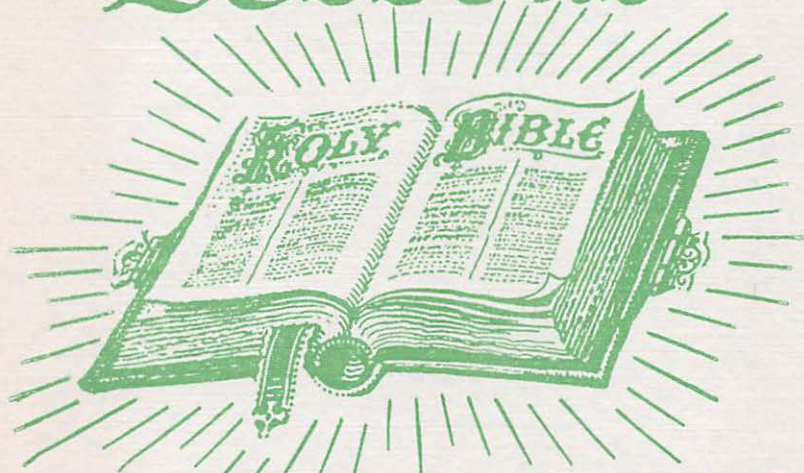


Bible Lessons



"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 22

Jan., Feb., March

No. 1

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Theme For First Quarter, 1990

Just recently I listened to an anointed message concerning being in the right place where God can use us and work with us. As I listened, I began to muse on what those places are where God wants us to be so that He can be glorified to bless us and to work with us.

God told Elijah to go to the brook Cherith, and that he was to drink of the brook, and God said, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee 'there.' " (I Kings 17:3-4). In Genesis 22:2 God told Abraham to take his son, Isaac, to the land of Moriah; and to offer him "there" for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which he would tell him. In both of these instances it was vital for these men to be "there," that is, in the place that God had commanded them to be. Had they not been "there," the blessings would not have come, and someone might have perished. It is likewise indispensable for us to get "there" in our lives.

Our lessons for this quarter will be a survey and study of the various attitudes and dispositions that we must have in our hearts to be "there" where the channel of the blessings of God will flow. May the Lord bless these *Bible Lessons* to the spiritual edification of every one, and let us earnestly endeavor to always be "there" in that place where God will fulfill His precious promises to us.—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

January 7, 1990

POOR IN SPIRIT: SENSING ONE'S NEED

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O

Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Isaiah 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Memory Verse: . . .Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? James 2:5.

Central Thought: The gospel can only be received and appreciated by those who sense their poverty and their need of the grace of God to the point of willingness to obey and qualify for whatever the gospel call them.

Word Definitions: *Poor:* Having little or no means, beggarly or like a beggar, inferior, needy. *"The acceptable year of the Lord":* This is an allusion to the Jewish year of jubilee. This was a year of general release of debts and obligations, and the setting free of bondmen and women. This is fulfilled in Christ's deliverance for the soul from the bondage of sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today concerns a most vital place for every person to be in before the Lord. We must without fail be "there." And that is being poor in spirit, inwardly, and sincerely conscious of our true condition before the Lord. No man will be very earnest and sincere in his approach to God without being deeply conscious of his state of poverty and destitute condition. Notice that Jesus headed the list of the

beatitudes with this thought of being poor in spirit. Our Scripture in Luke is drawn from the occasion of Christ coming in the power of the Spirit to His hometown of Nazareth where He went into the synagogue and stood up to read from the Holy Scriptures, as was His custom. He read from Isaiah the prophet. The place was Isaiah 61 and it spoke of the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the bruised. He went on to tell them that this Scripture was being fulfilled that day in their ears. Not being poor in spirit, the people of that city did not receive what He had said, and sought to throw Him over a cliff. Our text from the gospel of Matthew shows the poor and humble woman seeking help for her daughter, not being offended at the way in which Christ dealt with her; even to the point of being literally called a dog she did not turn away in anger and offence. Many would have been offended when Christ first answered her not a word. But she humbled herself in true deep poverty of spirit and justified the Lord. Our text from Isaiah shows the ones who acknowledge their ignorance and darkness to see and hear the words of the gospel to their joy and happiness.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of poverty does being poor in spirit imply?
2. What is promised to the person who is thus poor in spirit?
3. Will a person who does not think himself as poor, needy, blind, bruised, or enslaved be very open and receptive to the gospel of Christ?
4. Is there much danger in a person not being as poor as they should be in their own estimation?
5. What can a person do in order to be poor in spirit and remain that way all through life's journey?
6. What were the three main areas that the Canaanite woman could have become offended at Christ?
7. Why did she not become offended?
8. What is shown when a person is hurt and retaliates by taking offence?
9. Will a person who really senses their need take offence from the one they know will give the needed help?
10. Can you give a close description of the disposition of a person who is truly poor in spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The first place that is so vital for the soul to be in to receive of God's help is that of being poor in spirit, having a

deep-felt sense of our need before the Lord. Now we are all poor and needy before God, but in many people's minds they are not aware of how poor and needy they are. There is so much vain pride in the heart that dims one's consciousness of their need before God. It is easy to look on others and to see their needs, but very difficult for one to trace the extent of their own needs. But if we will be honest with ourselves and realize how poor, little and insignificant we are, it will help us to be in that attitude and frame of mind that will be receptive to the dealings of the Spirit of God with our souls. When we are not poor and able to sense our needs, we are cut off from the fulfillment of having our needs met. One elderly lady who was sent by her children to stay with some of the people of her faith in a distant city was visited one day by a social welfare worker concerning her old age pension. She told the welfare lady that she did not need her old age pension any more because she had a job with the church. When the pastor's wife took her to the office the next day to get things straightened out, she really did give them a line. She said she did not need a pension, and would never need a pension any more, as she had thousands of dollars in a bank in Texas that she had inherited from her granddaughter. This woman missed out on her pension for several months because she had it in her mind that she did not need it, and it was her only source of income at that time. God help us that we will not be like that lady concerning the things that we need from God. Being poor in spirit will help us to be aware of our needs so that we can diligently put in for our souls to be blessed with the blessings that God has provided for us to have. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is it that makes a person poor in spirit? Financial poverty tends to make a person forsake self-reliance, but it is not a absolute sign of being poor in spirit. There are many who are poverty stricken and very proud. I also feel that if we are in a proper relationship with God He can entrust some of this world's goods in our care and we can yet remain poor in spirit. Solomon expressed a desire that all dedicated Christians can have and be in the realm of God's will. It was, "... give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Prov. 30:8.

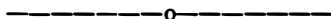
Mental poverty is not a prerequisite to being poor in spirit. We should not view ignorance as Godliness. There is a trap in being lifted up in our own eyes through knowledge, yet a

responsibility is placed upon us to recognize the gifts God has given us and to put them into use. Some seem to feel it is humility to constantly degrade their abilities. These are the type who may finally convince themselves that they are of no profit to God or man.

Being poor in spirit means to have our eyes upon God and behold His greatness to the extent that we realize how much we need Him. When the Publican and Pharisee were in the temple, the Pharisee looked at himself and was proud. The Publican looked at God and was humbled. Being a Publican, he may have been well off financially, but the need of God's mercy became uppermost in his mind.

A good comparison of being poor in spirit was brought out by Christ when He said, ". . . Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. It doesn't matter how many nice toys a child may have or how gifted he is intellectually, he still has a need for parents to provide and train him. Likewise, there is no realm on this earth that can be attained where man no longer needs God.

—Wayne Murphey



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January 14, 1990

REPENTANCE BEFORE GOD

Ezekiel 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

33:14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Luke 3:5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Luke 24:46 . . . Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Memory Verse: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. II Corinthians 7:10.

Central Thought: The gospel of Jesus Christ is calling for all mankind to repent and turn away from their sins against God with godly sorrow and be made new creatures in Christ Jesus to live as God would be pleased and glorified.

Word Definitions: *Repent:* To turn back or change from the error of one's way of life, deeply sorry to have grieved God and transgressed against Him, with a willingness to follow and obey God's Word forever. *"Restore the pledge":* Be willing to pledge one's self anew to serve God faithfully always. *"Fruits meet for repentance":* By your actions and ways show that you are sorry for your sins and are willing to walk in the way of God. *"The kingdom of heaven is at hand":* It has approached, come near, within reach of every soul. *"Remission of sins":* Pardon, forgiveness of sins. *"Be converted":* To revert, turn or come again. *"Godly sorrow":* Being sorry for grieving and offending our gracious Creator.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Repentance with godly sorrow before God is the place which every man, woman, boy, or girl must come to before they can be reinstated to God's favor. There is no way a man can enter into the kingdom of heaven without repentance. Our texts from Ezekiel bring it out very plainly that unless one repents of his transgressions, his end will be death and eternal ruin. Sin must be cast away and one must be made anew in heart and spirit. Repentance is not only ceasing from doing wrong, but there must be restitution and the fixing up and making right of the wrongs done in the past to his or her fellowman. From Matthew, Mark, and Luke we have framed the structure of the repentance message and ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. John's ministry was to prepare the hearts of people to receive the Christ who was to follow him. This preparation was to be effected by repentance, changing one's way of life from the old ways of sin and wrong to a life of righteousness and purity. The valleys to be filled are the low places of shame and dishonor. The mountains and hills are the areas of pride and vanity in the hearts of people that must be forsaken and brought to humility. The crooked to be made straight are the dishonest and deceitful ways that sin had gotten man into. And the rough to be made smooth covers all the unkind and selfish traits of man. Repentance begins

the work of salvation, which brings men and women back to the holy and happy life that God originally intended for them to live.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does man have to repent?
2. Is there anyone who does not need to repent?
3. What does repentance do for a person?
4. What kind of feeling is in the heart of a person who is truly repentant?
5. What are some of the fruits that show a person to be truly sorry for their sins?
6. What kind of valleys need to be filled?
7. How did John prepare a people for the Lord?
8. What is the preparation that people need to make today to receive the Saviour?
9. What mountains are to be brought low, what crooked things are to be made straight, and what rough places in people's lives need to be made smooth?
10. Is there any way a person can find favor with God and enter into His kingdom without repenting?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"And the times of this [man's] ignorance God winked at [overlooked]; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" Acts 17:30. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Every person has fallen into the pitfalls of sin. We were all shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. (Psalm 51:5). We were all caught in sin's snare before we realized what was happening. But we are not beyond hope and redemption. There is mercy and deliverance for us. But before we can partake of the Saviour's love and forgiveness we must become truly sorry and repentant in our hearts because of our sins and what we have done against the loving God who formed us. Godly sorrow and Holy Spirit conviction will cause a man to quit doing many things that he knows are wrong. There are some sinful ways and practices that may take the power of God to deliver from, but there must be a willingness to turn loose of those things and an abhorrence in the heart for those evils before victory can be gained. Real and true repentance does something for the soul. There are many people today who claim to be religious who have not turned from their evil ways in true repentance. It is more than just turning over a new leaf or making some New

Year's resolutions. It takes a determined stand to quit the sin business, and a firm resolve to part with the old master, Satan, and a total surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ as Master for all time. One must be sincere and mean it with all of their heart. No pretence nor hypocrisy can be in the heart. One must maintain this repentant attitude all along life's journey. A repentant attitude will help one to be quick to correct mistakes and wrongs committed along the way. It is willingness to submit one's self to all the teachings of the blessed Saviour who died for us on Calvary that we might be saved and washed heavenly pure. True repentance is the only foundation that man must lay in his heart for the true foundation, Christ, to be laid upon. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"There is only one way to prove that we have truly repented. It will not be enough to tell people that we have; they will wait to see the evidence in our lives. Suppose a wicked man repents and then goes back Monday morning to his old wicked ways; will anybody credit his Sunday's profession? He must go Monday morning to a new life if his repentance is to pass for anything. Everybody knows what is right in such a case. None are quicker to cry out against the sincerity and genuineness of the man's profession than wicked men themselves, when they see him continue in his old evil ways. Even bad men know what it is to be good; thus they pay high compliment to Christianity. Repentance amounts to nothing whatever if it produces only a few tears, a spasm of regret, a little fright as a flash from eternity reveals to a man his guilt and danger, and then a return tomorrow to the same old wicked ways. What are the works that are worthy of repentance?

"A grocer went home from the meeting one night where he had heard a sermon about false weights and measures, and burnt the 'bushel' he had been using to cheat his customers. A father who had been living carelessly in his home, when awakened to the truth, took down the old family Bible and confessed to his household his neglect, and re-established the family altar. These are illustrations of work worthy of repentance. In short, we must leave the sins we repent of, and must do them no more, and we must walk in the new clean ways of holiness. The heart is the important matter in all spiritual life, but the heart makes the life; and if the life be yet evil the heart can be no better, whatever external profession of betterment it may have made. The way to prove to men that we

have really repented, is really to repent, and the fact will soon speak for itself."

—Taken from, *Come Ye Apart*
by J. R. Miller

This is a picture of a man's life showing the various times and the hinderances that keep him from being able to find and have fellowship with God, His Maker.

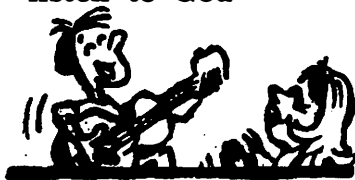
**Too young to believe
in God**



**Too many childish
amusements to ponder or think about
God.**



**Too merry and
pleasure seeking to
listen to God**



**Too busy studying
for education to de-
vote himself to God.**



**Too worried, and
taken up to wait for
or hope in God.**



**Too busy and en-
gaged to attend to
God.**



**Too tired, weary and
run down to pray to
God.**

Too old, aged, to convert or turn to God



Too sick or ill to seek God



Too late to trust in Christ!



January 21, 1990

FEAR AND REVERENCE FOR GOD

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Psalms 2:10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

89:6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Romans 11:20 . . . Be not highminded, but fear:

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Memory Verse: Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Psalm 33:8.

Central Thought: God is worthy of all reverence, respect, honor, and loving worship from His created beings. He is

Almighty, All-wise, and All-knowing, and it is for our profit that we fear Him and seek with all of our hearts to please Him.

Word Definitions: *Trembling*: The quaking and shuddering that comes from being affected by the presence of something great and terrible. *"Kiss the Son"*: Embrace or lovingly receive; worship purely and receive His discipline and instruction. *"When his wrath is kindled but a little"*: Christ has put Himself out so much to effect our salvation, and for us to slight or despise Him can easily incur His wrath and displeasure. *Arrogancy*: A swelling up of pride and haughtiness. *Froward*: The opposite of toward; deliberately opposed to the right.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Solomon finished up his book of Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, with the conclusion that he had made concerning all he had written. Many things he had studied out and commented on but in spite of everything, he wisely summed it all up, as more vivid proof, that the wise course in life for us to take is to obey and honor our Creator as we are commanded. He agreed with his father, David, who exhorted in his famous second Psalm to be wise and fear the Lord. It is generally believed that this Psalm was written on the occasion of David's ultimate overthrow of the Philistines who came en masse against him after he had taken the throne of Israel. But it is mostly valuable to us as a direct prophecy of Christ's kingdom and power. It is wise for us to fear and honor Christ with love, worship, and admiration in our hearts. Not only should we fear and respect God, we should fear and respect His Son, also. To fear God is to regard Him and hold Him always in loving respect, honor, and submission. As our New Testament quotations show, our fear of God should exist because of His jurisdiction and disposing of us in our future day to be tried by Him, and in the sense of our own weakness and unworthiness. Since we are so frail and unable to do that which is least, why do we try to do the things which are so rash and out of line? The fear of the Lord will do away with pride and the big head. It will stop all boasting and self promotion. Let us fear God, my friend, and give Him the glory that is due Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the attributes of God that merit fear, reverence and respect from us?

2. How does a person who truly fears God feel about himself?
3. What is the wisest disposition of heart that a person can have?
4. Why should we be afraid to displease God?
5. How does the fear of God affect our feelings and dealings with our fellowman?
6. Can a man truly love and fear God and at the same time hate or despise holiness?
7. How does the fear of man hinder the fear of God?
8. Can you think of other wise attitudes that attend the fear of God in a person's life?
9. How does the fear of God cause us to want to worship and to love Him?
10. From the truths gathered from the Scriptures in our lesson today, see if you can name the just reasons why our whole duty is to fear and obey God.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Without the fear of God in a person's life, there is no telling what course he or she will take, except that it will always be downward. The world is in the mess that it is in today because people have failed to reverence and fear God as they should. All the evils permitted and condoned would be eliminated from people's hearts and minds if the fear of God was there. The fear of God is underlaid in the heart of man by a deep sense of his own weakness, unworthiness and folly. The pride of men's hearts keeps the fear of God from taking root. Oh, if man could only realize how helpless and insufficient he really is! The awful accounts of history reveal the wretched folly of fools who have refused to acknowledge and honor God. There was Pharaoh who foolishly resisted and dishonored God. He ended up drowned in the sea with his whole army. There was King Nebuchadnezzar who was lifted up with pride and vainglory until he was driven from men to spend seven years as an animal! His son, Belshazzar, dared to drink wine from the holy vessels of the temple of God in his drunken folly and was slain that very night. There was King Saul who got lifted up in pride and grew jealous of David, a man after God's own heart, consulting a witch on the eve of his own self-destruction! And there was Herod who, refusing to give God the glory, was quickly devoured with worms! And the list is much longer. Down through the years we see many examples of foolish people who refused to fear and reverence God and His Word. Look at their outcome and end! View then

the happiness and success of people who did fear the Lord. Oh, how we need to always be in this place of fearing and reverencing God! It is another one of these places that we should in no wise fail to be in all the days of our life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

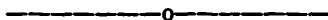
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Scriptures give us just reason as to why we should fear the Lord. Micah 2:1-3 says, "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even aman and his heritage. Therefore, thus saith the Lord; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which he shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil." We can see in society today some evils that men bring upon themselves because they fail to fear the Lord and His righteous ways. Such evils they cannot remove their neck from and many times the evil itself brings about death. History has proven that the fear of the Lord is conducive to longevity of life, whether it be individuals, cities or nations.

In our lesson God gives a warning to kings and judges. It is strange how a little power can go to a persons head. This feeling of power leads to self-dependence and abuse of authority. Ecclesiastes 5:8 points out a truth that it would be well for everyone in a position of authority to keep in mind. "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they."

As we fear God and gain wisdom, we will come to a deeper understanding of God, one in which we will see Him as a God of love and compassion.

—Wayne Murphey



January 28, 1990

**FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
AS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD**

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Romans 10:8 . . . The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Memory Verse: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

Central Thought: God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the Saviour of all mankind. He is our only hope of victory over sin and death. We must believe in Him, and follow Him faithfully all the days of our life.

Word Definitions: *Believe:* To be so fully persuaded that Christ is the Saviour that we forsake our sins and fully put our trust in Him for everything. *"God sent his Son":* God planned, commissioned, and accompanied Jesus, His Son, to come down into this dark world to take upon himself human flesh to atone for the sins of mankind. *Manifest:* To make apparent, clear, and beyond all doubt and question.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our hearts swell with gladness and praise as we survey the wonderful Words of Jesus and His disciples in our lesson today that express Christ's mission into this world! From the writings of John, the beloved disciple, we hear from Jesus' own mouth the gracious things that He said about Himself. It is the work of God for us to count these things true and apply ourselves in a true and faithful devotion to Him and His blessed cause. We were helpless and without strength to throw off the shackles of sin that bound us, but God sent Jesus down from heaven to rescue and save us from our lost condition. The people who had sought so earnestly for Jesus asked Him what they might do to work the works of God. Perhaps their minds were soaring high about what to do in their human efforts. Christ's answer was to simply believe in Him whom God had sent to them. Ponder the wonderful Words Christ spoke to Martha and later to doubting Thomas. Thank God that we have these gracious Words on record to read and believe! Let us open wide our hearts to receive their blessed message! It is true, every word of it. We never need doubt it. It is for each one of us to believe it with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and follow it through for the remaining days of our pilgrimage on earth. And, as we believe and trust for our own salvation and hope, may we bear witness of Him before mankind. Regardless of how much confusion exists in the world concerning Christ, the truth of Christ still stands and works today for salvation and victory for all who truly believe in Him with all their hearts. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the world need a Saviour?
2. Who did God send to be our Saviour?
3. Why was God's giving of His Son for us such a great thing for Him and for us?
4. Is it possible for us to believe in Christ with a vain faith?
5. How can we believe in something that we have not seen?
6. How close to us is the obtaining of the Saviour's grace?
7. What value to our faith is confessing with our mouth?
8. Is it true that our religion is our own private business?
9. Why did John write the things about Christ that he did?
10. What did the Father send the Son into the world to be?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God looked down upon His creation and beheld them year after year sinking deeper and deeper into the pit of sin. In the proper time of this frail planet's years God sent His Son to redeem poor, fallen mankind back to fellowship with Him. God was in Christ as He made His advent and appearing into this world. Jesus did come in the likeness of sinful flesh to bear our infirmities and sorrows and to atone for our sins. What we read in the Gospels is true, even though it is so wonderful that we can scarcely take it in. The blessed story of Jesus never grows old. His birth, His ministry, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father—all of this is the world's greatest story. It is for us to believe with all of our hearts. Think of the effect of Christ's visit to the world. No other person who ever lived influenced and affected the tide of human history as He did. God had spoken in various ways and at different times to the people of long ago by the prophets, but now He is speaking to men by His Son. His Divine Son now comes to bring good tidings of God's love and willingness to forgive sins and be reconciled to man. God, speaking through His Son, utters a message to the heart of man that has never before been uttered. It is a message of love, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and a willingness to start all over. The past sins and errors can be forgotten, smothered by the great blanket of God's grace falling so abundantly on the souls of men. It is at hand, all within our reach today. Let us reach out and take hold of His grace and strength and live victoriously in His name forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

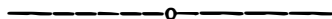
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When John G. Paton, first missionary to the cannibals of the South Sea Islands, was translating the New Testament into their language, he could not find an adequate equivalent for the word faith. One day a runner came into his tent out of breath and, with an exclamation, sank down upon his bamboo couch. Patton leaped to his feet crying, "That's it! That's it!" He asked the native to repeat the word. It meant that the native was casting his weight upon the bamboo couch. Patton said, "That's what faith in Christ is; it means to cast yourself upon Jesus Christ for reconciliation, for forgiveness, for redemption, for peace, and for everlasting life."

The third verse of the song *The Bondage of Love* states, "And now I have flung myself recklessly out, like a chip on the stream of the Infinite Will." This has the sound of one committing suicide, but in effect it is demonstrating faith in Christ and a giving up of our ways. One has never been let down who has cast himself upon Christ for salvation. The chorus of the song relates the result the author had when he flung himself upon the mercy of God. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! my soul is now free! For the precious blood of Jesus cleanseth even me."

A young soldier was shot on the battlefield, and dragged by a comrade aside to die. He shut his eyes, and all his past life flashed before him. It seemed but an instant of time. He looked forward and saw eternity, like a great gulf, ready to swallow him up, with his sins as so many weights sinking him deeper and deeper. Suddenly a lesson, which his pious mother taught him when a little boy at her knee, stood before him in shining letters. It was her only legacy. In the gaiety of life he had forgotten it. He had lost his hold on it, but it had never quite lost its hold on him; and now, in the hour of peril, it threw out a rope of mercy. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He caught the rope; it seemed let down from heaven. "Lord, I believe," he cried; "save me, or I perish!" This is a prayer never uttered by a penitent soul in vain.

—Wayne Murphey



February 4, 1990

WORSHIP, THANKSGIVING, AND PRAISE TO GOD

Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, . . .

116:1 I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Lamentations 3:22 It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24 The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Habakkuk 3:17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

I Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Memory Verse: 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. Psalm 117.

Central Thought: God is well pleased with a thankful heart who will praise and worship Him regardless of what evil or sorrow may befall. He is worthy of all the praise, thanksgiving, and worship that we can offer.

Word Definitions: "*Deep places of the earth, and the strength of the hills*": The Psalmist here is referring to the vast treasures and resources that are found underground in mines and excavations, such as silver, gold, precious stones, etc. *Worship*: To prostrate one's self in homage and adoration. *Portion*: Allotment or inheritance. *Peculiar*: Separate, particular, a special purchase for a special purpose.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are studying this quarter about some various attitudes and dispositions that we must maintain in our hearts if we are to be where God would be pleased with us to be. Today we will consider the thought of being thankful and worshiping God in praise. This is a very important part of the disposition of a true child of God. It is very evident that God takes note of and is very well pleased with a person who is thankful and happy with his lot in life and with the blessings that God has blessed him with. God is not pleased with people who murmur, complain, fret, worry, and are constantly living on the dark side of life. This place of praise is a place that we all must constantly be attentive to stay in. So many burdens press all around and the sorrows of life weigh pretty heavily upon us. We are tempted to give way to despair, but the Lord would be pleased if we would obey the Scriptures in our lesson today, and many more on the subject in the Word of God. This was one reason why David prevailed with God in spite of his sins and weaknesses. He was very efficient and faithful to praise and worship God. It is generally understood that Psalm 95 is the actual expression and composition of David. From the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the prophet Habakkuk come adoring praises from the midst of trouble and adversity. When God hears praises and thanksgiving coming from a child of His in trouble and the trials of life, it is a sacrifice that is most pleasing to Him. Along with all of the other areas that we are considering in this series, let us be sure to be "there," that is, in that place where we continually praise the Lord, worship and honor Him faithfully, and offer thanks daily to His blessed name.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you offered praise to the Lord today?
2. Did you come to the house of worship and the service of God today with a thankful and glad heart?
3. How many blessings have you received from God's hand of love and mercy thus far today?
4. Can you say that you are richly blessed?
5. Where does all the petroleum, metal ore, minerals, and precious stones come from?
6. Do you really appreciate and cherish all the answers to prayer that God has granted to you in life?
7. Is praise and thanksgiving a vital part of your prayer life?
8. Have you been guilty of any negative statements or murmurings or complainings in the past few days?
9. Can you truly say that you are happy in the Lord and satisfied with His dealings with you?
10. Do you think this is a very important or worthwhile lesson today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As we count our blessings and look around at the wonderful goodness of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, we cannot help but offering a glad "Praise the Lord" out of the depth of our souls. He daily loads us with benefits. Think of the beautiful world that He created. See that bright sun shining down from the lovely blue sky, and think of the rain and moisture that falls from time to time. How about the many different kinds of flowers and trees and the soft grass that grows beneath our feet? And there are the birds and the animals and the fish in the sea. What about that gasoline and oil that you use to run your automobile and the fine roads that we drive on, made from minerals that are taken out of the earth—the gifts of God? Where would we be without these special blessings? Don't you think we need to praise the Lord a little more? There are the personal blessings of health, strength, and the right use of our minds. Yes, we all have our infirmities and limitations, but we still have a lot to be thankful for. When the Lord takes a loved one, do you stop and thank God for letting them be with you as long as He did in the midst of your weeping for their departure? Who watched over you while you were helpless in unconscious sleep last night? We thank the Lord for these blessings, but most of all we thank and praise Him for His great love in Christ in sending Him down to this dark world to pay the price for our ransom so that we can be saved evermore. The precious Holy

Spirit that He sent and His Word that has been so miraculously preserved through the ages, all these are the gracious outreach to us of a God who is worthy of all our worship, honor, and praise. Are you "there" today, in that place of gratitude and praise to God, happy in the Saviour? If you are not "there," you should be. We owe everything to God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God has two dwelling places: one in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart. It is a humble mind from which thanksgiving will naturally spring. Notice those about you who are proud and exalted. Such individuals may be so preoccupied with pronouncing their attainments that they have no time to be thankful. Many times they not only fail to be thankful, but are unable to recognize the things to be thankful for.

I am reminded of what H. W. Beecher wrote: "If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would it draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings, only the iron in God's sand is gold."

Always keep in mind that the worship, the sacrifice, and the service that are the most acceptable to God come from a thankful heart.

—Wayne Murphey

President Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation

In late 1863, a certain elderly lady named Sarah Hale, a magazine editor, suggested to President Lincoln that he issue a proclamation for a day of national thanksgiving to God. The country was being torn and devastated by civil war, and at first Mr. Lincoln did not take to the idea. But later he decided to issue such a proclamation, saying, "We do have many things that we must thank God for: for the sun, and the rain, and the earth, and the fruits thereof; for the hope that comes

when the hour seems darkest; for the ideas and ideals left us of our fathers; for the loved ones who comfort and sustain us; and for that future that we know will come when man will be at peace with his fellowman; and the United States will indeed be a group of united states. Yes, many things that we must thank God for; there are many: the food on our table, the roof over our head, the clothes we wear, the wood we burn, the beds we sleep in; simple things, yet things so important to our fathers that when they came to this raw and untamed wilderness, they fell on their knees and gave thanks to God for food, for shelter, and for life itself. Yes, no matter what sorrows we carry in our hearts, no matter what we have lost, we still have much to thank God for.

This was the proclamation:

The year that is drawing to a close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they came, others have been added, which are so extraordinary in nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful Providence of Almighty God.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow or the shuttle of the ship. The ax has enlarged the borders of our settlement, and the mines, as well of iron and coal, as of the precious metals, have yielded more abundantly than heretofore. No human counsel has devised, nor has any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, has nevertheless remembered us in mercy.

I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and those who are at sea, and also those sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.
November, 1863

A. Lincoln



February 11, 1990

BENEVOLENCE TOWARD OTHERS

Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 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.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Ephesians 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Memory Verse: And be ye kind one to another, tender-

hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32.

Central Thought: God accepts the standard of our feelings and dealings with others as a standard for His feelings and dealings with us.

Word Definitions: "*Owe no man anything*": Meet faithfully and on time every duty and obligation, not failing or falling behind in anything that is required of us. *Benevolence*: Being kind and well-minded toward others; the disposition to do good.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the writings of the beloved Apostle Paul to the Romans and the Corinthians we find worthy instruction for us concerning our relationship with others. The salvation of Christ carries a liability for a good relationship with our fellowman. Included in the blueprint and plan for the Christian life in this world are guidelines for knowing how to relate with others. The Scriptures that we have chosen for today's lesson deal with this thought. It constitutes an area of our lives that we must surely be in constantly if we are to qualify for God's grace to be upon us. We must surely be "there" at all times. We cannot expect the grace of God to abound in our lives if we are deficient in the benevolence that is due our fellow creatures whom God loves as much as He does us. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." James 2:8 calls this the royal law, and it is a royal law, the royal law of the King of kings and Lord of lords. It comes from Leviticus 19:18: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord." This is an area of our lives that we must keep under constant and diligent survey. In this world of strife and turmoil we see that it all consists in man not relating to man properly. We owe to one another and to our fellow creatures love, respect, mercy, patience, forbearance, kindness, and every other commodity of goodwill, regardless of who they are and how they have treated us. Let us remember that to fall behind in this and fail to be "there" will affect our relationship with God. It will do it every time. Many, many people's spiritual drought can be traced to their attitude and relationship with others. This has more to do with our success with God than many people realize. Worship for God and benevolent love for others go hand in hand.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main debt that we owe to our fellowman?
2. If we truly love our neighbour, will we ever intentionally do him wrong?
3. Why is God so strict concerning how we treat our fellowman?
4. What kind of a heart does a person have who takes pleasure in harming others?
5. Is our benevolence toward others to be confined only to other Christians?
6. What chance would we have to win someone to Christ if we are found doing them harm?
7. What is the only sure way to overcome evil?
8. How are we members one of another?
9. Instead of running someone down with evil talk and gossip, what should we do?
10. To what extent should we forgive anyone who wrongs us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Man has ascended to the skies above and walked on the moon, but is not able to walk on the earth with his fellowman in peace. What profit is going to the moon when we do not know how to get along down here? In the plan of salvation there was a special provision made for counsel and grace to know how to properly relate to our fellow creatures of earth. Jesus had quite a bit to say about it in His teachings, and those who followed Him echoed the message of proper human relations to the world. If men could but understand and walk in the light of Christ's example! What a different world it would be if everyone would do that! What a different condition the church world would be in if everyone would heed the instructions of Christ! Oh, the barriers that are built up between people! Prejudices and feelings and cold shoulders are everywhere. When will man learn? Christ has laid down the guidelines and if we will sincerely follow Him in His example of human relations we will find great joy and success. As the poet Whittier wrote: "To worship rightly is to love each other." God looks beyond the song, the prayer, and the sermon to behold our attitude toward our brother and fellowman. If He sees bitterness, strife, unkindness, and unforgiveness, the worship offered to Him means nothing. May God help us today that the barriers that have been built up between people will be torn down and man will know the real meaning of brotherhood.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"What is real Good?"

I asked in musing mood.

"Order, said the law court;

Knowledge, said the school;

Truth, said the wise man;

Pleasure, said the fool;

Love, said a maiden,

Beauty, said the page,

Freedom, said the dreamer;

Home, said the sage;

Fame, said the soldier;

Equity, the seer;—

"Spake my heart full sadly,

'The answer is not here.'

Then within my bosom

Softly this I heard:

'Each heart holds the secret;

Kindness is the word.' " —John O'Reilly

It seems that many people want to be kind, but knowing how to be kind is something that is not well understood. Kindness is not just felt in large acts, but many times the small acts are the ones that break down barriers and bind hearts together.

When Eugene Debs was imprisoned as a conscientious objector, he became interested in a prisoner who was said to be incorrigible, devoid of a spark of goodness. Since the prisoner would not speak to anyone, Debs started a campaign of kindness by leaving an orange on his bed and going off without a word. In spite of many rebuffs he gradually penetrated the hard exterior of the man, and the two became fast friends. Years later at the news of Debs death, the prisoner, now a useful citizen, made the comment, "He was the only Jesus Christ I ever knew."

We are told in the scriptures that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and He went about doing good. (Acts 10:3). Not only do we have a wonderful example on how to be kind, but we can have divine anointing as we do it.

—Wayne Murphey

Notice: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the second quarter of 1990 be in this office by March 1. For your convenience there is an order blank at the end of this book.

February 18, 1990

PURE DECISION FOR CHRIST

Luke 9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Matthew 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands,

for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Memory Verse: . . . No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke 9:62.

Central Thought: Only those who forsake all else and follow Christ alone will be successful for Him, and be accounted worthy to share eternal glory with Him.

Word Definitions: *"Let the dead bury their dead":* Let the unsaved or spiritually dead attend to such matters. *"Not fit":* Not properly disposed, will not succeed. A person cannot be efficient as a minister of the gospel who is motivated by financial gain. *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father":* This word "hate" is more properly rendered as "to love less."

LESSON BACKGROUND

If any person would be a real Christian and worker for the Lord, they must sever themselves from all things that are foreign and contrary to their heavenly calling. All ties must be severed that would pull or influence them back into the world of sin. The three men we see coming to Jesus in our text from Luke had some home ties that needed to be severed. To the first Jesus revealed that the way of following Christ would not be easy and one would be bereft of comforts that were once enjoyed at home. He said this to test this man's decision. Would he be willing to forfeit those comforts for the sake of the gospel? The next man wanted leave to go back and attend to the burial of his father. Jesus knew that there were no doubt other things pulling on this man, and that a leave of absence would put him in a position that would ensnare him. It was not so much the burying of his father that threatened this man's going with Christ, but the thousand and one other things that lurked back there. Christ needed people who could cut loose from everything, and He is still calling people today to cut loose for Him. There are so many involvements that will entrap us and keep us from following the Lord all the way. Jesus knows that we are all the same way. Very few people are willing to leave all to follow the Master and His meek and lowly ways. It takes pure and irrevocable decisions to go all the way with the Master.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the influences in this life that hinder people and keep them from giving all to Christ?

2. What does being hindered and pulled back by trifling things from the service of the Lord show in a person's life?
3. What was the real reason for Christ not suffering the man to go and bury his father?
4. What danger is there in just looking back?
5. How can fleshly relations influence a person from wholly following the Lord?
6. How did Paul feel about his success in Christ?
7. Will it take all the things mentioned by Paul to be able to attain the resurrection of the dead?
8. Is there any way for a person to live selfishly and to the flesh and yet make it to heaven?
9. What kind of future does a person have who follows the Lord in pure decision all the way?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Clean cut and pure decisions for Christ are indispensable to success and victory. There are many things that we must separate ourselves from for the Master's sake, not because they are wrong in themselves, but because they have a tendency to lead us to other things that will completely engulf our souls and drown us in perdition. My wife's mother told me about her father who once ran a cotton gin far out in the country from the city. He had a young man working for him who was staying out there with him. The man's relatives and friends were all back in the city. Christmas time came and the young man begged leave to go home for the holidays. Grandfather said, "No, for if you go home you will get with the crowd and start to drinking, and then you will come back so drunk that you will be no count, and I need your help." Well, the young man kept up until he was allowed to go home. Sure enough, he got with the crowd and got so drunk that when he came back to the job and tried to work he messed up and got both arms in the gin saws and cut them off at the elbows. Jesus knows what influence can do to us. That is why we must sever ourselves from influences that will drag us down. We do not want to give the devil the chance that he is looking for. There are many people today who will talk about getting saved, and they really have a desire to do so, but they lack that pure decision. They are like the dog which was a cross between the beagle and the dachshund, a most frustrated creature who was forever torn between being a house pet and the call to roam the fields. Let us make pure decisions for Christ, give up the world and give ourselves to the Lord with all of our hearts and follow Him all the way.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is said that Zinzendorf once asked John Wesley, "Do you think it was self-denial for the Lord Jesus to come down from heaven to rescue a world?" John Wesley's answer was, "Was it self-denial? No, it was love — love that swallows up everything and first of all self." Christ didn't leave the splendors of heaven, come to this world and do without in order to make a name for Himself. Rather it was because He was moved by the heart-throbs of a lost and dying world. He loved the creation of His Father and gladly denied self in order to redeem it.

If we are to follow Christ we must be likewise impelled. Our love for Christ and His cause in the earth must be uppermost in our desires. Otherwise what we sacrifice in this life will bring no eternal reward. Sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice is nothing more than asceticism and not Godliness. God must give us a burden of sacrifice for it to be of profit.

God loves a cheerful giver. (II Cor. 9:7). If we love someone it is with delight that we spend the money we worked hard for in order to buy them a gift. When we present them the gift it is to find favor in their sight, not the favor of everyone else looking on. This attitude is exactly what Christ was looking for in His disciples. Think of how frustrating it would have been to Christ if His disciples had constantly complained and grumbled as they followed Him. Or, consider how disgusting the sight if the disciples had followed Him with great pride, boasting of their sacrifices for Christ's sake. Perhaps the Lord would have been tempted to quicken His pace and leave them behind.

If in our giving to God we do it with grumbling, He will not find pleasure in our sacrifice. If we do it for a name, His presence will not bless it. However, if we do it out of love, God will bless us many times over. —Wayne Murphey



February 25, 1990

COMPLETE CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

I Chronicles 29:5 . . . Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?

Psalms 27:4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Memory Verse For this is the will of God, even your sanctification . . . That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

I Thessalonians 4:3-4.

Central Thought: Since Jesus consecrated Himself to go to the cross as the supreme sacrifice for the salvation of the world, according to the will of God, all who believe in Him are

called by Him to make this same consecration to Him and His service as a living sacrifice forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today concerns a place that every child of God must come to in his life in order to receive the fulness of God's blessings in his soul. Sanctification and what it is has become a controversial subject in the church world today. But the difficulties are removed when we look at this subject on the terms of the consecration that God is calling us to make, the consecration that will bring the Holy Spirit down into our lives. Paul, after dwelling in the first eleven chapters of Romans on the issues of the law, sin, and what the faith of Jesus has brought to us, begins in the 12th chapter to bring forth the duties and responsibilities that are enjoined upon all who partake of the faith of the gospel. The first thing he says for us to do is to present our bodies as living sacrifices to do the will of God. Then we have Jesus in His final prayer, with the disciples before He entered into the dark hours preceding His sufferings, interceding with the Father for the spiritual welfare of His disciples. We notice that He prays for them to be sanctified, for which sake He sanctifies Himself by going willingly to the cross for their atonement. We also include the plea of David, at the end of his blessed and useful life, for willing consecration for the service needed in the temple construction. He had provided the materials in his lifetime for the great project, and now asks for willing consecration from his people. David had sought in his lifetime, as he brought out in the 27th Psalm, to live a consecrated life in the service of God. We find Paul's consecration to the death line in the last two Scriptures of our lesson, closing with the tender and yet resolute thought "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is, according to these Scriptures, the will of God for each one of us to consecrate our lives fully to God and His perfect will. This consecration will make it so that the Spirit of God will fill our souls and lead us through this life to heaven.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it a reasonable service for us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God?
2. Why is it that we should not be conformed to this present world?
3. What condition did Jesus say His disciples were in as He prayed to the Father for them?

4. What did he pray that the Father would do for them?
5. In what way did He sanctify Himself, and for what reason?
6. What concerning the work of God is the Lord asking of every soul today?
7. When we sanctify, or consecrate ourselves to the Lord, what will be the purpose of our life thereafter?
8. What should be the number one thing that we should seek after in life?
9. What were the three items David mentioned that were included in that one thing he was going to seek after?
10. What was Paul's purpose in life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"Since Jesus gave His life for me, should I not give Him mine?" This is the disposition that we should feel in our hearts toward the dear Saviour. Since He sanctified Himself to go all the way to Calvary and pour out His life's blood for us, it is only right, proper, and just that we make a definite and once for all consecration to Him with our life and all that we have. It is our reasonable service. Must Jesus suffer according to the will of God and we give nothing to Him in return? Oh, how every soul needs to consecrate their life to God! When Jesus went back to the Father, He left the promise to them of the Holy Spirit that He would send upon them. The disciples dedicated and consecrated themselves to Christ and prayed together, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. Today every child of God who has found forgiveness of their sins must seek God in holy consecration and giving up of self and earthly store. We must forsake our former desires and ambitions, and yield ourselves to His will and service, being willing to do anything and go anywhere, just so we are in His divine order. Oh, what a happy life one will have if they will sincerely and faithfully do this! Many wonderful experiences and blessings wait for the soul that is consecrated and yielded to the will of God. In the Lord's house is protection, peace, joy, happiness, and everything we will ever need for soul and body. The beauty of the Lord will He reveal to us, and unfold it more and more as the years come and go. We will daily inquire in His temple and learn wondrous things out of His gracious Word. Oh, how dear Christ is to us as life unfolds and we press closer to Him! Many lessons are to be learned, but the Holy Spirit is a faithful Teacher, then someday when life is over Christ will take us to that blessed home He has gone to prepare.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This is the testimony of a consecrated, dedicated life. The Apostle Paul who penned these words went on to write, "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. 1:22-24.

There is an interesting story concerning George Whitefield. At a private meeting of friends, after referring to the difficulties of the ministry, he said he was weary of the burdens and was glad that in a short time his work would be over and he could depart to be with Christ. All those present acknowledged the same feeling except for a Mr. Tennant. On seeing this Whitefield tapped him on the knee and said, "Well, Brother Tennant, you are the oldest man amongst us; do you not rejoice to think your time is so near at hand when you will be called home?" Mr. Tennant bluntly answered that he didn't. Being pressed he added, "I have nothing to do with death. My business is to live as long as I can, and as well as I can, and serve my Master as faithfully as I can, until He shall think proper to call me home."

The world, as well as the church, is in need of good men, great men and strong spiritual men. We can become such by making a full consecration in our heart for Christ and then let Him live through us. Much good can be accomplished as this is done, and we too can share the testimony of the Apostle Paul and others who have lived in God's employ.

—Wayne Murphey

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March 4, 1990

SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Jeremiah 7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

23 But this thing commanded I them, saying. Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.

I Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

I Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Memory Verse: For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

I Peter 4:17.

Central Thought: It is not only right and just for us poor, helpless mortals to be obedient to God and to His precious Word, but it is for our own good. If we will willingly obey the Lord and the gospel of His Son, all will go well with us in this life and we will enjoy the riches of heaven with Him forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we take up another vital place that we must all be in if we are to succeed for God. Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve the world was plunged into sin. Through the obedience of Christ to the will of God we are brought back to His favor. But for us to partake of Christ, we must become obedient children again. Disobedience got us into trouble, and it is through obedience that we can recover our lost estate. But it is not that we just start becoming obedient. There was One who had to be obedient for us. That was Christ, and as our lesson brings out, He learned obedience and was made perfect through the things He suffered. He was already a perfect Being as far as character and heart was concerned. But He was not perfect as our Saviour until He had been obedient and suffered the things that God required of Him. Now because He was obedient and suffered for us, we have the courage and understanding to submit ourselves to God and obey His precious Word. As our lesson reveals, God wants us to be obedient children. We are to cease from conforming to the children of disobedience around us in the world. Many today refuse to obey. It is because they do not see the love and goodness of Christ. They are afraid to obey, and their hearts are hardened in unbelief. But Jesus has suffered to deliver our souls from death, and He opened up the way that we can be obedient to God, also. We are all obeying something, some Master, if you please. You are either obeying the promptings of Satan through the lusts and desires of the flesh and of men, or you are letting the Spirit of God rule your life. Take heed to whom you are obeying, and be wise by submitting yourself to God, whose ways are right.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Name some reasons why it is wise to obey God.
2. Does a person gain anything by being rebellious and disobedient?
3. What was the main thing that God wanted out of the children of Israel?
4. Does God still require obedience today?
5. How will it go with us if we willingly obey?
6. What kind of state is the sinful world in today?
7. Can a person on their own start obeying God?
8. What did Christ have to do in order for us to be able to be obedient?

9. To whom is Christ the author of eternal salvation?
10. What does a person have to do to get out of the bondage of Satan and to enter the Kingdom of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Because of a state of disobedience and rebellion against the holy will of God, the world is in the mess and turmoil that it is in today. People obey every other influence and temptation; but not God. They yield to tobacco, drink, and drugs. These things become their Master and the lusts of their flesh rule over them with an iron hand. Obedience to these things brings upon people their own destruction. But to obey the gospel of the Lord is life, yes, life here and hereafter. There is no way that we can get anywhere with the Lord without being submissive and obedient to Him. Christ has come down from heaven to make it possible, and yes, even easy for us to obey God. There is no need for anyone to continue in the course of disobedience. Christ obeyed the perfect will of God for us, and it is a matter now of us obeying HIM. And He is so loving and kind and good, and His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It is not hard to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. Just become willing and eager to do His will, and He can and will work in you to help you to do His good pleasure and be happy while you are doing it. It is so sad to see precious souls wasting their lives in disobedience when they could be so much happier obeying the Lord and His sweet Word. How much happier Saul would have been had he obeyed the Lord instead of pleasing himself and the people! He paid dearly for that disobedience, and so will we if we disobey the voice of the Lord. Jesus does not want us to suffer the consequences of disobedience. Being made perfect through His obedience to God, He has become our Saviour if we will obey Him. Let us get "there" and remain in that place of perfect submission and obedience to God for the rest of our short journey here below.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The first law that ever God gave to man, was a law of obedience; it was a commandment pure and simple, wherein man had nothing to inquire after or to dispute, for as much as to obey is the proper office of a rational soul acknowledging a heavenly superior and benefactor. From obedience and submission spring all other virtues, as all sin does from self-opinion and self-will." —Michal Montaigne

There is nothing that Christ asks of us that is too hard. Neither are there any of His commandments a seeking soul cannot understand. If there is a requirement that an honest person cannot find the grace to be victorious in, then there most likely are human expectations involved rather than divine command. The very fact that God has given the invitation for us to come together and reason lets us know that we are at liberty to know why God wants us to do what is needful in living a holy life. There are circumstances in life that come our way which we cannot question God in, but it is imperative that we have a knowledge of how to conduct ourselves in these circumstances. As modes of conduct in Christian living are presented to us, we should fervently seek for the will of God, letting fall aside all the chaff of men's opinions which may be involved, until we can understand it as a pure and simple command of God. In doing this we will be obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to the world by Christ.

—Wayne Murphey

March 11, 1990

MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Psalms 37:8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psalms 25:9 The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Psalms 45:3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

I Peter 3:3 Whose adorning . . .

4 . . . let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Memory Verse: For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Psalm 149:4.

Central Thought: Far better is it for us to take the humble side and be meek as Jesus was, for then we shall inherit the great blessings of God that come upon the faithful.

Word Definitions: *Meek:* Submissive, humble, mild, gentle, needy, lowly, poor. *"Inherit the earth":* The word "earth" here really is better expressed as "land." It is really a spiritual term, referring to promised blessings of the Holy Spirit's reign in the hearts of the people of God. *"Bowels of mercies":* Deep inward feelings and affections. *"Superfluity of naughtiness":* Superabundance of badness. Anything to an excess and beyond wisdom is not good for the soul.

LESSON BACKGROUND

If there is any one of the things that we have studied about in this series that goes harder against the flesh and the natural man than meekness does, I do not know which one it would be. Meekness goes even against human nature. It is another disposition of heart that we cannot afford to be without. Jesus taught us by Word and by example to be meek. He boasted not nor put himself forward. Jesus stated along with the Psalm that the meek would inherit the earth. Many people argue about what inheriting the earth is going to mean, but in so arguing they miss the meekness. What He really is referring to in the thought of inheriting the earth, relates to the promise made to Abraham and to his seed of inheriting the land of Canaan. Abraham never got to inherit the land of Canaan in a literal sense, neither did his seed, actually. It

is a spiritual thought that is fulfilled in the New Testament referring to being saved and sanctified. The 45th Psalm is a pure prophesy of Christ. Verses 6 and 7 of that particular Psalm are quoted in Hebrews 1 as referring specifically of Jesus. In our lesson we have this Psalm foreseeing Jesus as riding prosperously, or successfully, because of three things. We find these three things are meekness sandwiched in between truth and righteousness. Truth and righteousness without meekness is ineffectual and without accomplishment in the realm of humanity. Religion without true meekness is turmoil and strife. Meekness, I would say, is one of the most important parts of a man's life. Lack meekness, and every other good thing in your life will be affected for the worst. All the writers of the New Testament praised meekness as an indispensable factor in success with God and man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How much of this material earth would make an inheritance a meek person would appreciate?
2. Why is a person always ahead to be meek and lowly?
3. What are some of the things that are eliminated from the heart and life by being meek?
4. Is it easy to be meek all the time?
5. Why is meekness so important in accompanying truth and righteousness?
6. How could Christ offer soul rest to all who came to Him?
7. What kind of people receive the Word of the gospel to their salvation?
8. How is true wisdom expressed?
9. How does God look at a meek and quiet spirit?
10. What kind of beauty does a meek person have?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many good-hearted and earnest people in our world today who are so talented, skilled and so beneficial to humanity in their fields of labor. But there is one ingredient that too often is so lacking in their lives that it spoils all their accomplishments. That ingredient is meekness. It is so easy to be lacking in meekness and not be aware of it. It is hard for the human mind to understand and value meekness. The Christian is taught by Christ and His example to be both meek as a lamb and bold as a lion. These two qualities must never be confused or mixed up. They must remain distinct and

yet united in our lives. We must never defend ourselves or push for our recognition or praise. There will be no strife in a meek person's life. It is a life of sweet peace and joy and soul rest. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is strength to overcome and triumph over our weakness. It is strength of soul to be steadfast in calm and peace in the greatest trials of life. Without meekness there will be no real unity or peace in a family or church. Jesus knew that. He knew that there would be no peace and soul rest to a person who lacks meekness. Christ manifested and proved meekness in His life. He went to the cross of Calvary with no effort of defence on His part. He was denied all the rights and deserved privileges of a human being, but He took it meekly, not answering again. He was our example. Let us strive to be meek like our Saviour was. When disputes or disagreements arise between us and our fellow Christians, let us be very careful to keep a meek and sweet feeling toward those who disagree with us. Some people can say such cutting words. Let us not cut back at them. Let us not defend ourselves or our position but commit ourselves to Him that judges righteously. To be meek puts us always on God's side, and Him on our side. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Meekness is retiring and not boastful. Generally someone, lacking in meekness, is primarily preoccupied with thoughts of himself and his own interests. Those who dwell on themselves are often built up in their own eyes. It is like the little boy who repeatedly hearing from his father of the important part he played in the Civil War that finally asked, "Father, did anyone help you put down the rebellion?" The person who builds himself up in his own eyes is often quite hurt when others fail to appreciate him as much as he appreciates himself and is very protective of the bubble he lives in.

As mentioned in the *Adults' and Young People's Comments*, meekness is not weakness. It is strength under control; strength of character and mind. When Abraham was faced with the dilemma caused by Lot, he could have exercised his rights and taken the land he wanted. He had the strength to do so. Instead he assumed a retiring position and allowed Lot to choose. In understanding when and what we can be firm in, we need to understand what our rights are. Our rights begin and end with our God-given responsibilities. Our first responsibility is our soul. We must protect it and let no man deceive it. We may have Christ-like firmness in that matter. If we are

married and have children, they are our responsibility to train and care for. These things entail a very small scope and do not give us a right to dictate in the lives of others. It is not meekness to be forward enough to try it. It is true that we are our brother's keeper, but what kind of dictates are allotted us in that scripture? Prov. 35:3 says, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." This is the kind of interest we should have in others.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Although these things go against the natural man, they should become first nature to a Christian. They should be things that we feel deep down in our soul. Until we do we will not be able to get ahead in life as far as prospering in the fruits of the spirit.

—Wayne Murphey

March 18, 1990

PATIENCE AND FAITH

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Romans 5:3 . . . We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

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

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Memory Verse: Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. James 5:11.

Central Thought: The trying periods of patience and waiting long on God will come to every child of God along the way of life. These trials of our faith are good for us, and if we will hold fast our faith under the pressure, God will bring us out with victory and success.

Word Definitions: *Patience:* Cheerful or hopeful endurance, constancy; bearing of trials without murmuring; not easily made angry. "*Tribulation worketh patience*": Patience is developed and accomplished through opposition and difficulty.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about a place that every Christian must become well acquainted with in his or her Christian life if success and victory are ever theirs. It is a disposition and attitude of heart and soul that settles many difficulties otherwise insurmountable. We need patience with God. We have Abraham mentioned in our lesson. No discourse or study concerning patience and faith is complete without some mention of Abraham. Abraham was patient with God. He waited patiently for the fulfillment of God's precious promises to Him. He was an example of patient waiting on the Lord. We must become like Abraham to be properly called his children. We also must learn to be patient and to wait on God, then we

must have patience with others of our fellow creatures of earth. Since God has been so patient with us, (and what if He had not been patient?) we must need be very, very patient with our brothers along the way. Bear with your brother, and have patience with him. The impulsive and overly zealous soul can do so much damage to the work of God. We must exercise great patience and longsuffering in dealing with dear, precious souls. We think that they ought to be more spiritual than they are. Maybe they have not had the chance and the opportunity that we have had. Be patient and keep on trying to be a blessing to them. And then we must be patient with ourselves. Many people get frustrated and downright discouraged with themselves. They forget that it takes time for God to make something of their lives. They are anxious to get it all done. But it takes patience on God's part and we are going to have to be patient too, right along with the Lord. Let us set ourselves for the trials and let us be sure to let the will of the Lord be done, especially now, holding fast the treasure of the grace of God and being overcomers in His name.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of some of the factors that make it necessary for us to have patience?
2. How can we know that God is a patient God?
3. Where would we all be today if God was not patient with us?
4. What does patience do for us?
5. What produces patience?
6. If we pray for an increase of patience, what can we expect to come our way?
7. Abraham obtained the fulfillment of the promises of God to him after he had done what?
8. How does a farmer exercise patience concerning his crops?
9. What were the prophets good examples of?
10. What character in the Old Testament was a good example of patience?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how we need to be in this place called patience, get "there" and stay "there" always! How much sorrow and trouble we will save ourselves by making patience our resort! How much sorrow and grief issue forth into people's lives because they are not patient, and have never learned to wait

on God! Many traffic accidents occur simply because someone's patience wears thin, and they try something desperate. The whole world is in a state of impatience. Nations are impatient with other nations. Husbands and wives become impatient with one another; children are impatient with one another and grudges ensue. If we would be disciples of the Lord and the true children of God, we are going to have to be patient. Put up with things and learn to bear with your brother and your fellowman. Many steps are taken, words spoken, and actions spent in a spirit of desperation and hurry. Instead of quietly waiting on God, the human tendency is to take things in our own hands and do something about it ourselves. Let us settle it in our hearts that we are to wait on God, and that waiting on God is healthy for our spiritual lives. God never gets in a hurry about anything, and some of His most choice purposes are the longest in developing. The reward for being patient and waiting on God is great! With numerous examples in the Bible and many testimonies that we have on record, we should all realize that it pays to have patience and faith for everything. Too many of us want our things right now. We are not interested in the spiritual good that we derive from experiences of patience, as we are in getting our desires gratified. And the frustration and unhappiness in many lives today bears witness to the sad mistake people are making by not being patient with God, their fellowman, and themselves. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"There is no such thing as preaching patience into people unless the sermon is so long that they have to practice it while they hear. No man can learn patience except by going out into the hurly-burly world, and taking life just as it blows. Patience is lying to and riding out the gale." —H. W. Beecher

"Patience is the support of weakness; impatience is the ruin of strength." —Caleb Colton

"Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride, bridles the tongue, restrains the hand, and tramples upon temptations."

—George Horne

"Our real blessings often appear to us in the shape of pains, losses, and disappointments; but let us have patience, and we soon shall see them in their proper figures."

—Joseph Addison

"Patience! why, it is the soul of peace; of all the virtues, it is nearest kin to heaven; it makes men look like gods. The best of men that ever wore earth about him was a sufferer, — a soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit."

—Thomas Decker

"All that I have accomplished, or expect or hope to accomplish, has been and will be by that plodding, patient persevering process of accretion which builds the ant-heap, particle by particle, thought by thought, fact by fact."

—Elihu Burritt

"Patience does not mean indifference. We may work and trust and wait, but we ought not to be idle or careless while waiting."

"There is one form of hope which is never unwise, and which certainly does not diminish with the increase of knowledge. In that form it changes its name, and we call it patience."

—Lytton Bulwer

"Many people consider patience a commonplace virtue, not to say a tame and insipid one. But rightly appreciated it is grand and heroic. Without it the strongest character has a dangerously weak spot, which at any moment may be its ruin. With it, the otherwise weakest has an element of invincible strength."

—Congregationalist



An Excerpt From *Pilgrim's Progress*

By John Bunyan

I saw moreover in my dream, that the interpreter took him (Christian) by the hand, and had him into a little room where sat two little children, each one in his own chair. The name of the eldest was Passion, and the name of the other Patience. Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet. Then Christian asked, "What is the reason of the discontent of Passion?" The Interpreter answered, "The governor of them would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of next year; but he will have all now. Patience is willing to wait."

Then I saw that one came to Passion, and brought him a bag of treasure, and poured it down at his feet; the which he took up, and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld but awhile, and he had lavished all away, and had nothing left to him but rags.

Then said Christian to the Interpreter, "Expound this matter more fully to me."

So he said, "These two lads are figures: Passion, of the men of this world; and Patience, of the men of that which is to come: for, as here thou seest, Passion will have all now, this year, that is to say in this world; so are the men of this world: they must have all their good things now; they cannot stay till the next year, that is, until the next world, for their portion of good. That proverb, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' is of more authority with them than all the Divine testimonies of the good of the world to come. But, as thou sawest that he had quickly lavished all away, and had presently left him nothing but rags, so will it be with all such men at the end of this world."

Then said Christian, "Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that upon many accounts. 1. Because he stays for the best things. 2. And also because he will have the glory of his when the other has nothing but rags."

"Nay, you may add another; to wit, the glory of the next world will never wear out; but these are suddenly gone. Therefore Passion had not so much reason to laugh at Patience because he had his good things at first, as Patience will have to laugh at Passion, because he had his best things last; for first must give place to last, because last must have his time to come; but last gives place to nothing, for there is not another to succeed: he, therefore that hath his portion first, must needs have a time to spend it; but he that hath his portion last, must have it lastingly; therefore it is said of Dives, 'In thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' "

"Then I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come."

"You say truth; 'for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' But, though this be so, yet, since things present and our fleshly appetite are such near neighbors one to another; and again, because things to come and carnal sense are such strangers one to another; therefore it is, that the first of these so suddenly fall into amity, and that distance is so continued between the second."

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Waiting On The Lord

Some people are always in a hurry about things. If they want to do something or to have something, they can not wait, they must do it or have it at once. When they are compelled to wait, the time seems very long and their impatience grows with every delay. They can not quietly and patiently wait for anything.

Such persons bring this same characteristic into their spiritual lives. When they pray, they want an immediate answer—they want God to hurry up. If the answer is delayed, they get all worked up about it. Sometimes they murmur against the Lord and feel very bad, like spoiled children. Sometimes they pray a few times for what they desire, and if the answer does not come they conclude that God does not mean to answer them; so they give up seeking for it and sometimes question God's faithfulness. If they see something that needs doing or something that is not going to please them, it must be remedied immediately; if it is not, they are much displeased. They can not wait for a propitious time or till things have worked out so that they can be properly handled. Their motto seems to be, "Do it now." That is all very well for some things, but quite frequently it is necessary to patiently wait on the Lord and upon others. We can not hurry the Lord; all time is His. He works according to His own purposes and will, according to His own wisdom and plans. We can not choose for Him; we must be willing for Him to choose for us. It must be His to say both as to "when" and "how." Ours is to wait and trust, His to choose and do.

Many years ago I read a story. Later, when I was lying on my bed of affliction and praying earnestly for God to restore my health, He brought to my mind this story and applied its lesson to my soul. It was such a help to me that I will give it to you also. I had been much troubled because I was not healed. I would pray very earnestly, with a longing that seemed to draw out all my soul. Others would pray also, but there was no answer from God. Disappointment and discouragement seemed to shut me in with walls of darkness. A feeling of helplessness and almost of utter hopelessness came over me. I was in this condition when God brought to my memory this long-forgotten story and applied it to my heart with a peculiar emphasis that made it a direct message from Him to my soul.

This is the story: The king of a certain country was growing old, and he had no son to succeed him. He announced

to his people that he would choose an heir to the throne from among the young men of the country by a competitive test which would give all an equal chance. On the day appointed a great number of young men presented themselves. A certain test was made, and some failed while others passed. Then other tests came, and each time some were rejected till at last only three were left.

They were put through test after test, but all seemed equally able to meet them, so the king announced through his heralds that on the next day the matter would be decided by a foot race. The course was marked off, the judges were at their places, and all was ready. Just at this time a man came up to each of the contestants and said secretly to him, "The king is taking special note of you. Do not run when the signal is given until the king gives you a special signal." The three took their places eager for the race. The signal was given, one bounded forward quickly, then hesitated and stopped; then another sprang forward after him, upon which the first started forward again and they ran for the goal with all speed. The third stood looking anxiously at the king and at the two runners, murmuring to himself, "I can make it yet, I can make it yet." The king gazed at the runners and gave no heed to the one still standing. The waiting man thought himself forgotten and soon realized that it would be impossible for him to win the race. He felt that all was lost for him.

The two runners ran on at top speed, reaching the goal together. They were brought back, and all three stood before the king. To the first he said, "Were you told not to run until I gave you the signal? Why then did you run?"

"I forgot," said the man.

Of the second he asked the same question. His reply was, "I thought it would be but a moment till you would give the signal, and seeing the other running I ran also."

To the third he said, "And why did not you run?"

"Because you did not give me the signal, sir," he answered.

"My son," said the king, "I knew that you could run, but I did not know that you could wait."

So the young man found that the test was not a test of doing but of waiting. And thus the Lord said to me that day, "I knew that you could run, I knew that you would work with all your strength; but can you wait on me?" These words have been repeated over and over in my heart during the long years. It was a hard lesson to learn, and many times I have grown weary, many times I have longed for the end of waiting; but that lesson has helped me to bear and to wait and to

be patient in the waiting. Sometimes it has seemed that the answer would never come. Sometimes it has seemed that the Lord had forgotten. Many times I have had to say to my heart, "Be patient and wait." This is the hardest lesson that many of us ever have to learn, but learn it we must if God's will and His plan are to be fulfilled in our lives.

There are some things for which we do not need to wait, but for which we need to press our petitions with earnestness and diligence and with an out-reaching grasp of faith for a "now" answer—for example, the supplying of a soul need, such as forgiveness or sanctification, or physical or other help where the need is urgent. Sometimes people think that it is not the Lord's time to save or sanctify them or to give them something else that is needed at once, when the trouble is they do not get earnest enough or do not exercise faith as they might. God's time for necessary things and especially for salvation work, is *now*; and if we do not receive when we seek, we may look for the fault in ourselves or in our manner of seeking. Waiting on the Lord is not needful in this class of things and it will only hinder receiving. There are, however, many other things for which we may not know God's time and in the case of which growing impatient and trying to force matters will grieve God and hinder us. Unfulfilled desire patiently and submissively met is often a powerful factor in character building.

Have you prayed for things, yearned for them, reached out after them, and yet your prayer is not yet answered? Have you been tempted to believe that it was of no use to seek for them? If you are not seeking selfishly, or if God has not denied you, do not lose faith. God has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive"; and again He says, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." God is faithful. He knows what is best. As a loving Father He watches over you. His ear is open to your cry. We are told to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Do not grow impatient, do not become wrought up, but while you must wait on the Lord, rest in Him. Jeremiah tells us how to wait for God to deliver—"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Think of that expression, "hope and quietly wait." Do not these words mean confidence and soul rest? Do they not mean assurance and trust? They do not mean, however, that we should be careless. They imply activity of faith and desire, but they shut out fear and unbelief. The Psalmist says, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." Keep

up your courage while you wait, do not grow despondent, be strong in faith; God will not fail.

Again, we are exhorted to "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way." If wrongs are not righted, if persecutions continue, if, like Paul, we have a "thorn in the flesh" and our desires are not granted, let us do what this text tells us—let us "keep His way." Let us serve the Lord just as truly as though conditions were ideal and all our desires satisfied. Let us show our fidelity to God, by being true whether circumstances are favorable or unfavorable. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, but he went up and down in it for many years as a stranger. His posterity went into Egypt and there, under the lash of the taskmaster, they waited, waited, waited. Did not they have God's promise? Had He not said that that goodly land should be theirs? Why did He wait so long? Was this the way that He fulfilled His promise? Had He forgotten them? Did their cries to Him fall on deaf ears? Their waiting was not easy. It was long and oh, how wearisome! Why did God wait so long, was there any adequate reason? Yes, when God waits there is always a good reason for the waiting. His acts are not arbitrary: He does not act according to caprice; He acts wisely and when it is best. He tells us why He delayed in this case—it was because the sins of the Canaanites had not yet come to the full. When they reached that point, the Lord fulfilled His promise and led the children of Israel out of their bondage into that goodly land.

Have you learned this lesson of waiting upon the Lord? Can you commit your ways to Him and feel that if desire is still unsatisfied, if obstacles are not yet removed, if trials yet bear upon you, the Father-love is not growing cold, nor His hearing dull, nor has He forgotten? In the proper time and way the answer will be sure, and because of the delay the answer will be fuller and will enrich you more than if it had come when first you asked. Wait patiently on the Lord, trust also in Him, be not weary in well-doing, and out of your waiting will come strength, and out of your sorrow will come rejoicing, and out of the bitterness will come sweetness, and at the end of the way you will find a crown and life everlasting.

—Charles W. Naylor

March 25, 1990

FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

I Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

4:8 . . . Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Memory Verse: We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. **I John 3:14.**

Central Thought: We must keep filled with the love of God at all times, and through diligent prayer and obedience

keep our love warm and tender for God, for our brother, and for all men.

Word Definitions: *Fervent:* With warm and earnest intent, with eager pursuit and firm resolve. *Charity:* Love, affection.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Peter and John harmoniously declare the great merits of pure divine love in our lesson today. Peter stresses fervent love. Love should always be kept warm and tender. Many, many problems develop in lives when love grows cold. God designs the Christian to live fervently, earnestly, and warmly. From John's quote of Jesus we see that He designs us to love one another, and that this is the way people are going to know His true disciples, by the love that they manifest one to another. John issues some dire warnings concerning not loving our brother as we should. This is serious business. Not only is it our privilege to love, it is our duty. Not only is it our duty, but it is our grave responsibility before God. The sayings of John are so simple and plain, that they need very little explanation or comment. They should be taken just as they are. We all need to learn to live together and love one another. The Bible is full of this injunction. How can we love God whom we have not seen when we cannot love our brother whom we have seen, and see every day? This is the place that God would have us all to be in every day of our lives. "Love one another, for love is of God," and "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love," are authentic words of John, the beloved disciple who leaned in love upon his Saviour's breast. Do not take love for granted. It is something we have to constantly guard and work at. It is easy for love to grow cold. Let us get "there" and stay "there," yes, there in that place of love. God will help us if we are willing for Him to. Where love reigns supremely, happiness reigns also. The cold and barren soul who loves not is a miserable person. Keep love burning in your heart always.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what manner should we love one another?
2. According to Peter, how important is fervent love?
3. What will charity, or love, do?
4. How did Jesus say that men would know His disciples?
5. Where does the man walk who does not love his brother?

6. What does the darkness of hatred do to a person's spiritual vision?
7. What did John call the person who hates his brother?
8. Do we need to see God visibly if we are full of His love?
9. How can we know that we have really passed from death to life?
10. Is it possible to love God and at the same time hate our fellowman?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The greatest power in this world is love, yes, love divine;
A stream of holy blessings within the heart to shine.

No other power on earth can do what love can well perform,
Undaunted by the woes of life, unscarred by wind or storm.

How cold the heart unwarmed by love, by greed and self-oppressed,

How barren is the life that's void of peace and inward rest.

The greatest debt we owe to man, or fellow pilgrims here
Is just to love them earnestly without a doubt or fear.

It never pays to go around the opportunity
To show some love to someone wrapped in sorrow's misery.

We are the loser when we fail to grasp another's need,
We rob our souls of love's delight when we fail to give heed.

Let's watch and pray and guard our love, and keep it warm
and true,

Let love a gushing fount proceed from us life's journey through.

Love has a way of coming back, like seed sown in a field;
It brings so sweetly with increase a golden harvest yield.

God loved us when we were undone, and lost way down in sin;
And made a way to win us back to welcome us within

His loving arms of mercy, grace, and turned us not away,
Shall we not love our fellowman, a debt so great to pay?

Pray oft, my friend, for love to burn within you constantly,
And exercise your soul in love and you will surely see

Such happiness and joy before unknown, unfelt, unguessed,
And sweet will be your inner life of faith and perfect rest.

And when from earth you're called away, no stranger you will
be

In that bright home beyond the skies that's ruled by love's
decree!
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. . ." The Apostle Paul expressed some things in this verse that he had personal knowledge of. First he knew at one time that he was dead in trespasses and sin. He had no hungering or thirsting after the humility of Christ, no movement towards God in repentance, no breath or pulse of true Christian life. He did have corruption of heart which was most offensive to God. He then had explicit knowledge of a change that took place in which God's Spirit quickened his soul to life. In this world are many infidels and agnostics who plead blindness, deafness and ignorance concerning spiritual matters. We are compelled to believe them for they are dead to these things. There are many others who have a profession of life, yet they do not live or have their being in Christ, thus coming short of a true knowledge of passing from death to life.

One of the telling marks in Paul's life by which he knew for sure of this spiritual resurrection was his feelings for Christians before and after this change. And what a change it was! Whereas before he had malice and contempt for them, now he was one of them and had deep, warm, feelings for them. Whereas before he persecuted them he now suffered when they suffered.

One writer expressed the love that bonds Christians together when he wrote, "Brethren in Christ have one common Father, one common likeness, one object of faith, love and adoration; one blessed hope, one present employment; alike in trials, alike in prayer. They lean upon the same hand, appear daily before the same mercy-seat, feed at the same table. How much all these things link them together, not in profession only, but in heart!"
—Wayne Murphey

Burke the Burglar

Burke was in the city jail, awaiting trial for some offence. Solitary confinement was wearing on him, and he spent his time railing at the guards, or cursing the sheriff on his daily rounds. It was Burke's delight to curse a sheriff.

Somebody threw a daily into his cell, and the first thing that caught his eye was a big headline like this: *HOW THE JAILER AT PHILIPPI GOT CAUGHT.*

It was just what Burke wanted, and he sat down with a chuckle to read the story of the jailer's discomfiture. Somehow the reading had a strange look, out of the usual newspaper way. It was D. L. Moody's sermon of the night before. "What rot is this?" he said to himself.

PAUL AND SILAS; A Great Earthquake; What Must I Do To Be Saved?

"Have the papers got to printing such stuff?" He looked at the date. Yes, it was the morning paper, fresh from the press. He threw it down with an oath, and strode about his cell like a caged lion. After a time he picked up the paper and read the sermon. The restless fit grew on him. Again and again he picked up the paper and read its blessed story. It was then a strange something, from whence he knew not, came into the burglar's heart, and cut him to the quick.

"What does this mean?" he said to himself; "twenty years and more I've been a burglar and jail-bird, and I never felt like this before. What is it to be saved anyway? I've lived a dog's life, and I'm getting tired of it. If there is such a God as that man is telling about, I believe I'll find it out if it kills me to do it."

Away toward midnight after hours of bitter remorse over his wasted life, and with many broken prayers, the first uttered since he was a child at his mother's knee, Burke learned that there is a God—One who is able and willing to blot out the darkest record at one stroke. He found out the wondrous secret of the cross, how that on it Jesus Christ bore his many sins and put them all away forever. That night God saved the burglar; he believed the Word of Christ and received everlasting life. Then he waited for day, a new creature, crying and laughing by turns.

Next morning when the guard came around, Burke had a pleasant word for him, and the man eyed him with wonder. When the sheriff came, Burke greeted him as a friend, and told him how he had been led to Christ by reading Moody's sermon.

"Jim," said the sheriff to the guard, "you had better keep an eye on Burke. He's playing the pious dodge, and the first chance he gets he'll be out of here."

When the case came to trial, it failed through some legal entanglement, and he was released.

Friendless in a great city, known only as a daring criminal, he had a hard time for months. Men looked upon his face when he asked for work, and upon its evidence turned him away. But he was brave, and sustained by the mighty power of God, he struggled on. Seeing how

his sin-marred face told against him, he asked the Lord "if He wouldn't make him a better looking man, so he could get an honest job." And God answered the prayer, for Moody said that a year from that time, when he met Burke in Chicago, he was as fine a looking man as he knew. That was of the Lord, who did it for him in answer to his child-like faith.

After seeking in vain for a long time to find steady work, Burke went to New York, hoping, far from his old haunts, to find peace and honest labor. He did not succeed, and came back to St. Louis, much discouraged, but still kept by the God who had found him in the prison cell.

One day there came a message from the sheriff that he was wanted at the courthouse, and he went with a heavy heart.

"Some old case they've got against me," he said; "but if I'm guilty, I'll tell them so; I've done lying."

The sheriff greeted him kindly.

"Where have you been, Burke?"

"In New York."

"What were you doing there?"

"Trying to find an honest job."

"Have you kept a good grip on the religion you told me about?"

"Yes," answered Burke, looking him straight in the eye. "I've had a hard time, sheriff, but I haven't lost my faith."

"Burke, I had you shadowed every day you were in New York. I suspected your religion was a fraud, but I want to say to you that I know you have lived an honest Christian life, and I have sent for you to offer you a deputyship under me. You can begin at once."

From that time the tide began to turn. He set his face like a flint. Steadily and with dogged faithfulness Burke went about his duties, until the best men in the city came to know and recognize him. Moody was passing through, and stopped off to meet Burke. He was found in a closet room upstairs in the court-house, serving as a trusted guard over a bag of diamonds. He sat with a bag of gems in his lap and a gun on table. There was \$60,000 worth of diamonds in the sack.

"Moody," he said, "See what the grace of God can do for a burglar. Look at this sack of diamonds! The sheriff picked me out of his force to guard it."

He cried like a child, as he held up the stones. —Sel.

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