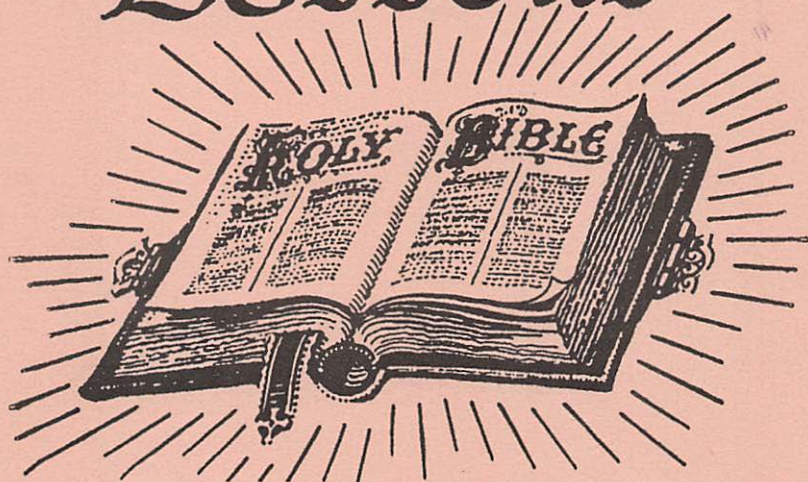


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR THIRD QUARTER, 2011

THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER

Our Bible Lesson Studies for this quarter includes various subjects that we are greatly inspired to bring forth. Some of these subjects are greatly misconstrued and wrongly taught in our society today. We pray that the Lord will bless these studies for the spiritual enlightenment of all.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



JULY 3, 2011

THE KINGDOM 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.

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

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

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

5 ...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Luke 17:20 And when he (Jesus) was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

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

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Kingdom of God that was prophesied in the Old Testament, and established by Jesus Christ as the Gospel to be preached to all mankind, is a spiritual kingdom that reigns in the heart and life of every born again and Holy Spirit led person.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 9:6, "*government upon his shoulder*": Rule and leadership in His control. "*Wonderful*": Distinguished, great and remarkable. "*Counsellor*": One capable of giving sound and worthy advice and direction.

Mark 1:15, "*at hand*": Approaches and draws near. "*repent*": Reform; change one's ways from sin to righteousness. This means to give up this sinful world and its ungodly lusts, and seek to follow Christ in all of His purity.

John 3:3, "*born again*": Receive birth from Heaven above; be made a new creature that is well pleasing unto God. "*of water*": Of the Word of God. This Word is a cleansing agent that is carried out through obedience.

Luke 17:20, "*not with observation*": Not with outward show or demonstration. "*within you*": In one's innermost being.

Luke 16:16 and Matthew 11:12, "*presseth into*" and "*suffereth violence*": Both of these expressions are from the same Greek word which means to force, crowd one's self, and to seize. This means that to get into the kingdom of God one must go against all oppositions of the world, the flesh, and the devil with a determination that will not give up. This requires effort to be made that very few are willing to put forth.

John 18:36, "*not from hence*": Not of men nor this present evil world.

Verse 37, "*bear witness unto the truth*": This statement tells us that Christ spoke and preached the real truth of God and His Word, and, that His witness is for people who will be honest and acknowledge their true condition and need, thus to speak the truth in their heart. That is why He said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice".

Matthew 13:44, "*treasure hid in a field*": A buried valuable substance. "*the which when a man hath found*": A man, either passing by or being employed working in the field for the owner, somehow discovers this great treasure. "*he hideth*": He covers it and hides it from view. "*for joy*": Elated at the vast worth of his find. "*goeth and selleth all that he hath*": Makes every effort by selling all of his possessions to get the price required to buy the field. He does this because he knows that the treasure is far beyond every thing else. When a person is awakened in his or her heart to the value of salvation from sin and hope of eternal treasures in Heaven, no sacrifice or amount of effort will be spared to take hold and possess this wonderful kingdom that Christ made available for us.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, what a wonderful subject from the Scriptures that we have in this lesson! The kingdom of God is the greatest treasure that we can ever possess in this life. Starting from prophecies in the Old Testament and all the way through the New Testament it is declared and manifested to be the richest and most valuable possession that we can have for our very own!

Isaiah expresses it so vividly as He prophesied of the Lord Jesus and the wonderful kingdom that He was to bring to us. He was to be the child born and the son given to us. He was to reign over sin, death and the grave, with all power in Heaven and earth given to Him by His Father, the Almighty God! He was made King of kings, the Prince of Peace. His kingdom is a kingdom of peace, peace that would increase unendingly. It is a spiritual kingdom, as Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3. It takes a birth to spiritual eternal things to get into the kingdom of God. We have to give up our pleasures and treasures and take hold by faith and obedience to the riches of salvation and victory over sin. It is an inward kingdom that reigns in the heart and life of a person. It is not of this present fleeting earth. It is not natural food but spiritual food for the soul, the inner man. And it is, as our scripture from Matthew 13:44 shows, a treasure valuable above all else.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the child born to us, and the son given to us?
2. What kind of kingdom did this Son of God bring to mankind?
3. What does it take for a person to enter into this kingdom?
4. What is the kingdom of God composed of?
5. What will one do if made aware of the value of this treasure?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What truth is in B. E. Warren's song, "What A Kingdom!"
"There's a theme that is sweet to my mem'ry; there's a joy that

I cannot declare; there's a treasure that gladdens my being: 'tis the kingdom of righteousness here. There's a scene of its grandness before me; of its greatness there can be no end! It is joy, it is peace, it is glory; in my heart how these riches do blend! What a pleasure in life it is bringing; what assurance and hope ever bright! Oh, what rapture and bliss are awaiting when our faith shall be lost in the sight! 'Tis a kingdom of peace, it is reigning within, it shall ever increase in my soul; We possess it right here when He saves from all sin, and 'twill last while the ages shall roll!" Are you lost in its splendor and beauty?

—Submitted by Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom that is to be entered into now. While many are waiting for some future time for it to be revealed, God's children are basking in its glories today. It is so different from the kingdoms of this world that are filled with strife and evil, for in God's kingdom is all the fullness of His righteous glory.

Jesus instructed His followers to "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." To be included in the everlasting Kingdom of God is of far greater value than all of the temporal things of earth that will soon perish. This kingdom must be pressed into. For one to put forth the effort necessary to enter in they must see its value and desire to be a part of it more than anything else.

One must "...repent...and believe the gospel." Without turning from sin it is impossible to be a part of this holy kingdom. One must likewise believe the Gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9. There is no other way for man to enter. It was for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to this world and His sacrifice opened the door for all mankind.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



JULY 10, 2011

SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

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

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

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;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

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

MEMORY VERSE: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 7:21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Only the faithful soul who is fully obedient to the will of God in this life will share in the glory that was given to Jesus Christ because of His submission to the will of God to be crucified for the sins of mankind.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:9, "*Hallowed be thy name*": Holy, sacred and honored is Thy name.

Verse 10, "*Thy kingdom come*": We welcome Thy kingdom to take over and rule our hearts and lives. "*Thy will be done*": Thy good pleasure, purpose and desire be fully satisfied and fulfilled in this earthly body.

John 6:37, "*in no wise*": In no way.

Verse 39, "*I should lose nothing*": No one will be lost who will faithfully believe and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 40, "*seeth the Son*": Have a spiritual vision and understanding of the Son of God.

Matthew 7:21, "*saith unto me, Lord, Lord*": Make a profession of believing Christ is Lord. "*doeth the will of my Father*": Obeys and follows God all the way in every thing.

Matthew 26:39, "*this cup*": This refers to the awful suffering that the Lord was about to endure.

I Thessalonians 4:3, "*your sanctification*": Sanctification of each one's personal body and spirit. The word "*sanctification*" is the same word that is translated from the Greek as "*holiness*" in other places. "*abstain from fornication*": Resist and do not yield to any temptation to commit sexual relations with anyone you are not lawfully married with.

Verse 4, "*know how to possess his vessel*": Be instructed in godly wisdom just how to live with and relate to one's husband or wife.

Verse 5, "*Not in the lust of concupiscence*": Not in evil fleshly desire.

Verse 6, "*go beyond and defraud*": Overstep and cheat.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we will study the important responsibility every human being has before God, and that is the submission of our will to Him. We can see in the beginning when God created man and woman that He meant for us as human beings to love, serve and obey Him with a free will. He does not desire to force devotion and service. He wants it to be the action of our will, a matter of our choice. He put man in the garden, with liberty to partake of its blessings, but God wisely inserted a limitation to the deal. He clearly made it known that there was one tree that man must not partake of. But then we see that satan sought to attract the woman to eat of the forbidden fruit. And it is still the same today. God wants people to willingly serve Him and willingly deny the temptations that satan may present to us.

Part of the prayer that Jesus gave as an example of our hearts desire to God expresses the yielding of our will to the will of God. Then in John's Gospel are found expressions of Christ's decision to not do His will, but rather to do His Father's will. And we have Matthew's account of Christ yielding to the will of God to be crucified for the sins of mankind. It was a very difficult thing to do, but we find Christ faithfully submitting to the will of God. Then in I Thessalonians 4, we see the will of God concerning the relationship between men and women in marriage. God wants marriage to be a holy institution, with lust of evil desire, fornication and unclean-

ness to be rejected. Let us take special notice of our Memory Verse concerning who are the ones who will enter the kingdom of Heaven.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of attitude does the Lord's prayer portray?
2. What is required of us to be able to enter His Kingdom?
3. Why was Christ required to submit His will to God?
4. Why is holiness so important in fulfilling the will of God?
6. What are some of the temptations satan presents to man?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Satan has many arts and devices that he uses to allure humankind to go against the will of God. The Holy Scriptures are very clear and plain, being brought out to show what the will of God is and what pleases Him. If a person truly desires to do the will of God, he or she will be able to understand what is required. All through the Bible history are the accounts of those who pleased God and those who did not please God. Starting from Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel we see the effect of wrong decisions. This is satan's realm of operation. Noah made a firm decision to please and walk with God right in the face of a hostile world of evil. Abraham made the firm decision to obey the Lord in the face of difficulty and temptation. Moses left Egypt and all that it held for him to go with God and His people. All along the route of humanity are both the good and the bad examples of the souls of men and the function of the power of choice God gave to them.

Jesus had to face this. He knew full well what the will of God was for Him to submit to. In the garden He wrestled in prayer and agony and brought Himself into submission to let Himself be crucified for the sins of mankind. Saul of Tarsus yielded his will to Christ on the road to Damascus. He came face to face with the realization that he was fighting against the truth. His response was, "What wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6.) This is still the challenge that we as mortals face today. Let us be on our guard against the devil who is out to allure us away from the will of God. He still is being successful with many.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many times people go through their trials and tests and long to see more of the manifestation of God's power, deliverance and victory over the enemy of their souls. Here is a key to that deliverance. Psalm 110:3 says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." and Deborah sang these inspired words in Judges 5:2: "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves."

The first text points prophetically ahead to the day of Pentecost, when the power of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, who had tarried in the upper room after Jesus' ascension, praying and presenting themselves wholly unto the Lord as "freewill offerings" which is how this text actually translates. "Thy people shall be *freewill offerings* in the day of Thy power."

The story is told of the Native American chief, who, upon hearing the gospel story, began the process of presenting himself to God for the "blessing." First, he drew a circle on the ground and put his blanket in it. Nothing happened, so he put in his weapons. Still nothing, so he got his faithful horse and put him in the circle, giving him, too, the dearest and most valuable possession he had, to God. He listened silently to the heavens and still felt no reply. In desperation, the old chief himself stepped across the line into the circle, and as the story goes, the blessing fell.

It will be the day of your power, too, and the day when God routs your fiercest inner foes, when you totally and completely surrender your will to God.

"God's will—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JULY 17, 2011

THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Ephesians 2:3 ...We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

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

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

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

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

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

1 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.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. I John 3:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God loved all humanity before the world began and manifested it to us, in our fallen sinful condition, by sending His precious holy Son, Jesus Christ, down from Heaven to this awful world to die a horrible death to atone for us and save us from eternal damnation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

"LOVE": Affection, concern, care, interest, regard, consideration, benevolence, dearness, fervent desire and good will.

Jeremiah 31:3, **"Yea":** Truly; positively; without fail. **"of old":** From afar; before the world began. **"lovingkindness":** Goodness, beauty and charm. **"drawn thee":** Attracted, invited and called us to Him.

Ephesians 2:3, **"conversation":** Conduct and behavior. **"desires of the mind":** What our darkened mind thought about, and how we looked at things. **"by nature":** Disposition and attitudes.

Verse 5, **"dead in sins":** Spiritually separated from God because of transgressions against His holiness and righteousness. **"quicken":** Made us alive in the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6, **"heavenly places":** The realm of eternal communion and fellowship with God and His Holy Spirit. This is a state and condition of the heart and mind that we can experience now in this present life.

John 3:16, **"God so loved the world":** From the writings of C. E. Orr comes a beautiful thought of this verse showing the measurements of God's love: "For God so loved the world"—The width: It covers all humanity in all parts of the globe. "That He gave His only begotten Son"—The height: His Son from the heights of eternal glory. "That whosoever believeth in him"—The depth: It goes down to the deep depths of wickedness and filth of sin and transgression that men are sunk down into. "Should not perish, but have everlasting life."—The length: eternal happiness and peace in the world to come. As Paul said in Ephesians 3:17-19, "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the

love of Christ."

I John 3:1, "*Behold, what manner of love*": Look upon and consider when, how, and from where ~~the love of God came~~. "*called*": Invited to be.

I John 4:7, "*Beloved*": Dear and precious.

Verse 9, "*manifested*": Revealed and clearly shown.

Verse 10, "*propitiation*": Atonement; price paid for our forgiveness.

I John 3:16, "*he*": Christ Jesus, the only One worthy to do this for us.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about the greatest and most wonderful truth in the Bible. It is showing us the great love that the Almighty Creator of the earth and heavens has toward us. And it is quite evident that having such a great love and expressing it toward us poor unworthy creatures shows us that He wants us to have love for Him and for one another. In Mark 12:29-31 Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:4, declaring that we ought to love God supremely with all the heart, soul, mind and strength; and also we must love our neighbor or fellow man as our self. Since God showed so much love and goodness to us, we must return that love to Him and love all our fellow creatures of earth.

All of the scriptures in our lesson today bear out that God manifested His love by giving His Son to be the means for our salvation from sin and eternal damnation. It is the greatest thing that God could do for us poor mortals. It was the greatest price that could be paid and was for the greatest cause, which was eternal in worth and value. He saw us condemned and helpless, with no means to bring us out to hope and eternal happiness. For this cause our gracious God and Creator sent His only Son into this world to bring about the great deliverance that we so desperately needed. And, as we view His great love, our hearts should be drawn and inspired to love Him and all of our fellow creatures with a true and fervent love as He showed to us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What condition was the world in before God?
2. What did God do to bring about deliverance for us?

3. What caused Him to go to such great ends to save us?
4. What kind of love ought we to really return to God?
5. Why should we also have love for our fellow man?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

All the works of the flesh and sinful practices that abound in our world are caused by a lack of the love of God in the heart of man. When we are made to realize the love that God has for us and how we owe Him *all* of our love, devotion and affection, the root of sin and disobedience to God can be easily and quickly overcome. When a man or woman indulges in fornication and adultery it shows that they have no love or worship for God. It shows that they are only seeking for selfish and lustful satisfaction. A man who allows bitterness and hatred to work in his heart and life is totally ignorant of God's love, and pleasing Him has no attraction to his sin-stained mind and heart. A thief has no love in his heart, or he would not want to steal and rob from his fellow man. A liar is void of the love of God. Godly fear is certainly based on sincere love and devotion to the great Creator Who gave us our life and being. The work of salvation in a man's heart is the effect of being made aware of one's sinfulness and wrong, coupled with the knowledge of God's love and mercy. There are many people today who are totally ignorant of God's love and kindness. Their lives are taken up with selfish pursuits and material gain. Sin abounds in such a life. Oh, that people would open their eyes to behold the goodness and greatness of God in the earth and heavens and be made aware of their need of His love to work in their heart and life! Satan knows what that would lead to, and he is all out to hinder it. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Abiding in light,
No stumbling at night
Is he that loveth his brother

A wise word to speak
In spirit so meek
Will help in gaining your brother

To him who is weak
No meat will you eat
Lest you should offend your brother
Sharing the load
On life's weary road
"He's not heavy, for he is my brother!"
A fault you may see
Count him not enemy
But admonish him as a brother
God's commandments to keep
With mercy entreat
Speak no evil of your brother
God's love you can show
The whole world to know
By how you are loving your brother
—Submitted by Sis. LaDawna Adams



JULY 24, 2011

SEEKING AND FEELING AFTER GOD

Acts 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us;

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being...

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he

will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

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

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

MEMORY VERSE: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's desire, in creating the world and us human beings, was that we should seek and feel after Him and find Him as a precious and loving Heavenly Father, and live, move and have our being in fellowship and favor with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 17:24, "*temples made with hands*": Buildings designed and constructed by man.

Verse 25, "*worshipped with men's hands*": Served or benefited by what mortal man can produce. "*as though he needed anything*": Not needing any earthly product that man can offer.

Verse 26, "*made of one blood*": All nations of men have the same blood flowing in their veins. "*hath determined the times*": Has set in order the seasons. "*before appointed*": Planned and lined up beforehand. "*bounds of their habitation*": The fixed limits and boundaries of where they should live.

Verse 27, *"that they should seek the Lord"*: For the purpose of man to be earnestly desirous of fellowship with God. *"if haply"*: In fervent desire that. *"feel after"*: Yearn and grope for. *"find"*: Make real contact and become acquainted with Him. *"not far"*: Very close and near.

Verse 28, *"in him"*: By His plan, consent and power. *"have our being"*: Exist with conscious awareness.

Isaiah 55:6, *"while he may be found"*: While God is making His love and grace available.

Verse 7, *"forsake his way, his thoughts"*: Give up and be willing to take God's way and to follow His thoughts.

Jeremiah 29:11, *"an expected end"*: A bright future and hope of eternal life.

Hosea 10:12, *"sow to yourselves in righteousness"*: Repent with godly sorrow for all your sins and be willing to straighten up and live right. *"reap in mercy"*: Receive forgiveness and favor. *"break up your fallow ground"*: Surrender your heart to be willing and obedient to God. *"rain righteousness"*: Pour out of His rich blessings the grace and power to live a righteous and godly life.

Matthew 6:33, *"all these things"*: Food and clothing and everything else that we may have need of in this earthly life. If we will seek God and put spiritual blessings first in our desires and purposes, He will faithfully provide for us the earthly material things.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have presented in our lesson today the number one thing of most importance in this mortal life. While the world around us seeks for wealth, pleasure and earthly possessions, God is entreating us to put Him first. As our first scripture declares, God created all things for this purpose. He wants man to seek after Him, feel after Him, and find Him. He will not force Himself on any one. He has done enough in His creation to make Himself evident. Just viewing the wonders and beautiful handiwork of nature is enough to cause a person to want to make personal contact with the One Who created it all. If a person is not persuaded that a great God created it all, there will be no effort put forth to make contact with Him. This is the state that so many hearts and minds are in. They are

unaware of the God of creation, just supposing that such has always been and always will be.

Our first scripture is part of the message that Paul, the apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, preached at Athens, Greece. Then from the blessed writings of the prophecy of Isaiah comes the wise entreaty for us to seek the Lord, forsake our fleshly thoughts of selfishness and pride, and find mercy and pardon with Him for our transgressions and sins against Him. Then we have another loving entreaty in Jeremiah 29 for us poor mortals to seek the Lord with all of our heart and thus find Him and receive His blessings. Then we have Hosea 10:12 and the fervent counsel for us to turn away from sin, and with repentance seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon us. Our Memory Verse is from Christ's sermon on the Mount and declares to us that if we will seek the Lord and His kingdom first, then we will also be blessed with what earthly things we have need of.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does God want us, His created beings, to do?
2. What strong evidences of God are seen in His creation?
3. In seeking God what must we do to gain His favor?
4. How earnest must our desires be to find God?
5. What will God do for us if we seek for Him with all our heart?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is the age-old tool of the devil, satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, to get man so taken up with the world and all things therein in such a selfish and lustful attitude that he or she is totally unaware of the Creator. All the inventions of man and what he has accomplished and brought about so fascinate and absorb poor mortals' minds. They have no room for thoughts of where it all really came from. They are just surrounded and involved with money, houses, lands, fleshly appetites, material substance, pleasures, sports, gadgets and entertainments such as television, movies, magazines, computers and such like. These things take up their time and interests so that any thought or concern about God and seeking Him is stifled and quenched. Young people's affec-

tions for fleshly appetites are so keen that any serious thought about God and seeking after Him is in the background.

Hosea 10:12 will always be a monument in my heart. This was the text that Brother Murphy Allen used in a message he preached at Guthrie Assembly Meeting in 1956. I was newly saved but had not received the Holy Spirit. As Brother Allen preached with such anointing from Heaven about how we should seek the Lord, I decided that I would go to that altar and not get up until I had obtained what I needed from the Lord. And that I did when the message was finished. I went to that altar and wept and prayed with all my heart. I did not care who heard me or what people thought. All I wanted was the fullness of God's Holy Spirit within my soul and favor with Him. And, thank the Lord, God met me there and filled my soul with His Holy Spirit. And from then on up to this present day I have sought the Lord for guidance and the knowledge of His precious will in my heart and life. When I later on was faced with choosing a wife, I sought the Lord with all my heart, and He truly directed me and gave me a godly wife to love and enjoy. I can truly testify that it pays to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon you. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In seeking and feeling after God a very important scripture came to mind - Matthew 6.6. "Enter into thy closet." A closet presents an out of the way, hidden place, a place to be alone. The Lord often went up into the mountains, or wilderness, or the Mount of Olives to get alone and feel after God through quietness and prayer. We are bombarded with noise, information and activity. Oh, how vital it is for us to find time in the closet alone with the Lord. "When storms of life are round me beating, When rough the path that I have trod, Within my closet door retreating, I love to be alone with God. Alone with God, the world forbidden, alone with God, O blest retreat! Alone with God, and in Him hidden, to hold with Him communion sweet."

I remember, my first pastor, Bro. Clifford Wilson inviting me into his closet to pray together. I asked him, where? It was an actual closet perhaps 3' x 8' that he converted to a study. We managed, and how I enjoyed those times. I have endeavored

to follow the example and what a blessing it has been to me in my life. I have an 8'x10' corner in my garage that I have walled off. When life's burdens perplex me, I usually seek for the quietness of my study where I can pray. "When thou hast shut the door" – it is so vital for us to seek quietness; quietness of mind, heart and spirit and allow the Lord to speak to us. With His words come life, help, comfort and hope.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JULY 31, 2011

PARTAKING OF THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:24 ...The people... came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him,...they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ! Corinthians 5:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Bread of life that Christ is offering for us to partake of is His Word for us to obey and follow and His Holy Spirit to strengthen, inspire, enlighten and guide us in the way that leads to everlasting life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 6:25, "*Rabbi*": The Hebrew word meaning "Master".

Verse 27, "*Labour not*": Do not seek nor be so interested. "*meat that perisheth*": temporal food for this flesh that will pass away. "*sealed*": Set His stamp of approval on.

Verse 54, "*eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood*": This is pure spiritual language meaning to follow Christ's example of life in this mortal flesh and trust in His blood for atonement for sin.

Verse 57, "*eateth me*": Obeys My teachings and guidance of My Spirit.

Verse 63, "*quickeneth*": Brings real spiritual life. "*the words that I speak*": Christ is speaking of His teachings and the truth that He upheld.

I Corinthians 5:8, "*old leaven*": Outward ceremony or show. "*malice and wickedness*": Badness, evil, depravity and iniquity. "*unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*": A heart and attitude void of pride and deceit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Just previous to the words spoken in our text, Jesus had fed the great multitude of five thousand men (beside the women and children) with five barley loaves and two small fishes. They were filled and satisfied and His disciples gathered up twelve baskets of the fragments, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." John 6:14. Then verse 15 states: "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." Now it is very evident that the reason why these people wanted to make Christ a king was the fact that He had fed them the food that satisfied their physical hunger. It was probably their thought that if we could have this man to rule over us, we would never suffer hunger again. And this is probably the reason for their pursuit of Him the next day, even taking ship and coming across the sea to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. This is why Jesus said what He did about them seeking Him because they did eat of the loaves and were filled. His counsel to not be so desirous of being filled with the physical food is a wise word for us today.

We live in a world that is charged with overeating and fleshly indulgence and gratifying the physical craving for the food that perishes. We can see its mark and effect everywhere, and, sad to say, the effect of it all is eating away at their health and well being.

In our lesson Jesus is giving us the key to happiness and spiritual well-being. Instead of gorging the appetite for this food that perishes and will do one so much harm, we should learn temperance and self control in what and how much we eat, and seek to partake of the Bread of Life that Jesus is offering to us in His Word and Holy Spirit.

Sad to say, these very people that wanted to make Jesus a king turned against Him. They were offended at His statement of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They were in total darkness about what He meant. Jesus is offering us today the food that will mean eternal life and happiness if we will yield to Him and follow His teachings and let His Holy

Spirit lead and guide our lives in the way of His truth and peace.
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were these people seeking so earnestly for Jesus?
2. What did Jesus counsel them to be more concerned about?
3. What is the Bread of Life that Jesus is offering to us today?
4. How do we partake of this wonderful living Bread?
5. Why should we be careful not to be so indulged in fleshly eating?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Overeating and overweight conditions is one of the greatest problems in our society today. Eating the right kind of foods and the proper and wise amount of food is so vital to health and happiness. The prophet Elijah, in obedience to the Word of the Lord, went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, and "the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook". I Kings 17:5-6. God is warning us to not be so carried away with physical food. Jesus fed the five thousand and at another time fed four thousand with physical food. But in our lesson today we have His wise and holy counsel of being more concerned about seeking for the meat, or food, that endureth unto eternal life that He will give unto us as the eternal Son of God and the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. (I Peter 2:25.)

We have the Holy Bible that we can read and study. This Holy Bible has proven through the years to be the source of all the inspiration and counsel that we need to enlighten our hearts and teach us the way of holiness and truth. And we have the Holy Spirit that Christ has made available for us to have in our hearts and minds to teach and inspire us with understanding and knowledge. This is the Bread of Life that we need to be interested in above all things. Cut back on that meat that perishes. It is hurting you and destroying your health and well being. Seek God and His Son for the meat that endures until eternal life, and partake of it faithfully every day!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Living Bread is not a neatly wrapped package sitting on a store shelf, it is a spiritual food that nourishes the spirit unto eternal life. Without it we will all perish. Jesus said, "I am the living bread..." We find this Bread by finding Jesus—through the words of His teachings and by accepting and obeying His doctrine.

This Bread is sent by God. Jesus said, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." This verse shows the unbroken chain of power that will give us eternal life—from the Father—to the Son—to us. As we receive the Son and obey His commandments, we also receive the approval of the Father and His power will work in our lives.

The Father must draw the soul who receives this Bread. It is through the mysterious working power of Divine grace that the hungry sinner comes to the living Bread. While the carnal man is filling himself with the husks of this world and has no appetite for the things of God, the spiritual man is drawn by the wonderful love of Jesus to feast on heavenly Manna, which enlightens his heart to things of eternal worth.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



AUGUST 7, 2011

THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING MEEK

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.

Psalms 37:10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be:...

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

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

Psalms 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Zephaniah 2:3 Seekye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger.

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

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

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

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

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.

I Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

II Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

I Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

MEMORY VERSE: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... Colossians 3:12-13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To obtain favor and help from God we must cast out all selfish pride, and be meek, forgiving, merciful and kind to our fellow man, and trust in God's care and goodness to make a way for us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 29:18, "*the words of the book*": The message of God to us.

Verse 19, "*meek*": Depressed in mind and spirit; gentle, submissive, tenderhearted toward others, and with no self-defense.

Psalms 37:11, "*inherit the earth*": Possess the land. This land is not this present earth, but rather the great spiritual land of salvation and fellowship with God, and eternal inheritance of life in the world to come.

Zephaniah 2:3, "*wrought his judgment*": Done justice in God's sight.

Matthew 5:5, "*Blessed*": Infinitely and forever happy.

Matthew 11:25, "*labour and are heavy laden*": Under the strain of bearing the heavy load of guilt and sin.

Verse 29, "*my yoke*": Joined up with Christ. "*rest unto your souls*": Freedom from the yoke and bondage of sin, guilt and condemnation.

Verse 30, "*easy*": Good, beneficial, useful and much better.

Ephesians 4:1, "*walk worthy*": Behave suitably and deservingly.

Verse 2, "*forbearing one another*": Putting up with each other.

I Timothy 6:11, "*flee these things*": Cast away the love of money, the root of all evil, that will pierce a person through with many sorrows.

II Timothy 2:24, "*apt to teach*": Able to instruct.

Verse 25, "*oppose themselves*": Set themselves in opposition to truth. "*if God peradventure*": Let God have a chance to work.

Titus 3:2, "*brawlers*": Contentious and quarrelsome people.

I Peter 3:3, "*plaiting the hair*": Fancy and elaborate braiding and decorating the hair. "*putting on of apparel*": To decorate clothing.

Verse 4, "*hidden man of the heart*": The inward beauty of holiness.

Colossians 3:12, "*elect of God*": Who God favors and has chosen.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have an extremely vital and important subject for our lesson today. There is absolutely no way for us mortals to attain to favor with God and be successful in living for Him without being meek and lowly in heart as Jesus proved Himself to be. The reason why God exalted Christ from the grave to life again and up to His right Hand of power and glory was because Christ was meek and in perfect submission to the will of God. Christ was totally defenseless, which is one of the main qualities of being meek.

We have chosen scriptures that show what meekness will help us to attain to. In Isaiah 29 the prophet shows the blind and ignorant condition of humanity. Their vision was as the words of a sealed book that neither the learned nor the unlearned could read. Verse 13 spoke of how "this people draw near me with their mouth, but have removed their heart far from me." Jesus quoted this scripture to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:8-9. But in verses 18 and 19 that we have in our lesson it shows the deaf and the blind being able to read the book and the meek and the poor having joy in the Lord.

We have several scriptures from Psalms that speak of the benefit of being meek. Our scripture from Zephaniah 2:3 shows that meekness will help us to be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. This is referring to the end of the world and the great judgment day we are all going to have to face.

Our New Testament scriptures all join together to declare the great value of meekness and how we should bring ourselves under its blessedness. The words of Jesus are so plain about the importance of being meek and lowly in heart as He proved to be in His earthly life and ministry. And both apostles Paul and Peter stress its value and unailing benefit. Forbearing one another, fleeing the love of money, being meek before those in opposition, and seeking inward beauty of the heart rather than the vain outward adorning are important in us attaining to this vital and wonderful attitude of the soul.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be meek and lowly in heart?
2. What must we resist and overcome to be meek?
3. How did our Lord Jesus Christ prove to be meek?
4. How does meekness manifest itself in our relations to others?
5. What will being meek and lowly in heart help us to do?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We live in a world and society that is dominated by pride, self-advancement, self-defense, self-honor and many other selfish evils. The love of money that Paul spoke of is a controlling factor in many lives. It takes a lot of wisdom, understanding and knowledge for a person to resist these ungodly currents in our world and bring one's thoughts and desires into subjection to be humble, lowly and meek as our Lord Jesus was and taught us to be. To be made aware of the need of meekness is one of the great needs that we have as mortals. The current and influence of people around us must be overcome. We must be wise to the devices of satan and to the good purpose of our Creator. We must set our hearts directly against the spirit of pride and lust that rules this world. If we don't take our stand to be humble and meek as Jesus showed us how to be, we will be a prey to the wickedness that rules this world. God hates pride and selfishness, and His Son Jesus Christ came down to human flesh to show us the way of meekness and humility. If we want it, we can have it, as many have proven before us. Let us remember that it will be the difference between being saved from the wrath of God in that last great day and being lost forever.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Have you considered how many current thought patterns, ideologies, socially accepted practices, behaviors and lifestyles are directly antagonistic to the principles taught in today's lesson? Let us consider several:

First of all, there is the matter of self-defense. How does the concept of meekness fit into the picture? What about going

to war in defense of one's country? Should a Christian pledge to fight for his country? People of God in years past have found Biblical answers to these questions, and it is time for God's people today to know and understand these things as well.

Secondly, the idea of a wife having a meek and quiet spirit is very offensive to current viewpoints. Today's woman is taught to assert herself and be independent. Unfortunately, harsh and extreme religious teachings and abuse in "Christian" homes have caused a backlash of bitterness and rebellion against the true Scriptural teachings in this area. Correct, balanced teachings of the husband's place to love his wife as himself and give himself for her, and her place of meekness and submission need to not only be taught, but also modeled by husbands and wives in daily living.

A third Biblical concept that has almost been lost in today's materialistic society is a meek and lowly style of living, where prestige, finery, "keeping up with the Joneses", and love of financial gain is deliberately forsaken in preference to a simpler, humbler, more contented lifestyle. I wonder, if a meek and lowly life is truly the key to Christ's rest, are there many of us who fall short of it? —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



AUGUST 14, 2011

THE TRUE RICHES

Luke 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

I Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

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

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

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life...

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? Luke 16:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is true wisdom for us mortals in this short fleeting life to seek for eternal riches of spiritual life in Jesus Christ, our Savior, rather than the vain and fleeting material riches of this present world which will all pass away.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 12:15, "*covetousness*": The love and desire for earthly riches.

Verse 19, "*say to my soul*": What ever a man does in life, whether he realizes it or not, it will affect the welfare of his precious soul. And how vain and foolish it is to try to satisfy the soul with the vanity of earthly wealth!

Verse 20, "*thy soul shall be required of thee*": Death will take your soul away from this earthly life to give account to Him Who gave it.

Verse 33, "*alms*": Benefits for the poor and needy. "*bags*": Purses.

I Timothy 6:9, "*snare*": Trap. "*perdition*": Eternal destruction.

Verse 17, "*highminded*": Lifted up with pride and self-satisfaction.

Verse 18, "*distribute*": Impart to the needs of others. "*willing to communicate*": Be generous.

Verse 19, "*good foundation*": True assurance. "*time to come*": Coming age of eternity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We live in a world that is charged and stained with the love of material earthly wealth. It is the current of society. Our lesson today shows the Biblical truth about the evils and spiritual detriment that accompany the love of money and earthly riches and gain. Notice our Lord's reaction to the man desiring Him to speak to his brother about sharing with him some of the inheritance their family had received. Jesus let him know that such a position and exercise was not His to fill. And then our Lord gave the dire and solemn warning to beware of the love of earthly gain. He stated that true life does not involve how much earthly wealth a person can accumulate. This desire for material riches is an evil disease that can really fasten itself upon a person in a terrible way. Notice the parable that our Lord spoke concerning all of this. The bumper crop that this rich man's fields were bringing forth charged his mind and heart with lust and covetousness. All he was thinking about was what it would mean to his bank account.

We have here the operation of a man's mind and thoughts in the direction of personal and selfish gain. Instead of thinking how he could use his wealth for the work of God or the needs of others, he purposed to use it for his own selfish welfare and enjoyment.

But what he did not realize, as he should have was that he was taking such action to the peril of his inner man, the soul that God had invested him with. This soul was an eternal being that will live forever and ever. And he was seeking to satisfy it with fleeting earthly wealth and security. He was not thinking of the eternal aspect of it all. He was not esteeming the value of his soul or eternal things. It was all selfish, lustful and covetous thoughts and desires. Death came to that man and his soul went out into eternity with no promise of rest and safety, but rather that of endless torment in the lake of fire. To lay up treasure for one's self and not be rich toward God is the depth of folly and error.

The apostle Paul's counsel and words of wisdom to Timothy goes right along with what Christ taught. He had stated in verse 7, before our text in the lesson, that "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out". Oh, how sad that people can be so blind to bury their affections in these fleeting earthly vanities and to neglect the true riches!

Our Memory Verse is from Christ's teachings concerning earthly mammon and the true riches. It shows the responsibility that we have to rightfully use the material possessions in wisdom and godly love instead of for self and lust. If we don't know how to use material things wisely and graciously, what right would we have to be given the true wealth of faith, hope and charity?

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus warn us to beware of covetousness?
2. What effect does the love of money have upon the soul?
3. What are the treasures that we should be seeking for?
4. What will happen to all of this earthly wealth and riches?
5. Instead of trusting in uncertain riches, what should we be doing?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

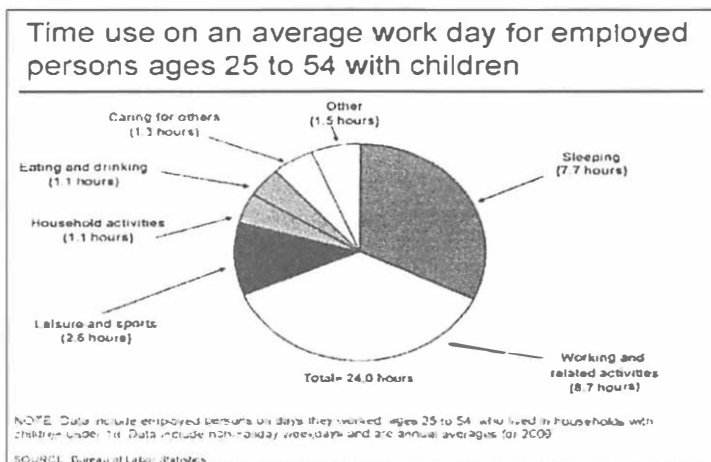
Our Memory Verse was one of our Lord's closing statements from His teachings concerning using earthly wealth for rightful advantages. He used the illustration of an unjust steward who was about to be put out of his stewardship. While the steward still had his position and the jurisdiction of the wealth of his lord, he made use of it to make friends by cutting down their debt, with the hope of them returning his favor with a place to live after he was put out. His lord commended him for such action, and Jesus uses that thought concerning what we should do with the mammon of unrighteousness. This mammon of unrighteousness is this money that we all have to use and deal with in life. Jesus told us to make to ourselves friends with this earthly money so that when we fail, that is, when we die, we will be received into everlasting habitations. This means that we use the money that comes to our jurisdiction to help the poor and others who have need. In so doing, we are pleasing God and making friends with heavenly society. And so Jesus declared that being faithful to use the money of this life in the wise and right way will have an important bearing on our future habitations in eternity. This all goes along well with our lesson of being wise to beware of covetousness and earthly possessions. It is part of our "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11, 17-18. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun....Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me."

What the preacher recorded three thousand years ago pretty much describes the same cycle of life endeavors that we have even now:



It is interesting to note that there was no time designated for church/worship (maybe it is included in the category marked "other"?). And yet, Heaven and hell are real. When life ends, our eternity begins. How much time should we be investing in the things that really matter? "Every hour for Jesus! Shall my motto be, there is plenty of work we may do; we may all keep busy till the Lord we see; till he comes for his faithful few."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



AUGUST 21, 2011

TRIUMPHANT REIGNING IN JESUS CHRIST

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

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

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

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

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

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

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

Romans 5:20 ...Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Revelation 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross of Calvary for the atonement of our sins, and rose again from the grave by the power of Almighty God, and ascended up to the right hand of God to intercede for us. By the grace and power that He gives to all who trust and obey Him we can overcome sin, death, and the grave and reign with Him now in this life and forever in that blessed world to come.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 6:19, *"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh"*: I speak as a man because of the weakness of your flesh. This means that Paul is speaking plainly to help us to see how we need to overcome the weakness of the flesh by the power and grace of Christ. If we do not bring the flesh under by controlling its appetites and passions we will be defiled with sin and transgression. *"iniquity unto iniquity"*: In yielding to sin and transgression against God, the soul of man develops from one stage of wickedness to deeper stages, becoming more vile and corrupt as time goes on. *"righteousness unto holiness"*: Upon being set free from sin and iniquity through the power of the grace of Christ, the soul of man can progress from righteousness unto the great triumphant victory of a holy and blameless life.

Romans 8:35, *"nakedness"*: Being in poverty and want of shelter or clothing or the bare necessities of life. *"peril"*: In danger of harm and injury. *"sword"*: Death by means of the destructive weapons of man.

Verse 36, *"accounted as sheep for the slaughter"*: Esteemed by wicked persecutors to be of no more value than animals to be killed.

Verse 37, *"we are more than conquerors"*: We are able to vanquish and overcome the powers of sin, death and hell beyond all opposition.

Revelation 12:10, "*accuser*": One who opposes; the devil, satan.

Verse 11, "*loved not their lives unto the death*": Did not seek to preserve this fleeting mortal life, being willing to die for the name of Christ.

I Corinthians 15:54, "*corruptible*": This physical body, subject to perish and decay. "*incorruption*": Unending life, perfect health and existence in the world to come. "*mortal*": Sentenced to die. "*immortality*": Will never die.

Verse 55, "*sting*": The power and point of damage and destruction.

Verse 56, "*strength of sin*": The law of God by itself, without the grace of Christ, made sin even more sinful and worse defiling to the soul of man.

Verse 57, "*victory*": Triumph and conquering power.

Romans 5:17, "*reign*": Overcome, subdue, conquer and rule.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The scriptures in our lesson today are declaring to us that in Christ Jesus and the power of His grace and triumphant risen life and ascent to the right hand of God is abundant grace and power that we can possess right here in this earthly life that will enable us to live victorious lives well pleasing to Him. We no longer need to allow sin and things displeasing to God to reign in this mortal body. Sad to say, there is a doctrine that is taught and promoted by many professed Christian churches that we cannot live free from sin. They teach that we are in these fleshly bodies and we cannot help but sin more or less every day, and that it is the body that sins while our soul is kept pure. But we know that this teaching is false and full of error. In the light of the scriptures we have in our lesson today we see positive declaration and proof that we can have power and grace to be triumphant and reign over sin and live righteous and holy lives right here in this life.

From the book of Paul's epistle to the Romans we have a clear line of doctrine and truth that we can reign in this life over sin and this evil world. Paul deals explicitly with the subject of sin and how we can perfectly and completely overcome it. He declares that we are to keep our members from being instru-

ments of sin and to yield them as servants to righteousness unto holiness. Even in hard and difficult times we can be victorious in the Lord Jesus. We have John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, in his epistle declaring that we through the strength of the Lord can overcome this world.

We have included the declaration from the book of Revelations about the early Christians and how they were victorious even though they met death in their stand for the Savior. They were like Jesus and were obedient unto death and did not cling to this present fleeting life. Let us be faithful and keep encouraged in this way of righteousness and holiness and share with those of old the blessed crown of life promised to all the faithful in the Lord Jesus Christ. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we overcome and reign over to be pleasing to God?
2. By what power and strength can we accomplish this triumph?
3. Why is it so important that we overcome the power of sin?
4. Why is it so necessary to believe that such victory is possible?
5. What are the members that we need to bring in control?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"Do you triumph, O my brother, over all this world of sin? In each storm of tribulation, does your Jesus reign within? One we hail as King immortal, He did earth and hell subdue; And, bequeathing us His glory, we are kings anointed, too. Shall we then by sin be humbled? Must we yield to any foe? No, by Heaven's gift we're reigning over all this world below. Oh, what grace and high promotion that in Jesus I should be raised from sin to royal honor, even reigning, Lord, with Thee! All this life is blissful sunshine, earth is subject at our feet; Heaven pours its richest blessings round our throne of love complete. Then we'll sing and shout the story of the wondrous blood divine; Full salvation, glory, glory! I am reigning all the time!" D. S. Warner.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Doing our best with what we are or have coupled with the Lord will be sufficient for victory. Remembering I Corinthians 2.26-29 will also help. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

"And Moses said unto God, who am I, that I should go unto pharaoh,..." Later, "Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent...but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Our excuses seem so reasonable to us. Yet they cheat us from victory when we persist in them.

David—a sling, stone and God was victory. Gideon—as the Lord decreased him to 300 men against a host was victorious with God. The young lad—with the few loaves and fishes) put what he had in the Lord's hands, and it was more than enough. The Lord works in ways beyond our comprehension. Let us be encouraged to look away from our weaknesses to His sufficiency and trust Him. —Bro. Bob Wilson



AUGUST 28, 2011

GOD'S WAY VERSUS OUR WAYS

Isaiah 53:6 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.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

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

Proverbs 14:12, 16:25 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 15:24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

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

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

Isaiah 35:8 And a 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.

John 14:5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Psalms 119:5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

Proverbs 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

Psalms 37:34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

MEMORY VERSE: Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We all have strayed away from God and His way of holiness and truth by following the way of

selfishness and worldly pride. Jesus Christ came into the world to show us the way that will lead to eternal life. He was the Way as a true example of what God is calling all of us to follow after. We must forsake our ways and thoughts and be willing to go God's way if we hope to attain to life eternal with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 53:6, "*turned everyone to his own way*": Followed our own selfish desires. "*laid on him the iniquity of us all*": God commissioned His Son Jesus to bear the punishment for all of our sins by His death on the cross.

Jeremiah 6:16, "*Stand ye in the ways, and see*": Take a good look at the ways of sin and worldliness and notice how vain and destructive they are. "*ask for the old paths*": Inquire after the paths taken by men of faith such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Saints of ancient times who prevailed with God to obtain His favor and blessings.

Isaiah 55:7, "*way*": Deeds, actions, decisions, methods and courses taken in life. "*thoughts*": Ideas, plans, purposes and attitudes.

Proverbs 14:12, "*the end thereof*": Where our own selfish and lustful ways are going to end us up.

Proverbs 15:24, "*The way of life is above to the wise*": The real way to eternal life is a heavenly and holy way that is much higher in wisdom and righteousness than the world around us. "*hell beneath*": Eternal torment and woe in the lake of fire.

Matthew 7:13, "*wide and broad*": Easy to go with plenty of room for worldly pleasure and selfish gratification. "*destruction*": Eternal damnation.

Verse 14, "*strait and narrow*": Difficult and requiring much effort and pure decision and purpose.

Isaiah 35:8, "*the wayfaring men*": This is referring to those who purpose to go the strait and narrow way that leads to life eternal. "*though fools*": They will go the true way even in the face of ridicule and persecution from the worldly minded who count them fools. "*shall not err therein*": Shall not go astray.

Verse 9, "*no lion nor ravenous beast*": These are referring to people who have a hateful and devouring nature and attitude toward others. "*the redeemed*": Those who have been saved and delivered from sin and iniquity.

John 14:6, "*I am the way*": Jesus Christ is the Way to life eternal because He set the pattern of self-denial and obedience to God that we all should faithfully follow in our earthly pilgrimage of this life.

Psalms 119:59, "*I thought on my ways*": I took a good look at the way I was living and realized that I was not right with God. "*turned my feet*": Changed my ways to please the Lord.

Psalms 37:34, "*inherit the land*": Receive the blessing of eternal life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have a serious but highly important lesson before us today. It is a truth that is extremely vital for all of us to study and seriously consider. Our first text from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ states the truth: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray." Yes, we have all turned every one to his own way. It is the way of selfishness, lust and pride. It is the way of the world around us, and we have all fallen beneath its woeful influence. Until we are made aware of this condition, there will be no effort made to change and correct ourselves. We need to wake up to our woeful state. Our ways are not good, and we need to seek for the old paths of holiness and godliness that we have record of those of old who walked therein, and we need to change our ways to please the Lord. Thank God, we have been blessed with a Savior who bore our sins and atoned for our evil ways by His death on Calvary.

People need to take a good look at themselves. It is so easy to see other people's faults and overlook our own. God help us to escape from that awful error! Eternity is looming in sight. Where we spend that endless age depends on whether we are willing to change our ways to walk in God's way. Jesus showed what the two ways are that we have to make decision about. There are those ways that people take that seem right, but the end will prove that they are ways of death. Let us be serious and honest before God. Be willing to acknowledge your sinful ways and to forsake them and change to take God's way of holiness and obedience to His will.

Our Memory Verse is certainly a prayer that everyone of us should express before God in all earnest sincerity. If we will truly pray in this way, and be open for God to enlighten us to

His heavenly way, we will be rewarded with light and understanding and God will surely lead us in the way everlasting. It will be worth all of our endeavor to successfully follow God's way and attain to the eternal resurrection of the dead.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the evil ways and thoughts men have?
2. What kind of way does God want us to take in life?
3. Why is the downward way a broad and easy way to go?
4. Why is the upward way described as strait and narrow?
5. What should be our prayer concerning all of this?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is quite evident from the Scriptures that there is a tendency for man to be unaware of the wrong of his ways. One more scripture in Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every way of man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts." There is danger here, but there is hope. The Lord can measure and help us to see the balance of our thoughts and ways IF we will give Him a place to do so. May we all be wise and give God a chance to help us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Life is filled with decisions that we must make and a child of God wants those decisions to be centered in the will and order of the Lord. Following four principles can help us focus our lives in a direction that would be pleasing to God. First and foremost, we must seek God. Prayer is a necessary part of godly people's lives. Many complicated situations in life have been unraveled and made clear through earnest prayer. God's way is often revealed through prayer. Godly counsel can also be of great benefit. Pondering the Word of God, waiting for Him and worshipping Him are all important in bringing us into His close presence and thereby allowing His will to be known.

Follow your calling. We are all called to be Saints and to live holy obedient lives, this is God's will. We should also utilize our talents, circumstances and resources to please God. Often God's will for us is simply being faithful right where we are.

Doing the work and fulfilling the responsibilities that are at hand. A story is told of a man who lined up at the starting mark for the land run that occurred in the late 1800's with an old mare hitched to a plow. Others who were at the line with their spirited steeds ready to run and stake their land claim made sneering comments about the man and his mare. How was he going to get to his claim? When the starting gun was fired, the man set his plow in the ground and started plowing. The land he wanted was right at hand. Don't overlook the opportunities that are readily available.

Conform your life to God's law. If you know what the right and just thing to do is, you are well on your way to doing the Lord's will. God's will for your life is always going to be within the constraints of His law.

Be open to changes. Some have used the expression concerning their plans that, "they are made in pencil." Meaning their plans can easily be erased and changed. When we are open to God's changes, He will often allow circumstances to change our lives for the better. Instead of being angry with interruptions, allow God to use them for His glory.

Interruptions and unforeseen changes that affect our lives may be difficult to accept at times, but there can be many lessons we can learn from those experiences. By allowing God to have His perfect way in our life will bring us through those trying situations with victory. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



SEPTEMBER 4, 2011

PATIENTLY WAITING ON GOD

Lamentations 3:22 It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.

25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

Psalm 27:14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalm 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

Psalm 123:1 Unto thee lift I up my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of the servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Psalm 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

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

Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

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

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

MEMORY VERSE: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is of utmost importance and vital for the children of God to learn to faithfully wait on the

Lord and not get ahead of Him. Learning to wait on the Lord in the affairs of this life will help us to be faithful in waiting for His promised coming again.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Lamentations 3:24, "*my portion*": That which is my treasured possession.

Verse 26, "*quietly wait*": Hope in silence and calm assurance.

Psalms 27:14, "*Wait on the LORD*": Hope and look for the Lord to work with earnest expectation.

Psalms 37:7, "*Rest*": Be quiet and confident. "*wait patiently*": Tarry and faithfully wait for the Lord to work things out for you.

Verse 8, "*fret not thyself*": To not allow yourself to move in anger.

Verse 9, "*inherit the earth*": Possess the land of God's promises.

Psalms 123:2, "*our eyes wait upon the LORD*": Look steadfastly with patient endurance.

Psalms 130:6, "*watch for the morning*": Look forward eagerly for the Lord to bring to pass the fulfillment of His promises.

Proverbs 20:22, "*Say not, I will recompense evil*": Resist the temptation to take things in your own hands.

Isaiah 25:9, "*in that day*": Verse 8 before this foretells death being swallowed up in victory. Paul, in I Corinthians 15:54 declares that this will be fulfilled in the final resurrection at that last great day. How blessed it will be for us if we will faithfully endure unto the end and be accounted worthy "in that day"!

Isaiah 30:18, "*And therefore will the LORD wait*": While we are waiting for that blessed day, the LORD Himself is also waiting with fervent desire.

James 5:7, "*Be patient*": Belongsuffering. "*husbandman*": Farmer. "*early and latter rain*": Showers of rain that fall early in the season, those that fall later on.

Verse 8, "*stablish your hearts*": Settle it in your heart and mind to be patient and faithful to the Lord no matter how long you have to wait. "*draweth nigh*": Will soon come to pass.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our study today deals with one of the great (and perhaps the greatest) lessons that we as children of God need to learn in the Christian life. It is even a matter that has to do with a person seeking the Lord for salvation, as Psalm 40:1 says, "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." Patience and waiting is of dire importance in our relationship with our Creator. Many people have erred and got in trouble with God because of not being willing to wait. King Saul did not wait for the prophet Samuel to come to offer the desired sacrifice, and forced himself to do it. (I Samuel 13:8-13.) It just takes a lot of patience and waiting on God to faithfully serve Him. This requirement of waiting on God and being patient is good for our souls and extremely important. The person that wants every thing right now and is not willing to wait will never make it with God.

The various scriptures we have in our lesson plainly point to patient waiting on the Lord. Our scripture in Lamentations shows this. In the first part of the chapter Jeremiah has a list of the various things he experienced by afflictions from God's rod of wrath. But after recalling those hard things, he remembered that it was of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed. So it is a matter of us being patient and waiting on God that will help us succeed with Him.

Then the latter scriptures, along with the others, point us to the final day that we must keep in mind to be patiently waiting for. Jesus promised as He left this earth that He would come again. That was over 2000 years ago. There were those who gave up hope, saying, "...Where is the promise of His coming?" II Peter 3:3-4. But we must keep faith and patience, and continue to "wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." I Thessalonians 1:10. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is being able to wait patiently such a difficult matter?
2. How does having to wait make the blessing more precious?
3. Why does God choose to work in long drawn out ways?

4. Who are some of the different Bible heroes who waited on God?

5. What is the ultimate thing that we must patiently wait for?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

C. W. Naylor, in his book "Heart Talks" illustrated the importance of learning to wait on God by the story of a king who needed a man for an important position. He considered several men, and finally narrowed it down to three men, and had them run a foot race. But before he gave the signal to run, he had someone go secretly to each of them to tell them to not run when the signal was given, but to wait for a special signal. So the signal was given, and one man struck out for the goal, and the next man hesitated and then went on running. The third man just stood there, wondering what was to be. The king asked the first man why he ran after being told to wait for a special signal. The man said that he forgot. The next man said that he decided to run when he saw the other man run. Then the king asked the man who did not run why he did not run. The man said that he was waiting for the special signal. The king said to him, "I knew that you could run, but I did not know that you could wait." So it showed that it was not a test of doing, but a test of waiting. And that man that waited got the position.

And so it is in the Christian life. It is important to be a good worker and doer, but it is firstly important to learn to wait on the Lord for counsel, guidance and instruction. There are things we need to get hold of now, such as salvation and victory, but there are other things we need from God that we will have to patiently wait for. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Lord taught a valuable lesson to me in a revival meeting one night, through the example of a precious godly minister, Bro. Charles Taylor. The song service that night was being particularly blessed and led of the Lord, and after the rejoicing, testimonies and prayer, the hands on the clock pointed to 9, and it seemed hardly possible for there to be much space for the preaching of the Word. A quietness then

prevailed, as the ministers waited on the Lord to direct. The quietness lingered, and lingered, with no one daring to move, and then, just as slowly and patiently, Bro. Charles went to the pulpit. As I marveled at his slowness, when it seemed that with the shortage of time, one would have seemed justified to have hurried his pace a little, the Spirit of the Lord spoke distinctly to my heart: "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Bro. Charles then announced his subject, which made me nearly gasp, because of the time frame we were looking at: "The History of the Church of God". He began, and God so ordered his words that within the hour he had given a clear, concise, but thorough, history of the church from Pentecost to the present time. I knew that I had just witnessed one of those miracles that can only come from a clean, yielded vessel, free from selfish agendas, and fit for the Master's use.

What a great contrast from the manner of approach and delivery that is taught in the seminaries, where a great deal of emphasis is placed upon self-confidence and sure-fire formulas for evoking audience interest and maintaining crowd appeal. This practice we have of waiting upon God to direct our worship services is a precious heritage that has been passed down to us by precept and example. At the very core of it is a depth of humility of spirit that is foreign to popular religious thought today, but is very blessed and owned by God. May the Lord direct our hearts into the "patiently waiting for Christ." (II Thessalonians 3:5.)

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



SEPTEMBER 11, 2011

LOVE AND WORSHIP TO GOD

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

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

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...

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalms 100:1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.
Psalms 104:33-34.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The heavens and the earth were created and spoken into existence by Jehovah, the Almighty God. To Him we owe all love, worship, adoration, praise, honor and obedience. Every day we need to worship Him in holiness and righteousness and serve Him faithfully.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 95:1, "*the LORD*": The Hebrew word is "Jehovah", which means the Eternal Self-existent One. "*make a joyful noise*": Shout for joy.

Verse 2, "*psalms*": Songs.

Verse 3, "*gods*": Other objects of worship.

Verse 4, "*In his hand*": In His control and jurisdiction. "*strength of the hills*": Their heights.

Verse 6, "*worship*": To humble our hearts in love, gratitude, honor, submission and fervent devotion. "*kneel*": On our knees bless Him and express our unworthiness and need for His help. "*our Maker*": The One Who designed us and brought us into being.

Verse 7, "*sheep of his hand*": Sheep who are fed and nourished by His bountiful blessings.

Psalm 96:5, "*gods of the nations*": The objects of worship by nations other than Israel. "*idols*": Vain and good for nothing. "*the LORD*": Jehovah, the God of Israel

Verse 6, "*majesty*": Magnificence and splendor.

Verse 7, "*Give*": Ascribe and credit Him for. "*give unto the LORD glory and strength*": Acknowledge that all honor and power is due to Him.

Verse 8, "*offering*": Donation or gift of love and thanksgiving to His honor. "*his courts*": Places designated and assigned for the worship of God.

Verse 9, "*beauty of holiness*": Not the outward beauty of the natural, but the inward beauty of purity and complete consecration to God.

Psalm 100:1, "*make a joyful noise*": Shout joyfully. "*all ye lands*": Everybody on earth.

Verse 2, "*with gladness*": With glee and joyful emotions:

Verse 5, "*good*": Here are a few synonyms: beautiful, best, bountiful, fair, fine, gracious, kind, loving, most pleasant, precious, sweet, wealthy and well favored.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the book of Psalms we are encouraged to love, worship, and obey the LORD Jehovah, the Creator of the heavens and earth and things therein. He is the One Who gives

us our life and being. We are all the work of His hands. He planned us, designed us, and brought us forth to life and awareness. And all who seek after Him with all their heart and do their best to follow and obey Him find that He is all gracious and loving and kind. He will help us all along our journey of life. He is so great and powerful. Look at the stars and the sun and the moon in the heavens! They did not just happen to be. God spoke them forth according to His plan and design. Breathe the air He has supplied. Look at the fruits, vegetables, trees, flowers and all the different kinds of birds and animals. They did not just happen to be. They were the effect of His great wisdom and power.

Consider each one of these Psalms we have used in our lesson today. Let us be wise and not harden our heart against Him. In the 95th Psalm the writer goes on to warn us to hear His voice and not harden our heart, like they did back in the time of Moses and the children of Israel. They drew back in unbelief and lost their chance to possess the promised Canaan land. The writer in Hebrews 3 and 4 dealt much with that thought. Oh, how could those people draw back in unbelief after seeing all that God had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and the awful wilderness? But they did draw back and grieved God until He sent them all back to wander in the wilderness until they died. God is faithful, but we must hold fast to our faith and confidence in Him.

The other Psalms in our lesson encourage us to give God praise and glory, and be thankful for His blessings. It is good in prayer to name out and thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed. Living with praise and thanksgiving in our hearts to God helps lift us up above the burdens of life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are we instructed to give thanks and praise to God?
2. What do we see in His creation that fills us with admiration?
3. What is the best offering that we can give to Him?
4. Can you name some things that show God's goodness?
5. What should we want to do while we have our being?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Holy Bible has many different accounts of people who were faithful to God and were so richly blessed. And we have the accounts of those who were not submissive and obedient to God and what they suffered on account of it. We have a wily foe that is out to influence our minds and hearts to turn away from following God. He got Adam and Eve to do so, and they suffered for it. Then there was their son Cain and his foolish ways and what happened to him. His brother Abel purposed to please God and He was richly blessed. Then think of Enoch who walked with God and pleased Him for three hundred years, and was rewarded by being translated to glory without suffering death like everyone else was doing. The story of Noah also shows the value of faith and obedience to God. Then think of good, faithful Abraham! Oh, how obedient he was to leave the land of his birth and go to a land that he did not know anything about! Then he kept on and was obedient even to the sacrifice of his son Isaac in loving faith. God rewarded him and gave him a place in the eternal world. We see him in Luke 16 as comforting Lazarus in paradise after his death. I tell you, it all adds up to great blessings and wonderful rewards to live for the Lord in this life.

Then think of Moses and God's blessings to him, seeing him on the mount of transfiguration with our Lord Jesus and along with Elijah, another wonderful faithful man of God. Think of Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt by his wicked brothers; and how he was faithful and obedient to the will of God and was richly rewarded. He resisted that wicked woman and was unjustly thrown into prison, but God was with him, and brought him out. Look at Saul and his woes because of his disobedience to God, and then watch David come forth to victory and success because of his trueness to God. Then there is Daniel and his overcoming experience.

And most of all there is our Lord Jesus Christ Who was obedient to the death of the cross to fulfill God's will. Look where He is now! Let us all be faithful in our lives as these were.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the beginning, God created many lovely things: birds, fish, animals, flowers, trees and grass. He commanded that

these creations abound and multiply. "And God saw that it was good...." We still witness the beauty of all of these creatures. Each bird, fish, animal, flower is still performing as the Lord intended in the very beginning.

But this could not satiate the hunger He had for a creation that could by choice reciprocate His love. So on the sixth day, He created man in His own image. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good." It did not take long for man to decide for himself that he would not walk according to the plan of God but chose disobedience instead.

But when man, by his own free will, turns his heart back to the Lord and chooses to love God instead of hate Him; chooses to allow the Lord to direct his steps rather than walk his own way; it brings the greatest of delight to the Creator. Just as in the Garden of Eden, we can enjoy the presence of the Father and share our thoughts and devotion with Him. "For I was made in his likeness; created in his image; for I was born to serve the LORD. And I can't deny him; I'll always walk beside Him; for I was born to serve the Lord."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



SEPTEMBER 18, 2011

JESUS CHRIST APPEARING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

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

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

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

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

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

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

Hebrews 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death;

24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: ...We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Hebrews 8:1-2.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Hebrews 5:5, "*glorified not himself*": Did not seek to be High Priest for His own honor. "*but he that said unto him*": It

was His Father Almighty God Who gave Him that high position of power and glory.

Verse 6, "*order*": Arranged official dignity of rank. "*of Melchisedec*": This means that it was not the Levitical priesthood that Christ entered into, but a special calling of God as Melchisedec, king of Salem, held in the days of Abraham.

Verse 7, "*supplications with strong crying*": Earnest entreaties with forcible crying out. "*unto him that was able to save him from death*": Unto God Almighty Who had the power to bring him up from the dead. "*was heard in that he feared*": Was answered by God because of His piety and submission to His Father's will.

Verse 8, "*learned he obedience*": Gained knowledge by the suffering He experienced.

Verse 9, "*being made perfect*": Completed and accomplished without drawing back or failure. "*author*": Cause and means to bring about.

Verse 10, "*called of God*": Addressed and saluted of God in prophecy.

Hebrews 4:14, "*profession*": Testimony.

Verse 15, "*touched*": Able to sympathize, himself having suffered.

Verse 16, "*boldly*": With unfailing confidence. "*throne of grace*": Christ's position of power and intercession with God. "*help in time of need*": Assistance, strength, relief, deliverance and overcoming ability just when we need it the most!

Hebrews 7:22, "*surety*": Guaranteed without failure.

Verse 25, "*to the uttermost*": To complete perfection. "*make intercession*": Make unfailing help and victory fully available.

Verse 26, "*became us*": Was made fully fitting and proper for us. "*separate from sinners*": Undeified by sin and fellowship with the ungodly.

Verse 28, "*infirmity*": Weakness with failure and shortcoming. "*word of the oath*": This is referring to the prophecy in Psalm 110:4 in which the Lord God swore that Christ was to be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. "*consecrated*": Perfected without weakness of failure.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the blessed New Testament book entitled The Epistle

of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews we have drawn the text for our lesson that shows the wonderful ministry that Christ is fulfilling at the right hand of God in the heavens toward us poor and needy creatures of earth. After obediently giving Himself to be crucified as an atonement for the sins of mankind, Jesus was resurrected from the grave and then transported up to the throne of grace in Heaven. Since then He has continued unchanging and of great benefit to the souls of humanity while they live their mortal life on this earth.

The knowledge and assurance of His presence in Heaven at the right hand of God as our Great High Priest is a great blessing and help to His Church in this world. Our lesson brings out His sufferings and anguish and how He was obedient to the will of God, and the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Seeing that we have so great a High Priest, we are encouraged to hold fast to our confidence and testimony in Him, and to ever come boldly to Him in prayer and find the grace and help we need.

The ministry of Christ as our great High Priest was the fulfillment of the priesthood under the old covenant of the Mosaic Law system. That priesthood is no longer employed in the work of God. It is now a personal privilege and joy for everyone to have access to all the strength, guidance, light, understanding, and inspiration that we need as we pass through this fleeting life.

As our Memory Verse declares, Christ has entered into the very presence of God in heaven to represent us before His throne. May we all be enlightened and inspired with the knowledge of this wonderful privilege we have to be able to come before the throne of grace and receive timely help.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is Jesus Christ doing at the right hand of God?
2. How long has He been engaged in this great service?
3. What privilege does this give to us here in this world?
4. How did Christ qualify to be given this great position?
5. Have you been faithfully going to the throne of grace every day?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a wonderful privilege is ours to have to be able to come before the throne of grace and implore the great and effectual help that Christ can bestow upon us! How many songs have been inspired with this thought of prayer and coming to the throne of grace! Joseph Scriven wrote: "What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer! Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged! Take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer! In His arms He'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there." Joseph Scriven had been through two deep sorrows. Two different young women he had been engaged to marry had both been tragically taken in death. He had given himself to be a helper to the poor and needy. On a visit to him his pastor found these words written on paper on his bedside table. He had written them to his sick mother. What a blessing this song has been through the years! What a blessing our Christ has been to the ages from His position at the right hand of God! Let us take advantage of this gracious ministry!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the song, "*I must tell Jesus*" we find the words "I must tell Jesus all of my trials; I cannot bear these burdens alone; In my distress he kindly will help me; He ever loves and cares for his own." I am very grateful for the opportunity of telling Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. I agree also that I am not able to bare life's burdens alone. Life is bigger than me.

Peter expresses these words, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." We as humans can get weighted down with cares, concerns and worries. Jesus told Martha once that she was troubled about many things. Cares have a way of subtly, gradually, stockpiling in our hearts and minds and weighing us down with stress, stealing our strength and

energy, and negatively affecting our relationships with those we love. The world's problems are too big, let alone my own. Let us give them to Him, He can manage them far better.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

OUR WORDS: A BLESSING OR A CURSE

Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

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

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

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by the multitude of words.

Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

13:3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

MEMORY VERSE: But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Matthew 12:36.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The power of speech and ability to communicate with one another is a wonderful blessing from God and can be used for good, but it also can be an instrument of eternal damnation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 12:34, "*generation of vipers*": Poisonous brood or offspring.

Verses 36, "*idle word*": Vain and useless conversation. "*give account*": Will have to answer and be responsible for.

James 3:6, "*fire*": An agent of destruction. "*world of iniquity*": An arrangement of injustice and wrong. "*members*": The various parts of the body: hands, feet, eyes and ears. "*defileth the whole body*": Will cause the whole being to be spotted and impure. "*setteth on fire the course of nature*": Inflames the path mankind travels. "*set on fire of hell*": Burns with the fire of eternal damnation.

Verse 9, "*made after the similitude of God*": Created and designed to be in the likeness of a holy God.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 "*Keep thy foot*": Guard your words, actions and ways.

Verse 3, "*a dream cometh*": Big idea or formulating of plans is made. "*through the multitude of business*": In the face of the greatness of the task. "*multitude of words*": Conversation of a big talker.

Proverbs 10:19, "*wanteth not sin*": Sin is not lacking. "*refraineth*": Restrains and brings in control.

Prov. 13:3, "*keepeth his mouth*": Controls his words. "*keepeth his life*": Preserves his soul from death.

Prov. 15:1, "*soft answer*": Tender and gentle reply.

Prov. 18:21, "*they that love it*": They who love and appreciate the value and blessing of being able to communicate will be wise and careful with its use.

Prov. 25:11, "*fitly spoken*": Wisely spoken at the right time. "*apples of gold*": Golden, delicious apples! "*pictures of silver*": Beautiful bowls or dishes.

Prov. 29:11, "*keepeth it in*": Holds it back in control.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today from the Holy Scriptures is one of the most important if not *the most* important lesson we as mortals need to get a hold of. God Almighty created us with the wonderful ability to talk, express ourselves, and commune with our fellow man and our loved ones. It is something that too many times people take for granted and fail to realize how serious and weighty is its responsibility.

We have for our first scripture the serious counsel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the course of His earthly life He used His tongue to speak words of life and vital truth that are so beneficial and helpful to us, especially concerning the welfare of our eternity bound souls. But, as He spoke those wonderful words of life, He was besieged by vain and destructive words hurled at Him from those who opposed and hated Him. This is why He called those Pharisees and religious leaders a "generation of vipers." Their mouths were foaming out destruction against Jesus, but it was bringing destruction to their own souls. Here Jesus gave the wise

Joseph spoke in wisdom to others in his life and came out of all troubles to be the second ruler in Egypt!

Think how Moses spoke in wisdom before Pharaoh and was able to lead his people out of Egypt. But then in anger because the children of Israel provoked his spirit "he spake unadvisedly with his lips", and lost his chance to enter the promised land! (Psalm 106:33.) And the list could go on and on. Let us take heed to our words, and use this wonderful ability to commune with our fellows in an acceptable way to please and glorify God. We can do it if we will exercise great caution and not be hasty in our speech. Weigh your words, remembering that we will give an account of them at the last day.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...But he that refraineth his lips is wise." Perhaps you have heard someone say something and thought, "they didn't think that one through before they said it." It happens too many times that people do not think before they speak. You may have heard the old story of the feathers. A man came to a wise man and inquired of him how to ask for forgiveness for using his tongue idly. He was instructed to go get a feather pillow and spread the feathers out. After the man did as he was told, he returned and reported that the task had been completed. The wise man then asked him to go and gather all the feathers back. The man said, "I can't do that, they have all flown away." So it is with our words, once they have been spoken, they cannot be gathered back.

A young boy wanted to go and play out on the frozen pond with some friends. He asked his sick mother if he could go. She told him he couldn't for the pond was starting to thaw. He became very angry with her and told her he didn't love her and went to the pond without permission. His mother was right, the pond's ice was thin and he broke through the ice. He was rescued and brought back to the house. While he was sleeping his mother passed away. When the boy found out he cried, "Oh I wish I had not told mother I did not love her." There are times when we have the chance to tell people we are sorry for what we have done or said, and then there are times like the little boy who do not get that chance. So let us be very careful of what we say.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

warning about us going to have to answer for every vain and useless communication spoken in this life. There is a great judgment day that we are all going to meet. And how we have used this tongue in our mouth is going to come up for us to answer for.

From James we have more of this solemn counsel and warning. Listen carefully to his words! Also the wise counsel from Ecclesiastes we would be wise to consider.

And then from Proverbs we have selected several strong and wise statements that really show the seriousness of this matter of our words and communication with others. May the Lord bless this lesson to us all. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How serious did Jesus say our words are in God's sight?
2. What did James say the tongue can become if not controlled?
3. Why is it wise to let our words be few?
4. What must we do to make sure our words are acceptable?
5. How can we be sure to keep our souls from getting in trouble?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We have many examples in the Scriptures of people who failed to use their tongue wisely and for the profit of their souls. And then we have record of those who were wise with their tongue and whose conversation helped to bring them to success and happiness. There was Cain who "talked with Abel his brother". (Genesis 4:8.) What did his talk lead to? It ended in death for Abel. Noah was not only a builder of the ark, but he was also "a preacher of righteousness." (II Peter 2:5.) Abraham used his tongue wisely with Lot, giving him the first choice of the land. (Genesis 13:8-9.) He refused the offer of goods from Sodom, and God was his exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1.) He believed God and expressed it in his life. He used his words to plead for the saving of Lot from Sodom. (Genesis 18:32.) With his words Abraham managed to carry out God's word in offering up his son, Isaac. Look how greatly God was pleased with him! (Genesis 22:16-17.) Look how

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