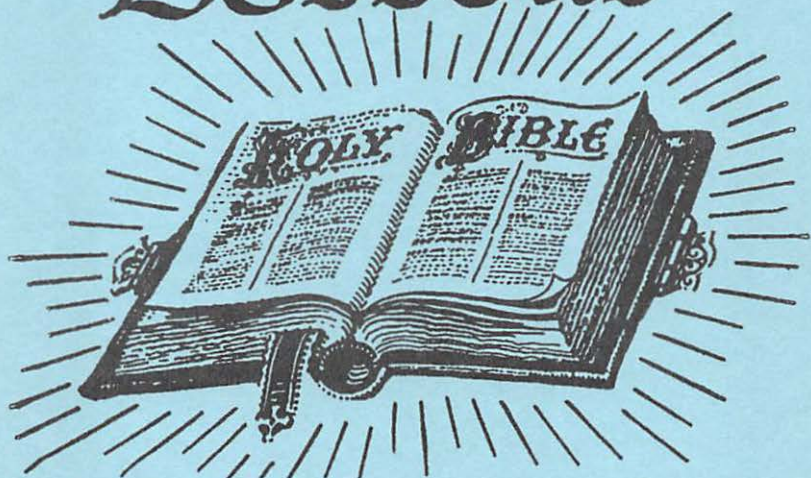


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 41, No. 1
Jan., Feb., Mar.
2009

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

(USPS054-680)

Volume 41

Jan., Feb., Mar.

No. 1

Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
Jan. 4	God's Forgiveness for Sin	1
11	Healing for Soul and Body	6
18	The Blessing of Being Poor and of a Contrite Spirit	10
25	Redeeming Our Life from Destruction	15
Feb. 1	Wonderful Privilege of Prayer	20
8	The Peace of God	25
15	The Gift of the Holy Spirit	29
22	The Wonderful Light of God	34
Mar. 1	The Great Gain of Godliness with Contentment	39
8	The Blessed Hope of the Righteous	44
15	Victory In Jesus	48
22	Sweet Soul Rest in Jesus	54
29	Attaining Unto the Resurrection from the Dead	59

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

**Articles contributed by: Sis. LaDawna Adams,
Sis. Angela Gellenbeck and Bro. Bob Wilson.**

**Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or
\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.
Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.**

Published Quarterly By:

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

4318 S. Division

Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044

**Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.**

BIBLE LESSONS FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2009

THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER

The sweet Holy Spirit has inspired our hearts with a series of lessons concerning the wonderful benefits that God has made available to us in His great plan of salvation. Psalm 103:1-5 speaks of some of these benefits: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." So we want to bring forth several lessons on the wonderful benefits of the Lord our God. We will begin with the wonderful blessing of God's forgiveness for sin. Then we will go to other wonderful benefits to dwell on and study. May we all receive comfort and help from these lessons.

Lovingly yours,

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



JANUARY 4, 2009

GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR SIN

Psalm 130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

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.*

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Mark 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out....

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

MEMORY VERSE: For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Psalm 86:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through the sacrificial death and shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, all mankind can obtain forgiveness for sin if they, with godly sorrow, will confess their sins, repent and turn away from all transgressions against the law of God, walk in and obey the light of His Word, forgive their fellow man, and believe God's promise of forgiveness and mercy.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 130:3, "*mark iniquities*": Condemn because of doing wrong. "*stand*": Prevail or remain.

Verse 4, "*mayest be feared*": Be held in deep reverence and loving respect.

Psalm 32:1, "*Blessed*": How happy! "*transgression is forgiven*": Disobedience lifted up, taken away, and not held any more against.

Verse 2, "*imputeth*": Charge or hold against. "*iniquity*": That which is crooked, perverse, or morally evil. "*guile*": Dishonesty and deceit.

Verse 5, "*confess*": To admit being wrong with sorrow and deep regret. "*Selah*": A pause in the musical progression. To us

it can be a place to pause to consider and ponder what has been expressed.

Isaiah 53:5, "*wounded*": Pierced. "*bruised*": Crushed. "*chastisement of our peace*": Punishment inflicted to pay for our safety and well being. "*stripes*": Marks on the flesh from wounds inflicted.

Ephesians 1:7, "*redemption*": Price paid for freedom or release.

Mark 11:25, "*ought*": Anything. "*forgive*": Release from guilt and condemnation.

Acts 3:19, "*Repent*": To change one's mind and ways of life from sin and transgression to loving obedience to God and His Holy Law. "*be converted*": To turn from sinful ways and walk in righteousness.

II Corinthians 7:10, "*godly sorrow*": Being grieved because of grieving and displeasing God. "*worketh repentance*": Brings about a decision to change one's heart and mind. "*not to be repented of*": That which is unregrettable and not to be changed.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first benefit mentioned in Psalm 103:3 is that of being forgiven of all of our iniquities. This is the subject of our lesson today, and we know that it is a vital subject to consider. Where would we all be today if God would not forgive us of our sins and transgressions against Him? Our first scripture in Psalm 130:3 answers that with the question, "Who would stand?" The answer is very obvious: No one! But then he follows with the declaration that with God there is forgiveness. If there wasn't, there would be no use in fearing Him. Then in Psalm 32 we have the blessedness shown of being forgiven. This scripture is quoted by Paul in Romans 4:6-8. From Isaiah 53 we have the declared prophecy of Christ's atonement for sin through the sufferings He endured. Paul also declares in Ephesians 1:7 that the forgiveness of sin is part of the redemption through the shed blood of Jesus. I John 1:7-9 echoes the glorious truth of forgiveness through the Savior's blood, but states that we must confess our sins to God if we would be forgiven. In Mark 11:25-26 we have Christ's own teaching of another one of the vital requirements in attaining forgiveness from God, and that is a forgiving disposition and attitude toward those who trespass against us. Then in Acts

3:19 we have Peter's counsel in his message to the people that we must repent, change our ways, and follow Christ if we want our sins to be blotted out. And we have included Paul's counsel in II Corinthians 7:10 that it takes godly sorrow to bring about repentance and turning to the right ways of God. Our Memory Verse brings the vital truth that God is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where would we be if God would mark iniquity?
2. What was the price paid for us to have our sins forgiven?
3. What must we do to be able to receive forgiveness?
4. Why is it so necessary for us to forgive others?
5. What does it mean to repent with godly sorrow for our sins?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How happy are those from whom the heavy load of guilt and condemnation has been lifted and taken away! It means so much for one to be conscious and aware of their sinful condition and guilt before God. The Scripture declares that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But many people are not aware of their sinful condition. God gave us His law in Moses to help us to see and recognize our sinful condition. We must come face to face with the reality of our wretched and lost condition before God. If we miss that vital point we will not have any drawing to Christ. God created us to live holy and righteously in this present world. But sin took over and brought us all into condemnation and a lost condition, with no hope. God did not want to leave us in that awful state, so He has made provision in His grace and through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ for us to be forgiven of our sins and to be cleansed from the very root and power of sin. We must confess our sins and acknowledge our wicked condition of heart and mind. And we must change our ways, quit the sin business and conform our hearts and minds to God's law of righteousness and true holiness. And we must be willing to forgive our fellow man of any sin that has been done against us. Oh, it means so much to qualify for the forgiveness of our

sins! Just to say we believe on the Lord Jesus for forgiveness is not enough. We must repent and change our ways to please and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Words are inadequate to express the gratitude and relief that one feels when they have been forgiven of their heavy debt of sin. Jesus allowed us to see His great love and mercy for mankind in action when the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him the woman taken in adultery and inquired what should be done to her. The Law said that she should be stoned but Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." When her accusers left, being convicted of their own conscience, Jesus set her free with the words that thrilled her sin defiled heart, "Neither do I condemn thee" accompanied with the admonition, "Go and sin no more." Instead of condemning her to death, Jesus gave her life.

Probably one of the greatest testimonies of the forgiving spirit of Christ was when He prayed for those who were crucifying Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His true spirit of love beamed brightly in that dark hour of suffering. Even in His agony He still remembered the needs of those around Him. When the thief on the cross implored Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, our Savior's heart of mercy graciously granted pardon and welcomed him that day into the paradise of God.

Jesus extended Himself to visit and eat with those who were in need of a Savior for He rejoices to forgive those who repent and He said in Luke 15:10 the angels of God also rejoice. When the scribes and Pharisees complained about His friendliness to sinners, He gave the parable of a man searching for his lost sheep. When the straying one is found, the man calls his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him for he is happy he recovered his lost animal. Jesus told of a woman's joy in finding a piece of silver that had been lost and the joy of a father receiving his wayward, penitent son with open arms. The sinner that repents will assuredly find a heavenly Father that loves to forgive and enjoys restoring the bond of spiritual fellowship. May we be in tune with the Father so we can also rejoice to forgive, and with open arms of mercy receive those who repent.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

JANUARY 11, 2009

HEALING FOR SOUL AND BODY

Psalm 4 1:4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

Hosea 6:1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

14:4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Matthew 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

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

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

MEMORY VERSE: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Hebrews 13:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered wounds and bruises in His body and shed His blood for the healing of the souls of men from sin and transgression, and for the healing of the physical body from sickness, disease, and injury. Jesus can and does still save souls from sin and heal sick and afflicted bodies today—all who will pray to Him with faith believing.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Hosea 14:4, "*backsliding*": Turning away and departing from God. "*freely*": Abundantly and bountifully.

II Chronicles 7:14, "*heal their land*": This is a spiritual healing, not for literal land, but for their ways of life and attitude of hearts, and the solving of heartaches and problems of life in general.

Matthew 8:17, "*took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses*": Christ accepted our diseases and afflictions to bear them for us, and to remove our physical sicknesses and injuries.

James 5:13, "*afflicted*": Suffer ill or adversity.

Verse 16, "*effectual*": That which will accomplish and bring results. "*fervent*": Strong and steadfast.

Verse 17, "*subject to like passions as we are*": Had feelings like us.

Hebrews 13:8, "*same*": Has not changed nor discontinued.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our first lesson we studied the scriptures that portray the wonderful benefit from the Lord our God of His forgiveness for the sins of mankind. Today we will survey the great blessing of the healing that God offers in His plan of salvation for humanity. Are we, as the human race, in need of any healing? Let us notice what Isaiah 1:4-6 says about Israel and which can be applied to the whole habitable realm of earth: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye

will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is nosoundness in it; but wounds, bruises, and putrifying (*running*) sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified (*softened*) with ointment." Just take a good look at humanity today, and what do you see? There is trouble, disease, wickedness, strife, and all kinds of evil on every hand. Do we need a healing? You had better believe it.

Our lesson portrays the healing that God has sent to the world through Jesus Christ. It is healing for the inner man from the ills of sin and transgression. It is healing for the mind from depression, worry, and ignorance. And it is healing for the physical body and its many varied diseases and infirmities. We have selected the various scriptures that show the healing that God is offering to us in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ to the world. In the Old Testament we see God's extended offer of healing for mankind. And in the New Testament we see Christ the Great Physician going forth with healing in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. And we have also the counsel of one of Christ's servants, counsel and instruction on how to obtain healing for the soul and body. Our Memory Verse declares that Jesus Christ is forever the same, which implies that what He did on earth in the way of healing He is still able and willing to minister to us today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of healing is mankind in need of today?
2. What does the healing of the inner man accomplish for us?
3. What vital steps do we need to take to receive healing?
4. Why should the healing of the soul be the most important?
5. Is Christ still able and willing to heal body and soul today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are many Christian professing churches and people who discredit the idea of trusting in God for the healing of the physical body, sad to say. It is so generally believed that doctors and medicine are available and though we can trust God for our souls, we must resort to the medical profession for the help we need for our physical bodies. They say that the

days of miracles are past, and that God does not heal the body today as it was done in the days of Christ and the apostles. Thus the majority of society resorts to doctors and medicine and drugs for bodily relief from sickness and disease. The scriptures in our lesson, however, point us yet today to the truth that Jesus Christ is still in the healing business, and that God is pleased with us consecrating our bodies to the Lord for His healing and loving care.

Then there are those who believe that healing is still possible, but that we need to employ both, that is, the aid from doctors and medicine along with prayer. There is much controversy about this. We should really seek the Lord with all of our heart to get His Holy Spirit leading and mind about it. Let us ask ourselves this question: Is the healing of Christ still miraculous and effective as it was when Christ was here on earth in His ministry? And if it is and is still available to us today, why should we think that we need the aid of the arm of flesh along with the healing of Christ? It is a matter that we had better earnestly seek the Lord about.

Then there are those who consecrate their bodies to the Lord and trust fully in Him for healing and are determined to do so for better or for worse, and to live or to die. This same power to heal according to the teachings of the New Testament covers the promise of the resurrection of the body in that last great day. The real thrust of the faith and hope of the true child of God is not for this present life. It is projected toward the future, and the hope of the Gospel is not the preservation of this mortal state of corruption, but rather for that blessed eternal world to come and the immortality promised therein. Thus it is the truth that to trust fully in God for healing, to live or to die, is really the thing that pleases God and will accomplish what we really need. If we cling to this life and draw back from death, we are in danger of losing our precious soul. Jesus said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12:25

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As I studied the Scriptures in today's lesson, a pattern began to emerge—we might call it, "steps toward spiritual healing."

The first vital step is to *recognize* my sick condition. I need to be broken-hearted that my own *wicked* ways and doings have brought about a terrible sickness in my soul. This recognition is sadly missing in many people who say they want to “get saved.” There is an emptiness in their words and in the experience they claim to get, and they soon “give up” in disgust.

Secondly, I must *repent*, or turn around; where I was going stubbornly away from God, I must now *return* to Him, and forsake my own way and the sins I loved. If I short-cut on this step, and don’t really forsake and hate the sins I am doing, I haven’t really *returned* and the healing does not take place.

I must now *receive* His promise to love me freely and forgive my sins as I repent of them, and *receive*—by whole-hearted faith and reliance upon the wounds, stripes and bruises He bore for *my* sins—His saving and healing power. I also *receive* the message that the elders and Gospel workers have preached, and believe that God hears us as they pray with me.

There is a world of difference in the words “accept” and “receive.” When I receive His salvation, I don’t just nod my head and say, “Nice gift, thanks,” but I reach out and take it and make it mine. Gladness and gratitude overwhelm me now, as I *realize* what it cost Him to save me.

“You didn’t have to save me, but You did, or send your Spirit to sway me, but You did, You didn’t have to love me, save me, heal me, but You did.” —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JANUARY 18, 2009

THE BLESSING OF BEING POOR AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

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

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

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

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

Zephaniah 3:11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.

12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

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

II Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

MEMORY VERSE: Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? James 2:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is the person who is fully aware and senses his own spiritual poverty, need of grace, mercy and help from God who will be able to obtain the true riches of His salvation and holiness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 72:1, "*the king's son*": Originally this is referring to David's son, Solomon, but spiritually it is pointing to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Verse 2, "*judge*": Rule and make righteous decree. "*poor*": The depressed or cast down in adversity and sore needs.

Verse 4, "*needy*": Destitute and in want.

Verse 13, "*spare*": Have pity and compassion; shield and protect.

Verse 14, "*precious shall their blood be in his sight*": The saving of their souls from death and damnation will be esteemed as valuable and worthy of the price He will have to pay for their redemption.

Isaiah 29:18, "*deaf and the blind*": This is principally referring to the spiritual ears and eyes of the soul which will be given sense to discern the message from the glad tidings of God's Book, the Holy Scriptures. "*out of obscurity*": From the depths of their gloom and darkness of soul they will be able to see and hear the wonderful message of God's love.

Verse 19, "*meek*": From the same word as "*poor*"; humble, lowly, and depressed.

Isaiah 66:2, "*contrite*": The smitten and wounded and downcast in heart and mind. "*trembleth*": Has deep reverence and earnest regard.

Zephaniah 3:11, "*not be ashamed for all thy doings*": This means that in Christ we will be forgiven and not have to bear the consequence for our transgressions. "*take away them that rejoice in thy pride*": God will remove from the heart all pride and vanity through the humiliation and suffering of His Son, Jesus. "*no more be haughty because of my holy mountain*": In the new Mount Zion, the new Jerusalem, the Church of God we will not be lifted up with pride, but will be filled with thanksgiving and praise to God.

Verse 12, "*afflicted*": Weak and helpless.

Matthew 5:3, "*poor in spirit*": Empty and destitute of importance and self-esteem; beggarly and without self-help.

II Corinthians 8:9, "*through his poverty*": Following Christ's example of being poor, humble and obedient to the death of the cross, it's suffering and shame, He willingly submitted to the will of God and permitted the evil men to crucify Him. It was through Him being thus obedient to the death of the cross that we attain to the true riches of godliness and peace.

Revelation 3:18, "*buy of me*": Obtain and purchase with faith and obedience as I have done. "*gold tried in the fire*": This is the spiritual wealth of heart and soul obtained by enduring and being faithful in the fiery trials of life that come to us as followers of Christ Jesus. "*eyesalve*": This is a figurative expression of enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit in the inner man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our Bible Lesson today we are inspired to dwell on a most vital point to consider in being qualified to receive the wonderful benefits of the Lord our God and His Son, Jesus. And that is being poor in spirit and being aware of the depths of our need of their gracious blessings and help. If a person is not conscious of their poverty and need of the Creator's favor and benefits, there will be little or no effort to procure them. One of the horrible effects of man's fall into sin and transgression was the element of pride that blinds the mind and makes one unaware of their true condition of poverty and need.

We begin this series of lessons with the 72nd Psalm, which is the prayer of David for his son Solomon who was to reign in his stead. And it is very much observed that the benefit of his kingdom was to be toward the poor and needy. And it is very evident that it all was a prophecy of Jesus Christ, the spiritual Son of David. Then from the 34th Psalm, another writing of David, we find that touching expression of what the Lord did for "this poor man." Going to Isaiah 29 we find that, because of blindness and a deep sleep upon the people, the heavenly vision is like a sealed book, that neither the learned nor the unlearned could read. The people were drawing near to God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him. But then the LORD declared that the deaf and blind would see and hear what the message was, and the meek and the poor would rejoice in it. Our passage in Zephaniah has the same expression of God's special favor to the poor.

We then have Christ's and Paul's message concerning the poor in spirit sharing in the riches of Christ's kingdom, and it is echoed by our Memory Verse from James 2:5. It is a vital truth that everyone would do well to take heed to.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it that the poor and needy are especially blessed?

2. What does the spirit of pride and self-esteem do to a man?
3. What can one do to assume a spirit of poverty and need?
4. How did Christ become poor?
5. What can we obtain from Him to be truly rich?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To be poor in spirit, we must be poor in the estimation of ourselves, poor in sense of importance, poor in position and title, poor in self-confidence, poor in pleasing self, poor in sense of reputation, poor in worldly honor, poor in feelings of success (only by the grace of God), poor in outward beauty (seeking inward beauty), poor in sense of worth and value (less than the least of all saints, Ephesians. 3:8), poor in expecting honor or position, poor in sense of accomplishment, poor in attitude about ourselves (sensing our need for improvement), poor by being aware of our need, poor in the sense of our abilities, poor in arguing and defending ourselves, poor in taking offense and getting hurt, poor in self promotion, poor in trying to outdo someone else, and very poor in self-justification. May God help us. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus encouraged us in Matthew to "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29. To learn more of our Savior, we refer to the letter Paul wrote to the Philippians. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5. You mean we have available to us an avenue by which we can have the same mind of Christ? Absolutely. How can we obtain this same mind?

"Fulfill ye my joy" JOY—Jesus first, Others second and You third.

"Having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind"—How much love did the Savior have for us? It was a love that cost Him His life. For "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13.

"Let nothing be done through strife, or vainglory;"—When the people were desiring to make Jesus their King, it was always interesting to see how subtly He drifted through the crowd so that they could not find Him.

"In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves"—Christ had such an humble spirit when dealing with the adulterous woman. He stooped and wrote on the ground in the midst of the accusations toward her. When He told the men to cast the first stone if they were sinless, He could have actually cast the first stone Himself for He was without sin! But He was not interested in the death of the woman but esteemed her highly when He said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant:" Our Savior demonstrated this lowliness when He washed the feet of the disciples. Just imagine—the Savior of the world kneeling down to wash all of the dirt, manure and filth that was common to those walking in sandals or barefoot. This was a task usually performed by the lowest ranking servant.

"He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death." When Jesus was in the garden, He wrestled with His flesh but finally consented with "Not my will but Thine be done."

So we see that our Lord is ready to give us His mind if we carefully walk in His footsteps and follow the examples He has left before us. There is power in a humble and lowly life in Christ.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JANUARY 25, 2009

REDEEMING OUR LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION

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

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

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

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

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

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

MEMORY VERSE: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The power of sin and transgression against God's law of holiness brought spiritual death to the souls of men and the sentence of eternal destruction in the lake of fire. But, through the suffering death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all who yield their souls and bodies to His obedience can be made free from sin and be perfected in righteousness and holiness before God and escape the sentence of eternal destruction.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 6:16, "*yield*": Submit to, recommend, agree with, and give aid. "*sin*": To err and to miss the mark; transgress and go contrary against. "*obedience*": Attentive hearkening, compliance and submission.

Verse 17, "*doctrine*": Instruction and teaching.

Verse 18, "*became the servants*": Became enslaved or subject to.

Verse 19, "*your members*": These are the various parts of one's body that are used for conversation and action, such as the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the arms, the hands, the limbs, the feet, etc. "*iniquity unto iniquity*": From one lawless and wicked practice to farther and deeper ones. "*servants to righteousness unto holiness*": Being subject to what is right and good and progressing on farther to entire sanctification and supreme love to God.

Verse 23, "*wages*": Payment, result, and consequence. "*gift of God*": A special present or reward God lovingly bestows on those who please Him.

Matthew 7:13, "*strait*": Narrow and difficult. "*broad*": Spacious and easy to travel. "*destruction*": Damnation; eternal ruin and loss.

Verse 14, "*narrow*": Constricted and requiring much press and effort to pass through.

Romans 3:17, The Greek says, "Be fellow-imitators of me, brothers, and take heed to those walking as we do as we are an example to you."

Verse 18, "*enemies of the cross of Christ*": Those who are hateful and hostile against the self-denial and shame that the cross of Christ brings upon the flesh.

Verse 19, "*whose God is their belly*": Their fleshly appetite is the God they serve and follow. "*whose glory is in their shame*": They glory and vaunt themselves in fleshly practices that are shameful. One great thing in our society is the public undress and exposing of the body. They glory in showing their nakedness, which in God's sight is a shame and disgrace.

Verse 20, "*our conversation is in heaven*": We are citizens of the heavenly country.

Verse 21, The Greek says, "Who will change the body of our humiliation for it to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working of His ability which is to subject all things unto himself."

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we will study another one of our God's great benefits as expressed in Psalm 103:4, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." To redeem means to pay the ransom price for the return of what is lost. The whole human race was captivated by satan and sin and a ransom price of the blood of an innocent and sinless person was required to redeem us and bring us up from corruption and eternal ruin to life and immortality. And this was another one of the benefits along with forgiveness of sins and healing of diseases.

Man was doomed for eternal destruction because of his sinful condition before God. But God's plan was for a Savior to come down from Heaven and be born as a human being and pay the ransom price for our redemption with His own precious blood. This was accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul brings this out in his writings. Jesus paid the price for our salvation from sin, but there is something that each one of us must do. As our scripture text in Romans 6:16-23 shows, there is a yielding to God that we must do in order to receive this victory over sin. We must obey from the heart the teachings of Christ. We must quit yielding to the flesh and the lusts thereof and exercise submission and obedience to God's law.

Matthew 7:13-14 are the very words of the Savior Himself. He is pointing us to turn from the wide gate and broad way of sin and evil and strive to enter in at the strait gate and the narrow way of righteousness and holiness. In Luke 13:24 Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." It is going to take a determined and violent effort to turn from the way of sin and take the path that leads to glory.

Then our text in Philippians 3:17-21 tells how some reject the cross and the narrow way to follow after the flesh and the world. We must turn from sin and be born from above if we would have the citizenship of Heaven and be changed from this corruptible body to that of Christ's glorified body.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What put mankind on the road to destruction?
2. Who paid the redemptive price to save us from destruction?

3. What do we have to do to lay hold on this salvation?
4. Why is the gate and the way to life so narrow and difficult?
5. How can we be sure to be redeemed from eternal destruction?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

One of the main points in Paul's instructions is our responsibility to cease from yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. He mentions it twice in this 6th chapter of Romans—in verse 13, and in verse 19 of our lesson. It is a very critical point to remember. We are all free moral agents with the power of choice. Man chose the way of disobedience in the beginning, and it took a powerful decision and strong will for Christ to obey the Father's will to make possible our redemption. And now it will take a strong will and undivided effort on our part to yield to the will of God and enter the strait gate and walk the narrow way to life. Every man has to make the choice. People who are enemies of the cross, whose end is destruction, and whose God is their belly, and who glory in their shame and mind earthly things do so at their own will. We can be strong to choose the citizenship of Heaven offered in Jesus Christ and attain to His resurrection. It is up to us to take heed and decide what will be our endless destiny.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God has given us so much to help us maximize this life and to give us a hope of eternal life. One song reads, "Who but the Christian is happy and free, filled with the glory of God? None in creation so happy as he, washed and redeemed in the wonderful blood." Another verse says, "Tell me not then, of the pleasures that sting, coiled under roses of pride; None but the holy and innocent sing out of a bosom where pleasures abide." It is a blessing to lay our heads on our pillows at night with a tranquil peace, knowing it is well with our soul.

As children of God, let us ever be thanking and praising God for His convicting spirit that helped us to see that once we were on the broad way heading to hell; but now through His blood, repentance, humility, and obedience to His Word, we are on the narrow way that is leading to life. We can also praise Him for His help when we turned to the right or left and yet He

was patient and faithful to show us our error and to restore us. I have observed some, who have made light of the carefulness of those in the narrow way, pay a high price for their looseness, carelessness and worldliness. "Sin will cost you, far more than you want to pay."
—Bro. Bob Wilson



FEBRUARY 1, 2009

WONDERFUL PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

Psalm 102:16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

Psalm 32:6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: After Christ triumphed over sin through His death and glorious resurrection, He passed into the heavenly places to sit at the right hand of Almighty God on our behalf. This gives us access to come to God in prayer continually for the help we need in this life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 102:17, "*regard*": Turn to; be moved by. "*destitute*": Poor, helpless, and needy. "*not despise*": Not count lightly, but highly esteem and be moved by.

Verse 18, "*shall be created*": Shall be born again and made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 32:6, "*floods of great waters*": The overwhelming woes and troubles of this earthly life.

Hebrews 4:14, "*profession*": The confession, testimony, and acknowledgement of the truth about Christ and the ministry of His love and grace.

Verse 15, "*touched*": Able to sympathize with.

Verse 16, "*boldly*": With unwavering confidence and assurance.

Romans 8:26, "*helpeth our infirmities*": Joins in to take hold of our part of the burdens of life. "*maketh intercession*": Pleads our case before God. "*groanings*": Cries and sighs in sympathy to our sorrow and pain.

Verse 32, "*spared not*": Was not lenient and did not release Christ from the suffering He had to endure.

Verse 33. This verse is saying, "Who will bring accusation against the chosen of God if God is justifying them?"

Verse 34, This verse is saying, "Who can condemn us when Christ, who died and was risen again, is making intercession for us?"

Phillipians. 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing*": Do not be anxious about anything. "*supplication*": Making petitions and earnest pleadings.

Verse 7, "*peace of God*": Comfort and assurance of God's faithful love. "*keep*": Guard and protect.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is concerning another of God's great benefits that He has made available to us, and that is the wonderful privilege of coming to Him with earnest petitions and requests for help and grace for the needs that arise while in this world of trouble and woe. It is a blessing so precious and valuable to us. From the beautiful 102nd Psalm we have the declaration that God will regard the prayer of the needy soul and not count it lightly. This will be because Christ is appearing in glory on our behalf. This Psalm, as verse 18 says, was written for the time to come, that is, the New Testament age when Christ would be seated at the right hand of God as our great High Priest. He, who was once tried and tempted as a mortal like we are, has been glorified and placed right next to God Almighty Himself. Oh, what a glorious truth! He ascended up on high to appear in the presence of God for us, a great Representative to plead our cause here below.

Hebrews 4:14-16 pictures it as a throne of grace set in the heavens, with our help and happiness in mind. "What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!" We can come with confidence and assurance that God is taking heed to our cries and pleas rising from the many needs that press us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He, God, was in Christ when He was here in the flesh. And then Romans 8:26-27 shows that the Holy Spirit, which He pours out upon us as His righteous children, is joining in with the intercessory process, making another powerful contact with God on our account.

Then, on down in Romans 8:31-34 are more emphatic truths of Christ and His ministry for our sake. Oh, the wonderful and powerful virtue that flows from our Savior to us continually! There is no cause nor need of failure or defeat. He overcame the world and will help us to overcome the world.

Philippians 4:6-7 agrees with it all and shows what peace we can have in our souls, free from worry and fear, confident of God's faithful help. Thank the Lord for this blessed benefit that we can partake of all the way! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the throne of grace so needed by us here below?
2. What makes Christ's presence in Heaven so beneficial to us?
3. How does Christ qualify to be such a worthy intercessor?
4. How does the Holy Spirit help in this great ministry?
5. Why does it not benefit us to be anxious and upset about things?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our lesson today we can see the depths and great value there is in the wonderful privilege and benefit of being able to communicate with God, having a faithful High Priest to represent us at His own right hand. We were taught as children and young people the need of prayer and how we should call upon the Lord in times of need and trouble. But we did not realize the depths of what it means and what it has taken to have this wonderful privilege. We needed someone to make a vital link between us and the Almighty. This association between God and man had been broken and disrupted on account of sin. It had to be restored, and the close relation and fellowship repaired. And, thanks be to God, He brought it forth for us mortals to enjoy again!

Jesus left Heaven and came down and was made in the likeness of men. He had a work to accomplish and He was obedient to His Father in fulfilling it to the full. He allowed Himself to be cruelly slain, but came forth from death a Mighty Conqueror. He then ascended up on high and sat down at the right hand of God and has been there ever since, interceding on our behalf. He sends forth His Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of His saints, and the Holy Spirit goes from us to Him with petitions and prayers beyond the power of words. This thing is real and precious to our hearts, the greatest treasure we have ever known! And it will continue to work and bless the people of God until the day that He declares it is enough, and will burst through the clouds to come and take us to our Heavenly Home forever! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Bro. E. E. Byrum wrote about his visit to northern India in 1904. While there he ascended into the Himalayan Mountains near the border of Tibet. In this area he occasionally noticed long white strips of cloth dangling in the air with the other end fastened to bamboo poles. On this strip of cloth was written a short prayer. The people in that area believed that as often as these flags waved in the wind, so often their prayer ascended to Heaven. These people felt this was an easy way for them to offer up their prayers. He reported that further on he arrived at a city where there was a temple with about forty prayer-flags surrounding it. Inside the temple he described a wheel about six feet tall and as wide as a barrel. This drum contained thousands of prayers, each written on a thin strip of fibrous paper. The petitioner would turn a crank affixed to this apparatus which would cause it to revolve. A bell at the top would signal each turn of the wheel. The people believed that each turn of the wheel would cause all of the prayers written inside to be offered to their deity on their behalf. The more affluent people of this culture would even hire others to crank the prayer barrel for them, believing that this would please their god and thereby obtain greater favor in his sight.

Surely we all understand that the Lord is looking for a more personal relationship with us through the avenue of prayer. We do not move the heart of God with repetition or noise. However, truthfulness, fervency, humility and gratitude are qualities of heart that do attract His attention. When our prayers possess these qualities and our petitions rise to Him from a believing, obedient heart then we can rest our cares in His mighty arms knowing that we are His child and all will be well with us.

It is proper that we call on the Lord when we are in need, but let us not forget Him when all seems to be going well. For in these times we can grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord without the pressures of severe adversity. The strength that we gain from that growth will enable us to produce more fruit in the times of trial because our fellowship with the Savior will be enhanced and we will understand Him better. It is His mercy and goodness that enables us to have enjoyable times, so always include Jesus, our dearest friend.

Let us fill our prayers with thanksgiving and praise for the special blessings He sends to gladden our life. Doing so not only extols the name of Jesus, it also adds extra cheer to our life by reflecting on His wonderful love. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey

FEBRUARY 8, 2009

THE PEACE OF GOD

Isaiah 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

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

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

19 When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

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

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

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

John 16:33 These things I have 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.

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

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Obeying God's law and trusting in His faithfulness brings a calmness and quietness into the heart and mind that nothing in this world can ever give.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 32:15, "*Until*": This verse is part of the sentence that begins with verse 13 which shows the woes and distress and desolation that would be upon humanity because of their sinful state. This condition would continue "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This is pointing to the plan of salvation and peace that Christ would accomplish for us. "*the wilderness be a fruitful field*": This means that the barren and fruitless hearts and lives of men would become a wonderful growth of the fruits of divine love and the Holy Spirit. "*the fruitful field be counted for a forest*": This means that the fruitful field of the soul redeemed by the grace of Christ will be so thick and abundant that it will be reckoned to be like a forest. Such can be the abundant life of the born again and Spirit-filled New Testament Saint of God.

Verse 19, The Septuagint Greek translation of this verse is very remarkable: "And if the hail shall come down, it shall not come upon you, and they that dwell in the forests shall be in confidence, as those in the plain country." This is a good description of how the peace of God can prevail in our hearts regardless of the circumstances of our mortal state.

Isaiah 26:3, "*perfect peace*": Abounding and continuing unbroken peace.

Psalms 119:165, "*nothing shall offend them*": There is no obstacle or cause for them to stumble.

Psalms 37:11, "*the meek shall inherit the earth*": The lowly and gentle shall inherit the land. In this Psalm the two terms, "land" and "earth" are used several times and they both come from the same Hebrew word. Jesus quoted this in Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." It is referring, not to a literal possession of this present earth, but a spiritual inheritance of the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ. It is attaining to His holiness, victory over sin, and being accounted worthy to be a part of His resurrection unto immortality. This is the land that we can possess now and have as our inheritance unto eternal life.

John 14:27, "*peace*": Calmness and quietness in the soul, free from alarm or fear. "*troubled*": Anxious, agitated, and disturbed.

John 16:33, "*tribulation*": Pressure, trouble, and affliction.

Colossians 3:15, "*let the peace of God rule*": Let nothing in this life disturb the inward rest of your soul.

James 3:17, "*first pure*": The most important and vital ingredient. "*without partiality*": Treating everyone as equal in God's sight. "*without hypocrisy*": Sincere and with no pretence.

Philippians 4:6, "*careful*": Anxious or worried. "*supplication*": Asking with earnestness.

Verse 7, "*passeth all understanding*": Goes beyond what we can think.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the wonderful benefit, brought out in the Scriptures, of the peace that we can have in our hearts and lives through the victory that Christ has accomplished for us to possess. There has been much talk and effort in world history of having peace, but it is so much like what Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 6:14, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Our lesson shows the real peace that we can have in this troubled world, a peace we can have in Christ through believing and following Him. We have it foretold in the prophecies of Isaiah and the Psalms, and then promised by Christ Himself to us if we will follow and obey Him. Then Paul and James bring out clearly the peace of God that we can have to rule our hearts and minds and keep us from the strife and evil turmoil in this sinful world.

This peace is a triumphant peace that does not depend on surrounding conditions and human endeavor. It is soul rest and assurance that enables us to rise on wings of faith and soar above the strife and turmoil of this world. It is a peace we can have every day and all the way. It will eliminate worry, strife, discord, anxiety, despair and frustration. We can have it abundantly through the triumphant grace of the Spirit from on high.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the fruitful field that God's peace will grow in?
2. How can we be kept in perfect peace?
3. What will the peace of God enable us to enjoy?
4. Why cannot the world give us this wonderful peace?
5. How did Jesus overcome this world?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Isaiah prophesied that "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," and He would be called the "Prince of Peace." He further said that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end..." Isaiah 9:6-7. It is true that Jesus Christ brought peace to this world. He is the Prince of Peace. But it is to be understood that the peace He offers is not brought about through weapons of war and the cunning craftiness of men. It is an inward peace, a quietness and assurance in the inner man that will reign when all is turmoil and strife around us. It is one of the benefits that comes with obtaining forgiveness from our sins. We are made to be at peace with God. God is no longer angry with us. He speaks peace, peace to those who are near and to those who are afar off. (Isaiah 57:19.) But there are those who will not allow the peace of God to effect their lives. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57:21.

We can receive the peace of God into our hearts, but we must give up our selfish desires, ways and thoughts. We must humble ourselves to walk with God in His peace and holiness. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. We must forgive our fellow men of their trespasses against us. All bitterness, strife, envy and jealousy must be put away from us. The peace of God brings quietness and stillness to the soul; it also brings harmony and happiness to the marriage, to the family and to the neighborhood. The apostle Paul, bringing to a close his second letter to the Corinthians, said: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." II Corinthians 13:11. He also counseled in Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9. There is but one way to have true peace, and that is through following Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There Is A Peace

There is a peace that cometh after sorrow,
Of hope surrendered, not of hope fulfilled.
A peace that looketh not upon tomorrow,
But calmly on a tempest that is stilled.

A peace that lives not now in joy's excesses,
Nor in the happy life of love secure.
But in the unerring strength the heart possesses,
In conflicts won while learning to endure.

It is a peace in sacrifice secluded,
A life subdued, from will and passion free.
'Tis not the peace which over Eden brooded,
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.

—Selected from *Streams in the Desert*
—Submitted by Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



FEBRUARY 15, 2009

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

26 ...The Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 ...When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot receive them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

MEMORY VERSE: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Romans 14:17.

CNETRAL THOUGHT: After Jesus had accomplished the will of God for the salvation of the souls of men, He ascended back up to the right hand of God and, from there, He pours out God's Holy Spirit to live and move in the hearts of all who believe, trust, and obey Him. It is truly the greatest Gift God ever bestowed upon mankind.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Joel 2:28, "*pour out*": Shed forth, bestow, and fill to overflowing. "*upon all flesh*": Upon this mortal realm, making it available to all humanity. "*old men*": Elder, aged, and advanced in years and experience. "*dream dreams*": Have communication with the eternal Heavens. "*young men*": Choice youth who have been purified from sin and called of God. "*see visions*": Have revealed the things eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man. I Corinthians 2:9-10.

Verse 32, "*delivered*": Rescued and saved from the power and dominion of sin and death. "*mount Zion, Jerusalem*": This is not speaking of old literal Zion and Jerusalem, but rather, as Galatians 4:26 says, "...Jerusalem, which is above, is free,

which is the mother of us all." Jerusalem above means Jerusalem in the Spirit of God, the spiritual city of holy saints of the Most High God.

John 7:38, "*out of his belly*": From the depths of his inner most being.

Verse 39, "*should receive*": The Greek says, "were about to receive." "*Holy Ghost*": more properly expressed "Holy Spirit." Either term can be used, however, but the term "Holy Spirit" is more fitting and descriptive. "*not yet glorified*": Not yet ascended to the right hand of God.

John 14:16, "*I will pray the Father*": Christ, at the right hand of God, will petition and make special request to the Heavenly Father. "*another Comforter*": An intercessor and means of consolation to take Christ's place, as Christ was to be taken up to the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit would take the place of Jesus with His disciples. "*abide*": Stay, remain, and continue.

Verse 17 "*Spirit of truth*": The Holy Presence of the Almighty God within the spirit of man to guide and make known the true essence of the Scriptures. "*dwelleth with you*": The Holy Spirit was near, around, and in their presence. "*shall be in you*": But when the Holy Spirit would be sent from Christ at the right hand of God, He would enter into the very heart and spirit of man.

John 15:26, "*testify of me*": Bear witness concerning Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, revealing Him and making Him vividly real to the heart of man.

John 16:13, "*guide into all truth*": Open up and enlighten our understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the Word of God in completeness. "*whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*": This shows the glorious link between the Holy Spirit in the heart of man and the Almighty God Who sent Him forth. The Holy Spirit is the communicative bond between God, Christ and the soul of man. God speaks through Christ, and the Spirit conveys it to the soul of man. And then in Romans 8:26-27 Paul declares that the Holy Spirit makes intercession to God for us. So it is a wonderful two-way intercom of communication between the Saints and the Lord!

Acts 2:1, "*with one accord*": United in the same mind and spirit. "*in one place*": Not divided, but in perfect agreement.

Verse 4, "*tongues*": Languages.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about the most wonderful gift that God ever gave to us mortals. God has blessed us with many precious and beneficial blessings, but the gift of His sweet Holy Spirit to come and live within us to strengthen, guide, comfort, enlighten, preserve, and be our communicative link with Him is, by far, the greatest bestowal of His love and goodness. Just think: the great Almighty Creator of the heavens and earth and all things therein would condescend to dwell within our hearts! He does not want to dwell in gigantic temples made with hands, but chooses rather to look to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at His Word. (Isaiah 66:2.)

Our first scripture was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost when he told the people what was happening before their wondering eyes and ears. Then we have our Savior's words, telling His disciples in His last meeting with them before He was crucified, of the coming of the Holy Spirit and what it would mean to them. Jesus then faced the cruel death of the cross with a joy set before Him of what God was to accomplish for His Church. And then, after He had ascended out of their sight, His disciples, at His directions, went back into Jerusalem to await the coming of the precious promise of the Father. Oh, how wonderful it is to be blessed with the indwelling Holy Spirit! We cannot afford to miss and be void of it in this life. It is the assurance of our being partakers of the great resurrection of the righteous in that last great day.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God say the Holy Spirit would enable us to do?
2. What did Jesus promise His disciples if He would go away?
3. What are the various things the Holy Spirit can do for us?
4. Why did Jesus call Him the "Spirit of truth?"
5. How is the Holy Spirit much more effective than Jesus Himself?

COMMENTS APPLICATION

Man's fall into sin put him at variance with his Maker. Therefore the Spirit of God cannot and will not inhabit the

unclean temple of man. Look at the strife, discord, confusion and terrible conditions that prevail upon humanity. The flesh and its lusts and desires are the ruling factor. Man knows not how to keep under his body and bring it into proper control. But God has accomplished a plan of salvation that can deliver man, and give him the greatest Gift that can ever be given. Jesus paid the price to make this Gift accessible. But, in order for us to have it, we must repent of our sins and turn away from all evil and seek earnestly to walk in the light of His Word. The Holy Spirit yearns to inhabit the heart of man, but He will not come and live in an unclean temple. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit is indeed a precious gift. The Holy Spirit gives guidance, strength, deliverance, power, comfort, intercession and prophecy. It is never to be taken for granted.

Let us reflect for a moment on the example of Saul of the Old Testament. "And there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." This was a man chosen by God. We have many examples of what mighty works was wrought through Saul because of the Spirit of the Lord on his life:

"And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them." I Samuel 10:9-10.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent." I Samuel 11:6-7.

But something tragic happened to Saul for in I Samuel 16:14 we find "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." We now see a different Saul. How did this happen? Where did it start? It started when Saul became impatient and disobedient. This led

to blame of others, self-pity and rebellion. He no longer had power in his life, much less guidance by the Spirit of the Lord. From that time on he was plagued with an evil spirit. This continued till his death even though he tried to get relief through music and songs. Jealousy ruled him. He was very hateful and vengeful. Since he could no longer seek the Lord for wisdom, he sought advice from the witch of Endor just as Samuel had predicted "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is an iniquity and idolatry." Sadly, Saul ended his own life during a difficult battle. He was such a different man than the one that God had appointed—all because of the departure of the Holy Spirit.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



FEBRUARY 22, 2009

THE WONDERFUL LIGHT OF GOD

Genesis 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

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

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

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.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light....

I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Ephesians 5:13-14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God created man with a need to be illuminated and instructed with knowledge and understanding. So He made provision through His Word and Holy Spirit for us to be thus enlightened of His goodness and His holy purpose. Christ came into the world to make this Light manifest and accessible to every person who senses their darkness and desires to be enlightened.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 119:105, "*Thy word*": The communication of God to man. "*lamp unto my feet*": This can be likened unto a small personal lamp or candle that gives one light for his or her individual life and conduct. "*a light unto my path*": This is a bright glowing luminary that lights up one's surrounding, his relations with others, and the course that he is taking through this time world. The Word of God is both of these to those who desire to please their Creator.

Verse 130, "*The entrance of thy words*": This is the opening, disclosure, and revelation of God's Word to the heart of man, that makes known what is contained in God's communication to us. "*giveth understanding*": Enlightens and opens knowledge so that we can take it in. "*the simple*": One who is keenly aware of their ignorance and need for instruction.

John 1:1, "*The Word*": The Divine Expression and Communication of God Almighty, which was manifested to mankind in Christ Jesus.

Verse 5, "*darkness*": Spiritual darkness; ignorance combined with error and deception. "*comprehended it not*": The darkness did not overtake, overcome, or quench down the light. When light shines, the darkness is dispelled unless there are obstructions and blinds raised up in the heart to keep it out. But when light and knowledge comes to an open mind and heart that light enters into the individual and darkness passes away.

Verse 9, "*That was the true Light*": He (Christ) was the all-revealing Light of God. "*lighteth*": Enlightens and makes known God's will to the heart of man.

John 8:12, "*followeth me*": Is in the same way with me. "*shall not walk in darkness*": Shall in no way walk in darkness.

John 12:35, "*Yet a little while*": For a short time. "*Walk while ye have the light*": Readily respond in obedience to the Light when it shines on your path. "*lest darkness come upon you*": That the darkness will not overtake you.

Verse 36, "*believe in the light*": Accept, obey, hold fast, keep up with, follow and continue in the illuminating light of the Gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 5:13-14. In the Greek the expression is: "But all things being reprov'd are revealed by the light, for light reveals everything. Therefore He says, Arise, sleeping one, and stand up from the dead ones, and Christ will shine on you!"

LESSON BACKGROUND

In today's lesson we will survey another one of the Lord God Almighty's wonderful benefits, and that is His wonderful light and how this light relates to us in such a wonderful way. As one of our texts declares, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all!" This is one of His greatest relationships with the souls of men, and that is why the Bible speaks so much of it. Our first scripture from the very beginning shows what was brought forth first. It is to be remembered that this first light was not that of the sun, which was created on day four. This first light that shone forth was an eternal light, a spiritual light, that from our text in John 1 is the very essence of the Word of God that was brought down to humanity in His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. He was and is the Light that enlightens mankind—all whosoever will come to Him. His Light shines out through His people and in His blessed Word and Gospel. In the Psalms and Proverbs we see His Light glowing in the blessedness of benefits to the souls of men.

The Gospel of John has much to say about the Light that came through Jesus Christ. It is spiritual light for the inner man, the living soul that God endued to man in the beginning. He is the Light of the World, but we are greatly responsible for what we do with the Light that He brings. The Light shines, but if we do not walk in and obey that Light, then darkness and spiritual blindness overtakes us. We must believe in the light, follow it, walk in it, obey it and hold fast to it forever. It brings us into fellowship with God and with all who also walk therein. The Light reproves sin and reveals righteousness and true holiness. We should rejoice in the Light and be thankful that God has caused it to shine out of darkness into our hearts.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the light that God brought forth on the first day?
2. What does the light of God do for the soul of man?
3. What is the serious responsibility that this light brings?
4. What must we do with the Light that God gives us?
5. How does Satan work against the Light of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus said in Matthew 6:22-23: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single (clear), thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil (murky and dark), thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" All the light around you is of no value to you if you are blind. If the lenses of your eyes do not permit the light to enter and its message be sent to your brain, you are in darkness. It is that way naturally and it is more so in a spiritual way. We need "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" to give unto us "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of our understanding being enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." (Ephesians. 1:17-19.) Jesus told the Pharisees in John 9:41, "...If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." God cannot and will not enlighten us if we don't acknowledge and confess our blindness. The light of your soul is the eye. Consider this, and may God give you understanding.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The congregations in Galatia were seductively being moved away from the true Gospel of Christ they had at one time received. We are not exempt.

The religious spirits in the world are powerful and are many times backed by the numbers and undergirded by false doctrine that makes provision for self, flesh, world and sin. Many say, "I don't see it that way anymore." They believe they have new light, all the while they begin to take on more and more of the world as the desire for holy, spiritual living becomes extinguished. Many are the participants of darkness (evil) and yet have a testimony of Christ.

"Walk in the light, while ye have the light; **lest darkness come upon you.**" Religious spirits appear to be the most deceptive. Again, we are not exempt.

O Lord, help us to walk in Your light and not our own; on Your terms, not ours. Help us to be honest, deep down in our soul, where it often hurts. Dear Lord, give us courage to acknowledge our sin and failures when they occur, and to find that true blessing of godly sorrow. Let the secret meditations of our heart be pure, holy and true. Lord, help us to see like You see and feel the things that You feel. Let Your love permeate our every thought and motive. When the difficulties of life come our direction, help us O Lord, to bow before Your great majesty with a tender, submissive heart—thanking You for Your great love that allows us to feel our utter weakness, unworthiness and dependence upon You. To those that are down, discouraged, hurting or in trouble, let us lend a helping hand and a prayerful heart. For these great blessings, our hearts crave. Amen.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

Notice: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the second quarter of 2009 be in this office by the second of March. For your convenience there is an order blank at the back of this book.

MARCH 1, 2009

**THE GREAT GAIN OF GODLINESS
WITH CONTENTMENT**

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.

11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

I Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Happiness does not consist in the abundance of things we might possess, but in being very reverent and obedient to God and learning to be content with what we are blessed with, making it our priority to be accounted worthy of obtaining life everlasting in the end.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Philippians 4:11, "*content*": Being satisfied and self determined to make the best of everything, whatever comes.

Verse 12, "*abased*": Depressed, humiliated, restricted. "*abound*": Excel, have plenty, prosper. "*instructed*": Taught and counseled of the Lord.

Verse 13, "*do all things*": Master every situation, meet every requirement, overcome every adversity,

Ecclesiastes 5:10, "*vanity*": Empty of any real satisfaction and profit.

Verse 11, "*good*": Profit or benefit.

Verse 12, "*not suffer*": Will not permit or allow.

1 Timothy 6:6, "*godliness*": Piety, deep reverence, honor, and loving respect for God. "*contentment*": State of happiness and satisfaction for what one has, not fretting nor straining to get something else. "*great gain*": Possessions that are truly valuable and worth obtaining.

Verse 8, "*raiment*": Clothing and shelter.

Verse 9, "*will be rich*": Resolving to be rich in this world. "*perdition*": Ruin and eternal loss.

Verse 10, "*erred*": Were seduced and led astray.

Verse 11, "*follow after*": Seek for and pursue diligently. "*patience*": Constant and faithful endurance. "*meekness*": Gentleness, humility, without revenge or retaliation.

Verse 12, "*lay hold*": Seek earnestly to be accounted worthy of.

Verse 17, "*Charge*": Make plain the command. "*be not highminded*": Do not be overly confident. "*nor trust*": Do not set hope on. "*uncertain*": Not real, but soon to perish. "*giveth*": Offers and faithfully provides.

Verse 18, "*distribute*": Share and impart to others. "*willing to communicate*": Generous.

Verse 19, "*laying up in store*": Treasuring up. "*against the time to come*": For the eternal age to come.

Hebrews 13:5, The Greek says, "Let your way of life be without money-loving, being satisfied with the things present, for He has said, I will not leave you at all, nor in any way will I forsake you."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Another one of the benefits of the Lord, as brought out in Psalm 103:5, is that He "satisfieth thy mouth with good things." The Lord God can satisfy the longing and desires of the heart of man better than any other power or influence. Only through Him can a person attain to true contentment and satisfaction. So we have for our lesson today the blessing of being content and truly satisfied in the soul.

We start with Paul's testimony to the Philippian of how he had learned to be content in whatever state he was. Paul had expressed his appreciation for the care the Philippian church had showed toward him. He stated that he was not speaking because of any want, for he learned an important lesson, the lesson of contentment. And he passed this on to the ages, and it truly is a valuable and vital lesson for every Christian to learn well.

We have from Ecclesiastes some wise sayings about the vanity of riches and their failure to bring satisfaction. Then we go back to the Apostle Paul and another one of his instructive epistles, this one to young Timothy. He had just mentioned about certain people who were destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; such should be withdrawn from. Then he declared what real gain is: godliness with contentment. His statements about the vanity of riches and the love of money are so vital to take heed to. Covetousness has ruined many lives. Jesus warned about it very much. And Paul gives us wise counsel to flee the snare of the love of money and follow after those important spiritual treasures of the soul that will

enable us to lay hold on eternal life. The riches of this life will not bring real happiness and contentment and they will soon all pass away.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What had Paul learned that was so vital to him?
2. Why do earthly riches not bring real contentment?
3. What is the true great gain that we need to seek for?
4. What things must we do to be able to lay hold on eternal life?
5. What promise of God assures us of His care and provision?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus warned us several times about the riches of this present world. The first three Gospels all relate the account of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. He was young (Matthew 19:22), he was a ruler, he was rich (Luke 18:18, 23,) and he came running to Jesus and knelt before Him (Mark 10:17.) The account in Mark has a point that the others do not mention. After Jesus had told the rich young ruler what he had to do to be perfect and attain to eternal life, we see the poor rich man turning away grieved: "for he had great possessions." Then Jesus turned and said to His disciples: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words." But then Jesus modified His saying thus: "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! Mark 10:22-24 Notice the phrase, "them that trust in riches." It is the trusting in the riches of this world that will keep one out of the kingdom of God. It is not the riches themselves, but the trust that is in the heart toward the earthly wealth, that does the spiritual damage. But it usually follows that, if a man seeks for earthly wealth and obtains it through his ardent efforts, that man will trust in that wealth. We could add another saying to go along with what Jesus said: "How hard it is for a man to have wealth and not trust in it." The warning in the Scriptures is timely and vital. It is for us to take heed to and escape falling into its destructive snare. There is something about riches that have a power over the mind and heart that is so deceitful and

dangerous. It has a terrific hold on the affections, and not many are able to relinquish its hold and give it up for the sake of saving their own precious souls. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We attain to the restful state of contentment by learning to trust in the faithfulness of God and by relinquishing our anxiety over the present circumstances of life. Paul said, "...I have learned...to be content." Paul experienced the bountiful supply of God's grace through the many trials he endured and in the midst of these difficulties he discovered the peace this valuable state of mind provides. Notice a few of Paul's discoveries.

"For to me to live is Christ...." Philippians 1:21. The power of Christ provides for us the important things we need in life. He delivered us from the penalty and bondage of sin, purchased our salvation, opened our fellowship with the Father, intercedes for us, has given us eternal life; He has gone to prepare a place for us in Heaven and will bring us forth in the resurrection. When our life is surrendered to Christ and He becomes our focal point in life, then we become partakers of these crucial blessings that provide the foundation for contentment. All else that touches our life becomes secondary.

"...Forgetting those things which are behind...." Philippians 3:13. Holding on to past mistakes and failures—our own or others'—will destroy contentment. Paul persecuted the Saints and to enjoy contentment he had to have a way to release those past memories. He also willingly put his education, his social standing and accomplishments behind him to obtain Christ. God's forgiveness must be accepted for our transgressions and we must likewise release others who have offended us. The thoughts of, "I should have," "If only," and "If they hadn't" must be placed, and left, at the foot of the cross where they can be covered with the shed blood of our Savior.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19. Paul learned to apply this knowledge to his life and it yielded contentment. God will provide for our needs today, and we trust Him for tomorrow. Jesus instructed us in Matthew 6:34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow:..." Jesus took away our reason for worrying about tomorrow and as we wait for Him to unfold

our future we can rest in His love today. We relinquish our timetable and our future into the capable hands of our heavenly Father.

In the words of John, "...But perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment...." Loving God supremely and knowing how much He loves us will destroy the specter of fear and allow us to be content with what He gives us and know that all things will work together for our good.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MARCH 8, 2009

THE BLESSED HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

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;

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

Hebrews 6:18 That...we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. Galatians 5:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We have a hope within our souls brighter than the perfect day. God has given us His Spirit, and we want the world to hear it: all our doubts are passed away.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Titus 2:11, "*salvation*": Rescue and defense from sin and its consequences.

Verse 12, "*soberly*": With a sound mind and self-control.

Verse 13, "*Looking for*": Awaiting with confidence and patience. "*blessed hope*": Supreme and fortunate expectation and anticipation.

Hebrews 6:18, "*strong consolation*": Forceful and triumphant comfort. "*set before us*": Presented and placed before our view as an example or reward to attain to.

Verse 19, "*anchor*": That which holds without fail. "*sure and steadfast*": Secure and firm. "*which entereth into that within the vail*": This hope reaches beyond the vail of the flesh into the realm of eternal dwelling. In the 9th and 10th chapter of Hebrews is presented the Old Testament tabernacle as a type of God's great plan of salvation. There were two vails, or curtains, in this tent structure that opened into two compartments. Into the first went the regular priests for daily attendance, but into the second went the High Priest alone once every year. This was a type of what Jesus entered into by means of His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. By this we are given this blessed hope of also entering "into that within the vail" and attaining to what Christ, as our forerunner, has attained to.

Romans 8:19, "*earnest expectation*": Intense and bright anticipation. "*waiteth*": Is eagerly and fully expecting.

Verse 20, "*made subject to vanity*": Sentenced to tarry for a time in this present fleeting world. "*not willingly*": Not of our choice or decision. "*by reason of*": Because or on account of God's plan and purpose for us.

Verse 21, "*glorious liberty*": Freedom from death, corruption, and the grave into everlasting joy and happiness.

Verse 22, "*groaneth and travaileth*": Yearning and pressing with great difficulty.

Verse 23, "*firstfruits of the Spirit*": The fruits of the Spirit-led life brought forth while in this mortal flesh. "*within ourselves*": In the inner man. "*adoption*": The eternal sonship we will attain to in the resurrection. "*redemption of our body*": The complete deliverance of this mortal body from death and corruption by being resurrected unto eternal life.

Verse 24, "*saved by hope*": Rescued from the fear of death and the grave by the power of Christ and His resurrection.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What a wonderful subject for our Lesson today! This should be of great importance to us, and it will be if we truly are born from above and are being led by the Spirit of Christ in our lives. We look around us and we see the decay and travail of this earthly life and the woeful condition that prevails in this world. Death reigns over mankind. Regardless of wealth or power or position, none can deliver themselves from the fate that awaits them. Many different kinds of religion offer some kind of hope in the hereafter. But only in the faith of Jesus Christ and what He offers and has accomplished can be found the true hope and assurance that the heart of man craves and seeks for. Much can be said about its exclusive features and what the hope of the Gospel of Christ has to offer. The New Testament presents a vivid picture of its wonderful values and benefits. We have chosen a few scriptures that portray it so beautifully.

Paul's epistle to Titus is very expressive of what the grace of God in Christ has brought to us. It shows what the grace of God in Christ teaches us. We are to give up the life of sin and seek to live a godly and righteous way. We do this with a beautiful hope in view. Jesus Christ, who was rejected by the world and exalted to the right hand of God, is going to come again in power and glory. This is the Christian's blessed hope.

Hebrews 6:18-20 presents a view of this hope as an anchor that holds the soul of man steadfast in the storms of life, reaching far beyond the earthly element into the heavenly eternal realm where Christ has already entered. Oh, how true this is! The intense anticipation and persuasion of our eternal inheritance holds us fast to our faith and decisions for Jesus.

Then we have Paul's wonderful description of this blessed hope in Romans 8:18-25. Oh, how we have feasted on his words here through the years! It is so well explained here about our present situation of groaning and suffering with respect to the bright future that will be ours when Jesus comes again. Oh, may the vision of Paul's message fasten upon our hearts and minds!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Christian have in view in giving up this world?
2. How are we "saved by hope?"
3. What does the hope of righteousness do for the soul?
4. What are some of the causes for our groaning and travail?
5. Just what all is contained in this blessed hope?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

My hope! sweet consolation of the Lord, the Gospel of His grace has shed within the weary heart, whose troddings through this life so oft is marked by sorrow's blinding chill. The eager eye the sacred pages scan for every ray that shines from hope above. And with contempt he shuns the worldly press, the throng, the tide of human art and praise, content to rather live in quietness. 'Tis there in holy concord with his God he learns of wealth unsought for by the world. And every factor that will provide aid in his pursuit to possess all this hope he will employ without a doubt or fear: A holy life, a watchful prayerful walk, an humble mind, a meek and quiet spirit, a bridled tongue, the sacrifice of praise in giving thanks to God, with love, good will, peace, understanding, and endeavoring ever to be at one accord with all who know the life of Christ, who worship Him alone. He feels the vanity of fleshly lusts, the vile decay of dark humanity. He is not moved by beauty strange and fair to forfeit all the treasures from above.

From all the burdens life may on him heap he lifts his vision with a steadfast hope that gives a silver lining to each cloud, a song that sings so sweetly in the night. Perplexed, not in despair, He stays his mind on things all full of virtue and of praise. Though persecuted oft—forsaken not; hemmed in by trouble—yet not in distress; cast down—but not destroyed, for Christ the Lord upholdeth him by His Almighty Hand! Oh, noble creature of the art of God! How blest thy state, how fair and precious, too: preserving element of earth and time, believer of the truth, now saved by grace. Oh, be it mine, thy lot! and let me die beneath the spreading shelter of His wings!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The commentator, Adam Clarke (see Clarke's Commentary, Hebrews 6:19, for his entire comments on this passage), has described so vividly the concept of hope, the Christian's anchor. In his word-picture, the world is a boisterous, dangerous sea, through which the Christian must voyage to reach the safe harbor, the royal dock. Nearing the port, it is too dangerous for the ship to enter, so she sends in first her small boat, who is represented as Christ, the forerunner, carrying the anchor, *hope*, safely within "the veil," or the eternal, heavenly world. The cable connecting the anchor to the ship is *faith*, and this strong cable, fixed to a steadfast *hope*, which is securely and permanently fastened by Him who entered Heaven before us, enables the ship to ride out the storms of life until the storm ceases, the tide flows in, and she rides safely into port.

"Faith sees the haven, hope desires and anticipates the rest; faith works, and hope holds fast; and, shortly, the soul enters into the haven of eternal repose."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



MARCH 15, 2009

VICTORY IN JESUS

Psalm 98:1 O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

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

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

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

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

II Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

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.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

John 16:33 These things I have 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 Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

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

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

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

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: 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. I John 4:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through the suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God, we can have victory over the world, self, temptation, sin, evil, distress, trouble, suffering, death, and the grave, and be able to reign with Christ in eternal glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 98:1, "*new song*": A song of victory not sung before. "*marvelous things*": Great, difficult, and wonderful accomplishments. "*gotten him the victory*": Opened wide a way for mankind to be saved from sin and death..

Verse 2, "*openly showed*": Revealed, made fully known. "*heathen*": The nations of the world.

Psalm 110:1, The Hebrew says: "A statement of Jehovah to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I set your enemies in place as a stool for your feet."

Verse 2, "*rod*": Ruling scepter of overcoming power, a staff signifying sovereignty and complete dominion. "*out of Zion*": From the Church of God. "*in the midst of thine enemies*": Even when surrounded by your enemies.

Verse 3, "*willing*": Willingly respond to your call with all the heart. "*day of thy power*": The time of your triumph. "*in the beauties of holiness*": In the magnificence and splendor of the holy life of your saints. "*womb of the morning*": The dawn and birth of the Gospel Day. "*the dew of thy youth*": The freshness and strength of the risen Christ and His beautiful charm.

II Corinthians 2:14, "*causeth us to triumph*": Always leading us to victory. "*savour of his knowledge*": The taste of His goodness and fragrant odor of His truth.

I John 5:4, "*victory*": Success and triumph. "*faith*": Persuasion, conviction, reliance upon Christ and being constant and unmovable therein.

John 16:33, "*tribulation*": Distress and trouble.

I Corinthians 15:54, "*swallowed up*": Devoured, drowned, and destroyed.

Verse 55, "*sting*": Poison and destructive power.

Verse 56, "*The sting of death is sin*": What makes death so destructive is the terrible damnation it brings on account of sin and transgression. "*the strength of sin is the law*": The law of God itself makes sin more exceedingly sinful and condemning. (Romans 7:13.)

Verse 57, *"giveth us the victory"*: Christ gives us the victory over the condemnation of the law, the weakness of the flesh, the power of sin, the sting of death, and the cruel triumph of the grave. He gives us victory over it all, and gives hope of the resurrection unto life eternal.

I John 4:4, *"greater is he that is in you"*: The Spirit of Christ enthroned within the heart and affections of the child of God gives power to overcome the temptations and persecutions of this wicked world.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have the wonderful truth concerning the triumphant victory that Christ has made possible for us to have over sin, self, temptation, persecution, suffering, death and the grave. Sin destroyed the fellowship God had with His creation. It wrought havoc, sorrow and despair upon the human race. It brought death and eternal doom upon the souls of men. But God worked out a plan and brought it to success and completion through the obedience of His Son, Jesus Christ. This great salvation in Christ gives us victory over Satan, sin, death, hell and the grave.

The Old Testament prophesied of this victory in several places, and we have chosen to use two texts from the book of Psalms that bring this out. Psalm 98 expresses it so beautifully about the victory Christ obtained for us. His righteousness and salvation were clearly revealed and made available for whosoever will. And then we have Psalm 110, which is a valuable prophecy of what God, through Christ, accomplished. This first verse is quoted several times in the New Testament writings. Jesus quoted from it in Matthew 22:44. Paul quotes from this in I Corinthians 15:25, speaking of the end when Christ would put down all rule and authority and power, "for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Peter quoted it in his message on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and it was referred to in Hebrews 1:13 about Christ. It is one of the foundation scriptures in prophecy about our Lord and Savior.

From the New Testament we have several scriptures that show vividly the victory that was accomplished through Christ, and that can be ours if we will believe and follow Him

all the way. Our text in I Corinthians 15 about death and its sting and the grave being swallowed up in victory is taken from Isaiah 25:8 and also from Hosea 13:14. How wonderful that God has given us the victory over all things through our Lord Jesus Christ!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What things were the souls of men under, in gloom and despair?
2. What did Christ do that brought victory over these things?
3. What did Jehovah in prophecy say to Christ?
4. Just how victorious can we be in Christ over all these things?
5. What will victory over sin, death and the grave do for us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The victory that Christ accomplished for us is a perfect deliverance from the things that held humanity in bondage through the centuries. Sin wrought separation between God and man, and brought the sentence of eternal doom upon us. God gave the law in Moses, but this did not bring deliverance. It was given to make man aware of his sinful condition, and to understand how bad sin was. So we had sin and the law hanging over us, bringing guilt and condemnation. But Jesus came into human flesh and was able to live without sin and transgression of the law before God. And He gave His life's blood as an atonement for sin. Thus He offers grace and help to live according to God's law and overcome the tendency to sin and disobedience. And, by Him being raised from the dead unto eternal life, this gives us hope of the same kind of resurrection, and thereby death is robbed of its sting and the grave of its victory. We can have the victory over all of it.

We need not allow sin to reign in our mortal body, to obey it in its lusts and desires. (Romans 6:12.) We can yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Thus we can face death with hope of being resurrected with Him. Wonderful victory in Jesus!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Brother John had a very positive description in Revelations 19:11-16. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

John also described "...the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Revelations 5:5.

The Lion of Judah, the Lamb that was slain,
In power and glory has risen to reign;
He only is worthy, none else could prevail
To conquer the dragon and open the seal.

The Lion of Judah has broken every chain,
And gives us the victory again and again.
The Lion of Judah has broken every chain.
And gives us the victory again and again.

This describes a Deity that is worthy of all of our honor, praise and glory. Our Savior is King of kings and Lord of lords. It is comforting to have that kind of strength between me and all enemy forces. With Jesus, we are on the winning side!
Thank the Lord! —Sis. LaDawna Adams



MARCH 22, 2009

SWEET SOUL REST IN JESUS

Isaiah 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

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

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

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

Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Hebrews 4:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There is a spiritual rest of the soul that God wants us to enter into. The Old Testament shows two types of that rest: The seventh day Sabbath rest, and the possession of the Canaan land that God had promised to Israel. Many came short of God's rest back then, and we should take heed that we not fail to enter the rest of the soul that Christ has made available for us today. To enter this rest we must cease from our own works of self and the flesh and be led by the Spirit of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 58:13, "*turn away thy foot*": Exercise strict control of all actions and words. "*from doing thy pleasure*": From pleasing self. "*call the sabbath a delight*": Make it more than just a commandment, but find the true meaning of it to the joy of your heart. "*the holy of the LORD*": To fulfill the holiness of God. "*honourable*": Glorifying unto God. "*not doing thine own ways*": We must be wise to forsake our own selfish ways and thoughts, as it says in Isaiah 55:7-9.

Verse 14, "*high places of the earth*": The spiritual heavenly things that Jesus has brought within our reach. "*the heritage of Jacob*": The spiritual land of victory over sin, and attaining to holiness unto God.

Matthew 11:28, "*labour and are heavy laden*": Striving to please self and the flesh and being weighed down with the guilt and condemnation thereof.

Verse 29, "*take my yoke*": Be united with my law and servitude. "*learn*": Be taught and instructed of my way. "*meek*": Mild, gentle, not demanding or self-seeking. "*lowly in heart*": Depressed, humble in circumstance and disposition. "*rest*": Quietness, calmness, ease and peace from strain and struggle.

Verse 30, "*easy*": Pleasant, refreshing, and enjoyable.

Hebrews 4:1, "*being left us*": Remaining for us. "*entering into his rest*": Being a true partaker of the soul rest God is calling us to have. "*come short*": Being behind and inferior to.

Verse 2, "*the gospel preached*": The message of offered blessings and help from God to Israel and those of ancient

time. *"did not profit them"*: Did them no good. *"not being mixed with faith"*: Not applied or received with a believing and obedient heart.

Verse 3, *"we which have believed"*: We who have accepted God's promises as true and are following them faithfully. *"do enter into rest"*: In reality enter into God's rest by giving up our ways and thoughts and following His word. *"although the works were finished from the foundation of the world"*: As verse 4 following implies: God instituted this rest when He finished the creation in the beginning.

Verse 4, *"spake in a certain place of the seventh day"*: This is referring to Genesis 2:1-3. *"on this wise"*: In this manner.

Verse 5, *"and in this place again"*: He is speaking of the scripture quoted in Hebrews 3:7-11 from Psalm 95:7-11, where God exhorts us: "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation..." Then he recalls how God was grieved with Israel when they drew back from going forward into Canaan, for fear of the giants and great walled cities, and how He swore in His wrath, "They shall not enter into my rest." The writer is using the Sabbath Day Rest and the Canaan land rest as types of the spiritual rest that we are to enter into in Christ.

Verse 6, *"some must enter therein"*: God lovingly longs for people to enter into His rest.

Verse 7, *"Again, he limiteth a certain day"*: Once more God marks out a time and opportunity for the souls of men to enter into His rest.

Verse 8, *"If Jesus had given them rest"*: He is referring to Joshua, who was to lead them into Canaan, the land of their rest. These two names, Joshua and Jesus, are the same name in the Hebrew language. If Joshua had given them the true rest, he would not afterward have spoken of another day.

Verse 9, This verse tells us, Then there is still a sabbath rest for God's people to enter into, a spiritual rest of ceasing from our works, and letting God work His work in us.

Hebrews 4:11, *"labour"*: Be eager, willing, and full of desire to enter into the spiritual rest offered through Jesus Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have for our lesson today the precious truth of the true Sabbath rest that God wants His people to enter into. Our lesson is drawn from Isaiah, the Gospel prophet, the Words of

Jesus, and the New Testament book of Hebrews. Our scripture from Isaiah is the final words of the prophet's exhortation to have the right attitude in our fasting and praying, and finishes with this thought of keeping the Sabbath in the right way. Then we have this golden text from the Gospel of Matthew of Christ's call for us to come to Him and partake of His rest. Before our text in Hebrews 4, in the 3rd chapter, the writer exhorts us to take heed to the warning, that he quotes from Psalm 95, of not hardening our hearts as Israel did when they were faced with going in to take the promised land of Canaan. He uses this, along with the literal Sabbath day rest, to typify the spiritual rest that Christ offers. It all points to a spiritual rest of ceasing from works of self and the flesh to be led by Christ through the Holy Spirit. Please carefully survey the Word Definitions, which will help you to see what God is really saying.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the works that God wants us to cease from?
2. What are the two Old Testament types of this spiritual rest?
3. Why is merely not working on the literal Sabbath not enough?
4. What did Jesus tell us to do in order to have His rest?
5. What kind of labor and heaviness does Christ relieve us of?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Along with doubts and fears, here is a list of things we must resist and overcome to enjoy this soul rest: hurt feelings, unforgiveness, retaliation, self-defense, arguing, talking back, talkativeness, criticism, fault-finding, worrying, hurrying, anger, wrath, bitterness, overburdening cares of life, being bothered by what people say or think, being self-conscious, judging others, financial pressures and worries, desire for outward beauty, self criticism, depression, lack of contentment and covetousness. There are other things, too, that we will have to be attentive to guard against. Keep faith in God's love and care, and pray with confidence in His faithfulness and the many promises of His Word.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On the journey through life to our heavenly home, I have found myself many times laboring and heavy laden. As we see the burdens and perplexities of life there is a temptation to become fearful and worried. What if this happens or what if that happens? Sometimes the difficulties loom up before us like an insurmountable, straight up wall of solid rock and our human minds see no way of deliverance.

I am thankful for the promise of rest. It is one of the many great benefits of the Christian life and it is so wonderful. We can get ourselves into a strain trying to figure this and that problem out. The blessing of rest comes through faith and trust in God. In the lesson, they failed to enter in because of unbelief. We at times fail to have that sweet soul rest because of our unbelief. When I am able to commit myself and situations to God and put my full trust in Him, and I cease from struggling to work it out the way I want it to work out, a peace, confidence and rest automatically enters my heart, mind, and spirit that is definitely of heavenly origin.

The song "Be Still" has been a great reminder and encouragement to me on numerous occasions.

Oh, be still, thou soul of mine, Thou art not forsaken;
Tho' the powers of sin may rage, Thou shalt be unshaken.
He Who gave His life for thee, Thus permits that thou
shouldst be
For thy good, as thou shalt see—Tempted for a season.

Be courageous, firm and true When life's battle's waging;
Oh, be still, my soul, and rest When the tempest's raging.
He Who doth our sorrows share In His love and tender care—
Trials more than thou canst bear—Will not let thee suffer.

Why shouldst thou so fearful be At the tempter's roaring?
Simply trust in God alone, Satan's wrath ignoring.
See God's tenderness and prove, With the sainted hosts above,
His unfailing, wondrous love, Ever for thee caring.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Let us give ourselves wholly to the Lord and go up and possess it at once, it belongs to us.
—Bro. Bob Wilson

MARCH 29, 2009

**ATTAINING UNTO THE RESURRECTION
FROM THE DEAD**

Luke 20:35 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.

John 5:25 Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Romans 8:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To be accounted worthy to be in the final resurrection unto eternal life, we must surrender all to Christ and have His righteousness of faith; experience, and know and learn of Him—the power of His resurrection from sin to salvation, the fellowship of His shame and reproaches from the world—and be willing to die as He died.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 20:35, "*accounted worthy*": Judged to be entirely deserving.

John 5:25, "*Verily*": Very truly. "*The hour is coming, and now is*": He means that this would take place now in this present life. "*the dead*": This is the spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians. 2:1. "*hear*": Give ear and take heed to.

Verse 26, "*life in himself*": Christ has the power to quicken and bring life to others.

Verse 27. "*the Son of man*": Christ will have the authority to bring judgment upon all mankind, because He was a man as we are, and overcame the temptations and influence of sin and transgression.

Verse 29, "*done evil*": Practiced and performed repeatedly or habitually wicked and ungodly works. "*damnation*": Judgment to everlasting destruction.

Philippians 3:7, "*gain to me*": Profitable to the flesh and worldly association. "*loss*": Detrimental and damaging, worthy of getting rid of.

Verse 8, "*excellency*": That which is superior and greater in value. "*dung*": What is to be refused and thrown away. "*win Christ*": Possess and lay hold of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior.

Verse 10, "*know him*": Recognize, understand, experience, and be in close communion and fellowship with Jesus. "*fellowship of his sufferings*": Participating and being a partaker of Christ's humiliation and rejection by the world. "*being made conformable*": Rendered to be like to; to die for the same reason and cause that Christ also died.

Verse 11, "*If by any means*": So that somehow. "*I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*." I will be able to be in the right condition, that God will count me fit and acceptable to be resurrected as Christ was resurrected.

Verse 12, "*Not as though I had already attained*": Not counting myself to have reached it. "*follow after*": Pursue and continually reach for. "*apprehend*": Lay hold of and possess.

Verse 13, "*reaching forth*": Stretching eagerly forward to.

Verse 14, "*I press toward the mark*": I pursue earnestly to reach the goal. "*prize*": The reward. "*high calling*": The invitation to share eternal glory with Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:11, "*quicken*": Bring back to life and immortality.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In this final lesson of this series of the benefits we can obtain in Christ Jesus, we will consider the ultimate end of the Christian life and the faith He is calling us to follow. Namely, this is the attaining of the resurrection of the dead with Christ in eternal glory. To be accounted worthy and deserving of this great and glorious triumph over death and the grave, it will take more than merely a head faith and mouth profession. It must be in the depths of one's heart and affections, in the very center of the inner man. There are things we must give up, and things that we must press to lay hold of and experience.

We have Christ's own words about the resurrection of the dead. We must first be a partaker of the spiritual resurrection from the dead state of sin unto a life of righteousness and holiness.

Then we have the testimony of the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, of what endeavors and efforts he was employing to be able to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. This is a writing that we should all take serious heed to. Just to make a profession and talk about Christ is not enough.

We must put our all into living for Christ and following Him in all the details of His life. Giving up all fleshly and worldly gain, receiving His righteousness only, learning of the knowledge of Him, experiencing the power of His resurrection in one's life, partaking of His shame and suffering, and being willing to die as He died—all of this is vital to the attaining of the resurrection of the dead. It is, as Paul said, a prize to look forward to and a goal to press toward, calling on all of our affections, devotion and ardency.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul count all things other than Christ but dung?
2. What resurrection should we experience in this life?
3. Why did Paul discredit the righteousness of the law?
4. What were the various things Paul sought to possess?
5. What was the mark, and what was the prize Paul pressed for?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Paul excelled in his law experience as a Hebrew and a Pharisee. But when he came face to face with the reality that Christ was truly alive and glorified, he relinquished all of his former holdings and made Christ and all about Him his chief objective. It became his purpose to truly possess Christ in his heart and life. This meant to obey His teachings and to be led by His Holy Spirit. He was determined to truly know and experience Christ in all things. He wanted to be sure that the righteousness that he was holding to was the righteousness of faith and obedience to Christ. He was not fearful of bearing his cross and being a partaker of like sufferings and humiliation that Christ Himself bore. And Paul truly bore with courage and steadfast patience the shame and persecution that he suffered from his own countrymen. He willingly took upon his heart and soul the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He poured out His life's blood for the Master. He died as His Master and Lord had died, willingly and without any draw back or effort to escape. It was a goal that he reached for and strove to attain, and a treasured prize that he coveted to win. He left this recipe for the ages to read and seek to follow in response to the

heavenly invitation of Christ. May we all take diligent heed and apply our hearts to that heavenly vision.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The verses in our lesson today from the third chapter of Philippians testify of Paul's fervor to gain eternal life. The intensity of his desire is clearly evident in the eleventh verse when He said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul focused his energies on knowing Christ for he realized his entrance into eternal life was in the hands of God's Son.

Paul said, "...forgetting those things which are behind...", "...Reaching forth unto those things which are before," and "I press toward the mark...." If we desire to attain unto the resurrection with Paul and many other Saints of God, then we will also be required to follow this same course to Christ.

Jesus said, "... No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62. Our inheritance is not an earthly one, therefore we must not look back to the things of earth for our fulfillment, for our treasure is in Heaven. We reach, stretch ourselves forward, toward the things that will bring our lives into conformity with the example Christ set before us. Then we must press. We have a deadly foe that we must resist and overcome if we intend to please Christ. As Bro. B. E. Warren poetically noted in the song, "Press On," we must press against our failings, care, sorrow, raging tempests, fiery billows, rough rapids and strong temptation. We press to have trust and have faith, in spite of doubt or feelings, and rely on God's Word to take us through.

While we are pressing, Christ will be beside us assuring us of victory. He knows the struggles we face and He understands our weakness, therefore He will faithfully minister to us the things we need to be successful. "Press on, says Christ our loving Friend; I'm with thee to the end."

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



Subscription Order

Please send _____ copy/ies of the
Bible Lessons quarterly to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription rate: \$1.50 per copy per
quarter; or \$5.00 per copy for one year
(issued quarterly). 1ST Qtr. '09

Please find enclosed payment in the
amount of \$_____.

Mail to:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 518
Guthrie, OK 73044

