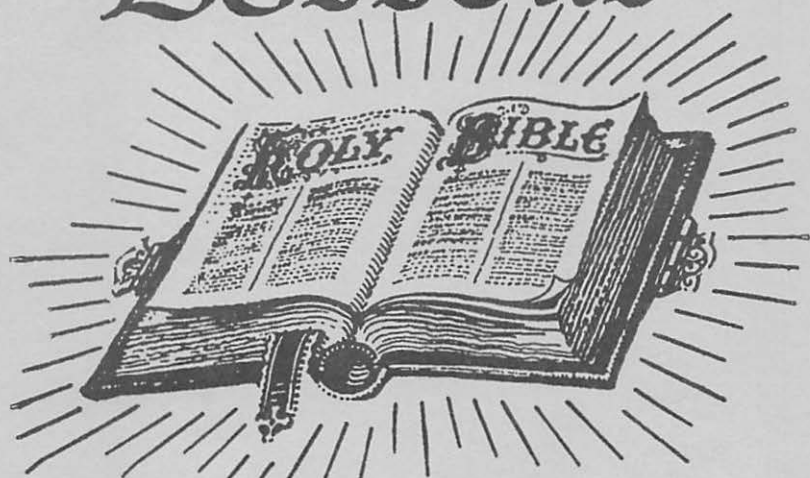


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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BIBLE LESSONS, FOURTH QUARTER, 2007

THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER

We do not have a main theme for the *Bible Lessons* this quarter, but each lesson has its own individual subject and theme. The Lord has richly inspired and blessed our souls in the study of these various subjects through the years, and we trust they will be a blessing and an inspiration to each one. As do all Bible subjects, this series of lessons relate to one another. Generally speaking, this series of lessons have the spiritual welfare of our souls fully in view. May we all take heed to the truths of God's Word that we may reap the benefits thereby.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



OCTOBER 7, 2007

HAPPY AND BLESSED PEOPLE

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psalm 2:12 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.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Psalm 40:4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Psalm 41:1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

Psalm 65:4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

Psalm 84:5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of *them*,

6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

Psalm 89:15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

Psalm 94:12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

Psalm 119:1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him. Isaiah 30:18

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Reverence, love, worship and obedience to the Lord will bring blessed happiness to the heart and life of a person.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 1:1), "*Blessed*": The meaning of the Hebrew word from which this is translated is an exclamation, saying, "How happy!" All the times this appears in our lesson it is from that same Hebrew word. "*scornful*": One who makes mouths at or scoffs. This is the derision and shame that is thrown at children of God by the foolish and unbelieving world.

(Psalm 2:12), "*Kiss the Son*": In the Hebrew this means to embrace and attach your heart to the Son. This is pure prophecy of Jesus Christ and God's counsel for us to receive and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. The Septuagint Greek translation renders it, "accept and receive His discipline." Verse 7 has Christ declaring that the Lord Jehovah had said unto Him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." This statement is quoted several times in the New Testament as a direct reference to Jesus Christ. "*lest he be angry*": To reject and ignore Jesus the Son of God, after all He suffered on our behalf, is to cause His anger to be kindled.

(Psalm 32:2), "*imputeth not iniquity*": Will not charge iniquity to him.

(Psalm 34:8), "*O taste and see*": Put forth your heart and soul toward the Lord and draw near to Him. Give Him a chance to draw nigh to you. You will find His blessings are sweet, profitable and very rewarding.

(Psalm 65:4), "*causest to approach unto thee*": Will bring near to thee.

(Psalm 84:5-6), The Septuagint Greek translation is very good: "Blessed is the man whose help is of thee, O Lord; in his heart he has purposed to go up the valley of weeping, to the place he has appointed, for there the law-giver will grant blessings." Oh, what a message that is to us today!

(Psalm 89:15), "*joyful sound*": Vibrant expression and acclamation of joy and rejoicing.

(Psalm 94:12), "*chastenest*": To correct, discipline or reprove.

(Verse 13), "*until the pit be digged for the wicked*": Until the place for the punishment of the wicked is fully prepared and ready for them to be thrown in. The sentence will be handed to those on the left hand, "...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41.

(Psalm 119:1), "*undefiled*": Upright, pure and holy.

(Verse 2), "*keep*": Protect with great care, maintain and obey joyfully from the heart.

(Isaiah 30:18), "*will the LORD wait*," The Lord Jehovah is tenderly waiting with great desire. "*they that wait for Him*": The Septuagint Greek translation says, "they that stay themselves upon Him."

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, we have gathered several Scriptures that speak of the blessedness of being the true children of God. This term "blessed", which is defined in the Hebrew as an exclamatory expression "How happy!", has richly inspired our hearts. How happy is the soul who really goes all out to serve God! The other Hebrew word that is translated "blessed" means to benefit and prosper. And that is a wonderful experience for us to receive from the Lord God. But the term "blessed" in our lesson is so beautiful and

truly descriptive of the blessedness of those who truly love and follow the Lord all the way.

Paul quotes from Psalm 32:1-2 in our lesson in Romans 4:5-6, saying with it, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." The word "imputeth" here means to count or reckon. As we survey these Scriptures in our lesson today, it causes a great desire to swell up in our hearts to really apply ourselves to godly fear and obedience to our Creator. He has done everything so graciously and wisely to make us happy and joyful in Him. If we neglect this great salvation, we do it to our own hurt and destruction. May this truth fasten upon our desires and move us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in our hearts and lives. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the word "blessed" in our lesson?
2. What are some of the qualifications we must meet to be "blessed"?
3. How can we truly "kiss" the Son of God?
4. What is the reward for being true to God through the valley of weeping?
5. What will be recompensed to those who receive God's discipline?
6. Make or write a list of these requirements and set your heart upon them.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are warnings in our lesson that we need to take notice of. The counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners and the seat of the scornful are to be definitely avoided. Let us give heed to the counsel given to embrace the Son and His discipline and avoid His anger. Let us avoid all guile and deceit and receive joyfully God's forgiveness for sin and transgression. Let us give the Lord a chance by applying ourselves to His good way. Let us not respect the proud and such who turn aside to lies and the deception of sin. Let us not neglect to befriend and help the poor when we have opportunity. You will

never lose when you reach out your hand to help someone in need. Let us set our purpose to be the chosen of God and experience the satisfaction that comes with being in His house and holy temple. Draw not back from suffering and the valley of weeping. It will come to everyone. Purpose in your heart to move forward, "up" the valley, toward that place God is wanting you to get to. Blessings await you there that you knew not heretofore. Seek to experience the joy of the Lord and the rejoicing of the heart in keeping the statutes of the Lord. Despise not the chastenings of the Lord, and be teachable with Him. You can thereby escape the destruction of the wicked. Let us be diligent to walk uprightly and measure our lives by the truth of His word, regardless of what others around us are doing. You are responsible for your own life and soul's welfare. Seek God daily with all of your heart, feel after Him, and find Him for your own satisfaction and welfare. And be diligent to learn to wait on the Lord for guidance and His blessings. It will be worth all the patience and endurance you can muster to let Him work in your life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*Not like waves upon the ocean, Tossing wildly, rolling high;
Or the tempest's great commotion, As it sweeps across the sky;
But like twilight gently stealing O'er the verdant, shady lea,
So the holy saints in Zion Rest from all their sins set free.*

It has been said that sinful pleasures are as "flashes of lightning which, in spite of their intensity, blind the senses and vex the desires, and make the darkness still grosser afterward." These flashes of pleasure leave the soul dry and thirsty and craving for more, while the state of that soul sinks lower and lower into the depths of sin.

Thank the Lord for a Savior Who saw our helpless condition and rescued us from the dark surging ocean of sin. The resulting joy that gladdens the heart of a child of God is far different from the sensations of those who are running after the world. The joy of the redeemed is like the constant rays of the sun, warming and comforting their soul. Day by day, as they walk in the light of God's Word and obey His gentle voice, they are being led closer and closer to the source of their joy.

God has pronounced His blessing upon those who walk in the paths of righteousness, and they need not fear evil even though they may go through the valley of the shadow of death. We know this is true, for we know His promises are sure. As God makes the pronouncement and the soul of man responds with an amen in his heart, the blessing becomes established and a sense of joy warms the soul. Incorporate the instructions given in this lesson in your life and your soul will surely be blessed.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



OCTOBER 14, 2007

BLESSED ONES IN CHRIST JESUS

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

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

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

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

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

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Luke 1:45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power....

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The born again child of God in Jesus Christ is heir to many wonderful and bountiful blessings of supreme fortune and happiness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(In all the scriptures in the lesson), "*Blessed*": Supremely blest, fortunate and well off.

(Matthew 5:3), "*poor in spirit*": Having little or no means, destitute and needy in their own estimation.

(Verse 4), "*mourn*": Stricken with grief and sorrow.

(Verse 5), "*meek*": The mild, gentle, lowly and humble person who takes mistreatment and wrong with no retaliation or complaint. "*inherit the earth*": This could more properly be expressed as inheriting the *land*. This expression comes from Psalm 37 in which it brings out about the meek, the righteous and those who wait on the Lord as thus inheriting the land and the earth. Verses 3, 29 and 34 says "the land," and verses 9, 11 and 22 says "the earth." They are both from the same Hebrew word. Actually it is referring to the spiritual inheritance, the spiritual land, of which it all is a type. It is the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places that we inherit and enjoy in the grace and salvation of the Jesus Christ.

(Luke 1:45), "*blessed is she that believed*": This is what Elisabeth said of Mary, because she had believed the report of the angel about her becoming the mother of Jesus.

(James 1:12), "*when he is tried*": When he is approved. This is what enduring and resisting the pressures and attractions of sin does: it proves our faithfulness and obedience to God.

(Revelation 14:13), "*their works do follow them*": Their faithful lives do accompany them, coming up before God.

(Revelation 19:9), "*called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*": Invited to the feast and celebration of the marriage of Christ and His Church. This is for those who are true members of Christ's Church.

(Revelation 20:6), "*part in the first resurrection*": This is the spiritual resurrection that those who hear and give heed to the voice of the Son of man can experience, as Jesus said in John 5:25. It is a quickening and a resurrection from the dead state of sin that Paul spoke of in Ephesians 2:1, 5. It is a resurrection from the pride and vanity of this present evil world unto a life of holiness and obedience to God. "*the second death*": "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20:14.

(Revelation 22:14), "*may enter in through the gates into the city*": This entry into the New Jerusalem is obtained now in this present life. We enter into this city through the gates of righteousness by being born of the Spirit of God and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. For the Psalmist said in Psalm 118:19-20, "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter."

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we studied from the Old Testament the blessedness of the true children of God. Today we will study what is said in the New Testament about this blessedness. We start with what is called the "Beatitudes" that Jesus spoke of in His sermon on the mount. Each one of the various dispositions of heart Jesus mentioned are vital for us to have if we would really be blessed and fortunate and well off before God. Oh, we should weigh these matters seriously before God and seek Him earnestly for His help, that we truly fulfill their meaning.

Luke 1:45 is part of the expression of Elisabeth when she greeted her cousin, Mary, who had come to visit her. Mary had

been visited by the angel Gabriel and informed that God had favored her to be the mother of Jesus, the long looked for Savior, the Son of the highest. She had questioned the angel about it, not that she was doubting what God could do, but she was puzzled about how it could be without her being married to a man. But when the angel explained it to her, she responded with: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." She believed it, and had gone to visit Elisabeth to share with her the good news. But upon her entry into Elisabeth's house, Elisabeth was made aware of the truth and rejoiced greatly. And she made this statement about Mary being blessed because she had believed what the angel had told her.

The rest of the scriptures cover various promises of blessedness to those who overcome this world and are accounted worthy of inheriting the provisions offered in the New Testament plan of salvation.

Our Memory Verse contains the words of Jesus to His disciple Thomas, after Thomas had beheld his risen Lord and said that he would not believe until he had seen Christ alive and felt of His hands, feet and side. This can be fulfilled in us today, we who have not seen with our outward vision of the flesh, but who believe and have received the spiritual vision of Christ given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you name the various qualifications of being blessed in Christ?
2. Why is it so important to believe the promises that God has given?
3. What is the purpose for us enduring temptation, and what does it show?
4. Who is it that will be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb?
5. When are we to enter through the gates into the city of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To be blessed, fortunate and well off in one's spiritual life with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, is the highest plane of happiness one can attain to and enjoy in this life. And Jesus

has given to us the recipe of ingredients that can, without fail, help us to be thus richly blessed. But each one of these vital elements that we need to have in our hearts and minds has an enemy to overcome. Against being poor in spirit is the spirit of pride and self-exaltation that is so prominent in this wicked world. We must be enlightened and warned about pride and resist its influence. Worldly pleasure and fleshly lusts war against being mournful and heavy hearted before God. And it goes against the will of the carnal mind to be meek and lowly in heart as Jesus was. Fleshly lusts captivate the mind and drown the hunger and thirst for righteousness and holiness we need to have. Selfishness and greed will quench the merciful spirit we should have toward others. Many defiling influences can steal the purity we need to have in our hearts. And this world of strife and turmoil can keep us from being the peacemakers we ought to be. Let us be on our guard lest we be spoiled by the evil influences of the world around us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All of the Scriptures in today's lesson form a composite picture of a certain kind of individual. It is a far different picture than the one that is painted of a successful, prosperous individual by today's societal standards.

Let's get the picture: An humble, selfless person who is constantly aware of his dependence upon God. Instead of seeking for the approval of this world, this person hungers for total obedience to God and holiness in his life. In his relationship with others, he puts them first, doesn't fight for his own rights, yields to the needs and wishes of others, and seeks for what would show mercy and make for peace in every situation. When this person is persecuted and reviled, he counts it a great honor to suffer and endure hardship, even to die for the One he seeks to please. He or she realizes that there is more to life than what is seen or felt by the senses. He enters into the life of faith, which endures under great trial and pressure. There is a constant sense and knowledge of his eternal reward, because he has been resurrected from the dead state of sin, has been called to be Christ's waiting bride, and daily keeps the commands of his Lord. Even physical death is no longer

dreaded, because it only ushers him into the rest and bliss of his heavenly home.

This is true prosperity, true success. Does my life fit this picture of BLESSEDNESS? —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



OCTOBER 21, 2007

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

Genesis 49:22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be upon the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Deuteronomy 11:26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Psalms 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

MEMORY VERSE: The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Proverbs 10:22

CENTRAL THOUGHT: If we will but set our hearts to be obedient to His Word and Holy Spirit, the blessings that God will pour out upon our hearts and lives will be far beyond what we can imagine and will recompense us for all we might have to suffer on account of our decision to follow Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Genesis 49:22), The Hebrew reads: "A fruitful son is Joseph, a fruitful son by a spring, his daughters run over a wall." Joseph did not have any daughters in the flesh, but his spiritual posterity has many sons and daughters who bring forth the fruits of the example of his faith.

(Verse 23), "*sorely grieved and hated him*": This refers to those who heaped sorrow and grief upon Joseph, such as his brothers and the wicked woman who lied about him and caused him to be thrown into prison in Egypt.

(Verse 24), "*from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel*": From this kind of suffering came forth to victory the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of the people of God.

(Verse 25), "*blessings of the deep that lieth under*": These are the blessings found in the depth of suffering and heartache that children of God so often are called to bear.

(Verse 26), *"above the blessings of my progenitors"*: above the blessings upon my other sons. Joseph was blessed far more than his brothers were. *"the everlasting hills"*: Clear into the realm of everlasting life. *"separate from his brethren"*: The prince and leader of his brethren. Joseph was persecuted and put down by his brethren, but he came out ahead of them all in the blessings of the Almighty.

(Psalm 133:2), *"precious ointment"*: This is referring to the wonderful oil that was poured as anointing upon the priesthood of Israel. Exodus 30:22-33.

(Verse 3), *"dew of Hermon"*: The heavy and bountiful dew that was upon Mount Hermon. Dew is the distillation of moisture from the air, and, along with the precious ointment, is a type of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of the believer in Christ. *"there the Lord commanded the blessing"*: There in that Holy Spirit anointing and holy unity of the Saints of God is found the true hope of eternal life.

(Ephesians 1:3), *"Blessed be the God"*: Adorable and worthy of all praise and honor. *"spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"*: These are the eternal benefits for the soul of man that elevates us up above the flesh and the fleeting material things into the heavenly realm of Holy Spirit leadership and inspiration.

(I Peter 3:8), *"courteous"*: Friendly, cordial, mannerly and helpful.

(Verse 9), *"contrariwise blessing"*: Instead of returning evil for evil, go against the fleshly way and give a blessing to the one giving railing and evil.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we take on the great and glorious subject of "The Blessing of the Lord." We could not include all the Scriptures containing this wonderful thought, but the Lord directed us to the Scriptures we have before us. God is a God Who can bless and make things so much better and more profitable. He can give prosperity and success to individuals and to all that pertains to life and godliness. God put His blessing upon the earth and the heavens and all that He put in them. He blessed man, male and female, and said, "...Be

fruitful and multiply...." Genesis 1:28. He gave this blessing anew to Noah and his family after they came out of the ark. Genesis 9:1 He called Abraham to leave his native land and go to a land He would show him, promising great blessings to be his, and that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. Genesis 12:1-3

Our first scripture, from Genesis 49:22-26, is part of the blessing that Jacob was inspired to bestow upon his sons when he came down to die. This part of the blessing was to go to Joseph, his beloved son, who had suffered and gone through great distress in his life, and proved faithful and true. In Deuteronomy 11:26-28, we see Moses setting before Israel a blessing if they will be obedient to God, but a curse if they are not obedient. Then in chapter 28, Moses numerates the blessings and the curses in detail. The same God who loves to bless will also pronounce a curse where He deems fit. After man sinned against Him, God pronounced a curse on the ground and sentenced man to die and go back to the dust. But in Abraham and his posterity, we see the blessings of God coming again.

We have Psalm 133 as part of this lesson, as we see in it the blessing of God foretold upon the New Testament Church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the unity of His Saints and the blessing of the Lord unto life forevermore. In Malachi 3:10 we have God's promise to pour us out a blessing if we offer to Him the acceptable sacrifices to His cause and Kingdom. Then we have Paul speaking in Ephesians 1:3 about the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. And in I Peter 3:8-9 it brings out about special blessings to us if we take upon us the attitude of our blessed Savior. Our Memory Verse is a precious encouraging truth and may we earnestly seek to be qualified, in faithfulness to God, to receive His wonderful blessing that makes us really rich in true riches.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph have such greater blessings than his brothers?
2. What can be expected if we are not obedient and faithful to God?

3. What kind of ointment can we receive that will bring us the blessing?

4. What kind of sacrifices must we offer to God if we want His blessings?

5. What are some of the spiritual blessings we can find in Christ Jesus?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13. This statement pretty well sums up our lesson, showing how Christ makes it possible to enjoy the blessings of faith.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” Isaiah 1:19. The one thing that stands between us and the inheritance God has intended for us is our disobedience. The failure to inherit is the result of disobedience.

This is illustrated by the spies' reports given to the children of Israel. Caleb and Joshua came back with a report of great things to inherit, but the other ten spies could only see the strong inhabitants, the walled cities and the giant sons of Anak. God was angered by their disobedience, and they were made to wander in the wilderness forty years and ultimately die in that land. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones of the original camp of Israelites over 20 years of age to actually inherit the land of Canaan.

God has so many wonderful blessings for His people: abundant fruits, the spoils of conquered enemies, defeated walled cities, a land flowing with milk and honey. We will inherit if we obey His commandments and trust completely in His will.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

OCTOBER 28, 2007

FERVENT WHOLESOME DESIRE FOR GOD

Psalm 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

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

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Isaiah 26:8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early; for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

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 things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Proverbs 10:24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

Proverbs 13:19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

I Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

MEMORY VERSE: Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Psalm 37:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There must be a strong and fervent desire in the heart of a man for God and His blessings of grace and truth if he would have God to bless and bring happiness, success, and contentment to him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 27:3), "*encamp*": To surround and lay siege against.

(Verse 4), "*desired*": Earnestly requested and ardently inquired for. "*enquire in his temple*": To inspect, search diligently into, and to earnestly consider the laws and commandments of God, that one might worship Him acceptably.

(Verse 5), "*pavilion*": Shelter or place of refuge. "*secret of his tabernacle*": The true fellowship and communion with the Almighty is a life that is hidden from the sinful world around us. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3.

(Verse 6), "*mine enemies*": There have always been enemies of the righteous. "...Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8. But, hidden with Christ in God and keeping in tune with God's worship in His holy temple, (which temple ye are, I Corinthians 3:17) we will be lifted up in triumph over all. "*sacrifices of joy*": "The sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Hebrews 13:15.

(Isaiah 26:9), "*seek thee early*": Diligently seek God.

(Proverbs 3:13), "*wisdom*": "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Proverbs 9:10. "Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job 28:28. Wisdom is right perception, proper judgment and accurate discernment. This can only be obtained by having true reverence, respect and honor before the Creator. "*understanding*": The ability to separate and distin-

guish each item of life and know of its purpose and value, then to know how to put it all together.

(Proverbs 10:24), "*fear of the wicked*": With fulfilling the sinful lusts of the flesh comes an inward fear of what will come hereafter.

(I Peter 2:2), "*as new born babes*": Just like little babies are hungry to be fed with their mothers' milk, so we must have and develop a hungering desire for the Word of God. Then, when the Spirit of the Lord opens up some of the Word to feed our souls, we can say with Jeremiah 15:16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name. O LORD God of hosts." "*sincere milk of the word*": The Greek meaning is: "the unadulterated (pure) spiritual milk of the word."

(Psalm 37:4), "*Delight thyself in the LORD*": The Hebrew word for "delight" here indicates a tender affectionate feeling in the heart for the Lord. He is our Creator and Giver of life, and we owe Him all the affection, worship, adoration and love we can render.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our Bible Lesson today we are inspired to bring forth scriptures concerning the need for us to have a wholesome desire and appetite in our hearts for God and His Word. It is indispensable for a person to conceive and maintain a fervent desire for the One Who gave us life and breath and all things. We must seek the Lord and feel after Him with earnestness and sincerity. He is so greatly worthy of our pursuit of Him. But satan, our wily adversary, seeks to turn our desires in other directions. This was his ruse with Eve when he turned her desire toward the forbidden fruit. This is one of his devices. There are so many worldly and earthly things to lust after. And the heart of man too often is a receptive organ for satan to work with.

David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, had fervent desires toward God and His service. He worshipped God not in the sense of constraint, but rather from an earnest desire. The prophet Isaiah had that same desire toward God and the remembrance of His name. The Proverbs spoke of the importance of this important matter, also. And we have Peter's counsel about it, too. We must be on our guard against satan

and keep our desires in the right direction. We must resist the alluring powers of temptation around us. Let us love Jesus Whom we have not seen, but yet believing, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (I Peter 1:8.)

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did David desire and seek after in his life?
2. What has God done to attract the desires of man?
3. How does satan seek to offset man's desire for God?
4. Who controls what kind of desires a man will have?
5. In what manner should we desire the milk of God's

Word?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God created man and most of earth's creatures with appetites and desires. One of the greatest of these appetites is the hunger and thirst for food and water. Then there are other desires that we as mortals have. Under the influence and from the attraction of the flesh comes desires that too often get us in trouble. The male and female relationship is one of them. God gave this desire but it must be controlled and governed by the will and leadings of the Holy Spirit. But when it is not thus brought into subjection it becomes inordinate desire, or lust. Uncontrolled desires and appetites are the passions that bring men into the bondage of sin. Man is tempted when he is drawn away and attracted of his own lust and enticed. It is up to man's will whether he yields or repels the temptation. We are creatures of choice with the power of free will. It is for us to resist temptation and set our hearts and minds to seek to know and to do the will of God. To indulge in gratification of fleshly lusts may bring some enjoyment and satisfaction, but that is but temporary. We need to find something higher and of more value and benefit than physical enjoyment. We are more than flesh and blood. We are also spirit, with the same element as the Spirit of God. We need to behold what is promised by the Lord and set our hearts to seek after those things. We have to go against the fleshly attractions to do this. But it is surely worth every thing we have to employ to be able to enter into the blessings of the Spirit of God. This is wisdom, and all other things to be desired are not to be compared with it.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our conversation is one place that desire is revealed. It doesn't take very long to find out where a person's desire really is, because that is what they like to talk about, whether it be a person, work or hobby. Their awareness and eagerness about the subject reveal their interest and desire.

Just recently, on my flight home, I sat between a young man who was asleep and a short, elderly lady who had her seat belt fastened very loosely. I spoke for a little while with the elderly lady then got my Bible out to read. The young man awoke and asked me if I was a Christian. I told him I was, and the conversation continued. He had converted to Christianity from Catholicism two years ago. However, he had not been reading his Bible much. I explained to him that every Word of God was essential to our spiritual life. The Lord directed me where to encourage him to read. I shared a few scriptures and his face lit up. Then as the plane was applying the brakes during landing the small, elderly lady started sliding out from under her seat belt, and the Lord helped me to see her in time and keep her in her seat without getting hurt. We exchanged telephone numbers, and I walked away encouraged in heart that God was able to make me a blessing to both.

Desire for God is so vital to our Christian life. Malachi 3:16 says, "Then they that feared the LORD **spake often** one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name." It shouldn't be thought that we can't talk about anything but the spiritual; however, if our heart and desire is in Heaven, we will usually find a good point to direct hearts and minds to Jesus.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



NOVEMBER 4, 2007

GOD OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

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

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

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms....

Isaiah 32:1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

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

Isaiah 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We, as mortals in this troubled world, need a refuge and protection that is sure and unfailing. The Almighty offers us His strength and overshadowing protection and has made it available to us through His Son Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 46:1), "*refuge*": A shelter to flee to for protection. "*a very present help in trouble*": The Hebrew says, "A help in distresses is found very much."

(Verse 4), "*most High*": The Supreme Being.

(Verse 5), "*right early*": The Hebrew says, "at the turning of the morning."

(Psalm 91:1), "*secret place*": A protective covering to safeguard us from harm.

(Verse 2), "*fortress*": A secure place of defense.

(Isaiah 32:2), "*a man*": This is a prophecy of the Man, Christ Jesus.

(Isaiah 25:4), "*strength to the poor, a strength to the needy*": The Hebrew word for strength here means a well-fortified place of protection and defense. "*blast of the terrible ones*": This means the breath or railing of satan and the ruthless who comes against the child of God. "*as a storm against the wall*": Thank God for the Wall of Salvation that surrounds us, and the storms of persecution cannot harm us at all.

(Hebrews 6:17), The Greek renders this, "In which God resolving more abundantly to show to those who receive His promises the unchangeableness of His counsel, accompanied it with an oath." He swore by Himself with an oath to Abraham, and this oath is fulfilled in the victory that Christ gained over sin, death, hell and the grave.

(Verse 18), "*by two immutable things*": By two unchangeable factors, which were the Word (promise) and the Oath. "*in which it was impossible for God to lie*": There is no chance of God being wrong, mistaken, or capable of failure. "*we might have a strong consolation*": Such assurance of our salvation being fulfilled and completely brought to pass gives us great comfort and overcoming confidence in its truth and faithfulness. "*fled for refuge*": fleeing sin and fellowship with this present evil world. "*to lay hold upon the hope set before us*": To claim as our own the bright anticipation that the grace of God offers to us.

(Verse 19), "*anchor of the soul*": That confidence that holds us fast to our profession of faith in Christ. "*entereth into that within the veil*": This anchor reaches into the very presence of Almighty God and the eternal Heavens. The veil was Christ's flesh that was rent in death and opened up the way for us to enter into the heavenly places with Christ. Hebrews 10:19-20.

(Verse 20), "*forerunner*": One who goes before to make a way for others to come after.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson for today we have presented the wonderful truth of the Almighty God offering Himself to be our refuge and strength in this present world of trouble and sorrow. We have drawn from several places in the Scriptures that declare this blessed and comforting Truth. What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! God loves us and is freely offering Himself to help us without fail. We have the testimony of many down through the ages who have proved this to be true.

Along with the two choice passages from Psalm 46 and Psalm 91, we have the beautiful words from Deuteronomy 33:27 of Moses in his blessing upon Israel before he was taken from them. Oh, what a comfort are those everlasting arms underneath us as we pass through this life! It has inspired several beautiful hymns that are so edifying and comforting. And from Isaiah come two beautiful expressions of the protection and safety found in the Almighty. How wonderful that the storms of trouble and persecution from the wrath of carnal man are stopped and arrested from harming us by the great wall God has set between us and them!

Our final Scripture text is from the New Testament and the wonderful epistle to the Hebrews. Here we find the Word of our salvation and hope presented as a two-fold application of the Promises of God accompanied by His oath. He gave us this glorious gospel with its two immutable factors to give us a strong and sure confidence and to encourage us to flee this world of sin and lay hold upon this blessed hope. It is a sure refuge and an anchor that cannot fail. Jesus Christ accomplished this for us in His obedience to the Heavenly Father in going all the way to the death of the cross. His flesh was the veil that separated us from the heavenly realm, and when He allowed Himself to be so cruelly slain, it opened up the way for us to enter that Eternal Life that we all need. Here is our refuge and unfailing Shelter of love and hope. Oh, how we can rejoice and give glory and praise to our wonderful God for all He has done for us!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways do we need a refuge and place of shelter and protection?
2. What kind of foe do we need to triumph over?
3. Who is that man who is to be a hiding place and shadow of a great rock?
4. What keeps the blast of the terrible ones from harming us?
5. What has God given to us to give us such strong hope and consolation?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is wonderful that we have such a good "body guard" in the Lord God Almighty! He watches over us all the time, night and day. We can go to Him in prayer at any time for grace to help in time of need. He commissions His angels to encamp around about us to deliver us. We are shielded and protected, and He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us. No matter what happens we do not need to be afraid. We must not worry about anything. God is faithful, and He will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it. (I Corinthians 10:13.) In the great plan of eternal salvation for us, He has backed up His wonderful promises with a sworn oath to give us great assurance and confidence to give up the world and surrender to Him and lay hold upon the bright hope He has given us. There is no failing in Him. And there needs to be no failing in us when we learn to trust and obey Him. We must watch and pray and be mindful of the cunning devices of our adversary the devil. But Christ conquered so that we can also conquer and overcome this world. So let us hold fast our confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Success can certainly be ours in attaining to that glorious resurrection with Christ. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The verses presented in our lesson today have been the staff that has supported many toilworn pilgrims as they crossed the treacherous chasms of life and were beset with doubts and fears. Throughout our mortal journey we need

assuring and reassuring that the Lord will be with us, and when we read these precious promises and our heart through holy faith claims them for our own, then our soul finds rest with sweet peace.

To qualify for these promises and make them real in our life, notice a couple of statements that Paul made when he was being transported as a prisoner to Rome and the ship they were sailing ran into a tempestuous wind that buffeted them for many days. He said, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts 27:23-24.

If like Paul, you can truly say, "*Whose I am, and Whom I serve,*" then these promises are for you. These powerful statements are a wonderful personal testimony. While God is merciful to the sinner, and He does send blessings upon them, He is under no obligation to do so. It is only a manifestation of His goodness to draw them to repentance. However, those who give themselves to Him and faithfully serve Him come under His special care. God told the children of Israel, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Exodus 19:5.

Dear Saint of God, be encouraged to find refuge in these promises, for you are a special treasure in the eyes of the Lord.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



NOVEMBER 11, 2007

LET US WORSHIP THE LORD OUR MAKER .

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

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

Psalm 100:2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

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

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

Psalm 96:4 For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

8 Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

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

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

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

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

MEMORY VERSE: I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. Psalm 138: 2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The LORD God Almighty is so great, wonderful, gracious, merciful, wise and loving that we should bow down before Him in worship, adoration, honor and gratitude all the days of our life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 95:1), "*let us sing unto the LORD*": Let us sing for joy to Jehovah. "*make a joyful noise*:" Shout. The Hebrew word means to mar or break the silence, to split the ears with a great sound!

(Verse 6), "*worship*": The Hebrew word means to prostrate, which Webster defines as lying with face downward in demonstration of great humility and lowly submission.

(Psalm 100:2), "*Serve the LORD*": Be willing to work for Jehovah in His service. "*with gladness*": Cheerfully and happy for the privilege.

(Verse 5), "*good*": Gracious, beneficial, merciful, helpful, kind, thoughtful, generous, forbearing, patient, tender, compassionate, longsuffering and any other worthy quality or characteristic. "*truth*": Unfailing faithfulness.

(Psalm 96:4), "*above all gods*": Better and more beneficial than all the other gods that people serve and follow after.

(Verse 5), "*idols*": Worthless, good for nothing, empty and vain.

(Verse 6), "*Honour*": Grandeur and excellency. "*majesty*": Magnificence and splendor. "*strength*": Power and ability. "*beauty*": Shining brilliance. "*in his sanctuary*": In His service and worship.

(Verse 7), "*Give unto the LORD*": Attribute and give Him credit and honor for. "*bring an offering*": "Offer unto God thanksgiving..." Psalm 50:14 "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. But to do good and to communicate (share with others) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hebrews 13:15-16.

(Verse 9), "*beauty of holiness*": This is the decoration and ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price, (I Peter 3:4) and a sacred and pure life consecrated to God and unstained by sin and worldly defilement.

(Psalm 149:6), "*high praises*": Exaltation and honor. "*two edged sword*": The Word of God. "For the Word of God is quick (full of life), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

(Verse 9), "*the judgment written*": This is the judgment that God has decreed, prescribed and appointed. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness..." Acts 17:31. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14. "*this honour have all his saints*": "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?..." I Corinthians 6:2.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the sacred Scriptures of the book of Psalms, we draw an inspiring challenge for us to the true and wonderful worship of our great Almighty God. It is so blessed to know that He is real and that we can obtain His favor and help. He created the Heavens and the Earth and everything that is in them. He spoke it all into existence. "He spake, and it was done...." Psalm 33:9. He is the Giver of life and breath and our being. We live and move at His doing. We owe everything to Him. Without Him we just would not be.

Our first two Scriptures are from the 95th Psalm. The latter part of this Psalm is quoted in Hebrews 3rd and 4th chapters. In Hebrews 4:7, the writer states that God was saying in David what he was bringing out. David was good at offering worship and praise to God. He excelled in that. Kneeling and bowing down in worship to God is very becoming to His Saints. One can pray and commune with God in any position, for prayer comes from the inner man. But it is good to bodily kneel when we pray and commune with our Creator. Then from the 100th Psalm we have a beautiful injunction to worship the Lord God, for it is He hath made us. Not only are we made of Him in the physical, but we are His new creation in Christ Jesus in righteousness and true holiness and unto good works. Thanksgiving and praise is a vital part of our worship to Him. Just to come down in prayer before Him and begin to enumerate the many blessings we have from Him will bless and inspire our hearts. And the 96th Psalm is also so good, and it entreats us to worship Him in the beauty of holiness and fear before Him. It is wise and good for us to do so.

The 149th Psalm contains some very interesting and serious thoughts. Not only do His Saints praise Him, but they also have the Word of God to wield and fight the battles of life with. That Word is given to us now for our benefit and salvation, but it will be the judgment of the ungodly in the last day. And the Saints will have a part in that judgment. If we will bear His judgment now in living for Him and enduring the fiery trials of life, we will escape that final judgment which will be poured out upon the wicked. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it wise and the right thing to bow down and worship God?

2. Why do we owe everything to our wonderful Creator?
3. What do we have to be thankful for to Him?
4. What is required in our hearts and lives to be able to really worship God?
5. What will the praise of God's Saints be to the wicked in the end?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

*It surely is a wise, good thing to worship Him, our God and King;
 To bow before Him on our knees, to seek His face, His grace to please.
 For He created Heav'n and earth, all things His Word has brought to birth.
 That lovely Sun from day to day does His great majesty portray;
 The lovely Moon and stars at night shine down the splendor of His might.
 The air we breathe, the rain that falls, the flow'rs that bloom, our wonder calls.
 The luscious fruits abundantly, the grass and trees so good to see;
 And ev'ry animal and bird show forth the wonders of His Word.
 For all of this let's thankful be, but much, much more we now can see:
 The blessings of His truth and grace, salvation, and His smiling face;
 Deliv'rance from this world of sin, the Holy Ghost to live within;
 The comfort, courage, and relief His healing gives in pain and grief;
 His Word, the Bible, wond'rous Book! Light, comfort gives each time we look;
 His Father-heart to us chastise and teach us to be good and wise;
 The hope steadfast that we possess, His blessed perfect holiness,
 The strength He gives for ev'ry day, His providence along life's way.
 All these are benefits Divine, His faithful love to ever shine,
 And help us through life's stormy vale: Thank God, His goodness cannot fail!
 Oh, let us bow and worship Him, and never let our faith grow dim!
 We'll make it by His wond'rous grace, and finish this our Christian race.*

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It's an awesome thought that the joyful praise and worship we offer God actually becomes a weapon in our hands against His enemies. Fear, anxiety, pain and doubt—all enemies of Almighty God, have to flee when we worship and praise Him. How unselfish and devoted to our well being and peace is He, when even worship to Him benefits His creatures! A few years ago, we had a time of pain and suffering in our home. Late one night, as the one suffering was nearly scream-

ing with pain, I was calling on the Lord for mercy and relief. The Lord began to impress upon my mind that I needed to praise and worship Him. Human emotions and feelings protested it would be disloyal and inconsiderate to my loved one's pain to begin to sing and praise! But the leading was very strong, and I obeyed. I began to sing, "What a Mighty God We Serve!," first softly and faintly, then with confidence and strength. At that moment, relief came, the power of pain was broken and permanent healing began. The triumphant praises which glorified the blessed Lord became my strength and my sword. "This honor have ALL His saints." Have you discovered this wonderful secret weapon? —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



NOVEMBER 18, 2007

CHRIST'S CONFLICT WITH THE WORLD

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

I John 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 16:33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Galatians 6:14 God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: 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? Matthew 16:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The society of mankind in the world around us is not in fellowship with God Almighty Who created them. Their pride, lust and evil thoughts are at enmity with the holy and righteous God in Whom they live and move and have their being. Thus the world is also contrary to the children of God. But through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we can overcome the world and live to please our God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 2:15), "*Love not*": Do not esteem, place high value upon, go after, cherish, or make your treasure. "*the world*": The realm of this present mortal life. It includes this earth and the human populace that inhabits it. We must love the souls of the people, but not the fleshly pursuits, pleasures, and treasures they hold to. We can use this world, but we must not over-use, misuse, or use it to the full, because the fashion of this world is passing away. (I Corinthians 7:31.) Jesus, in His prayer to the Father, spoke thus of His disciples: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17:14-15.

(Verse 16), "*all that is in the world*": John is going to speak of that which is in the world that we must overcome and keep

unspotted from. *"lust of the flesh"*: the longing and strong desires of the body uncontrolled, undisciplined and unsanctified by the Spirit of the Lord and the will of God. All fleshly desires, appetites and concerns must be in accord with and subject to the jurisdiction of God's holiness. Paul stated in I Corinthians 9:27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The first attraction of the forbidden fruit to Eve was that it was "good for food." *"lust of the eyes"*: Outward beauty and attraction is one of the prime causes of lust and uncontrolled desire. The second attraction of the forbidden fruit to Eve was that it was "pleasant to the eyes."

"pride of life": This is the exalting of man's ability, wisdom and beauty. The third attraction of the forbidden fruit to Eve was that it was "a tree to be desired to make one wise." Genesis 3:6. One of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man is to reprove and convict of sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8.) Without the spiritual eyes of a man being convicted and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he will not be able to understand what sin really is.

(James 1:27), *"unspotted"*: Without fault or blame; unaffected and uninfluenced.

(James 4:4), *"enmity"*: In opposition to and being in hostility against.

(John 16:33), *"tribulation"*: Trouble and distress.

(I John 5:4), *"overcometh"*: Subdue, conquer, prevail against, triumph over.

(Titus 2:12), *"soberly"*: With a sound mind and complete self control.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our Bible Lesson for today is concerning the conflict between Christ and this present evil world. II Peter 1:4 speaks about how we, by the precious promises of God, "might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The precious Son of God was sent into this world to bring about deliverance for man from the power of sin and transgression. But He met opposition from the princes of this world who did not recognize Him.

(I Corinthians 2:8.) The spirit of the carnal mind dominated humanity. The prophets had spoken, and the Scriptures had been written and handed down for people to hear and read. But the controlling power of the world was satan and his spirit of darkness and error and ignorance. And it became manifest very soon that the spirit of the world was not going to accept the Savior whom God had sent.

And yet, today the conflict is still going on. The carnal mind of people is still enmity against God and not subject to the law of God. They that are thus in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:7-8.) We start our lesson with John's warning against the love of this world. James takes it up also, and we have Christ's own Word about the matter. The world must be forsaken, renounced and overcome if we would be successful in attaining to what pleases God in our lives. Paul even plainly states that the world was crucified to him and he to the world. And Titus plainly says that the grace of God teaches us that we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. And our Memory Verse brings out the very words of Jesus, asking the critical question: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The crucial decision in every man's life is whether he will give up the world and take up his cross to follow Jesus.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is it in the world that is not of the Heavenly Father?
2. What does James declare as pure and undefiled religion?
3. Why does the world hate the followers of Christ's Spirit?
4. What is the victory that overcometh the world?
5. What must we do about the world if we would receive the grace of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Styles, fads and fashions! Boyfriends and girlfriends! Money and more money and more money! Ball games, picture shows, T. V., skating rinks, circuses, and the list goes on and on of the allurements of this world and its pleasures. A boy or girl grows up from childhood and soon faces the beckoning

influence of these physical pleasures and pursuits. At first it is in little "no-harm" things, but gradually it develops into more serious and detrimental things. Then on the other hand comes the influence of godliness and the teachings of the fear of God and the salvation from sin that Christ Jesus offers. Beyond it all is the river of Death and eternity. The gospel is preached, the Spirit of God convicts, and then a decision has to be made: "Shall I give up these worldly things and take up the cross to follow Jesus?" It is a war in the mind. The world attracts on one side and the fear of God is calling on the other side. Oh, how serious it all is! Some yield to the attraction of the world and its fleshly thrills. But there are a few who think it all through and make a decision to go all out for God and the welfare of one's eternity bound soul. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A person living an honest life is going to come in direct conflict with a swindler. A loving person is going to clash with one who is obnoxious. A peaceful person will find no fellowship with a contentious person. A contented soul will have nothing in common with a greedy soul. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. It is not possible to be a friend of the world and Jesus, too. "No man can serve two masters."

One of the most effective methods of the devil is working through people who are under his power and authority. If we could just peel away the veneer of this physical realm and peek into the spiritual realm, then we would see that this is where the real battle is being fought. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. When people harass, persecute, degrade and mock us, it is actually the devil working through them.

Child of God, do not be offended when the world shuns you. Do not be discouraged by their hatred. We are worldly misfits. We do not belong here. We are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Why? Because our citizenship belongs in a "...city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" Hebrews 11:10. —Sis. LaDawna Adams

NOVEMBER 25, 2007

THE BLESSING OF HOLY MATRIMONY

Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

I Corinthians 7:3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband..

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Matthew 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

MEMORY VERSE: Let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Ephesians 5:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God instituted marriage between man and woman to be a great blessing of happiness and joy, and if both husband and wife will fulfill their God-given responsibility, it will be a grand and glorious experience for both.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Genesis 2:18), "*help meet*": A counterpart; a helper answering to the need; one who would share life with him.

(Verse 21), "*closed up the flesh instead*": Closed up the flesh underneath where the rib was taken out.

(Verse 24), "*cleave*": Cling, hold fast to.

(Proverbs 12:4), "*virtuous woman*": A woman of strength and character. "*crown*": A reward, an honor and a blessing.

(I Corinthians 7:3), "*due benevolence*": The kindness she deserves.

(Verse 4), "*power*": Authority, rule or control.

(Colossians 3:18), "*fit*": That which is befitting, becoming and proper.

(Verse 19), "*bitter*": Sharp, unpleasant and harsh.

(Ephesians 5:23), "*head*": Leader, director or one who goes before. "*saviour*": Deliverer and Protector.

(Verse 25), "*love as Christ also loved*": This is a high standard of love, a forbearing and giving of one's self to atone for the faults and failings of the other instead of censuring and condemning. Christ took our place in the wrath and punishment for sin and bore it in His own body so that we could be

set free and not be condemned. He surrendered and yielded up Himself to God on the behalf of us, the church.

(Verse 28), "*love as their own bodies*": The husband should take Christ's example to love his wife and comfort and care for her as he would his own flesh.

(Verse 29), "*nourish*": Feed and bring up to maturity. "*cherish*": Warm and ardently protect and care for.

(Verse 30), "*we are members of his body*": Christ willingly gave up His flesh on our behalf. In other words, He considered us as His body, instead of His own flesh. Thus He counted us to be His body, and we became His treasure of life eternal.

(Ephesians 5:33), "*in particular*": Individually.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have for our lesson today one of the most beautiful and wonderful workings of God in His creation. He created man from the dust of the earth and gave him his life and being. Then He ruled that it was not good for man to be alone. It is evident that Adam felt a need or desire for a companion, seeing the animals in pairs as male and female. God is wise and He works in ways to make things more appreciated and enjoyed. He could have just made the woman from some more of the dust of the ground. But He took a rib from the side of Adam and made the woman of something taken out of man. He wanted there to be a close union between husband and wife. And there in our Scripture from Genesis, God made the decree for marriage to be as a man leaving his father and mother and being joined to his wife.

We took the scripture from Proverbs 12:4 because it pictures the great blessing a godly and virtuous wife is to her husband. She is a crown and a rich treasure. Any godly man who has a godly wife can tell you about it.

Then we go to the writings of the apostle Paul and the important things that he brings out about marriage, and how it is a type of the union between Jesus Christ and the souls He redeemed by His death on Calvary. He is pointing us to Christ's love and union with His people, the Church of God, as an example of the happiness and love that can be with a man and his wife. Oh, how wonderful that this can really be! But we must apply ourselves to this principle of self-sacrifice and living for one another if we want the blessing that marriage can bring. Oh, that people would marry as husbands and wives with an insight to what Christ's marriage to the Church really means!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God deem it not good for the man to be alone?
2. What was His reason for making a woman instead of just another man?
3. What is marriage between husband and wife typical of?
4. How did Jesus show His love for His bride?
5. And who is the bride that Jesus gave Himself for?
6. What must we do to qualify to be a part of His bride?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A holy, virtuous, godly woman as a wife and bosom companion for a man to have as his own peculiar treasure is the greatest earthly experience one can have in this life. To be happily married with mutual enjoyment and happiness in both parties is a blessed state indeed! But as we look out on our society today we see many marriages that are not of that sort. It was God Who ordained the first marriage. It should be God Who brings couples together and directs them in marriage. If people marry just to fulfill the sexual passions, without spiritual life and faith and fellowship with God in their hearts and lives, they will be like building a house without any foundation or guidelines. Young people need to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and really be filled and led by the Holy Spirit. This should be the first priority. The Holy Spirit can lead a person in the choosing of a companion if He is given consideration and room to work.

Before a person enters married life, he or she needs to really be married to Christ in the Spirit of the Lord. And they need to keep up that union and fellowship with their Lord and Savior all the way. That is the basis of the love and unity that can be experienced with a husband or wife. Marriage is more than just physical attraction and fulfillment. There is a spiritual side that must be kept in good wholesome order. Prayer and being faithful in the service of God must be faithfully attended to all along the path of married life. The many break-ups and divorces that occur in people's lives is an indication that things are not what they ought to be. We need to be wise and put the Lord first, and then He will bless the marriage bond and make it the blessing and success it is supposed to be.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the teenage years there is usually a growing desire for companionship. There is nothing wrong or sinful with this desire; it is God given. Yet we must allow the Holy Spirit and Scriptures to guide us in this life altering decision. Marriage has the potential of being one of life's greatest blessings or greatest heartaches. An older sister one time told me, after years of heartache and disappointment (her companion had been gone some time), "I thought he was a Christian."

II Corinthians 6:14 teaches us not to be yoked together with unbelievers. "They would make such a good Christian" or "But if you only knew them" are very dangerous thoughts to entertain. If they are not saved and you are—they are not an eligible candidate. It is when we override God's Word that we get ourselves into trouble.

Titus 2:6-7 "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works:..." What is the person's track record? Another verse says, "prove all things." A person being saved two or three months is not sufficient time. Does their testimony have some spiritual depth? How do they treat their family and those they work closely with. They will be treating you the same way once the honeymoon has ended. Can they hold down a job, are they responsible, faithful and dependable. Are they emotionally stable? The Septuagint rendering for Proverbs 31:30 is "Charms are false, and woman's beauty is vain: for it is a wise woman that is blessed."

Bro. Ostis Wilson once made the statement, in reference to whom to marry, that out of all of his years of ministry, no one took his advice. Once the heart doors have been opened, they are very difficult to close, so be careful, ask questions and pray!

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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DECEMBER 2, 2007

THE ONENESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

I Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is the will and plan of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, that all who believe in His name be joined together in a holy bond of love and unity through the one Holy Spirit, and in obedience to the Word of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 52:7), "*publisheth*": Makes heard clearly and distinctly.

(Verse 8), "*see eye to eye*": Understand and speak with one accord everything together in the same mind and judgment. "*when the LORD shall bring again Zion*": When Jehovah brings back Zion. This is referring to the New Testament Mount Zion which Hebrews 12:22-23 declares it to be the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the general assembly and church of the firstborn (Jesus Christ). This is the Church of God which He (Christ) purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28.)

(John 17:6), "*manifested*": Revealed and made clearly known. "*the men which thou gavest me*": Christ speaks here of the disciples that God had caused to come and who had left all to follow Him.

(Verse 11), "*I am no more in the world*": Christ's work and ministry to the world was finished, and He was about to be offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. "*these are in the world*": His disciples for whom He is praying to the Father will be left in the world as His body to work through for the cause of the gospel. "*one, as we are*": In unity and undivided, even as Christ and His Father were in harmony and togetherness.

(Verse 21), *"one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee"*: Christ is praying that God will bless His disciples with the Holy Spirit that will unite them as He and His Father are united.

(Verse 23), *"perfect in one"*: Completely and fully accomplished in unity.

(I Corinthians 1:10), *"no divisions among you"*: No splits, gaps or falling apart among the followers of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:1), *"walk worthy"*: Live and conduct yourselves appropriately or as it is proper and becoming.

(Verse 2), *"forbearing one another in love"*: Putting up with one another in the love of God.

(Verse 3), *"endeavoring"*: Making eager effort and being prompt and earnest. *"keep"*: To maintain, to watch and guard from any hindrance or disruption. *"the unity of the Spirit"*: The oneness that comes with everyone having the same Spirit. This brings a sweet unity, but it must be carefully handled and guarded. We will not all agree on every point and detail automatically and at the first. We must bear with each other in heavenly love. *"in the bond of peace"*: The uniting principle of the peace of God, as Colossians 3:15 says, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

(Verse 13), *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith"*: The Greek text words this: "Until we all may come to the unity of the faith." We must each one individually have the Holy Spirit as the basis of unity. But it will take time and personal progress and growth in the things of Christ to come to the unity of the faith. There are gifts that God gives to various members to help with this process. *"perfect man"*: Full grown, fully developed and mature.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have a Biblical subject that is so plainly brought out in the Scriptures, and it is a wonderful and blessed state to come to by the grace of God and the workings of His Holy Spirit. Our first text shows the unity of the Church as foreseen by the prophet Isaiah inspired by the Spirit of God. The watchmen are the ministers and leaders who declare the word and counsel of the Lord in their watchful care for men's souls. They will see eye to eye, and be agreed on the teachings of Christ and His holiness. This is unity and is brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Then we look into the prayer that Jesus prayed as recorded in John 17. He prayed this prayer at the end of His evening with the disciples when they kept the Passover, and He instituted the Lord's Supper. Right after this, they went out and that evening He was arrested and on His way to the cross. The part of His prayer we want to notice is His plea for His disciples to be one. He wills that we be united together even as He and the Father were united. From Acts 4:32 we see that the multitude of the believers were truly in unity. Then we have Paul's counsel to the church in Corinth and in Ephesus. He is pointing them to unity. They must maintain the unity of the Spirit with lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance, as progress is made in each individual Christian toward attaining to perfect unity of the faith and the successful function of the Church. Our Memory Verse is from the sweet 133rd Psalm that foreshadows the unity of the Church in the New Testament. All of these Scriptures give testimony to the unity of God's people that God truly has designed to be a reality in His people today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What has God made available to us to help us to be in unity?
2. How united did Jesus pray to the Father that His disciples should be?
3. Is it possible for all believers in Christ to be truly in perfect unity?
4. What must each one have to help make this unity perfectly accomplished?
5. What does harmony and perfect unity do for the work of the Church?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

With lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance, any congregation of saved and sanctified people can live in peace and harmony, with love one to another, and be successful in their worship to God and their work for the Lord.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can those who are one in spirit, by virtue of spiritual birth, be made "perfect in one" before the world, so as to

convince unbelievers of the truth of Christianity? The conditions for this perfect unity are:

1. *We must be "in Christ,"* which signifies salvation from sin: "not of the world."

2. *We must be kept in His name,* which means to reject all other spiritual names.

3. *We must receive the Word of God and keep it,* which means to reject all the doctrines and commandments of men.

4. *We must be sanctified wholly,* which removes from the heart the cause of carnal divisions.

All these conditions are expressly stated in the seventeenth chapter of St. John, where Christ prayed for the unification of His people. There is a false standard of so-called unity made prominent throughout Christendom, which is simply an attempt to bring together by external organization the professed followers of Christ. But such can never be more than a miserable counterfeit. True unity can be effected only by meeting the Bible conditions already mentioned. Mere external organization—bringing together multitudes of people, the majority of whom know nothing about a saved experience and sinless life, who never have been born again—such, I assert, is not in any sense Bible unity. Reader, do not be deceived by such a combination of diverse elements. Bible unity is based on spiritual life and is in perfect accordance with the Word of God. The truly saved have spiritual fellowship with each other, and know each other and have no spiritual affinity with those who are not of God. They "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Ephesians 5:11. They are instructed to "...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving *together* for the faith of the gospel." Philippians 1:27.

—(*What The Bible Teaches* by F. G. Smith)



DECEMBER 9, 2007

CHARITY, THE LOVE 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 sweetsmelling savour.

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

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

II Peter 1:5 ...Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

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

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

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

I Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

MEMORY VERSE: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. I Peter 4:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The love of God is the most important thing to have living and operating in the heart and life of every true child of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS:

(Ephesians 5:1), "*followers*": Imitators. "*dear*": Beloved; close and precious and affectionately attached.

(Verse 2), "*love*": The Greek word is "agape," pronounced *ag-ah'-pay*, and is the word that is translated "charity" in our lesson scriptures. It is the pure and true love and affection that exists in the heart of the Almighty God. We can label it Divine love, or the love of God.

(Romans 13:8), "*Owe no man any thing, but to love*": Do not come short of rendering to every man what is due him. But above all that we render, we owe our fellow man true love, warmth and affection.

(Verse 9), "*briefly comprehended*": Summed up.

(Verse 10), "*Love worketh no ill*": Love does not work evil.

(II Peter 1:5), "*giving all diligence*": Bringing in all earnestness and eagerness. "*add*": Furnish in addition to; fill out and complete. "*virtue*": Fortitude, manliness, valor. "*knowledge*": Instruction and learning. "*temperance*": Self-control. "*patience*": Endurance. "*godliness*": Godly fear and reverence. "*brotherly kindness*": Brotherly friendship and affection. The Greek word here is "Philadelphia," the name that the godly William Penn gave to his colony in the New World. History relates that he never had trouble with the Indians because of the love and friendship he showed to them. "*charity*": The Love of God!

(Colossians 3:12), "*Put on*": Be clothed and array yourself with. "*elect of God*": Chosen and well pleasing to God. "*bowels*": Tender feelings of pity and sympathy. "*Forbearing*": Putting up with and doing one's best to get along with.

(Verse 13), "*quarrel*": Complaint or grievance.

(Verse 14), "*bond of perfectness*": The uniting principle of perfection or completeness. Without charity, the love of God, the best of anything is greatly deficient.

(I Corinthians 13:4), "*envieth not*": Does not have improper resentful feelings against others. "*vaunteth not itself*": Does not boast or brag about itself. "*is not puffed up*": Is not inflated with pride.

(Verse 5), "*Doth not behave itself unseemly*": Does not act unbecoming or indecently. "*not easily provoked*": Does not become exasperated or allow one's anger to get out of control. "*thinketh no evil*": Does not meditate or wish for evil to come to someone else.

(Verse 6), "*rejoiceth not in iniquity*": Does not rejoice in seeing evil in others, but is glad to see the truth manifested and on display in other people.

(Verse 7), "*beareth*": Quietly covers and overlooks.

(I Peter 4:8), "*fervent charity*": Intense agape (Divine love). "*cover*": Hides and will not expose; will not air or advertise them out to others. "*multitude of sins*": A great big bundle or large number of faults and failures.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the writing of the epistles of the apostles Paul and Peter, we have a good lesson on the most important factor in the Christian life. God so loved us that He sent His Son down to this world of trouble and sorrow to be the atoning sacrifice on our behalf. It was His loving care that moved His great heart to work out this wonderful plan of salvation. And His Son Jesus Christ had that same love that made Him willing to give Himself for an offering and a sacrifice to God to pay for our forgiveness and mercy. It was love all the way through. And God wants this same love to be applied to each one of our hearts, that we might walk in that same love and live to be a help and a blessing to our fellow men. Paul instructs us in our first Scripture that we should imitate God, as His dear children, and walk in that same love that Christ manifested.

Romans 13:8-10 declares that this love is really what will fulfill the law of God. Without this love, trying to keep God's law will be a tragic failure. But the love of God in the heart will give us the power to successfully keep the law. Peter gives a list of the things that we need to supply our faith and experience with. We have to work at our salvation with diligence and godly fear by bringing these attributes into our ways and behavior. This salvation involves diligent effort on our part to work these things in our lives. We must exercise ourselves unto godliness. Notice that charity is the crowning addition over all the others. Paul labels it in Colossians 3:14 as the bond of perfectness, and he instructs us to include it with the other things we are to invest or cloth ourselves with.

Then from I Corinthians 13 we have the list of the attributes of Divine love with their meanings. It is a high standard of life that the love of God can elevate us up to.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do to be dearly beloved children of God?
2. What is it that we owe to humanity and our fellow men?
3. What are the things that we need to add and invest ourselves with?
4. How do we add and put these things on?
5. What does charity do about the faults and failures of others?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our lesson we are instructed to “put on” and “add to.” We are to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance for others. We are to add to our faith virtue. This means we are to exercise ourselves to be manly and valiant in our faith. But then we have to add something to virtue. It needs knowledge and instruction. But then we need to add temperance to that and temperance needs patience. Each thing we add will need something else added to it. This is going to take diligence and determined effort to discipline our mind and thoughts and actions. We must take control of our lives and make them go in the right direction. It is not easy to always be meek. You have to go against your feelings. Going against one’s feelings is not a popular trend. But if we are going to walk in love, we must go against our feelings in many ways. This is the proof we are going to have to furnish if we attain to that everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior. It is a full-time and every day job adding these things to our lives. We’ve got to work at it faithfully if we hope to succeed. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God’s heart is totally centered on loving and caring for His creation. Jesus, the “express image” of the Father, lived a life entirely devoted to ministering to others. He didn’t even seek a bed for Himself. He literally laid down His life for us—the undeserving, the ungrateful, the sinful.

Our “old man” is the self-centered image we inherited from Adam. This others-centered heart, the “new man,” is the image to which we have been called to conform. We do not consider anymore if one is “worthy.” We are called to serve Him. We are

called to give our lives for Him. We take on the image of DIVINE LOVE, which gives and gives and gives, without resentment. The new life that Jesus lives through us is a life of love, intercession and service for others. We can only truly serve God by serving each other.

There is cold-blooded, cruel, abusive selfishness. There is warm, friendly, super-sweet selfishness. There is intolerant, arrogant, religious selfishness. It's all the "old man." Put it off. Die with Christ, and be recreated in His image, the image of true, unselfish love. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



DECEMBER 16, 2007

BEING ACCOUNTED WORTHY

Luke 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Matthew 10:37 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.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

II Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

5 ...That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

Colossians 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.

Hebrews 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Revelations 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

Revelations 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Revelations 5:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It will be with much faithful obedience, holding fast to faith and confidence, patience in suffering, and prayerful watching for us to be accounted worthy to be in the resurrection and stand before the Son of man in that day.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(In all Scriptures in our lesson), "*worthy*": Appropriate, entirely deserving, entitled or fit.

(Luke 21:34), "*overcharged*": Loaded down. "*surfeiting*": The Greek word means "a headache or seizure of pain from drunkenness or overeating." "*cares*": Anxieties. "*unawares*": Suddenly.

(Verse 36), "*pray always*": At every time begging and earnestly entreating. "*accounted worthy*": Esteemed or deemed by God as deserving, entitled or fit.

(Matthew 10:37), "*more than me*": Above me.

(Colossians 1:10), "*unto all pleasing*": Pleasing the Lord in everything.

(Hebrews 10:29), "*done despite*": Insulted.

(Revelations 16:6), "*blood to drink*": To be accountable

and responsible for the blood of the Saints and prophets that they have poured out in their persecuting and murdering of them, and will be recompensed with eternal death in everlasting hell fire. *"they are worthy"*: They deserve it.

(Revelation 5:12), *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"*: Philippians 2:6-9 expresses it like this: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." God counted Christ worthy of the great glory He exalted His Son to, because He was faithful to obey and drew not back from the suffering and humiliation He was called to endure.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our Bible Lesson today we want to dwell on what it will mean to be accounted worthy of the invitation of the Lord and the benefits obtained in responding to that invitation. We have chosen several key Scriptures, but there are others we could bring in.

We have several from the Words of our Lord Jesus. In Luke 20, Jesus was answering the question, from those who did not believe in a resurrection about marriage and how the resurrection would affect it. Jesus gave them the truth on it, but we want to notice especially His expression of those who will be accounted worthy of the resurrection. Then in Luke 21, Jesus is speaking of His second coming and warning us to take heed that we be on our guard—that we will be accounted worthy to escape and to stand accepted before Him. In Matthew 10, we have the account of Jesus sending forth His disciples to preach the gospel and heal the sick. He speaks about the persecution that will come against those who herald the gospel and how that our foes will be those of our own household. Then He states that if we love any close relative above Him, we are not worthy of Him, and if we fail to bear the cross for Him, we will not be worthy of Him.

Then we have several Scriptures from the writings of Paul and from the book of Revelation about this serious challenge. Our Memory Verse speaks of how Jesus, as the Lamb of God,

because of Him being slain, was worthy of great glory and honor. Let us remember that we are not actually worthy of Him in our own state and ability; but if we will diligently follow the Lord in all things, we can be accounted worthy for Christ's sake.
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the things we must do to be accounted worthy?
2. What does it mean to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"?
3. What must we be watchful about to be found worthy?
4. What were those who shed the Saints' blood accounted worthy of?
5. Why was the Lamb of God accounted worthy of such glory and honor?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jacob in his prayer to God, as he was about to meet his brother Esau who had threatened to kill him, said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies...which thou hast showed unto thy servant; deliver me...from the hand of my brother...." Genesis 32:10-11. John the Baptist said that he was not worthy to bear the shoes of Jesus. (Matthew 3:11.) The elders of the Jews who came to Jesus asking help for the Roman Centurion and the healing of his servant stated that he was worthy of help for he loved Israel and had built them a synagogue. But the Centurion himself sent word to Jesus through some friends that he was not worthy for Him to enter under his roof, and that he did not think himself worthy to come unto Jesus. (Luke 7:4-7.) John the Baptist told the people to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. (Luke 3:8.) The prodigal son told his father when he came back from his evil way that he was no more worthy to be called his son. (Luke 15:19.) The writer in Hebrews 11:38, in speaking of those who had suffered poverty and adversity because of their faith, said that the world was not worthy of them. Paul said that whosoever shall eat of the bread and drink of the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. (I Corinthians 11:27-29.) And in Acts 13:46, Paul and Barnabas

spoke of those who put the Word of God away from them as judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

So we see that it means much for us to be accounted worthy of the Lord and the benefits that His grace and salvation have to offer. Many people count themselves as unworthy, but that they will be saved regardless. It is easy to overlook the fact that, though we are unworthy of ourselves, yet there are things we must attend to faithfully to be accounted worthy. In our previous lesson we had Peter's instructions of things we have to add to our experience. And he went on to say that if we do these things we shall never fall, "For," he said, "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II Peter 1:11. We must be on our guard against the things the Word of God warns us against. Let us take heed to the counsels of the Lord and be accounted worthy to stand before Him in that day.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Just the phrase "being accounted worthy" conjures many thoughts. The word "*worth*" means something of value. The word "*worthy*" denotes commendable excellence. There are other words like "*trustworthy*" which means being dependable, and worthwhile which means to repay one's time. All of these words describe something very precious in the sight of God.

This makes me think of the great Father opening His jewelry box and examining the contents inside. "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:17. He picks up a jewel and exclaims, "My, what a precious jewel. I had to allow this soul to be cut many times, but just look at the beautiful facets. And watch how this jewel catches the sunlight. What a priceless treasure." He gently lays this gem aside and selects another. He examines the precious stone and then explains, "This particular gem has gone through many rough and gritty places. But it has only made the sheen more beautiful. What a trustworthy soul. I could count on them to trust fully in me!" He tenderly lays this precious jewel aside and selects yet another. "I love how this jewel sparkles with my grace. This particular gem had to go through fire and great tribulation.

But it glitters with my hope and happiness. This gem is worthy of my eternal inheritance."

"Behold, I have refined thee...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48: 10. "...Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth...?" Job 1:8. The Lord has His watchful eye upon us and is desiring that each one of us would be accounted worthy of the inheritance.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



DECEMBER 23, 2007

JESUS CHRIST AS GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have handled, of the Word of life.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

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

MEMORY VERSE: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. I Timothy 3:16

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was truly the Almighty God Who created the heavens and the earth, come down and made manifest as a mortal earthly being.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 1:1), "*Word*": This is referring to the Divine Expression and Speaking forth of the Almighty God. It spoke everything into existence. The worlds were framed and put in order by the Word of God, having their substance and existence through the power and creative force of the Creator, in Whom we live and move and have our being. "*the Word was with God*": This Word was God's plan and purpose that He cherished in His heart as a will and determined counsel. This is what Jesus came from. He was in the mind and heart of God before the foundation of the world. I Peter 1:19-20. "*the Word was God*": The Word was backed by the Supreme Being that spoke it forth. In this way Christ was with the Father before the world. His origin was from eternity. He was with the Father, in full fellowship and co-operation from the beginning.

(Verse 3), "*All things were made by him*": By Him all things came into being. Through Him, Jesus Christ, God created the world and laid the foundation for the fulfillment of His good and holy purpose. Christ said in John 17:24 in His prayer to the Father, "...Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." He was from everlasting and shall endure unto everlasting.

(Verse 4), "*life the light of men*": The illuminating power to enlighten, inspire, and bring understanding was in the eternal life and being of One who existed before the sun, moon, stars or earthly light was brought forth. This is spiritual Light that we need to shine into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 4:6.) It is a most wonderful experience for light to shine from Heaven into our innermost being, illuminating and revealing knowledge and understanding to our hearts and minds.

(Verse 5), "*comprehended it not*": Did not take eagerly, seize or possess it. Light dispels darkness. Darkness cannot overtake and hinder the light. When the light shines, the darkness goes. The stubborn heart of man can hinder the light from shining into his heart, but he cannot escape from the responsibility that the shining light puts upon him.

(Verse 9), "*lighteth*": Enlightens and gives knowledge to.

(Verse 11), "*He came unto his own*": Jesus came to His own nation and people, but they did not recognize nor acknowledge Him as being what and Who He really was.

(Verse 12), "*power*": Authority, right or privilege.

(Verse 14), "*the Word was made flesh*": The eternal One Who was with the Father from the creation came down into mortal flesh and manifested His glory and power.

(I Timothy 3:16), "*without controversy*": With great confession and clear undisputed testimony and witness. "*great is the mystery of godliness*": The work of God that He accomplished through the good purpose of His will is beyond all question great and wonderful, but it has a secret and a hidden operation. "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth (brings to light) all things, yea, the deep (hidden) things of God." I Corinthians 2:9-10.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have scriptures that declare that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. Many people discredit the testimony and witness of this truth, but that does not make it not true. From the heart of God the Father comes a stream of holy light and revelation that enters the hungry and thirsty soul of man and makes him to know that it is the truth beyond all question and doubt. We have in our lesson the testimony of one of the disciples of this Man Who came from Heaven. He saw His glory, he heard His Words of wisdom, and his hands touched Him, the Word of Life. His witness is true and has been preserved for us down through the ages. We rejoice today

in the witness that we have deep within our very soul. We are thankful for what Jesus Christ accomplished when He came to years of maturity. He was God in the flesh and He manifested that glory and power faithfully and performed the perfect will of Him Who sent Him into the world. Woe be to those who discredit it and reject it from their consideration and life!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the Word of God that was made flesh?
2. What power did Christ give to those who believed in Him?
3. What was the confidence that John had of Jesus?
4. What was accomplished in God being manifest in the flesh?
5. What is the hope that God coming into human flesh has given?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In a manger in a cattle shed, in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, was laid a new born baby Son. His mother had given birth to Him while there under the decree of the Roman Emperor that all the world had to be taxed, and each person was to go to his own city for this to be done. In the hurry and scurry and excitement of the time, it was not realized what an important event had taken place. But out in the fields where shepherds were watching their flocks of sheep by night, the glory of God shone down from Heaven, and made known to those lowly shepherds what had taken place. They were told that a Savior, Who was to be known as Christ the Lord, had been born unto them, and a sign was given to them how they could find and know Him. Perhaps even the shepherds did not comprehend the depth of that wonderful birth, but they knew enough to be inspired in their hearts with unforgettable joy and rejoicing.

That little infant was the fulfillment of the plan of Almighty God that He had purposed from before the world was created. It was God manifest in the flesh. That little Baby's mother

knew, and when she saw the shepherds and their joy, she knew what it was about. She knew that no man, not even her husband, had fathered that child. She knew that the angel had told her that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest. She knew that her little infant Child was the Son of the Living God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Wonder of Wonders

By Charles B. Wacuff

The wonder of wonders as she looked on His face,
That this little boy spoke the worlds in their place;
The stars and the moon, shining brightly on them,
The earth and the sun were created by Him.

The wonder of wonders as she heard His small cry,
That this voice had thundered on Mount Sinai;
The hand that she held so tenderly,
Had made a dry path thru the mighty Red Sea.

The wonder of wonders as she looked down and smiled,
That He was her Maker as well as her child;
He created the womb that had given Him birth,
He was God incarnate, come down to the earth.

The wonder of wonders as the Father looked on,
In eternity past, this was His Son;
Had sent Him to die on Calvary's tree
And that is the wonder of wonders to me.

The wonder of wonders, oh, how could it be
That God became flesh and was given for me?
The Almighty came down and walked among men
Oh, the wonder of wonders: He died *for my sin!*

—Submitted by Bro. Bob Wilson



DECEMBER 30, 2007

HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD LIVE

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

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

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

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

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

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

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

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

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

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

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

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To live is not a right, but it is rather a privilege that God has granted to us. Therefore we should be careful how we live, for we shall give account to God. We need to live unto Him, Who died for us and rose again, such godly and holy lives that He can be pleased and glorified with. It is not how loud you sing or how big you talk that will avail with God. It is how you live that will count in that day.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 5:14), "*constrainteth*": Compels and holds us to obey and follow. "*dead*": Spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1.

(Verse 15), "*should not henceforth live unto themselves*": Should no longer live to please self and the appetites of the flesh.

(Titus 2:12), "*soberly*": Moderately with discretion, self control and a sound mind. "*godly*": With earnest and sincere reverence and respect to God.

(Verse 13), "*Looking for*": Awaiting with confidence and patience.

(Philippians 1:21), "*gain*": Eternal profit and benefit.

(Verse 22), "*this is the fruit of my labour*": Paul is saying here that it would be gain for him to die, but, as long as he remains in this mortal body, it will be for fruit and profit from his labors in the gospel for the welfare of others. "*yet what I shall choose I wot not*": He would like to go on and be in heaven with the Lord, but if he remains in the flesh it would mean more blessings and fruit for his account with the Lord. Therefore he does not know what he should choose.

(Verse 23), "*in a strait betwixt two*": He is saying that he is attracted by these two things. To depart and be with Christ is far better, but to abide in the flesh would be profitable for others. He went on to say in verse 24 that he knew he would abide and continue with his brethren for their furtherance and joy of faith.

(Romans 8:12), "*debtors, not to the flesh*": We do not owe the flesh anything. We do not have to live to the flesh, for we have found something so much better and rewarding.

(Verse 13), "*ye shall die*": It will be death to your soul if you let the flesh rule your life. "*through the Spirit*": Through the strength and inspiration of the Holy Spirit we can bring the flesh in subjection to the will of God. "*mortify the deeds of the body*": Put to death the practices of the body. This means that we bring our bodily appetites and desires in strict conformity to the Spirit of Christ. As Paul said in Romans 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

(Romans 12:18), "*as much as lieth in you*": As much as you can possibly do in your own heart and mind.

(Galatians 2:20), "*crucified with Christ*": Christ lived a life dead to self and the lusts of the flesh. We must follow His example and live that kind of sacrificial life.

(Hebrews 10:38), "*draw back*": To shrink from submission and the responsibility of trusting and obeying God. "*my soul shall have no pleasure in him*": God will not be pleased. This Scripture is the Septuagint translation of Habakkuk 2:4. The Hebrew translation says, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Christian profession is more than just a testimony from the lips, but it is a life that we must live every day. We must live and put in practice our faith or it will not profit or mean anything. In our lesson today, we have Scriptures that will help to point us to the life that God is pleased for us to live.

We see from all these Scriptures the kind of life that we are to live. First, we are to live no longer to ourselves and our own desires, but we are to live solely with an aim to please God and to follow the life that Christ lived. We are to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and bring ourselves in subjection to the obedience of Christ. We must live carefully and conscientiously with Christ and His holiness and humility fully in view. We are looking for the Lord to come, and we want to be accepted of Him in that day. We want to live our lives in this flesh in such a manner that fruit will be to our account in that great judgment day. We must bring our bodies under and in

full control of the Spirit of God. We must live that crucified life that our Savior lived. We must live peaceably with all men. We must live in the Spirit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith and all the other qualities of holiness. We must live by faith and not draw back in doubts and unbelief. We must live joyfully and sing unto the Lord as long as we live. To live a Christian life successfully and triumphantly is our highest vocation. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What will be the result of living to the flesh and worldly lusts?
2. What do we have in view by living soberly, righteously and godly?
3. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?
4. What must we be on our guard against if we live by faith?
5. Why is it good to sing unto the Lord while we live?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a wonderful blessing to be alive! But where does our life come from? "In Him (God Almighty) we live, and move, and have our being...." Acts 17:28. In living we think, we talk, we go, we come, we move about from one place to another. We deal with other people who are alive. Life is a privilege that God has given to us. How careful we ought to be with living! Life is more serious even than death. Life and how we live it will determine our eternal destiny. The apostle Paul came to realize what real life and living was. He found the answer in meeting up with the Prince of Life who appeared in mercy to him, arresting him from his life of vanity, and giving him an invitation to a better and more profitable way of living. This life of living here on earth is weighty with responsibility and eternal values. We can waste it on vain and useless things, or we can invest it with eternal treasures. What you do with your life is up to you. I remember a sermon I heard as a young boy at a church service that held forth this question: "What are you doing with your life?" It touched my heart deeply. I am glad that I gave my heart and life to Jesus and have endeavored to live the kind of life He wanted me to live. May each one of us, as we face this New Year, ask ourselves that question: "What am I doing with my life?" —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The law manuals line the library shelves, each dictating how society shall conduct itself. Then there is the electrical code, the plumbing code, the mechanical code and of course, the building codes, each having their own enforcement personnel. Oh! Don't forget the tax code. Surely, we must live in the most regulated society history has ever known. Then, too, many jobs have procedural manuals to follow for nearly everything one does. The preponderance of these codes and regulations certainly makes life complicated.

At the time of Jesus, the Jews also had become highly regulated. The list of Ten Commandments had grown into a sizeable compilation of ordinances, both written and unwritten. Yet, in the midst of all these laws, the hearts of the people were far from God. The complicated structure of law failed to change the sinful nature of society. Jesus offered some simplifications that would help people understand how to conduct themselves in His Kingdom, and these should become the theme of every child of God. In Matthew 7:12 it says, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Then in the book of John, Jesus issued a new commandment. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. Those who follow this simple command, to love others as Christ has loved us, will have a full time job, but they also bring God's smile of approval on their lives.

To obey this new commandment, an individual must crucify the carnal man and allow Christ to live in their heart. The sinful man is unable to fulfill this on his own; he needs the cleansing blood of Jesus to change his heart. The resulting "new man" is then able to be a productive member of God's Kingdom. When the beautiful life of this "new man" is portrayed to the world, the love of Christ is displayed to all. Jesus went on to say, "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35. May the love of Christ be the ruling discipline in every reader's heart.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

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