

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 28, No. 3
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
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Volume 28

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THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER, 1996

Our studies for this Quarter will be various Bible subjects of great spiritual importance to the soul of man. It is our sincere burden that these lessons will be a special benefit to everyone who applies their heart to know the truth.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



JULY 7, 1996

THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST

John 19:13 ...Pilate ...brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat...

14 ...And he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

I Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

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

Galatians 5:11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Luke 14:26 (Jesus said,) If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (He that loveth father or mother,... son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37.)

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple (is not worthy of me, Matthew 10:38.)

Philippians 3:18 (...Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

MEMORY VERSE: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, was rejected by His own nation and put to death by being hung on a cross. The cross of Christ is to us a symbol of His rejection, humiliation, shame, reproach, and death. The cross becomes a reality to us in the shame and rejection we feel from the world because of our obedience to the will of God.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(John 19:15), "*Crucify*": To put to death by the method of fastening the victim to a cross by means of a stake or heavy nail.

(John 19:17), "*The place of a skull*": The word was "Golgotha" in the Hebrew, "Cranium" in the Greek, and "Calvary" in the Latin (Luke 23:33). It was probably called "the place of a skull" because of the rounded shape of the hill where the execution of our Lord took place. Or it could have been so named because of it being the repeated scene of death as it was.

(Galatians 3:13), "*Tree*": This word refers more to the timber or wood from the tree than the tree itself.

(1 Corinthians 1:17), "*Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*": "None effect" in the Greek means to make empty or vain, to neutralize or nullify. The cross of Jesus is to have an effect upon the soul of man to bring him to a separation from sin.

(Galatians 5:11), "*The offence of the cross ceased*": This is a parallel or like expression of the previous thought of making the cross of none effect. Paul was persuaded that to preach the gospel with the excellency of worldly wisdom would hide the meaning of the cross to people. Also to hold up the Old Testament circumcision of the flesh as a requirement for being saved was to Paul the means of bringing an end to the offence that God wanted every man to experience from the cross.

(Galatians 6:14), "*Glory*": To boast or rejoice in.

(Luke 14:26), "*Hate*": Love less. The accompanying scripture from Matthew 10:37 helps to explain Christ's meaning here.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The wooden cross on which the Prince of Glory died was not only a means of crucifixion, it also stands for all the suffering and shame that His children will suffer and bear for His sake. John tells of Jesus bearing His cross to Golgotha. The other three gospels relate the account of one Simon, of Cyrene, a passer-by, who was laid hold on and ordered to bear the cross, the literal cross. Perhaps John was seeing the real cross that Jesus bore that day, a cross on His heart, and an inward agony of sorrow and shame, brought on by His being rejected of those whom He sought to save.

The apostle Paul had a clear vision of what the cross really stood for. He was hounded and persecuted by the Jews who sought to hold to the old law and its system which was really brought to an end by Christ when He fulfilled it in His death and resurrection. There was a shame and reproach that accompanied Christ's death. Paul was persuaded that preaching anything other than the death of Christ on the cross and His resurrection was a violation of that shame and reproach. He did not want to dim the value and esteem that we should place on the cross. Worldly wisdom and love of earthly things is contrary to the cross. Through the cross the world is crucified unto us and we are crucified to the world. Because of the cross we are able to see how fleeting, vain and unprofitable this present evil world is. Without the cross a person is charmed and fascinated by the world and its pleasures. But with the cross in view it all takes its true form as vain and useless. And in the cross the heavenly and eternal joys are revealed.

Jesus, in the scriptures in our lesson, speaks of one's own cross. Everyone of us has a cross to bear in life. Giving up this sinful world and denying ourselves of our own selfish pleasures is to embrace the cross and carry it daily. Unless we accept the cross and bear it faithfully we can never be His true disciples.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What all did Christ accomplish in His death on the cross?
2. What was the real cross that Christ bore?
3. Why was Paul so concerned about the effect of the cross?
4. How can preaching with wisdom of words cause the cross to be made of none effect?
5. Why did Paul believe that to preach circumcision would cause the offence of the cross to cease?
6. Why should we not glory in anything but the cross of Christ?
7. What is the cost of us not bearing our cross?
8. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?" Why?
9. How can we be "enemies of the cross of Christ?"
10. How can we truly bear our cross for Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In this modernistic world where there are so many charming inventions and glittering, fleshly thrills it is easy to lose sight of the cross. There are many things that will tend to make us unaware of the need for repentance and giving up the world. Satan has succeeded in making sin not look so bad. Thus people are laden with sin but do not realize it. Many religious systems are present to ease the conscience and soothe people into a deep sleep spiritually. In the Pilgrim's Progress John Bunyan pictured Christian being directed by Evangelist to the narrow gate of repentance and faith in Christ. As he headed toward the narrow gate he met Worldly Wiseman who succeeded in turning him away from the way of the cross. He pointed him to a city named Morality wherein was a man named Legality who had a son named Civility, who had a reputation of being able to take off the burden of sin that Christian had on his back. So Christian started toward that city of Morality but was stopped by the hill

of Sinai which represented the law. He was soon stopped and dealt with by Evangelist who showed him the error of leaving the way of the cross. Christian received his counsel and continued on to the narrow gate. In a book entitled "The City of Nocross" the author pictured what it would be like to go on down to Morality and have Legality and Civility relieve the heart of conviction for sin without repentance and the cross. I read the book once and it was very stirring. It is so plain how the devil sidetracks many people and keeps them from the way of the cross today. Instead of recognizing their need of giving up the world and turning from sin with a godly sorrow and taking up the cross for Jesus, so many reform and become moral, civil and legal. They can live a decent life to a great extent and are made insensitive to their true need of repentance and the cross. Much worldly wisdom turns people today away from a real Bible experience of salvation. So many get under conviction and reform to a certain extent, but they do not go all the way to pay the full price to get an experience of Bible salvation that will last and satisfy. Let us never lose sight of the cross. Without the cross there is no real experience with God, only a deception. In the city of Nocross you can partake of the world and have a pretty good showing in some things, but the cross of repentance and faith in Christ is not there. Let us take heed and make sure that we embrace the cross and daily live up to its standard.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our lesson the apostle Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." There were many things in Paul's past life that he could have gloried in if he so desired. He could have bragged about his schooling in the scriptures or his strict adherence to the law. But he saw something in the cross that brought about a great freedom and allowed his soul to rejoice.

There were some in the Galatian church who were still trying to exercise the law and bind it on others. It created such an oppressive atmosphere that the freedom of the true believers was stifled.

It is easy to come down hard on the side of the law and feel like you are upholding the true standard, but it will have a

debilitating effect upon the congregation or church. The real joy of the saints will fade. It is possible under these conditions, if a number of the congregation have the same law spirit, to manufacture emotions, but true salvation goes much deeper. Where the law holds reign there will be constant judgment and suspicion.

The apostle Paul became so moved and concerned with those in the Galatian church who were feeling more righteous than others that he wrote in Galatians 5: 12, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." He had found freedom in the forgiveness of sins which was purchased on the cross of Jesus Christ, and he gladly bore that cross. If it was a problem with others that he rejoiced in his freedom, then he also would gladly bear that reproach.

—Wayne Murphey



JULY 14, 1996

STEWARDSHIP—THE ECONOMY OF GRACE, PART ONE

I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Ephesians 4:7 ...Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Peter 4:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The salvation of the grace of God in Christ is not only a special blessing to save our souls from eternal ruin, it is also a responsibility which has been entrusted for us to minister to others

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(1 Corinthians 4:1), *"Let a man so account of us,....as ...stewards"*: Paul wanted himself and all the Lord's workers to be reckoned by others as lowly servants of Christ and stewards of the Gospel. *"Steward"*: This is translated from the Greek word "oikonomos" which means a manager or overseer of another man's house, property or goods.

(1 Peter 4:10), *"Manifold grace of God"*: "Manifold" here means having many different parts. God's grace has many

different elements, functions, applications and benefits, all working together to produce holiness, victory and success for us in living for Him.

(I Corinthians 9:17), "*If against my will*": Paul's language in this verse is evidently this: I am called of Christ to preach His gospel. If I do it willingly, I will be happy and blessed and have hopes of a rich reward. I cannot escape this call. Even if it brings things upon me that my flesh would not want or enjoy, I must still pursue this calling because the economy of grace requires it of me, and I will have to give an account of how I have handled it. "*A dispensation of the gospel*": The word "dispensation" means a dispensing or distribution. It is translated from the same word in the Greek as "stewardship." The Greek word is "oikonomiea" from which comes our English word "economy." Economy is defined as the management and regulation of household matters consisting of income, use, care, control, expense and proper upkeep and preservation. There is the economy of the individual, the marriage, the home, the city, the state and the nation. And, as we have in our lesson today, there is the economy of grace: the management and regulation of our souls and our work in the work of the Lord and His Church. It is an extremely serious and important matter all the way around.

(Romans 12:6), "*Proportion*": This word means the equal part or share and the relation of one part or portion to another part and to the whole. The gifts and functions of the various members of the body of Christ are given to benefit each other and the operation and influence of the Church before the world. Each member must keep the proper ratio or relationship with God so as to keep the work of the Gospel balanced and functionable. This calls for diligence, tolerance and co-operation on the part of everyone. Each member is responsible to conduct himself with respect to his fellow workers and with respect to the progress and success of the whole operation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have for our lesson today a very important subject. Not only are we receiving from God the benefits of His grace and salvation to redeem us from sin, death and eternal destruction, but God wants to entrust each one of us with a portion of His work. He knows us altogether and knows how we can be best

used in His great economy. But just as we are helpless without His saving grace, just so are we fully dependent on His grace for ability to do His work.

Paul shows in his writings that we are nothing of ourselves, but rather servants (ministers) and stewards of the gospel. He has entrusted us with His truth. Peter says that as we have received the gift, we are to minister it one to another. This is how an economy works. Each person ministers to another. We are all servants one of another. Look at the city that you live in or are near and you will see many functions that are in operation in that city to make it a safe and comfortable place in which to live. There is, for instance, the garbage and trash collection and disposal system. Then there is the sewage disposal system. These are unpleasant matters, but they are very important. Then there is the water department, the law enforcement, the office workers in bookkeeping and financial affairs. Look at the maintenance crews for streets and roads, the dog pound, the traffic lights, the airport, and those in leadership such as the mayor, city manager and councilmen. Oh, the list goes on and on. And we know that many problems arise when people fail in their duties in these different offices.

In our lesson today we see it is the same with the grace of God and the function of men and women in His work. Thank the Lord for the instructions of Paul and Peter! If we will take diligent heed to their counsel and live close to the Lord, we can have a balanced and smooth operation of faith and labor in our own souls and in God's work in general. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul say that men should account him as?
2. What is required in being a steward and why is it so important?
3. What are we to do with the blessings of grace that God gives us?
4. Is it possible for a man to be trying to do work that God is not directing him in?
5. What was the necessity that Paul felt was laid upon him?
6. Why did Paul feel a woe upon him if he preached not the gospel?
7. How does God want us to think concerning our work for Him?

8. Is it possible for us to get ahead of the Lord's working?
9. What were the gifts that God gave the Church through Christ?
10. What was the purpose of giving these gifts?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Salvation is not only a wonderful gift and benefit, but it is also a great responsibility. We who receive the grace of God are responsible people. Paul, in II Corinthians 6:1, beseeches us that we receive not the grace of God in vain. We are stewards of the blessings of His grace. We are to minister them to other souls on the journey of life. We are not to keep it to ourselves. We are to share it with others. Each one of us has an influence in life for good or bad. We can make it for the good if we will receive the gift of God and let it live and function in our lives. It is required in being a steward to be faithful and wise in how we handle what is entrusted to us. The story of Joseph in the Bible shows what a good steward is. He was entrusted with things by his father, and then down in Egypt he made good as a steward in the house of Potiphar and also in the prison. And then, when his time finally came to assume the stewardship of the kingdom of Egypt, he was ready. He proved to be a faithful steward in everything. Even so, we are stewards today of the grace of God. We are going to have to give an account of what we have done with the grace He has given to us. Through our prayers and submission to God, we can be successful in our stewardship. We can be economical saints, using the spiritual wealth God has entrusted us with for the good and benefit of others. We are encouraged in Ecclesiastes 11:1 to reach out with the blessings that God has given us. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days". If we will sow the gospel seed with earnest prayer and faith in God, there will be a bountiful harvest for us to reap. Woe be to us if we do not seek to know and do God's will in our short, earthly life. We will have a long eternity to mourn our loss and failure. But it does not have to be that way. Let us seek the Lord with all of our hearts for grace to do His will. He will help us. And we will have an eternity to rejoice and enjoy the fruit of our labors here below.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Do you notice how Paul considers his calling? He said, "...for necessity is laid upon me;..." It wasn't that he considered his calling a burden, but he felt incapable of what God had for him to do. This is the secret to working successfully for God. It is an indication of humility.

One little boy said to another, "I don't think my mom knows much about children because she puts me to bed when I'm wide awake and gets me up when I'm sleepy." This is a rather amusing thought because we regard it from an adult perspective, but from a child's view, it could be perplexing and a very real concern.

In a similar fashion, when God calls a person to a work, the first reaction can be, "I don't think God understands me. Does He know what He is doing?" There can be two reasons for this response. First, we can't see things from God's perspective, and secondly, He has called someone with enough humility to question their capability to perform what God has laid upon their heart. If you see someone who is almost demanding God to call them into a particular work, the possibility exists that they won't be effective in it should God allow them their desire. Consider the callings and reactions of people like Paul, Moses, Isaiah, etc., and you will see these principles in action.

Another important truth the Apostle Paul explained, and which we should consider, is that we are to minister **"...according to the proportion of faith."** We are to be good stewards by giving out only those things which God has given to us. It is very easy to minister in the flesh rather than simply presenting what God has definitely revealed and leaving things at that. The reason it is easy to slip into the flesh is because emotions run high. Most preachers have at some time found themselves caught up in the excitement of the moment, especially if they are ministering to a large crowd, and saying things that they felt were inspired. But when it is all over and they are alone with God, if they are still humble, God will cause them to be troubled and to learn to avoid that kind of fleshly behavior.

If everyone within the Church will be a faithful steward, it will hasten the time in which each member can "...come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,..."

—Wayne Murphey

JULY 21, 1996

STEWARDSHIP—THE ECONOMY OF GRACE, PART 2

"To him that hath shall be given."

Luke 8:4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he (Jesus) spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Mark 4:24 ...Take heed **what** ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Luke 8:18 Take heed therefore **how** ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Matthew 13:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Only those who have an ear to hear with an open mind and receiving heart will be able to understand the gospel when God sends it to them.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Luke 8:4), "*Parable*": A similitude; a story of common life with meaning parallel with the spiritual meaning, conveying a principle or principles of truth.

(Matthew 13:11), "*It is given unto you to know....but to them it is not given*": Because Christ's disciples had left all to follow Him, because they believed Him to be the Son of the living God, because they had received already all things that Christ had up to this time given to them, and because He had called them to be His disciples and had accepted them as such,—all of this qualified these men to be given the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These people in the outside world did not have these things.

(Matthew 13:12), "*Whosoever hath, to him shall be given*": Where does this law, that Jesus states here and in several other places, come from? Is it not a truth of life from the very dawn of creation? Why did Adam and Eve lose their home in the garden of Eden? Why was Abel accepted and Cain rejected? Why was Noah given the charge to build the ark for salvation? Why was Abraham singled out and given the promise of the Saviour coming through his lineage? As you consider each one of these Bible characters, you can find the answer. Each one qualified for greater blessings and benefits because of some very essential things that they possessed. Those who failed to hold or possess these essential qualities lost what they had.

(Matthew 13:14), "*By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand*": Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10 When Isaiah

heard the voice of the Lord calling, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" he answered, "Here am I; send me." And the Lord said to him, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." The stubbornness and hardness of the human heart to receive the divine message was already manifest in Isaiah's time. It was still unchanged in Christ's day.

(Mark 4:24), "*Take heed therefore WHAT ye hear*": This word "what" is a very important word and can also include "who" we hear. It is very critical that we be very choosy about who we listen to and what we listen and give heed to.

(Luke 8: 18), "*Take heed HOW ye hear*": The word "how" here means "in what way: The kind of attitude and spirit that you hear a thing in determines greatly how you will react to it and what it will mean to you. From childhood to old age, we are besieged with words, ideas and thoughts from many different sources. What we hear and how we hear it is so important, far more important than what the average person realizes. We have Christ's warning about this. Let us take diligent heed.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We might call our lesson today "The Stewardship of Hearing". God had seen fit to deal with man intelligently through the avenue of His Word. Seeing this to be so, we are greatly impressed with the sense of the importance of how we hear His Word. We have Jesus before the multitudes who came to hear Him. They had seen His miracles and experienced the blessing of His healing hand. These were means of drawing them to Him so they could hear His Word. But at the same time, Christ knew the blindness and hardness of their hearts. So we see Him, instead of openly expounding the truths of His work and kingdom, speaking in parables like the one we recorded here, the sower and the seed. Everyone understood what He said about the sower and the seed, for that was the normal way it was done back then. But they did not know that He had another sower and seed in mind. And He did not want to tell them about it right then because He knew that they were not in any condition to rightly receive it as they should. His disciples were close to Him and were given the chance to ask Him of the meaning and why He did not explain it to the multitude.

Jesus explained the reason why He was not telling the multitude. He pointed to Isaiah's prophecy concerning the hardness and blindness of mankind and how that instead of telling them, He was withholding it from them except in parables. It is even so today. There are many things in the Bible that the common run of people today cannot receive, even if you tell it to them. The heart is hard and the mind is closed. But He wants the message of His salvation to go forth. He knows who can and will receive it.

How about us? Where does this put us? It puts us in a very serious and responsible place. Here our stewardship begins. What are we going to do with the gospel and the Word of God when we hear it? Are we going to turn it off and count it lightly, or are we going to pursue with eager and earnest heart its meaning? As we hear, let us respond with love, faith and obedience. Thus we will have what we need to qualify us for receiving more, and more, and more. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus not reveal His mysteries to the multitudes?
2. Why did He readily reveal it to His disciples?
3. What does it mean to have ears to hear?
4. How can a person hear and yet not hear?
5. How were His disciples qualified to be told the meaning?
6. Is this blind and deaf condition still true with many today?
7. Why is it so important to be careful WHAT we hear?
8. Why is it so important to be careful HOW we hear?
9. What decides whether we really receive the truth or not?
10. What are the things we must have in order to be given?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

My wife's mother, Sister Vera Forbes, was giving the lesson in a young people's meeting held in our home one evening several years ago. I will never forget her lesson to the young people, and I have thought much about it through the years. It goes along with our lesson today. She said there were seven things that we had to "have" in order to have success with God. They are: (1) a

seeing eye, (2) a hearing ear, (3) an open mind, (4) a believing heart, (5), a submissive attitude, (6) an obedient nature, and (7) a faithful spirit. There is much important truth in this. But it starts with a seeing eye and an ear to hear. Many fail to have these first two. It is human nature to not want to look or listen. In the explanation of the parable of the sower and the seed, Jesus described four different kinds of people. They all had one thing common. They all heard the Word of God. But they all reacted differently. Some heard it but it did not register with them and the devil was there to take it out of their hearts. Some heard it and rejoiced to receive it but they lacked depth of purpose and vision and they were soon offended. Others heard the Word but the cares, riches and pleasures of this life choked it out. But there were those which "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, kept it, and brought forth fruit with patience". Luke 8: 15.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

During the summer, a clergyman called on a lady who had a very fine collection of roses. She took him out to see her white roses, red roses, yellow roses, climbing roses, roses in pots and the modest moss rose. Every species he had ever heard of, and a great many he had never heard of, were there in rich profusion. The lady began plucking right and left. The clergyman remonstrated, "You are robbing yourself, dear madam."

"Ah," she said, "do you not know that the way to make the rosebush bear is to pluck its flowers freely? I lose nothing by what I give away."

Jesus stated the principle by saying, "...With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." Mark 4:24. When we give to others of that with which God has blessed us, we are blessed. If we have a spirit of humility, we can also receive in kind. We can learn something from everyone. Even those who are not serving the Lord can teach us some valuable perspectives and principles of living if we are open to receive them. Too often we think we must "teach" those less fortunate than us, rather than simply being of the nature to impart a blessing to them; and thereby we lose what could be a great blessing to us. —Wayne Murphey



JULY 28, 1996

**STEWARDSHIP—FAITHFULNESS IN THE UNRIGHTEOUS
MAMMON**

Luke 16:1 And he (Jesus) said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

I Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Luke 16:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Since we are soon to lose our earthly stewardship of material wealth and possessions through death, we should use our earthly money and goods to make friendship with heaven and the angels so that they will receive us into their eternal dwellings.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Luke 16:8), "*In their generation wiser than the children of light*": If people who profess to be saved were as diligent in their pursuit of eternal life as the carnal and covetous are in their pursuit of earthly gain, they would be farther up the road than what they often are.

(Luke 16:9), "*Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*": The meaning is clear: Use the literal, earthly wealth that you are now just a steward over to make friends of the heavenly powers and the angels so that when you die and your earthly wealth and possessions fail, you will be received into eternal dwellings in that blessed world to come. Those who fail to do this and use their money for selfish and worldly gratification are but sealing their doom in eternity's night.

(Luke 16:10), "*Faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much*": If you are faithful in the earthly money and wealth, using it wisely and justly and with generosity for the poor and the work of the Lord, you will be faithful and true with the grace and spiritual blessings God will bestow upon you, and you will be accounted worthy to enjoy that blessed home above.

(Luke 16:11), "*True riches*": Salvation here below and victory over death unto life eternal.

(Luke 16:12), "*That which is another man's, and that which is your own*": All of the possessions that you acquire or have in this fleeting world are not your own. It all belongs to God and is given to you as a trust for you to be a steward over. That which

is your own is that which you can have and enjoy now and which you will be able to take with you to glory when you leave here.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When Jesus gave this lesson on the unfaithful steward, He was on His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. He had just given the parables of the lost sheep, the woman's lost piece of silver and the prodigal son. These three parables were given to the Pharisees and scribes who murmured because Jesus was receiving publicans and sinners and eating with them. But the parable in our lesson today was given to His disciples. It was a special message for them and so it is today. This parable contains a vital message that every child of God needs to understand and lay hold of. Note the opening information. Here is a rich man who has to deal with one of his servants who had not handled the money entrusted to him wisely or profitably. He calls him and orders him to give an account of the matter, giving him warning that if it proves true what has been reported, he will lose his position. It is very important to get the point here, because he is using this as a figure of our position. We are going to be put out of our stewardship, that is, we are going to die and take nothing with us. This is what he is talking about. And we ought to take this seriously because our eternal welfare is at stake. The steward ponders his predicament, knowing that he is guilty and will soon be dismissed from his job. He saw no hope in making it on his own by digging ditches or begging on the street. So, realizing that he was not yet put out and that he still had the authority of his position of handling the money, he resolved to make friends with his lord's creditors by cutting their bill way down. And so he did as our lesson shows. He was making a way for himself and his future. When his lord heard about what he did he thought it was a wise move, and it was. Jesus uses this to illustrate our need for making friends for eternity. And he points to our use of the earthly wealth and goods that we are just stewards over to bring it out. This lesson is of utmost value to us who are seeking for God's blessings and for the hope of eternal life. Let us take it seriously because this parable shows what the deciding factors are in whether we obtain or lose a home in heaven.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What position was this steward in when he was accused?
2. Why did he feel that he could cut down the debtors' bills?
3. What was his purpose in cutting their bills down?
4. Why are worldly people more dutiful in seeking wealth than the children of God are sometimes?
5. Why are earthly wealth and riches called unrighteous mammon?
6. How can we "make friends" with the unrighteous mammon?
7. Who are the friends we need to make?
8. What are the eternal habitations that we need to secure?
9. Why should we lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a sad condition for a person to be called from this life out into the great beyond with no welcome in an eternal dwelling! And yet many people go out of this life in just that condition. They are unaware of their predicament while they are here and in the dark about the doom that awaits them beyond the gates of death. They have lived for self, been covetous and inconsiderate of the needs of others. They probably, for the most part, have professed to be children of God but have overlooked a most important factor in having hope of heaven. Let us not be thus deceived. Let us view our plight. We are soon to be ushered out into eternity by death. We will lose everything we had earthwise. We will take no money, nor houses, nor lands with us. The only thing we can truly take with us is the spiritual wealth that we have acquired through faith and obedience to Christ. If we do not have salvation, we will go out into the darkness and gloom of an eternal world with no refuge nor shelter. How terrible to think of it! Paul pictured it in II Corinthians 5: 1-4 as being found naked. We are groaning and earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven so that we will not be found naked. We need to secure for ourselves a dwelling in eternity. That is the size of it. By believing in Christ and His precious blood is but one factor through which we have hope of eternal life. Our faith must be accompanied by obedience to His Word. And He

teaches us to "give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." Luke 12:33. Oh, may God impress this important lesson deeply upon our hearts. Let us make friends while we have time and opportunity who will welcome us into that heavenly home! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A STEWARDSHIP PARABLE—"And behold, a certain man went down with a friend to a place where people like to eat. And there the two of them dined sumptuously. And when they finished eating, the waitress brought the men a bill. And in the sight of his friend the man placed beside his plate a certain sum of coins. 'What does this sum of money beside your plate mean?' the friend inquired.

"'It is but a tip, a customary percentage of the sum of the bill,' the man answered.

"The friend said to himself, 'How strange this is! This man has been served for a few minutes by the waitress, and behold, he gives to her 15 percent of the bill. All his life he has received this world's good from his heavenly Father, yet he is offended that God should ask of him a tenth part of his increase. Can it be that he holds this waitress, a stranger, in greater esteem than his heavenly Father?'" —Taken from compilations by George Knight.



AUGUST 4, 1996

STEWARDSHIP—"OCCUPY TILL I COME"

Luke 19:11 ...(Jesus) spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having

received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Matthew 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MEMORY VERSE: For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. Matt. 25:29.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ has gone into the heavens, there to remain, until the time decreed by the Father to return and reward the faithful and punish the wicked. He has entrusted to His servants His spiritual wealth of the gospel and the Holy Spirit to do business with and share with others until He comes again. We must be diligent to busy ourselves in His work so that we can offer Him an increase in that day.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Luke 19:13), *"Ten pounds"*: A pound to each servant. The term "pound" is translated from the Greek word "minas" which simply means a unit of measure. In verse 15 it was called "money", and that word in the Greek is "silver". So we know that it was silver that he entrusted his servants with. Gold and silver and valuable gems are symbols of spiritual gifts and wealth. The gospel and the work of sharing it with others is given to us to labor in through the power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. *"Occupy till I come"*: The Greek expression here is "Busy yourself with." In the case with money, the only thing one can be busy with it is to buy, sell or trade. In the case with spiritual blessings or gifts, we busy ourselves by sharing them with others.

(Luke 19:15), *"Gained by trading"*: The Greek meaning of this phrase is, "earned by thoroughly occupying one's self".

(Luke 19:17, 19), *"Authority over ten cities, five cities"*: This man had received a dominion which, in an earthly sense, had cities and communities that needed leadership, control and protection. Since these servants had been faithful with his money in his absence and had been able to present it back to him with an increase, he deemed them worthy and able to assume the oversight of a like proportion of his kingdom. How parallel this all is with the kingdom of Jesus Christ! Jesus has gone into heaven to wait until the Father decrees that He should inherit all things unto life eternal. While He tarries at the right hand of God, He sends the Holy Spirit to jurisdict His servants in the care and business of His spiritual wealth - the kingdom of God in the hearts of mankind!

(Luke 19:21), *"Austere"*: Rough and severe. This man's warped vision of his lord caused his vision of opportunity and responsibility to be warped also.

(Luke 19:23), *"Bank"*: The Greek word here is "trapeza" which means a table, or a counter. Figuratively it refers to a broker's office for loans at interest.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today of our Saviour's parable of the nobleman and his entrusted pounds of silver is very parallel and similar to the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Originally, both of these parables may have been identical and have assumed

their different terms because of the two different men who related them. It is evident, however, that they were given at two different occasions. Here in Luke, Jesus gave this parable after His visit in Jericho and the conversion of Zacchaeus, and He was preparing to journey on toward Jerusalem. Someone among His disciples travelling with Him had it in their expectation that the kingdom of God would appear very soon. Jesus gave this parable, seemingly without any explanation, but the meaning was very obvious. It shows plainly that He was not going to make the kingdom of God a literal dominion on earth. He was, rather, about to be transported to the heavens to reign at the right hand of God until the time when God would bring an end to all things here below. In the intervening period, His people were to be stewards of His manifold grace and busy themselves with His gospel to the souls of men. There was to be responsibility and faithfulness proven in each of His children while He interceded for them at the right hand of God and empowered them with His Spirit.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 came after Jesus had left the temple with His stinging rebuke to the Jews. There with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, He foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem along with the end of time and His second coming. The parable of the talents was part of that discourse. It is a message to the children of God today to be faithful in His service and minister the gifts of God given to them by the Holy Spirit one to another and to the souls of men around them.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus give this parable?
2. What was the "far country" He was going to?
3. What does Christ give to His servants?
4. What does He want them to do with His gifts?
5. What does it mean to "occupy till I come?"
6. How can we increase the wealth He entrusts us with?
7. What will our reward be for being faithful with what He gives us?
8. What was the servant doing all that time that his pound was laid up in a napkin?
9. What will be the end of those who are not faithful?

10. Can you explain verse 26 of our lesson?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the account of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, we find where the lord gave one servant five talents, another two and another one talent. In our lesson in Luke, he gave to each the same amount of one measure. This shows that the Lord knows each one's individual ability and what he can handle. One increased his pounds to ten, and the other gained five. It was the slothful servant who did nothing with what he received who was in trouble when his lord returned. The one that received one talent while the others received more might have yielded to the thought that his one talent was not much and would make no difference. But he was wrong. The Lord wants us to be just as faithful with what little we have been entrusted with. He wants us to busy ourselves with His Word and Spirit in sharing it with others. Teaching, singing, praying, preaching, witnessing, testifying, giving and helping are ways for us to serve the Lord and multiply what He has given to us. We must be earnest and sincere. We must be diligent and ever ready to give an answer to those who ask a reason of our hope in Christ. Here a little and there a little with the blessings of God can bring a great increase. He will not let us off lightly if we are slack and careless and taken up with the cares and pleasures of this life. We are going to have to give an account of our life and labors. Let us pray for God's grace, guidance and blessings on our service to Him. Let us constantly abide in Him and draw, through prayer and communion with Him, the inspiration and anointing that will make our work for Him effectual for the good of the souls of men. Remember, there is a great reward in store for the faithful.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

About 175 years ago, there was in America a day of such unaccountable darkness that it was supposed by many that the last day had come. The legislature of Connecticut was in session and its members shared in the general awe and terror. In the consternation of the hour, someone moved an adjournment. An old Puritan then arose, and said that if the last day had come, he desired to be found at his post, doing his duty, and therefore

moved that the candles be brought in so that the house could proceed with its business.

"Occupy until I come," is the message which sounds in the heart of every believer. Perhaps the way grows dark and the path obscure, causing perplexity and hesitation. At times the storms beat wildly upon us and our souls writhe at the thrashing of the wind, rain and hail. We are without a consciousness of the presence of the master of the storm. We look in vain for a way to be done with the tormenting elements. Yet in the very core of our soul we know that we must continue on with integrity and courage, seeking to be a blessing to others when we ourselves would be blessed. There can be no retirement in serving our Lord, no sheathing of the scythe. Our bodies may not allow us to go and do as we once did, but our soul must keep fighting for a deeper and newer spiritual life so that we can be a beacon of hope to others who may be struggling along the way. We must be faithful until our master releases us from our duties and we meet Him in peace.

—Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 11, 1996

LIVING THE LIFE FOR GOD

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodlinesss and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

II Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

I Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Philippians 1:20 ...Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

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

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

I Timothy 5:6 ...She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

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. Psalm 104:33-34.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is not how well we can speak, or sing, or preach, or testify; it is not where we attend church services, and it is not how much we profess to be Christians: it is how we live that is really going to count.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Titus 2:12), "*Soberly*": With soundness of mind and self-control; moderate. "*Godly*": Well reverent before God; being greatly devoted to God and respectful of His Word with whole hearted obedience.

(I Peter 4:3), "*For the time past of our life may suffice us*": We lived in the flesh long enough, "*Lasciviousness*": With no control

of passions or desires especially in men and women relationships. "*Lusts*": Longings, cravings and desires especially for things forbidden and wrong. "*Excess of wine*": Drunkenness. "*revellings*": Partying, drinking with no control, fleshly enjoyments with no respect to what is decent, right or lawful. "*Banqueting*": Drinking any and every kind of alcoholic beverage with glee and celebration.

(Romans 8:12), "*We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*": More plainly stated: "We are under no obligation to live after the flesh. We are set free from its dominion and power, and we do not owe the flesh any indulgence or favor."

(Romans 8:13), "*Mortify the deeds of the body*": This means to put to death the practices and manners that we used to participate in while we were in sin. Anything that a person does that is contrary to God's holiness has to be cut out of his life and ceased from partaking of forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The kind of life we live is going to determine where we will be in eternity. We need to receive the life which is from God in the salvation of Jesus Christ. But after we are saved and washed in the blood, we have a responsibility before God to turn away from all sinful and unholy practices that the world is indulging in around us. Turning away from these things, we must seek to live a holy and upright life before God and man. We might be good speakers and talented singers and with a lot of education and skill, but if we do not live godly, soberly and righteously, it will all be in vain. Brother Isaac Chandler told how he asked one of the brethren to always pray for him when he went out in meetings for the Lord that he would keep saved. Finally the brother asked him why he always asked for prayer to keep saved when he was going to be preaching every night. Brother Chandler said, "If I will keep saved, my preaching will be all right." Keeping saved and living right is a full time responsibility for every one of us. We should take heed to the kind of life we are living. Many people seem to have gotten the idea that no matter how they live and treat their family and fellow man they are still saved and all is well. Oh, how deceived they are! We must live a careful and strict life for God if we hope to make heaven our home. God will give us grace to do so if we are willing and

obedient to His Word. We have chosen various scriptures from Paul and Peter that have to do with how we live. We must live to God and not to the flesh or to self. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the things we have to deny and turn away from to live for God?
2. What will people think of us if we quit doing the things we used to do with them?
3. How would you describe the real life of a child of God?
4. What does it mean to live unto Him who died for us and rose again?
5. How are we to be crucified with Christ?
6. Can we be truly crucified with Christ and conform ourselves to the styles and fads of the world?
7. What did Paul mean when he said, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"?
8. How can one who lives in pleasure be dead while she liveth?
9. What will happen to us if we live to the flesh?
10. What does it mean to "mortify the deeds of the body"?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When a person gives their heart and life to God and is saved from sin and born of the Spirit of God, he or she is a new creature. Old things pass away, and all things become new. He is to live a different life from there on out. Some of this life will be spontaneous and by the help of the Spirit of the Lord will be easy and joyous. But there will be some things that will be quite difficult and will require much prayer and watchfulness to accomplish. The adjustments that will have to be made in the change from a sinful and fleshly way of living may be hard. But if we are determined to go for God and make the grade for Him, He will be right there to help us. Where we were once loose and careless and highhanded, we must now be careful and strict. We must be conscientious and sincere with how we live and conduct ourselves before God and man. We must have much self discipline and control of our desires and feelings and mannerisms. We must live honestly before everyone. If we find ourselves

overpaid or reimbursed more than what is right, we must be quick to fix that up. We must never pull crooked deals and always be trying to get the best of someone. The way we live is our greatest testimony. People listen more to the way you live than to what you say. Instead of living to please the world, the flesh, people and self, we must live to please the Lord. Our affections must be nailed to the cross and we must live to God and to Him alone. We must live joyfully and be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. We must never be complaining, faultfinding and critical. We must strive to live a life that will be a blessing to the souls of men. It is a beautiful life to live for God, and the end of such a life is a home in Heaven with Jesus and His saints forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"There is no harm in any natural appetite, considered in itself. Appetites have been given for the preservation of the race, and for our well-being.

"Now here is the problem: These appetites must not be eradicated. Instead, they must be cleansed, sanctified and controlled. Is this possible? And how can this be brought about? Arm yourselves with a thought. 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind:...' I Peter 4:1. What thought?

"1st. That suffering in the flesh is not, as the world counts it, an unmixed evil, but often a blessing.

"2nd. That Christ's sufferings during His life were because of the fact that 'His life was dominated by a supreme thought; it was controlled by an all-commanding purpose. He rejected sovereignty of the flesh; He subordinated the temporal! He uncrowned the body, making it a common subject, and compelling it to obedience to high commands.'

"3rd. The thought of the cross of Christ. Drink in the meaning of Christ's death. The pious contemplation of His death will most powerfully kill the love of sin in the soul and kindle an ardent hatred of it.'

"4th. The thought of my death in Christ, of my identification with His death. Drink in the spirit of Christ's death till it be repeated in you. Dead men do not sin. We are viewed in the Mind and Purpose of God as having died with Christ in His death and

raised in His resurrection. We must regard ourselves as having passed out of this life in which flesh and sense reign supreme."

—Taken from writings by James Smith



AUGUST 18, 1996

THE BEAUTY OF THE SAINTS OF GOD

Isaiah 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.

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

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

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

Psalms 29:2 Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Psalms 90:17 Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us...
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 3:3 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.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The beauty that is of importance to God is the inward beauty of the soul, a spiritual adorning of meekness, love, faith and holiness. Outward beauty of itself is vain.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Isaiah 28:4), "*Hasty fruit before the summer*": Both the Hebrew and Septuagint Greek texts say "the early fig". This expresses the early decay and fading of outward beauty. It just does not last. It is just for a time and then it vanishes away.

(Proverbs 11:22), "*A fair woman which is without discretion*": The Hebrew says, "A beautiful woman who turns true perception and understanding aside". The Septuagint calls her an "illminded woman".

(1 Timothy 2:9), "*Modest apparel*": Decent and orderly clothing. "*Shamefacedness*": The Greek word meaning is "not to see," and it indicates a bashful, downcast eyes attitude, opposite of wanting to be seen and admired. "*Sobriety*": The same word as "soberness," which means having a sound mind and possessing discipline and self-control. "*Broided hair*": Hair that is braided and fixed fancy with adorning of colors entwined in it." "*Costly array*": Expensive garments.

(1 Peter 3:3), "*Plaiting the hair*": Elaborate braiding of the hair, the same as broidered hair.

(1 Peter 3:4), "*The hidden man of the heart*": The inward man adorned with the beautiful traits of holiness, meekness and perfect love.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we will study from the scriptures the age old problem of mankind from the beginning. The lure of outward beauty and that which is pleasant to mortal eyes has gotten many people into deep trouble with their Maker. Part of the allurements of sin is outward attraction and beauty. The

forbidden fruit was "pleasant to the eyes" of Eve. Lot was attracted toward Sodom because of the well watered plain of Jordan that he saw when he lifted up his eyes. David fell a victim to sin when he looked upon his neighbor's beautiful wife across the way, bathing upon the housetop. And the problem develops with people, especially women, wanting to stress the outward beauty by adding artificial means of enhancing their beauty. Our scriptures today show the vanity and evil of stressing the outward beauty ahead of the inward beauty of the soul. John Wesley was a stern rebuke against outward adorning. He said that when a woman seeks to beautify her outward form it is a good proof that she is lacking in the inward beauty. The Lord wants to be the diadem of beauty in the hearts and lives of His saints. He wants them to have the real beauty, not just outward show. He wants us to be neat, clean and orderly. But He wants the main beauty in us to be the heart full of meekness, kindness, faith and holiness.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does God pronounce a woe on people who stress the outward beauty?
2. What does God beautify the meek with?
3. In what way is a true child of God beautiful?
4. Why did Peter and Paul counsel women to dress in modest apparel?
5. Does a person filled with holiness and the love of Christ need outward adornment?
6. What will people say when they come to the judgment to face God when they have disregarded these plain scriptures in our lesson?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In our world and society today, people are just carried away with adorning the outer man, this fleeting and frail tabernacle of clay that will soon be folded up and laid aside. Very little effort is concentrated on adorning and attending to the beauty of the inner man. This is a great sin of our sunken society. While adultery, fornication, drunkenness and strife abound, mankind is still seeking to beautify the outward man and neglecting to

take care of his soul. How vain is outward beauty! How true our scripture is that declares that a beautiful woman without understanding is like an old hog besmeared with mud with a jewel or ring of gold in its snout! Beauty is only skin deep. Many young people have been ruined in their souls because they became overly conscious of their outward beauty. They lost sight of the real beauty. Inward beauty is far more rewarding and necessary. By being modest and plain, it will help the beauty of Christ to be more evident. But if we put on things to be showy and fancy it will take from the inward beauty. Let us remember that it is not just casual advice that the Bible gives on this line, but strong and urgent commands that we must willingly and faithfully obey.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Describing the method of his work among the North American Indians, David Brainerd wrote, "I never got away from Jesus, and Him crucified; and I found that when my people were gripped by this, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed as the sure and inevitable fruit of the other."

The forgiveness of sins purchased by Christ on Mount Calvary must be the focus of the message of salvation. If a code of dress and ethics are instituted and enforced within a body of people, the result, at best, will be an organization in which people look and act one like another. If an adoration of Christ is instilled in the hearts of a body of people, you will find that they will look and act like Christ, resulting in a unity one with another.

The closer we are able to draw to God, the deeper into the depths of humility it will take us. This will result in the care of the outward man taking its proper place in our lives and the hidden man of the heart having full liberty to shine for Christ.

—Wayne Murphey



Does your Bible Lesson subscription expire with this quarter? If it does, be sure to have your renewal in this office by September 1 so that you won't miss the fourth quarter of 1996.

We trust these Sunday School books will be an inspiration by helping to open up just a few of the hidden mysteries of our majestic God.

AUGUST 25, 1996

THE PEACE OF GOD

Isaiah 57:19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Psalms 37:11 ...The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

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

Colossians 3:15 ...Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Psalms 85:8 I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,...

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

MEMORY VERSE: Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Psalm 119:165.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, wills to bring His mercy and peace to all men. Through the offering of His Son Jesus as an atonement for sin, God and man can be in peace and harmony. God's peace can be in our hearts and we need never to be afraid and troubled any more.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Isaiah 57:19), *"I create the fruit of the lips"*: Regardless of the sad plight of lost man, God is willing, on His part, to initiate and bring forth a provision for man to be at peace with Him.

(Psalm 119:165), *"Nothing shall offend them"*: Both the Hebrew and the Septuagint put this as saying, "There is not a stumbling block to them." If we will exercise ourselves to really love God's law and His dealings with our souls, we will prosper in spiritual life and peace.

(Philippians 4:6), *"Be careful for nothing"*: The Greek says, "Be anxious for nothing". If we will resist worry and anxiety and pray with faith and thanksgiving to God for every need, we will experience God's perfect peace in our souls.

(John 14:27), *"Not as the world giveth"*: The carnal minded of this world have no real vision of the peace of God. They strive for a peace of tolerance, concession and truce amid warring factions. Their quest for peace is a constant disappointment and failure. Jesus puts His peace into the heart of those who follow Him and His teachings. This inward peace is the peace of God, a quietness and calm assurance of victory amid all the strife and turmoil of this world.

(Psalm 85:10), *"Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace"*: In Christ Jesus the truth of man's sin and unrighteousness are met with mercy, peace and forgiveness from God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Being at peace with God and having peace and rest in the soul is truly the most blessed condition a man can enjoy. In our

lesson today we see where God yearned for this peace to be worked out between His great loving heart and fallen man. And we see that He brought this great peace to us through the gift of His Son Jesus. But there is something on our part that we must do in order to have this peace. God sent His Son to pay the price for us to have this peace, and now it is up to us to humble ourselves in meekness and submission to Him so that this peace can be enthroned within our hearts. Peace brings quietness and rest to the spirit. No more condemnation, guilt and tormenting fear will oppress and disturb us. Through faith and obedience to His blessed Word, we can have an inward peace that nothing can disturb.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did man not have peace in the soul?
2. Why did God want this peace restored?
3. Who brought this peace to the earth?
4. How can we have this peace for sure?
5. How are mercy and truth met together?
6. How can we have perfect peace?
7. What will the peace of God do for us?
8. Can we have peace when everything around us is in turmoil? How?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The world is crying "Peace and Safety" today amid drowning fears. Pursuing peace in today's world arena is as hopeless as a man trying to outrun a greyhound dog or cheetah. It is impossible to have peace when the real peace of God is not in the heart. One of the great, sinful defects of mankind as expressed in Isaiah 59:8 is that "the way of peace they know not." And all the time the real peace which Christ came to bring is abiding in the hearts of all who love and follow Him. Christ came to bring the peace of God to the soul. Through the forgiveness of sins and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, a man can truly enjoy an inward peace and rest that will cause him to cease from strife and war. Oh, what a wonderful blessing to have the peace of God keeping our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus! There would be a lot less stress, tension, nervous breakdowns and mental problems in our society if people could know how to commit things to God

and let His peace rule in their hearts. Worry, fret and friction are totally eliminated from a man's life by the peace of God ruling within. As we worship God and love His precious Word, we find a peace and soul rest that is beyond understanding. People will wonder how we can keep so calm and peaceful. It is because of His peace that He has filled our souls with. The peace of God is the greatest tonic and medicine for healing from oppression and distress.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"What a very blessed thing is peace. To have a heart tranquil in looking to God is the quelling of the storm and tempest, Mark 4:39. It is the healing of the longstanding disease, Luke 8:48. It is the satisfying conscience, II Kings 5:19. It is the blessing of forgiveness, Luke 7:50. To be spiritually minded is peace, Rom. 8:6. To be a partaker of the kingdom of God is peace, Rom 14:17. Peace follows on the resurrection of Jesus. 'He was raised again for our justification,' Rom. 4:25, and 'being justified we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. 5:1. All, therefore, is wrapped up in Him. He is our 'peace.'

"Of old He had been named 'the Prince of Peace,' Isa. 9:6. Peace was the keynote of His birth, Luke 2:14. Peace was also connected with His death. It was one of the bequests in His legacy to His people, John 14:27. The will could not be proven until after His decease, Heb. 9:16-17. But the God of Peace brought Him again from the dead, Heb. 13:20; and He was His own executor. John 20:19-20.

—Taken from *The Titles of Our Lord*, by Rowley Hill.



SEPTEMBER 1, 1996

THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS

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

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self

with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

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

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

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

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

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

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

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

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them, as thou has loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. John 17:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It was the burden of the heart of Jesus and His prayer to the Father that His disciples would be

sanctified, kept from the evils of this present world, and be in unity of heart, soul and mind, even as He and the Father were one.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(John 17:5), "*The glory which I had with thee before the world was*": Jesus knew that He had been with the Father as the Word of God before the foundation of the world. This persuasion of the pre-existent Christ filled the early morning Church. They were not doubtful as to Christ's divinity and union with God. And, according to what Jesus expressed in this special prayer to His Father, all who follow Him and share this blessed unity will also behold and have a part in that glory which was given to Him when He was raised from the dead and set at the right hand of God.

(John 17:6), "*The men which thou gavest me*": All of the disciples that were faithful to Jesus were counted by Him as being given to Him by the Father. God drew these men to Christ. They were attracted to Him because they saw in Him the power and glory of God and were enlightened by the Spirit of God. That is the only way that we can truly be united with Christ.

(John 17:17), "*Sanctify them through thy truth*": The word "sanctify" from the Greek means to make holy, pure and consecrated. Christ was praying that His followers would be sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit that He had promised would come. This infilling of the Holy Spirit is the real power and foundation of the unity of the saints of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had just kept the passover with His disciples in the upper room. It is evident that the prayer of our Lord and Saviour that we have in our lesson today was uttered while they were still in that upper room. It was here that He had washed their feet and ministered to them the bread and the fruit of the vine as a memorial for them to keep of His sacrifice for them. The 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John contain the precious and touching discourse of our Lord to His beloved disciples, preparing them for the dark days that were coming when Jesus would be taken from them in His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He also

was pointing beyond those coming sorrows to the time when He would ascend to the Father and send the Holy Spirit to take up His blessed abode in their hearts. Oh, the sacred words that He spoke to them that evening! And He finished His discourse with them in this prayer in the 17th chapter. It is easy to see the burden of His loving heart as He committed His beloved disciples to the Father. He wanted them to be sanctified by the Word of God, by His own precious blood, and filled with the Holy Spirit. He prayed that they be kept in a unity as close and perfect as the unity that existed with Him and the Father. Thank God, this prayer was answered, and it is still answered today for all who follow the Lord all the way. And then we see that it was His joyous hope that all who would be given to Him in the ages to come would be with Him in the Spirit and in that glory which He had with the Father from the beginning. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Jesus feel in his heart for His disciples?
2. What were the things that He was praying for God to do for them?
3. In what way did He want His disciples to be one?
4. What had Christ given these men from God?
5. Why does Christ desire that His followers be one as He and the Father are?
6. What does Christ want His disciples to be kept from?
7. Who else was Christ praying for?
8. Why did He want His disciples to be sanctified?
9. Was Christ's prayer answered?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In this world of so many churches and beliefs who profess to be Christians, and yet are so mixed and divided, it is easy to lose sight of the plan and purpose and provision that Christ made for His children to be one body in a harmony as close as that of Him and His Father. He prayed for it, gave His life for it, and nothing but perfect unity will satisfy His holy demands. And regardless of how much confusion there is in the world among the professed followers of Christ, it still is His holy will that all who are truly born again of the Spirit of God and are walking in the light of His Word be in one heart, one soul and one mind. The

wonderful thing about it is that it will work this way when we really go all the way with the Lord and get all that He has for us. For a person to be really in the unity of the Church of God he must be saved from sin and the world, walking in the light of the word of God, and sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit. This will really effect a wonderful unity in men and women. Just to organize and make rules for discipline and conduct and enforce them upon the members is not real unity. When two people love the same Saviour, are pressing toward the same goal, possess the same Spirit within, and live by the same holy doctrine, these are one. To offset this blessed unity and break ranks in division and strife is to sin against the Lord. Perfect love and a saved and sanctified experience will bring about perfect unity. We must be diligent that we be everything that God wants us to be that this blessed unity can be a reality in our lives. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Unity is brought about by the spirit of God. We receive this spirit by dedicating ourselves to Him. However, it is easy to forget that possessing this spirit doesn't automatically create unity. We must still commit ourselves to learning how to treat others so that unity can exist. We must apply ourselves to intelligent living on a daily basis. The spirit of God will teach us and help us if we pay attention.

Someone has written ten rules to build strong friendships and I would like to share with them you. I believe these are basic in creating and preserving unity.

1. Permit your friends to be themselves. Accept them as they are. Accept their individuality; don't feel threatened if their opinions and tastes sometimes differ from yours.

2. Give each other space. We are entitled to our private feelings and thoughts. Someone who tries to invade the inner space of a friend risks destroying that relationship.

3. Be ready to give and receive. Be eager to help but be able to ask for help as well. Don't be overdemanding or let yourself be used.

4. Make your advice constructive. When a friend needs to talk, listen without interruption. If advice is asked for, be positive and supportive.

5. Be loyal and faithful. This translates into being with your friend in bad times as well as good ones. It means honoring confidences. It means not disparaging a friend in his absence.

6. Give praise and encouragement. Tell your friends what you like about them and how thankful you are for their presence in your life. Delight in their talents and applaud their successes.

7. Be honest, but beware of those things that are better left unsaid.

8. Treat friends as equals. In true friendship there is no room for such childish behavior as showing off how smart and successful you are.

9. Trust your friends. Make the effort to believe in their intrinsic goodness.

10. Be willing to risk. One of the obstacles to a close friendship is the fear of rejection and hurt. But unless we dare to love others, we condemn ourselves to lives of isolation and loneliness.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 8, 1996

BROTHERLY LOVE

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

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

Matthew 23:8 ...Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

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

I Peter 3:8 ...Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

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

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

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

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

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

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.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

II Peter 1:7 And [add] to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All who are redeemed from sin in Christ are in one great bond of brotherhood, with pure love and affection for one another, even as Christ has loved us and laid down His life for us.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Matthew 23:8), "*Rabbi*": Master.

(I Peter 1:22), From the Greek: "Having purified your souls in the obedience of the truth through the Spirit to unpretended brotherly love, love one another from the pure heart with purpose and intently."

(I Peter 3:8), "*Be pitiful, be courteous*": Be tenderhearted and friendly of mind.

(I John 2:10), "*None occasion of stumbling*": No cause of displeasure or sin.

(Hebrews 13:1), The Greek says, "The brotherly love let remain."

(II Peter 1:7), "*(Add) to godliness brotherly kindness*": In the 5th verse Peter says to add to your faith virtue. In verse 1 he addresses his epistle to us who have obtained like precious faith with him. Now he exhorts us to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness (from the same Greek word "philadelphia" as brotherly love); and to brotherly kindness charity. The word "add" from the Greek means to furnish besides or fully supply. Each one of these important things mentioned needs something else to go along with it, except for charity, which is divine love, it being the crowning grace. Brotherly kindness needs to be added to godliness. How many times has a person's effort to be godly caused an attitude of looking down and being critical of others. Therefore with our godliness and zeal for pleasing God we must furnish a kind and brotherly attitude toward others.

(II Peter 1:8), "*In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*": This word "knowledge" here from the Greek means full knowledge or acquaintance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul said in I Thessalonians 4:9, "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." The truth of brotherly love in our lesson today is one of the foundation stones of the Christian faith. We who are truly born again and filled with the Spirit of God are taught of God to love our fellow followers of Christ. Jesus taught it, Peter and John taught it, and the Apostle Paul taught it. It is a disposition of heart that we inherit from the nature of Christ. But it is also a command for us to diligently keep. Due to imperfections in our humanity and the trials of life and the accusations of Satan, we must be diligent to purposely hold an attitude of love toward every one. We must love even when we do not feel emotionally loving. We must go against our feelings and love anyway. Paul instructs in Colossians 3:19: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." I heard a sister many

years ago ask why that Paul had to tell husbands to love their wives. To her it seemed that husbands who are saved ought not to have to be told to love their wives. But we must remember that we are still human and in the flesh. We have to hold ourselves in love steadfastly with determination, not just because we feel that way, but because we know it is what God wants us to do. It is the same way with loving our brothers. We may not always feel like loving our fellow, but we know that we must, so we do it whether we feel like it or not. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is it that makes us all brethren?
2. Will we ever be tempted to not love?
3. Will we ever divide if we keep brotherly love for one another?
4. Do we have to agree on every point to have brotherly love?
5. How can we make sure that we let brotherly love continue in us?
6. Is a brotherly attitude quick to criticize?
7. Why must we take brotherly love as a serious command?
8. What is godliness without brotherly love?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A lack of brotherly love has been the main cause of division and church problems through the years. Satan would seek to cause our love to grow cold. Jesus warned us about this. Our love must be kept warm and fervent. Many, many problems develop in the soul when love grows cold. To keep our love fervent for one another, we must keep our love fervent for God. We must keep up our prayer life and communion with God. We must be diligent to be merciful, patient, longsuffering and helpful to our brothers in Christ. If we have means to help our less fortunate brother, and we fail or refuse to do it, the love of God cannot dwell in us. We must love not only in word, but in the way we act. Brotherly love is one of the most beautiful features of the Church of God. Seeing how we care for one another and love each other's company is a warm attraction to the outside world. In this world of coldness and hatred, it is so wonderful to see brotherly love in action. One family was on a trip and stopped at various places to visit some of the saints. Oh, how warmly and sweetly they were

treated. The host took off of work and took them sight-seeing, fed them with good , luscious meals, and put them up for the night in their home. Some of the travelling company were affiliated with a sectarian group, and they wanted to show how that their church was brotherly, too. So they stopped in their town and called some of these people. They answered, "Come on over and we will give you a cup of coffee and send you on your way!" They saw the difference. Saints have been known to stop at another saint's home and find the key and go in and make themselves at home. One saint couple came in late one night and found seven people in bed. It just made them feel good. Oh, it means so much to let brotherly love continue right on and never stop!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23:8. Titles can be a hindrance to brotherly love thriving. The scribes and Pharisees liked to be called father and master, and Christ saw the pride and division it spawned. There were many titles given to Christ in the prophecies of the Old Testament, but Christ didn't make any of them His official designation. Just the insinuation of rank creates a caste system and suffocates brotherly love. There are offices in the Church of God, and there is temptation enough to "feel" the position, without the giving of a personal title.

A destitute boy once applied for help at the house of a covetous minister, and received a dry moldy crust. The preacher inquired of the boy if he could say the Lord's prayer, and was answered in the negative. "Then," said the preacher, "I will teach it you: 'Our Father,' etc."

"Our Father," said the boy. "Is He *my* father as well as *yours*?"

"Yes, certainly," answered the preacher

"Then," replied the boy, "how could you think of giving your poor brother this moldy crust of bread?"

There should never be a position where we feel like we are ingratiating ourselves to God by **giving** things to others, whether temporal or spiritual. We should be glad to **share** what God has bountifully blessed us with.

—Wayne Murphey

SEPTEMBER 15, 1996

THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

I Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

24 ...God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

MEMORY VERSE: For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Romans 12:4-5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Church of God operates just like a human body with various functions and workings that pro-

mote health, progress and success in Her mission in the world.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Ephesians 4:2), *"Forbearing one another"*: The word in the Greek for "forbearing" means "to hold oneself up against", that is "to put up with." There will be things that we will have to bear with one another about if we keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

(I Corinthians 12:13), *"Baptized into one body"*: By receiving the blessed infilling of the Holy Spirit the followers of Jesus are immersed into a life of such love, fellowship, and holy unity that they are bound and connected together in heart, soul, and mind. *"have been all made to drink into one Spirit"*: The Greek expression is: "all into one Spirit were irrigated (watered)." All drinking and partaking of the same Holy Spirit that God sent down through Jesus makes them one body in Christ.

(I Corinthians 12:25), *"No schism in the body"*: Mention is made of various members of the body such as, the eye, the ear, the nose, the hand, and the foot. Perhaps the eye and the hand would be the most attractive, while the ear, the nose, and the foot would be not so attractive. But for the success of the operation of the body each of these members have an important part. In every organization or business, there are many different offices and functions. Some are prominent and out in front while others are more or less in the background. One dear old brother used to say of my Mother and brothers as we were the janitors of the saints chapel: "Their place is as important as anyone. Why, what would people think if they came to our services and found us worshipping in a dirty chapel?" God planned that His Church be a unit working together in love, peace, and harmony with all the members caring for and respecting one another.

(I Corinthians 12:27), *"Members in particular"*: Individual members each having a section, share, or part of the whole.

(I Corinthians 12:28), *"First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers"*: Paul is showing the order in which the gifts of the Spirit were manifest in the function and operation of the Church, the body of Christ. First came the apostles of our Lord and Saviour who went forth heralding the salvation in Christ. Then came the prophets, foretellers of future events and warning the people of things to come that had already been foretold in the

scriptures. Then came the teachers and pastors who cared for the flocks and congregations which had been raised up. After this came the other gifts. *"Helps"*: Reliefs, assistants. Every working movement has to have certain members whose function was simple, and yet important *"Governments"*: The Greek word means one who steers or pilots. This would refer to leadership in the work of the Lord, those who take the lead and help to direct in worship services and whatever other work there is to be done.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul had quite a bit to say in his writings about the Church as a body functioning in this world. He knew what a dangerous detriment an independent attitude on anyone's part would be. It is so important for every worker of the Lord and every child of God no matter who they are to remember that they are just a small part of the whole. We must consider one another's feelings, viewpoints, and convictions. Each one is an individual, precious in God's sight, and worthy of our help and consideration. Some, as our lesson reveals, are not as gifted and capable as others; but if they are truly saved and living a spiritual life, they are important and worthy. I heard about a minister in a place that somehow had a feeling about a certain sister that she was not very valuable or useful in the work of the Lord. But one day he got in a real need financially and was earnestly praying for God to supply. Here came this sister and handed him some money that she said the Lord told her to give to him. It opened his eyes and made him feel ashamed. I think of an elderly brother in our congregation and how some of the young people looked down on him and made fun. Oh, that was a sinful thing to do! That brother has long departed for his heavenly home and some of those young people are still out in sin. Are we desirous to work for God and be a part of His Church? We must learn the lesson of co-operation, how to work together and love one another. Many people do not prosper because they do not want to recognize the importance of listening to the counsel and ministry of the pastor. We need one another in our spiritual lives and in our service to God. Remember, an independent attitude will do detriment to your soul and to the work of the Lord.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are there things that we must forbear and put up with?
2. Why must we "endeavor" to keep the unity of the Spirit?
3. Why is there a tendency for one member to look down on another?
4. In what way is the Church like a human body?
5. Who set the members in the body, the Church?
6. What are some members of the Church who might not seem so important?
7. How do other members of the body come to the aid of an injured member?
8. Why is it sometimes harder to rejoice with them that rejoice?
9. Why is schism and division such an unwanted thing?
10. Why can we not choose for ourselves what part of the body of Christ we will be?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God sets the members in His Church, distributing the gifts of the Spirit individually to each one as He wills. God knows what each one of us can handle. He will not give a person a work to do but what He will help that person adapt and be successful in it. I notice that there is a man or woman fitted in just about every kind of work or profession there is. There are mechanics, janitors, builders, carpenters, salesmen, drivers, architects, draftsmen, etc. All are filling their place in the great world of commerce. All goes well when they work together and respect each other's place. Problems arise when there are conflicts and disagreements. The big wheels get high handed and oppress the little wheels. The little wheels get dissatisfied and go on strike. In God's Church all the members love each other. There are no big I's and little you's. We have the same care for one another. We seek to consider the poor widow as much or more than the more prosperous and comely members. That person who is small and despised can be a great blessing in the work of the Lord. All the various functions and gifts in the Church operate in harmony and love. The pastor works with the evangelist. The teachers co-operate with the pastor. All the members live in

peace and humility toward one another. It is a beautiful picture, and it is the way God planned for it to be. Let us seek the Lord for grace and power to relate to one another in the right way that His work will be successful in the earth. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Eph. 4:12 says that the offices in the Church are for the perfecting of the saints. The Greek word as it is used in this verse is very closely like the Greek word for mending. Perhaps we don't like to think of it in these terms, but the saints are constantly in need of mending.

We are living in a social age when divorce is prevalent, dysfunctional families are common, and both young and old are hurting without knowing how to find relief. The devil is certainly working hard to oppress all. Yet it is the unity of the body of Christ that can succeed in keeping each member whole in spite of these things.

As the body of Christ functions according to the pattern of the Bible, each member's doctrinal beliefs will be purged. No one ever reaches the place where their thinking cannot be refined and purified. We can also be a blessing to each other socially, as we exemplify how to please our brother. This process occurs in the one body of Christ, and each has a part in it regardless of how young we are in the Lord or how humble a position we may feel that we hold.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 22, 1996

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

I John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

I Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

II Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

II Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

MEMORY VERSE: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Ephesians 2:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through the atonement of the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can be in full and perfect fellowship with God the Father, walking and talking with Him, as His beloved children, abiding in the Light of His Word.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(I John 1:3), "*Fellowship*": Partnership, communion; partaking of mutual interests, joys, or sorrows; sharing with one another's hopes and treasures.

(I John 1:7), "*Walk in the light, as he is in the light*": As God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, then all who have fellowship and communion with God must needs be in that same holy light. This light comes to us in Christ, and when we receive this light down into our very innermost being and begin to walk in obedience to that light we will experience the full and perfect joy of fellowship with God.

(Ephesians 5:1), "*Dear*": The same word as "beloved;" close, valuable, precious, cherished, enjoyed and special.

(Ephesians 5:2), "*Sweet-smelling savour*": An odor of sweet smell. The sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross for the redemption of lost man was a fragrant odor in the nostrils of God. It brought about reconciliation between God and the souls of men that He had yearned from eternity to have.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the beginning God planted a beautiful garden as a home for the man and woman that He had made. He enjoyed fellowship with Adam and Eve, visiting them and communing with them heart to heart. Oh, how happy and blessed this fellowship was to God and to man, also! But, sad to say, man fell a victim to the temptation of Satan in partaking of that which God had forbidden. The fellowship and communion was broken because God cannot be a partaker of that which conflicts with His Spirit and nature. And that is just what disobedience to His law does. It brings into the soul contrary attitudes and ways that disrupts fellowship with holiness and purity. But God had it in His plan for Christ to come in the right time and bring about reconciliation with God again. But for this to really work, man must become repentant of his sin and transgression and be obedient to God. He must depart from the ways of darkness and unbelief and walk in the light of God's Word. He must cast out his pride and become humble and contrite again. He must depart from the unclean and unholy associations and ways of life and perfect holiness in his heart. Thus, man can be once more a follower of

God and a dearly beloved child in full fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What certain conditions must we be in to have fellowship with God?
2. Why can we not have fellowship with God if we are walking in sin and darkness?
3. What does it mean to "walk in the light"?
4. Can the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse us from all sin if we refuse to obey God's word?
5. What does fellowship with Christ involve?
6. What kind of person does the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity dwell with?
7. Why can He not dwell with the proud and the scornful?
8. What are some of the filthiness of the flesh and spirit that we must cleanse ourselves from?
9. Is it possible to profess to know God and not be cleansed from sin properly?
10. What are some of the qualities of a dear child of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Fellowship and communion with the Almighty God is the sweetest and most blessed condition that a man can ever be in. To have God living within our hearts and hear His sweet voice comforting, instructing, cheering and even reproving us is bliss beyond words to describe. When John and Peter and the other disciples of our Saviour believed in and followed Jesus all the way and received the Holy Spirit that He sent down on the day of Pentecost, they entered into the blessed fellowship of the Almighty Father. And their message was to help all mankind to come and share in this blessed fellowship. This fellowship is still available for us today. We can forsake the ways of sin and this present evil world and press our way into the kingdom of His dearly beloved Son. There we can walk with God as did the pure and holy in the world's early ages. We can share the blessings that Enoch and Noah did who walked with God. But we must be diligent to turn away from everything that is displeasing in God's sight and change our ways to suit Him in conformity to His holy

Word. Many people, sad to say, make a profession of having fellowship with God but do not humble their hearts to walk His pure and holy way. It will not work. They may get by here seemingly in the eyes of the world, but they will not get into His holy heaven. It is a serious thing to walk with God, but it is a joyful thing. The greatest joy and happiness that one can know comes with fellowship with their Maker. For that is where man is most at home, that being what he was originally created for. It is wonderful to have the Lord awaken you in the night or early in the morning and commune with you through His Word and Spirit! Oh, it is the yearning of my heart to encourage everyone to seek for this blessed experience and find it to your full contentment and satisfaction! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are immense and obvious advantages to having fellowship with God. Colossians 2:7 says, "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Any time you interrelate with others, there is an influence exerted to become, in some aspects, as they are. That is why we are warned not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. A heart to heart exchange with one who walks in darkness can exact a toll upon the one who walks in light.

By having fellowship with God, we can be built up and established. To build something, to establish something, or to become rooted, requires a process of time. Perhaps you've heard someone describe their experience with God, and it rang so very true in your soul also. It contained something rich which you could feed on. You knew the thought they shared came from them having spent quality time with God. And then maybe you witnessed that same person behave in a way that almost set you back in amazement. Perhaps they acted very unwisely or in a childish manner, and it made you wonder how the same individual could have been so profound one moment and so earthly the next. It is not to say that the person manifested sin in their life, but that they were going through the process of being built up through fellowship.

The verse we quoted in Colossians also expresses that we are built up by what we are taught. We can profit by the

fellowship that other people have had with God. There have been times when I have been amazed in studying the writings of Christians from different time periods. I have seen an idea expressed by one person, only to find the exact same thing written by someone of an earlier century. Today, we are believing and saying some of the same things that Martin Luther said in his lifetime, which he received from his fellowship with God. We never know just how far-reaching the effect of our personal fellowship with God will be.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 29, 1996

JOINT - HEIRS OF GOD WITH JESUS

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Ephesians 2:4 ...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:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

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.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

I Thessalonians 5:8 ...Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

MEMORY VERSE: It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also livewith him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us. II Timothy 2:11-12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord Jesus Christ has offered us a share in the riches of His eternal inheritance from God the Father. If we will be willing to die with Him to this present evil world, we can be quickened with Him, raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places. If we will suffer with Him, we will reign in this life with Him and appear with Him in glory.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Romans 8:16), "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit*": The Greek says, "The Spirit itself testifies jointly with our spirit." The blending of the Holy Spirit with ours in the comfort, assurance and manner of life gives concurrent or up-to-date evidence of our sonship with the Father.

(Romans 6:8), "*Dead with Christ*": Dead to sin, dead to the ways and follies of this present evil world, dead to self and the praise of men, dead to all else but the perfect will of God.

(Colossians 3:2), "*Set your affection*": Set your mind, your interest, your desires and your treasures on things in the eternal world to come, where Christ has reserved an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled for you. Things of earth will

perish and are perishing, but the things above are eternal.

(Colossians 3:3), "*Your life is hid with Christ in God*": God has seen fit to hide the beauty and reality of the spiritual blessings from the wise and prudent of this world. Their eyes are blinded by the god of this world and they cannot understand the ways and convictions of the saints. This makes for trouble and persecution from the carnal minded for those who are living for things above.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Apostle Paul was filled with joy in obtaining the salvation of Jesus Christ. He had, at one time, tried so earnestly to persecute the people of God. But God saw that Paul would be a good vessel if he were but turned around. So a special work was done in striking him down and making him aware of the reality of Jesus. It is so wonderful to think how a man so inflamed with zeal against Christ was made such a blessing for Him. So, you see, we must never give up in praying for people. We do not know just what God is doing in His dealings with souls. When Paul came face to face with the truth that Jesus was alive and the King of glory, he submitted to Him and right then and there was made a different man. He discovered the joy of being with Christ. He mentioned it several times in his writings. He pictures the Christian as being dead with Christ, made alive with Christ, raised up with Christ, sitting with Christ, suffering with Christ, being hid with Christ, reigning with Christ and appearing with Christ in glory. Whether we wake or sleep, we will live together with Christ. We are with Him now as we walk the road of our pilgrimage. Like the two men on the road to Emmaus who walked with Jesus, our hearts burn within us as He walks with us and opens up the scriptures! We want to walk with Him in life's fair morning and when the shadows of evening have come. And in that blessed new heaven and new earth we will reign with Him and live with Him forever. Oh, how we love to be with our blessed Jesus!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why will we not reign with Jesus if we are not faithful in suffering with Him?
2. How can we be comforted when we are called upon to suffer as a Christian?
3. What are we going to inherit as joint-heirs with Christ?
4. What were we before we were quickened to life in Christ?
5. What are we quickened to be?
6. How are we "dead with Christ?"
7. How are we "hid with Christ?"
8. Why is it not wise to set our affections upon things on earth?
9. What are most people setting their affections upon?
10. How can we be sure that we will appear with Christ in glory?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I could not do without Him,
Jesus is more to me
Than all the richest, rarest gifts
Of earth could ever be.
But the more I find Him precious,
And the more I find Him true,
The more I long for you to find
What He can mean to you.

Without Him, everlasting loss
Of love, and life, and light;
Without Him, everlasting woe,
And everlasting night.
But with Him! Oh, with Jesus!
Are any words more blest?
With Jesus everlasting joy,
And everlasting rest.
With Jesus all the empty heart
Filled with His perfect love;
With Jesus perfect peace below,
And perfect bliss above.

—Frances Ridley Havergal

These words from the pen of the beloved poet quite well express the deep sentiment of my heart. We dare not do without Him. The world is coming to its end and we are coming, too. To be without Him is dreaded woe and unending anguish in a lake of fire and brimstone. If we are without Him, we are desolate and our lives are a desert wasteland. But if we can, by faith and obedience to His Word gain Christ to be our all in all, we will find with Him our lives can be a watered garden. When you really love someone, you love to be with them. A wife who really loves her kind and faithful husband loves to be in his presence. A husband who loves his loving and faithful wife loves to be with her. A father who loves his children is not anxious for them to hurry and grow up and get out of his way. He loves their presence in his home, especially if they are obedient and submissive to him. We love the Lord Jesus and love to be in His service; be with His saints, and worship God. We are going to be forever with Christ or forever without Him. Oh, let us set our love upon Him and seek to be with Him all of our life's journey and share a blest eternity with Him above!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16. This knowledge is one of the greatest comforts a person can have in life. In the darkest hours it provides reassurance. Even in the valley of the shadow of death it will be there to light our path and provide hope to our souls.

An incident happened once in which two miners were sinking a shaft, and to do this they were blasting through solid rock. They had placed in the rock a large charge of gunpowder, and had so fixed the fuse that it could not be taken out. Through some mistake, fire was struck, and the fuse began to hiss. On seeing this, both men dashed to the bucket and gave the signal. The man above, in vain, attempted to move the windlass. One of the miners, seeing that only one could escape, leaped out again, and said, "Escape, I shall be in heaven in a minute." The bucket sped up the shaft, and the

man was safe. Eager to watch the fate of his deliverer, he bent down to hear. Just then the explosion rumbled below; a splinter came up the shaft and struck him on the brow, leaving a mark that would remind him all his days of his rescue. They soon began to search among the fallen rock for the dead body. But to their surprise a voice was heard, and they found that their friend was yet alive; the piece of rock had roofed him over, and he was without injury or scratch of any kind. When asked what induced him to let the other escape, he replied, "I knew my soul was safe; I was not so sure of his." This is the confidence we can have in the spirit of God. —Wayne Murphey



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