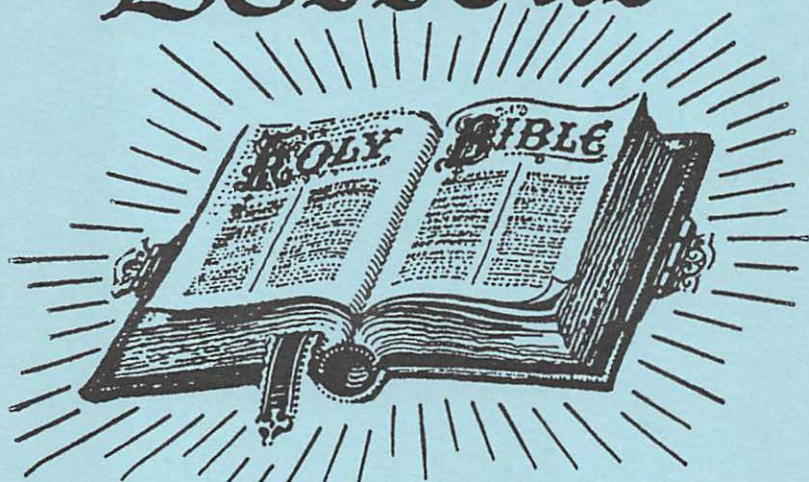


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Volume 43

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No. 2

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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,
Sis. Angela Gellenbeck and Bro. Bob Wilson.

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BIBLE LESSONS SECOND QUARTER, 2011

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER

We are greatly and sweetly inspired to bring forth various subjects of Bible truth for this series of lessons. We believe that each lesson subject is of vital importance for the welfare of our eternity bound souls. We pray the Lord to bless these lessons to all who study them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 3, 2011

HAVING PERFECT HOLINESS BEFORE GOD

Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Romans 6:19 ...As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

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

II Corinthians 6:16 What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

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

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

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

I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

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

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

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

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

MEMORY VERSE: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God Who created all things is a holy, pure and sinless God, and to be His children we must be holy as He is. For this cause Jesus died and rose again and has made holiness and victory over all sin available for everyone who will yield their hearts to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 35:1, "*wilderness, solitary place, and desert*": These refer to the barren hearts and lives of people controlled by sin and the lusts of the flesh. "*shall be glad for them*": The souls

of men will be glad and rejoice to be visited by the Word and the Holy Spirit which Christ will give to them.

Verse 8, "*highway*": The Hebrew word indicates a thoroughfare, a turnpike, and an exalted way for traveling up above all other ways. Such is the way of holiness up above the sinful ways of the world. "*for those: the wayfaring men*": Wayfaring means "those who will go the way." Even though they are fools in the eyes of men, those who will follow after holiness will be the true children of God.

Verse 9, "*the redeemed*": Those who are fully saved and delivered from the power of satan and sin.

Verse 10, "*the ransomed of the LORD*": Those who are released and delivered by the Savior. "*come to Zion*": Enter into the Church of God.

Luke 1:74, "*our enemies*": The power of satan and sinful ways.

Romans 6:19, "*your members*": Faculties of the body: hands, feet, eyes, ears and tongue. "*unto holiness*": Obtaining the fullness of God's grace and perfect purity before Him.

II Corinthians 7:1, "*cleanse ourselves*": Lay aside and cease from every practice and participation of what is defiling and corrupt before God.

I Thessalonians 4:3, "*sanctification*": Holiness. Both of these words are from the same Greek word. It means purification; being made clean and free from all the defilement and pollution of sin and disobedience to God. "*abstain*": Not participate nor be involved with. "*fornication*": Unlawful relations with the opposite sex.

Verse 4, "*how to possess his vessel*": How to conduct himself as a godly husband in perfect purity and trueness to his wife.

I Peter 1:13, "*gird up the loins of your mind*": Bring every thought and desire and purpose into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (II Corinthians 10:5.) "*be sober*": Abstain from all sinful practices and fleshly indulgences. "*hope to the end*": So live that you will be accounted worthy of attaining to the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Christ. See Philippians 3:10.

Verse 15, "*all manner of conversation*": Everything you say or do.

Hebrews 12:14, "*Follow holiness*": Seek, strive, and diligently pursue in your life all the precepts and commandments of the God of holiness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a most wonderful and beautiful subject of the Holy Bible. Being holy and without blame before God in love is what God has chosen us to be, before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4.) Isaiah's prophecy foretold this holy way for those who would be redeemed through the precious blood of Christ. Our scripture from Luke is the precious words of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. How wonderful was his declaration of what God was to bring about for the salvation of His people!

Paul brings it out very clearly in Romans 6 and II Corinthians 6 and 7 that holiness is the object of the salvation of Christ. He quotes from Leviticus 26:12 in II Corinthians 6:16 and in verse 17 he quotes from Isaiah 52:11. And then in chapter 7 and verse 1 Paul declares what we must do to attain to perfect holiness in the fear of God. How can people be misled into error and false doctrine in the face of such solid truth in the Bible?

Paul, in I Thessalonians 4 speaks plainly about holiness in the marriage relation. The world in his time was given over to the lusts of ungodly sexual relations. And so it is in our time. But there is a holy and pure way to be married and enjoy the blessings that God has planned. It is through our being holy and righteous in the way we live in His sight.

I Peter 1 has some straightforward truth on this subject. Peter quotes from Leviticus 11:44 in his declaring that we should be holy as God is holy. And then our Memory Verse from Hebrews 12:14 clinches this subject in declaring that without holiness no man will be accounted worthy of being accepted of the Lord in that final day of judgment. May the Lord bless this precious truth to all of our hearts, is our earnest prayer.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does God desire us to be holy as He is holy?
2. What is the true meaning of holiness before Him?
3. Besides being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, what must we do?
4. What are some of the blessings that holiness brings to us?
5. What will be the fate of those who are without holiness?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Being holy and sinless before God should be a desirable state for a person to be in. Satan has blinded the minds of so many that they are not able to see the value of the way of holiness and purity before God. God is a holy God and it is very clear that He will accept nothing short of perfect holiness in the lives of His children. It is a good way, the best way to live.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In a world that is overcharged with rioting, unrest and violence, there is still a "way of holiness" that the Redeemed of God are walking in. The sinful things of the world are not allowed on this highway and, consequently, many "religious" people can not find it. Some even deny its existence, but thanks to the precious Son of God, we can be one of the blood washed pilgrims on this Royal Highway.

There are several words that come from the stem of the Greek word for *holiness*—sanctified, purified, chaste and clear are a few of them. Perfect purity can only come from God and, through the atonement Jesus made, sinful man can be washed and made pure. Then through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit living in the heart of man, one can be kept pure as he lives from day to day in the will and order of God.

Another word that comes from this Greek word for holiness is *saint*. Yes, *saint* means someone who is sacred—holy—pure. When we refer to one another as a Saint, we are truly referring to someone with a high calling. Notice how Paul addressed the church at Corinth. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,..." 1 Corinthians 1:2. The believers were referred to as *Saints* more than fifty times in the New Testament.

Some people would contend that one can only be a saint when they are in Heaven. But we know that is not true for the writer of Hebrews stated, "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:" Hebrews 12:14. Unless our life is governed by the principles of holiness we will not be able to meet the Lord in peace and hear Him say, "...Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25:21.

Our precious Savior has graciously made a way for us to live and walk in holiness before Him all the days of our life.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

APRIL 10, 2011

BLESSED HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

I Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

MEMORY VERSE: For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. II Corinthians 5:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All who are saved and partakers of God's holiness through Christ Jesus possess a bright anticipation of being resurrected at His Second Coming unto eternal life and glory in the new heaven and new earth that will be a reality after this present earth and heaven pass away.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Peter 1:3, "*begotten us again*": Regenerated; resurrected us from a life of sin to fellowship with God. "*lively hope*": Hope of eternal life.

Verse 4, "*inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*": A possession undecaying, not polluted by sin, and never to pass away.

Verse 5, "*kept*": Being guarded and preserved. "*through faith*": By means of unfailing and unwavering confidence and faithfulness. "*to salvation*": Until the coming of the Lord when our corruptible bodies will be changed to immortality.

I John 3:3, "*purifies himself*": Through obedience to the Word of God that is revealed in Jesus Christ. We are not only clean by virtue of the blood of Jesus, but we also are purified by the spiritual cleansing of obedience to the truth, as is expressed in I Peter 1:22.

Romans 8:18, "*reckon*": Estimate, calculate and conclude. "*not worthy to be compared*": Our reward in eternal glory will far exceed what we lose or suffer in this life.

Verse 19, "*earnest expectation*": Fervent and intense anticipation. "*waiteth*": Is eagerly expecting.

Verse 20, "*the creature*": Our mortal state. "*made subject to vanity*": Decreed to temporary state of mortality and corruption. "*not willingly*": Not of our will, but according to God's plan. "*subjected the same in hope*": Made us subject to this

vain earthly life in hope of something much better.

Verse 21, *"the glorious liberty of the children of God"*: The freedom from this fleeting life of vanity to enjoy eternal happiness and joy with Christ and all of His holy people.

Verse 23, *"the redemption of our body"*: The change of our mortal state to immortal.

II Corinthians 5:1, *"our earthly house of this tabernacle"*: Our mortal state is likened to living in a tent, in comparison with our immortal state as a building; stable, permanent and lasting for eternity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From Peter and John, two of our Lord's disciples, and the Apostle Paul we have gathered precious expressions of the blessed hope that we might have in this short earthly life, for which our Savior suffered and died. We would truly associate this wonderful and intense anticipation of eternal happiness with our previous lesson on holiness. We are confident that only the holy and pure in God's sight will be accounted worthy of obtaining that world and the resurrection from the dead. To possess and inhabit that incorruptible and undefiled inheritance requires perfect holiness and faithfulness to God and His holy will. It is reserved, as Peter brought out, for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. And then, John brought out that every man who has this hope "purifieth himself even as he (Jesus) is pure."

The apostle Paul's view concerning this hope is so richly expressed. In the preceding scriptures in Romans 8, he brought out what it means to be the children of God, as those who are led by the Spirit of God. And, if we are children, then we are heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, if we are faithful to suffer with Him and bear the cross as He bore His. "We are saved by hope." The whole plan of salvation points toward that which is yet in the future. We can suffer, therefore, as a follower of Jesus, because we know and are persuaded of the bright future that is promised to us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Christ have to do to provide for us this hope?
2. What does our lesson show of what is included herein?
3. What requirements must we meet to attain to this hope?

4. What is our earthly life compared to with this glorious hope?

5. How can we be so sure concerning the truth about it all?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The hope of eternal life with Jesus Christ and the redeemed of all ages is truly a bright and uplifting influence in the life of a Christian. It is one of the main things that make the Christian life so desirable and attractive. Hebrews 6:18-19 speaks about how, through God's promise and oath, "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." The writer goes on to say that Christ as our forerunner has therein entered. Jesus, for the joy set before Him endured the cross and counted lightly the shame thereof. (Hebrews 12:2.) Why could our Saviour so willingly and with joy submit to the suffering and death of the cross? It was because of what He knew would be gained thereby. And so it is with us in the things that we are called upon to suffer and endure. We know that, if we will hold fast our confidence and let this hope be our anchor, we have a glorious reward awaiting us. This is one of the great attractions to be saved and live for Jesus. It will be worth far beyond all that we will ever suffer or have to endure to be accounted worthy of that world to come and the resurrection of the dead. It meant that much to Jesus and it means that much to every person who is really endeavoring to be faithful to Him. This hope is truly the anchor of our souls.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

These Scriptures speak of an incorruptible inheritance, a marvelous likeness, a manifestation, a glorious liberty, a redemption, and a glory—an exceeding and eternal weight of glory—that we can't see now, but yet we look at it. How can this be explained? And yet, this is our anchor, keeping us tethered securely to Christ during the wildest storms. Something we can't see, something so very against our flesh, yet so keenly vital to our spirit.

This was personally revealed to me during a time of severe sickness in our home. One night while finishing up the dishes, I leaned into the dish water and cried to the Lord desperately: "God, I usually hear You comforting me during a trial. You've been so silent in this one. I feel so *pressed*! Please speak a WORD to me to guide me and assure me." We went to bed with the prayer still on my heart.

Early the next morning the WORD shot me bolt upright in my bed: "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." Ephesians 5:27. Immediately upon the heels of that was, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." I John 3:2. And "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." II Corinthians 4:17.

Oh, praise God! the thing I wanted most of all, for me, and my loved ones—to be like Him—was being *worked for* me by the affliction we were enduring! I could not make myself like Him. The wrinkles and blemishes needed the pressure of a hot steam iron more powerful than I could manufacture. He knew just what would do it. So He ordered it for us. What a personal, powerful, and precious Father we have!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



APRIL 17, 2011

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

John 19:16 ...And they took Jesus, and led him away.

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

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

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 9:23 And he (Jesus) said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The cross was the instrument upon which our Lord Jesus Christ submitted to be shamefully executed for the sins of all mankind. It becomes a symbol of the humiliation and suffering that we must also be willing to bear as His people if we would share in His eternal glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Philippians 2:5, "*mind*": Attitude, purpose and decision.

Verse 6, "*form of God*": Being as His Son in the fashion, likeness or image of God. "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": Counted not equality with God to be held on to.

Verse 7, "*made himself of no reputation*": Emptied himself. "*form of a servant*": Position or level as a slave, or bondman. "*likeness of men*": The same level and position as mortal man.

Verse 8, "*in fashion*": Having the same circumstances and surrounding. "*humbled himself*": Became wholly submissive. "*became obedient unto death*": Allowed himself to be put to death. "*even the death of the cross*": The most shameful and agonizing death that one could suffer.

Verse 9, "*Wherefore*": Consequently or because of His submission to the will of God. "*God also hath highly exalted him*": God, who willed that Christ should suffer such a horrible death also willed to reward His obedience with the highest position of honor and power.

Verse 10, "*things under the earth*": Those who have already died and departed from this mortal life.

Luke 9:23, "*take up*": To accept or to be willing to bear. "*his cross*": One's own personal sufferings inflicted as a result of following Christ. "*daily*": Every day and in every circumstance and position of life.

I Corinthians 1:17, "*not with the wisdom of words*": Not with skillful and smooth talk. "*none effect*": Lost sight of and not accounted necessary.

Verse 18, "*foolishness*": Ridiculous and of no value.

Philippians 3:18, "*enemies of the cross*": Hostile and hateful to the humble life of a true Christian. "*whose God is their belly*": Fleshly appetites their principle aim and enjoyment.

Galatians 6:14, "*God forbid*": Let it not be with respect to God. "*glory*": Boast or prevail. "*save in the cross*": Except in the cross and what Christ accomplished in His death upon it. All else that a person can gain, have and hold will pass away. Only through faithfully sharing the suffering that Christ suffered can we be accounted worthy to share in His eternal glory.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider the suffering and shame that our Lord Jesus Christ bore on the cross and the influence it has in our hearts and lives. We have first, from the writings of Christ's beloved disciple, John, the scene of Christ going forth bearing His cross up to Golgotha, the hill which was also called Calvary in Luke 23:33. Our Lord had been unjustly sentenced to this horrible death because of the pressure and hatred of the leaders of the Jews. He had been up all night, deprived of any mercy or chance to have some time for reconsideration or space for tempers to cool down. He was arrested, run through

a mock trial, sentenced and crucified the next morning. The cross became a symbol of the sufferings and humiliation that all who follow Him can expect in this fleeting mortal life.

We have the apostle Paul's revealing words in Philippians 2 that describe the route that Jesus took, coming down from Heaven above to this mortal sphere, and then going on down in shame and humiliation to the death of the cross. But, thank God, it declares the exaltation of our Savior from the grave up to the eternal right hand of God. Luke and Matthew show Christ's challenge to all who follow Him to bear, each one, his or her own personal cross, and Paul enlarges more on what the cross does to the pride and fleshly lusts that flow in this wicked world, and how following Jesus in the cross conflicts with it all.

Let us take special notice of our Memory Verse, considering Paul's declaration that the only real glory that we must seek for is brought about by the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. All else is vain, corruptible and soon to perish.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of death did Christ our Lord submit to suffer?
2. What various things will we suffer in bearing the cross?
3. What are some of the things we have to give up to follow Him?
4. What are some of the things that are contrary to the cross?
5. What glory is there in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The theme of the cross has been an inspiration for a number of inspiring and beautiful hymns. George Bennard wrote: "On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame; and I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain. O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world, has a wondrous attraction for me; for the dear Lamb of God left His glory above to bear it to dark Calvary. To that old rugged cross I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear; Then He'll call me some day to my home far away, where His glory forever I'll share. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown". Thomas Shepherd

wrote: "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me. Disowned on earth, 'mid griefs and cares He led the toilsome way; But now in Heav'n a crown He wears, and reigns in endless day. The consecrated cross I'll bear, till from the cross set free, And then go home, my crown to wear, for there's a crown for me." Lucy M. Lewis wrote: "Oh, the cross, the precious cross! 'Twas there I counted all but loss; 'twas there I gave my heart to God, 'twas there He washed me in His blood, and spake the words, 'Thy sins forgiv'n', and filled my soul with peace from Heaven. The only way for sinners lost, the only way that we can gain an entrance to this heav'nly plane; 'tis there we find the purest gold, and joys that never can be told. To me this world is naught but dross: Far richer treasures now I own, while up the shining way I run; when in that heav'nly land I see the One Who bore the cross for me."

—Submitted by Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If we have given our great burden of sin to Jesus Christ then why is it necessary to bear a cross? There is a glorious answer! It is just as the poet said, "The way of the cross leads home."

If we are to have the mind of Christ; if we are to be like Him, then self *must* be crucified. Hence, the need for the cross. The flesh is at enmity with the Spirit. But with the nails of grace, we can fasten self upon the cross and put it to death. Many times self will cry out for mercy; to be taken back down off the cross. But we must leave it there if it is to die. This crucifixion of the flesh brings forth glory to the Spirit. "Oh, the cross has wondrous glory, oft I've proved this to be true. When I'm in the way so narrow, I can see a pathway through. And how sweetly Jesus whispers, take the cross thou needs not fear. For I've tried the way before thee and the glory lingers near."

Jesus adjured the people to "take up thy cross and follow me." He was in no way interested in torturing the people, but in giving them an avenue to overcome self and to gain complete victory. We cannot truly partake of Christ's resurrection until we have been willing to partake of His death. "A resurrection I confess, has taken place within my breast. I've been awakened from the dead and now I live with Christ instead...."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

APRIL 24, 2011

DEAD WITH CHRIST, ALIVE WITH CHRIST

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

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

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

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

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1-2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, allowed Himself to be put to death as an atonement for our sins. If we would partake of what He died for, we must die to sin and worldliness and live a holy and sinless life unto God right here in these mortal bodies.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 6:2, "*God forbid*": Let it not be!

Verse 3, "*baptized into Jesus Christ*": Taken and united into eternal fellowship with the Risen Savior. "*baptized into his death*": Become like Him, a partaker of His sufferings and death.

Verse 4, "*walk in newness of life*": Live, function and conduct ourselves in holiness above this world of sin.

Verse 5, "*likeness of his death*": Being dead to self and sin as Jesus was. "*be also of his resurrection*": Partake of the victory that was given to Him by being resurrected from the dead state of sin to a holy life before God.

Verse 6, "*our old man*": The old life of self and sinfulness. "*body of sin*": The very principle and substance of sin. "*destroyed*": Rendered powerless. "*henceforth we should not serve sin*": Not commit sin anymore.

Verse 11, "*reckon*": Count and declare. "*dead indeed*": Truly dead in fact and reality from sinful habits and desires.

Verse 12, "*Let not sin therefore reign*": Because Christ died for sin and you have died to sin, give absolutely no place for sin to be committed. "*in your mortal body*": In the ways and deeds that you follow and allow in this physical body. "*obey it in the lusts thereof*": Do as sin and the world would tempt you.

Verse 13, "*neither yield ye your members*": Do not allow your hands, your feet, your ears, your eyes and your tongue to do or say anything that transgresses God's holiness.

Colossians 3:3, "*dead*": Separated and apart. "*hid with Christ*": Living a spiritual life that is not accepted nor understood by the world.

Verse 4, "*shall appear*": Shall come in power and glory at the end of this fleeting world.

Colossians 3:1, "*things above*": The eternal treasures where Christ is. "*affection*": Mind, thoughts, interests and desires.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are inspired for the lesson for this day in which we especially remember the resurrection of our glorious Lord and Savior. We want to study and survey what it all means and what effect God wants it to have upon us. It is wonderful to behold the truth of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, but we need to realize what it meant for Him first to die, and, what effect it should have upon how we should so live and conduct ourselves. It is very plainly expressed and brought out that if Christ died for sin, then we should absolutely die to sin. Christ's death for sin points to a death we must die. The baptism mentioned in our lesson is the spiritual baptism that water baptism is a figure of. We are baptized; we are submerged and buried in the death of our Lord. It is a death to sin, a separation and complete surrender of our hearts to live solely for the Lord in the way of perfect righteousness and true holiness. We can be baptized a thousand times in literal water, but if we do not die to sin and this ungodly world, we accomplish nothing.

Sad to say, there are multitudes in this religious world who are taught that we cannot live free from sin, and that we must sin, more or less, every day. This is a cursed false doctrine that is going to mean eternal woe to man unless the truth is truly taught, believed and obeyed. The language in our scriptural text is so plain. Notice the various expressions: "henceforth we should not serve sin," "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body," and "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." These are positive declarations. Thank the Lord for the truth that is expressed in these wonderful scriptures!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose did our Lord Jesus lay down His life?
2. What death does this call for us to die?
3. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
4. What kind of life does God want us to live?
5. What are the members that we are to yield unto God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ came into the world to save the souls of men from the power of sin and death. To accomplish this He had to

be obedient unto death, the death of the cross. An innocent and pure Man had to suffer the penalty for sin so that we poor and condemned mortals could be delivered from sin and its consequences. And that was what Jesus did. He did it willingly, obediently and meekly. He did not try to escape, nor to resist the ones who were inflicting the awful death He was to suffer. But He did not suffer and die to merely let us be free. He died so that we may be able to die to sin and not live any longer beneath its dark dominion. In other words, He gave His life to set us free from the dominion and bondage of sinful nature and habits. The Law of Moses exposed what sin was made of. And Christ paid the price for our deliverance from sin by His obedience and sacrifice to do the will of God.

It is for us, therefore, as our lesson points out, to die to sin as Christ died *for* sin. We are to completely quit the sin business, and no longer allow it to dominate and pollute our souls before God. We are to quit yielding the members of our body to do sinful things that are displeasing to God. We must cease from the god of this world and things contrary to our Holy Creator. We must be holy and without blame before Him in love. We must worship and serve Him alone. We must trust Him, obey Him, and be fully led by His Holy Spirit. We must cease from lying, stealing, committing adultery, covetousness, taking God's name in vain, hatred, bitterness, strife, envy, jealousy, unlawful sexual activity and every other ungodly conduct that God is displeased with. We must learn to walk in humility, love, faith, peace and all the fruits of godly love. By the grace of God we can do it. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; But unto us which are saved it is the power of God." I Corinthians 1.18. What a powerful message contained in the depths of this verse. Colossians 2:15 reads – "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Revisit the scene with me once again, as Jesus stood before Herod. "Then he questioned him with many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him." Luke 23:9-10. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:" I Peter 2:23. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is

brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isaiah 53:7.

There was a fine display of carnality by his enemies. Christ stood alone, no one pleading His cause, stripped of any dignity or honor; yet, He stood in the strength of the Spirit of His Father. Pilate marveled, this was totally contrary to human nature. Pilate was surrounded by his soldiers, a man of position and authority; yet, he caved in when public pressure became great. Jesus stood alone, serene, calm with a clear understanding of the will of God. Our Savior conquered, triumphed, prevailed in His last test.

The secret is found in the garden, when He prayed through, surrendering His rights; yea, His whole life had been in preparation for this moment, and He conquered. You and I must die also. The circumstances are different from Christ's; however, the cross is just as real. "I saw the death I had to die, a death in which my soul did cry." Just recently, through earnest entreaty of the Savior, He helped me to see that I was holding on to my rights, my advantage. Kneeling in prayer, from the depths of my spirit I gave it up. Do we lose at such times, does the way of the world prevail? Perhaps in some respects concerning the flesh, but I arose from my knees with a freedom, a peace, and clearer understanding of the will of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



MAY 1, 2011

THE PEACE OF GOD

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

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell, Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through the grace that God has provided for us through His Son, Jesus Christ, the soul of man can have peace, quietness and assurance that will sustain and preserve a person through all the troubles and sorrows of this mortal life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 9:6, "*government shall be upon his shoulder*": The rule and leadership will be His responsibility. "*Prince of Peace*": Overall authority of power that subdues strife and turmoil in the hearts of men, bringing quietness and assurance therein.

Verse 7, "*increase of his government*": Greatness of His control. "*peace*": Safety, prosperity and rest.

Isaiah 26:3, "*mind is stayed*": Purpose is to lean fully on God.

Isaiah 32:17, "*assurance*": Perfect trust. "*sure dwellings*": Homes of safety.

Isaiah 57:19, "*fruit of the lips*": The conversation of a person. "*him that is far off*": The Gentiles and nations of all the world. "*him that is near*": The nation of Israel who God worked His great power through.

John 14:27, "*not as the world giveth*": The peace of God that Christ gives comes not because of strife and war, but comes through faith and obedience to God. This was the peace Christ had as He obeyed the Father even unto death, and such is the peace all of His saints can possess also.

Philippians 4:5, "*moderation*": Mildness and gentleness. "*at hand*": Very near, not afar off.

Verse 6, "*Be careful for nothing*": Be not anxious or worried about anything. "*supplication*": Asking, entreating, petitioning.

Verse 7, "*passeth all understanding*": Goes beyond what one can ask or think. "*keep your hearts and minds*": Preserve the peace and assurance of the inner man.

James 3:17, "*first pure*": To be truly pure is of most importance. "*gentle*": Mild and patient. "*easy to be entreated*": Not hard to deal with. "*without partiality*": Not judging by sight or outward show. "*without hypocrisy*": With no pretense or deceit.

Psalms 119:165, "*nothing shall offend them*": They will not stumble.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have brought to light the true peace that man needs in his heart and mind. Sad to say, many say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14.) But God spoke, through Isaiah, that in the promised Messiah

there would be peace given to the soul of man. All of the prophecies in our lesson are pointing to that inward peace and quietness that Christ would bring to all who would follow Him. Our New Testament scriptures are vivid in showing what this inward peace is and how it works. Paul really describes and labels this wonderful peace as being obtained by rejecting worry and anxiety and taking every thing to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. How wonderful that we can cast all of our cares on Him, as I Peter 5:7 tells us! The peace of God can be ours if we will so do. James tells us that the wisdom that is from beneath is bitter envying and strife, wherein is confusion and every evil work. James 3:14-16. And our Memory Verse from Psalm 119:165 has a key to peace, and that is to love God's law. Oh, that mankind would wake up to the vanity and uselessness of all of their foolish, selfish and greedy ways! Oh, how much better it is to commit our hearts to the Lord, and trust fully in Him!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of peace can the Prince of Peace give to us?
2. According to our lesson how can we obtain this peace?
3. What peace did Christ have that He wills to give to us?
4. What was Paul's recipe for having the peace of God?
5. What kind of peace does the wisdom from above give?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The wonderful Bible truths of the peace of God in the souls of men have inspired numbers of beautiful hymns. The LORD God in Isaiah 66:12 said that He would extend peace to the New Jerusalem like a river, and Bro. D. S. Warner penned these beautiful words: "I'll sing of a river divine, its waters from trouble release, more precious than honey and wine, that river, sweet river is peace. It reaches from heaven to earth, it issues from under the throne; great peace! oh, thy infinite worth! Sweet peace in my Jesus alone. Oh, wonderful life giving flood, thy waters so crystal and pure, make glad all the city of God, forever thy blessings endure. O Jesus, the tempest of sin is hushed into heavenly rest, since tasting the pure living stream that flows from Thy crucified breast. Oh, this river of peace makes me perfect and whole; and its blessings increase, flowing deep in my happy soul!" Another song by W. D. Cornell so sweetly speaks: "Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight

rolls a melody sweeter than psalm; In celestial-like strains it unceasingly falls o'er my soul like an infinite calm. What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, buried deep in the heart of my soul; so secure that no power can mine it away, while the years of eternity roll." D. O. Teasley wrote: "I came defiled and guilty to Jesus the mighty to save. He took my sins and sorrows, and beauty for ashes gave. I came to Jesus repenting, confessing my every sin; My heart's door swung wide open, and glorious peace flowed in. And since that joyful moment of glorious peace to me, my soul has ceased its pining; my heart has been light and free. Roll on, ye changing seasons, or turbulent seas of sin; I've found a blessed shelter, and glorious peace within!" Clara M. Brooks wrote, "As I walk in pastures green, by the crystal waters' sheen, Jesus gives me from all sorrow and from care release; As a shepherd doth his sheep, He my soul doth ever keep; while I'm trusting I have perfect peace. Oh, He keepeth me in perfect peace! While on Him my mind is stayed, I can never be afraid, for He keepeth me in perfect peace." Thanks and praise to God for His wonderful peace! —Submitted by Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"One spring a mocking bird and his mate built their nest in a little tree just outside the window of a ranch house on the plains of New Mexico. His song was a great joy to the kindly people on the ranch, and when he sang at night they were glad that the air could be filled with music.

"The work on the ranch progressed into early summer; the fields of grain gave promise of a bountiful harvest, and in the mocking birds' nest were tiny birds. Then one night there was a storm, the growing grain was destroyed, and the work of planting and tending had all been for naught. The morning brought such discouragement to the hearts in that home that they felt it was not worth while to go on, to start over again and plant another crop.

Suddenly the mocking bird's song was heard, more joyous than ever. How had the birds fared in the storm? They had lost their nest and their little ones—their home and their children—but they had not yielded to discouragement. They had decided to build a new nest in a larger tree, and then, of course, there had to be a song. And so, encouraged by the mocking

birds, the family on the ranch started again, and was rewarded with a plenteous harvest at the end of the season."

—From *Words of Comfort and Cheer* by Mrs. Charles Cowman

The peace that dwells in the heart of a child of God is a foundation that other Godly virtues are built upon. It walks hand in hand with love, and together they are the "oxygen" that gives life to the fruits of the Spirit and every good work, allowing them to mature into beautiful manifestations of holiness. It can only occur when sin is cleansed from the heart and it will quickly fly away if sin is allowed to return. It gives boldness to enter the presence of God and inspires faith in Him when things about us all go wrong. It brings comfort in times of affliction and spreads about us a holy serenity in the midst of a boisterous troubled world. Our heart swells with songs of thanksgiving for the sweet peace that Jesus gives to His people.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MAY 8, 2011

THE JOY IN BEING A CHILD OF GOD

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

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

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

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

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

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

Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

John 16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

I Peter 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

MEMORY VERSE: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Romans 14:17-18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: How great is the joy and happiness of being saved from sin and eternal damnation, by being washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ and having fellowship and communion with Him through His indwelling Holy Spirit every day!

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 27:4, "*desired*": Earnestly requested. "*seek after*": Search and strive for. "*beauty*": Delight, splendor and grace. "*enquire in his temple*": Inspect, consider and learn of God and His Son.

Verse 5, "*hide*": Protect and preserve; keep in secret.

Verse 6, "*sacrifices of joy*": Loud and earnest expressions of gladness and praises to the LORD.

Isaiah 12:1, "*praise*": Worship and give thanks with extended hands. "*thine anger is turned away*": Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ on the cruel cross of Calvary, the anger of God against us because of our sins has been appeased and withdrawn. "*and thou comfortedst me*": God reaches out His arms to us in mercy and love. Oh, what joy, and how we should thank and praise God!

Verse 2, "*salvation*": Deliverance from sin and death.

Isaiah 29:18, "*the words of the book*": The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is God's message that is hid from the worldly wise and revealed to the meek and lowly in heart.

Verse 19, "*meek*": Mild, gentle, humble and lowly. "*poor*": The needy and destitute souls who recognize their need of salvation. In these two scriptures the deaf, the blind, the meek and the poor refer to those who do sense their need. Jesus told the proud and self-satisfied Pharisees in John 9:41, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin (you could be delivered from your sin); but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Romans 5:10, "*saved by his life*": Will be changed to immortality through His risen life.

Verse 11, "*joy in God*": Rejoice, glory and glow with happiness in our Creator. "*atonement*": Reconciliation; being reunited with God.

John 16:20, "*ye shall weep and lament*": Because of Christ being taken from them and crucified.

Verse 22, "*I will see you again*": I will come back from the grave.

I Peter 1:9, "*end of your faith*": Purpose and final outcome of faith.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What gladness and rejoicing flows in the hearts and minds of those who are partakers of this great salvation that Christ has purchased and made available to us through His sacrificial death of being crucified on Calvary's cross and His resurrection from the grave, followed by His ascension to the right hand of God! Through the inspiration and blessing of the Holy Spirit it is all so real and wonderful! There is joy that cannot be expressed with this mortal tongue. In our lesson we have various scriptures that tell what this joy is all about. We have David's expression of the joy he felt in being a part of the eternal God's household, experiencing His protection, care and learning of His great wisdom and goodness. In Isaiah 12 we have a prophecy of the rich joy that will be for all who partake of His salvation. Before this, in chapter 10, the prophet foretold the coming of the Savior and what a blessing it was to be for Israel and all other nations.

Isaiah 29 spoke of the vision God is giving as likened to a book sealed and not readable. Jesus quoted verse 15 in Matthew 15:8-9, applying it to the self-righteous Pharisees of His day. This book the prophet speaks of is the salvation that Christ came to bring to the souls of men. How sad that so many people do not have understanding of it. But our lesson declares that those who sense their darkness and need will be able to read the book.

Then the New Testament scriptures show what a blessing Christ made possible for us to have, and what a joy the kingdom of God can be to those who seek the Lord and are willing to take up their cross to follow Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What all does salvation in Christ offer to our joy?
2. What did Jesus liken His death and resurrection to?

3. How do trials and temptations help to bring us joy?
4. How can a person have joy unspeakable, being filled with glory?
5. How is this joy far better than pleasures of this life?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In Matthew 13:44 Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Picture this man plowing another man's field and uncovering a fabulous chest of valuable wealth that he knew was worth far more than anything. He knew that it would be worth more than what he had or ever could have. So he covered it up, and went and sold all that he had and bought the field. Why was he willing to give up all that he had? It was because he knew that the treasure was worth far beyond it all. And so it is with this treasure of salvation and the kingdom of Christ. When a person is made to see its value as being far beyond all else in this fleeting life, it is not hard to pay the price, take up the cross, and follow Jesus. And it truly can be done with joy! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Of all the necessary graces we endeavor to maintain, joy seems to be the forgotten one many times, the one that is most elusive to us. We seem to comprehend strict obedience, conformity to standards, doing things right; and apply ourselves with utmost diligence, and at times, severity—gritting our teeth, bearing up, doing what we're supposed to, because we have to. But *joy*? We can wearily come to day's end, grinding and sputtering and hacking, not realizing that we missed the "something" all day that would have made such a difference for us personally, in our family life, and in our community witness.

But consider this. God didn't mean for us to live like that. His every command, all of the plan of salvation, was for our joy! It was for our well-being, our prosperity!

Another thing we should remember is that when we are raising children, the thing that will affect them and influence them the most toward the Lord is our joy. The thing that will

cause them to one day "jump ship" is a strictness and severity about religion minus the joy. They will look into our countenances from day to day, searching for the answer to this question, "Is Mommy happy?" When they meet relatives whom we have explained to them, "Oh, they're not saved," and those relatives seem to exude happiness and fun, and Mommy is so weary and grumpy, but Mommy is "saved," the unsaid message is being etched upon their hearts. *"Being saved makes you no fun."*

Joy is a choice. It is not a feeling. It is a decision. It is giving God permission to make your day. It is deliberately going to His well, letting down the bucket, and drinking in the cool, life-giving freshness. It's found in His Presence, which, by the way, is not something found only in our quiet times on our knees, but can be an abiding Presence while we're wiping noses and spills and tears. His joy is our strength. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



MAY 15, 2011

THE GRACE OF GOD

Psalm 84:10 ...I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Proverbs 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

16 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Ephesians 2:4 God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

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

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

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

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

I Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

II Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God in His mercy has showed favor to us mortals who have transgressed His law of holiness by sending His Son Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins and to help us to live a righteous and holy life in this present world and be found worthy to gain eternal life in the world to come.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 84:10, "*doorkeeper*": An abject; the lowest position.

Verse 11, "*grace*": Kindness, favor and unfailing help.

Proverbs 3:34, This text is quoted in James 4:6 which says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." It is also quoted in our Memory Verse in I Peter 5:5.

John 1:14, *"The Word"*: This is referring to the Word of the Almighty God who created the earth and the heavens and all things therein. This Word is what quickened the womb of the virgin Mary and caused her to bring forth Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. *"grace"*: Graciousness, helpfulness, and beneficial favor. *"truth"*: That which is right, accurate, complete, perfect and genuine.

Verse 16, *"fullness"*: Richness and completeness. *"grace for grace"*: Grace bestowed upon man by a gracious Being.

Titus 2:12, *"worldly lusts"*: Sinful desires of the flesh. *"live soberly"*: Live and conduct one's self with a sound mind and self-control.

Verse 14, *"peculiar people"*: A special people who live to please God above and beyond the ways of sinful man.

Ephesians 2:5, *"quickened us together with Christ"*: Resurrected us by the power of Christ's resurrection from the dead state of sin to have fellowship with Him.

Verse 6, *"sit together in the heavenly places"*: Communion with God and Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7, *"in the ages to come he might shew"*: Through the succeeding generations of time God would offer to all men the great grace that His kindness has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ. And, for over two thousand years, it has surely been accomplished.

Verse 8, *"that not of yourselves"*: Not of our own power or goodness.

I Corinthians 15:10, *"not in vain"*: Fully effective and unfailing.

II Corinthians 12:9, *"sufficient"*: Enough; will perfectly meet the need. *"my strength is made perfect in weakness"*: Christ's power finds success and full accomplishment in one who senses their weakness and need. *"rather glory in my infirmities"*: Instead of being frustrated and discouraged by the things he suffered, Paul was glad when he experienced the help given by the grace of Christ in those difficult times.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have a wonderful lesson before us from the Holy Scriptures. Many other scriptures could be brought out about the wonderful grace of God. I Peter 5:10-11 says, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ

Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." We began our lesson with two very important scriptures from the Old Testament, the one in Proverbs 3:34 being quoted by James and Peter in their epistles. All of our scriptures magnify so beautifully the wonderful loving favor of our great Almighty Creator. He loves us and has given us the best for our good. Jesus Christ was the Word of God made flesh and was full of grace and truth. It was an outreach of good and loving favor from the LORD our God to send His Son down here to our human level. It is unmerited favor, but He is that kind of God. He is a God of love and mercy. We do not have any reason to draw back from faith in Him. His grace is sufficient for every need that we might ever have. Paul prayed earnestly that the thorn in the flesh he was suffering, in all of the persecutions and afflictions, would be taken away. But Jesus spoke those precious words: "My grace is sufficient for thee." By the grace of God we can overcome all difficulties and obstacles. May the Lord bless and encourage our hearts to strive to be humble and meek as Jesus was that we might not have any lack of grace and power to live a successful life for Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. To whom does our lesson say that God gives grace to?
2. Who was it that was stated to be full of grace and truth?
3. What did Christ say to Paul about His grace?
4. What does our lesson say that grace has done for us?
5. What kind of life does the grace of God help us to live?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see." The writer of those lines, John Newton, was a slave trader and led a dark and sinful life. He had a godly faithful mother who did not cease praying for him. God worked in his heart and life and made him a new creature in Christ Jesus and he became a faithful minister of the Gospel. He is just one of the many who have partaken of the wonderful grace of Jesus. Harldor Lillenas wrote, "Wonderful grace of Jesus, greater than all my sin; How shall my tongue describe it, where shall its praise begin? Taking away my burden, setting my

spirit free, For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me!" B. E. Warren wrote, "By the grace of God I am saved today, I will walk by faith in the narrow way; I will trust His grace to preserve my soul, I will rest secure while the billows roll. By the grace of God I will never yield to the tempter's pow'r, but with sword and shield I'll defeat the foe with an ardor strong, In the name of Christ sing the victor's song. By the grace of God I will keep my eyes on the Lord alone and the promised prize. I will bear all things in His precious name, I will trust His grace and His promise claim." Let us be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. II Timothy 2:1. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Out of the beautiful violence of His (Christ's) life will flow a river of grace that will change (y)our world. To stand before the cross is to give yourself to Scripture and prayer in order to "be there" as only the Word and Spirit can enable you to do. To do this work is to be filled with amazement.

For the believer, grace means God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Until we embrace this costly grace—or rather until we allow ourselves to be embraced by it—we can never know what it means to be completely accepted. Never experience a deep sense of unqualified adoption as a daughter or son. Never realize what it is to really live. Never be moved to take up our own cross each day and follow Him.

Do you wonder where to begin today to follow in the steps of the Lord of Grace? The crucified life begins in servanthood: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" Philippians 2:8.

I must warn you that, when we take them as chosen marks of our life, humility and obedience to Christ threaten to change us completely. They will do violence to the old, selfish, superficially promising pursuits that we have mistaken for life. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," wrote Paul, "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" II Corinthians 4:10.

I pray that you...rediscover some of your original passion and purpose in following Christ. I hope that you have experienced a new awareness of what God's gentle violence and surpassing grace can accomplish in your life...." Taken from *A Violent Grace* by Michael Card. —Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 22, 2011

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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

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

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

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

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

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

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

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God...Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:22,24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We must take the example of people we have on record who exercised faith and confidence in God to instruct, inspire and help us to believe and be obedient to God in our individual lives.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Hebrews 10:35, "*confidence*": Assurance and persuasion. "*recompence of reward*": Receiving benefit from one's earnest effort.

Verse 36, "*patience*": Constant, unfailing endurance in waiting or suffering whatever comes.

Verse 38, "*faith*": Persuasion, believing, conviction, trust and reliance. The word in the Hebrew denotes unfailing loyalty, devotion and trust. "*draw back*": Cowardly shrinking away from.

Verse 39, "*perdition*": Eternal ruin, loss and destruction.

Hebrews 11:1, "*substance*": Support; concrete or complete essence. "*evidence*": Convincing proof.

Verse 2, "*elders obtained a good report*": Those of ancient times bore witness and firmly testified.

Verse 3, "*through faith*": Faith was the power that brought into being the visible creation from the basis of eternal invisible matter. "*the worlds*": things created. "*framed*": Designed and brought into being. "*not made of things that do appear*": Made of things unseen by the command of the Word of God.

Verse 4, "*he being dead yet speaketh*": God said to Cain in Genesis 4:10, "...The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto

me from the ground." The faith of that dear earnest soul, who sought God's favor, spoke to the heart of God after he had been mercilessly killed by his wicked, jealous brother. So does the blood of all the saints and martyrs through the ages cry unto God!

Verse 5, "*translated*": Changed and transferred from mortal to immortality.

Verse 6, "*diligently seek him*": Search out, investigate, crave and demand to know God.

Verse 9, "*dwelling in tabernacles*": Abraham was content to dwell in temporary tents even in the land God had promised, for he knew that his real possession was in the future.

Verse 10, "*looked for*": Waited for with earnest expectation. "*builder*": Planner and designer.

Verse 19, "*accounting*": Estimating, concluding and reckoning. "*from whence he received him in a figure*": Abraham was determined to do as God had commanded him in offering his son Isaac as a burnt offering. He went as far as to take the knife to slay Isaac, and it was then that God stopped him, and spoke those encouraging words of His good pleasure in Abraham and what He was going to bless him with. Genesis 22:15-18. Thus it was with Abraham as if he received his son back from the dead. Does this not inspire and encourage us to have faith in God as Abraham did?

Mark 11:22, "*Have faith*": Be determined to lay hold of and possess a believing attitude and heart.

Verse 24, "*believe*": To count and take as true, real and without fail. It is interesting to note that the root word of "believe" is "belove". When we can really love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we will have very good success in believing and trusting in Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, what a wonderful lesson we have from the Word of God today! There are many other scriptures that we could include with this precious thought, but let us diligently apply ourselves and take heed to what we have. Just before the first scripture in Hebrews 10:34 the writer had mentioned how these dear ones he was writing to had taken joyfully the loss of their material goods, knowing that they had better and enduring substance in Heaven. Here is the basis of faith. We

can rise above things that are seen and what happens to them because we have our eyes on eternal treasures. This is one thing that our Lord Jesus spoke so much of. This was why He was so willing to let Himself be killed because He had a joy set before Him of eternal things.

We have several mentioned in description of the faith they manifested. We must consider and remember these precious examples of faith. Think of Abel and how he pleased the Lord and suffered death at the hand of his wicked brother! Consider Enoch, so full of faith and love for God! God rewarded him so greatly, and has promised to reward all who will do likewise. Oh, consider what Noah did; being warned of things not yet seen. He believed God and went forward with the work before him. And then let us remember our father Abraham, and may the Lord help us to follow in the steps of his faith.

Jesus gave the lesson of faith when He cursed the fig tree. We can have this triumphant faith if we will press our way against all other influence and pressure.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the opposing influences against faith in God?
2. Who were some of them in the examples of faith mentioned?
3. What does it mean to diligently seek God?
4. Can we have this overcoming faith in God today?
5. Why is faith so necessary and important?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our text in Hebrews 10:37-38 is a quotation from the Greek translation of Habakkuk 2:3-4. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." He speaks of "his" faith. This denotes a personal individual faith. Each one of us can have this personal faith. We will have to press for it and put forth great effort and determination, but we can all have this faith that will avail with God and enable us to overcome this sin cursed and unbelieving world and society. We must get our eyes on Jesus and be instructed by His faith and

obedience to God as well as all the others that the Bible gives account of. Let us be true and determined to attain to this saving and keeping faith to the end. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." These words are encouraging the child of God to hold onto his faith, his confidence in God and the promises of God and that there will be a great reward in time to come if we hold on.

It is important to remember that our faith will be tested and tried. The apostle Peter reminds us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." *"Fiery trial"* speaks of severe heat, pain, difficulty, discomfort. The Scriptures bear out, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." I Corinthians 3:13. Again, I Peter 1:6-7, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found; unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

It is easy for us to pray, "Lord, get me out of here." However, the trying of our faith is more precious than gold. We want to be more concerned about our spiritual growth and development than we do our earthly comfort. The fire brings the dross to the top, it helps us see ourselves. "In the heated furnace, Father let me stay; precious gold refining, purge the dross away." Job's wife, after all that she saw, said, "Curse God and die." That is exactly what satan desires—give it up, cast it away, there is no use in continuing on. Oh, No! Don't you know Job was so glad he didn't cast away his confidence. Beloved Saints, hold on, the reward is coming.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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MAY 29, 2011

HEALING IN JESUS

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalms 118:6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ bore in His body the wounds and stripes inflicted upon Him as an atonement for the healing of our souls from sin and the healing of our bodies from sickness and disease. He manifested His healing power while here on earth and, from His mercy seat in Heaven, Christ can and does still heal the sin-sick soul and the diseased body of those who put their trust in Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 53:1, "*report*": Testimony and teaching. "*arm of the LORD*": Outreach of His power and grace to save and to heal.

Verse 5, "*stripes*": Wounds and bruises. "*chastisement of our peace*": Punishment to atone for our salvation and healing.

Psalms 118:6, "*on my side*": Standing for me and with me.

Jeremiah 17:5, "*cursed*": Evil and destruction pronounced.

"*whose heart departeth from the LORD*": Affections and confidence is turned away from faith in God.

Verse 7, "*Blessed*": Greatly benefited and happy. "*trusteth*": To flee for refuge with assurance and confidence. "*hope*": Security and expectation.

James 5:13, "*afflicted*": Undergoing the hardships and troubles met in mortal life. "*merry*": Cheerful.

Verse 14, "*elders*": Spiritual leaders such as pastors and ministers. "*pray over him*": Petition and entreat God in his behalf. "*anointing*": Applying oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This is to represent the consecration and submission of the afflicted one to God and His loving care.

Verse 15, "*prayer of faith*": prayer accompanied by faith and assurance. "*save*": cure and bring healing.

Verse 16, "*Confess your faults*": acknowledge where you have come short, deviated and stepped aside from following and trusting the Lord. "*the effectual fervent prayer*": the prayer accompanied by Holy Spirit inspiration and anointing in

earnestness and sincerity. "*avaieth much*": has great strength to accomplish great things.

Hebrews 13:8, "*the same*": unchanging and possessing the same power and ministration of salvation and healing as before.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We want to consider and come face to face with a truth that very few people in our world are willing to acknowledge and count as truth. We begin our lesson with the wonderful prophecy of Isaiah concerning the promised Messiah Who was to come and bring salvation and healing to mankind. It is true that Christ brought healing to the souls of men. He is able to heal a person from the disease of pride, lust, hatred, strife, covetousness, unbelief and all other things that afflict and disease the heart and soul of man. But it is also a solid fact that Christ is the great Physician, a wonderful healer of diseases of the physical body. He showed this supernatural power given to Him by His Father, God Almighty. He showed it by healing all manner of sickness and disease that infected the people of His day. There is no way to deny the report of the wonderful ministry of healing that He possessed. But we do have the idea and teaching abroad in society that Jesus no longer heals the mortal body, and that now we have doctors and medicine to look to. This is a false belief, which the Scriptures in no way give any place for.

Our text in Matthew 8:17 declares that Christ's healings were the fulfillment of our text in Isaiah 53. It is not quoted word for word, but Matthew applies the prophecy to the healing of our infirmities and sicknesses. Let us take heed to our Memory Verse, and be assured that the Lord Jesus is still in the healing business, and it is His will and good pleasure for us to put our complete trust in Him for the healing of the body.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Isaiah's prophecy say Christ's suffering was for?
2. What did Matthew say Christ's healing was fulfillment of?
3. What did Jeremiah say about trusting in man and the flesh?

4. What does James say for us to do when we are sick?
5. What is meant by Jesus being the same today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson today is a controversial subject among men. Very few churches teach that Christ is still the Healer that He was when He was here among men. The world of medicine and surgery and other works of men is a strong flowing stream in society. How sad that so many refuse to accept the scriptural teaching of Christ Jesus and the privilege that we have in our day to put our trust in Him for the healing of our mortal bodies! But we have many testimonies on record of children of God who have experienced the supernatural power of the healing of their bodies from all manner of sickness and disease. Yet there is embedded in the hearts of men a love for this present life and an unwillingness to die without doing something about it, utilizing the skill of doctors and medicine. To die trusting in Christ Jesus alone without medical help is surely not a popular and accepted procedure. What does God want us to do? Does He want us to turn to the arm of flesh for the help we need in our physical status when He has very clearly manifested His Son as the healer of men today? May we awake to righteousness and view the Scriptures of our lesson today with an open mind. Make it an earnest matter of prayer.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." Matthew 9:21-22. There are many instances of miraculous healings that Jesus performed while He walked the sands of this earth and I am thankful that they did not cease when He ascended to the right hand of His Father. There are many examples of the apostles continuing His ministry of healing and there are examples of the Lord healing His people today.

Lamentations 3:22 is a comforting scripture when we are suffering from the hand of affliction and the enemy of our souls

tells us that "God doesn't care about you, He won't hear your cry." It says, "*It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*" Because He went to be with His Father, His compassion for the plight of suffering mortals calling out to Him for help did not suddenly end. No, we are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace with our needs. We are instructed to call for the elders of the church to anoint and pray for us. We are invited to come to Him with any problem, whether it is a financial problem, a safety issue, a troubled relationship, or a physical or spiritual need. Understand that God cares about you. God does hear our cry and the prayer of faith still does save the sick. And we can rest securely in His arms as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd that truly cares for the sheep of His pasture. May no one ever be discouraged to call on Him in their time of trouble.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



JUNE 5, 2011

THE ONENESS AND UNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!...For there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Psalm 133:1-3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It was the prayer and purpose of Christ in His work on earth that all who believe in and follow Him would be in unity even as He and the Father were one, and He gave the various gifts to the Church to help to bring about that perfect oneness upon which He commanded the blessing of life forevermore.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 17:9, "*pray*": Make earnest request and petition.

I Corinthians 1:10, "*same mind*": As one in thought, feeling, and purpose.

I Corinthians 12:13, "*made to drink into one Spirit*": Given of God to partake of the same identical Spirit of holiness.

Ephesians 4:1, "*walk worthy*": Conduct yourselves as suitable to this same profession. "*vocation*": Invitation.

Verse 2, "*forbearing one another in love*": Putting up with each other in the divine love of God.

Verse 3, "*Endeavoring*": Making earnest, prompt and sincere effort. "*keep*": Maintain. "*unity of the Spirit*": The togetherness and harmony that the Holy Spirit brings. "*in the bond of peace*": In the uniting principle of quietness and freedom from strife and confusion.

Verse 11, "*gave some*": Bestowed and endued as was prophesied. "*apostles*": Delegates and ambassadors commissioned and sent to herald the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "*prophets*": Foretellers of the future according to God's Word. "*evangelists*": Those who announce and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. "*pastors*": Shepherds; those who feed the believers. "*teachers*": Instructors.

Verse 12, "*perfecting of the saints*": Complete furnishing for spiritual progress of those who are truly saved. "*edifying*": Building rightfully and making strong.

Verse 13, "*Till we all come*": Until we all attain and arrive to. "*a perfect man*": A full grown and developed Christian. "*measure of the stature*": The mark of maturity and completeness.

Psalms 133:3, "*there the LORD commanded the blessing*": It was in that state of oneness and harmony that God willed and appointed the blessing of eternal life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we see the design and plan of God brought to light concerning those who believe and trust in Christ for eternal salvation. It is perfect harmony and oneness of Spirit and faith of all believers. We will first consider a part of Christ's prayer that He earnestly offered to His Father after His precious time of counsel, instruction and comfort that He

had with His disciples after the Passover supper. We will consider the special emphasis that Jesus in His prayer to God put on the oneness that He desired His disciples to have together. The ardent burden of His prayer is that His Church, whom He purchased with His own blood, would be united in love, harmony, agreement and holiness. Without that beautiful characteristic and condition of peace and holy fellowship, the Church of God would fall short of the will and good pleasure of God and His Son. Thus was Christ's burden in prayer that solemn evening right before He and the disciples went out to Gethsemane and the sad events that were to follow.

Our text in Acts 4:32 was spoken of the congregation at Jerusalem at their gathering right after the apostles had returned from their confrontation with the Jewish leaders. They united in prayer, and the power of the Spirit of God came down and filled their hearts with power and victory. This bonded their hearts afresh with the glory and oneness of Heaven.

We have Paul's instructions from I Corinthians about this unity and how needful it was as a vital fruit for the Church of God to bear. And then Paul's message to the Ephesians is so good. His exhortation of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit points out vital things we, as the children of God, must keep in mind and attend to. "Walking worthy with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love," is indispensable in attaining to the unity that God wants us to have. And then the various gifts that the text he quoted from Psalm 68:18 referred to is surely an accurate point to remember.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus praying to His Father mainly about?
2. Why is unity and harmony among God's Saints so important?
3. What efforts do we need to make in order to keep unity?
4. What gifts has God given through Christ for this purpose?
5. What must each one of us do to have unity really fulfilled?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We live in a world of strife, confusion, disagreement and all kinds of disorder and frustration. Families are divided, marriages are broken up, and, worst of all, the professed realm of Christianity is in chaos and awful division and turmoil. This was never God's plan and design for people. Our Lord Jesus Christ built His Church on the Rock of Himself in His humility, meekness, and obedience to the will of God. It is only in following His example of submission to His Father, denying self and each one taking up his own cross that we can attain to real full salvation and succeed in being accounted worthy of eternal life. Jesus prayed for His disciples to be in unity with each other. If we will humble ourselves to walk with God and follow the guidelines of the teachings of Christ and His apostles with faith, holiness, meekness and pure Divine love, then we can enjoy this good and pleasant state of unity, harmony and one accord. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If lowliness, meekness and forbearance are what is necessary to the endeavor of keeping unity with those to whom God has joined us by His Spirit, then the opposite is also true: a personal agenda of pride and self-righteousness, insistence upon "my rights", and unyielding impatience with others' shortcomings is what will sabotage the whole operation and render any attempts at maintaining unity totally useless. Actually, these things will cut me off from fellowship with God, as well. (I John 1:6-7.)

Brother Charles Elwell once said, and I noted it on the flyleaf of my Bible, "Self-righteousness will do two things: It will cause you to isolate yourself from those whom God loves, and it will cause you to not see your own need."

The truth coming so strongly and clearly from these Scriptures is that unity is something that is given to us from God, when we are each truly saved and pure in heart. Sometimes we don't see it that way. We mistakenly, albeit sincerely, think that we must all think totally alike, or look alike, and be totally perfect, before we have unity. We think it is something we have to "come to". (Ephesians 4:13.) But these Scriptures bring out that it is God-given unity that will be the

vehicle to *bring us to* the maturity and perfection of the fullness of Christ's stature. Not the other way around. It is futile for me to require you to be "perfect" before I "have unity" with you. Rather, I *need* you in my press toward maturity and Christ-likeness.

I also cut off fellowship and unity with God or you as a fellow Christian if I insist upon my individual "rights" to my opinion and allowances in my life in the face of your careful observance and attention to separateness from the world. This too is selfish pride and walking in darkness, which will never blend with light. I *need* you to bring me to a more careful and watchful lifestyle. I shouldn't despise or disdain you.

I know this can work. Let's make it our goal to focus on what we have been given in Christ, and in that unity, press together toward the mark. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JUNE 12, 2011

THE LIGHT OF GOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

II Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:8 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.

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

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.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 6:22-23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ and His Gospel of salvation is the Light of God that has shone into this world. If we are made aware of the darkness of sin that we are in, we will rejoice to see and walk in this Light. But if we are blinded by satan and the lusts and desires of sin and the flesh, we will not see the light and will go on in greater darkness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 1:5, "*the darkness comprehended it not*": Did not take it eagerly and possess it.

Verse 9, "*lighteth every man*": Brings light that is for everyone.

John 8:12, "*light*": Spiritual light that Christ shines is made up of several things, some of which are: knowledge, understanding, instruction, counsel, reproof, correction, revelation, inspiration and guidance.

John 12:35, "*Yet a little while*": God gives every man a chance to accept His light and to walk in it. But we must respond with obedience without delay. "*Walk while ye have the light*": Follow and obey the counsel that the light gives you. "*lest darkness*": To keep from going back into darkness.

Verse 36, "*believe in the light*": Be persuaded and assured that it is the true light and walk in obedience to its every precept.

II Corinthians 4:3, "*hid*": Kept from being seen by a veil or covering over the heart and mind. "*lost*": Those who will perish.

Verse 4, "*the god of this world*": The devil and satan. "*blinded the minds*": Hinders the soul from seeing and understanding the real truth.

Verse 6, "*in the face of Jesus Christ*": In the light of His countenance of holiness and truth.

Ephesians 5:9, "*the fruit of the Spirit*": The effect of the light of the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Verse 10, "*proving*": Making clearly known.

Verse 11, "*reprove*": Admonish with love and a desire to help.

Verse 13, "*made manifest*": Being reproved, exposed and revealed.

I John 1:6, "*do not the truth*": Are not practicing the truth.

Verse 7, "*fellowship one with another*": This fellowship first is with God, which we will have if we walk in the light of His Word. As we have fellowship with God, we will also have fellowship with all who are also walking in His light.

Matthew 6:22, "*single*": Clear and without obstruction.

Verse 23, "*evil*": Veiled and dull of perception. "*If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness*": If what we esteem and believe as light is really in the darkness of error, and we won't recognize it, that is great darkness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

There is natural light and there is spiritual light. When God created the world the first thing He spoke forth was light. (Genesis 1:3.) This was not the light of the sun, for that was not brought forth until the fourth day, as Verses 14-18 tell about. What then was this light? Our scripture in John 1:1-5 gives a key. It is *spiritual* light that God wants His creation to receive. Jesus Christ is that true Light that we all need. Christ declared that He was the light of the world and He proved it by the life and works that He brought forth. We have His warning in John 12:35 and 36 of the danger of failing to walk in the light.

Paul, in II Corinthians 4 speaks of the god of this world blinding the minds of men and keeping them from walking in the light. We need to take heed to this warning. God commanded the light to shine and illuminate the souls of men, but we need to be diligent to attend to this solemn matter. Then Paul in Ephesians 5 speaks about this light and how serious it is. Light reproves and shows up sin and ungodliness, and we need to give heed to the counsel to awake from spiritual sleep and cease from sin and transgression and let Christ be our light.

I John 1 shows how we must walk in the light. If we will diligently do this we can have fellowship with God, for He is light, perfect light, with no darkness at all. We have in our Memory Verse another warning about light and darkness. It is by walking in the Light of Life in Christ that we can experience the cleansing of the blood that Christ shed for the salvation of our precious souls. May the Lord help us all to take heed and embrace the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of light does the Scriptures declare about?
2. Who is the true Light that we all need?
3. What are we responsible to do about this Light?
4. What happens when people fail to walk in this Light?
5. What important things does this Light make known?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I Peter 2:9 says that we "should show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous

light." Oh, how sweet and bright is the illumination of the soul of man, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit revealing the Word of God and writing it in our hearts! Truly, light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun of righteousness! He is the true Light that shines in the darkness to guide our feet in the way of peace and holiness. Praise the Lord for delivering us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son! He has enlightened the eyes of our understanding that we might know what is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Praise His name forever and ever for His Light! Let us be diligent to walk in this Light and not allow the darkness to overtake us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Not long ago, we were in the innermost part of a cave when the tour guide announced that we were to stand still while he turned off the lights so we could experience 'total darkness.' The darkness was so great that you could almost feel it as a presence. You could not see your hand in front of your face; no matter how hard you strained to look. Interestingly enough, one of the children of the group had on a wrist watch with the tiniest pin dot of light illuminating in that great darkness. Naturally all eyes were riveted to that small point of illumination. Imagine our relief when the tour guide switched the lights back on and we continued our tour.

This is just how it is spiritually in our world today. Your life is being observed by those in darkness. Their eyes are riveted to the light of Jesus Christ that is within you. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Matthew 5:14. So, be faithful to the light bestowed upon you. Some may only be given a pin dot while others have received a giant shaft of light. Rejoice in the light you have been given. Do not be ashamed of it or put it under a bushel. Flash the light of Christ all around. The world is counting on you.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JUNE 19, 2011

THE NEW TESTAMENT SABBATH

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness;

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter my rest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:28-29.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: From the creation of the world God has had a rest that He wants us to enter into. Under the law it was the seventh day Sabbath, and was also observed in the entering in of Israel into the land of Canaan. But in the New Testament it is a spiritual rest of ceasing from one's own works of self and fleshly things, and coming to faith and perfect obedience to the will and good pleasure of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 95:8, "*provocation*": This was the time when Israel provoked and grieved God by drawing back from going in to possess the land of Canaan which God had promised them.

Verse 10, "*Forty years long*": Israel had witnessed God's power for forty years in their deliverance from Egypt and the miracles He wrought in the wilderness.

Verse 11, "*not enter into my rest*": Numbers 13 and 14 tells of the people of Israel drawing back in unbelief from moving forward to possess the promised land.

Hebrews 4:1, "*Let us therefore fear*": Be careful and diligent to resist the temptation to draw back in unbelief from entering into the spiritual rest that Christ has made available for us.

Verse 2, "*not being mixed with faith*": Not accompanied and joined with unwavering trust.

Verse 3, "*we which have believed*": We who have accepted the Gospel of Christ as the truth of God. "*do enter into rest*":

Partake of and experience the spiritual rest of the soul. *"if they shall enter into my rest"*: In quoting from the text in Psalm 95:11 the wording seems to differ. In Psalm 95:11 it says, "They should not enter into my rest." In quoting this in Hebrews 3:11 it says, "They shall not enter into my rest." And, "If they shall enter into my rest." It all points to the same thought: because Israel drew back in unbelief from going in, as God had commanded them, to possess the land of Canaan, God declares that they shall not enter into His rest. And that is what the writer in Hebrews is endeavoring to bring out in the New Testament. Christ came to bring soul rest, but if we draw back in unbelief and selfish desires, we will not enter into His rest.

Verse 4, *"seventh day"*: The literal seventh day of the week in which Israel was commanded to rest and do no physical labor.

Verse 5, *"in this place again"*: In speaking of the entering of Israel into the promised land of Canaan. Both of these are types and shadows of the spiritual rest that Christ has made so we can partake of and enjoy.

Verse 6, *"it remaineth that some must enter therein"*: It is still God's desire for the souls of men to enter into His rest offered in Christ, the rest of fully trusting and obeying Him.

Verse 7, *"limiteth"*: Marks out, appoints or specifies.

Verse 8, *"Jesus"*: This is really Joshua, the one who led Israel into Canaan. Both words, Jesus and Joshua, come from the same Hebrew word, meaning, "Jehovah saves".

Verse 9, *"There remaineth a rest"*: There is yet a rest that God wants us to enter, a spiritual rest of the soul obtained by faith and obedience to Him.

Verse 10, *"ceased from his own works"*: Stop living and doing as self and the flesh promotes.

Verse 11, *"labour"*: Strive with steadfast faith and submission to God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The writer, in Hebrews chapter 3, quoted from Psalm 95 after stating in verse 6 that, "we are the house of Christ if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Then he quotes from Psalm 95 and is applying the

warning to us to take heed that we do not allow our hearts to be drawn back from fully trusting and obeying God and the Gospel of Christ. Let us note in our lesson that the writer uses the seventh day Sabbath rest and the rest of possessing the promised land of Canaan both as types of the spiritual rest in Christ. We have as our Memory Verse the very words of Jesus that reveal the rest that we can find in Him. While in sin and living for self and the flesh, we are slaves and labor under the heavy and woeful taskmaster, satan. Covetousness, pride, adultery, fornication and all the other works of the flesh as listed in Galatians 5:19-21 are the works that God wants us to cease from. We can have this soul rest if we will, as Jesus said, take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart.

We have included in our lesson the last two verses of Isaiah 58 that reveal the substance of this rest of faith, "not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words." May the Lord help each one of us to have an understanding to see what a beautiful and sweet rest we can have through Christ Jesus. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What two rests are pictured in the Old Testament?
2. What is the rest that Christ is offering for us to enjoy?
3. What caused Israel to draw back and not enter God's rest?
4. What causes people today to fail to enter into His rest?
5. What must we do to be able to enter into the rest of the soul?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The 90th Psalm is an earnest prayer for God's mercy to us poor and needy mortals in this short sojourn of earth. But its final petition in verses 16 and 17 goes well with our lesson on entering into God's rest: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." God's work and our work must be united. First we

need to experience and know the work of God. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." Ephesians 2:10. Through His works can the work of our hands be established. We need His work of grace and holiness accomplished, and then we can work and accomplish what His will designs. Let us seek first His work and He will order and establish the work that we are to do for Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I am so thankful that this rest is made available to us today in 2011. I entered for sure, when I first gave my heart and life to the Lord; but I have had plenty of times since, that my heart has been overcharged with cares, responsibilities, pressures and temptations. At times, I have felt like Peter, sinking beneath the waves of sorrow, disappointment and failure. It seems inevitably I'm brought to the point that I can't go on. I wear out, carrying my own burdens, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Then in prayer, I surrender myself or the problem completely into the Lord's hands. The rest and peace comes in, as I believe and trust in the Lord. It is truly wonderful.

I clearly remember one such experience. We had been under financial stress and I had been working many hours, the future looked very bleak. My wife suggested a camping trip and I just didn't see how. However, we left. I remember when we got there I was weary and exhausted in my mind and spirit and I sat in a chair and just watched the children unload and set up the tent. As I sat there and began to drink in the beauty of our surroundings and my family, it felt like there were big tension springs that were loosening, popping and releasing inside of me, they had been wound so tight. Needless to say, it was one of our best and most memorable trips ever. I came home renewed with a fresh perspective that God is still in control and "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JUNE 26, 2011

THE LAST GREAT DAY

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened,

which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Other associated Scriptures: Matthew 12:36-37, 41-42; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:27; Luke 21:34-36; and I Timothy 5:24-25.

MEMORY VERSE: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. II Corinthians 5:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Every person who has lived in this world will stand before God and His Son Jesus Christ in that last day and be judged and receive a just reward for the things they have been responsible for in their earthly life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Peter 3:10, "*great noise*": Crash. "*melt*": Be loosened and pass out of existence. The whole structure of earth, and all things therein, is held together by the Word of God. In that day this same Word will release all things to nothing. "*burned up*": Wholly and entirely consumed.

Verse 11, "*dissolved*": This is from the same word as "melt" in verse 10. Colossians 1:17 states that by Him all things "consist", which means set and held together. And by Him will they all pass out of existence.

Verse 12, "*Looking for*": Anticipating earnestly. "*hasting*": Urging and desiring to speed up His coming. "*fervent heat*": Burning fire.

Romans 14:10, "*set at nought*": Despise and count lightly.

Verse 11, "*confess*": Acknowledge.

Verse 12, "*give account*": Receive just reward.

Acts 17:31, "*given assurance*": Provided faith and confidence beyond all doubt.

Revelation 20:11, "*fled away*": Vanished.

Verse 12, "*books were opened*": Every deed committed will be made plain and brought to light. "*works*": Actions, toils and what purpose or effort was made.

II Corinthians 5:10, "*receive*": Be given a just and righteous reward.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Peter in the first part of chapter 3 of his second epistle warned us about people who would question about whether Christ was really going to return as He had promised. Peter referred to the time when the world was destroyed by water and it took place by the Word of God, and that this second coming of Christ is going to be carried out by the same Word. He stated that, "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." And, also, Peter declared that, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He said that the Lord is longsuffering to us, and that is why He is letting things go as He is. "But the day of the Lord will come!" Our lesson is full of warnings for us to diligently prepare to meet that day "without spot and blameless."

These scriptures, along with the other scriptures referred to, are plain and not hard to understand. We need to take heed to this truth, and pray each day that God will help us to be ready to meet the Lord in the air and be accepted of Him. Paul in our Romans text warns us about keeping the right attitude toward our brother. It is very vital to realize that we are all going to be held accountable for our own individual condition before God. Paul's message in Acts 17 to the people in Athens closes with the warning that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Christ. And then the vivid scene portrayed in Revelation 20 is that solemn event that will take place in that last day. Our Memory Verse repeats the serious foretelling of the judgment. It would be good if each one would take time to read the other scriptures mentioned at the end of the text.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why has God delayed the coming of the great judgment?
2. What should we be diligent about concerning Christ's coming?
3. Why should we not judge or set at naught our brother?
4. What will take place on that great Judgment Day?
5. What will happen to this present earth when Jesus comes?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

For our closing comments we will quote from the song, "The Resurrection", written by Clara M. Brooks, from the Song Book "Select Hymns", page 116. "Now the shadows of the evening gently steal across the sky; Soon we'll see our Savior coming—Lo, the hour is drawing nigh—Coming for the pure and holy, by His saints to be admired—Those redeemed from ev'ry nation, all in garments white attired. Quickly as the lightning flashes, in the twinkling of an eye, shall these frail and mortal bodies put on immortality. All that sleep shall then awaken; those redeemed of that vast throng, shall with angels in the heavens join the everlasting song. All who in the resurrection from their sins have had a part—quickened by the Holy Spirit, made anew in life and heart—On the morn of Christ's appearing shall a crown of glory wear. They shall rise to meet the Savior; Oh, what rapture! I'll be there. *At the thought of that bright morning not a fear steals o'er the soul that is robed in white adorning, pressing forward to the goal.* Nay, reluctantly we linger in this world of earthly night, when we think of that fair morning when our Lord appears in sight. Into Father's heav'nly kingdom, waiting in the realms of light, we shall have abundant entrance; we shall shine in glory bright. Not a care shall dim its splendor, not a tear, or pain, or sigh: Help me live that I may enter those fair mansions by and by." Then the chorus rejoices: "We shall meet him, we shall meet him with the angels in the air! We shall crown him King of glory in that morning over there."

Praise the Lord for the blessed hope we have of being in that glorious resurrection!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems like we are witnessing a surge in violent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, destructive hurricanes and tornadoes, torrential rains and flooding. Is the Lord trying to convey a message to mankind? What would that message be?

There were some who came to Jesus and told Him about some Galilaeans who Pilate had slain, mingling their blood with their sacrifices. Jesus asked, "...Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?" He continued on to remind them of the eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them and asked, "...think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" His response to these tragic instances was, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:2-5.)

The Lord is trying to cause people to wake up to their own need of salvation. He will return as He promised and unless people repent of their sins they are going to be eternally lost. When a catastrophe happens to others, it should cause fear and trembling to come upon us and we should begin examining our own souls to make sure we are clear before the Lord. For one day He is going to call for us and then it will be too late to try to repent of things that should have been taken care of long ago when we had plenty of opportunity.

Adam Clarke said concerning the verses in Luke 13: "It is very wrong to suppose that those who suffer by the sword, or by natural accidents, are the most culpable before God. An adequate punishment for sin cannot be inflicted in this world: what God does here, in this way, is in general:

1. through mercy, to alarm others;
2. to show his hatred to sin;
3. to preserve in men's minds a proper sense of his providence and justice; and
4. to give sinners, in one or two particular instances, a general specimen of the punishment that awaits all the perseveringly impenitent."

May we correctly discern the signs of Christ's soon return and be ready to meet Him in peace. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey

The Secret of the Singing Heart

by C. W. Naylor

Those who desire fresh inspiration to approach the challenges of life God's way, will certainly want to read this book. Are you really on the road to happiness? Are you fertilizing the worry tree? Are you facing the sunrise? "The Secret of the Singing Heart" will give godly insight into each of these questions plus many more. It is filled with encouraging counsel that is sure to strengthen your faith and enhance your walk with God.

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