

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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Introduction To Lessons For Fourth Quarter, 1990

Rather than covering one specific book of the Bible in our lessons for this quarter, we have sought the Lord for inspiration and guidance for each lesson as an individual subject. It seems, however, that the pattern of the inspiration of the Spirit has been concerning the welfare of our souls, as we have several lessons that have to do with various aspects of the prosperity of the soul. We have two seasonal subjects that concur with Thanksgiving and Christmas. We offer these studies to you and pray that they will be accompanied by the same inspiration and anointing upon your soul as we have felt in preparing them. Pray for us. —The Publishers



October 7, 1990

THE GARDEN OF THE LORD

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Isaiah 51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and

her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

11 And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

61:11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.

Song of Solomon 4:12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Thy plants are an orchard . . . with pleasant fruits; . .

15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

5:1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

6:2 My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

Memory Verse: They . . . shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, . . . and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Jer. 31:12.

Central Thought: In the beginning God planted a garden and put man into the garden, but in Jesus Christ and New Testament salvation God puts the garden in the soul of man, and the fruit of that garden are the gracious fruit of holiness

and righteousness in the heart and life of a person who is led by the Spirit of God.

Word Definitions: *Eden*: The region of Adam's garden home, the name of which means delight or pleasure. *"To dress it and to keep it"*: To work, tend, and till the garden, and to protect and guard it safely. *"Draw out thy soul"*: Let your soul issue forth help and mercy to others in need.

LESSON BACKGROUND

A beautiful picture is brought to our minds as we think about the lovely garden home that the first man and his wife enjoyed! Every tree beautiful to look upon and every tree that produces good food was in that garden. I am sure that there were flowers of every sort adorning the garden, also. God put the man into that garden and it became his home along with the woman that God gave to be with him. But, sad to say, man failed to keep the enemy out and fell a victim to Satan's trap by disobeying God. God had no other recourse than to drive out the man from the garden and to bar its entrance. From the inspired Words of the prophet Isaiah we find the promise of a better garden. From Adam we received a fallen inheritance, and a lost estate. From our father Abraham we find a faith that will surmount the loss and sorrow inflicted upon us through the fall of Adam. Zion is a type of the Church of God. Zion is Eden restored and the garden of the Lord put into the soul of man. Isaiah speaks of the fast that God wants us to be engaged in. It is a fast or an exercise to help the needy and the poor in their distress. It is to set people free from their burdens and the oppression of the Devil through the gospel. With this spirit of mercy, love, and helpfulness, the soul of man is fit for the garden of the Lord to be flourishing in the heart. The Spirit of God reigning in the soul will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth in the lives of the saints. The Song of Solomon is a metaphor, or illustration that depicts the relationship between the Saviour and His beloved Bride, the Church of God. We have included the Scriptures from the Song of Solomon that picture the Lord and His precious Bride enjoying

one another as a garden of delights. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was God's purpose in planting the Garden of Eden?
2. What were the privileges and responsibilities of living in the Garden of Eden?
3. Where is the garden of the Lord now?
4. What kind of fruit grows in the spiritual garden?
5. What kind of spirit in the life will cause a desert or wilderness condition?
6. What kind of attitude and disposition must one have to be like a watered garden?
7. Is it possible for a person to live a life so beautiful, fragrant, and attractive that it will cause others to desire the garden of the Lord to be in them?
8. What kind of spices are in the life of a true child of God?
9. How is the Church a sister to Christ as well as a spouse?
10. In what way is the soul of man an enclosed garden, a fountain and spring closed up and sealed? (Clue) How does Christ open up our garden, and unloose the springs of holy affection in the soul?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God, through the ministry of His beloved Son, wants to make your soul like a watered garden. He wants to plant all the luscious fruit of the Spirit in your very heart and life. He wants to come down and enjoy the fruit put forth by your faith and love for Him. And He wants the spices and fruit of your relationship with Him to be enjoyed by others. With man in the garden there was much potential for failure. But with the garden in man, there is much greater chance for success and victory. Love is the principle fruit in the lives of the children of God. Love for God and the Lord Jesus Christ along with love for one's fellow man will blossom in beauty and happiness more and more as we yield to the will of God and follow faithfully in the footsteps of our dear Saviour. Oh, God wants to take the desolate heart that is ravaged by sin and lust and

greed, and He wants to transform its wilderness to blossom like the rose. Because of strife and evil in the soul of man there is no fellowship or joy in the presence of the Lord. The heart and mind is taken up with the pleasures and treasures of this present world and little or no thought is given to the gracious Giver of life and its blessings. Thus the soul of man is a parched and dry barren desert where the weeds of hatred, strife, doubt, worry, slavish fear, and selfishness abound. Thank God, a way has been made where this awful wilderness can be transformed into a beautiful garden of love, faith, prayer, obedience, service, helpfulness, joy, and rejoicing. What do you have growing in your life today? If you know that this beautiful garden is not a reality with you, go to the Saviour and take His way. Your soul can then become a garden of sweet delight to you, the Lord, and to others. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It was a beautiful garden Adam and Eve resided in, and sometimes we are tempted to think with longing what it would have been like if Adam and Eve hadn't sinned and mankind could still be living there. If the very first couple failed to resist the enemy, I am sure that with the millions of people who have been in the world since, someone would have spoiled God's plan of Eden. But when we study God's redemptive plan for man, we can be thankful we live in the dispensation we do.

After Adam and Eve were barred from the garden, God made special visits to those who feared Him. Moses is an outstanding example. Different times God took him into His presence and blessed his life. One outstanding time was when Moses was discouraged and asked to see God's glory. God told him, "There is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock." Exodus 33:21. It is inspiring to think that God had a place right beside Him for those who yearned for Him.

Adam and Eve, while in the garden can be envied, Moses, Abraham and the other patriarchs can be looked upon with wonder, but a greater experience has been brought about through Christ whereby God can be with us at all times. It doesn't have to be just in the cool of the evening or on special occasions. I can be every moment.

To constantly have God's cooling and refreshing presence in our lives should make our hearts very fertile and productive. Not only does it take the moisture to make things grow, but also sunlight. God's constant love in our hearts provides that as well. Nature teaches us that when there is mist as well as sunshine there will be a rainbow. This holds true in the life of a Christian. God's presence and love will put a holy aura about us.

—Wayne Murphey



October 14, 1990

THE GREAT AND TENDER MERCY OF GOD

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Psalms 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

9:12 . . . They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

12:7 . . . If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

James 2:12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Memory Verse: By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. Prov. 16:6

Central Thought: God would have been just if He had chosen to condemn and destroy the human race, but because of His great mercy He worked out and provided a way that we might be saved from eternal ruin.

Word Definitions: *Mercy:* Kind or compassionate treatment of an offender, adversary, or prisoner; compassion where severity, judgment, and punishment is expected or deserved. *Brawler:* One who fights or strives, opposite of being peaceable.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God's mercy and the quality of His mercy is something that we need to understand, be aware of, and never forget. It is very easy for us to forget the fact that only through the mercy of God are we saved and brought into favor with Him. We have gathered several Scriptures from various writings from the Old and New Testaments on this special subject. Some of these are

the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only do we behold the great magnitude of God's wonderful mercy, but we see that we are to be just as merciful as he is merciful, that is, in our attitude and dealings with our fellow creatures. Our attitude toward others must be that of kindness, gentleness, and meekness, always remembering how we once were and where the tender mercies of the Almighty God have brought us from. Our text in Paul's epistle to his beloved son in the faith, Titus, is a beautiful entreaty for us to always heed and remember. To be harsh, condemning, and unmerciful to anyone is an evident token of the fact that we are failing to remember what the mercy of God has dug us out of. Note the comparison of God's mercy toward us in our Scripture from the Psalms as being as the heaven high above the earth. If God's mercy is that great, there ought to be no end to the mercy we exercise in our hearts for others. Jesus quotes on two different occasions from Hosea 6:6, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." On both occasions when He used this Scripture against His antagonists it was when He was being criticized for His clemency and mercy for those in need. He was eating with the publicans and sinners, and, on the other occasion He permitted His disciples to break the law of the Sabbath by gathering food to satisfy their hunger, and justified them. Paul, in Romans 9, is dealing with the Gentiles concerning the Jews and their status with God. He recalls that Sarah and Rebecca, the ancient mothers of the Jewish race, were both given conception by the decree of God. He applies this to the truth that what we are or what we have in relationship with God is not of anything that we are or what we have done. It is all of God who showed us mercy. He stated later in Romans 11:32 that God concluded everyone (Jews and Gentiles) in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. In our text from James, he had just made the statement that to be justified by the law, one must keep the whole law, and that offending in one point constitutes being guilty of all. This means that there is no way we can be justified by keeping the law. He tells us, therefore, to speak and do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. Then he speaks about having judgment without mercy if we show no mercy, and that mercy

rejoices against judgment. What he is saying to us is that we should deal with one another under the terms of the law of liberty in Christ. We should not be censorious or quick to condemn, but rather to show mercy, knowing that it is not by keeping the law that we are saved, but rather by the grace and mercy of God. The law that He wants us to keep now is a law of freedom and love in Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of treatment from God do we really deserve?
2. What kind of condition were we in before the mercy of God found us?
3. Is there any danger of us forgetting that we are saved by mercy alone?
4. What do you see in the expression "the law of liberty?"
5. What do you think the expression "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" means?
6. How can we be sure that we will qualify for the mercy of God?
7. Will God have mercy upon a critical, fault-finding troublemaker if they do not change their attitude?
8. What should be in our hearts towards one who is failing?
9. Who will obtain mercy from God?
10. What are we forgetting when we fail to be merciful and gracious to our fellow man?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A person will never be able to have and maintain a balanced, happy, and satisfying experience in the Christian life until he learns to trust God for His mercy. Satan will constantly accuse and keep a soul in the complex of frustration and discouragement by making him feel always short of what is required and unqualified for the blessings of God. But once we are able to realize the greatness and tenderness and blessedness of the mercy of God, it brings such rest and peace to the soul. We are able to relax in the arms of God, just fall

back and let His mercy uphold us. We will never be able to satisfy ourselves by how good we are. If we find satisfaction and security on those terms, we are deceived and our security is a false security. This does mean that we are not to strive to serve and please our Lord. If we truly love Him, we will seek to please Him with all of our hearts. But, at the same time, we will always be aware of our mortal weakness and our need of His mercy and grace. We will always remember, regardless of how high up the ladder of success in the Lord we may be able to go, that it is all purely His mercy that has made it available for us. This attitude of feeling the need for God's mercy will show up in our disposition toward others. We will be merciful, patient, and longsuffering toward everyone. Instead of being inclined to condemn and cast off, we will yearn for ways and means to help troubled souls. Mercy in the heart of God caused Him to look down upon this world of sin and strife with an unwillingness to judge and condemn. His mercy prevailed against His sense of judgment of wrath. Let mercy be the law of our life. Let us ask God for grace and power to show a merciful spirit to every soul. Remember, the merciful are the ones who will obtain mercy. It is an unfailing law set by God Himself.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The rainbow is an emblem of God's mercy. There was a time when human iniquity caused God to repent that He had ever created man and he destroyed all except Noah and his family. Imagine the destruction of the flood. It would have been horrible to see every living thing drowning, calling for help, and totally hopeless. As God looked upon this he was grieved and vowed that He would never destroy the earth in such a manner again. To seal this promise of mercy to mankind He placed a rainbow in the sky. As God looks upon our society today I have a feeling that His resolve is tried to the limit. When we see a rainbow today we can be very thankful that God's mercy is still enduring. However, just as a rainbow will not shine in the night, there is coming a time when the day of time will cease and God's mercy will end.

To be as merciful as God, our mercy must encompass broad bounds. God's mercy will reach the vilest case that sinful humanity can produce. Because of His mercy we may share the sentiment of the Psalmist David who was perplexed that the wicked flourished and prospered. When David entered the sanctuary of God his perspective was renewed and he realized that God was extending mercy and withholding judgment from such evildoers. It has been said that nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy. Remember that a God who is all mercy would be an unjust God. God's unsurpassed mercy will one day turn into righteous judgment. Therefore, the cry of every heart should be, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord." Psalm 25:7.

—Wayne Murphey

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October 21, 1990

HAVING THE IMAGE OF GOD IN OUR HEARTS AND LIVES

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . .

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Romans 1:21 . . . When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

II Corinthians 4:4 . . . The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:14 In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Colossians 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of him that created him:

II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Memory Verse: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; II Cor. 10:5.

Central Thought: God originally created mankind to be like Himself in heart, soul, and mind. Because of sin and disobedience man lost the image of God out of his soul and the image of lust, strife, and greed took shape in his heart. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, came in the image and likeness of the Father to restore the image of God once more into the hearts of mankind.

Word Definitions: *Image*: A resemblance or likeness. *Imagination*: A molding or framing of the mind, a conception, idea, or device. "*Express image*": The Greek word is our word "character." It means an engraving, a stamped figure, an exact copy or representation. Christ was in every detail an exact replica of the Heavenly Father.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us ponder what it meant for mankind to be created in the image of God. Surely it meant more than just his outward form. There was an image in the soul, the inner man. As man became conscious on the dawn of his first day, his first awareness was the presence and power of His Creator. In all probability he was able to look up and sense the smile of love and joy shining down upon Him from God. And as man with worship and gratitude in his heart to God for all of His blessings began to move about, the thought and awareness of God mirrored in his heart and mind the very likeness of his Creator. But, sad to say, sin took over and the image of God was ruined and destroyed from his heart. Another image had taken its place, an image of man's devising. The image of self-gratification and honor took the place of the image of God. It did not remain the same, but grew and increased until the day came when God decided that He would destroy mankind. Today we live in the final days of a world that has every image ruling in the hearts of men that can be shaped and framed by darkened souls. But Jesus came in the fulness of time to restore us back to the image of God. Jesus was the very image and likeness of God. As we turn our eyes away from the images of pride, worldliness, and sin, and fix them upon the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His beauty and holiness, our hearts are won to His embrace and fellowship. We begin to conform our lives to His standards and ways, and we are changed into that same image by the Spirit of the Lord. In New Testament full salvation the image of God is restored in the soul of man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the images that people often set before their praise and admiration?
2. What takes place in the heart as we behold the image of our desires and esteem?
3. What conditions have developed in the world because of man losing the image of God?
4. What are imaginations?
5. What does the light of Christ, the image of God, do to the heart when it shines within?
6. What image did Christ shine to us?
7. Are we portraying any kind of image by our lives today?
8. If so, what kind of image are we showing to others?
9. Is it possible for God to have His image in our souls if we are looking to other sources?
10. How can we be changed into the same image as Christ?
11. What does it mean to look with "open face?"

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES COMMENTS

We have many images in the world today that people are getting their eyes on. There are "stars" shining that people allow to enter into the inner chambers of their hearts, and are reproducing their image there. There are movie stars—stars of the stage and screen. People's hearts are filled with wonder and admiration at the portraying of these stars. The image of these stars are reproduced in the lives of their admirers. There are sports figures who capture the imaginations of young and old. Yes, there are many images that people worship today. There is the imagination of the heart—the framework of one's purposes and desires. There are desires for money, pleasure, popularity, and worldly praise. These are graven images of the worldly and corrupted hearts of men. Oh, the need man has for a change of image! There is a way that such a change can be effected. Jesus Christ came down into human flesh to show us the Father bright and clear again. Through the gospel and the eternal Word of God preached by the power of the Holy Spirit is mirrored once more to our gaze the image and likeness of God. As we turn our eyes from the vain and fleshly images

of the world and look up to Christ by faith we can see him in His beauty. Our hearts are won to him. His light shines down into the sensitive and tender tables of our hearts. There His image of love, purity, holiness, humility, faith, meekness, comfort, cheer, wisdom, and every other attribute we need is impressed. We are changed from the image of the flesh to the reflection of Christ mirrored in our humble and meek spirits. Thus the image of God, through the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, is restored to the soul of man. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The small daughter of a minister went home from church and exclaimed to her mother, "Daddy was preaching that God is bigger than we are. If God was bigger than we are and lived inside us, everybody could see him." This very simply states a true fact. People will see God if He is living in our hearts. To be more specific, what is seen is the image of God.

It is only natural to be curious about something you have heard about and not seen. Especially is it so when you write or communicate with those you have never personally met. You wonder what they look like and many times conjure up an imagination in your mind of their appearance. If you can see a photograph it really helps you to recognize them when you do meet. Have you ever wondered what God, the One of whom you have heard and had to do, looks like? A synonym for image is portrait. When you behold the life of a Christian you should have an insight into what you will experience when you stand before God at the ushering in of eternity. This puts a great responsibility upon us who profess, to exhibit Godly qualities. For a substance to have reflecting capability it must be bright and clean. So must our lives be in order to mirror God. When our heart is in a proper condition God will automatically be on display.

—Wayne Murphey



October 28, 1990

JESUS, THE LOVER OF OUR OUR SOULS

Psalm 72:1 Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

Isaiah 38:17 Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

John 13:1 When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

I John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Memory Verse: 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. 1 John 4:9.

Central Thought: The love of the Heavenly Father sent His Son Jesus into the world, and Jesus possessed the same love for precious souls by dying on the cross to secure their release from sin's bondage and their hope of eternal life with Him.

Word Definitions: "*Bishop of four souls*": One who oversees, guards, protects, shelters, and cares for our souls.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The poor and needy souls of mankind were oppressed by the deceitful works and turmoil of Satan and sin. We needed a Saviour, One who would deliver us from the error of our way, One who would love us and win our hearts to Him. We have gathered several Scriptures that show the love of Christ for our souls in doing just that. The seventy-second Psalm is entitled "A Psalm for Solomon." It was written by King David for his son, Solomon, who was to take his place on the throne of Israel. But the Spirit of prophecy was upon David as he wrote this psalm and its grand fulfillment is found in Jesus, the Root and Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star. (Rev. 22:16.) This psalm shows Christ as loving the souls of men, saving them from the oppressor, sparing them, and redeeming them from deceit and violence. "Precious shall their blood be in his sight." This shows the tender and earnest feelings of love, care, concern, interest, and sympathy that Christ possessed in His heart for mankind. It is a love that we want to have duplicated in our hearts. We want to receive and acknowledge that love, and let it work in us toward other precious souls. The text in Isaiah 38:17 is part of Hezekiah's

prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for sparing him from death when Isalah had brought him the summons to set his house in order and prepare to die. He is pictured in Isalah 40:11 as a tender Shepherd, feeding and caring for His beloved flock. And from the Gospel and Epistle of John, the beloved disciple who had so much to say about love, we have drawn several expressions of Christ and His love for His disciples, a love that reaches abundantly to you and to me. Peter, also, shows his holy regard for the love of Christ, calling Him the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of condition were the souls of mankind in that made their need for a Saviour so great?
2. Who was oppressing them?
3. Will Christ mean anything to the person who does not sense their need of Him?
4. What kind of feeling did Christ have in His heart to be able to do what He did for souls?
5. How should we feel about such great tender love and affection?
6. Why did Christ call us "friends," and not just mere servants?
7. What is the greatest sacrifice that love can cause a person to give?
8. What did Jesus prove beyond all doubt when He laid down His life?
9. What does beholding the love Christ had for us mean to us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is very, very important for the soul to be made aware of the tender love and care Christ has for him. Satan has his devices to hide this from souls to keep them from seeing the love of the Lord. It is because we are so close to the flesh and to the natural senses that we are many times unaware of the love that Jesus has for us. His love is so great, and His tender care is so eager to commune with us, that we find it hard to take it all in. We do not feel worthy of such love. But we need to lift our eyes above the apprehensions of the flesh and this

dim world of coldness and hard hearts. We are the objects of a great and wondrous love. No matter how far we may have strayed from Him, His love will draw us back if we will give Him a chance. Jesus is the Lover of our souls. Just as a young man loves a maiden, and just as a parent (who is a true parent indeed) loves their child, even so Christ loves us, and has pledged Himself eternally to be our Saviour and Friend. The soul who discovers the great love of Christ finds a relationship with God beyond that of a servant. A faithful servant and loving Master relationship is a beautiful and a happy one. But the relationship of friend to friend, or that of love to love, or that of parent to child is even greater. We do not feel worthy of being any more than just a servant, but God's love draws us to sonship and the tender embrace of a lover. Oh, how sweet to know that Christ loves us like this! Such love sweeps away each doubt and fear, and we can sweetly rest our souls deep in the heart of His great love. The torment and fear is swept away by the great love of Christ. Oh, happy day it was when we turned from the barren desert of sin to find happiness and rest with the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Volumes have been written about love. Book store shelves are full of them. Men and women have striven to refine love. Love has been put on exhibition in many ways, but still there is no love that has been perfected like the love that Christ has for us. That love is gentlemanly in every way. It contains a strength that is a comforting protection, and is as gentle as a mother towards her new-born. No one will ever be able to fully describe this love on paper, but those who rest in the arms of Christ know the feeling. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19.

A minister was once lying dangerously ill, and prayers were being offered up at his bedside by members of his

congregation that the Lord would raise him up again. In doing so they made mention, among other things, of his tender watchfulness in feeding the lambs of the flock, and used the expression, "Lord, you know how he loves you." The sick man heard them, and said, "Ah, children, do not pray thus! When Mary and Martha went to Jesus, their message was not, 'Lord, he who loveth Thee is sick, but 'he whom Thou lovest.' It is not my love to Him that gives me comfort, but His perfect love to me."

—Wayne Murphey

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November 4, 1990

HUMAN RELATIONS

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye may joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

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 neighbour as thyself.

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

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Memory Verse: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Rom. 14:13.

Central Thought: God wants us to have and maintain an attitude of love, kindness, helpfulness, consideration, tolerance, and mercy toward our fellow man; not seeking to condemn, but rather to manifest to others the fruit of a better way.

Word Definitions: *Bowels:* Deep inner feelings of love, pity and sympathy for others.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ and those of His servant and apostle Paul we have gathered some wise admonition concerning our attitude and relation with our fellow human beings. We have the relations between Christians to one another and also the relations of Christians to their fellow creatures of earth who have not found the treasure of salvation. Jesus in His sermon on the mount, and Paul in his epistles to young churches unite in an appeal for us to love our fellow man as ourselves, and love them even as He, Christ, loved them in coming down from heaven to die for their sins. It is a love to be kept warm and pure, tender and gracious. The

best way to help lift up another person's standards is to set a pure and straight example in our own lives for them to see and follow. Another Scripture that will go well with our lesson is what is generally called The Golden Rule, which is found in Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." This is more simply worded thus: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Many times we are so fearful of compromising with wrong that we forget to be friendly, pleasant, and helpful to others. We are so fearful of being contaminated by the world that we sever ourselves from vital contact that we ought to have with the world. Being the salt of the earth and the light of the world brings a responsibility upon us to be open for ways and means to communicate the joy of our faith with those around us. Many times we prove that we do not know how to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, let alone knowing how we should relate to those outside our Christian community. May the Lord help us to be concerned about this matter, study and ponder these Scriptures, and pray for grace and guidance in our relationship with our fellow human beings. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. If there are any such things as consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, and bowels and mercies, how will these things affect our attitude toward others?
2. Is there any danger of us, as Christians, failing to have these qualities of benevolence in our lives?
3. What kind of consequences can we expect if we fail to have the proper relations with our fellow human beings?
4. By what means can we acquire these things in our lives?
5. From these Scriptures can you identify the spiritual savour, or saltiness, Christ wants us to have?
6. What is the main quality of a Christian that elevates him above the world around?
7. What is the main thing we owe to our fellow man, and why do we owe it?

8. Can we help a person if we deliberately do things we know offend and displease him?
9. What if Christ had not been willing to have borne our sins on Calvary?
10. What is the real judgment we should exercise and pass on one another?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We want to cultivate the spirit of love and helpfulness in our hearts toward others. No matter how overbearing and trying they may prove to be, our best weapon and tool to handle them with is godly love that will not only tell them the truth, but will tell it to them in the spirit of meekness. We are called of the Lord to love one another, and to love one another as He has loved us. (John 13:34.) We are also called of the Lord to love our fellow man. The commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is a royal law. We cannot truly love God without loving the thing that is lying closest to His heart—His human creation. To love a person requires a great amount of respect and regard for his feelings and personal sense of worth. God loves mankind enough to give them the right of choice. He wants them to be happy, and if they choose to be happy without God, then God gives them that right. The Pilgrim fathers who founded Plymouth Rock and the Massachusetts Bay colonies of North America did so in an effort to escape religious intolerance in the old world. But they proved to be unwilling to grant religious freedom to others. There were those who were banished from their midst when they manifested and maintained disagreement with their beliefs. It is easy for us to become intolerant, impatient, and censorious toward others. Such a spirit is one of the worst things that can develop in a professed Christian. We must speak the truth in love, and have a spirit of helpfulness and set a good example to others. If we are persuaded that another person is not right, then we have a responsibility to show love to that individual and show him by precept and example the true way. There is a right way to go about admonishing our fellow man. We should be very prayerful and very careful about how we go about such business. What have you gained when you crush

and discourage a soul with your words of harshness and criticism? Let us open our hearts and minds to these Scriptures and seek the Lord to help us to have the proper attitude toward others.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are told in our lesson that Christians are like a candle. There are some who have great aspirations and would like to be like a big lighthouse. They are zealous of foreign fields and what can be done across the seas. This is good and every dedicated laborer for God will have an interest in all who have not heard the good news. But being a candle carries a different thought. A candle lightens everything in its vicinity. They say that although a lighthouse beam reaches a far distance, the base of the lighthouse is dark. Before we are qualified to be of great use to God we must first draw our attentions in and be what God would have us to be in our own vicinity. This entails having good human relations. Until we learn this we will not get along with others or be profitable to God no matter where we are. We should pray for an outpouring of the love of God to the extent that we will have sympathy, delicate tact and a careful watch to anticipate other's thoughts and feelings. I know this is how everyone wants others to be toward them, and that is how we should be toward others. If the golden rule were perfectly carried out, it would fulfill a part of Christ's prayer, for the will of God, to a great extent, would then be done on earth as it is in heaven. We cannot expect that to universally happen, but we should be able to see it taught and practiced in God's church, which is founded upon Christ and His teachings.

—Wayne Murphey



November 11, 1990

MUSIC IN THE SOUL

Psalm 104:33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

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

Psalm 149:1 Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

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

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

Psalm 119:54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

Isaiah 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Hebrews 2:12 . . . I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

I Corinthians 14:15 . . . I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Ephesians 5:18 . . . Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and

spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Memory Verse: I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord. Ps. 104:33-34.

Central Thought: The Lord our God is so wonderful, and He has done such great things for us in His grace and salvation that music and glory rings in the redeemed heart that breaks forth in singing and rejoicing and praises to Him forever.

Word Definitions: *Psalm:* A poem set to music and melody. Hebrew definition. *Hymn:* A very special song or psalm of praise and worship to God. *Spiritual songs:* Songs of spiritual and soul edifying nature and purpose.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The soul of man is so created to have an inclination to want to express itself in music and singing. Music is one of the special blessings that the Creator bestowed upon His creation. The Word of God has very many places where we are enjoined to sing and make melody unto God. We have chosen a number of choice texts to bear out our thought in the lesson today concerning the music God wants us to have and keep in our hearts to Him. From the Old Testament writers and on into the New Testament we have great indication that God is pleased with man voicing his joy and gladness in singing. Of course, Satan has seen to it that man has the option to sing songs and make melodies that are not edifying to the soul, but rather are sensual and degrading. But all who have found the joy of God find that the spiritual singing of the Christian life is far superior to the cheap and vulgar racket that the world calls

music. God permitted David and others of the Old Testament era to worship Him and use literal instruments. But we who have found the grace of the Lord Jesus and the spiritual life that is in Christ perceive that God is not interested in literal musical instruments in His worship. It is not that they are sinful and wrong of themselves, but it is that they are of no value in spiritual worship to God. Therefore we are persuaded that it is best to exclude them from the worship of God, yet permit them for musical enjoyment and learning in the home or in one's individual life. Real music is in the soul. No matter how sweet the music produced by outward methods and devices, unless the soul is tuned with the Spirit of God there will be no real music in the heart that is edifying and spiritually upbuilding.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes a person want to sing?
2. Does the Lord love to hear people sing?
3. What is there about singing that blessed the Lord so much?
4. Can an unsaved person who has not experienced the joy of the Lord sing the praises of God very well?
5. Can a person who cannot carry a tune sing praise to God if he is truly born again?
6. How does the high praises of God and the two-edged sword go hand in hand with the saints?
7. What kind of songs and music dominate the life of a Christian?
8. What should a soul do when they are merry?
9. Of what value are spiritual songs to the child of God?
10. Why would Satan love to take away the rejoicing from the heart of a saint?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many times along the path of life when a song lifts a soul to victory and joy when nothing else can. There are times when we can sing our troubles away even when praying and weeping fails to do so. Music is God's special gift to man.

Cold and vain is the heart who has not found the joy of God expressed in singing. There is the ancient story of one called Caedmon who was a member of the court of a certain monarch. There was a jubilation of singing going on in the place and Caedmon did not like it. He did not appreciate music at all. It bothered him so, that he fled from the palace and crept into the barn to get away from it all. While in the barn he fell asleep. While he was sleeping he dreamed that he heard the angels in heaven singing such beautiful songs. One of the angels spoke to Caedmon, saying, "Sing, Caedmon!" Caedmon answered, "What shall I sing?" The angel answered, "Sing the beginning of created things!" And in his dream Caedmon began to sing a beautiful hymn of praise to God, the strains of which he vividly remembered upon awakening. He went into the palace singing his new song, and was brought before the king who presented Scriptures to him to be put to music. It was a heaven-born revelation to this man. Let us sing to the Lord, and let us be happy in His wonderful grace. There are many, many hymns and spiritual songs we can sing to our edification. Keep the songs ringing, and never let them go out of your life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One person, acutely acquainted with and involved in music, wrote, "I am conscious of a power in music which I want words to describe. It touches chords, reaches depths in the soul, which lie beyond all other influences. It extends my consciousness, and nothing in my experience is more mysterious. An instinct has always led me to transfer it to heaven; and I suspect the Christian under its power has often attained to a singular consciousness of his immortality. " Singing plays a very important role in our link with God. As attested to by the previous quote, there is great power in song. It is inbred in the very soul of man and when properly exercised reaches the very throne of God. A look into history proves that every divinely inspired reformation was accompanied by a renewal of song.

Since singing is such an integral part in our worship to God, we wish to do it in a way that will accomplish its desired

effect. In this writing I would like to consider the use of the musical instrument as it relates to this subject.

One instance of a particular significance is recorded in II Chronicles 5:13. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord." Musical instruments were of benefit to them there. These were people who had hatred, jealousy, malice and all other kinds of evil in their hearts. They were so wicked and adverse to each other that God had to institute cities of refuge for their survival. Can you imagine this kind of people getting together in one accord without something outwardly dynamic taking place? Anyone who has played musical instruments with others or participated in group singing can understand the feeling of togetherness that is shared. When the Israelites were concentrating on blowing the trumpets and playing the other musical instruments in harmony and rhythm they had no facility unoccupied with which to be thinking ill of another. Under the law system, a person, by believing in God and keeping the law could be justified in God's sight, but they did not possess the indwelling Holy Spirit which unifies the heart. Hence, their unity had to come from an outward source.

God wanted man to have the Holy Spirit and more than just an outward worship. Even the pagans could rival the Israelites in the use of musical instruments. (Daniel 3:5). God began to work through the prophets and give them messages by which to usher in a new and better dispensation. In Amos 5:23, God called for the ceremonial music to stop. Amos 6:5 shows that they were doing the same thing that David had done, but God was growing weary of the fallacies of the system that had existed from Moses' time till then. (Amos 5:25, 26).

Jesus ushered in this change. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him

in spirit and in truth." John 4:23, 24. Jesus did not pass an edict for His believers not to use musical instruments in worshipping God, but He set an example before them of the true and proper way to worship the living God and it had little to do with outward ceremonies. At the Last Supper it is recorded that, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Mark 14:26. Noting the various backgrounds of the disciples, their singing might not have been the most melodious, yet doubtless they felt a spiritual significance in it.

History verifies that the early morning Church did not use musical instruments. F. L. Humphreys in the book, *The Evolution of Church Music*, states, "One of the features which distinguishes the Christian religion from almost all others is its quietness. . . The early Christians discouraged all outward signs of excitement, and from the very beginning, in the music they used, reproduced the spirit of their religion, an inward quietude. All the music employed in their early services was vocal."

It was not until the 16th century that musical instruments made any inroad into the church. "Though old Greek, Roman and Hebrew authors are lavish in their praise of the astonishing effects of instrumental music, as used in their several temple services, yet it was not till the latter part of the sixteenth century that a really artistic signification was attached to the cultivation of instrumental music."

—*History of Music.*

As late as the 17 and 1800's many of the noteworthy Christian leaders held out against it. This included such men as John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, Adam Clarke, John Calvin, Alexander Campbell and others.

Charles Wesley penned the words, "O for a thousand tongues to sing, Blessed be the name of the Lord!" This is a feeling of the soul and can only be vented from the heart. It is a desire, when properly expressed that will bring God into our presence and satisfy our inner longings. —Wayne Murphey (Available in tract form entitled, *Man's Worship To God.*)

November 18, 1990

UNDER HIS WINGS

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Psalm 63:7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

Psalm 31:19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Psalm 36:7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Isaiah 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm,

a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Memory Verse: . . . A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isa. 32:2.

Central Thought: To all who trust and obey God He is a great shield and protector from the dangers and destructive elements and forces that abound in this wicked world.

Word Definitions: *"Secret place":* A hiding place, covered and out of view from agents that would inflict harm and pose a threat of danger. In the most holy place of the Jewish tabernacle was the mercy seat overshadowed by the wings of the cherubims. This typifies the secret place of complete consecration and trust in God, the sanctified and heavenly experience that Christ has made available for us. *"Noisome pestilence":* A dangerous and destroying plague. *"Shield and buckler":* Two different kinds of shields, the one protects by its prickly barbs (something like what a porcupine defends itself with) and the other simply a surrounding band. *Wings:* A word used to describe the Almighty's protecting influence. *"Apple of the eye":* The pupil of the eye which is protected with great care. It also denotes tender and loving regard as a man for his wife or children.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Scriptures are very strong in their declaration of the truth of God's overshadowing care and protection for His children. We need to really be aware of God's protection over us. It will keep our hearts from fear, worry, fret, and over-concern. This means that we can trust in God everyday to guard us from the dangers that stalk our frail habitation of life.

We all need a shelter from harmful elements. We have our homes we go into at the close of day. We shut and lock our doors in a wise effort to safeguard our night's repose. God has promised to be our shield and protector. This is one of the fringe benefits of being Christian and living for Christ. We have His protection and overshadowing care over us night and day. There is the terror by night. These are the forces evil and destructive and lurk hidden and unseen to our feeble sight. There is the arrow that flieth by day. We need to be in that secret place of entire sanctification at all times. Let us note that these promises are for those who dwell in His secret place and for those who trust in Him. The Lord is good to His trusting children, and Jesus still yearns to gather people under His loving care.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need a refuge?
2. What are some of the dangers and harmful things we need to be protected from?
3. Can we say that the Lord is our refuge even though we might suffer some things in life?
4. To whom is the promise of safety and protection given?
5. In what way is God's truth a shield?
6. What are we hid from in the secret of His presence and in His pavilion?
7. What does the term "apple of the eye" illustrate concerning God's feelings for us?
8. Although man can destroy our mortal body, can he touch the soul that God keeps safely?
9. What is the feeling and attitude of a person who does not have God's care for his refuge?
10. What are some of the reasons why many people are not under the shadow of the Almighty?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are times when we are tempted to fear and be apprehensive of the many terrible dangers that lurk around

us in this world of sin and wrong. "What if this would happen?" "What if that situation would develop?" "What would I do?" As you question and doubt, the worries increase to great proportions. There are many people today who live constantly in turmoil and fear. Many steps are taken and efforts made to offset the dangers that they foresee. But to the child of God there is safety and quietness in knowing of the love and care of our gracious God. Yes, things do happen and the Lord permits them to happen to His trusting children. But He has a purpose in it all for our good. He would not let it come our way if He did not have a reason. And for every sorrow and trouble He permits us to suffer, let us remember that from many more sorrows and troubles He has protected us. Things could always be worse. And then we need to be sure that we are in His refuge and under His wings. We cannot expect God to protect and shelter us from evil if we do not enter into His secret place of holiness and faith. There are physical dangers in this life. Our bodies are constantly endangered by germs, accidents, and many other evil forces. Thank God, we know that He is watching over us. We can trust Him to stand between us and the dangers that throng about us. There are financial dangers. Losses through fire, theft, and the destruction of storm and wind are always possible. Millions of dollars are spent for insurance on homes, businesses, property, and lives. There are swindlers, and crooked agents who seek to prey on people who are unaware. Then there are those spiritual dangers, such as false prophets and defiling influences from unregenerated people. We need the protection of the Lord against all of these things. Let us seek earnestly to remain under the shadow of His wings. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"A shelter is nothing if we stand in front of it. The main thought with many a would-be Christian is his own works, feelings and attainments. This is to stand on the windy side of the wall by putting self before Jesus. Our safety lies in getting behind Christ, and letting him stand in the wind's eye. We must be altogether hidden, or Christ cannot be our hiding place.

"Foolish religionists hear about the hiding place, but never get into it. How great is the folly of such conduct! It makes Jesus to be of no value or effect. What is a roof to a man who lies in the open, or a boat to one who sinks in the sea? Even the Man Christ Jesus, though ordained of God to be a covert from the tempest, can cover none but those who are in him. Come then, enter where you may; hide in him who was evidently meant to hide you, for he was ordained to be a hiding place, and must be used as such, or the very aim of His life and death would be missed."

—C. H. Spurgeon

The tempest's awful voice was heard;

O Christ, it broke on thee!

Thy open bosom was my ward,

It braved the storm for me.

Thy form was scarred, thy visage marred;

Now cloudless peace for me.

—Selected

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November 25, 1990

THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Luke 17:12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and He was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Where there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Psalms 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

107:21 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

116:17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.

Jonah 2:8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

I Thessalonians 5: 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you

Romans 6: 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.

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: Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. Ps. 100:4.

Central Thought: God loves and appreciates a thankful heart. He has blessed us with so many wonderful blessings of life and godliness that we need to be thankful to Him every day, and be faithful to express our gratitude to Him in prayer and praise.

Word Definition: *"Pay thy vows"*: Keep and fulfill your promises. *"As becometh saints"*: As it is fit and proper for saints to do.

LESSON BACKGROUND

At this season of the year we are made to reflect especially upon the many blessings of God during the past year and to offer a special expression of thanks to Him, our kind Heavenly Father, for all He has done for us in every phase of our lives. The story of the Samaritan leper who was the only one of ten that Jesus healed who returned to give special thanks is a touching reminder of how easy it is to forget to be thankful. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem when he and His disciples encountered this troop of ten pitiful men who were gripped with this terrible disease. They were outcasts from society. They could not go home to their families or have any social interaction with people. They had to warn everyone who met them to keep their distance. People would bring food and set it down and leave. It was a sad thing to be a leper. There were no shelters or sanitariums such as we have today. They were

beggars on the mercy of the people. On that day when Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priest, (who would pronounce them clean so they could be free to go home) with joy they beheld their skin clean and healthy again. With happy hearts they started on their way, looking forward to being reunited with their families. I am sure that each one was very glad for this fortune that had come their way, that only God could give. But of the ten only one remembered to express his gratitude. And this he did with a loud voice of glory to God. It is important for us today to be very expressive in our thanks. So many other forms of communication come from the lips. Murmuring, foolishness, hatred, and strife fill the conversation. Let us all try to be more thankful, and show our thanks to God and to others who are a help to us. God will be pleased and we will be much happier, too. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Do you think the nine lepers who did not turn back to give thanks were purposely unthankful?**
- 2. Is there any chance that you or I could be just as forgetful?**
- 3. How did Jesus feel about the nine not coming to offer thanks?**
- 4. Could being a Samaritan have had anything to do with this stranger being more thankful than the others?**
- 5. Is a thankful attitude beneficial to good spiritual health?**
- 6. Why is it vital to be expressive with your thanks?**
- 7. Did you ever do something special for someone and not be thanked for it?**
- 8. How did it make you feel?**
- 9. What does the tenor of our Scripture texts today indicate about God's feeling for a thankful heart?**
- 10. What does an expression of thanks indicate in the one who gives it?**
- 11. What does the absence of an expression of thanks indicate?**

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jonah, I am sure, was certainly glad and thankful to get out of the whale's belly. Right after he said what we have recorded in our lesson, God spoke to the fish causing it to expel him onto dry land. The general disposition of a loving and obedient heart to God is one of thankfulness and gratitude. How cold and barren is the heart who never thinks to give thanks to God nor to anyone else for that matter! It is a good habit to form and maintain a thankfulness and express it. It is good to have a time of the year when we get together in our homes and family circles to enjoy one another and the things that God has blessed us with. God is not displeased with nice dinners and family gatherings, but let us be sure to include a hearty expression of thanksgiving to God, and then continue to be thankful all the year through. So much mortal breath is wasted in vain conversation and a lot of foolishness. It is inconsistent with godliness to be that way. But it is consistent with godliness to offer praise and thanks to God often and several times a day. One said of old: "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments." He also said, "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments." Ps. 119:62, 164. In view of the commandment not to do so, Daniel kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. (Dan. 6:10.) God is pleased and has a special endearment to a thankful heart. He will hear those prayers that are seasoned with earnest thanksgiving. He hears all of the murmuring and disputing and complaining, and He is grieved. The unthankful will have to meet a just God someday, and it will not go well with them. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Few things are brought out in the Bible in such striking contrast as God's blessings toward mankind, and humanity's failure to be thankful. The 106th chapter of Psalms vividly reveals this concept. In three different verses Israel is stated to have forgotten. "They remembered not the multitude of his mercies" (verse 7), "They soon forget his works" (verse 13) and

"they forgot God" (verse 21). These things should be a warning to us, for the soul that is not thankful and finally in his heart forgets God is sure to make a failure of life here and in the hereafter.

Great are God's blessings and many times great is our forgetfulness. There is much that it is easy to take for granted. Many have had a relatively comfortable home all their lives, and not only accept it without thought but feel that God owes it to them. We must acknowledge that it is because of God's kindness and mercies that we have good shelter, food, family and friends. Physical and spiritual dangers lurk in every aspect of life and "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

I recently heard someone express their inability to remember and how they wished they could do something about it. The cure to forgetting God is to stop and count our blessings. There will be plenty of them to occupy our mind for some time. A little girl said to her father one evening, "Father, I am going to count the stars." Soon he heard her say, "One hundred, two hundred, five hundred, oh, I didn't realize there were so many."

—Wayne Murphey

**"Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one;
And it will surprise you,
What the Lord hath done."**



December 2, 1990

THE TREASURES OF THE SOUL

Isaiah 33:5 The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

13:44 . . . The Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

1 Timothy 6:6 . . . Godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Colossians 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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: In Christ and the kingdom of heaven that He brought to us is found the real treasures that will never pass away. These are treasures of the soul, treasures of faith, love, hope, purity, righteousness; treasures that we can all abound in freely and fully. They are ours forever if we will hold to the Saviour.

Word Definition: *Householder:* Master of the house, or the head of the family.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have insight to a realm of riches and treasures which are hidden from this present evil world, but are revealed and willed to all who believe and follow Jesus. As it has been with every generation since the fall of man, our society is deceived with the lusts of wealth and earthly treasures. These kind of treasures will pass away and will

prove of no value when we meet our eternal destiny. But the treasures that we have presented in our lesson are the eternal treasures, the treasures of the soul. What is the stability of our times in this world? Is it material wealth and prosperity? We all ought to know the answer to this question. The stability and strength of a man is the wisdom and knowledge that he has found in his Maker. We have the Words of the gospel prophet, Isaiah, and the Words of our Lord Jesus, and the wise sayings of His apostle, Paul, to testify of the vanity of earthly riches and the rich blessings of spiritual life in Christ. We would do well to take heed to these testimonies. If a person could but come to the realization of the value of the Kingdom of God, they would do just like Jesus said, they would go and sell all and obtain it. The treasures of the soul are the only treasures worthwhile. Worldly treasures are deceitful and disappointing. Many a soul has been ensnared by them. But as a person seeks to follow Christ in His holiness, his heart and life becomes filled with spiritual treasures that grow in value and sweetness as the years go by. Oh, they are wonderful! Being comforted and knit together with God's holy and humble people brings to light treasures that are so rich and valuable that our joy in possessing them is boundless. Victory over sin, peace and quietness in the trials of life, and a hope of eternal life after this fleeting life is past—oh, what treasures for our souls!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main thing most people in the world are reaching for?
2. How does the love of money bring an instability to the soul?
3. Name two factors that make the quest for earthly wealth so dangerous and disappointing.
4. What kind of condition does the heart get in when it becomes set on earthly treasures?
5. Why are so many unwilling to give up all for the kingdom of heaven?
6. How is our experience with Christ likened unto us being a householder?

7. What are some of the good treasures we can have in our house?
8. What is truly great gain?
9. Will a man have righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness if he does not follow after them?
10. What kind of riches are found in being knit together in love with other children of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Two little boys were talking about what they wanted to be when they grew up. One said, "I think I would like to be a merchant man." He had noticed that people who owned and worked in stores dressed nice and looked neat. His brother said, "I want to be a great preacher. I want to have a big church of 1000 members and have every member give me a dollar every month." One thousand dollars a month looked big to him. One main current flowing in the heart of the unregenerated person is the love for worldly gain. This lies in the fact that people have their sense of values mixed up. They are unaware of the value of eternal things and how real they are. Their only vision is that of material prosperity. But when a person finds the salvation of the soul in Christ, their sense of values makes a drastic change. They are made to realize that earthly treasures are soon to perish and decay. They are quickened in mind and spirit, and are awakened to the fact that the spiritual side of life is more valuable and more real than the transitory and fleeting things of this world. They begin to reach for these spiritual blessings and the more they experience them, the more they appreciate and esteem their worth. A person is better off to be poor and have the treasure of the Kingdom of God than to have the whole wide world and be void of the grace of God. Jesus spoke about a householder and his treasure. This is quite a thought. In our society, people own houses. Here they keep their belongings and the things they esteem of value for use and preservation. They have furniture, books, keepsakes, tools, appliances, clothing, and numerous other valuables. This is typical of the soul. In Christ we receive many spiritual blessings that we treasure in our hearts and minds.

We draw them out and share them with others. Some are fresh and recently acquired from the Lord. Some we have had in our hearts for some length of time—revelations of truth, spiritual experiences of faith and joy, lessons learned in the school of the Master, and other spiritual treasures we have gained in our Christian life. We keep these treasures and they become more valuable to us as we get older. We use them and apply them to the perplexing problems we meet in life. These are treasures. Oh, if only young people could but see the value of giving their hearts to God and really following His will in their lives! If they could but see the riches they would enjoy by doing so! These are the riches of the soul, riches we can take with us when we leave this world and go to the next. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Most everyone possesses treasures of some kind. Somewhere in your house you probably have a drawer or cabinet which holds the things you have accumulated that mean a great deal to you. Children often have a few certain toys or keepsakes that they save apart from their other possessions, but by the time a person has been an adult for a few years, his treasures generally include some heirlooms. This may be dishes from your grandmother, pictures of your ancestors, or a rocking chair that has passed down through the family for many years. Also adults who have held a job for several years may accumulate enough money to add something new to the things they treasure.

Jesus said, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The "scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" would be the Christian who has walked with God and applied himself in learning of Him. That is the person who is able to aptly explain the value of the treasures they hold dear. A child may not be able to explain about great-grandmother's porcelain teakettle in such a way to make it sound valuable, but the parent who often heard the story of how this article was brought to the new country many years

ago can make the story attractive. The saint who possesses the old, old story of salvation can describe the treasure in an appealing way, having read about and studied it many times in the Bible. It may be old and has been through many times of testing in history, but that only adds to the attraction of it.

The Christian can also possess some new treasures. God's mercies are new every morning. (Lam. 3:23). God daily gives us experiences that we can treasure and share with others.

How much better these things of lasting worth are than the treasures obtained in this world. At the end of life we will not leave these behind, but go to the One who is the source of them.

—Wayne Murphey

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December 9, 1990

INWARD BEAUTY OF THE SOUL

I Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

I Peter 3:1 Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

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

Psalms 149:4 For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he

will beautify the meek with salvation.

I Chronicles 16:29 Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Psalms 45:11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

90:17 . . . Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: . . .

110:3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Proverbs 31:30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the strange woman.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

Memory Verse: As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion. Prov. 11:22.

Word Definitions: *"Modest apparel"*: Clothing that is orderly, decent, and consistent with godliness. *Shamefacedness*: Downcast eyes, or bashfulness. *Sobriety*: Soberness or self-control. *"Broided hair and plaiting the hair"*: Hair with decorative colors woven or braided into it. *"Chaste conversation"*: Pure conduct.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Bible teaches a truth that the women of our society should know. Of course, it is not only for women, men should be aware of it, also. Men and women both should be aware of what it means to really be beautiful. But it seems that women are more inclined to decorate themselves with unnatural means than men. Our lesson today reveals the vanity of outward adornment and the value of inward beauty, the beauty of the soul. The way ungodly people have of displaying

their bodies for human admiration and of decorating the outward man in an effort to enhance their beauty is not only vain and useless, but it is displeasing in the sight of God! Great effort is taken to make the hair, skin, eyes, lips, and figure more beautiful. It is with the admiration of their fellow creatures in mind that this is done. God wants us to be neat, clean, presentable, and decent in our personal appearance, but He wills that our real beauty be that of the inner man, the soul. An old adage says, "Beauty is only skin deep." This is true. God wants us to have a beauty that is more than what can be put on display for mortal eyes to behold and admire. He has a beauty shop to take each one of His children to that will make us beautiful especially in His holy sight. We have drawn Scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments to bring out these truths. The beauties of a holy life, and the great price of a meek and quiet spirit are undeniable qualities of Christian charm that make the artificial decorations that so many employ seem so cheap. Behind outward beauty there often lurks the sting of deceitful pride and selfishness. We are warned in our lesson about this. Many a young person has been led astray from the will of God through the allurements of a beautiful woman or a handsome man. Just remember that this beauty can be deceitful and vain. Let us seek to be beautiful in God's sight with the inward beauty of the soul that we attend to every day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes a person want to make themselves more beautiful?
2. Is it wrong to want to be beautiful?
3. Where does mankind stray in their thoughts of being handsome and beautiful?
4. Which is more noticeable: outward beauty or corruptness of heart? inward beauty or outward homeliness?
5. Why are pearls, gold, costly array, and some of the other things mentioned in our lesson counseled against?

6. What does emphasis on outward beauty do to the beauty of the soul?
7. What is a fair woman without discretion likened unto?
8. Which can bring more happiness to man: a beautiful wife void of the grace of Christ, or an ordinary wife full of the love of God and humility?
9. Why can outward beauty be misleading and treacherous?
10. What are the things that the Lord beautifies His children with?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In our world today emphasis is placed on outward beauty. This goes along with the emphasis put on material gain and prosperity. They go hand in hand. The lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life go right along together. (1 John 2:16.) Just as the Lord wants us to be more concerned with spiritual treasures, He is also desirous that we be concerned about the spiritual beauty of the soul. This is the beauty that God is looking at. It is a beauty that He greatly admires. Some people are more beautiful and handsome than others. But whether we are naturally good-looking or whether we are homely, the inward beauty of the soul can be ours, one and all. It is for us to be concerned about being beautiful in God's sight, rather than in the eyes of vain and lustful humanity. We might be unattractive in the eyes of men, but in God's sight we can be beautiful and lovely. And this beauty that God loves can shine out through our homely features in a wonderful way. Isaiah, the prophet, spoke of Jesus as having no form nor comeliness, and that when He would appear, there would be no beauty that we should desire Him. (Isa. 53:2.) Christ's beauty was not that of the outward flesh. It was the beauty of His sweet spirit that drew hearts of men and women to Him. This same beauty He can impart to us. As we conform our lives to His splendid example of love and humility, His beauty can be upon us. Thus we can be truly beautiful in the sight of God and in the sight of all who are truly born again.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The fountain of beauty is the heart, and every generous thought illustrates the walls of your chamber."

—Francis Quarles

"There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior, like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us."

—Virgil

"Beauty is but the sensible image of the Infinite. Like truth and justice it lives within us; like virtue and the moral law it is a companion of the soul."

—George Bancroft

"That it is striking and beautiful is not always good; but that which is good is always beautiful." — Nino de l'Enclos

"If either man or woman would realize the full power of personal beauty, it must be by cherishing noble thoughts and hopes and purposes; by having something to do and something to live for that is worthy of humanity, and which, by expanding the capacities of the soul, gives expansion and symmetry to the body which contains it." —Thomas Upham

"There is no better cosmetics than a severe temperance and purity, modesty and humility, a gracious temper and calmness of spirit; and there is no true beauty without the signatures of these graces in the very countenance."

—John Wray

"Beauty, unaccompanied by virtue, is as a flower without perfume."

—French Proverb

"The criterion of true beauty is, that it increases on examination; if false, that it lessens. There is therefore, something in true beauty that corresponds with right reason, and is not the mere creation of fancy."

—Lord Greville



December 16, 1990

LIFE FOR THE SOUL

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in Himself.

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Memory Verse: Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. 55:3.

Central Thought: Because of sin and disobedience the soul of man was cutoff from fellowship with God in a dead and lifeless state, enslaved by the spirit of the world and the lusts of the flesh. Jesus Christ brought deliverance from sin and the world, making it possible for the soul to be resurrected to a new life of victory and peace in pleasing God.

Word Definitions: *Quicken*: Re-vitalized or made alive. *"Heavenly places"*: In the Greek the term is "the heavenlies," which is the spiritual realm lifted above the material or earthly realm. It is the realm of the Spirit where man finds communion and fellowship with God. *"The body of sin"*: The root, substance, essence, and principle of sin. *"Reckon ye yourselves"*: Count or conclude yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and follow a pattern of life that is consistent with such a profession.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When God gave commandment to Adam to abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The kind of death He was speaking of was that of spiritual death, brought about because fellowship with God would be broken by disobedience. Adam lived in a physical sense long after he had sinned against his Creator, but in a spiritual sense he died the very day he chose to sin against God. Paul, in Romans 5:12, stated that "By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Adam passed an inheritance on to all mankind. It was the principle of sin in the heart and the state of spiritual death that comes from being disobedient to God. Ezekiel 18:4 declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Sin brings spiritual death and a breach in fellowship with God. James 1:15 declares that "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Paul, again, in 1 Timothy 5:6 said "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." This is the dead that Jesus was referring to

when He said that the dead would hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. Jesus came to bring life to the souls of mankind. He came to abolish death (spiritually and physically) and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel. (II Tim. 1:10.) People who walk according to the course of this world in disobedience and lust according to Satan's power are dead. For all good and moral and spiritual purposes they are dead. They are still alive in the fleshly and physical sense, but they are dead to God and His holy purpose. Jesus brings life, a spiritual resurrection to the soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What do people who are dead in sin live for?
2. What caused God to want to bring the soul of man back to spiritual life?
3. In order for us to be made alive, what must happen to our old man, or our old way of life?
4. How are we to reckon ourselves in Christ concerning sin?
5. What must a person do in order to have a spiritual resurrection in God?
6. What did Christ have in Himself that He could share with us?
7. What are the two resurrections spoken of in our lesson?
8. By what power is the soul quickened from death to life?
9. We are quickened from a dead state of sin. What are we quickened unto?
10. What do we live for in our quickened state of fellowship with God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful to be saved and quickened from our old life of vanity and folly! How dark and useless our former ways of life seem to us now. We have been made alive in Christ. Our hearts are reaching out to heavenly blessings and joys. We have died to our old ways of sin and pride. We have found a richer treasure that will never pass away. Oh, how foolish and blind we were when we were trying to satisfy our souls on the moldy things of sin and the world! Living like animals we were,

serving various lusts and empty pleasures that never satisfied us. We were constantly seeking for something newer and more exciting. Satan's noose was getting tighter around us as we went deeper and deeper in the mire of fleshly domination. Finally we awoke to the fact of what the Devil was doing to us. We began to call on the name of the Lord, and God heard our cries and lifted the burden of guilt and condemnation from our souls. He reached down and lifted us up and out of the horrible pit of sin and miry clay. We became alive and started to really live. When we were dead in trespasses and sins, the service of God and the Bible and prayer meant very little to us. The things of the world had upper control in our minds. We were more concerned about our own selfish interests and pastimes than about the things of eternal worth. But now things are different. We are alive, and we are living for Jesus with a purpose to be true to Him forever. We have experienced that first resurrection, the resurrection of the soul. This will prepare and qualify us for the second resurrection which will take place when Jesus comes again. We want to come forth at His call to the resurrection of eternal life with God in glory. Praise the Lord for life with Christ now, and the blessed hope of living with Him forever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." No one created God. He came into being on His own. This same power was given to Christ. No one resurrected Him. Others had been resurrected but there was always someone who had the power that brought it to pass. Since it takes life to beget life, it is easily seen that the only way to have life is through God and His son, Christ Jesus.

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah He put forth every effort possible to spare the lives of those who were righteous. He performed a miracle in sending angels down to Lot and his wife to show them the way to escape. Lot's wife made it outside the city before her affections for what was behind became her undoing. After the angels brought Lot and his two daughters forth abroad, he told them, "Escape for thy life; look not behind

thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." Gen. 19:17.

Today the Son of God uses ministers as well as other means to give people warning of the wages of sin which bring death. The truth is still being heralded that Christ is the one to flee to. In Him is life. The majority of people don't even hear the voice. Then there are some who make a start but are drawn back into death. Even after we have escaped to Him we must keep our heart and affections centered on Him in order to retain life. It isn't until we have reached heaven that we will be crowned with life eternal. —Wayne Murphey

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December 23, 1990

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

Luke 1:26 . . . The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Memory Verse: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Matt. 1:23.

Central Thought: Mary's firstborn child was the Son of God, fathered by God Almighty and conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. His name was Jesus and He was God manifest in the flesh.

Word Definitions: *Espoused:* Engaged to be married. *Emmanuel:* From the Hebrew word Immanuel, meaning God is with us. *"Swaddling clothes":* Wrapped in strips of cloth. *"On earth peace, good will toward men":* Peace and good will from God toward all mankind.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is one of the foundation beliefs of the Christian faith. If the teaching of Christ being conceived in the womb of an unwed virgin is not true, then the entire Christian faith is not worthy of our confidence or devotion. It is not only an important pillar in our biblical teachings, but it is also a most wonderful and blessed

one. As far as what the Bible teaches is concerned, there is no doubt or question. The Scriptures we have in our lesson, along with many others that we do not have room to include, strongly declare that Mary's first-born son was conceived by the power of God and not the offspring of man. There is no sound reason to doubt it, and there are many, many reasons to believe it with all of our hearts. With God nothing is impossible. Mary's cousin, Elisabeth, who had been barren (was too old to conceive,) was with child by the decree of God. God's power had quickened both Zacharias and Elisabeth in order for John, the forerunner of Christ, to be born. This was a miracle. But in the case of Mary, it was more wonderful. Mary was engaged to marry, but the marriage had not taken place. There was no way for Joseph to be the father of her first-born. Jesus was sent by God into human flesh. This is for us to embrace and fully accept and believe as true. God wanted to come a little closer to man than He was in Eden, or on mount Sinai, or in the tabernacle. He came to get the feel of our mortal infirmities. He came to settle forever the question of His love for us. And He did come in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Was it needful for God to come into human flesh?
2. Was it needful for Mary to be engaged to be married?
3. Was it a great condescension for Christ to be born into human flesh?
4. Is it a wonderful truth that Jesus was born into this life of dying mortals?
5. Was this all a clear fulfillment of prophecy?
6. Did Jesus come to bring peace and good will to mankind from God?
7. Is this good tidings of great joy for **all** people?
8. Is Christ born unto us?
9. Did all heaven rejoice when Christ made His advent unto the earth?
10. Does the story of Christ coming into the world bring joy to your heart?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To really believe the truth in our lesson today brings great joy to our hearts. Oh, think of what it meant for the Almighty

God, the Creator to come down in the personage of His Son to the level of lowly human beings! But this is exactly what took place when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. God came down to be close to us. The Law had failed, and man was helpless in bonds of sin and disobedience. The whole creation would have had to be eternally banished if something hadn't been done. The prophecies had declared that such would come to pass in the fullness of time. Yes, God was truly on schedule. All the wonderful things that had been spoken of the Messiah were to be fulfilled. Our thought today concerning Christ being born of the virgin Mary is a prime truth in the mysteries of God's eternal purpose. God could have taken upon Himself human flesh in another manner. He could have, yes. But in His wisdom He saw that coming down and being born as a human baby would link Him to us in even a closer way than just coming down in a human disguise. By being born of a woman, He would fall heir to all the feelings, temptations, shock, suffering, surprises, disappointments, and all the other things that human beings experience. And so God chose to take that route in His approach to us. He was willing to feel the drawing power and weight of temptation and the allurements of sin; to exert His holy power to overcome and conquer such temptations; to feel our sorrows and hurts; to weep as we weep and suffer as we suffer. Though God of heaven, He condescended to prove that He is our Friend. Surely we can rejoice anew this season as we re-estimate the great value of Christ's condescension to earth and what His coming has brought us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many have tried to discredit it, but it is a fact that God came to this world in the form of Christ and dwelt here. Even before His birth there was an expectation among men of all nations that some remarkable person was about to appear in Palestine. This anticipation was by no means restricted to the Hebrews. Suetonius said: "There had spread throughout the whole race an ancient and fixed opinion that it was in the fates that at that time persons coming from Judea should possess the empire." Tacitus says: "In very many was the persuasion that it was contained in ancient books of the priests that at that very time it would happen that the East would prevail and

the persons coming forth from Judea would possess the empire." Josephus says: "There was an ambiguous oracle likewise found in the sacred books that at that time one from their country should rule the world." The expectations were fulfilled and in a better way than any of these men expressed it.

Some think that the study of nature or science will disprove Christ's advent. But it was nature, the star in the east, that lead the way to Christ. It will still do that today.

Another fact to collaborate Christ's birth, is that uninterested people found Him and welcomed Him first. The wise men were not even Jews, but heathens. They had no invested interest in making something out of nothing concerning the birth of a great man in Judea.

Much more could be said to prove His coming but the greatest knowledge is the fact of having the Holy Spirit within us today. It was Christ's death which made the way for the Holy Spirit to come, and there could not have been a death without a birth. They were blessed people to have God in their midst, and we are blessed people that He came and fulfilled His mission on earth.

—Wayne Murphey



December 30, 1990

HOPE, THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Hebrews 6:17 ...God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast; and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

II Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen

are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Memory Verse: . . . We . . . have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Heb. 6:18-19.

Central Thought: By Jesus rising triumphant from death and entering into the heavenly realm we are assured of eternal glory with Him as we follow and fellowship His sufferings here.

Word Definitions: *Immutable:* Unfailing. *Anchor:* That which holds fast. *"Forerunner for us entered":* Jesus entered into that within the veil, that is into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us. *"A strong consolation":* A sure confidence of the truth of the gospel. *"Light affliction" and "weight of glory":* How light and short are our hardships and trials in comparison with the worth and eternity of our reward! *"Earthly house of this tabernacle":* The word "tabernacle" here means tent. Our earthly life is frail and temporary as a tent. *"Mortality swallowed up of life":* Completely lost and devoured by triumphant life in Christ. *"Earnest expectation":* Intense anticipation. *"Manifestation (of the sons of God)":* The disclosure or revealing of God's children in the great resurrection morning. *"The creature made subject to vanity":* Mortals sentenced to abide in this present state of suffering and decay in hope of something better later on.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the writings of the apostle Paul we have an excellent view of the hope of the godly. It is hard to describe the happy state that those who love and follow the Lord Jesus will enjoy. But in the light of these Scriptures and many more which we have not space to include, we see that our hope is sure and there are wonderful things in store for us who love the Lord faithfully to the end of the way. We see that our present state is so temporary and uncertain. He likens our present physical sphere unto a tent. A tent is anything but permanent and substantial. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in tents during their sojourn in the land of promise. (Heb. 11:9.) They were promised possession of the land, but were sojourners therein all their lives. We, like them, are sojourners here below. We have here no continuing city; we seek for one to come. (Heb. 13:14.) We have a hope and strong assurance that some blessed day we will be with Christ forever in that happy world to come. It is an anchor to our souls. It holds us in the stormy trials of this life. We hold fast to its promise of dwelling eternally with the One whom we love so dearly. Though we may have to tarry for awhile in this world of sin and darkness, we know that a better day is coming by and by. It will be worth it all to see our Saviour face and to hear Him say the words, "Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of situation makes hope a welcome treasure?
2. What has God done to help our hope to be sure and steadfast?
3. What are we fleeing from in order to lay hold of the hope set before us?
4. Why is Jesus called here the forerunner?
5. Why did Paul count our present afflictions as light?
6. Why is it detrimental to our spirituality for us to look at the things that are seen?
7. What is a house not made with hands referring to?
8. In what way will a person be found naked if he has not the hope of the gospel?
9. What is the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for?
10. Which is better: present riches and no hope; or present poverty and steadfast hope?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Hope is an anchor of the soul, an anchor that God has given abundantly to us. He has confirmed His promise with an oath, and by these two immutable things we have a rich and blessed consolation to know that what He has promised He will fulfill. Our hope foresees us meeting the Lord in the clouds of the air in that last great day. We will rise to meet Him with joy and rejoicing. These mortal bodies will be changed. There will be many who passed from this life and have been sleeping in the grave while their soul reigns above. They will come forth and their souls will reunite with their resurrected and glorified body. There will be a few who will still be alive when Jesus comes. They will be changed in a moment and in a twinkling of the eye from mortality to immortality. Those who are saved will go up together to be with our dear Saviour forever and ever. All sorrows and sufferings will be gone forever. We will live and praise and sing to our God with a voice that will never be hoarse nor weary. We will see all the faithful who have lived before us, and will meet again those precious ones whom we knew and loved down here. We will see Jesus face to face. Oh, it will be wonderful! If we could visualize and see how wonder-

ful it will be, we would want to go on so badly that we could hardly stand it. But we can see it in the light of the gospel and the precious Scriptures we have before us today. May the Lord help us to hold fast to this anchor of the soul, and let Christ live and be in us the hope of glory until we are called from this life. Amen and amen.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The story is recorded of a discouraged man in London who was on his way to drown himself when he saw a copy of a painting entitled "Hope". The picture shows a blindfolded woman sitting upon the top of the world and playing upon the one string left on her lyre. "Well, I have one string—I have a little boy at home," the man exclaimed as he retraced the steps he had taken.

The child of God is never without hope. No matter how hard a blow life deals there is still the greatest hope that can be had. People have hoped in many things and been disappointed because they were temporal, but the hope of the Christian is anchored in the spiritual.

Hope will do wonderful things for a person. The hope of candy will make a child cavort with joy. The goal of a new car or home will make a couple sweat and work for years to obtain. The hope of an eternal life is far beyond these temporal things and will cause those who have it to go to greater lengths and rejoice more in the thought of it. The scriptures tell us "And hope maketh not ashamed. . ." Rom. 5:5. It is this hope that caused the martyrs to stand up and give their bodies to the executioner. I would term that as being a very powerful force. It can be so strong because it is sure and steadfast. And it is sure and steadfast because it enters into that within the veil. This hope actually goes into the presence of God. As we talk to God and He communes within our heart of things eternal, it verifies to us that heaven is real and attainable.

—Wayne Murphey



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