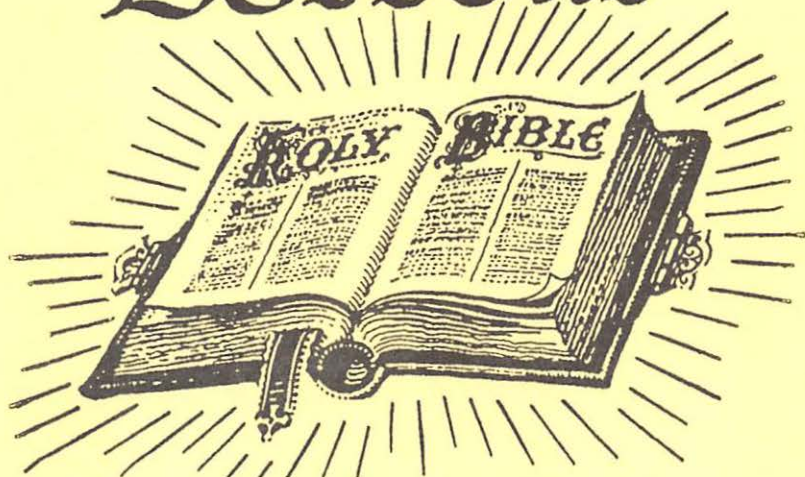


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 42, No. 3  
July, Aug., Sept.  
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**Volume 42**

**July, Aug., Sept.**

**No. 3**

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

Articles contributed by: Sis. LaDawna Adams,  
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## **BIBLE LESSONS FOR THIRD QUARTER, 2010**

### **THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER**

We feel inspired of the Holy Spirit to bring forth a series of lessons from the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians. We have been greatly blessed and edified by the rich truths brought forth therein. We have divided this epistle into the thirteen lessons of this quarter. We pray the Lord to make these series of studies inspiring and a spiritual benefit to everyone who takes part in them. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



**JULY 4, 2010**

### **THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS OF OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST**

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

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

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he

might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The soul of man can obtain, through the redemption of the blood of the Son of God, sonship with God and an eternal inheritance of spiritual life and victory over sin and a hope of being accepted into eternal glory with Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 1:1, "*apostle*": A commissioned delegate or messenger.

Verse 3, "*Blessed*": Adorable and worthy of high honor and worship. "*spiritual blessings*": Eternal heavenly messages of life and hope. "*heavenly places*": Heavenly values of eternal worth.

Verse 4, "*chosen*": Desired, selected and fully accepted. "*foundation of the world*": The preplanning and purpose God had in mind when He created the world. "*holy*": Pure, blameless and wholly acceptable to God.

Verse 5, "*predestinated*": Previously marked out and planned. "*adoption*": Being made sons and daughters.

Verse 6, The Greek says, "For the great recommendation of the high honour of His favor, with which He favored us in the one who was beloved (Jesus Christ)." Matthew 3:17, 17:5.

Verse 7, "*redemption through his blood*": Deliverance and salvation by means of the ransom price of the blood of Jesus. "*according*": In proportion and on the level with.

Verse 8, "*abounded toward us*": Was more than enough on our behalf. "*wisdom*": Possessing knowledge and the capacity to make proper use of it. "*prudence*": Cautious and careful application of judgment.

Verse 9, "*mystery*": That which is hidden or kept in silence.

Verse 10, "*dispensation*": The administration and wise management of a household or estate. The Greek word is "oikonomia," from which comes the English word "economy" which is defined as wise and careful use of wealth, property, resources, materials, etc. The same word is translated as stewards and stewardship in other places. (Luke 16:1-13, I Corinthians 4:1-2, and I Peter 4:10.) The whole Christian function in the hearts and lives of men is an economy that calls for faithfulness and wise management and behavior. "*fulness of times*": The completeness of the season, which is the Gospel day and its availability to mankind. "*gather together in one*": Unite in perfect harmony and fellowship. "*all things in Christ*": All people, all nations, all families in the salvation which Jesus Christ has made available.

Verse 11, "*inheritance*": Portion or possession assigned or bestowed. "*purpose*": Design or plan.

Verse 12, "*praise of his glory*": Fully and joyfully accepted into His eternal glory. "*first trusted*": Trusted in Christ and obtained His salvation while yet in this present evil world.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The Apostle Paul, who, by the will and goodness of the eternal Father in Heaven, was apprehended and delivered from the deception of satan by the Lord Jesus Christ, was the author of this beloved epistle that we have before us in this series of lessons. He wrote it to the Saints at Ephesus from Rome and sent it by the hand of Tychicus, "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." Ephesians 6:21. He was surely anointed of the Holy Spirit to write such a wonderful letter of encouragement and spiritual edification. And the goodness of God has preserved this sacred writing down through the years for our benefit and spiritual edification today.

In our first lesson we have Paul's greeting and declaration to the Saints of the wonderful blessings of God that He has bestowed upon us in His Son, Jesus the Anointed of God. These are spiritual eternal treasures of grace and strength to overcome sin and the obtaining of the hope of eternal life in the

world to come. This is the economy of grace, the opportunity for us to obtain something far better and more valuable than all the fleeting vanities of this present world and far, far beyond its fleeting worth. But Paul calls it "the mystery of his (God's) will," which is, as Christ put it, "hid from the wise and prudent (of this world) and revealed unto babes." (Luke 10:21.) Paul declares that it was purposed and predestined before God created the world. And what He purposed and planned He brought to pass in the fullness of time. There shines in the light of Paul's expressions the gleam of eternal life and happiness in the world to come. He, who at one time opposed and sought to exterminate the cause of Christ, had become greatly persuaded that Jesus was the true Messiah Who had come, not just for the Jews, but for all nations of men on the face of the earth.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What blessings has God made available for us in Christ?
2. What does He want us to be before Him?
3. What things are mentioned in our lesson that we have in Him?
4. What did God want to accomplish in this dispensation of time?
5. What is the inheritance that we can obtain through Christ?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is so wonderful to know that the Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, had the wonderful plan in His great mind that we find expressed in our lesson today! We should be so thrilled in our hearts to think of His goodness and the wonderful blessings that He planned for us. He purposed it all with our welfare and happiness in mind. He created the world and all things therein for our benefit. But, much more than that, He has made it possible for us to experience far greater blessings. He has eternal values that He wants us to seek after. The earthly blessings of life are so good, but the spiritual blessings in the heavenly realm are so much greater in value. He wills that we be holy, pure, wise, prudent and filled with hope and assurance of eternal blessings. We

need the atonement of the precious blood He spilt on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We need the blessings of His Holy Spirit to live and reign in our hearts. We need hope of a better world than this fleeting earth to set our hearts upon. This great salvation that Christ made available for us has all of these wonderful values. It is for us to come to Him, obtain His grace and salvation, and live for Him all our days.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The Saints of God have a great treasure store of spiritual blessings that God showers upon their lives. Each day new blessings flow from the hand of our Heavenly Father to strengthen and encourage His faithful children. When one is heavy hearted and they come to the Lord in humility and earnest prayer, time and again they feel the Spirit of God lift them from the depths of their woe and give them comfort in their trials. Often the darkness that hangs heavily before a Christian's troubled mind is transformed into bright rays of hope when their faith takes hold of one of God's infallible promises. God has promised to be with us in the troubles of today and He will deliver us and bring us to an expected end. ~~That end is only the~~ beginning of a glorious inheritance that lasts forever in the presence of our Savior.

It is important for the child of God to understand, count and rejoice in the spiritual blessings bestowed upon them. A verse found in Romans 14:17 is very relevant to our lesson, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." If we spend our time only worrying about our "meat and drink," we will not be a light to the world, for those things are only of the world and will soon perish. However, righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost is a part of our eternal inheritance that we find in Christ. When we shine the light of these spiritual blessings upon the sin-stained hearts of our fellow man we show them the beauty of Christ our blessed Redeemer. The contrast between what they have in the form of temporal possessions and what they see of the blessings enjoyed by a Saint of God should prove without doubt that our spiritual inheritance is far superior to the corruptible treasures of this world.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**JULY 11, 2010**

**GOD'S MIGHTY POWER WROUGHT IN CHRIST**

Ephesians 1:13 (Christ) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

**MEMORY VERSE:** (Ye are) buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** After we have fully trusted in Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, we must receive the Holy Spirit Who will put a seal and protective armor on us to



keep us through this troublesome world as we partake of the power and riches of our Savior Who is at the right hand of God interceding on our behalf.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 1:13, "*gospel of your salvation*": The good news and glad tidings of your deliverance from sin and eternal destruction. "*after that ye believed*": This shows that we need something more than forgiveness and deliverance from sin. We need the second work of grace, the infilling of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised to send to His disciples after He had gone back to Heaven. "*sealed*": Made secure for safe keeping and preservation in this corrupt and evil world in which we live.

Verse 14, "*earnest of our inheritance*": A pledge as a security for what we will have in eternal glory. It is like a part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest which will come later. "*until the redemption of the purchased possession*": Until the final resurrection of our bodies. "*unto the praise of his glory*": This points to the assurance and great recommendation of our acceptance unto eternal life.

Verse 15, "*faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints*": Both of these are vital and indispensable for success and victory in the Christian life.

Verse 17, "*Father of glory*": Our Heavenly Father Who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. (I Peter 5:10.) "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation*": The opening up to our understanding of the things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.... But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit..." I Corinthians. 2:9-10 "*in the knowledge of him*": In the true recognition of Christ's personage and being.

Verse 18, "*eyes of your understanding*": Spiritual light and comprehension.

Verse 20, "*wrought*": The Greek word is "energized," which means worked or brought into action. "*heavenly places*": The eternal realm of Almighty God.

Verse 21, "*principality*": Earthly rule and authority. "*dominion*": Control and lordship.

Verse 22, *"under his feet"*: Subject to His command and will. *"head over all things to the church"*: Director and manager to His people, the Church, just as the head is to the body.

Verse 23, *"fullness"*: The perfection, completeness of every vital ingredient that we need to live, labor and succeed in doing His will. *"fillet all in all"*: His sufficient grace and power is to fill everyone with everything we need for our spiritual welfare and happiness.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson Paul had just declared that in Christ we have obtained an inheritance according to what God had purposed for us. He stated that we are to be fully accepted into glory who at the first, or in the beginning of our experience, trusted in Christ. Trusting in Christ, therefore, is only the start, and we must go forward and progress to perfection and completeness. In our first scripture of today's lesson we see that receiving the Holy Spirit comes after being saved and is part of the progress that we are to make in our Christian profession. Every person who believes and has passed from spiritual death to life in Christ needs to go forward to perfection and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Paul states, in verse 14, that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the earnest of our eternal inheritance, a pledge and an assurance of the redemption of our mortal bodies unto immortality. And, after we have received the Holy Spirit, we must progress and go forward to the attaining of spiritual blessings that Christ has to share with us from His position in power at the right hand of God in the heavenly places.

Let us apply our hearts and seek God that our spiritual eyes will be enlightened to the wonderful riches of Christ that He wills to share with us. There is illumination, understanding, power, victory, and overcoming strength for our souls through communication and fellowship with Christ in His exalted position at the right hand of God. We need to get it in our hearts, our minds, our thoughts, our desires, our interests and our concerns. We must apply our hearts to this wisdom and prudence that Christ holds out for us to possess. He is our head, and we are His members. We will see some more of these wonderful realities as we proceed in our studies in the lessons ahead. Let us seek the Lord in prayer that we will be able to

take it all in and have it work the holy will of God in our hearts and lives.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are we to seek for after we have put our trust in Christ?
2. How does the Holy Spirit seal the soul of man?
3. What does God have that we need to see and know about?
4. What did God accomplish when He raised Jesus from the dead?
5. What is Jesus to us, and what are we to Jesus?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and grew up to be the Savior of mankind from the power of sin and death. He was obedient to God Almighty, His Father, in submitting to the death of the cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. His disciples did not understand what He was endeavoring to accomplish. They were sad and disheartened at His horrible death on the cross. But, after He had risen from the grave and passed from their human sight, it began to dawn on them what was really coming to pass. And, then, when the Holy Spirit filled their souls, it really began to open up to them what the whole thing was about. They saw Jesus as gone into Heaven with all power given to His control. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit that Christ sent down to His disciples they were directed and inspired to go forth and accomplish the will of God for each one of their individual lives. And it is the same today. Christ is still at the right hand of God interceding for us, sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within each one of us and be our strength and guide in our individual Christian life and work that He wants us to do. It is not us doing it, but Christ working in and through us. In each heart and mind the Spirit of God reveals and opens up the eyes of our understanding concerning His will and workings. It is a wonderful operation that God Almighty oversees and directs as Christ moves and operates through the Holy Spirit in each member of His body. Oh, what a blessing to be a part of this great Cause!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Part of Paul's earnest prayer was that we would know what was the exceeding greatness of God's power toward us who are believers. That power, he said, was "according to," or in the same measure of, the power that energized the dead body of Christ, raising Him out of the grave! He wanted us to know it, to experience it.

Somehow, I can't reconcile the popular religious teaching—that we must remain in our sins, more or less, even after we become Christians—with this revealed will of God in our behalf, that the very resurrection power would work in our lives.

What could He not do in us? What habit could we not overcome? What foe need oppress us year after year? Why could we not triumph over sin, with this power working in us? What would prevent us from forgiving as He forgave, loving as He loved, enduring suffering as He endured? What disease could He not heal, what obstacle could He not make us able to surmount?

Do we need strength to serve impossible people, in impossible circumstances? Does the night loom dark and difficult before us who are suffering sickness and pain? Are we in need of a special boost of energy for a daunting task ahead? The resurrection "power-boost" is within us. We are able, because HE is able.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**JULY 18, 2010**

### **RAISED UP TO SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Almighty God, through the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, is abundantly able to resurrect the souls of humanity who are spiritually dead, because of sin and transgression, to be alive and lifted up above this sinful world to a life of righteousness, fellowship, and victory with Him now and in the eternal ages to come.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 2:1, "*quickened*": Resurrected; made alive spiritually. "*dead*": Without spiritual life or fellowship with God.

Verse 2. "*walked*": Behaved and followed after. "*course of this world*": What was followed after by the present society of humanity. "*power of the air*": The ruling influence that controlled people's lives, which was the devil, satan, the enemy of God. "*now worketh*": At the present time is dominating and operating. "*children of disobedience*": People living contrary to God's holy Word.

Verse 3. "*we all*": Everyone, both Jews and Gentiles; as it says in Romans 3:22-23: "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "*conversation*": Conduct and manner of life. "*lusts*": Physical passions and desires uncontrolled and not subject to the Spirit of God. "*of*

*the mind*": "The carnal (fleshly) mind which is enmity against God." *"by nature"*: According to the disposition and ruling purpose. *"children of wrath"*: People ruled by violent passions and uncontrollable anger.

Verse 4, *"great love"*: Abundant care, concern and affection.

Verse 5, *"together with Christ"*: Raised up to live a life in full fellowship with the risen Savior.

Verse 6, *"raised up"*: Elevated above the present currents of sinfulness and wrong in the world. *"made us sit together"*: Seated us in perfect harmony and loving fellowship. *"heavenly places"*: The spiritual realm of communion with the Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we can experience and enjoy right here in this present life.

Verse 7, *"ages to come"*: The eternal world of unending life and happiness with Christ. *"exceeding riches"*: Those joyful happy pleasures of being with Christ in eternal bliss far beyond what we can now imagine. *"his grace in his kindness toward us"*: His unmerited favor topped with His tender, beneficial, and gracious good feelings toward us.

Verse 8, *"not of yourselves"*: Not because of any good about us.

Verse 9, *"not of works"*: Not because of anything we have done in our own toil and efforts.

Verse 10, *"his workmanship"*: What God created, produced and made possible and attainable. *"before ordained"*: Fitted up and prepared in advance.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we had the declaration of the great power that God exerted on our behalf when He raised up Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens far above all power, might, dominion and every name in this world and in that which is to come. Every one of us needs to have this glorious truth revealed to our hearts and minds. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory can and will (if we will earnestly seek for it) reveal all of this to us. What our physical senses cannot discern, God reveals to our inner man by His precious Holy Spirit. Oh, this is such a wonderful blessing and experience!

In our lesson today we have declared what we can experience by means of the work that God accomplished in His Son, Jesus Christ. After referring to the dark past of the times of our darkness and ignorance, Paul declares what the merciful and gracious God has accomplished in the hearts and lives of those who partake of His wonderful grace. First we can be quickened and made alive to fellowship with God and His Son. This is the first resurrection, in which the soul reigns united with Christ. Being raised from the dead state of sin, we are raised up in holy fellowship with one another to a spiritual realm as the true Church of God, which is later declared to be the Bride of Christ. We enjoy communion with our beloved Lord and Savior every day of our life's sojourn. As we sing, pray and give attention to the Word of God we can experience God's workmanship, working in us "...both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13 Oh, what a wonderful experience that we can be partakers of!

Then in verse 7 we have the beautiful future portrayed that every true child of God can rejoice in. We have this holy fellowship with Christ now in the Spirit, but "in the ages to come" He will continue to unveil more of the "exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." This blessed hope is a sure and steadfast anchor of our soul, entering into that "within the veil," that is, beyond this earthly realm into that heavenly eternal world that Christ, our "fore-runner" has entered for us. Hebrews 6:19-20.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What takes place in a person who is quickened in Christ?
2. What kind of life does a person live who is not thus quickened?
3. What are all who are in Christ raised up to enjoy?
4. What are we looking forward to in our fellowship with Him?
5. In what way are we the workmanship of God?

#### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God's great love and kindness has been wonderfully manifested to us poor and needy mortals of the dust. We were

lost, without hope, and in the prison house of sin and transgression. But, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we have been made alive and raised up to sit together in heavenly places with Him. Through the sweet influences and guidance of His Holy Spirit we have been re-created to a holy state of righteousness and a life of well being in fellowship with our Creator. The dark past of sin and shame is left behind and we are filled with joy and bright anticipation of future happiness and pleasures in the new heaven and earth that we will share together with our precious Redeemer forevermore. How glad and thankful we are for what our Heavenly Father has made available for us to have and enjoy! Our earthly sojourn is attended with many difficult and unpleasant burdens of distressful experiences. Our bodies wear down through the years, and afflictions and infirmities develop as we get older. But we lift our eyes with a steadfast hope to the bright future shining before us. Soon death will come and take us out of this troublesome life. As the poor beggar Lazarus was taken by the angels to Abraham's bosom to be comforted, and as "...blessed are the dead which die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labours..." Revelation 14:13, so we can look forward to our future transport from this troublesome earthly pilgrimage to eternal dwellings in that bright world to come! Heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of God on which we base our hope will never pass away! Praise God forever!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In Hebrews 10:24, 25 it says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

There is something special about being with the Saints of God. We love to sing together, pray together, and worship together in the oneness of the Holy Spirit. But what is even more special than this is when the Holy Spirit speaks through His ministry and we hear the Words of the Lord: comforting us, challenging us, and witnessing to us. It is indeed a time of



sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Our hearts rejoice in this taste of Heaven.

But this is not all. Just think of what awaits us over there. Let your heart and mind transcend to that eternal place of never ending joy and happiness—Heaven. Heaven is a place where ALL of the Saints will be together forever. We can all sing together. We will all worship and praise the Lord Jesus Christ together. We will be with Jesus for all of eternity. What a wonderful place to be!

While we are still in this fleshly realm, these heavenly places are a refreshment to our spirit and a renewing of our hope in the Lord. "You don't have to wait till you get to Heaven to be happy . . .there's a little bit of Heaven on this side."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**JULY 25, 2010**

### **THE JEW AND THE GENTILE UNITED IN CHRIST**

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Almighty God manifested His power and goodness through the descendants of Abraham, His friend; but in His Son, Jesus Christ, He made His power and goodness available to all the nations of the world so that whosoever will can be a part of His one holy nation both in this time world and throughout all eternity.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 2:11, "*Gentiles in the flesh*": All earthly nations, tongues and peoples.

Verse 12, "*without Christ*": Separated from Jesus the Savior. "*aliens*": Foreigners and non-partakers. "*common-wealth*": Citizenship and community. "*covenants of promise*": The promises given to Abraham and his descendants, the nation of Israel. "*no hope*": Nothing to look forward to after this short earthly life.

Verse 13, "*far off*": At a distance, excluded. "*made nigh*": Brought up close and given an invitation to be a partaker of.

Verse 14, "*our peace*": The means of bringing both Jew and Gentile together in brotherly love, peace and harmony with one another. "*made both one*": United us all in one nation. "*middle wall of partition*": The barrier of resentment and prejudice.

Verse 15, "*abolished in his flesh*": By Christ's suffering of death on the cross, the Mosaic law was fulfilled and the door of hope was opened unto all nations. "*of twain*": Of two

different nations. *"one new man"*: One body of people from all nations united in heart, soul and mind.

Verse 16, *"reconcile"*: Completely bring back together in love and harmony. *"by the cross"*: Because the cross signified death to carnality and sin and an end to the passions of self and pride, it became the gateway for all mankind to enter in to be united in brotherly love. *"having slain the enmity"*: The hostility and opposition that separated one nation from another was put to death, making it possible for men to be one happy family.

Verse 18, *"access by one Spirit"*: Admission and a wide open door by the indwelling Holy Spirit bestowed upon the souls of men through Christ Jesus. *"unto the Father"*: For whosoever will to become children of the same wonderful God.

Verse 19, *"household of God"*: The closely united family of born-again children of the Eternal Heavenly Father.

Verse 20, *"foundation of the apostles and prophets"*: This foundation is the prophecies and promises spoken by the prophets of old and preached by the apostles of Christ as the Gospel for all the world. *"cornerstone"*: The stone on the corner of the foundation that all the building lines up with.

Verse 21, *"fitly framed together"*: Compactly organized and closely jointed to one another. *"groweth"*: Develops and enlarges into greater and more wonderful strength and beauty.

Verse 22, *"habitation of God"*: A spiritual nation that God can live in and work through.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we have portrayed the beautiful reconciliation that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has brought about between the nation of Israel and all the nations of the world. The Jew and the nation of Israel are no longer separated in the eyes of God. God worked through the nation of Israel through the years to manifest His power and glory in the eyes of the world. It was His way of bringing about His salvation that would be preached to all the world in the fullness of time. It is as our Memory Verse declares: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Romans 10:12.

Ephesus was a city in Asia Minor and the people there were foreigners to the Jews. It took some time for the apostles of Christ to be made aware that the Savior died, not only for the Jews, but for all nations of men. They were so filled with the idea that the Jews were God's special treasure, and that communion with other nations was contrary to God's plan. But, after Peter's experience with the people at the house of Cornelius, as recorded in Acts 10 where the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles, they began to realize that this Gospel was for all nations.

Our lesson shows that the barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles has been destroyed and God opens His arms to all nationalities and tongues and people who are willing to take up their cross and follow the Lord Jesus. There is still the belief in many that the Jews are yet the chosen people of God, and they also believe that Jesus Christ will come one day and set up His throne and kingdom in literal Jerusalem and reign as King over all the earth from the land of Israel again. But this doctrine is false and can be proven false by the proper application of the Holy Scriptures. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. To whom is the salvation of Jesus Christ offered to today?
2. Why were the Jews so hard against other nations?
3. What broke down and killed the enmity between them?
4. Is the literal nation of Israel still God's own special people?
5. What kind of a building is God's church pictured to be?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Matthew 28:18-20 quotes Jesus as saying to His disciples, before taking His leave of them after His resurrection: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations,....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Luke 24:49, after saying in verse 47 "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations," states that Christ said, "Behold, I send the promise

of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." And Luke in Acts 1:8 quotes Jesus as saying, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." So we see two things in these scriptures. 1. Christ emphasizes that His message of salvation was meant for all the peoples of the world. 2. The Holy Spirit was the guiding power that His disciples must have to accomplish this great work. And it is the same today. Some think we need to go, go, go, because Jesus said, "Go," so let's go! But there is also the need to have the Spirit of God as our Guide and Help. This inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit was the means of success and victory for the apostles and the early Morning Church. It is still what we need to carry out the work of the Gospel of the truth of salvation today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Several years ago, while living at Guthrie, I was walking thru the neighborhood handing out tracts and inviting people to services. Toward evening, I saw an older couple sitting out on the front porch, so I stopped to visit and give them a tract. The old man asked where I attended services. I told him. Then he said, "Oh, you go to the Holstein church." I had never heard the Saints being referred to as 'Holstein church,' so I enquired. He said that was the only church in town that blacks and whites attended together during the segregation. I felt that testimony was a good witness for the Saints.

I heard a story, whether true or not I don't know, that illustrates a point. There was a black brother seeking attendance at a certain congregation. The pastor put him off by telling him he needed to pray about it. The brother prayed about it, got an answer and later was able to share it with the pastor. The Lord had told the black brother—"I've been trying to get into that church for years, what makes you think you can get in?"

Prejudice bars the door of the heart from the Lord coming in. On the contrary, how many testimonies have we heard of those that found genuine salvation and arose from the altar

with a love for everybody. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**AUGUST 1, 2010**

## **THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN REVEALED**

Ephesians 3: 1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which

God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. I Corinthians 2:9-10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** What God accomplished in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem mankind from sin unto righteousness, was the fulfillment of the purpose and plan God had in mind before He created the heavens and the earth.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 3:2, "*dispensation*": Stewardship. As we had in Ephesians 1:10, the Greek word is "*oikonomia*," which is the basis for our English term "economy." It indicates a bestowal of riches and treasures from God that we are responsible to use and work with for the benefit and welfare of others. "*to you-ward*": Toward you, or for your behalf and welfare.

Verse 3, "*by revelation*": Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit opening up to one's understanding. "*mystery*": The truths of the working and purposes of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that are hidden from the natural man.

Verse 4, "*understand my knowledge*": To truly see and comprehend the spiritual things that had been revealed to Paul concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Verse 5, "*in other ages*": In times past. "*was not made known*": Kept back and hidden from people's minds and understanding. "*now revealed by the Spirit*": Opened up and made known through the inspiration of the Spirit that God gave through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6, "*Gentiles*": Other nations besides the Jews. "*fellow-heirs*": Sharing the grace of God in Christ with the Jews.

Verse 7, "*effectual working*": The efficient, energetic operation.

Verse 8, "*less than the least*": Far less worthy than everyone else. "*unsearchable*": Untraceable; beyond man's comprehension. As Paul said in Romans 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Verse 9, "*make all men see*": Bring to light that all might have an opportunity to behold. "*the fellowship of the mystery*":

The mutual participation in the spiritual eternal things of God revealed in Christ. *"hid in God"*: Kept secret in God, withheld from man until the fullness of time.

Verse 10, *"unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places"*: Who are these principalities and powers in the heavenly places? There have been various views taken concerning what Paul is speaking of here. He said in the preceding verse that all men were to be given a chance to see the fellowship of the mystery of Christ, and now he says, "to the intent" that "by the church the manifold wisdom of God" might be known unto these "principalities and powers." It may be referring to heavenly beings. God knows what it is all about. We must leave what we do not understand to Him, and be diligent ourselves to be true and faithful to Him.

Verse 11, *"according"*: In fulfillment of. *"the eternal purpose"*: What God planned before the world was created.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson from chapter 2 of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians he spoke quite at large concerning the bringing in of the Gentiles into the fellowship and plan of salvation through Jesus Christ the Son of God. The people of Israel had the feeling about themselves that they were the nation that the Almighty God owned and especially favored. And God did work for them and through them in wonderful ways. But what they failed to understand was that God showed His power and goodness for them as an advertisement to the world of His wonderful blessings; and that in the coming of His Son into the world the way was to be made that all other nations could be partakers of those blessings. It was a mystery that Israel and its leaders were totally in ignorance about. Even the followers of Jesus did not comprehend it until the Holy Spirit made it known to them. Paul himself had been ignorant of it, but the Lord made him know that his ministry was to be directed to the Gentiles, the other nations of the world.

There seems to be something else revealed by the Holy Spirit to Paul, and in our lesson he seems to be seeking to convey this to the church. And that was that this bringing in of the Gentiles to be a partaker of the promise in Christ by the Gospel was the grand fulfillment of God's plan that He had in



mind from the beginning. And, perhaps, it was that through the New Testament Church (made up of peoples from all nations) God was making known to the angels in Heaven and their host an exposition of the various aspects of His wisdom and power. Peter said, in I Peter 1:12, that the things which the prophets had prophesied and testified beforehand were to be for the New Testament church, saying, "...Unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; *which things the angels desire to look into.*" That may be why Paul said in verse 10 of our lesson that unto the powers in the heavenly places might be known, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God. Could this be the fulfillment of the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord? If so, as the angels behold it in wonder, so can we behold the wonderful workings of our great and wonderful God! May each one have an open mind to ponder and search out more and clearer knowledge of this.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is the grace of God considered a stewardship or economy?
2. What was Paul's burden concerning the Gentiles?
3. Why did God work so wonderfully with the Jews?
4. What did God want all men to see in it all?
5. How is the mystery of God and Christ made known to man?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God works in mysterious ways, and His ways are past finding out. But by the inspiration and illumination of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, we can be enlightened and informed of His gracious and mysterious ways. We must not be overconfident in ourselves. Paul said in I Corinthians 8:2, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." We must have an humble mind and attitude, feeling our inability and need of God's enlightenment and inspiration. We must continue to seek the Lord for His guidance and wisdom. And let us remember that we will never "know it all." There will always be deficiencies in our knowl-

edge that we need to improve and grow on. This is what is so challenging and yet a real blessing. When we think we know it all, we deceive ourselves, not being open for more and better knowledge and understanding. May God help us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The mystery of Christ began unfolding in the creation of the world. When sin entered the world through the fall of Adam and Eve, it is Christ Who was the seed promised to bruise the head of satan. The spiritual Rock that the children of Israel drank of in the wilderness was Christ. The dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had of the stone that came out of the mountain and destroyed the image with the head of gold was Christ. Throughout the ages, the mystery of Christ has been revealed to man in a way that brings salvation and deliverance. There is still more of this mystery yet to be revealed, for at the end of the world He is coming back to claim His glorious bride and to judge the quick and the dead.

Notice the thrust of Paul's words, "...the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to **you-ward**:" "Whereby, when ye read, **ye** may understand..." While this message was written to the Ephesians and for the Gentiles, it is also for us. In the ninth verse he says, "And to make **all** men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...." It is with a grateful heart that we understand that the mystery of the plan of salvation is for all mankind, and we rejoice that the Holy Spirit has revealed a portion of this mystery to us.

The glory and mystery of the Gospel has been compared to a gem that refracts the light, as you turn it you are able to see there is still more beauty. May this mystery ever be alive in our hearts and never stagnate into a form of religion that obscures the vibrant energy and love of our precious Savior.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



AUGUST 8, 2010

## POSSESSING AND ENJOYING CHRIST TO THE FULL

Ephesians 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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

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

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

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The great Almighty God has given all of us an invitation to experience in this life the most wonderful and completely satisfying relation of loving fellowship and blessings with Him and His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that goes far beyond everything else on earth.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 3:13, "*faint not*": Be not down hearted or discouraged. "*at my tribulations for you*": Because of what I suffer on your behalf. "*your glory*": For your eternal benefit.

Verse 14, "*bow my knees*": Submit and humble my heart in prayer.

Verse 15. "*whole family*": The entire host of redeemed souls of mankind recorded in Heaven. "*is named*": Entitled to be identified as true children of.

Verse 16. "*strengthened with might*": Given power to accomplish and perform.

Verse 17. "*dwell*": Live, work and move continually. "*by faith*": Through one's own personal and unfailing belief and persuasion. "*rooted and grounded in love*": Fully established by experiencing the great love of God.

Verse 18. "*able to comprehend*": Strengthened to understand and fully possess full light and knowledge of. "*what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*": The measurements of the full capacity of. It has been expressed that John 3:16 contains these four measurements of the love of God. "For God so loved the world, (the *breadth*, taking in every creature of mankind in the entire world and all ages of time) that He gave His only begotten Son, (the *height*, Christ coming from the heights of eternity down to this world) that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, (*depth*, reaching down to the lowest of the depths of the degradation and wickedness of mankind), but have everlasting life, (*length*, reaching and continuing for the ages of the ages)."

Verse 19. "*to know*": To really have a heart experience of. "*passeth knowledge*": Goes beyond what mortals can comprehend. "*filled*": Furnished and supplied to perfection. "*fullness*": Complete satisfaction.

Verse 20. "*according*": Along and in harmony with.

Ephesians 4:1. "*beseech*": Lovingly entreat, invite, implore and encourage. "*walk worthy*": Conduct and behave one's self in an appropriate manner. "*vocation*": Calling or invitation.

Verse 2. "*meekness*": Gentleness; mildness of temper and action. "*forbearing*": Putting up with; reaching out with love that 1 Peter 4:8 says. "covers a multitude of sins."

Verse 3. "*endeavoring*": Making prompt and earnest effort. "*keep*": Preserve and hold fast. "*bond of peace*": The uniting principle of a peaceful attitude toward others.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have vividly expressed the Apostle Paul's intense burden and desire for the Ephesian Saints he

was writing to. And what he was earnestly desiring for the brethren back there to have is surely the great blessing that we should desire today. He had spoken in the first part of this third chapter of the ministry that God had given him of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Ephesians and to other nations of the Gentiles. He wanted them and all men to partake of the wonderful spiritual blessings that are in Christ Jesus our Lord. Then he listed them, and as we consider these things that he here names out, our hearts are overwhelmed with joy and gladness and we honor and offer praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonderful privilege of experiencing them ourselves.

The first thing he mentioned of the riches of Christ's glory is "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Is there any greater treasure or joy that a human being can experience and possess than to have the very Spirit of the Almighty God to be united with his or her innermost being? When you get to weighing this glorious blessing it overwhelms you! It is worth more than all of this world and ten millions of the same. By this we have Christ dwelling in our hearts by steadfast faith and assurance and unbounding joy! And thus we are rooted and grounded in divine love, with a strength that will enable us to overcome all the opposing powers of satan. And that is not all. We are able to fully possess light and knowledge of the four-square dimensions of the whole wonderful treasure-house of spiritual reality and blessings. Thus we can be "filled with all the fulness of God"! And this is not fleeting earthly substance, but eternal, never failing, inexhaustible, and sweetly enjoyable blessings that we can have right here in this present world.

Then Paul, in chapter 4, earnestly entreats us to walk and live in an appropriate manner to this wonderful blessing. Notice what he says we are to do it with. This lowly, meek, longsuffering, and forbearing attitude and disposition of heart corresponds with the Spirit that Christ possessed and manifested. And this will enable us as His Church to be kept in unity and one accord right here in this present world of turmoil and sorrow.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What can we experience with God's Spirit in our inner man?

2. What are we to be rooted and grounded in?
3. What does God want us to comprehend with all Saints?
4. What does God want us to be filled with?
5. How can we walk worthy of this high and holy calling?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

There is no earthly treasure, and there is no earthly pleasure that is worthy to be compared with the joyful reality of the eternal God and our heavenly Father's sweet presence in one's heart and life. To have communion with Him and have access to His unfailing help and blessing twenty-four hours a day every day throughout the year is the richest treasure any person can have. Its enjoyable blessing makes this fleeting world and what it offers look sick and so empty! Oh, how sad that the majority of men and women are carried away with the lusts of the flesh, wealth, pleasure, entertainment, and "what-have-you," and are totally ignorant of the true riches of faith, love and hope that are found in Christ Jesus our Lord! We pray for the unsaved with a heavy heart that somehow God's Holy Spirit will strive with them, bring them under heavy conviction, and make them aware of their need of Him! Oh, that their darkened souls can be awakened to the vanity and emptiness of their pursuits for pleasure and gain of this fleeting world! It is sad that this darkness is keeping many from seeing the light! The things of the world are so attractive to the physical senses that men are not aware of the reality of things that are unseen and eternal. But there are those few sincere and earnest people who have turned from these earthly vanities, and have found the reality of the love and goodness of the Almighty God and His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ! Thank God that we can be in that holy remnant of the faithful!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

As I meditate on these Scriptures, a picture begins to form in my mind of a beautiful tree, stately, strong and full of fruit. David saw it as he described the blessed man in Psalm 1:3. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

He spoke of it again in Psalm 92. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing...." Psalm 92:12-14.

Isaiah saw it as he described the effects of Christ's Gospel in Isaiah 61:3. "...that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Jeremiah saw it: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8.

Ezekiel and John saw it when God showed them visions of the river of God. (Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 22:2.)

Reader, is your life like that beautiful tree? Have you been strengthened and rooted to experience the depth, breadth, length and height of Christ's love? Are you bringing forth the pleasant fruits of meekness, forbearance and humility? Does healing and restoration come from your life?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**AUGUST 15, 2010**

### **A UNITED BODY WITH DIFFERENT MEMBERS**

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

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

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

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

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

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

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

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. I Corinthians 12:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ and His Church are likened unto the human body, with Christ as the Head and the various members of His church like the members of the body, each one having a different function, but all working together for the good of the body, the Church, and its function in the earth.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Ephesians 4:4, "*one body*": A single sound, whole and complete organization. "*one hope of your calling*": A one and only looked for, everlasting prize in eternal glory promised in our invitation to salvation.

Verse 7, "*measure*": What Jesus Christ has accounted each member of His Church to be entrusted with to faithfully fulfill.

Verse 8, "*led captivity captive*": Jesus our Saviour captured, subdued and defeated the power of satan that had all humanity in the prison house of sin. "*gave gifts unto men*":



Endued men and women who believed in Him with various gifts of operation and function.

Verse 9, "*what is it but that he also descended first*": Christ ascended up to the right hand of God, but it would have been no value or help to us if He had not first come down from Heaven. "*into the lower parts of the earth*": Down to the depths of suffering, humiliation and death of the cross.

Verse 10, "*fill all things*": Administer and furnish direction, guidance and strength to enable each member to perform. This is what Christ is doing at the right hand of God. He is there interceding for us and directing and inspiring through the Holy Spirit each one of us in the work He has for us.

Verse 11, "*gave some*": Bestowed upon the various members of His body, the Church. "*apostles*": Delegates, ambassadors, commissioners and messengers of the Gospel with miraculous powers. "*prophets*": Inspired speakers or foretellers of future events and things to come. "*evangelists*": Those who herald, preach and announce the good news of salvation through Christ. "*pastors*": Shepherds; those who feed and nourish the souls of men by the Word of God. "*teachers*": Instructors and counselors.

Verse 12, "*perfecting*": Furnishing help for all to have complete spiritual victory and success. "*work of the ministry*": Operation and function of the service rendered by each member. "*edifying of the body*": The building together and direction given for progress to all the members of the church.

Verse 13, "*Till we all come*": All of these gifts given by Christ through the Holy Spirit are to help bring every member of His body to spiritual fullness that He is pleased with. "*in the unity of the faith*": To the unity and oneness that glorifies and pleases God. "*perfect man*": full grown and developed Christian. "*stature*": Maturity and completeness.

Verse 14, "*no more children*": No longer infants and babes. "*sleight of men*": Deceitful maneuvering of false teachers. "*wind of doctrine*": Influence and pressure of false teachings.

Verse 15, "*grow up into him*": Progress and go forward to attain to maturity in Christ. "*the head*": Leader and principle means of life, organization, instruction, guidance and preservation. "*even Christ*": This is what Jesus Christ, at the right hand of God working through the Holy Spirit, is to His Church.

Verse 16. We would like to quote this from the Greek Interlinear Translation: "Of whom all the body being fitted together and brought together through every bond of assistance, according to the working in the measure of each one's part, producing the growth of the body, to the building up of itself in love."

I Corinthians 12:13, "*baptized*": United by being all submerged in Christ Jesus. "*drink into*": Be a partaker together of.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

After the vivid and clear shining declarations of what God in His Son Jesus Christ has made available for us in chapter 3 of our studies in Ephesians, Paul entreats us in chapter 4 to walk worthy of this great plan of God with all lowliness, meekness and longsuffering, earnestly striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And now in today's lesson Paul brings out God's plan for the function of His Church as a living organism for the operation and success of His Gospel before the world. Note the "oneness" expressed: "one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and one God and Father of all." This is the Almighty's design for His Church, to be the chosen Bride of His Son.

But then Paul brings up another aspect of God's plan. He is saying that it is all one, but everyone has a measure of Christ's gift, that is, an individual part and function that is different from others, but designed to work in one accord with everyone else in the body. He quotes from Psalm 68:18, a prophecy of Christ ascending on high after leading captivity captive for the salvation of the soul, and His giving gifts to men. And Paul gives a list of the various gifts and functions given to the Church. And he shows how that it is all for the edification and benefit of all the members. He shows the need of progressing from childhood stage to full grown adulthood. Our Memory Verse is from Paul's writings to the Church at Corinth in which he goes into much detail concerning the various gifts God gave to the Church. This is wonderful truth, worthy of our wholehearted consideration.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. What are the various important things noted as being "one"?

2. What are the different gifts and functions given to the Church?
3. What is the intended purpose of these various gifts?
4. Why is it so needful to attain to full growth status?
5. Why is the body of Christ much like the human body?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us notice some of Paul's sayings from I Corinthians 12:4, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. Verse 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. Verse 12, For as the body is one, and hath many members,...so also is Christ. Verse 18, Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. Verse 24, ...God hath tempered the body together, ... Verse 25, That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. Verse 27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular (part of the whole): Verse 28, ...apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Verse 29, Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" The answer is obvious. No! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

When we think of our physical bodies, we can truly say that we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made.' Just think of the bone structure, the skin, the internal organs, the heart, the brain, the lungs. Each part has a significant function. Each member is a part of the whole body. How well would a body function without a heart or lungs? Yet, these are vital organs, although they are unseen. It was a perfect design by the great Creator.

This, then, can adequately describe the Church of God. There are many members and each one of us is a part. There are many outward functions in the Church of God that are seen: pastors, evangelists, apostles, teachers, etc. But let us not forget the many inward responsibilities that may never be seen but are a true functioning part of the Church of God. There are many, many Saints who are faithful in the behind-the-scenes activities—responsibilities that are so very necessary, yet unseen. Each member is a part of the body.

Let us each one have such a love for the Lord and the Church of God that we are willing to do whatever He places in our hands to do, whether it be the hidden responsibility or the one that is seen. "But now hath God set the membersevery one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." so that we are "fitly joined together." We do not choose what capacity the Lord wants us to serve in. Rather, He chooses us. Interestingly enough, the capacity that you may feel confident and most able to do may not be the part that the Lord wants you doing at all. Those desiring to remain hidden from view, the Lord may call in an outward responsibility. Our duty is to be ready and willing for His service in whatever capacity He chooses. "Whether much I may do in His vineyard, or small be the place that I fill."

What part are you?

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**AUGUST 22, 2010**

### **OFF WITH THE OLD MAN, ON WITH THE NEW**

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

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

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

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

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

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Beye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Colossians 3:9-10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To be a true follower of Christ and partake of His benefits we must forsake the old ways of sin and evil and be made new creatures of purity and holiness, well pleasing unto God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 4:17, "*vanity of their mind*": Worthless thoughts and desires of no value.

Verse 18, "*alienated*": Made foreign and contrary. "*ignorance*": Being totally in the dark and having no knowledge of. "*hardness*": Without feeling; not sensitive to what pleases God.

Verse 19, "*being past feeling*": Having rejected all care and concern for what is right and good. "*lasciviousness*": Indulgence in fleshly desires with no discipline or control. "*unclean-ness*": Impurity of heart and mind. "*greediness*": Covetousness; the love of financial gain.

Verse 20, "*not so learned Christ*": Did not learn from Christ such unholy ways.

Verse 22, "*put off*": Wholly and completely depart from. "*conversation*": Behavior. "*old man*": The previous sinful and ungodly nature. "*corrupt*": Defiled, polluted and bad. "*deceitful lusts*": Passions and desires followed while deceived by satan.

Verse 23, "*renewed*": Renovated, reformed and changed. "*spirit of your mind*": The attitude and disposition of your thoughts and feelings.

Verse 24, "*put on*": Apply one's self in conformity to. "*new man*": A fresh and newly made alive person in heart and mind. "*created*": Fashioned and formed and made to be. "*true*

*holiness*": The sacred and pure way of life that is according to God's truth.

Verse 25, "*members one of another*": Associated members of the same organized body who are in touch with and in full fellowship with each other.

Verse 26, "*Be ye angry*": Be fervently displeased with sin and wrong. "*and sin not*": Do not allow your anger to cause you to violate the spirit of love and mercy. "*let not the sun go down*": Do nothing in your indignation against wrong that would be displeasing to God and grieve His Holy Spirit.

Verse 27, "*Neither give place to the devil*": Make no opportunity for the devil to take advantage and hinder any one from seeing the true way.

Colossians 3:10, "*renewed in knowledge*": Being fully informed in complete recognition and discernment of what is good and acceptable in the sight of God.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson today is largely a beautiful description of the wonderful change that can take place and should take place in the heart and life of every human being. Paul shows the great transformation of a person from the old man of sin, self, and the world to the new man of faith, righteousness and holiness. He mentions several descriptions of the old man, such as, "vanity of their mind," "understanding darkened," "alienated from the life of God," "ignorance," "blindness of their heart," "being past feeling," "lasciviousness," "to work all uncleanness with greediness," all which "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Then he shows how that "being renewed in the spirit of your mind" one can "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Then we are to "speak every man truth with his neighbor," "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good," and communicating "that which is good to the use of edifying." And following on down in the remainder of the epistle are more beautiful blessings that in Christ we have the privilege to partake of. It makes us think of the song, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart!" Just view these wonderful blessings that we can obtain for the welfare of our eternity bound souls. We think of the world around us, steeped in the many things that are damning

people to eternal ruin, and pray God to help us to be a help to all we can. But it is really a wonderful salvation that Christ paid for with His precious blood that we can obtain right here in this present evil world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What keeps a soul from understanding the truth?
2. What are some of the characteristics of the "old man"?
3. What can be gained by us putting on the "new man"?
4. Instead of stealing what should a person do?
5. What communication should come out of our mouth?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What a blessing for a man to experience conviction of his sinful lost condition before God and to seek earnestly to turn away from his sins and the influence of this wicked world and find forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior! It is an experience that everyone needs! The current of the world around us is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (I John 2:15-17.) There is the love of money and the search for worldly wealth and ease: fine homes, fine cars, fat bank accounts, sports, revelries, ungodly entertainment, unholy styles, fads and fashions, strife, bitterness, hatred, murders, robberies, thefts and the list just goes on and on of the ways and things of this corrupt society. And it has been going on all down through the ages. In the time of the early morning church it was raging in the Roman Empire with its vain and corrupt leaders. Following history on up from then to now it is a picture of war, commotion and many terrible happenings. The root and bottom of the woe and trouble is the sinfulness and darkness of man. But Jesus Christ brought life and hope to humanity, and all who really seek after and find Him as Lord and Savior find the answer to all of their sorrows and despair.

God has worked according to His own purpose and wisdom. In Abraham and others like him God established the example of the faith He wants everyone to lay hold of. Then in Moses God made known to us His laws and commandments that are to help us to understand what sin and transgression amounts to. If we will be open hearted and willing to be taught

of Him we can be made aware of our sinful condition and can find the way to come to Christ and be saved and given the grace and power to live the beautiful life of holiness and righteousness that will enable us to be accounted worthy to obtain the life that is everlasting!

But we must be aware that the enemy that got us into this awful sinful state is still on the prowl and is working to offset the plan of salvation in the minds of men today. So let us take heed to the Gospel of Christ and seek the Lord Jesus with all of our hearts to be saved and find victory and peace in our souls. Even though salvation has been brought down, the devil is still successful in hindering many people from being saved.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Satan and all in his employ are endeavoring to resurrect the old man of the flesh—the carnal man—with new light, a promise of liberty to those that have “clean escaped from them who live in error” and that have “escaped the pollutions of the world.”

He endeavors to do so little by little. He endeavors to use things that look innocent and harmless at the first, to get his foot in the door. Lot didn't start off in Sodom, his error was pitching his tent in that direction. Be assured, it doesn't stop there, there is much more. The lottery was sold to the general public that way. So many dollars will go to help education—the children. Look at all the corruption and addictions it has brought.

It is very difficult, even impossible to close a door that has been opened to temptation without damage, consequences and loss. Let us be watchful and on our guard. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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**AUGUST 29, 2010**

**BEING FOLLOWERS OF GOD AS DEAR CHILDREN**

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

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

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

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

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

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. Psalm 36:7, 9.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To be children dear and close to the Almighty God we must walk in love and in the pure light of the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 4:30, "*grieve not*": Do not allow anything in your heart and life that would be contrary and displeasing to the pure and holy Spirit of God. "*whereby ye are sealed*": Paul said in chapter 1:13, that, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Spirit within the heart of a person helps to "seal" and preserve him or her from the defilements of the world around. But we must be careful to maintain the right attitude and spirit toward others. That is why in the following verses Paul stressed putting away bitterness and things contrary to the Spirit of love. We are in the flesh and have feelings that we must bring into subjection to the obedience of Christ. The Holy Spirit seals us but we must exercise our spirit to be in accord with Him. If we do not exercise thus we can grieve the Spirit of God right out of our lives as many others have done. "*unto the day of redemption*": Until the coming of the Lord when He will change these vile bodies to be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:21.)

Verse 31, "*clamour*": Loud crying, arguing, screaming or ugly conversation. "*all malice*": Ill will and all other evil things.

Verse 32, "*for Christ's sake*": Because of what Christ suffered in atoning for our sins.

Ephesians 5:1, "*dear children*": Dearly well beloved children.

Verse 2, "*sweet-smelling savour*": An odor of sweet fragrance. What Christ did for us poor unworthy mortals in giving His life and shedding His blood for our forgiveness was and is yet very sweet and well pleasing with God.

Verse 3, "*as becometh saints*": As is fitting for Saints.

Verse 4, "*filthiness*": Uncleanliness and impurity before God. "*jesting*": Joking. "*not convenient*": Not proper or becoming.

Verse 5, "*whoremonger*": The same as "fornicator"; one who has any impure relationship with the opposite sex. "*covetous man, who is an idolater*": Covetousness, the love of money and worldly wealth, is idolatry because it is the worshipping of something other than the true God.

Verse 8, "*sometimes darkness*": In times past were in spiritual darkness. "*walk*": Live and conduct yourself.

Verse 9, "*fruit of the Spirit*": This means the fruit in our life that comes from walking in the light of God through the Word

and the Spirit. *"proving"*: Testing and making clear and manifest.

Psalms 36:9, *"in thy light shall we see light"*: In the light of God that shines through His Word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ we can really gain understanding of the true light.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson today is a continuation of the instructions Paul was giving concerning things we must be sure to lay aside and cease from in putting off the old ways of sin and the world and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. These are habits and ways of conduct that are paramount and abounding in the worldly society we live among. It is certain that faithfully obeying these instructions will set us distinctly apart and at variance with others around us. But we must remember that we are doing it, not to be different, but because we want to please God and be accepted of Him. It may be that some of these things that God is calling us to will not cause much difficulty with others, but there will be some points that will stand out and cause ridicule and persecution, especially if we take a definite stand openly with a firm opposition to the worldly spirit that is working against our faith.

Rather than retaliating and being bitter and resentful to our fellow man, if we show kindness, good will, mercy and love, it will stand out and be an influence that will help win souls to the true way. Just like Jesus lived and served others with good works and merciful deeds of healing and help, so we can, by keeping the right attitude of peace and patience, manifest the beauty of the Christian life to those we meet up with in life. The gross sins that were so prevalent in those ancient societies are shown to be so displeasing to God. God has a beautiful plan for a pure and holy marriage that can be experienced by those who will resist temptation and let Him bring it all about. Covetousness and the love of worldly riches is strongly warned against by Christ and the writers in the New Testament. And Paul speaks in verse 4 of our lesson about filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting as not being proper to indulge in. We have much of that in our society today. The ability to speak and communicate is a wonderful blessing, but it can be the greatest tool that satan can use to ensnare our souls with.

In verses 8-10 of our lesson Paul introduces the thought of the darkness of sin and what we were "sometimes," and how that now we are "light in the Lord." This is a wonderful theme in the New Testament with Christ as the "Light of the world." Darkness and ignorance breeds sin and unrighteousness in abundance. But the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. This is the light of God's Word that the soul is in great need of to be able to attain to the blessings of eternal worth. In our next lesson we will have some more about this wonderful subject. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some of the things that we are to cease from?
2. How does God want us to relate to and treat others?
3. Why are we to be so diligent to not partake of the evil things?
4. Why is a covetous man named as an idolater?
5. What is coming upon all who partake of these evils?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God's holy Law and the way He wants us to live and follow is so good and profitable for us mortals. When we compare the way of sin and the world with the way of God's holiness and truth, we can see very readily that it is better to serve God than to serve satan and the ways of sin. Jesus Christ met with the temptations of satan and resisted them steadfastly. He did not partake of the attractions of the sinful world around Him. And God gave us His commandments and laws to help us to see how much better is His way than the way of lust, selfishness and greed. To be in the light is much better than to grope in the paths of sin and transgression. God's Word is explicit in detailing the things that are sinful and displeasing to Him. And God also has wonderfully listed the many beautiful and beneficial things we can adorn our lives with in accordance with His plan. It is all given for our happiness.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The original word translated *Children* in Ephesians 5:1 is used in the sense of *offspring* of someone. A child in this sense

bears the resemblance and characteristics of their parent. God wants us to have the nature of His dear Son, Jesus. When a heavenly birth transforms our heart and washes us from the defilement of sin, we are expected to walk in a way that reflects the Divine nature of God in our lives. The law of love should govern all of our actions toward our fellow man. When one walks in love it leaves a trail of comforting words, deeds of kindness and blessings that touch the heart of others and points them to the God of love Himself.

There is a report of a young minister who cherished a note that he received from a man in his congregation. It said, "Your sermon met me where I was on Sunday—at the crossroads of confusion and hurt. Thanks for preaching it!" That kind expression of thanks had a profound effect on the minister for he was at the intersection of discouragement and pain. The note helped the minister find courage to continue his ministry. A young Christian man was visiting a country where common courtesies are not the normal practice. He observed a lady with a baby stroller attempting to enter a store. He walked up to the door and opened it for her to enter and she gave him a look of astonishment. While this was only a small token of courtesy we often take for granted, it can have a greater impact on people's lives than we realize.

Let us, as children of God, be like our Father and walk in the light of His truth.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**SEPTEMBER 5, 2010**

### **AWAKE TO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF GOD**

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

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

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all...If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. I John 1:5, 7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** As true Christians we must seek to walk in the light of God's Word, carefully and conscientiously, using our time in this world to prepare for eternity, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and seeking to help and edify others in this holy way of life.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 5:11, "*unfruitful works of darkness*": Things carried out in ignorance of the truth of God are vain and of no profit. "*reprove them*": Be bold to declare the truth of the Bible regardless of the opposition you meet.

Verse 12, "*done of them in secret*": Secret societies and fleshly lusts carried on under cover and vain professions of religion.

Verse 13, "*reproved, made manifest by the light*": The light of the Word of God shining through the Gospel of Christ will show up the evil and wickedness of the works of men if they will have an open heart to receive it.

Verse 14, "*Wherefore he saith*": There are various ideas of where this saying came from, but Adam Clarke showed the words of a hymn that was used in Paul's time in Christian Church worship, which says: "Awake, O thou that sleepest,

and from the dead arise thou, and Christ shall shine upon thee." So from where ever or from who ever it came, it is a good expression of truth.

Verse 15, "*walk circumspectly*": This means to live, behave and function "looking carefully round about on all hands; to be every way watchful, wary and cautious, in order to avoid danger, discern enemies before they come too nigh and secure a man's interest by every possible and lawful means. The original Greek word signifies *correctly, accurately, consistently, or perfectly*. Be ye, who have received the truth, careful of your conduct; walk by the rule which God has given you; do this as well in little as in great matters, be an example in your principles, which are holy and good, by a corresponding conduct; do not only profess, but *live* the gospel." From Adam Clarke. "*not as fools, but as wise*": How can one be truly wise in the sight of God? Job 28:28 has the answer: "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." And the general instructions in the book of Proverbs echo the same, stating in Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Verse 16, "*Redeeming the time*": Buying up the opportunity. Adam Clarke has some good points here: "Buying up those moments which others seem to throw away; steadily improving every precious moment, that ye may, in some measure, *regain* the time ye have *lost*. Let *time* be your chief commodity; deal in that alone; buy it all up, and use every portion of it. In *time* ye are to get a preparation for the kingdom of God; if ye get not this in time, your ruin is inevitable; therefore, buy up the time." "*evil*": Dangerous, full of trouble and temptations.

Verse 17, "*understanding*": In the Old Testament this word "understanding" means *to take apart*, and in the New Testament it means *to put together*.

Verse 18, "*excess*": Being void of temperance and self-control.

Verse 19, "*speaking to yourselves*": Exhorting and comforting one another. "*melody in your hearts*": Spiritual edification from the messages in song.

Verse 21, "*Submitting yourselves one to another*": Keeping

an humble attitude of love and brotherhood toward all others. *"in the fear of God"*: With reverence and respect to Him Who is above all.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson several things were mentioned that we as the sons of God must not allow to be part of our walk and behavior. Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting were named out as not convenient and consistent with godliness. But there were also mentioned having a tender heart, love, goodness, righteousness and truth. Then Paul labeled the bad as the works of darkness and ignorance while the good things were the fruits of light and good wisdom and understanding. This thought of spiritual light of God as it shines in His Son, Jesus Christ is a paramount theme in the New Testament writings. And it is found numbers of times in prophecy. Just as natural light is such an important factor in our earthly existence, so spiritual light for the inner man is vital and indispensable. A lack of light for the soul has serious consequences. The sad thing is that a person can be in spiritual darkness and not be aware of his darkness. And when you are not aware of your darkness, there will be little effort or sincere seeking for the light. God gave us His Law which is, as David said in Psalm 119:105, a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

This light will help us to see the things that we need to be attentive to and careful about, such as being filled with the Spirit, understanding what the will of the Lord is, singing in the Spirit and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, and submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. Oh, may the light of God shine in our hearts and give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! (II Corinthians 4:6.)

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. What does the spiritual light of God do for the soul?
2. What must we do to be enlightened by God?
3. What does it mean to walk circumspectly?
4. Why is redeeming the time such an important thing?
5. What benefit is there in singing hymns and spiritual songs?



## COMMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

Here are a few scriptures on light: "For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness." Psalm 18:28. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." Psalm 36:9. "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:5, 6. "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." Psalm 43:3. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Psalm 97:11. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous." Psalm 112:4. "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." Psalm 118:27. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." Psalm 119:130. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Proverbs 6:23. "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." Isaiah 2:5.

-Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It put things into clear perspective for me when I made a list, comparing, or rather, contrasting, darkness and light. Take a good look:

### DARKNESS

satan  
sin  
evil  
wickedness  
unbelief  
sadness  
guilt  
condemnation  
fear

### LIGHT

God  
obedience  
good  
righteousness  
faith  
joy  
innocence  
pardon/justification  
courage

## **DARKNESS**

death  
coldness  
despair  
hatred  
loneliness  
misery  
bitterness  
bondage  
error  
lies  
night  
blindness  
ignorance  
sleep  
drunkenness  
shame  
secret  
hell

## **LIGHT**

life  
warmth  
hope  
love  
friendship  
comfort  
forgiveness  
freedom  
truth  
honesty  
day  
vision  
awareness/knowledge  
wakefulness  
sobriety  
confidence  
manifest  
Heaven

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**SEPTEMBER 12, 2010**

## **THE CHURCH OF GOD, THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Revelation 19:7-8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God instituted, from the beginning of the creation, the union of man and woman in holy matrimony as a type and figure of the marriage of Jesus Christ the Savior with all who will sincerely turn from sin and trust, love, and obey Him—to be His holy Bride for all eternity.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 5:23, "*head*": Just as the head of the human body is connected and has control over all parts of the body, so Christ, as the Head, is the One Who directs and has contact with every member of His Church. "*saviour of the body*": The Deliverer and Protector of every member of His Church.

Verse 24, "*subject*": Obedient.

Verse 25, "*gave himself for it*": Yielded and surrendered Himself to the death of the cross on behalf of the Church.

Verse 26, "*sanctify*": Make it holy in the sight of God. "*washing of water*": The cleansing obtained through obedience to the teachings of Christ.

Verse 27, "*present it to himself*": Have the Church to stand beside Himself. "*glorious*": Splendid, gorgeous and beautiful through the glory of God. "*wrinkle*": Mark of old age. "*any such*

*thing*": Anything like it. *"without blemish"*: Faultless and blameless.

Verse 28, *"love their wives as their own bodies"*: Cherish, care for, protect and seek for their welfare just as they do for themselves.

Verse 29, *"nourisheth"*: Carefully attends to her every need. *"cherisheth"*: To warm, overshadow and protect with affectionate care.

Verse 30, *"members of his body"*: United with Christ to have the same kind of glorified body that He has through being resurrected from death.

Verse 32, *"a great mystery"*: A wonderful work with secret blessings known only to those who truly experience it. *"concerning Christ and the church"*: Just as a man leaves his home and protection of his parents to be united with the wife of his choice, so Christ left the heights of eternal glory to come down to this sin-cursed world to purchase for Himself a people who would love, follow and be united in heart with Him as a cherished Bride.

Verse 33, *"in particular"*: Each individual. *"reverence"*: Respect, honor and esteem as we also render to Christ.

Revelation 19:8, *"while"*: Bright, radiant and magnificent.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson today reveals a glorious truth and declaration of a most wonderful theme in the Holy Scriptures. Here we have the beautiful comparison of the relationship of Saints of God and those who are redeemed from sin by His Son, Jesus Christ, as a beautiful and spotless Bride! And Who is the One so blessed to be the Husband of this Bride? It is the Lamb of God Who, as John the Baptist declared, "...taketh away the sin of the sin of the world." John 1:29. This is the meek and lowly Savior Who purchased the Church of God with His own blood. (Acts 20:28.) How sweet and precious it is to be saved by the grace of God and filled with His Holy Spirit and to be a part of this great multitude of redeemed souls that make up the beautiful Bride! All the counsels and instructions that we have had in this series of lessons point to being qualified to be a part of this spotless wife of Christ.

John the Baptist also spoke of Jesus as "the bridegroom who has the bride." (John 3:29.) Paul also spoke of this in II Corinthians 11:2, saying to the ones at Corinth, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Isaiah 62:5 prophesied that "...as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." So we have in our lesson the blessed truth of Christ and His Church, all who are delivered from Satan and sin to be a part of the spotless Bride of the Lord Jesus. And parallel with the marriage of Christ is the blessed plan of man and woman being united in one flesh for a life of love and happiness. God instituted the marriage of man and woman in the beginning, as our quote in the lesson from Genesis 2:24 shows. And, happy and blessed is a godly man who is given by God the love and wedded union with a godly woman!

We have also added as our Memory Verse two verses from Revelation 19:7-8, which is a beautiful announcement of this wonderful marriage of the Lord Jesus and His glorious Church. Oh, words fail to express the wonder and admiration we feel in our hearts as we behold and ponder this precious lesson! May the Lord help us all to so apply ourselves to godliness and obedience to Christ that we may be accounted worthy to experience the joy and reality of being married to our Savior. We are married now in this present time with Him in the Holy Spirit and fullness of Bible salvation. But when He comes in power and glory at the closing of time's mortal sphere, it will be consummated and fulfilled completely, to be enjoyed for eternity. It is a wonderful experience to have in this life, that is, to be happily married in the will of God with a godly companion to love and enjoy. But how much greater is the experience of being part of that great throng who are united with Christ in this present life in the Spirit and who will be with Him in that eternal world of bliss for the ages of the ages!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Christ do to purchase this spotless Bride?
2. What kind of Church did He give His life to purchase?
3. In what way are we members of Christ's body?
4. What kind of love should a man have for his wife?
5. How should a woman relate to her loving husband?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Marriage is a divine institution given by God for the benefit and happiness of His creation. And it seems that, in the beginning when God first created man, the man was alone while he gave names to the various animals, for it says in Genesis 2:20 "there was not found an help meet for him." So God, from the rib, from the side of man, made a woman and brought her unto him. And down through the ages it has been repeated and many are the accounts of man being given a wife to love and enjoy. And it is still the same today. It is a blessed experience for a man to seek for and to be given a wife as a real bosom companion and delight. Yes, there are many tragedies that have taken place in the relationship between men and women. But if people will give their hearts to God and really live for Him, and seek His guidance and follow His leadings, a happy marriage can be attainable. And, as it is with all other of God's blessings, it is important that we please God and be submissive to His will in every detail of our lives if we want to enjoy the real benefits God has promised and planned for us. And, most of all, we need to let God have His way so that we can be part of the Bride of Christ. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The religious world offers a vast array of spiritual clothing. There is the "sin more or less" garment. There is also the weekly "confessional" garment. As well as "the Lord is too kind to send me to hell" garment. Last, but not least, is the "hypocrite/self-righteous" garment. These are garments that are shabby, wrinkled, spotted and indecent. They have just a form of godliness but deny the power of true salvation.

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10.

This garment of salvation is like fine quality fabric, freshly laundered, pure and spotless, without blemish, pressed smooth and covers the bride. What a wonderful trade. We hand the Lord all of our filthy, stinking rags of sin and unrighteousness

and the Lord gives us a beautiful garment of salvation, one that covers all of our sins.

Not only is it a cleansing of our sins, but the wedding garment is necessary for entrance into that heavenly kingdom. We read in Matthew 22:11-14, "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few *are* chosen." How shall we escape if we, too, neglect this great salvation? —Sis. LaDawna Adams



**SEPTEMBER 19, 2010**

### **SUCCESS AND VICTORY, Part 1**

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise:

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ:

6 Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To have victory and success we must be faithful to follow Christ's example of faith, obedience, humility, love and patience with all men, and truly overcome the world with the spiritual weapons He has provided us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 6:2, "*with promise*": This means that the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," the fifth of the ten given through Moses, was the first one of the commandments that was attended with a promise, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12. It is to be noticed that the first four commandments were concerning man's relation to God, and the six final ones were concerning our relation to our fellow man.

Verse 4, "*provoke not to wrath*": Do such in the right spirit and use wisdom, love and fervent prayer with your discipline. "*nurture*": Discipline and correction. "*admonition*": Calling attention to by mild rebuke and warning.

Verse 5, "*servant*": One who has been purchased and is lawfully bound to another person. Paul's instruction here lines up with the attitude we should have to Christ who purchased us. "*according to the flesh*": In secular and earthly matters. "*fear and trembling*": Godly reverence and humble respect. "*singleness of heart*": Sincerity and wholehearted devotion.

Verse 6, "*eyeservice*": Work done just for appearance. "*menpleasers*": Thinking only of pleasing man. "*from the*



*heart*": From the desire of the soul to glorify and please God.

Verse 8, "*the same shall he receive of the Lord*": God will reward the faithful doer who has nothing in view but to please his Lord.

Verse 9, "*forbearing threatening*": Refrain from being bossy and domineering. "*your Master*": The Lord Jesus Christ. "*respect of persons*": Judging merely from outward appearance.

Verse 10, "*be strong in the power of his might*": Be empowered by the greatness of His strength.

Verse 11, "*whole armor*": Every single part of God's protective will. "*wiles*": methods and tricky tactics.

Verse 12, "*principalities*": The spirit of evil leaders and authorities. "*spiritual wickedness in high places*": Evil spirits in the spiritual realm who work against the soul of man.

I Thessalonians 5:8, "*of the day*": Walking in the light of Christ Jesus. "*be sober*": Be discreet, watchful and conscientious.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have in our last two lessons from this wonderful epistle of Paul to the Ephesians more vital instructions for success and victory in the Christian life. He speaks to children and how they need to be attentive to their parents and obey their teachings and authority in the home. Oh, what an important thing this is! Many, many souls have gone astray from the way of salvation because they were not subject to their father and mother in the home life. I can look back in my life and see places where I submitted to my father and mother, and how glad I am that I did! It was not easy, because I had my own desires that went against my parents' rule. But I thank the Lord that He helped me in those difficult times. Children need to realize that rebellion against parental authority is turning to go down the broad way to destruction. Being obedient to one's parents helps a person to be submissive to the Lord. And if any young person rebels and refuses to do as father and mother tells them to do, they will suffer for it.

And then the parents have responsibility to be guided by godly wisdom in dealing with the children, not provoking them to anger by unwise dealings, void of the love of Christ. It takes

a prayerful father and mother to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

There is also the relationship between servants and masters. We can include laborers and the ones they are working for in this matter also. It does not pay to resist and be hard to deal with while working for someone. There is a lot of strife and turmoil in the workplace. It is a terrible scene. But the grace of God can help a person conduct himself in a manner that is right and wise. This goes for the boss and leaders as well as the workers.

We have in our lesson the beginning of the thought of the armor of God that we are to employ in the Christian life. We need to recognize the fact that the real Christian life is a spiritual contest waged against the powers of the devil, the one who got man to partake of the forbidden fruit in the beginning. And he is still on the job today, seeking to influence and pressure the souls of men to go his way. But God has provided us weapons and we will consider them in our next lesson.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why should children obey their parents in the Lord?
2. What was promised along with the commandment of the law?
3. How can we keep the right attitude toward those we work for?
4. What should masters and bosses remember as they oversee others?
5. Why is it vital to put on the whole armor of God?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Life is a gift from God. But God has wisely accompanied His gift of our life and as humans being with responsibility. If we would live and enjoy His blessings of success and happiness we must fulfill the responsibilities attached to it. In the beginning God gave man the many fruits that grew in the garden. But there was one, and only one requirement that accompanied the gifts God bestowed: to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And that was what satan tempted man to desire. It is the same today. God has

many blessings that we can partake of and enjoy. But there are those things that His holy law has made clear to be forbidden and displeasing in His sight. We live in a world that is dominated by those forbidden attractions: pride, selfishness, covetousness, strife, hatred and many other passions that we as mortals are tempted to partake of and pursue. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, met all of these temptations, and He overcame them every one. He "...was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15. And He overcame all temptation and was faithful in the responsibility that was given Him. He became obedient to death, the death of the cross, to pay the ransom price for us. He was exalted to the right hand of God the Father to intercede in our behalf. He can help us to bear the responsibility God has given us with life. Let us pray to Him at the throne of grace daily and seek His help in overcoming this world of wickedness. He is faithful to be our daily help.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The lesson today touches on children honoring parents, the relationship of parents to children, employees to employers, etc. These relationships are a major part of life. We are able to assess or get a picture of our relationship with the Lord by these earthly relationships. The teaching of the Holy Scriptures, if followed, will maximize the potential of having successful relationships which will result in a successful life.

His yoke is easy and his burden light; but, "the way of the transgressor is hard." Hatred, bitterness and sin violate, crush, bruise, wound and maim. We live in a world of hurting people all around. It will help us to note that people who leave a trail of hurting others are people who have been deeply hurt themselves. Let us look beyond their behavior and have compassion on their wounded soul.

One of my favorite texts is Luke 4.18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

—Bro. Bob Wilson

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2010**

**SUCCESS AND VICTORY, Part 2**

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. II Corinthians 10:4-5

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The real Christian life and vocation is a spiritual warfare waged with spiritual weapons that

are mighty through God to help the child of God to overcome all the opposition and temptations that satan will try to bring against him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 6:13, "*whole armour*": The complete suit of armor, with no part lacking. "*withstand*": Resist and overcome. "*evil day*": Time of perilous and harmful pressures from the devil. "*having done all*": Accomplished everything God has required.

Verse 14, "*loins girt about with truth*": In the physical the loins contain the vital organs. In the spiritual sense these vital organs are digestion of spiritual food (the Word of God, breathing (the Holy Spirit), the flow of spiritual life, and resistance against evil influences. Keeping with the whole truth and not being misled by false doctrines is vital for spiritual well being. "*breastplate of righteousness*": The breastplate is also a protection for the vital organs. It is labeled as righteousness. Both truth and righteousness are specific means of overcoming the devices of satan and the many false doctrines in the world.

Verse 15, "*preparation of the gospel of peace*": Being fully prepared and anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel of peace. This is taken from the prophecy in Isaiah 52:7 and quoted in Romans 10:15, "...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The word "preparation" can also be taken to mean the preparation of the heart to believe and obey the truth of the Gospel of Christ, and to live triumphantly and walk over all the power of the enemy. Every Christian should have enough knowledge of what the Gospel teaches that will give courage and strength to be an overcomer for the Lord.

Verse 16, "*Above all*": Over all the rest of the armor. "*quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*": All the temptations and suggestions of the devil to the mind that would discourage or lead the soul astray can be quenched and brought to nothing as we continue to believe and hold our confidence steadfast. The shield of the armor was a great oblong object held up in such a way that it covered and protected the whole body.

Verse 17, "*helmet of salvation*": Adam Clarke has a good comment here: "The hope of continual safety and protection, built on the promises of God, to which the upright follower of Christ feels he has a Divine right, protects the understanding from being darkened or confused by any temptations of Satan." "*the sword of the Spirit*": Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword..." We can wield it by applying it directly to any evil thought or suggestion presented to our minds by the devil.

Verse 18, "*watching with all perseverance*": "Being always on your guard, and intent upon your object, and never losing sight of your danger, or of your interest." Clarke.

Verse 20, "*ambassador*": Representative of the King of kings.

Verse 24, "*in sincerity*": In genuine love and true holiness of heart. "Amen": The word "Amen" is from the Hebrew and it implies faithfulness, truth, firmness, surety, and trustworthiness. Other expressions are: "So be it!" and "It is unfailing truth!"

II Corinthians 10:4, "*not carnal*": Not fleshly or literal. "*strongholds*": Deceptive beliefs and ideas contrary to truth.

Verse 5, "*imaginings*": Vain reasoning and deceitful thoughts suggested by satan. "*captivity*": Submission and control.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the various parts of the armor of a Christian soldier identified and we have sought to define them in their true meaning. It is very important to know and understand what it means to take hold and possess each one of these factors for success and victory in the true life of godliness and righteousness before God. Jesus Christ fought with these weapons in His life and ministry. He met the devil head on, and with the sword of the Spirit, triumphant faith, submission and humility before God, true righteousness, truth, love, and peace He was able to overcome and gain the eternal victory. We also who follow in His steps must wield these spiritual weapons every day of our mortal life. We are not wrestling against human and physical powers, but against the spiritual powers of darkness and deceptions of the enemy of

all righteousness. We have chosen for our Memory Verse the clear declaration of what our weapons are really for. May the Lord help each one to be able to understand this important matter that concerns the eternal welfare of our never dying souls.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is the Christian warfare not with literal and fleshly weapons?
2. What is the goal and objective for a soul to fight spiritually?
3. Who is the great enemy that we must overcome in this life?
4. What must we do to take hold of these weapons and use them?
5. What did Paul desire to be to us from the Father and Christ Jesus?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It does not take a robust physical person to be a victorious conqueror in the Christian warfare. A little child or a frail woman can be a valiant soldier in the Christian battle. It takes a firm and pure decision and a steadfast purpose. It takes an open mind and a willingness to be taught and disciplined by the Lord. A person must take a firm and solid stand in his or her heart for the holy Bible way and what it stands for and points to. One cannot be weak-kneed, hesitant and fearful to be a good soldier for Jesus. We must be persuaded and firm in our commitment to serve the Lord in this wicked world. We must resist the devil and keep a prayerful and humble attitude about everything in life. We have a foe who is going to try to stop, hinder and lead us astray. We must be watchful, careful and earnest in our hearts to please the Lord and follow Him all the way. The current of the world around us is for self, pleasure, the love of money, strife, hatred and all kinds of evil passions and desires. We must take our stand for what the Bible teaches and go that way regardless of the opposition we meet. Get in mind what these weapons are and pray for God to help you to know how to wield them in your heart and life.

That is the only way to be triumphant and successful. "...Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." II Timothy 2:1, 3.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is an illustration of a great warrior who inquired of a skillful craftsman whether he could design a undergarment that he felt would provide protection against bullets. The craftsman assured the man that he could design such a garment. The workman took great pains in the construction of the jacket. When it was finished he presented it to the warrior and assured him he would be completely safe wearing the jacket. The warrior looked at the garment and asked the workman to put it on himself so he could see it more closely. When he finished putting it on, the warrior examined it for its safety and then stepped back a few paces and drew his revolver. The designer cried, "Oh, don't shoot me!" as the hammer came down on the cap. The design of the garment was safe and the bullet did not penetrate the workman. His creation was a success.

The armor that we are instructed to have on in our lesson today has been tried and proven to be safe by the Captain of our salvation. When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, satan tested it very thoroughly. The Scriptures say He "...was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin." If there was a flaw in its design we can be sure satan would have found it and exploited it to his advantage. But Jesus was kept safe and we will also be safe if we put on the whole armor. Those who are only partially equipped will not be fully protected.

There are many who have gone before us and used this armor successfully. Paul was experienced in this spiritual warfare and had likewise used this armor. In this 6<sup>th</sup> chapter he was explaining to the Ephesians the importance of being fully equipped so that they would be able to stand in the evil day. We are also living in an evil day and we need every advantage to keep from being wounded in our spiritual battles.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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