

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

***“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, and in which you stand, by which also you are saved”***

When Christ was going back into heaven, after accomplishing that great work of salvation of all humanity from sin, His departing words, yes, His last words to His disciples were: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15, 16).

Paul, the apostle of Christ, writing to the Corinthians said that he had preached to them the gospel. Men like to preach their testimonies, or quote passages from the books of other men. But Christ commanded to go and preach the gospel. And, Paul, His follower, said “I declare to you the gospel, which I preached to you.”

How wonderful it would be if preachers today everywhere preach and declare only the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel, about which the apostle said to the Corinthians that they had received it, and that in which they were standing and by which they were also saved. Further he said, “If you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

So the gospel of the Bible is: Christ died for our sins. Not only died. But He died *for our sins*. And that He was buried in a tomb or grave, and that He rose again *from* the dead. These three are the fact of the gospel which is the good news for man's salvation.

To the Romans Paul had said, "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of the doctrine to which you were delivered (or that was preached to you, S.D.): And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17, 18). What set them free from sin? They had obeyed from the heart that form of the doctrine or teaching that was declared to them. Both the Corinthians and the Romans were saved from sin by the preaching of the gospel.

They had heard the gospel and they had obeyed from the heart the FORM of the gospel. What is the gospel? Again, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead. What had they obeyed? They had obeyed the form of the gospel. The word form means: figure or shape or pattern or conformation. Now listen to the apostle again in Romans 6:3-5, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized to His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." Baptism, therefore, is the form of the gospel. Baptism symbolises the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In being baptized one is buried in the symbolical tomb or grave of water, after one repents from sin or dies to sin (Acts 2:38), and then the individual comes out of the watery grave which portrays the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what Christ had said when He was going back to heaven: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Finally, one must remember also the words of Christ from John 12:48, "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him— the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" what did He say one must do to be saved?

# **Elders In The Church**

**J. C. CHOATE**

The Bible teaches that Christ built the church (Matthew 16:18), that it is made up of the saved (Acts 2:47), that He died for it (Acts 20:28), that He is the head of it (Colossians 1:18), and that He is coming back for it. (1 Corinthians 15:24), that it is made up of many congregations (Romans 16:16), and that each congregation is to have elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9), provided there are qualified men to be appointed to these offices.

Elders are spoken of in the scriptures as being elders (older men) (Acts 20:28), bishops (overseers) (1 Timothy 3:2), presbyters (overseers of a governing body) (1 Timothy 4:14), shepherds (leaders or caretakers) of the flock (God's people) (1 Peter 2:25), and pastors (also means shepherds). (Ephesians 4:11). They are to give spiritual leadership to the congregation. The deacons are to serve along with the elders, usually taking care of the physical needs of the congregations. There are to be two or more qualified elders to provide leadership for each congregation.

Elders are to serve together and work together. There is not to be a "head" elder. The highest office in the church, under Christ, is that of being *one* of the elders in *one* congregation. Even then, each elder must be chosen by the members of the congregation where he is to serve, based on his qualifications. Women are not allowed to serve as elders.

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 the qualifications of an elder are listed. Paul said, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, nor greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

In Titus 1:5-9 Paul writes to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting,

and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Putting together the qualifications that Paul lists in writing to Timothy and to Titus, we have the following:

1. Blameless.
2. Husband of one wife.
3. Vigilant, watchful, alert to current situations.
4. Sober, sober-minded, calm.
5. Of good behaviour.
6. Given to hospitality.
7. Apt or able to teach.
8. Not given to wine (not addicted to alcohol, not a drunkard).
9. No striker, not violent.
10. Not greedy of filthy lucre, not greedy of money.
11. Patient, gentle.
12. Not a brawler, not quarrelsome.
13. Not covetous, not jealous or wanting what others have.
14. Ruling well his own house.
15. Children in subjection, children who have obeyed the Lord.
16. Not a novice, not a new Christian.
17. Of good report of them without or of non-members.
18. Not accused of riot, dissipation, or subordination.
19. Not self-willed.
20. Not soon angry or quick tempered.
21. Lover of what is good.
22. Just.
23. Holy.
24. Temperate, self-controlled.
25. Holding fast the faithful word.

To be appointed an elder, one must have all of these qualities. Having such, he is able to join one or more other elders to give leadership in a local congregation of the Lord's church.

Actually, though, with the exception of a few of the qualifications—such as being married, being the husband of one wife, having children, having believing children, having the ability to teach, not being a new convert- all Christians should have these same principles in their lives.

Those men in a congregation of the Lord's people who have these qualifications, and are appointed by its members to be elders, have the work of giving leadership to that congregation: **they see that it is properly fed spiritual food, that it performs the work God has given it to do, that it is kept morally pure, and that it remains true to the teaching of God's word.** These are exceedingly grave responsibilities and must not be taken lightly. Why? Because "... they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Peter wrote, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Concerning the way we as Christians should deal with elders, Paul says, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren." (1 Timothy 5:1). Again, he says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear." (1 Timothy 5:19). It is a serious matter to falsely accuse an elder of something wrong. God's word says that it can be done only when there are one or two witnesses to support the charge.

No where in the scriptures do we read that *one* man can serve as "the pastor" of a congregation of the Lord's church. One and all should read and study God's word on what it says about the elders of the church, their qualifications, their work, and how we should deal with them.

# *I Have Sinned*

FRANCIS DAVID

A number of times we have seen, its hard for people to say, "I have done wrong, this is my mistake, or I am sorry." Instead we see, a lot of times, people try to play a self defence and justifying themselves. In the Old Testament we read a story of a man who did wrong but later came to realization and accepted that he was wrong and sinned and therefore wanted to repent and change himself. This man was David who sinned and later made confession, that he was wrong. You can read this story in the book of 2 Samuel chapter 12. When David committed adultery with Bethsheba and got her husband killed, the Lord sent Prophet Nathan to make him realize that he has done wrong. The Scriptures narrate this story like this: "Then Nathan said to David, "you are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel; I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little. I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife." In David's life, it was a tragic thing. Can you imagine, David a man after God's own heart could have done such a heinous thing? But he did. For a moment he forgot who he is, and what he is supposed to do. But the best and excellent thing which we see in this man that he came to realisation and confessed that he has done wrong in the sight of God.

David repented like the prodigal son we read in Luke chapter fifteen. It was a penitent repentance from David. The result of his genuine repentance is found in Psalm 51. In this Psalm King David prays to God like this: "Have mercy upon me, O God. According to your loving kindness, According to the multitude of your tender mercies, Blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my

transgression. And my sin is ever before me. Against you, You only, have I SINNED. And done this evil in your sight. That you may be found just when you speak. And blameless when you judge." As we read the full psalm, we see he was convinced and wanted to change himself.

We learn from this that we must realize we are sinners and in many ways we have displeased the Lord by not obeying His commands revealed in His word. The Bible says, "For all have sinned" (Rm. 3:23).

Do you realize that you are a sinner? Do you want to repent of your sins? David was willing to say to the Lord that "I have sinned". This is the hardest thing for a man to accept or say that I have done wrong. We try to shift blame on others, like Adam and Eve or put blame on others for our own wrongs and mistakes. Some may try to cover up their sins by their good deeds. But in the case of David we don't see such a thing. He wanted to repent and start a fresh. David did not try to implicate Bethseba or did not put blame on her that she made me to do that. He could have said, no, I am the King I cannot do such a thing, If anyone speaks against me, he should be ready to face the consequences. He simply, accepted: "I have Sinned" (I Sam 12:13).

We read in Luke 18, the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector. The parable goes like this: "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went to temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a Tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not like other men-extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "GOD be merciful to me a sinner" Jesus Said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other....." Here we see the difference between two kinds of sinner. One wanted to repent with the genuine heart but the other one was just praising himself.

The Bible says thru apostle John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make HIM a liar, and His word is not in us." (I Jn. 1:8-10). Today

if we are convinced that we are on the wrong side or not walking according to God's will, I would urge you to come to God. Accept Jesus; believe in Him, confess him as the Son of God, repent of your sins or your sinful life and be baptized and the Bible says, you will be a saved person, and you are promised life eternal in Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian and not walking according to God's will, then you must realize that you are on the wrong side. Mend your ways and come to God by genuine repentance. Are you willing to say, "I have sinned"?

## **Forgiveness**

***Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."—Luke 23:34.***

THOMAS R. DOHLING

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, a subject of ridicule and shame, in agony and injustice meted out by the hand of man, instead of pouring down fire and brimstone to destroy his persecutors and killers, he utters these sweet words which is beyond human comprehension. "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." We can take heart from this characteristic of the divine nature. He is slow to anger and does not deal with us according to our sins. Rather, He is patient and forgiving.

When other religions of the world live by the doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", Christianity teaches us to forgive. When others propagate hate and revenge, the Word of God teaches us to love our enemies and leave vengeance to God [Deut.32:35; Heb. 10:30]. Romans 12:19-21 says : "Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*" says the Lord. Rather, *if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will be heaping burning coals on his head.* [Prov.25:21, 22] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

In the "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 6:12, 14; Lk.11:4, Jesus teaches us: "Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those



who trespass against us" and he goes on to say: "For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins." So we see that it is only when we have forgiven others [been patient with the wrong they have done us for we cannot forgive like God—we can only overlook their faults and make allowances for them] that God will forgive the sins that we have committed against Him. If we hold on to a grudge against someone [especially one who is a brother/sister in Christ] we remain in that sin and God cannot forgive us as long as we continue to hold that grudge; you see, that grudge is a sin! If we get rid of that grudge (turn aside from it, repent) and forgive (which is synonymous with forget), then we are ready to receive God's forgiveness.

When Peter asks Jesus [in Matthew 18:21, 22] "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy times seven." This would mean an uncountable number of times. Do you know why Jesus said this? What does this teaching bring to mind? As I pondered on our Lord's teaching here, I saw my imperfect self continually sinning against God and His forgiving me times without number (1 John 1:7, 9). We are taught here to do likewise. It is for our good that Jesus taught us such. As long as we remain unforgiving, the grudge/anger burns a hole in our minds and poisons our thinking [and indeed our entire system]. The only thought then that occupies our attention at all times would be upon revenge taking—how may we hurt the offender; how do I get even. Then, when we are able to hurt him/her, we compound our sin of having an unforgiving heart—it becomes bigger. Does it satisfy us? Perhaps—perhaps not. But it does not please God because judging, punishing, condemning belongs to God not to us. That is why the Word of God teaches us in Romans 12:18-21: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people. Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, ***"Vengeance is mine, I will repay,"*** says the Lord. Rather, ***if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will be heaping burning coals on his head.*** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

# *Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness*

KEN TYLER

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness**: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Many Bible passages exalt righteousness. Notice these from Proverbs: **Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people**" (14:34).

"Better is a little with **righteousness** than great revenues without right" (16:8). "He that followeth after **righteousness** and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour" (21:21). "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but **righteousness** delivereth from death" (10:2).

What is "righteousness?" Webster says, "Freedom from guilt or blame." Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon defines "righteousness" as "integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness; correctness in thinking, feeling, acting."

In II Peter 2:5 Noah is called "a preacher of **righteousness**." We are told that "All scripture ... is profitable ... for instruction in **righteousness**." (II Timothy 3:16). David said that he, had never seen the "righteous" forsaken. (Psalm 37:25). Luke 1:6 states that Zecharius and Elizabeth "were both **righteous** before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

Physically, the person who is genuinely hungry or thirsty can think of little else; he will do all humanly possible to supply the need. If we could get people to pursue righteousness the way they pursue eating and drinking, this would be a different world in which to live! Let me ask you, do you hunger and thirst after righteousness?

For the person who does hunger and thirst after righteousness, a "crown of righteousness" is laid up for him. The apostle Paul said shortly before his death, while in prison at Rome: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to Me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8).

It is my prayer that all of us will "hunger and thirst after

righteousness" so we shall receive a crown of righteousness at the last day.

## ***Christ's View Of His Church***

**CLEM THURMAN**

*"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord . . . Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever" (Eph. 3:8-11, 20-21).*

To gain a true picture of the church which is revealed in the Bible, we must look at both the divine side and human side of that church. The church of Jesus Christ was planned by God, as our text states. It was built by Christ (Matt. 16:18), through His apostles, as He directed them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-47). But the church, as God planned it, is also composed of members who are human. As man is subject to weaknesses and frailties, the church that is seen in the world often manifests human foibles and weaknesses. But behind all of the human weakness, there is also the divine side of church which depicts the nature of God.

### **THE CHURCH PURPOSED FROM ETERNITY**

Notice the language of our text: *"The church . . . according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Because God purposed the church and designed it, the church will partake of His nature. The Lord never made any mistakes in planning His church, and He said, *"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). In order to reflect the characteristics of God, the church must be perfect in its purpose, origin and design. It also partakes of the perfection of its

builder, Jesus Christ.

Of the Lord Jesus it is written, *"Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation"* (Heb. 5:8-9). In His obedience to the Father, *"obedient even unto death"* (Phil. 2:8), Christ was made perfect as our Savior, and thus He purchased the church *"with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). Surely the church, His body, will partake of the perfection of its head (Col. 1:18).

But we must also recognize that the church was founded and developed under the guidance of inspired-men the apostles. The Lord promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles to, *"guide you into all the truth"* (John 16:13). So, the Holy Spirit directed and guided the infant church into the path of development that God desired. Thus the Lord assured perfection in its original teaching and practice. Therefore, we see that any imperfection or blemish in the church is only that which man has put there. As God ordained it, and set it forth in the Scriptures, the church of the Lord Jesus is perfect.

## **HIS ORGANIZATION FOR HIS CHURCH**

It must be recognized that the church has a perfect organization. The apostle Paul wrote of Jesus Christ: *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence . . . [God] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"* (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Christ is the head, and therefore *"all authority"* resides in Him (Matt. 28:18). God has placed all necessary offices in the church for perfect co-ordination and efficiency. Any time that organization is shown to be defective, the weakness will be found in the human side, not the divine side.

God purposed that each local church would have a group of men as *"overseers"* (Acts 20:28) who would be called *"elders"* (Titus 1:5). The apostle Peter writes, *"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you . . . shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight"* (1 Pet. 5:1-2). The elders are responsible for the care, spiritual guidance and development of the church, as they *"watch in behalf of your souls"* (Heb. 13:17). In this work they have men

called deacons to serve the church under their oversight (1 Tim. 3:12-13; Acts 6:1-6). The evangelist (or minister) also has been ordained by the Lord to serve under the oversight of the elders in preaching the gospel and ministering spiritually to the needs of the members (1 Tim. 4:12-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

### **THE LORD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS CHURCH**

The Lord gave to the church the perfect plan to perpetuate itself through evangelism. This work was not committed to a "clergy" class, but was given to every member: When persecution came, the apostles remained in Jerusalem and the members left: *"They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). Each Christian had the same story to tell, as they could relate what Christ had done for them. *"But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak"* (2 Cor. 4:13). As those who believed told the story of the cross, the gospel was spread all over the world in that one generation (Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23).

The early church did not set up auxiliaries to help the needy, thus detracting from the glory of the church. The church itself is the perfect benevolent organization. It cares for the widows and orphans and other unfortunates (James 1:27; 1 John 3:17; Col. 3:17) without setting up another organization to do that work. The funds used are provided by free-will offerings of the members of the church: *"And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren"* (Acts 11:29). This giving was done according to the Lord's plan (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8). God was thus glorified *"in the church"* (Eph. 3:21).

The work of "building up" or "edifying" the church was also given to the church. As Paul wrote, *"For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ. . . Speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love"* (Eph. 4:12, 15-16). By the teaching of the word of God, the church is to increase and *"grow up."* As the word of the Lord is studied, the members of His church grow to be more like Him (2

Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:9-10).

## **HIS CHURCH TEACHES HIS TERMS OF SALVATION**

**Jesus is the Savior.** Although in today's world, it is not "politically correct" to say so, no one can be saved without Jesus Christ. He said it: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). The apostles also declared the same truth, as they answered the charges of the Jewish leaders: *"And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). To reject Jesus as Savior is to reject salvation.

**We are saved by faith.** The Lord Jesus said, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). The process by which we are saved begins with faith in Christ. Paul wrote that we are, *"Justified by faith"* (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16). The word of the Lord produces faith (Rom. 10:17), and when people hear the word of the Lord Jesus, and trust Him, that faith will lead them to follow Him.

**Jesus requires repentance.** Faith just naturally produces repentance. When one believes in Jesus as Lord, he then must recognize his own sinfulness and faith creates the desire to turn from those sins. Jesus put it this way, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish . . . Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations"* (Luke 13:3; 24:46-47). Instead of saying, "Come and worship with us, we will accept you just as you are," His church still says: *"Repent."*

**Jesus teaches baptism.** Repentance will lead one to be baptized. When sinners asked what to do, they were told: *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . . They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls . . . And the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved"* (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

When the gospel was preached (Acts 2:22-36) sinners were convicted in their hearts of their sins and asked what to do. When

they were told, they *"received the word"* and were immediately baptized. When they were baptized, they were *"added to the church"* because the Lord had saved them. This echoes what Jesus said in Mark 16:16, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* And as we continue to read in the book of Acts, we find people hearing the word, believing, repenting and being baptized (Acts 8:12; 8:36-38; 10:48; 16:30-34; 22:16). That pattern doesn't change.

That "plan of salvation" is what was taught by the church of the Lord nearly 2000 years ago. And it is what His church still teaches today. And because we are *"baptized into Christ"* (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27), His church today still insists that baptism is necessary for salvation. The church that Jesus built, according to the eternal purpose of God, is still in the world today. It is the same church. It still teaches the same gospel. It still offers the same salvation. And it still preaches the same terms of salvation. Friend, if that church is not in your community, you can begin one by obeying Christ's command, and by teaching others to do likewise.

## ***"Lead Me to Calvary"***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

When our blessed Lord was crucified at that place called Calvary (or, Golgotha), epochal events took place. Sin was overwhelmed by His purity, Satan was defeated by Christ's power (Heb. 2:15) and heaven became a possibility for us. The magnificent glory of God shone that day as never before. Glad tidings of redemption pealed forth on that tremendous occasion. Jude 25 belongs in this setting: *"To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."*

Evil had been running rampant and the lost souls of humanity had looked in vain for hope and cleansing until the Messiah came, lived perfectly and died vicariously to redeem us from the power of sin and death! *"For the Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). That fountain of efficacy that Zech. 13:1 had promised now flowed from the gentle side of Jesus to grant mankind peace with the Creator. *"For God so loved the world,*

*that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

The "new and living way, "through the veil of His flesh (Heb. 10:19-20), had been opened to bring joy to shameful folk who had been on the road to hell: *"Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).*

Prophecy and fulfillment meshed at the Cross and demons trembled at the sound of victory for the saints. Christ had entered the strong man's house and the devil knew a stronger One that he was now the winner (Mark 3:27). Most of the greatest gospel songs we sing center around the scene of Calvary and the incomparable love of God (2 Cor. 9:15). W.J. Kirkpatrick helps to focus with these words of the gospel hymn:

Lest I forget Gethsemane,  
Lest I forget Thine agony,  
Lest I forget Thy love for me,  
Lead me to Calvary.

Paul gloried in the cross (Gal. 6:14), and so should we. Preaching the crucified Savior was the heart of apostolic proclamation: *"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).* The urgency of calling sinners back to Golgotha was the heart of Christianity: *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11).*

*Into the Cross of Jesus  
Deeper and deeper I go,  
Following through the garden,  
Facing the dreaded foe,  
Drinking the cup of sorrow,  
Sobbing with broken heart:  
"O Savior, help; dear Savior, help!  
Grace for my weakness impart.*

Jesus lay down His life to give us hope of eternal bliss as Calvary open the way to heaven. Indeed, "The way of the Cross leads home!" What matchless grace!



# *A Picture Of The Blessed Man*

HOWELL BIGHAM

In Psalm one we find a picture of a blessed man. This threshold to the book which contains 150 psalms delivers a divine contrast between the blessed and the ungodly. Furthermore, it presents a portrait of two channels, or choices, for man: to obey God, or to disobey God (Matthew 7:13-14; Joshua 24:15). In studying this great chapter of inspiration, we find five important points.

## **A PROFILE OF THE BLESSED MAN**

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (verse). Note the character of the blessed man. First, he is one who "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." A person who is blessed and righteous in the sight of the Creator will not follow the counsel or advice of the wicked, but rather will follow the advice that is given in the inspired word of Almighty God (Ecclesiastes 12:13; II Timothy 3:16-17)! The apostle Paul said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11)!

Secondly, the character of the godly man is one who will not stand in the way of sinners. The blessed man will not congregate or assemble with those who follow the course of Satan! He understands the terrible influence that evil can have upon good! Paul spoke concerning such when he said: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33).

Furthermore, the blessed man also is one who will not sit "in the seat of the scornful." He will not take his seat with those who mock God and his word!! Rather, the blessed man's walk, stand, and seating will be with God and his truth (Jeremiah 6:16).

The Pleasure of the Blessed Man "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (verse 2). Indeed the righteous man's profile consists of more than just "do not's;" it also contains his pleasure. His pleasure and delight is in the word of God (Psalms 119:103; 19:10)! He delights in the study of the Bible (Psalm 119:35; Acts 17:11-12), realizing that it is the source of eternal life (John 6:63). God's word is our guide to lead us through this dark world of sin, to our eternal home in

heaven (Psalm 119:105)! Not only does he delight in God's word, he also meditates (studies seriously) upon the word of Jehovah (I Timothy 4:15-16; Psalm 119:97). The importance of meditating on God's truth is seen in the command of Paul to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

### **THE PROSPERITY OF THE BLESSED MAN**

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (verse 3). The Bible often affirms that the righteous man will prosper (Matthew 6:33; James 1:25; I Timothy 4:8). The blessed are described as a mighty tree. A mighty tree is one that is grounded and settled in mother earth. Likewise, the faithful Christian is rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, the Savior of man (Colossians 1:23; 2:7). Furthermore, the righteous man is likened unto a tree that has been "planted by the rivers of water." This tree is one that receives an abundant source of nourishment. Likewise, the faithful child of God receives an abundant source of nourishment from the inspired word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:104)!

Continuing, the blessed man is described as a tree that "bringeth forth its fruit in its season." This mighty tree is fruitful. It is alive—not dead! Therefore, the righteous are to be fruitful in the kingdom of God (John 15:8; Mark 16:15).

Lastly, the prosperous tree is portrayed as one whose "leaf also shall not wither." The prosperous tree is an evergreen tree. It is a thriving, healthy, prosperous tree! Likewise, the faithful Christian is one who will live forever—in the glory of heaven (Revelation 2:10). Yea, the blessed man will prosper, for he is one who lays his treasures up in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21; Revelation 3:17-18)!

### **THE PERISHING WAY OF THE UNGODLY**

We read of the perishing course of the ungodly: verses 4 and 5 teach "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Notice that the "ungodly are not so." They are unlike the blessed man who: (1) walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly; (2) nor standeth

in the way of sinners; and (3) nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. The ungodly are those who: (1) do follow the advice of the wicked; (2) assemble with sinners; and (3) sit in the seat of those who mock God. Therefore, because of their following the destructive course which leads to eternal hell (Matthew 7:13), they are described as worthless "chaff which the wind driveth away." The reason for their unfit and perishing condition is because they follow after the creeds and doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9; 7:21-23), rather than the good word of God! Therefore, at the judgment bar of Christ, they will not stand (Matthew 25:41-46; John 5:28-29)!

### **THE PURPOSE IS GIVEN**

Finally, verse six presents the reason why the ungodly shall perish: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." The judgment will be a day of revealing (Galatians 6:7-8; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; II Corinthians 5:10)! On that great day the Lord will approve of the one who follows his will (Matthew 7:21) However, to the ungodly, they will hear his despairing words: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23)!

In conclusion, Psalm one contains these five important points. There are two ways with two different destinations offered to every accountable person. Which will you choose? We pray that all will choose the way of the "blessed man" (Psalm 1:1-3).

## *The Price of Discipleship*

**W. EDWIN KEARLEY**

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

It is an honor to be a disciple of Christ. A disciple is one taught or trained (Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible). W.E. Vine says that the word disciple "denotes one who follows one's teaching, as the disciple of John, Matthew 9:14." (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). Privileges are granted unto the disciple and blessings descend upon him in time and eternity. But in order to be a "disciple and to attain these favors, a price

must be paid. What is the price? The answer is found in our text.

**SELF-RESTRAINT IS A PRICE WHICH MUST BE PAID.** "Let him deny himself," said the Master. This does not mean one should torture his body and refuse life's joys. It does mean that he must curb his lower self and exercise self-control. Of what is a disciple required to deny himself? Paul said that the grace of God hath appeared "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts ..." (Titus 1:12). John urged, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16). This is not a heartless restraint imposed by an arbitrary power. (1) Self-control is a law of development. The person who disregards it does not grow. (2) It is a law of protection. He who ignores it is exposed to injury. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," Paul said (I Corinthians 9:27). (3) The Master denies us of "ungodliness and worldly lusts" for the same reason that a mother denies her child unwholesome food, or poisons. Every command is given through love for our good.

**THE PRICE OF DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES SELF-SACRIFICE.** Jesus said, "And take up his cross." . . . There are two words which convey to the mind the darker experiences of life. They are: (1) Burdens. Burdens are the inevitable cares and strain of daily life. (2) Thorns. A thorn is a limitation. It may be mental or physical. It is that which makes life miserable and duty difficult. Paul had one. He said that he was given "a thorn in the flesh, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations ..." (II Corinthians 12:7). Paul prayed three times for it to be removed. The Lord answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

Paul responded, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Corinthians 12:9).

# **Some Just Don't Like Preaching**

**RONNIE A. MISSILDINE**

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:17-24).

This scripture tells us that there were those in Paul's day who viewed preaching as foolishness or unnecessary. But Paul, in using a little irony said that "it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Some people just don't like to hear preaching. Consequently you hear them say, "The sermon was too long, " because it went 35 minutes. Or they say, "We shouldn't have gospel meetings any more: they are outdated." What they are really saying is, "I don't like preaching."

Don't think that I am saying that people ought to come just to hear the preacher entertain. I am not! There is something much more fundamental than that. People OUGHT to want to come to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ preached.

In an analysis, we might find two problems. First, maybe some preachers are trying to entertain instead of preaching the gospel. Consequently people are not really helped by an entertaining (?) little sermonette. It may be that more jokes and

illustrations are given than Bible quotations, and people are not edified enough.

But second, it could be that some listeners are "dull of hearing . . . lest they should hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should be converted ..." (Matthew 13:15). That, friends, is an attitude problem on the part of the listener! We ought to want to listen EVERY TIME the truth of God's word is preached, whether we are 'entertained' or not. We need it so we can be edified and grow and learn — and (if nothing else) to hear the old, old story that we love so well!

The gospel is not outdated. It remains God's power to save (Romans 1:16). And the preaching of it is still "the power of God, and the wisdom of God!"

## ***How Much Of The Lord's Time Have You Stolen?***

**EDSEL BURLESON**

A Rochester, Texas, church bulletin told about a young man who was working in a large department store. His employer told him he would be required to work on Sunday. It so happened that the hours assigned to him would have prevented his attending any of the worship services which he had regularly attended since childhood. The young man informed his employer that he would not be able to continue his work under those conditions, and his employer told him he would have to go.

A few days later, the young man answered an ad in the paper from a bank which had advertised a vacancy for a teller. In checking the young man's previous employers, the bank president contacted the department store head and inquired as to the boy's record, and whether he could recommend him. The store manager replied, "Why, yes, I'll be glad to recommend him. He will make you a good man ... I just fired him a few days ago."

"Fired him?" the bank president exclaimed. "Why would you recommend a man whom you just recently dismissed from your service?" The store manager explained the circumstances under which the boy was released, and remarked, "I know he will make a good man for your bank, because if he won't steal the Lord's

time, he won't steal your money!"

How much of the Lord's time have you stolen? It is such a temptation to take the Lord's Day and use it as our own!

Time is such a valuable possession. Each of us has exactly the same amount. But how differently it is used, or misused! Waste of time is the most extravagant and costly of all expenses. Schiller said, "He who neglects the present moment throws away all he has." The Apostle Paul urged: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Colossians 4:5).

Longfellow said, "It takes less time to do a thing right than it does to explain why you did it wrong." Once we lose time it is gone forever! One today is worth a dozen tomorrow.

The man who make the best use of his time has most to spare.

## **Faith**

**FRANK D. YOUNG**

The great need of the world is faith in God. We need the faith of Abraham, to trust God for his promises. We need the faith of Noah (Hebrews 11:7) to do what God has said. In our worship to God, we must have the faith of Abel (Hebrews 11:4). We need the faith of Moses, in deciding between conflicting voices of today (Hebrews 11:23-26). "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him" (Hebrews 11:6). The necessity of faith is, therefore, emphasized in this statement.

The nearest to a definition of "faith" in the Bible is found in Hebrews 11:1, which says: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This definition is two-fold. Faith is, first, that which gives substance to, or stands under it is "assurance of things hoped for." Also it is the "evidence" or the proving or testing "of things not seen." One therefore might give mental assent to the truthfulness of a proposition, and still not have "faith" in the sense of this definition. As an illustration of this, Hebrews 11:30 says: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." This example harmonizes with God's definition of faith. In Joshua 6 we learn how the walls of Jericho fell. God commanded Joshua and Israel to

march around the walls once each day for six days; then on the seventh day, they were to march around seven times. Joshua and the Israelites believed God — he believed God would give him the city when he did what God said. He, therefore, was assured of the truthfulness of what God said. But that was only the first half of the definition of faith: he then must offer evidence, or accept the testing or proving. Hence, he began to march, as God had said. One does not have faith in the sense of this statement when he merely gives assent to the fact that Christ is the Son of God. But, when one has the faith spoken of in Hebrews 11:1, that one not only believes in Christ as God's Son, but he believes to the extent of DOING what Christ has said.

In Ephesians 4:5 Paul says there is "one faith." There had been other kinds of faith, as there had been other baptisms. In the early church there was miraculous faith; but that faith had ceased to be. Hence, Paul said there is "one," and calls it the "common faith" (Titus 1:4). Thus it is a faith all can have.

The Bible says: "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). Whatever we do in becoming Christians, or in worship to God, we must do by faith. In Romans 10:17 Paul says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Thus to walk by faith is to walk according to God's truth. If one walks by the way that merely SEEMS right, that one does not walk "by faith." Cain was condemned because he failed to walk by faith—he did not do what God said. People can not bring into Christian worship mechanical instruments and not sin. The New Testament does not authorize them.

In becoming a Christian, one must "walk by faith." When one repents of his sins, he is walking by faith, since God's word demands that we thus do. One cannot become a child of God by faith without being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3). God's word demands that we be baptized (Acts 10:47-48), and we must walk by it.

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