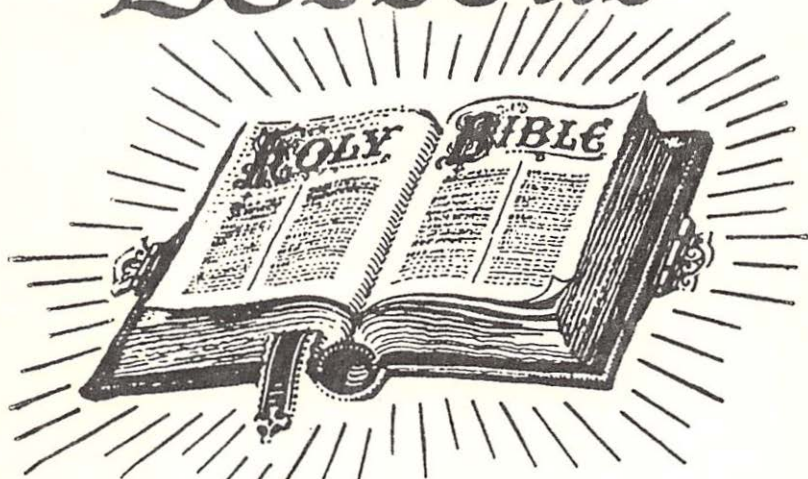


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

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April, May, June  
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**Volume 36**

**April, May, June**

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church  
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Willie E. Murphey**

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## THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2004

Our first three lessons falling in the Easter season will be about the death, resurrection and ascension of our blessed Lord and Saviour. After that we will have a series of lessons on the various attitudes and requirements for pleasing God. These include repentance, humbling ourselves, godly fear and obedience. These are, without question, indispensable in obtaining favor with God and being successful in our lives for Him. It is for us to put forth an all-out effort to have these qualities abound in our experience with God. To be without them will spell failure and everlasting rejection. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 4, 2004

### THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God:

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

**MEMORY VERSE:** 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. Eph. 5:2.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, our Saviour, willingly submitted to lay down His life and offer His body as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God against us because of our sins and transgressions. His Father accepted this offering of His sinless life and by it we can obtain fellowship with God.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Hebrews 2:9), "*made a little lower than the angels*": The Greek meaning is "made less than the angels for a little while."

(Ver. 10), "*became him*": The Greek meaning is "was fitting for him." "*captain*": Prince, or Leader. It is from the same Greek word as "Author" in Heb. 12:2.

(Ver. 11), "*good things to come*": good things in the future. Christ was prophesied of, long before He came, and looked for by many generations. The Greek word is similar to Heb. 13:14 where he speaks of the city we have as no continuing city, that is, of this present world, but as "one to come." "*tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*": This means that Christ entered into a most holy place which was not material nor of this present creation. What He entered into was, as verse 24 says, "heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

(Verse 14), "*dead works*": These are works of death, sinful practices, deeds of transgression, and courses of vanity and error.

(Hebrews 10:5), "*when he cometh into the world*": When Christ takes upon Himself human form and enters the realm of earthly life. The writer is applying this scripture from the 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm as what Christ "saith" when He undertook His mission to earth. It is a most vivid and inspiring prophecy of our Lord's great work. "*a body hast thou prepared me*": The miraculous conception of the young virgin was Christ's entry into this world. It was the wonderful work of the most High to give His Word to be made flesh and dwell among us.

(Ver. 7), "*Lo*": Behold; look; see.

(Ver. 10), "*By the which will*": By this will that Christ submitted to have fulfilled in Him, the will and good pleasure of the Father to offer His body as a sacrifice for sin. "*offering*": to bear towards, to tender, that is, to offer in payment for an obligation. The wrath of God had to be appeased for the offense and grievous sorrow that man's folly and rebellion had brought to Him. The burnt offerings of animals were not really sufficient to atone for this injustice of man toward God, although they were allowed for a time. But Christ's offer of Himself to death and suffering was fully sufficient to fulfill the solemn requirement of ransom for man's sin. "*once for all*": On one occasion only. While under the old law system the animal sacrifices had to be made year after year, over and over again. Christ's offering of His body as a sacrifice and atonement for sin was so perfect and completely satisfying to God, that it needed to be made only once for all time and eternity. The old animal sacrifices are no longer needed and must cease forever.

(Ver. 14), "*perfected forever*": The offering of Christ brought about a permanent and everlasting condition of completeness and satisfaction on God's part and our part.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

As this is the week before Easter, the day we especially remember the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are inspired to bring forth a lesson on the offering of Christ of His body to God as the supreme sacrifice for the atonement of sin. From the epistle to the Hebrews we see the blessed application of Christ's offering of Himself without spot to God on the behalf of us in the bondage of sin.

We are spellbound with holy awe at this epistle, and how the writer quoted from the Old Testament and how he applied these Holy Scriptures to Christ and His work. In chapter 2 He quoted from the 8<sup>th</sup> Psalm, an expressive admiration of wonder of God's interest and concern for man in his primeval stage, but well fit to be applied to Christ, who was the second Adam. (I Cor. 15:45.) The matter of God putting all things under His feet is vividly taken up by the writer as being applied to Christ. But He made it clear that all things are not yet put under Christ. This will not be accomplished until the end and the great resurrection when Christ shall completely destroy death, the last enemy. See I Cor. 15:26. But we do see Jesus as being made less than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.

The writer speaks much of the old law system with its offerings and sacrifices and gives to us the glorious truth of Christ's superior offering of Himself that fully accomplished the good pleasure of God.

Bro. Leslie Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. For what great purpose was Christ made lower than the angels?
2. Why was Christ's sacrifice and offering of Himself so greatly needed?
3. What kind of Holiest Place did Christ enter into by sacrificing Himself?
4. To what extent is Christ's sacrifice and shedding of blood effectual?
5. How did God manifestly declare that He was pleased with Christ's offering?

#### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

A great price was hanging over the destiny of humankind. God had created man in His own image, but man had counted it so lightly as to give it up for other values. The Almighty was offended and grieved. There was a righteous and holy anger in His heart and mind that was completely justifiable. He had a right to be in controversy with man. As man became aware of this breach of fellowship and the anger of the Lord it seemed fitting and proper to offer to God something that would help His anger to be cooled or even appeased. Abel offered of the best of his

sheep, the first of his increase. Later there were other sacrifices such as Noah and Abraham offered. Then in the law of Moses many animal sacrifices were offered. But through it all the Lord was pointing men through the holy prophets to a greater and more perfect sacrifice that the Messiah would offer. Thank God for sending His Son and giving Him the charge to offer Himself on our behalf to atone for our sins and heal the woeful breach between us and God! Jesus "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. He did not draw back but gave Himself to the murderous throng who thirsted for His blood. They did not know it, but they were accomplishing the will of God. In allowing them to put Him to death, Jesus was paying the ransom price that the Father was calling for. He paid it, the Father was pleased, and you and I reap the great reward for the obedience of our Lord to the will of God. Let us never forget what Christ did for us in offering Himself to die in our place that we might live forever with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The importance of the supreme sacrifice that Jesus made for mankind is too wonderful for our minds to totally comprehend. It brought forgiveness and cleansed us individually from our sins, and it also has the power to cleanse every other person who will meet the conditions of repentance and by faith believe His atonement meets the need of their heart.

From the time of Adam and Eve, when sin first separated man from the presence of God, the promise was given of One who would bruise the head of the serpent. The prophecies were greatly multiplied through the Psalms and in Isaiah, all pointing toward the birth of Jesus Who was to be the Savior of the world.

Zechariah 13:1 says, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." That fountain was gloriously opened by the terrible suffering and agonizing death of the Lamb of God Who had no spot or blemish to keep Him from being accepted of the Lord. He became the perfect sacrifice that brought atonement for the sins of the world. His love for us opened the doors of the dark prison house of sin and now we can freely enter His presence and partake of the joys of His eternal kingdom.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**APRIL 11, 2004**

**OUR SAVIOUR'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH**

Colossians 2: 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

I Corinthians 15: 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54b Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. I Thessalonians 4:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** After Jesus had offered Himself in death without spot to God for the atonement of our sins, God raised Him from the dead and gave Him an eternal triumph over sin, death and the grave. He will share this triumph with all who believe in Him and faithfully follow Him unto death.



## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Col. 2:10), *"complete"*: completely filled, plentifully satisfied, perfectly furnished and finished. In Christ alone is found this bountiful provision for the soul's welfare and happiness.

(Ver. 12), *"through the faith of the operation of God"*: Through the active believing of our hearts of the working of God. God has accomplished all of this in His Son, Jesus Christ, but we must count it so and believe steadfastly that it is ours.

(Ver. 15), *"made a show of them openly"*: In triumphing over death by being resurrected, Christ stripped the powers of sin, death and the grave from their hold on humanity and publicly displayed His power and authority over all of them.

(I Cor. 15:20), *"firstfruits"*: The beginning and the first to be raised from the dead to immortality and eternal existence.

(Ver. 53), *"corruptible"*: decayed and perishable. *"mortal"*: liable to die. *"incorruption"*: unending existence. *"immortality"*: deathlessness.

(Ver. 55), *"sting"*: The barb or point of wounding and hurt. This means that the thing that makes death so terrible and damaging is the sin and transgression that is a separation from hope of being brought back to life. When Jesus died for our sins, He rendered death without a sting or means of harm. Thus, (though we still will die), with the sting gone, we have confidence and hope of being restored to life.

(Ver. 56), *"strength of sin"*: The power and force that gives sin the advantage. This is the law. When man transgresses the law of God this renders him liable and responsible for the consequences, thus inflicting condemnation and guilt. But Christ has fulfilled the law and made grace and truth available for us to overcome the threat of the law and be obedient to the will of God.

(I Thess. 4:14), *"them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"*: God will bring forth, from the dead, those who have died trusting and following Jesus. Thus they will share in the resurrection of their Lord and ever be with Him and His saints.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

On this glorious day in which we especially remember the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ we have several scriptures from the apostle Paul concerning this vital subject. Thank the

Lord for the privilege of having these sacred writings to feast our souls upon! God has graciously preserved these priceless truths, which meant so much to our forefathers, for us to have and rejoice in.

We can see from the expressions in these writings just what the resurrection of our Lord meant to the apostle Paul and to the Church of God in those days. The rising of our Lord from the dead was the main theme of the message that went to all the world. It was light rising in the darkness and hope being shed upon the gloom and despair that enshrouded the nations. Christ broke the power of the devil and his dismal hold upon the souls of men. Sin and transgression bound humanity and degraded their earthly tread with a weight of condemnation and guilt besides the pollution of mind and heart. There was no hope beyond the veil of death. But Christ came to destroy that woeful curse and made available to mankind a bright anticipation that lit up the vales of mortal tread.

Paul's epistles to these early congregations are full of spiritual nourishment for the Christian profession. He addressed the influences that rose to contest the real truth of God and Christ. In the Corinthian church were some who got it in their mind that there was no resurrection from the dead. We appreciate the kind and yet forceful words that Paul used in dealing with that thought. "If there is no resurrection, then is Christ not raised; and if Christ is not raised, there is no hope in the future for us." That was the language of the apostle. He quotes in verse 54 from Isaiah 25:8, which states: "He will swallow up death in victory." He quotes in verse 55 from Hosea 13:14, which states thus: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Thank God for the declaration: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Yes, through Christ we have victory over the entire thing: over the law, sin, death and the grave. It is a complete and perfect deliverance for us to experience and rejoice in forever. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the real problem with mankind that needed to be solved?
2. Why was sin labeled as the sting of death?

3. Why was the law labeled as the strength of sin?
4. How did Christ accomplish the victory for all of this?
5. What is the hope that the resurrection of Christ made available for us?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Paul said in Romans 5:7-8. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And let us remember the words of I John 2:2 where he said, "And he (Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus, "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The death of the holy Son of God was the ultimate expression of love for lost humanity. Laying down one's life is the greatest measure of devotion. There was a divine purpose in Christ being required of God to lay down His life. They did not take it from Him. He lay it down of Himself. He had the power to stop those evil men from taking His life. But He did it voluntarily. He did it because He loved us, poor, lost sinners, who were separated from God and without hope. What was His purpose in doing this? It was to win *our* love. When we can visualize the extreme sacrifice of His pure and stainless life, laid down on our behalf for our eternal salvation, it will have the effect on us of wanting to love and adore Him forever. This is His good pleasure. Our love and union with Him was the joy that was set before Him. Not everyone will receive it, but all who behold the Son and will leave all to love and follow Him will be richly rewarded to share eternity's bliss with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

One outstanding thought in our lesson today is this verse: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." I Cor. 15:17. By this verse we are instructed clearly that if a man is still living in sin he either has not believed to the saving of his soul, or he has a vain, ineffectual faith—the object

of his faith is false, not what it says it is. Think about it honestly, what kind of faith do I demonstrate by my life? Do I prove, by my life, that Christ is risen from the dead? Or, by the life that I live, do I show the world that the Christian faith is vain?

The apostles, in Acts 4:33, gave with "great power" a "witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and great grace was upon them all." What kind of witness do we give of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? If I say I am a Christian, but I am always defeated, never having power over sin, always falling into disobedience and giving in to the lusts of my flesh, what kind of a witness to the resurrection is that? It only says that the power that came on the scene that wonderful morning couldn't roll the stone away, couldn't bring life into the dead body of Jesus, and that He is still there in that tomb.

But the tomb is empty! And the same power that burst the bars of the grave asunder is the same power that works in us "who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Eph. 1:19-20.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**APRIL 18, 2004**

### **THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST TO HEAVEN**

Psalm 47:5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

Psalm 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

Psalm 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Luke 24:46 And (Jesus) said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

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

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Luke 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9b While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Hebrews 9:24

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** After Jesus had accomplished all that He came to earth for in dying and rising again from the dead, He was taken up into the eternal heavens and was given the seat of power and intercession for us at the right hand of God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 47:5 and Psalm 68:18), "*gone up*" and "*ascended*": These two expressions are from the same Hebrew word.

(Psalm 110:1), "*LORD*": This word refers to the Self-existent, Eternal and Almighty God; the Creator and Heavenly Father. "*my Lord*": This is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord. This is emphatically a prophecy of Jesus, as expressed several times by the New Testament writers.

(Luke 24:46), "*behoved Christ to suffer*": Christ *must* suffer. It was the Father's will for Jesus to go through with being crucified. He was tempted to draw back. When Peter struck the

servant of the high priest and smote off his ear, Jesus reproved him by saying, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matt. 26:52-54. What do you think would have been the outcome if Christ would have drawn back from the cross and prayed for the Father to deliver Him from going through it?

(Luke 24:47), "*repentance*": The real meaning is: sorrow for sinning against God and a change of one's thoughts and ways to please God. "*remission*": forgiveness.

(Luke 24:49), "*tarry*": sit and wait. "*endued*": clothed. "*power*": miraculous force and strength.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The truth of our Lord Jesus Christ ascending from this earth to the eternal heavens above is a very vital truth. Not only is this clearly prophesied of in the Old Testament Scriptures, but also there is a vivid type and shadow of it in the once a year entry of the High Priest into the Most Holy Place in the Jewish tabernacle. As our Memory Verse says, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,...but into heaven itself." Paul spoke of this in Ephesians 1:20 about the working of God's mighty power, "which He wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Jesus had to pass in bodily form from the realm of earth into the realm of Heaven. It is blessed to believe this from the heart to be true.

We have chosen several scriptures from the Old Testament prophecies that point to Christ ascending to the right hand of God. And we have put together Luke's two accounts of this touching and glorious scene along with these prophecies to try to describe it to our minds. All of those disciples who were with Him on the mount of Olives that day saw Him go up toward heaven and kept gazing upon Him until the cloud received Him out of their sight. Have you ever tried to imagine what that was like to see and behold? It was a thrilling and rapturous experience, one that was not to be forgotten.

To me the 24<sup>th</sup> Psalm well foretells the ascension scene. Verse 3 asks the question: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the

LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?" Verse 4 answers: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." We could picture Verse 7 as the cry coming up to the Heavenly realm: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." We can hear the response from Heaven: "Who is this King of glory?" And then the answer from the ascending host who are accompanying Christ: "The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle." Yes, it was the Lord Jesus Christ in the power and glory of the Father approaching the heavenly portals. He was strong and mighty in battle, having subdued the powers of sin and satan and wrought victory for the souls of men. Now He is coming up to take His position at the right hand of God as the Great High Priest and Intercessor for the souls of men. There He must remain until the time of the end when He will come in power and glory to receive the saints of His love and to judge the world in righteousness. All through the intervening ages He has remained in this position of intercession for the souls of men on earth, without break or vacation, day and night, year in and year out.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Christ have to ascend up to heaven?
2. What is He doing there at the right hand of God?
3. What did He tell His disciples to do after He had left them?
4. What did the angels tell the disciples about "this same Jesus?"
5. Why was it better for Christ to ascend to heaven rather than stay on earth?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In Charles Gounod's *The Redemption* is a beautiful chorus that sings of the Ascension of Christ. The lyrics go thus: "Unfold! Unfold! Unfold! Ye portals everlasting! Prepare now to receive Him ascending on high. Behold the King of Glory! He mounts up to the sky, back to the Kingdom of Heaven. Unfold! Unfold! Unfold! Behold the King draws nigh! Who is this King of Glory? Of Hosts He is the Lord, and of Angels and Powers, The King of Glory!"

This scene of the ascension of Christ has captivated my heart and mind. Oh, do we really believe and understand this precious scene as reported to us by the prophets and by those who beheld it with their own eyes? Our blessed Jesus, the meek and lowly Lamb of God who walked among men to lift their hearts and minds from the sordid and perishable things of earth, has gone above to reign forever! He partook of the same flesh and blood that we are in now. He endured the same trials and tribulations that we suffer. And then He willingly allowed Himself to be tortured and slain by the cruel mob. But He did not stay dead. He arose triumphant from the grave. And then after showing Himself alive by many unfailing proofs He went up before the wondering eyes of His disciples and disappeared into the clouds. Behold this scene with open face until its beauty and virtue fills your inmost soul! Let us live ever with heaven in view and pray always that we will be accounted worthy to be received by Him in that last great day! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

When our Savior ascended to heaven, the angels spoke to those looking on saying, "...this same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. Notice the direction they were looking—Up! In Luke 21:28 we are instructed, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Up! What a wonderful point of view.

The children of Israel had to look up at the brazen serpent to find healing from all of the fiery serpents that were biting them. Peter had to look up at the Savior in order to walk on the water. Stephen looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Up!—This is the direction of our redemption and hope.

We as Christians can draw comfort in this life by looking up. We may be surrounded by trials, tribulations, distresses and despair. But be encouraged to look up. The coming of our Lord is close at hand. Every day, sunshine or rainy, would be a great day for the Lord to come again. So, be ready and look **up!**

—Sis. LaDawna Adams





**APRIL 25, 2004**

**GOD COMMANDS MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT**

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Luke 3:2b The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

7b O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8a Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,

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

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

Isaiah 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

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

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

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

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

II Cor. 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.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

**MEMORY VERSE:** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To get right with God we must do all we know to do to straighten up our lives by quitting sinful practices and ways and doing those things that we know God is pleased with. This alone will not save us, but must be done to prepare our hearts to receive God's forgiveness and mercy.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Acts 17:30), "*winked at*": overlooked and refrained from punishment. "*repent*": To turn and cease from sinful habits and lifestyles that transgress the holiness of God and seek to please God. This is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. That alone will not save you, but God requires it of us as a preparation of our hearts for His grace. So many say, "Oh, just come to the Lord as you are." That is true in the sense of being honest and confessing your real sinful condition. But there are things that we must do in a godly, sorrowful and repentant attitude to correct our conduct and ways of life in order to prepare our hearts for the gift of salvation that Jesus wants to give us. God is not playing around with anyone, and He will not tolerate us playing around with Him.

(Mark 1:15), "*at hand*": has approached or come near.

(Luke 3:7-8), "*generation of vipers*": The Greek says, "offspring of vipers." "*fruits worthy of repentance*": This means to do things that show that you are sorry for your sins and are willing to follow the Lord and His way. "Worthy" means suitable or deserving. Repentance is literally forsaking our ways and thoughts with a determination to follow God's ways and thoughts. (Isaiah 55:7.)

(Ezekiel 18:30), "*Repent and turn*": The Hebrew says, "Turn and be made to turn." A person must put forth a steadfast and determined effort on their own to turn away from the sinful ways they are in. I heard about a man who was under conviction for his sinful ways and was on his way to a saint minister's house for prayer. He had a pack of cigarettes in his pocket and the devil whispered and suggested that he have one more "smoke." As he reached for the pack of cigarettes, a Voice spoke to him, and said, "If you do that, the whole thing is off." He took that pack and threw it out the window, went on and the Lord saved him. "*your ruin*": a stumbling block or something to cause you to fall.

(Acts 3:19), "*be converted*": To turn about and go in the opposite direction.

(II Corinthians 7:10), "*salvation not to be repented of*": The deliverance from sin and wrong to a life of that which is right and needs no change; irrevocable and without regret. "*sorrow of the world*": Any other kind of sorrow and regret that is not from a sense of grief and offense to our Maker. It could be a sorrow of being found out, or the painful result of one's evil deed, or the vengeance of another mortal for the wrong done or inflicted.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our remaining lessons of this Quarter we will consider the various requirements of being in the right spirit and attitude of heart before God. Today we take up the subject of repentance. I fear that many are unaware of the fact that God is demanding repentance and also of what repentance is and also have no realization of any need for repenting. But let us take note of these scriptures and take heed to them.

We have chosen scriptures from various Old and New Testament writers that plainly declare that God is expecting us to repent. We have Paul at Athens, at the close of his message to them, declaring that God is not going to overlook our sins any longer but is commanding us to repent and shape up before Him. John the Baptist strictly charged those of his day that they must repent and change their ways for the right. Jesus also called for repentance. Then we have the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, both through the power of the Holy Spirit, calling for us to turn from our evil ways to follow the right ways of the Lord. Peter, in his preaching to the multitudes called for repentance and conversion to that which pleased God. James and Paul both charged us to cleanse ourselves in godly sorrow and fear. Our memory verse from Prov. 28:13 puts it well that only through confession (hiding our sins no longer) and forsaking of our sins can we hope to have mercy. It is plain as it can be. People need to be aware of their sinful condition, have deep heartfelt and genuine sorrow for grieving God, and a willingness to quit the sin business and seek earnestly and honestly to please our holy Father in heaven.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What does it mean to really repent of one's sins?
2. Why is there a need for repentance on our part?

3. What action do we need to take to show that we are repentant?
4. How can we cleanse and wash ourselves?
5. What kind of attitude and spirit is godly sorrow?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In Abraham God showed us the faith in Him that He wants us to cultivate and have. In Moses and the law God showed us where we have sinned and erred from His holiness. With these two principles in mind we can find the way to His salvation. He showed us faith first without the law so we could have something to overcome the guilt and condemnation that the law would bring. God was wise and good to do it that way.

In Christ Jesus, His Son, God brought these two elements together. Christ showed a way that is pure and sinless, but at the same time He offered the sacrifice of Himself to atone for our sinful state. "All things are now ready" for us to make the move that God wants us to make. He is not going to do it all and leave us without responsibility. There is something that we must do. We must repent. We must quit our sinful ways and practices and amend our doings. We must cleanse ourselves before we can expect Christ to work His cleansing. In fact, Christ could shed His blood to atone for our sins a thousand times, but it would do no good unless we do our part of repenting and cleansing ourselves. We are free moral agents invested with a will and the responsibility of making a choice. There is something that we must do. We must repent.

Repentance is not to be drawn back from, ignored, nor is it to be feared. It is not a shame to acknowledge one's wrong and seek to amend one's ways. It is a shame not to. Even a saved person will have times when he will have to repent. Jesus spoke to the seven Churches in Asia in Revelations 2 and 3 and only two of the seven needed no repentance. The other five all had things that He told them to repent of. He said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Rev. 3:19. We need to be thankful that God has made it possible for us to repent. We can do it if we will to do it. And His blessed Spirit will help the poor and needy soul who realizes the need to repent and straighten up before Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Jesus gave us the heart-touching account of the prodigal son to help us envision heaven's perspective. You will remember that the prodigal son left his father's house of love and security (God's will and plan for his life) for a riotous life of sinful pleasures. It was there he wasted his substance and began to be in want and came down very low until he came to his senses. Sad to say, many times it seems like it takes us coming very low before we come to our senses. The pigpen is a good illustration of sin and its defilement. One sister said the Lord had to hold His nose as He washed her inside and out.

We see the proof of his repentance when he was willing to leave sin and head back to father's house. He didn't come back making demands or excuses. He took responsibility when he simply acknowledged, "I have sinned." Repentance is not the natural course of the human spirit. It takes courage, determination and humility to say those words. The natural tendency is to gloss it over, make excuses for it or blame others.

Repentance is not defeat but the beginning of victory with God. It is entrance into grace. It is the only way we can enter into the Kingdom of God. The father met the son while he was a great way off. I can envision the father looking every day with a longing to see his son once again. Our heavenly Father is still waiting and longing to see a son or daughter come to their senses and start heading home. Like the prodigal they will find a warm reception.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**MAY 2, 2004**

### **HUMBLING OURSELVES TO WALK WITH GOD**

Isaiah 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Matthew 18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

I Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

**MEMORY VERSE:** He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** If we would gain the favor of God we must assume an humble and submissive attitude before Him. We need to recognize and be aware of how poor and needy we really are in His sight.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 66:1-2), The Hebrew renders this: "Thus says Jehovah: Heaven is My throne, and earth the stool of My feet. Where then is the house that you build for me? And where then is the place of my rest? And all these things My hand has made, and all these things exist, Jehovah states. But to this one I will look intently on and regard with pleasure: the afflicted and contrite of spirit, fearing and trembling at my word."

(Matt. 18:3), "*be converted*": Reverse or turn around completely.

(Matt. 18:4), "*humble himself*": Get low; cast out all pride and self-exaltation.

(Luke 18:10), "*publican*": Tax collector.

(Luke 18:11), "*prayed thus with himself*": The Greek says, "prayed these things to himself." "*as other men*": Greek, "as all other men."

(I Pet. 5:5), The Greek renders this: "Likewise, younger ones be subject to older ones; and all being subject to one another, put on humility, because God sets Himself against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones." This is a quote from Proverbs 3:34 which reads: "Surely He scorneth the scorners: but he give grace unto the lowly."

(James 4:7), "*resist*": Stand against.

(James 4:8), "*double minded*": The Greek says, "two-souled." One who has a combination of desire and conviction to serve and obey God but is also easily influenced by the world and desires of the flesh. Such people are miserable and cannot really enjoy either. We must take our stand for one or the other. As Elijah said in I Kings 18:21, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him."

(James 4:9), "*heaviness*": shame.

(Micah 6:8), "*walk humbly with thy God*": The Hebrew says, "Humble thyself to walk with God."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we take up another phase of the list of proper attitudes we should assume to gain the favor of God. These are indispensable requirements. There is no way we can make it without them.

We quote first from Isa. 66:1-2. Stephen quoted from this text in his address before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:49-50. He brought out how David desired to find a tabernacle for God, "but Solomon built him an house." Then he went on to declare that "the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." He then quoted Isaiah, inferring that the idea of building a literal temple for the great God who inhabited the universe was a foolish and wasted endeavor. And Isaiah proceeds to tell just what the house was that God desired. It was the hearts of poor, afflicted, contrite and reverent men who esteemed His Word above everything else.

All of these places stress the need of getting down in the dust of humility and lowliness of heart and attitude. Being as an innocent child, being as the dejected tax collector that sensed his sinfulness and utter unworthiness before God, cleansing our lives from sin and making irrevocable decisions for God. These are the qualities that God is looking for. In order for us to avail before God we must assume these attitudes without fail. As Peter says in his quote from Proverbs: God sets Himself against the proud and lofty, and gives grace to the humble and lowly. Oh, the curse of pride upon humanity! No one can get anywhere with God who nurses pride and self-esteem in his heart.

Our Memory Verse from Micah 6:8 is a very important verse to have in memory. This is the thing that God desires to see in us. He spoke before of the things that could be presented before God, thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or even one's firstborn child. No, these are not what the LORD God is looking for. It is that humble, submissive and obedient heart. Jesus perfected this spirit by humbling Himself to the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8.) This is a truth worthy of all acceptance and vital for our success in being saved and living to enjoy the favor of our God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was God not satisfied with a literal temple and what is He looking for?
2. What does it take for a man to really humble himself?
3. What was really wrong with the Pharisee and his prayer?
4. What is God's attitude toward the proud? What is it toward the humble?
5. What does James tell us that we need to do to get straightened out?



## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Through the ages of mortal time there has been the temptation for man to have too high an opinion of himself, his abilities, his intellect and his accomplishments. This exalted attitude in the heart of mankind is labeled by the scripture as "the pride of life." (I John 2:16.) It was one of the points of the tri-fold temptation that ensnared Mother Eve in the beginning. The forbidden tree was made to appear to be desired because it was spoken of by the tempter as fruit to be desired to make one wise, even to be as a god. This desire to be lifted up has ensnared many people. And it is still the drawing card of the devil today. It is something that every human being faces. It is evil, destructive, and to be refused and resisted if we would please that Wonderful God who created us and gave us our being. We must go against that tide and attraction that seeks to draw us toward the praise of men and self. We must recognize that we really have nothing to be lifted up about. We are nothing, less than nothing, (Isa. 40:17), and we must discipline our minds to be lowly and let God be all in all. We must humble ourselves and acknowledge the supremacy of God Almighty if we would be lifted up in true honor and rightful praise.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

A certain way must be followed for one to make Heaven their home. If we intended to go to the home of a friend it would be necessary for us to travel the proper course to their home. Jesus has shown us by example, and He has instructed us by His Word that the way of humility is crucial to pleasing God.

There are several characteristics that mark someone who lacks humility. Self is elevated causing that person to despise others who are just as important in God's sight. This occurs in both the worldly social structures as well as in a religious environment. They will not heed the counsel of others, including the Lord, because they are right in their own eyes and will go boldly ahead even though they are wrong and are hurting others. If it occurs at all, even their giving is directed to their selfish interests. They deal with others in a harsh, uncaring manner. When a mistake occurs, they are quick to shift the blame and are unwilling to accept responsibility for their own blunders. Sometimes they seem to enjoy pointing out the faults of others and

they dwell on the deficiencies of their fellowman. They have difficulty in forgiving others. A lack of humility may become prominent in an outward display of the body, its clothing and adornment. It causes one to think they should be served first instead of waiting on others and is the reason for much war and strife.

Some only have a cloak of humility. They try to appear humble, caring and godly but in reality they do not possess the virtue. It is easy for the Lord and others looking on to see through their vain profession.

A lack of humility can occur in the poor as well as the wealthy and the lives of both are equally tarnished and effectively barred from the gentle spirit of the Lord.

Humility will cause us to be teachable, respectful, forgiving, caring, serving, obedient and modest. When we understand how important godly humility is in our life our prayer should be, "Lord, help us to truly possess this rare virtue."

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**MAY 9, 2004**

### **FEAR AND REVERENCE BEFORE GOD**

Leviticus 26:2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

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

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

Psalms 33:8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.

Psalms 111:9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.

Psalms 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

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

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

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

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

Philippians 2:12b Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Proverbs 23:17-18.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Lev.26:2), "*reverence*:" To revere, according to Webster's definition, means to regard with deep respect, love and awe, as something sacred; to venerate. Awe means a mixed feeling of reverence, fear and wonder caused by something majestic, sublime, etc. The words venerate or venerable has to do with being worthy of respect and reverence by reason of age and dignity, character, position, etc. The words "worship" and "adore" come into the picture relating to fear and reverence also. It all adds up to a deep inward respect and honour toward God because of His greatness, His goodness, His wisdom and every other wonderful thing that is true about Him. Not only should we

respect and honor His person, but everything about Him or that has to do with Him, such as His sanctuary, His service, His saints, His Word and His Salvation.

(Psalm 2:11), "*trembling*": To shudder, quake or shake violently.

(Psalm 2:12), "*when his wrath is kindled but a little*": The Hebrew says, "for quickly His anger is kindled." I believe what the LORD is saying here amounts to a warning to not trifle with Him or His Christ, who this is speaking of. We dare not count lightly what Jesus Christ has suffered and accomplished for our eternal redemption. We should not let other things hinder or slow us from an immediate embrace of Him in His grace, truth, correction and discipline. Sad to say there have been many who have allowed selfish desires and the worldly attractions to belittle Christ in their minds and have neglected His salvation to the point of grieving His Spirit, and He has left them in darkness without hope. Jesus declared in John 12:35-36, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you:...While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

(Heb. 12:28), "*godly fear*": The Greek word here means "apprehension or caution." Extreme carefulness and diligence should be employed concerning our relationship with our Creator. It is certainly nothing to play around with or be lighthearted about.

(Rom. 11:20), "*be not high minded, but fear*": Do not be too self-confident; take nothing for granted; do not feel that the Lord owes you anything special. Keep a lowly attitude and opinion of yourself and exercise extreme caution and diligence toward God and pleasing Him.

(Prov. 23:18), "*an end*": a hereafter.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we have gathered expressions from the Holy Scriptures about godly fear and reverence that we owe to our Creator. It is a most serious and solemn injunction that we have been given. Countless examples have passed the scene of earth of those who failed to revere and give God due honor and of what happened to those who went beyond His mercy because of their stubbornness and neglect.

It requires more than talk. There must be action on our part if we would make good our claim of godliness. We must fear and respect His commandments and every word that proceedeth out of His mouth. We must be sincere and honest and mean it with all of our heart. God knows those who are truly His. We might fool the people, but we never fool God. He is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. (I Sam. 2:3.)

It is such a fearful and serious matter because of the extreme chances of loss or gain that are involved. If we fail to make the grade He is calling for and we pass the bounds of this life without His favor, the result is eternal shame and contempt. If we prevail to gain His favor and grace and remain faithful at all cost to the end of life, the result is everlasting life and fellowship with Him. Thus we are called upon to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Take heed that we do not take it for granted or count it lightly. It is so serious and there is nothing more terrible than for our souls to be lost forever.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is true godly fear an unpopular thing in this present evil world?
2. Who is responsible for a person to have godly fear?
3. What are some of the influences in the world that combat the fear of God?
4. What are the consequences of failing to fear God as we should?
5. What are the consequences of faithfully serving God with godly fear?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

I remember when I was a young person that there was a sentiment among the worldly crowd that scorned and belittled anyone for being "religious." I remember telling some boys at school who made a nasty sign to me that that was wrong. Their response to me was, "Are you religious?" You could feel it, this attitude against the fear of God. Sad to say, these boys evidenced very little show of godly fear or real religious training or influence. Such is still the case in this wicked society. The way people dress, what they feed their minds on and their loose and

undisciplined conduct show up their absence of godly fear. The awful current of the television holds a grip on our society, and it is not for the good of mankind. The morals of the nations are at a low ebb. The love of earthly gain, the thirst for physical pleasure and selfish gratification holds sway over the majority of mankind rather than godly fear.

"Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Oh, the weight of such wonderful counsel! And why so? The answer: "For surely there is an end (a hereafter); and thine expectation shall not be cut off." The dividends that godly reverence and holy fear will recompense you goes far beyond the frivolous and vain reward you might hope to have from this world. People possessed with worldly delights think but little of a hereafter. In reality it is just non-existent. But we have in mind an incorruptible crown in the world to come. Such will be worth it all to obtain.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

I have noticed, even in my short lifetime, a kind of pattern in God's dealings with mankind. It seems about the time humans are the most confident in their own intelligence and the most assured in their own accomplishments that God allows some great natural disaster to come upon the earth. Men may not acknowledge God and His sovereignty, but it does bring about sobering changes in the lives of those who stop to ponder the deeper purposes of these events.

One story I read took place in Romania in 1977. It was a time when the government of that country put great pressure upon Christians if they were observed evangelizing others or distributing Christian literature. The individual writing her story was being interrogated in an unmerciful, grueling manner. One day the country suffered a massive earthquake, and as the young lady reported to the officers as she had been told to do every day for her interrogation she noticed that the attitude of the men had drastically changed and she was given leniency. She attributed this to the mighty display of God's power in the terrible earthquake. It seemed that the people were softened for a time, even in their scorn of these "crazy" believers.

Psalm 46:8 says, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." We have only to look around us or read the pages of history to realize that God is to be held in great honor, reverence and awe.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**MAY 16, 2004**

### **SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD**

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

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

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

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he (Jesus) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

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

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

19 By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. I Samuel 15:22b, 23a.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Sin came into the world through disobedience and only through obedience can it be eliminated. Christ our Saviour, through His obedience, made it possible for us to be likewise obedient to the will of God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 1:18), "*let us reason*": The Hebrew says, "let us be right."

(Isa. 1:19), "*obedient*": The Hebrew word basically means to hear, give attention and good heed, respond, submit, follow and obey.

(Heb. 11:7), "*moved with fear*": The Greek word means to be circumspect and with apprehension. Circumspect means to look all around. We should consider every point, direction and factor involved in our affairs with God. Apprehension means to take in and understand and be aware of the seriousness of the call of God.

(Heb. 11:17), "*tried*": Put to the test.

(Heb. 11:19), "*from whence also he received him in a figure*": Abraham was given the ultimate test of his obedience to God. Would he obey God's commandment to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering—his only son in whom God said would be his seed and a blessing to all nations? To obey would be to fully commit the keeping of God's promise unto God alone, relinquishing every physical evidence of such fulfillment. But Abraham went ahead and progressed to the farthest act of obedience before God stopped him short of the slaying of Isaac. As far as Abraham's



obedience was concerned, Isaac was as good as dead. He was going to obey God and go through with it. And when God did stop Abraham and Isaac was released, it was as if he received him back from the dead. And in another great sense, Abraham had already received Isaac from the dead, having begotten him from his own body beyond reproductive years and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

(Heb. 5:8), "*learned he obedience*": Through experiencing the suffering of death in submission to the will of God, our Saviour gained the true understanding of what obedience really is.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we will consider another vital attitude and function that we must have before God. We have gathered several scriptures from various sources in the Old and New Testaments about this matter of being submissive and obedient to God. Along with these scriptures in our lesson I want to refer you to one more text found in Jer. 7:23 where the Lord said that the thing He commanded the people was, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." The Almighty God has a just and wise right to expect the recipients of His favors to be perfectly submissive and obedient to Him. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Heb. 2:2. The Lord, through Isaiah, put it straight before us. He wants to be on good terms with us and is willing to forgive all iniquity. But He makes it clear that He is expecting us to be willing and obedient. If we refuse to obey, He shows what we can expect.

We have two examples of men of old who obeyed God explicitly, that is, definitely and without reservation. They were prime examples of obedience to the known will of God, and for that reason God honored and rewarded them greatly. Because of Abraham's obedience God swore to bless him and his posterity with eternal blessings. He was made the Father of all the faithful down through the ages. Then we have the greatest example of them all. Our Lord Jesus Christ emptied Himself to the will of God and became obedient to the death of the cross. It was a voluntary step that He took. He could have gotten out of it. But He chose to go all the way with the will of God. And, as our scripture in Romans 5 shows us, through Christ's obedience, we can be made righteous, even as through Adam's disobedience many were made sinners.

And Peter sums it up to us to make sure that we give up the sinful lusts that we had in our sinful times of ignorance and become obedient children and holy in all manner of conduct. Our memory verse comes from Samuel's rebuke to King Saul when he failed to obey the command of God. Saul saved some of the sheep and cattle that he should have destroyed, saying that he brought them to sacrifice to the Lord. But we see God's reaction toward that, for the greatest sacrifice we can make in God's sight is a willing and obedient heart to obey His commandments and do His will.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is God expecting out of us, His children?
2. What are some of the displeasing things that we will be tempted to do?
3. How many examples of obedience and disobedience can you recall?
4. Who made it possible for us to regain the spirit of obedience to God?
5. How has it been made clear that obedience to God is for our good?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Through the disobedience of Adam sin came into the world and death came by that disobedience and passed upon all men. The reaction of Adam's disobedience was that it showed up in his offspring. The inclination to take one's own way and do one's own pleasure was passed down to the following generations. Satan got a foothold upon humanity and he did not draw back from grinding it in. There were those, however, who got their eyes open to what disobedience to God would do. They made special efforts to overcome the temptation to disobey and were submissive to God, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and many down the line. The majority, though, fell a prey to the disobedient spirit. I Pet. 3:20 spoke of those who were disobedient in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing. Eight people were the only ones obedient to God and escaped the destruction of the flood. The challenge is yet to us today. Are we going to renounce being children of disobedience and become obedient children? It is for us to decide. God will force His will upon no one. But when we open our eyes and consider all of the issues before us, we will have to acknowledge that it is better to obey God than to be

"contentious" and "obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." (Rom. 2:8.) Our father Abraham proved that it pays great dividends to obey God at any cost. And look at the reward God bestowed upon His Son for obeying Him. He has "highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Phil. 2:9. Let us be wise, be obedient children and reap the great reward of perfect submission to the will of God. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,..." I Samuel 15:23. These are very strong words, but I believe the Lord wanted to impress us as to His hatred for rebellion. You do not have to look very far to find a rebellious person or group of people. It permeates our society with its wickedness. It is found in our schools and our government. It affects the entertainment, music and fashion industries. There is little respect for authority or the laws of the land. This produces a lack of the fear of God and His commandments.

Rebellion starts at a very young age. Romans 1:29-30 describes, "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents." It is kind of interesting that "disobedient to parents" is lumped in with "envy and murder."

Disobedience goes hand in hand with rebellion. You find a disobedient child; you will find a rebellious adult. A disobedient child is unhappy, disruptive and unteachable. (Ask any school-teacher.) But an obedient child learns well, is mannerly, is easy to entreat and happy.

This is the way it is spiritually also. The Lord did not make His commandments to be grievous. They are there for our protection. Obeying the Lord keeps us in a position to be teachable, trainable, peaceable and happy.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

**Notice:** If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the third quarter of 2004 be in this office by June 1. For your convenience there is an order blank at the back of this book.

**MAY 23, 2004**

**POSSESSING THE PROPER SENSE OF VALUES**

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

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

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

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

I Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

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

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

**MEMORY VERSE:** For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Psalm 84:10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We all need to have the proper sense of values. We need to esteem the favor of Christ with all that might be suffered for His sake to be far more valuable than what the world offers in material gain and enjoyment.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Heb. 11:24), "*come to years*": The Greek says, "having become great." Stephen in his defense before the council made this statement about Moses: "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Acts 7:22.

(Heb. 11:26), "*reproach*": insulting or humiliating treatment; disgrace, dishonor, scorn, ridicule, etc.

(Prov. 3:13), "*finding*": coming forth to, attaining, acquiring. "*wisdom*": good judgment, keenness of mind, balanced in thought, with proper motive and sense of values. "*getting*": securing, successfully laying hold of. "*understanding*": The Hebrew definition is "the mental distinguishing and separation of every vital part of life's responsibilities; perception and comprehension of life's needs, opportunities, challenges, dangers and values. *Understanding* in the New Testament from the Greek means to be able to put them all together properly, orderly, and with the right effect.

(Matt. 13:44), "*when a man hath found, he hideth*": We need to get the picture here as it is a likeness of what might go on in a person's mind and life when he or she is confronted with the truth of the kingdom of God. A man doing the plowing for another man in his field (or digging) unearths a fabulous vein or deposit of highly valuable commodity. He cannot take possession of this heretofore hidden treasure, so he covers it back up so as to keep it a secret. But he is fully aware that what he has found is a fabulous wealth, far beyond any that he has or ever has seen. With this thought in mind he leaves it hidden and endeavors to buy that field. With joy he parts with everything he has, because he knows the wealth of that treasure will by far recompense him for what he has to give up. We need to recognize the great value there is in the kingdom of Heaven that Christ has made available

to us. We must hide it in our hearts and not confer with flesh and blood, but fulfill every requirement that is given us in an all-out effort to obtain the kingdom of God for our very own by being truly born from above and be led faithfully by the Holy Spirit of God. (Romans 14:17.)

(I Pet. 2:6), "*elect*": Choice; the very best; more valuable than all the rest. "*precious*": valuable, esteemed of great outstanding worth; dear; cherished; honorable.

(I Pet. 2:7), "*disallowed*": Rejected; not approved; cast off and despised.

(I Pet. 2:8), "*stumble*": The Greek says, "to strike at or surge against." This means to count as in the way, offensive and not desirable.

(Matt. 16:24), "*take up*": To accept and assume the responsibility of; esteem as valuable and profitable.

(Psa. 84:10), "*rather be a doorkeeper*": The Hebrew says, "I have chosen rather to be at the threshold, in the house of my God." This means just inside, or the lowliest place, the very last in line. But even if we are, as Paul said in Eph. 3:8, "less than the least of all saints," and we are really on the inside it is still by far a richer and more profitable place to be than in the worldly abundance of those who are without Christ.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we take up the all-important matter of our sense of values. A person's sense of values is what guides him in the decisions he makes in life and the direction that he is going. Satan got our foreparents in the garden, and I mean both Adam and Eve, to get their sense of values mixed up. And he has succeeded in doing this to the majority of folks ever since. Jesus knew this to be true. He knew that some would receive Him while others would reject Him. We have gathered scriptures to illustrate and exhort us concerning having the right sense of values. But there are many more that we could include in the lesson. This matter of having the proper sense of values is far reaching, and we are so challenged and instructed by it. Let us weigh carefully the principles brought out in these scriptures, and take heed, diligent heed and be very careful with this vital issue. Remember that your sense of values will determine where you will end up in eternity.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Moses choose to suffer affliction and reproach than Egypt's riches?
2. What are the two sets of values before us that we must choose from?
3. Why was the man willing to sell all he had to buy that field?
4. What does the kingdom of God have that is superior to everything else?
5. What are the serious consequences of having the wrong sense of values?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

*How careful, careful we must be the proper worth of things to see,  
To look, consider, ponder well the wealth of what we buy and sell:  
The glitter of this worldly sphere and all that's offered to us here  
In contrast to the realm of Christ and all the riches He has priced.*

*Consider Moses and the place that Egypt offered him to trace,  
As son of Pharaoh's daughter fair, and such position waiting there,  
Yet all before him standing out, were all these groaning slaves about,  
Whom he had learned were saints of God who suffered 'neath old Pharaoh's rod.*

*What would he do, what would he gain, by casting off his golden reign  
And taking sides with poverty, and losing his nobility?*

*Thank God, he made the wise, wise choice, and heard the great Almighty's voice  
Who called him from the burning tree, to go and set His people free!*

*The sense of values of a man will guide him through this earthly span:  
His choices' and decisions' frame will be according to the same.*

*If Heav'n's eternal values shine within the heart their treasures fine,  
Then he will follow all their ways and gain His great Redeemer's praise.*

*But if he deems this earthly tread the main recourse for heart and head,  
You'll find him digging in the earth for things that are of little worth.*

*So let it be a cause for fear: to guard our sense of values here,  
Take heed, make sure eternal wealth is all your aim for life and health.*

*Oh, what's it worth, this world to gain and find its treasures are but vain?  
Let's rather seek God's kingdom first; escape the doom of those who're cursed.*

*—Bro. Leslie Busbee*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There was an occasion where I was enabled to go through and view a several hundred thousand-dollar show home. The ceilings were 12' or higher. The staircase was winding and trimmed in oak. The crown molding was layered. The bathrooms were very spacious. The house that I lived in seemed like a small cardboard box in comparison. The comparison wouldn't have been far off by many. On the way home from viewing that house my heart began to sink within me, and I began to ask myself, what are my life and efforts amounting to; it seemed so little. I was feeling down and discouraged when the Lord brought a song about heaven to mind. I began to sing that song, and its truth started sinking down into my heart. I began to recognize that my home is really not here in this life. A vision of heaven opened up to my spirit and what I saw made that show home look like a cardboard box in comparison. I walked into my little home that evening with strength and confidence that I was making the right choices by putting God first in my life.

I'm glad to know that I'm not the only one that has felt this temptation. In Psalm 73 Asaph said that his feet were almost gone and that his steps had well nigh slipped as he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He thought he had lived for God in vain. When he thought on this he said it was too painful. He couldn't reconcile his difficulties in trying to serve God with the prosperity of the wicked; it seemed so unfair until he went into the sanctuary, then he had his proper sense of value restored.

Neither riches nor poverty create spirituality. There are those that love God and don't have much of this world's goods, and God blesses them. There are those also that love God and are blessed to have more. Whatever our station might be, let us be content and enjoy the rich salvation that God has bestowed. Let us not live for this life only but earnestly endeavor to keep God first and His work and purpose close to heart.

—Bro. Bob Wilson





**MAY 30, 2004**

**MERCY AND FORGIVENESS FOR OTHERS**

Matthew 6:9a After this manner therefore pray ye:

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

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

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

II Corinthians 2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which *was* *inflicted* of many.

7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. James 2:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God will not grant mercy and forgiveness for us if we fail to have and show mercy and forgiveness to our fellow man.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Matt. 6:12), "*debt*": Something owed, whether something due or an offense. "*debtor*": One who owes something to another; a delinquent, a transgressor; one who is guilty of an offense. "*forgive*": To free fully, relieve, release, dismiss, let go, loose, set at liberty.

(Matt. 6:14,15), "*trespass*": A side-slip or deviation, (unintentional) error or (willful) transgression.

(Luke 17:3-4), "*repent*": To reconsider, to think differently or change. True repentance should be for the better or for what is right.

(Matt. 5:7), "*mercy*": Compassion; a refraining from holding or inflicting judgment or punishment; a disposition to forgive, pity, or be kind; clemency, forbearance, or leniency.

(Matt. 18:22), "*seventy times seven*": The time frame was not specified but if we consider it for a day it would equate to over 20 times an hour, which would be every three minutes. For a week it would be almost 3 times an hour, which would be every 20 minutes. Dividing the days of a year, 365, into 490 comes to about 1 and 1/3 times for every day. Can we have this kind of forgiveness? If we want God's forgiveness we must have it.

(Luke 7:37), The Greek says, "Judge not, and in no way be judged, condemn not and in no way you will be condemned."

(Matt. 7:2), "*mete*": Measure, what you give out. What you give out to others will come back to you.

(James 2:13), "*mercy rejoiceth against judgment*": Mercy exults or triumphs over judgment.

(II Cor. 2:5), "*overcharge*": To be heavy upon or severe; to be overly judgmental. Paul's language in these verses is evident. He did not want to be heavy or severe with the one who caused grief among the congregation. Whoever this was, suffered blame, censure and condemnation by the majority. Instead of that, they should forgive and comfort him, lest he be drowned and devoured by more superabundant sorrow. Paul beseeches them to ratify, make authoritative and official their love and forgiveness for him.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to consider our need for being merciful and forgiving to others. We have selected chosen scriptures from the New Testament for our text. First we have the express words of our Lord Jesus. From His model prayer in Matthew 6 we find the petition for God to forgive us as we forgive others. We have debts, trespasses and, in Luke 11:4 is the term, "sins." Now we know that we all have sinned and come short of God's glory and good pleasure. If we cannot obtain forgiveness for our sins, we have no hope. Jesus Christ as our Saviour gave Himself for our sins so that we can be forgiven. But in obtaining this forgiveness, there is the requirement of us forgiving those of our fellow men who offend, transgress and do wrong against us. It is just this simple. Forgive others and God will forgive us. Withhold forgiveness and mercy for others and God will withhold forgiveness from us. God accepts the feelings and dealings we have with others as a standard of His feelings and dealings with us.

Luke's account says that Jesus mentions trespassing seven times in a day, but in our text from Matthew 18 we find the figure seventy times seven or 490 times. Jesus followed these words with the illustration of the servant who was indebted to his lord, the king. He owed an impossible figure that in our money would be over (if not multiplied) a million dollars. Because the servant had no way to pay and begged for clemency, the king was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt. The same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants that owed him a very small debt. He took action against him, refusing to show mercy and forgiveness. When the king heard about it, he put the debt that he had forgiven back on this servant. And Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." This is the tenor of Christ's teachings on forgiveness. If we want forgiveness from God, we must, from our hearts, forgive those who trespass against us. No grudge or ill will must be in our hearts against anyone no matter how wrong or sinful they are. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5:44.

From the apostle James we have the acute words warning us against holding judgment on others without mercy. Mercy

triumphs over judgment. And we have the apostle Paul's counsel to the Corinthian brethren concerning one who caused grief among them. It was to forgive, comfort and confirm their love to him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How do our sins against God relate to the sins of others against us?
2. What would happen to our world if everyone would be this merciful?
3. What will happen to us if we forfeit God's forgiveness by being unmerciful?
4. How often would 490 times be in one day? One week? One year?
5. What solemn truth will help us to freely forgive if we will remember it?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In one of John Greenleaf Whittier's poems he spoke of a time when he was hurt so deeply by the offense of one of his fellow men. He was smarting beneath its awful injury. It seemed that he just could not rise above it. In his anguish and distress, he took a walk out of the town and passed by the cemetery. As he viewed the graves and thought about those who were buried there, many of whom he knew and had been acquainted with, he was struck with the thought of how we all are going to be one day reduced to that same level. Someday we will leave this world and we will be ushered out to meet our Creator, the Almighty God. Godly fear swept through his soul, and he said, "Trembling, I forgave!" Oh, how true this is! Bitterness, wrath, ill will and an unmerciful and unforgiving attitude will never pay off. If we don't get hold of ourselves and bring our hurt feelings into subjection to the obedience of Christ we will pay a terrible price. We ought to exercise ourselves to kindness and good will, mercy and forgiveness toward everyone, no matter how overbearing and corrupt they may act toward us. We are not their judge and we should pray for them for the Lord to bring them to repentance. Keep a peaceful attitude toward everyone. Many times it is those who are closest to us who can most keenly hurt and offend us. I Peter 4:8 says, "Charity shall cover a multitude of sins." Sometimes it seems we do not have enough to cover one fault,

let alone a multitude. We need the love of God shed abroad in our hearts and we should replenish and refresh that love all along our life's journey.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **Conversion of Charles E. Byers**

During the winter and spring of the year 1904 while working in a factory, I fell under deep conviction, but I did not know what was troubling me. I became so disturbed I could hardly do my work. I decided I must be homesick for country life, so I hired out to a farmer and we moved into the country. I was still troubled and spent a most miserable summer. Fear filled my soul day and night. The sight of the sunset would cause me to break down and weep. The lightning and thunder filled me with terror. Nothing gave me any satisfaction. The old crowd of friends with whom we associated no longer brought any pleasure. Wife became somewhat concerned over my condition and often asked if I was disappointed in her. I assured her that was not the cause of my trouble, for I loved her dearly.

In the spring of the year 1905 I heard that Bro. B. E. Warren was holding a meeting at what was known in the community as Holiness Chapel. I had known Bro. Warren for several years but was always very shy of him. The first night I attended the meeting the singing and preaching simply tore my heart to pieces. I tried to hide my feelings, but I was convinced before the sermon was ended that I needed God and salvation. I thought the whole sermon was addressed to me. That night I could not sleep but wept and tossed all night.

The next evening we were at the services again. What singing! What praying! What testimonies the saints gave of how God had saved them and of how happy they were in their experience with God! In spite of all I could do I found myself weeping during the sermon. I really wanted what those people had in their hearts. By the time Bro. Warren had finished his sermon I was trembling from head to foot. When the altar call was given I felt that I wanted to go but made no move. My trembling became so noticeable that my wife leaned against me to support me. At the close of the invitation Bro. Warren asked if anyone would lift his hand expressing a desire for prayer. I raised my hand and broke into weeping. Bro. Warren spoke to me, assuring me that they were interested, and promised to pray for me.

We drove five miles to our home in almost complete silence. I spent another wretched night. The next morning was the 9th of March. I tried to work but could not. I went to the barn and into the hayloft. There I tried to pray but did not know how. All I could do was to weep and groan. Night came and we went again to the service. I thought I never could wait until Bro. Warren finished his sermon. No sooner did they start the invitation than I was walking down the aisle to the altar. There I wept and prayed but to no avail.

After about ten minutes of intense struggle Bro. Warren asked me: "Do you have any hatred in your heart against anyone?" This stirred my feelings, especially against one young man with whom I had had trouble. So I said, "Yes, I do." "You know, Charles," he spoke very kindly but very definitely; "what the Bible says: 'Except ye forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.'" I said: "Bro. Warren, Must I forgive those fellows who treated me so mean?" "You surely must," he replied. "I'll never do it. I hate them," I said, but no peace came. At length I found grace to say: "O God, if you will forgive me, I will forgive Jimmy," meaning the man I hated so bitterly. But nothing happened. Again Bro. Warren quoted the words of our Lord: "Except ye forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." Then I lifted my voice with my soul to God: "Lord, I will forgive." No sooner had I said it than it seemed as if heaven opened and peace came into my soul.

—Excerpted from *To the Chief Singer*.



JUNE 6, 2004

### **BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD**

Psalm 46:8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Isaiah 30:7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

15 For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Psalms 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good: and my sorrow was stirred..

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Psalms 4:4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We as human beings need to be silent before the great Almighty God. All of our selfish strife, fearfulness, reasoning, worry, fret, murmuring, boasting and vain efforts of foolish pride and self conceit must be stilled into quiet submission to Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psa. 46:8), *"what desolations he hath made in the earth"*: The Hebrew says, "Who sets ruins on the earth." The word ruins.

from which we have the word *desolations*, comes from the Hebrew word which means to stun or stupefy. The Almighty God can and does cause things to take place that will bring to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

(Psa. 46:9), "*he breaketh the bow, cutteth the spear, and burneth the chariot*": All of these things are the devices of the carnal strivings of man. God is not pleased with them and has sentenced them and all weapons of war to destruction. They are to be disused and cast off if we would avail with God. Carnal warfare is vain and displeasing in the sight of God. The effect of God's righteousness is to bring such vain strivings to a perpetual end. This is done in the heart of man and the effect will follow outwardly, also.

(Psa. 46:10), "*Be still*": Cease your fleshly striving, relax your pushing and shoving, leave off your vain pursuits for fleshly pleasure and gain, slacken your stride of daily toil, and bring your soul into quietness and submission to God.

(Isa. 30:17), "*Egypt*": Worldly, earthly, fleshly help and support.

(Isa. 30:15), "*ye would not*", The Hebrew says, "Ye were not willing."

(Isa. 30:16), "*horses*": Fleshly schemes and human wisdom. All of this must be rejected if we would have the help of God. Isa. 31:3 says, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." How sad that man trusts in man and in his own flesh instead of God Almighty and His gracious Spirit!

(Eccl. 5:1), "*keep thy foot*": Watch your steps and be careful of your conduct.

(Eccl. 5:2), "*rash, hasty*": Both of these words are referring to hurrying, as in a hurry to bring forth a word. We must cool our speech, restrain our tongues and be more disposed to be silent and listen. They say that a good detective is one who keeps his mouth shut and his ears open.

(Psa. 39:2), "*I was dumb with silence*": The Hebrew says, "I became dumb keeping still."

(Psa. 39:3-4), "*while I was musing the fire burned*": While I withheld utterance with my tongue, the inward warmth of divine love stirred within me. When I finally did speak, here is what I said, "Make me to know, O Jehovah, *my* end, and the limit of *my* days, what it is. Let me know how lacking (vacant and destitute) I am."



(Psa. 4:4), *"commune with your own heart"*: Speak within your own heart: ponder and weigh within your own heart the course you are taking and the words you have spoken. Silence your vain efforts and cool the heats of your desires. *"upon your bed"*: God fashioned us to need quietness, sleep and rest. Not only is it required for health and wellness of body, but it is also a time to reflect and ponder and commune with our own self about our ways and conversation.

(Rom. 3:19), The Greek text renders this: "But we know that what the law says, it speaks to those in the law, that every mouth may be silenced, and all the world may become under judgment to God."

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we will consider the great necessity of being quiet and silent before God. In our noisy world it is easy to be caught up in its strife and turmoil, the fruits of man's lustful endeavors for gain and selfish pleasure. For us to attain to fellowship with our Creator all of this vain, noisy strife must be silenced within our hearts and minds. Our hearts must be subdued to meekness and gentleness and our spirits must withdraw from the strife of human greed to contentment and silence before our God. We have chosen scriptures that portray this kind of disposition that is surely indispensable to having access to fellowship with God.

Let us diligently consider each one of these vital texts of scripture and apply them to our own lives. What a difference it would make in society if people would take into consideration these precious truths! Look at all the wars and conflicts that are constantly being waged at home and abroad. They would all be silenced if man would bring himself into the stillness and quietness of the meekness and gentleness of Christ! How useless would be all the terrible weapons of war! "Put up your sword!" said Christ to Peter. (John 18:11.) He could have called for twelve legions of angels. But the soul of our Savior had been brought into quietness and submission to the will of God. He sought not the carnal means of defense. His Father was His refuge. A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God is of great price (1 Peter 3:4), and He wants us to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. (1 Tim. 2:2.)

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it necessary for us to be still in order to know that He is God?
2. What kind of noise and strife do we need to eliminate from our lives?
3. What evidence do we see in the world of the vanity of earthly strife?
4. Why is it not wise to be hasty and rash with our tongue?
5. What does it mean to "commune with our own heart?"

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Be still and know. I remember an occasion when I was delivering merchandise for a printing company in Springfield, MO, to a real estate office. I had my goods on a dolly and was wheeling it down the hallway. I became aware of a strange sound that made me wonder if something was wrong with the dolly, like a bad bearing or scraping. In order to find out what the noise was I immediately brought the dolly to a standstill. The noise kept right on and I knew that it was from another source. Immediately the scripture came to my mind, "Be still and know that I am God." It was a great thought and a vital lesson to me that day and I have thought about it a lot though the years. In order for us to know the voice of God we must silence all other voices. There are many voices in the world, but through the stillness of our spirits we can hear God speaking to us, and we can know and recognize His voice.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

When was it that God came and visited with Adam and Eve in the garden? "In the cool of the day." (Gen. 3:8.) What times of the day are cool? Well, I think of early morning. The noisy little children of the household are still sleeping in their beds, the house is in order, the hustle and business of the day has not yet begun and the awesome sight of the rising sun and the melody of the singing birds brings, not commotion or chaos, but calm and soothing meditative thoughts.

The late evening, especially in the long summer days, also is a time where a cool quietness seems to come over the day. The supper dishes are washed, the day's work can be interrupted until tomorrow, a gentle haze brings a tranquil aura outside over

the countryside as the sun begins to set and a quiet rest on the porch swing seems to bring mind and body together into harmony and peace.

When was it that God visited with Abraham? He brought him out to look up at the stars. It was while Jacob was alone and quiet after his heated, frantic escape from Esau that God appeared to Him and assured him of His presence. We read many times how Jesus spent solitary nights up in the hills, communing with His Father, listening to His Father.

It may seem impossible to achieve in today's world. You may live in the city. Your surroundings may be anything but serene. It seems sometimes that there is a conspiracy plotted against us to keep us from ever finding a truly quiet place. But let us make it a priority to get alone with God and just be still.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**JUNE 13, 2004**

### **FAITH, TRUST AND PATIENCE BEFORE GOD**

Habakkuk 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Psalms 118:8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

Proverbs 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

Jeremiah 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Hebrews 6: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

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

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

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

Hebrews 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God is worthy of our complete trust and is looking for us to believe His Word and count Him faithful to fulfill all of His precious promises. To doubt His faithfulness or trust in other sources of help grieves His Spirit and will bring a great curse upon us.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hab. 2:3), "*at the end it shall speak*": The Hebrew says, "It shall speak to the end." This means that what God has promised will not dim nor wane through the long delay of its fulfillment. God's promises will not fail though we have to wait a long time for them to come to pass.

(Hab. 2:4), "*lifted up*": puffed up with pride. "*his faith*": One's own personal confidence and trust in God and His promise to be true. This word "faith" here is from one of the Hebrew words that is derived from the basic Hebrew word "aman" from which we have the word "amen." It means to build up or support; to render firm or faithful, to trust or believe (count faithful); to be permanent or quiet; to be true or certain. To have faith in God

means that we count Him faithful and true to fulfill His promises and that He is worthy of our confidence and patient waiting. We will not discredit Him nor give up our confidence in Him in the face of any opposition or difficulty. Each one of us can obtain and maintain a personal faith in God that no power of earth can hinder or destroy.

(Psa. 118:8), "*trust*": to flee for refuge or protection; to confide in.

(Jer. 17:5), "*Cursed*": Under the sentence of God's wrath.

(Jer. 17:6), "*heath in the desert*": A juniper shrub apart from the moisture and that which gives life and growth. To trust in man instead of having faith in God is to be apart from the true source of life and health, spiritually and physically.

(Jer. 17:7), "*Blessed*": Happy, prosperous and successful.

(Heb. 6:12), "*slothful*": neglectful, sluggish, lazy and dull. "*faith*": The Greek word here means persuasion; credence (credit or belief in the testimony of another); conviction; reliance; steadfastness. "*patience*": Long-suffering and forbearance.

(James 1:5), "*upbraid*": scold, criticize or condemn.

(James 1:6), "*waver*": to doubt. In the Greek it means to separate thoroughly; to hesitate; to withdraw from; to oppose.

(Psa. 37:5), The Hebrew renders this text: "Roll on Jehovah your way, trust in Him, and He will work."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we have another ingredient in the things that are necessary for us to have in our disposition and relationship with our Creator. We find that in the beginning it was God's good pleasure to create mankind and for us to have confidence and a firm belief in what He said. He told Adam that he could eat of all of the trees of the garden except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He named it right out to him. But the devil, just as he does today, sought to bring a doubt in the mind as to the truth about what God said. When the woman told the serpent that if they were to eat of the tree they would die, the adversary replied that they would not surely die, but rather that it would be a beneficial thing. Thus by yielding to the tempter and partaking of the forbidden fruit, they discredited God's Word.

All along the way of mortal time, God sought for someone who would believe and obey Him without reservation and in the face of all contrary evidence or testimony. Noah met this qualification and obeyed God's command to build an ark. Then

we have the account of Abraham, of whom our text in Heb. 6:12-15 refers to. He was a prime example of believing and obeying God through a period of patient endurance. God wants us to follow Abraham in this kind of faith and patience.

We have the prophet Habakkuk declaring that the just shall live by his own personal faith. This is a very important statement of truth that is quoted and referred to several times in the New Testament. We have two scriptural sayings in our lesson that mention trusting and putting confidence in man. This is something to consider in our present age when medical science has progressed and taken sway of mankind in general. It is still better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Jeremiah declares that those who trust in man and make flesh their arm are cursed. Our text in Proverbs warns us to wait on the Lord and refrain from taking things into our own hands.

All these scriptures encourage us to maintain a faith in God that He is pleased with. James exhorts us to be steadfast and not doubting in our approach to God. God is faithful and we can trust Him without fear. We have the testimony of many down through the years about the faithfulness of God. Let us take this lesson to heart and be strong in faith as our father Abraham showed us to be.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is God grieved when we doubt His promises and put our trust in man?
2. What else must we have to go along with our faith as Abraham did?
3. Is it always the most convenient thing to hold on to our faith?
4. What causes us to be tempted to cast away our confidence in God?
5. How can we overcome the temptation to doubt and waver in our faith?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

I am persuaded that it is for every one of us to obtain, develop and maintain an active and triumphant faith. If we desire it and set our hearts toward God in love, devotion, submission and earnestness we can have it in a wonderful soul-satisfying way. The current of the world and society around us is against this

simple faith in God. Mankind has brought out so many seemingly marvelous things that make faith in God appear to be non-existent and unnecessary. Thus it puts to the test those who really would have faith in God in reality and truth. We have to go against the current of the world around us and the thoughts and feelings that come against us in our own minds. Satan is still seeking to undermine faith in God. Paul encouraged Timothy to flee covetousness "and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith." I Tim. 6:11-12. It is a warfare that we must engage in if we are to take the way of faith that we might please God and believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6.)  
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." Psalm 20:7. Our Lord is the great Physician. He is not bound by the laws of physics, the laws of nature or the laws of medicine. He does not have to wait on science for new discoveries. "...he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him."

Asa was a great king and accomplished many things through the Lord's help. But events turned disastrous when he failed to put his trust in the Lord. He lost battles, "...Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." II Chronicles 16:9. He was afflicted, "And Asa...was diseased in his feet, until his disease *was* exceeding *great*: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians." II Chronicles 16:12.

We live in a time where it is relatively easy to be spiritually impatient and spiritually independent. If the Lord does not answer our prayers in our time frame or our method, we tend to take things into our own hands. The Lord wants our complete trust in Him to work out all of the details of our lives; great or small.

When we experience breakdowns or defects in equipment, vehicles or appliances we usually take the item back to the maker or manufacturer for repair. We can safely take any breakdown or defect in our soul, mind or body to the Lord. He is well able to take care of us. After all, He is our Creator. He heals without side effects or lingering symptoms. He is worthy to be trusted.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

**JUNE 20, 2004**

**PERSONAL SACRIFICE AND CONSECRATION TO GOD**

Psalm 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

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

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

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.

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

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.



**MEMORY VERSE:** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51:17.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God requires sacrifice to be offered unto Him by those who desire His blessings. The old law animal sacrifices proved to be unacceptable, but Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of God, offered Himself as a supreme, acceptable sacrifice for us. Through Him we also must offer acceptable sacrifices to God in being broken and submissive to Him—offering praise unceasing to God and ministering to the needs of our fellow men.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psa. 50:5), *"made a covenant"*: The Hebrew says, "cutting My covenant." The term "cutting" refers to the slaying and destroying of that which is sacrificed. This was as the slaying of the animals, the shedding of their blood, and the destruction of the carcass. Abraham was instructed by God to divide in half a heifer, a she goat and a ram. There was a turtledove and a pigeon to be offered with the animals but they were not divided in half. Abraham divided each one and laid each piece opposite to its counterpart on the altar of sacrifice. Abraham guarded the sacrifice and drove away any fowls that sought to light upon them. After the sun went down God sent fire down and passed between the pieces. (Gen. 15:9-11, 17.) This has a special meaning. In order to please the Lord we must sever and divide asunder our desires in preference to the will of God. The Holy Spirit will come in His holy fire and fill our hearts with a rich reward of joy and peace, which will bring spiritual blessings more precious than all of our earthly treasures that we sacrifice to obey His voice.

(Heb. 10:10), *"by the which will"*: By the same will or good pleasure of God. *"once for all"*: Upon one occasion only. Christ's sacrifice was so perfect and well pleasing to God that it needed to be made only once, and not over and over again, as the Old Testament sacrifices were.

(Heb. 7:26), *"became us"*: Was made fitting or suitable for us.

(Heb. 7:28), *"maketh"*: appointed *"consecrated"*: perfected.

(Rom. 12:1), *"beseech"*: To invite, invoke, implore, beg or entreat. *"living sacrifice"*: A sacrifice of a life that lives and abides

by the law of self-sacrifice and putting God's glory and the welfare of others above one's own self. "reasonable": logical, rational, fitting and worthy.

(Rom. 12:2), "*be not conformed to*": Be not fashioned alike nor made of like pattern. "*transformed*": Changed and transfigured in form and nature. "*prove*": To test, discover and approve. to be what it really is.

(Eph. 5:1), "*dear*": Beloved, special, precious and close to one's heart.

(Heb. 13:15), "*giving thanks*": The Greek meaning is to assent, acknowledge, confess and fully recommend.

(Psa. 51:17), "*broken*": Like terms are: "burst, rent and crushed." This refers to a fully surrendered spirit to the perfect will of God. "*contrite*": Completely collapsed; empty of pride and self honor.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we want to consider the thought of sacrifice and how important and vital it is in our relationship to God. In our first scripture from Psalm 50 we are given a glimpse of the great day of the Lord when He appears to destroy the world and gather His saints unto Him forever. Notice it says concerning these saints that they have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. God justly is calling for sacrifice from us, His created beings. If we do not love God enough to sacrifice our dearest treasures for His sake, then we are not worthy of Him. Jesus said in Matthew 10:37-38: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me." In this is proven our love for God.

We see the thought of sacrifice introduced early in the scriptures. We have the account of Abel offering a more excellent sacrifice than what his brother, Cain, offered. (Heb. 11:4.) In addition to the incident already mentioned about Abraham's sacrifice in Gen. 15, we are also reminded of the account in Gen. 22 of Abraham, in obedience to God, putting Isaac on the altar of sacrifice. We have also brought out the animal sacrifices that were offered under the law and how they were found to not be sufficient to satisfy God. We have Heb. 10 bringing out the prophecy from Psa. 40 about Jesus coming into the world to offer the one supreme sacrifice for the salvation of the world in preference to all the old law sacrificial system.

That sacrifice that our Lord Jesus offered in love and goodness toward us who were in desperate need for mercy proves to be the only real sacrifice God accepts. All other sacrifices we make must be in relation and kinship to His. We must walk in that same love. His was the perfect sacrifice and thus He is the perfect High Priest to go between God and us. And we see from Heb. 13 that genuine, heartfelt praise is an acceptable sacrifice with God along with communicating and giving to others. Let us be diligent to apply this principle of sacrifice to our daily lives.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is God concerned about us making sacrifice to Him?
2. Why were the animal sacrifices offered under the law not acceptable?
3. What sacrifice from us is reasonable and worthy to offer to God?
4. What kind of love should we walk in from day to day?
5. What makes heartfelt praise and doing for others so important a sacrifice?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us not allow the thought of big sacrifices to keep us from remembering those little sacrificial deeds and expressions of love for God and our fellow man. A kind word or deed expressly put forth for the comfort and welfare of others can be a great blessing and well-pleasing to God. "...In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. 2:3-4. Picking up after one's self with consideration of others is a small thing, but it has great potential for kindness. Letting someone else take that more convenient parking place is another sacrifice that we can make. Life is full of opportunities for sacrificing our pleasures for the sake of others. And let us remember that there is an all-Seeing Eye of One who is weighing every motive and action that we take in our everyday life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Sometimes we as people think we know the way to happiness and contentment. Perhaps we hold back on God because we feel we would be unhappy. I've heard people say that they

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

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

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

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

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

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Psalm 119:33.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The way of the LORD God Almighty is a learning way. We must be teachable and willing to learn His ways and the truth of His Word. We must never allow ourselves to be slothful in the learning process.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psa. 25:4), "*teach*": To instruct, discipline, show, demonstrate, train, give lessons, guide the study of, educate, provide with knowledge, inform, enlighten and school.

(Psa. 25:9), "*meek*": Depressed, lowly, being sensitive and aware of one's ignorance and need.

(Prov. 1:6), "*proverb*": A wise saying full of substance, force and meaning. "*interpretation*": Definition and meaning. "*dark saying*": A puzzle or riddle; something spoken with a hidden meaning.

didn't want to consecrate to God because they felt they would be called to preach. Perhaps for you it is something else you hold in reserve as unwillingness, because you fail to see the true blessing.

In Ezekiel, we have the man that measured the river. You remember at first it was to the ankles, then to the loins, then it was so deep you had to swim. I thought about that in connection with our relationship to God. Some of us, in the Christian life, are just getting our feet wet so to speak. It is good that we are in, but we like to be in control close to shore. We are afraid of the deep. Then there are some of us that have ventured slowly out a little further, certainly enjoying more of God and His presence; yet still like the feeling of having our feet on soil. Then there are others that have wholly consecrated and are over their heads, trusting in God to keep them afloat. This is where God is calling us. He understands our fears and is patient, yet He calls us to come out and enjoy the deep. The apostle Paul was out there when he said, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." I Timothy 1:14. The poet said, "And now I have flung myself recklessly out, Like a chip on the stream of the Infinite Will."

Offering ourselves to God, as a living sacrifice, is the least we can do for His sacrifices for us. Let us all be encouraged today to go a little farther, farther than we've gone before.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**JUNE 27, 2004**

### **WILLING TO LEARN AND BE LED**

Psalm 25:4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

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

12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

(Matt. 11:29), *"my yoke"*: A coupling that joins the Teacher and the one being taught. Our coupling with Christ is our steadfast, unwavering faith and submission to Him. If we are not united with Jesus in the meek and lowly state of heart and mind as He is, then He will not be able to communicate with us and teach us as He desires to do.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Being teachable and willing to learn is such an important aspect of the Christian life. There is so much to learn in the ways and doctrines of the Lord our God. But if a person does not realize that there is much to learn or is not open for counsel and admonitions, there is not much they will learn. The way of being a true child of God and a disciple of Jesus Christ is a learning way, being taught and schooled in the things of God.

We notice in David's writing in Psalm 25 not only a willingness to learn and be taught, but a real fervent prayer and desire to be so. "Show me, teach me and lead me" is the earnest plea expressed here. Sinners need to be taught in the understanding of the way of the Lord. But it is the meek who will really appreciate it and esteem it of great value. The proud and lofty of mind feel that they are already informed, and are not open "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." II Tim. 3:16.

The scripture in Proverbs 1:5 stresses that need for an increase in learning. It is brought out again in 9:9, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." Let us recognize that no matter how long we have been in the way there is still something for us to learn. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things (John 14:26), and if we will be attentive and diligent to seek for His guidance and counsel, we can gain understanding and wisdom that will guide us aright.

Jesus spoke in John 6 about the drawing of the Father as the only way to come to Him. He quoted from Isaiah 54:13 concerning all who come unto Him as being taught of God. If a person is not influenced by the Word of God in reverence and godly fear, it is doubtful that he will have any drawing to Christ. From the cradle to the grave, it is surely a learning way all the way. May the Lord stir us to diligence to be open for His counsel and reproof. As it says in Prov. 6:23, "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light: and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who will the Lord guide in judgment and teach His way?
2. Who is it that will come to Christ?
3. Who is it that will increase in learning?
4. Why is it so important to be humble and willing to learn?
5. What is Christ's yoke and how can we take it upon us?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

I remember a very wonderful experience I had when I went out one morning to work for a farmer to drive a tractor pulling a rotary hoe implement over the wheat fields to loosen up the soil around the sprouted wheat. The farmer explained to me how he wanted me to do, and how to cross and re-cross the field to cover its area. He tried to explain how I was to start at the corner and go back and forth, turning at the edges each time with the fence when turning to go back the other way. His first expression of instruction left me bewildered. So I told him that I did not understand. He then began to explain it all over again, and I saw that I still was not getting his instruction clearly in mind. I remember in those few seconds what went on in my mind. I was ashamed to have to ask him to explain it again for fear that he would be angry and count me a stupid dunce. I was tempted to say, "Okay," and get on the tractor and get to moving, hoping that somehow I would make it. But I remember coming to this decision, that I was going to stay with him and get the right understanding no matter what he thought of me. So I confessed to him that I still did not understand. Well, I was surprised with his reaction. He was very kind and considerate. He knelt down on the ground and drew a picture of the operation that he was trying to explain. Right away I caught on, and I hopped on the tractor and took off across the field. I had not gone very far when the Spirit of the Lord spoke so sweetly and yet so vividly to my soul: "If you will be that diligent and humble to seek understanding of the will of God in your life, the Lord will have all patience with you and He will help you to know His will."

Oh, how we as frail human beings need to ever earnestly seek to know and understand the will of God concerning us! How we need to study the precious counsels of the Lord in the Word and have a teachable disposition before Him! Oh, we need to seek the Lord in prayer earnestly for His counsel and guidance. He promised us in Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee

in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye." May the Lord help us. There may be times when we will be misled and make mistakes. We are human and we can be misled. The Lord will not cast us off, but will give us a chance to correct ourselves. Let us keep this prayerful attitude: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9.

"Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:13-14.

These two verses illustrate why we need to be teachable and willing to learn from the Lord. The Lord understood the lost condition of man and He made a way for him to be redeemed and brought back into harmony with His perfect plan. If we intend to be a part of His eternal kingdom, we will need to devote ourselves to understanding His ways. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "These things write I unto thee,...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God,..." I Timothy 3:14-15. Paul saw the need for Timothy to be instructed in the Lord and we, like Apollos, need the ways of God expounded to us more perfectly. The enemy of our souls is doing all that is within his power to deceive and destroy us. But we should avail ourselves of the spirit of Truth that Jesus spoke of in John 16:13 when He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:..."

The precious Holy Spirit will teach us, keep us and guide us safely through this dark world and bring us to the end of this life with a wonderful testimony of His keeping power. To be taught of the Lord is a valuable experience that may require patience and endurance on our part but the lessons that we learn will work together for our good and will cause us to blossom forth in the beautiful likeness of our Savior. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen." Jude 1:24-25. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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