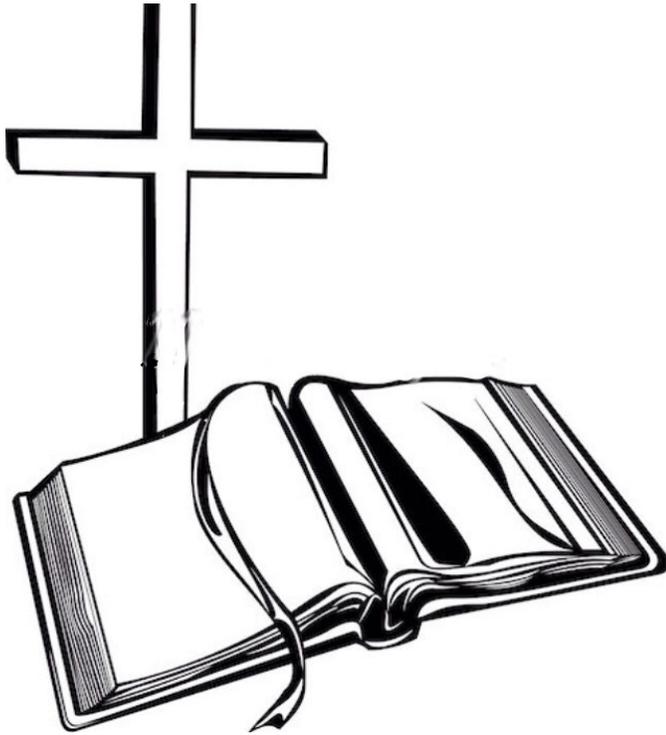
*Brother Reggie Stegmeier*

## Winter 2019 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-2388	12-26-2019	Eating the Word of God	Brother Calvin Foster
TR-2389	12-27-2019	When God Changes His Clothes	Brother David DeVoll
TR-2390		God Wants Us to Be One	Brother Calvin Foster
TR-2391	12-28-2019	What Kind of Legacy Are You Leaving?	Brother Allen Borders
TR-2392		Don't Sell Your Birthright	Brother Calvin Foster
TR-2393	12-29-2019	The Power of a Grateful Heart	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-2394		Make Peace With God	Brother Calvin Foster
TM-429	2019	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-430	2019	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
	2019	Winter Camp Meeting Choir Songs	
	2019	All Songs & Messages for the Winter Camp Meeting in MP3 format	

**Recordings are available on CD's for a suggested donation of \$3.00 each & MP3's for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0.35 for each additional one. You may order by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, Tape Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling Brother Sam or Sister Rachel Fowler. Call 740-345-1312, the Print Shop. Please make donations by check or money order in U.S. funds payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.**

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, 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.



# The Wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ

*Brother Calvin Foster*

## **True Christianity**

I thank God for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord told His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. The Gospel is wonderful! Accepting Jesus is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-10 the Apostle Paul said: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

I thank God for true Christianity. It is based on historical facts that are true in history and also true in the Bible. Paul mentioned simple facts here: Christ died, Christ was buried, and Christ rose again. We do not serve a dead Christ. You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart. Christ died for

your sins and my sins. In Matthew 1:21, speaking of the birth of Jesus Christ and speaking of Mary His mother, we read, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

True Christianity puts away sin from the world. It will put away sin from your heart, from your home, from your reading material, from institutions, from our customs, and from our government. Christ came to take away sin from the world. If you have not put away sin, you have not found true Christianity. You need to have a true, born-again experience.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself

unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

I thank God for Jesus Christ. He looked beyond my faults and saw my need. Love looks beyond what people are to what they can be. The Bible lets us know that God's love is as strong as death. He looked upon us and saw what we were, but He did not just look at what we were, He saw what we could become by His grace. Love makes you feel strong and tender. Love makes you feel appreciated, secure, and important. Thank God, when I did not feel important, God made me feel important. When I did not feel appreciated, God's love made me feel appreciated. God's love made me feel strong. His love helped me become the man I am today. The love of God believed in me. When I was walking the streets and doing sinful things, His love said: "Speak to him. I can make something out of him."

Christ looks beyond your faults and sees your need. God can take the most unworthy person and turn that person into a masterpiece of beauty and grace. God's love can do that. God sees your potential. God sees you, and He loves you.

### **Spiritual Blindness**

Christ healed many people in His ministry during His time on earth, but His greatest concern for the people was their spiritual blindness. A man was born blind and Jesus healed him, but Jesus was concerned about the spiritual blindness. I thank God for the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ. God intended the Gospel to bring men and women together. He intended the Gospel to bring us together to love one

another, to respect one another, and to treat one another right. Many men get hold of the Gospel and want to change it and rearrange it. That is the reason there is such a religious mess in nominal religion today. Christ prayed that His disciples would be one, and I am holding to that. We ought to be one, and we have to be one.

In Matthew, Chapter 15, Jesus reproved the hypocrites. In verses 7-14 He said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

"Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

The Apostle Paul, in his writing in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, said to the brethren at Corinth: "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."

The devil has blinded the minds of many people. Friend, God wants to save you. He wants to get your mind, your spiritual understanding. The Gospel is hid to those who are lost. Satan has blinded many people's minds to

the glorious Gospel of Christ. Satan does not want people to realize how wonderful it is to serve God.

### **All Things Become New**

Often I think about when I first got saved of how many saints of God testified and told of how God saved them and what He delivered them from. As I studied for this message, I thought about Joshua, Chapter 2, where it tells about the harlot Rahab who hid the spies. Imagine taking a look at your family tree and finding a woman in your family described as a prostitute. You would probably say: "Whoa! That woman is kin to me?"

Rahab hid the enemies of the government. She hid the men that Joshua had sent to spy out the land. When the men of Jericho confronted her about the Israelite spies that had come into her house, she lied about it. If you had found that this woman was in your family, would you hide the story or would you spotlight it and praise her? What would you do? This woman Rahab was King David's great, great grandmother, and she was mentioned in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:31 tells us, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." You may inquire, "What are you saying, Brother Foster?" I just want to show you something. Many saints have come from different walks of life. You were going your way, and I was going my way, but God brings us together.

God did not want to hide Rahab's story. He highlighted her life and her family lineage. This shows you that God can take a person with a bad reputation and change his or her life completely. Second Corinthians 5:17 says,

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The Apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 2:1-2, and 6: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. . . . And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The devil does not want us to get along with one another; therefore, we must not be ignorant of Satan's devices. God wants us to get along so what the Heavenly Father said, that we will do.

I thought about the blind man that Jesus healed in John, Chapter 9. He was born blind, and Jesus healed him. The Pharisees called the man to question him. John 9:24-25 reads: "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner [talking about Jesus]. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Praise God! I do not know how you got saved or where you were when you got saved. You do not know where I was, but I was spiritually blind, and now, thank God, I see. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! Some people might have a lot to say about God, but that man said only a few words: "I once was blind, but now I see." If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

### **Touching Jesus**

One of the greatest stories in the Bible is found in Luke 8:43-

48: "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?"

"And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

The Bible lets us know there is healing in the Gospel. James said in James 5:14-15: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." I thank God for the wonderful Gospel.

Christ did not need to speak to the woman with the issue of blood. She did not even want Jesus to know it was happening. She had her mind on healing, not for Jesus to turn around and look at her. Real faith will get the job done. In essence, she said: "I do not even need to touch Him. All I need to do is touch the hem of His garment." Thank God for the Gospel!

There is healing in the Gospel. One of the most touching and inspiring Scriptures in the

Bible is in Mark, Chapter 10. No doubt, all the Gospel workers who have worked with children can feel my inspiration on this. Mark 10:13-16 reads: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them [in so many words, they said, 'No, don't bring children here and bother Jesus; get these children away from here!'].

"But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God [no matter how big a person gets in his mind or how big he gets in his name and reputation, he needs to stay humble, like a little child]. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." God loves all souls, including little children. A lot of people do not have any time for children. Many do not show patience with them.

### **Be Forgiving**

Thank God, the Gospel has forgiveness in it too. In Matthew 6:9-15 Jesus taught His disciples: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Now, that may be hard for

you to swallow, but in order for God to forgive you, you have to forgive those who have trespassed against you. If you will not forgive others, you will tie God's hands. If you will not forgive, God cannot forgive you. You had better let it go, brother. You had better let it go, sister. Suppose someone really did you wrong. You know he did you wrong, and God knows he did you wrong. When you see him coming, what do you do? Do you go the other way? Dear one, you need to let it go.

The Gospel teaches you to forgive. Unforgiveness will eat at you like a cancer. You see, you might have something against a person, and that person could go on with life, just whistling along as happy as can be. If you are angry and will not forgive, it will eat at you, and then on top of that, you are causing God not to forgive you.

Hebrews 12:14 tells us, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Romans 12:18-20 reads: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." You see, God has your back, so to speak. You can just leave it with God.

Ministers know the troubles in some families these days. Many are filled with hatred, envy, strife, and anger. It is everywhere. The Gospel came to straighten out the family. God wants them to get Jesus in their hearts. They need to let the Gospel straighten them out. Brothers are killing brothers, fathers are killing children, and mothers are killing children. This

world needs the Gospel. Our country needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Friend, you can live it. Thank God for the wonderful Gospel. It is the greatest message in the world.

### **Take Heed Lest You Fall**

Influence is the power of persons or things to affect others, seen only in its effects. You could allow someone to influence you against a brother. All you have to do is listen to someone, and when that brother comes into your presence, he can see by how you are acting that someone has influenced you against him. Perhaps you used to shake his hand, but now you give him the cold shoulder. What happened? You have allowed someone to influence you against him.

Parents influence children, even their grown children. Mother, you should stay out of your son's marriage. Father, you should get out of your daughter's marriage and quit influencing her against her husband. A man leaves his father and mother and should cling to his wife.

My mother used to always want me to take her shopping on Saturdays. I was a good boy to my mother. I would get up early and take Mother shopping, but after I got married, the most important woman in my life became my wife. Do not take me wrong, my mother was still important to me, but I had to please my wife ahead of anyone else once I got married. Once you get married, your wife is the most important woman in your life.

Preachers influence people, so preachers have to be careful. The husband influences his wife, and the wife influences her husband. What is the point? You have to be on guard concerning bad influences. The Gospel lets you know that you are not infallible; you could fall. Those who promote the doctrine of eternal

security will tell you that you cannot lose your salvation, but that is contrary to what the Bible says. We are not infallible.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Therefore, you must be careful of how you live or you can fall.

God wants you to be faithful to Him. You do not want to be as one who does not love God. Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Why? Because they love not the Truth. Dear one, you want to be faithful to God. In Revelation 2:10 Christ told the angel of the church in Smyrna to "be thou faithful unto death [be faithful, be trustworthy, and be dependable, and God will bless you in what you put forth your hand to do], and I will give thee a crown of life."

### **Be Careful of How You Live**

I was thinking about the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew, Chapter 25. Verses 2 and 8-9 read: "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. . . . And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

Some people are going to buy the Truth and some are not, but every man will have to stand before God. You must have oil in your lamp. That parable is teaching that you must be careful of how you live. The five foolish

virgins represent those who do not let the Word of God take root in their lives. It is one thing to hear the Word of God, but it is another thing to obey the Word of God.

You deceive yourself when you hear of the Word and fail to do as it says. I have always prayed, "Let the Word of God fall on good ground." Paul wrote in Romans 8:28-31: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

In the Book of Acts, Chapter 5, some of the Jews were worried about the influence the disciples would have on others. Gamaliel was a wise man, and he counseled them. He said in verses 38-39: "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." You may withdraw your financial support, but if a work is of God, you cannot stop it. God's church is symbolized as a white horse going forth conquering and to conquer. Many men tried to stop Christianity, but they could not. Praise the Lord!

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Friend, you need to be saved. If you are not saved, I want to put the fear of God in your heart through the preaching of the Gospel. How can people

sit under the Truth and not care about being saved? I am afraid not to be saved.

### Reaping What You Sow

You can read about the children of Gad in the Book of Numbers. They were speaking to Moses and said they were not going to cross the river until later. Moses tried to tell them not to do that. Let me tell you something. You cannot escape the consequences of sin. You may commit sin, but it is going to find you out. Sin will overtake you and cause you to be punished. You are going to reap what you sow. If you are not saved, I pray to God that you will get saved and get a real experience of salvation that the Gospel can give you.

You may say, "I just want to go a little bit and have a little fun." Sin will take you further than you plan to go. You may say, "I am going to stay in sin for just a little while." Sin will keep you longer than you want to stay. You may say, "I don't mind a little suffering and pain." Sin will cost you more than you want to pay. Many people are suffering right now because they did not listen. Young person, I hope you listen. Do not get on social media and make a fool of yourself. Sin will destroy you. You need to stay with the Lord. I am trying to help you. The world out there will eat you up and spit you out, so to speak. There are pedophiles and thieves out there, and they do not care about you. There is nothing out in the world for you, absolutely nothing. Sin will take away your virginity, take away your health, and destroy you.

You should never smoke tobacco. Smoking will mess up your lungs. Men put tobacco in their mouth and it eats up their teeth and gums, and many get cancer from it. That is sad. Sin

will take people down. Tobacco smoking is very addictive.

When I was a young man, I was expelled from the public schools. No public school would have me. I was in a gang, but God saved me. I got back to school and got my high school diploma. One of the proudest days of my life was when I got my high school diploma. The principal of the school said, "Calvin, I want you to lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance at graduation." That was the greatest honor that I had ever had in my life.

I came from a broken home. I never knew what it was like to have my daddy around. After I graduated from high school, I went to a trade school. I met a beautiful girl at church and got married, and soon we started a family. I got the job I wanted and became the head man on the assembly line. The wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ saved my life. By the grace of God, I will never let it go. Now I am preaching.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 reads, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Jesus told His disciples in Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

We read in John 8:21 that Jesus said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." If you die in your sins, you cannot go to Heaven where Jesus is. That is the reason I am trying to help you and cause you to fear the Lord. If you go to a cemetery, you will see that people of all ages are buried there. All ages of people die. Think about that. May God bless you is my prayer.

*(Compact Disc TR-1909)*

*Luke 13:24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

# How Is Your Walk With God?



*Brother Irwin Sesher*

## **Striving for the Heavenly Goal**

It saddens me to see how people try to enter the gates of Heaven carrying so much that weighs them down in their lives. Many people are doing a lot of talking, but they are not doing much walking. Many say they want to walk with God and want to communicate with Him, but their actions prove otherwise. Most people today are striving for worldly pleasures, fame, prosperity, prestige, and political gain. Some moves that people make are not helping them to become more spiritual. Many people have too many earthly

goals. Dear one, we are not to focus our lives on earthly goals. We must look at the heavenly prize set before us. What will you gain in the end if you neglect your soul but succeed in all your earthly goals?

The word *strive* means "to make an earnest effort or struggle vigorously." Not many are striving for the heavenly goal. Are you striving toward the prize set before you? Are you living holy? Are your business dealings honest? Are you treating your brothers and sisters the way you should treat them? Are you witnessing to others? You cannot be a good witness if you do not live

a holy life.

Are you faithful in your church attendance? Church attendance is important, just as your work attendance is important. If you do not show up for work, you are not going to get paid. Likewise, you are not going to get paid spiritually if you do not go to the house of God. You are not going to get your prayers answered if you are not faithful to the house of God.

If you are going to be successful in this spiritual walk, there are things that you have to do. You will have to get busy and drive things out of your life. Too many people want to talk instead

of listening. Someone once said that you should use your ears more than you use your mouth. Before attempting to solve any disagreement, you must first listen to other people's feelings. Paul's advice in Philippians 2:4 was, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." In other words, you should not merely focus on your own things, but you should be concerned about others and what they have to say. It would be good to take an interest in other people's problems to see exactly where they are coming from. Someday you might want somebody to listen to your problems. Perhaps you need to be more sympathetic toward others and listen to their problems. Maybe those people want to talk to you.

### **How Is Your Commitment to God?**

In order to make Heaven your home, it is going to take work. You are going to have to put forth effort and make a commitment. Do you desire to make Heaven your home one of these days? Are you committed to the work of God? It takes dedication on your part. Also, it is going to take faithfulness and not giving in to each little hindrance that comes your way. You need to be bold in the things of God by standing up and not giving in. You need to be thick-skinned, not weak-kneed, so to speak, when you stand up for what is right.

I am thankful that I found the right way. I am glad that I did not join a church, but I was born into the church. I am thankful for good saints of God to worship with. I am thankful for a faithful pastor who is true to my soul and who is willing to listen. Some people do not want to listen. Friend, you are not going to gain any spiritual ground if you do not listen to godly counsel.

Many people are truly unhappy with their lives. Some are concerned about where they are going to get the money to pay their bills. Salvation makes you happy and puts a desire in your heart to live right. It causes you to want to be in the house of God and to love your brothers and sisters. Once you were in dire need of salvation, but one day Jesus Christ spoke peace to your soul. Salvation will cause you to rejoice in the sanctuary. It will put a smile on your face.

Psalm 150:1-6 states: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in ccthe firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD." I thank God for breath. God gives us that breath to praise Him for His goodness. What a good God we serve. Even when we go through trials and discouraging times, we can still praise the Lord.

If you have God's Holy Spirit down in your heart and soul, you will want to praise Him. If you were able to get out of bed this morning and get dressed, you should praise the Lord. We ought to give God praise and glory for everything that He has done for us. He is such a good God! He supplies our every need and protects us. We ought to give Him more praise than what we are giving Him.

### **Showing Gratitude**

Psalm 117:1-2 says: "O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us:

and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD." We should not just obey God out of duty, fear, or compulsion, but because we love Him. We are not forced to serve God. We want to serve Him. Why? He gave His Son to die for our sins, and we can trust that He knows what is best for us. I am thankful for that.

We should want to follow Christ out of gratitude for everything He has done for us. The closer we follow Him, the deeper our friendship becomes. When we come together to worship, we should be singing praise to Almighty God with our full attention. We should not sing the words because they are in the songbook, but because the words mean so much to us spiritually. No child of God should stand and sing "amazing grace, how sweet the sound" with a deadpan expression.

It was amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. I was lost in sin, headed to a devil's hell, but He loved me so much that He gave His life for me. We need to really realize that we are singing to a holy God who paid our sin debt and gave us eternal life. It is important that we get involved in the singing, but it is hard to sing if it is not down in the heart. I thank God for His Holy Spirit that wants us to do right and live right.

Today many are hesitant to follow Christ. It comes down to giving up their will and turning it over to the will of God. Too many do not want to give up their will. They are too proud. One thing that God hates is pride. The cosmetic industry is making billions of dollars from people who want to change their looks. You should be thankful for what God has given you.

The Lord does not want merely a part of your life; He wants all your life. He asks for all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. He is not interested in a

halfhearted commitment or in partial obedience. He does not want leftovers. I like something that is fresh. Thank God, we come to services where the services are fresh. We can feast on good spiritual meals where we can grow spiritually and get strength for body and soul. We face battles, and the enemy wants to take us down spiritually. Jesus Christ is the only true way.

How is your walk with God? Are you walking close by His side or are you allowing hindrances to come between you and the Lord? Friend, you cannot follow close by His side if you are trying to follow Him from a distance. When you are feeling low and think you do not have anywhere to turn, remember to turn to God. You can pray when you are going through a battle, "Lord, You know what I am going through, but I am going to praise You anyway." You would be surprised how that can give you a lift. You need to let others in the world know exactly where you stand with God. People in the world will definitely let you know where they stand.

### **Working Together for the Kingdom of God**

This Gospel that we possess is meant to change the sinner. The sinner is not to try to change the Gospel. I like it that way. You see, the enemy may try to convince you that you are a loser and say: "What do you have to live for? What has God ever done for you?" You should start thanking God for what He has done for you. The devil will place stumbling blocks in your life, and he will try to convince you that you are a nobody and have no talents. The devil will try to convince you that people do not care about you. He will try to wear you down, but thank God, you have someone much stronger than the enemy. As a child of

God, it is time to stand and tell the enemy that he is a liar. It is time for you to prove the enemy wrong. The enemy has nothing to offer you. Some people choose to listen to the enemy because they are not strong spiritually. You can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones.

Psalms 140:6 reads, "I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD." We must work together. The enemy wants to come in and divide wherever he can. We are workers together for the Kingdom of God. We should work together, fellowship together, and worship together.

In the Book of Acts, Christians in Jerusalem were very specific in their commitment to one another, and fellowship was very important. Acts 2:42 states, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The Lord expects us as children of God to do the same today.

There might be times when you feel defeated or discouraged, and other times you will experience joy, passion, and excitement. Times of discouragement are very real, and they will come around. You should not say, "Since I have had so many times of discouragement, I am not going to follow Jesus." That is when you need to follow Jesus even more. The Bible does not say that the just shall live by feelings. It does say in Romans 1:17, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Feelings come and go, and feelings are constantly changing, but walking with God takes faith and commitment. It takes hard work and consistency.

Enoch walked with God in a world at a time that was very corrupt. Enoch did not change his stand or his love for God. Enoch was a very good example of how we should live. To walk with

God, you must get yourself in rhythm with His teachings and not expect God to get in rhythm with your ideas. You can get yourself in trouble when you try to get God to line up with what you want to do.

God is pleased when you obey His commandments. Enoch was a true testimony to God's goodness, and he was an excellent witness. You should have a testimony of what God has done for your life. If you are saved, God brought you out of a terrible pit, and you should let the world know that God can do the same for them. They should see it in your life and hear it in your talk.

### **Being an Effective Witness**

Someone once said, "Before we can effectively witness for God, we must first walk with Him." Sometimes you have to walk a little ways with others to understand them. That is not a time to go in an opposite direction. If you do that, you will not be able to enjoy and share things with them. Most importantly, you will not be able to understand them.

I am thankful that being a child of God is more than going to the house of God. You can take the Lord wherever you go. It is a journey through life. Every one of us is on a journey to eternity, and as we walk with Christ, we should do our very best to imitate and glorify Him in every way possible.

Henry Ford once said, "Those who walk with God always reach their destination." D. L. Moody said, "If I walk with the world, I cannot walk with God." What a bold statement!

You may ask, "Will God be there if I walk with Him?" I am glad you asked. Deuteronomy 8:6 states, "Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him." Ephe-

sians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." I have another quote that I want to share with you: "The deepest level of worship is praising God in spite of the pain, thanking God during the trials, trusting Him when we are tempted to lose hope, and loving Him when it seems so distant and far away. At my lowest, God is my hope; at my darkest, God is my light; at my weakest, God is my strength; and at my saddest, God is my comforter."

How is your walk with God? Are you truly satisfied with your life just the way it is right now? Do you feel in your heart there might be something lacking in your life? There is a song that says, "*I want to walk as close as I possibly can.*" Is that a reality in your life? When you walk close to God, the main focus of your life is on Him and nothing else. Is it your heart's desire to have His presence in your life? Do you long for Him and want to grow in the things of God? When you are close to God, you will allow the Lord to work in your life. Is He walking in your life today?

Charles Spurgeon said: "How sweet it is to learn the Savior's love when nobody else loves us! When friends flee, what a blessed thing it is to see that the Savior does not forsake us but still keeps us and holds us fast and clings to us and will not let us go!" That is just how good our God is! Are you applying that to your life? Do you want to walk as close as you can to God? I think every true saint of God wants his walk to be as close as it can possibly be.

(Compact Disc TR-1835)

## CAN YOU RISK . . .

moving about in health and strength with the soul unprepared to meet God, when you could name half a dozen who have been suddenly called, and you know "not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1)?

**Can you risk it?**

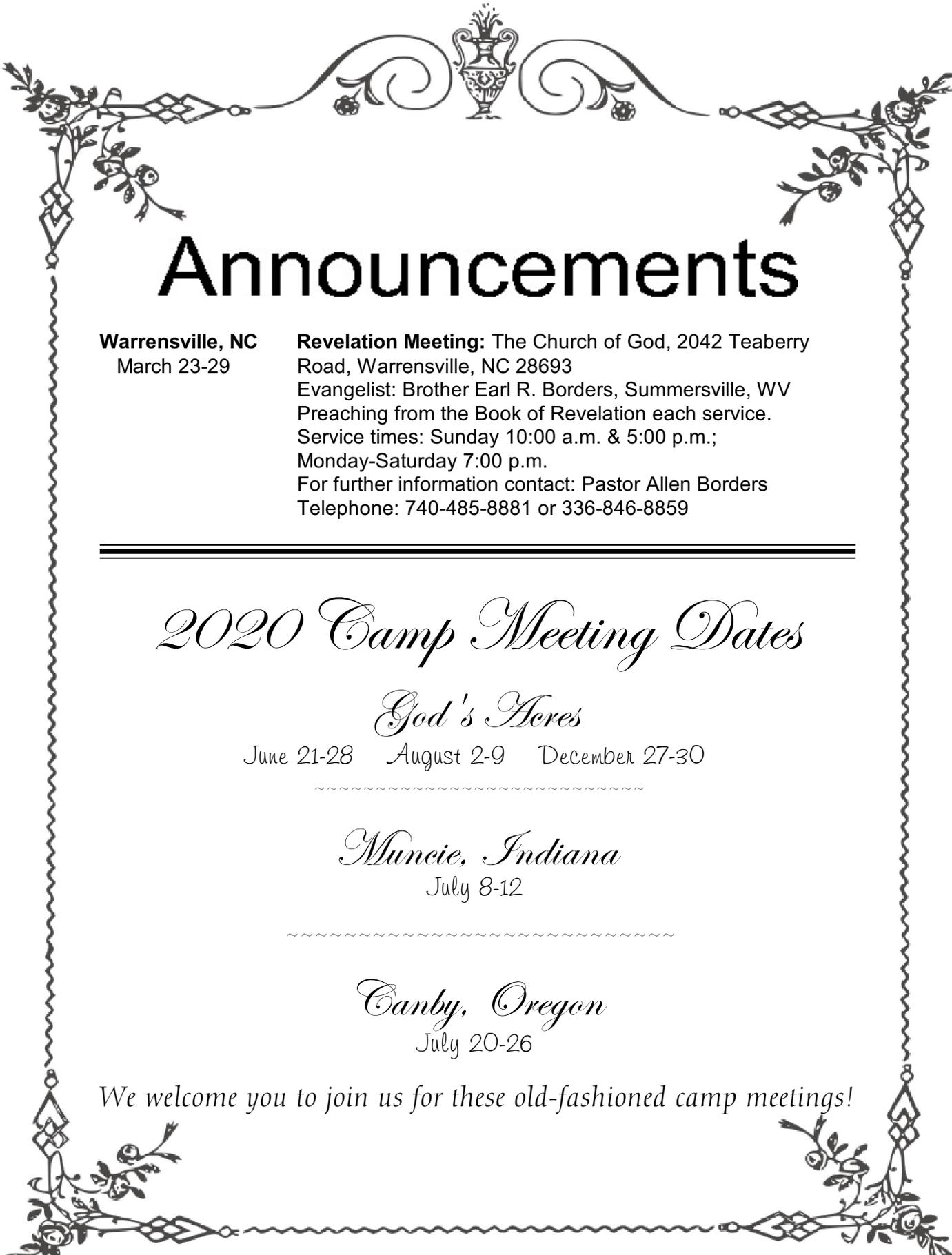
knowing that any moment YOU may be called before God, for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)?

**Can you risk it?**

having a deep inner knowledge that you could dwell forever in eternal Glory (2 Corinthians 4:17) or in everlasting burnings (Isaiah 33:14) unprepared?

**Can you risk it?**

***Risk no more! "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).***



# Announcements

**Warrensville, NC**  
March 23-29

**Revelation Meeting:** The Church of God, 2042 Teaberry Road, Warrensville, NC 28693  
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Summersville, WV  
Preaching from the Book of Revelation each service.  
Service times: Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.;  
Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Allen Borders  
Telephone: 740-485-8881 or 336-846-8859

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## *2020 Camp Meeting Dates*

### *God's Acres*

June 21-28    August 2-9    December 27-30

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### *Muncie, Indiana*

July 8-12

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### *Canby, Oregon*

July 20-26

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