

# 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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April, May, June  
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**Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**  
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**Volume 44**

**April, May, June**

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church**  
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## BIBLE LESSONS FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2012

### THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER

We feel inspired of the Lord to bring forth a series of lessons on the various labels of what we must "be" to please God and succeed in attaining to the resurrection of life eternal. These matters are vitally necessary and we need to take them very seriously to heart. May the Holy Spirit bless each lesson to all who have a part in their study. —Bro. Leslie C. Busbee



APRIL 1, 2012

### BE HUMBLE AND POOR IN SPIRIT

Micah 6:8 He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

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

Proverbs 16:18 Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better *it is to be* of a n humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Proverbs 28:6 Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

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

Matthew 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

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

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 14:11.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To serve God successfully and have His favor and grace in our hearts and lives, we must be lowly, humble, poor in attitude and spirit, and be submissive and obedient to Him all the way, even as Jesus did, to suffer death as He did.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 34:6. "*poor*": Destitute, depressed, lowly, humble, needy.

Proverbs 16:18, "*haughty*": Lifted up with pride. "*fall*": Stumble or go down. "*divide the spoil*": Share with the gain of.

Proverbs 28:6, "*perverse*": Dishonest and crooked.

Isaiah 57:15. "*contrite*": Crushed and bruised and wounded. "*revive*": Give life and well being.

Matthew 5:3. "*poor*": Beggarly; with little or no means of himself.

Matthew 23:12. "*abased*": Brought down low. "*exalted*": Lifted up to a heavenly place.

I Peter 5:5. "*resisteth the proud*": Is opposed to the self-exalted. Proverbs 3:34, From which this is quoted, says, "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly."

Philippians 2:5. "*mind*": Attitude and disposition.

Verse 6, "*form*": Nature and likeness. "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God...*": Counted not equality with God to be held on to.

Verse 7, "*made himself of no reputation*": Emptied himself.

Verse 8, "*obedient unto death*": Submissive to the will of God to allow Himself willingly to be crucified.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our first text from the prophet Micah is the conclusion of the question put forth of how can we come before the LORD God Almighty. He asks if we need to come with burnt offerings of various cattle and other kinds of offerings, even like offering our children for atonement of our sin and transgression. But then he concludes, as our text says, just what is the thing that will bring the favor of God upon us. And, in doing justly, loving mercy, and humbling ourselves to walk with God, we can be assured of success. And the testimony in Psalm 34 of "this poor man" obtaining favor is clear.

We have several scriptures from the book of Proverbs that clearly show the need and importance of being humble. And Isaiah's declaration of what really avails with the high and lofty eternal God joins with the line of the other scriptures about this vital ingredient to obtaining favor with Him. And then through the New Testament we see it numbers of times so clearly brought out—we need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of our Creator. It is the only thing that will prevail and bring us under His gracious wings of mercy. Our Lord Jesus spoke of it so clearly, and His apostle Peter echoes the message from his epistle.

But the crowning scripture is the one in Philippians 2:5-11 where it shows how Christ, though He was in the form and likeness of the Father in heart and Spirit, yet He humbled Himself and was obedient to the will of God in being submissive to allow those evil men to take, arrest Him, run Him through a mock trial, and unjustly sentence Him to be crucified. It was all done in a matter of hours. He could have stopped them at any point along the way, but He was obedient to His Father's will and let them carry out their evil work. This is our prime example of humility, submission, and obedience.

We must be willing to have the same mind and purpose that Jesus had. Jesus said in John 12:25, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall

keep it unto life eternal." It was for Him and it is for us today. He was obedient unto death and was rewarded by His Father in being raised from the tomb unto everlasting life and glory. And so will it be with us if we follow Christ's example of humility and obedience to the will of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Micah declare that God required of us?
2. Who did the high and lofty One say would find favor with Him?
3. What must we resist and go against in order to be humble?
4. What did Jesus do to be the prime example of humility?
5. What was His reward for being humble and submissive to God?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We want to quote from song No. 298 in Evening Light Songs: "If thou wouldst have the dear Savior from Heaven walk by thy side from the morn till the even; there is a rule that each day you must follow: Humble thyself to walk with God. Humble thyself and the Lord will draw near thee: Humble thyself and His presence shall cheer thee. He will not walk with the proud or the scornful. Humble thyself to walk with God.

"Just as the Lord in the world's early ages walked and communed with the prophets and sages, He will come now if you'll meet the conditions: Humble thyself to walk with God.

"Just as a stream finds a bed that is lowly, so Jesus walks with the pure and the holy: Cast out thy pride and in heart-felt contrition. Humble thyself to walk with God." By Johnson Oatman.

As pride is one of the main downfalls of humanity, so humility is one of the main essential attributes that we as humans must have and maintain to be able to avail to salvation. Pride was one of the aspects of satan's temptation to Eve along with physical appetite and outward attraction. And so must humility and lowliness of heart and mind be employed along with self-denial and control of bodily appetites. Let us keep in mind that humility was greatly incorporated with our Savior's triumph over the powers of sin and the devil. By humbling ourselves before God and our fellow man.

we can partake of Christ's victory over sin and death. Let us also remember the various Bible heroes of humility and obedience to God, namely Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Daniel, and others along with all the countless witnesses of Christ in this New Testament age of time.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:2-3. When one considers the importance of being poor in spirit with respect to their relationship with God, it ceases to be a mystery why Jesus began teaching the people with this principle. Jesus identified the first and great commandment as being "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." We see from our lesson today that it is impossible to love the Lord with that kind of fervency when a person is filled with pride, self-achievement and feelings of self-worth.

When a person is poor in spirit they realize how much they need God. They know that only He can satisfy the deep longing of their heart and when He speaks to that soul's need, the potential for an eternal relationship with Him begins. Consider some of the other beatitudes that follow this verse for they also demonstrate the traits of one who is poor in spirit. When one mourns they are voicing a need that they are unable to fulfill on their own. One cannot be meek except they likewise have needed gentleness from others and appreciated that quality. To hunger and thirst after God's righteousness one must be empty of their own righteousness. The truly merciful person sees how much mercy they need from God and others. Those who are pure in heart cannot be lifted up with pride for pride distorts a person's perspective of justice. One cannot be a peacemaker if they believe they are always right. To suffer for Christ one must give up their rights and take a way that does not appeal to the flesh. Those who are poor in spirit are on the threshold of a stairway that leads to a more abundant life.

When one truly sees their own helplessness and completely trusts their life into the hands of a merciful God, they accomplish at least two important things. They will become detached from earthly things, for they know that those things have not, and will not, bring the satisfaction and peace that

their soul is longing for. They will become attached to God, for He is the only One Who can supply and fill the needs of the heart. God is truly the source of strength, grace, hope and security and seeing one's need of Him is a great blessing that leads to unspeakable joy in the kingdom of heaven.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**APRIL 8, 2012**

### **BE WISE AND INSTRUCTED**

Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*.

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son: this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

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

Proverbs 19:20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be* *thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long.



18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him. Psalm 2:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We need to take on heavenly wisdom and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings, thereby escaping the wrath of God and being accounted worthy of being with Christ in eternal glory.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 2:2, "*set themselves...against the LORD*": Fix their hearts in opposition. "*his anointed*": The Christ of the eternal God.

Verse 3, "*break their bands, cast away their cords*": Oppose and disregard the counsels and teachings of Christ and His Heavenly Father.

Verse 4, "*sitteth in the heavens*": Rules and reigns over all the earth from His eternal throne in Heaven. "*laugh and have in derision*": Mock and hold in contempt as nothing.

Verse 5, "*speak*": Send and pronounce judgment. "*vex*": Punish and repay with eternal vengeance and displeasure.

Verse 6, "*Yet*": Disregarding all of foolish men's opposition. "*my king*": Jesus Christ, His holy Son. "*my holy hill of Zion*": God's exalted plane of holiness and triumph in the New Testament Church of God.

Verse 7, "*declare the decree*": Pronounce with all eternal authority. "*this day have I begotten thee*": The apostle Paul in his message to Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:33, quoted this as being fulfilled by Christ being raised from the dead. Christ was the Son of God from the womb of His mother, but His being raised from the tomb made Him the Son of God with power. Romans 1:3-4.

Verse 8, "*the heathen*": The Gentiles, the nations of the world. "*thine inheritance and thy possession*": The souls of all humanity are given to Christ for eternal salvation or destruction.

Verse 9, "*rod of iron*": The everlasting and unfailing Word of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 10, *"Be wise now therefore: be instructed"*: Act wisely and be taught.

Verse 11, *"rejoice with trembling"*: Be joyful and happy in the salvation of Jesus Christ, and at the same time be reverent and filled with godly fear.

Verse 12, *"Kiss the Son"*: Embrace in complete submission to the doctrines of Jesus Christ and worship Him with a pure heart. *"lest He be angry"*: Submit to Christ to escape His wrath. *"When his wrath is kindled by a little"*: The least resistance to Christ can bring danger of eternal destruction. *"Blessed"*: How happy!

Proverbs 15:24, *"above to the wise"*: Exalted in holiness and purity far above this sinful world. *"hell beneath"*: Eternal doom in the depths of everlasting fire.

Proverbs 19:20, *"thy latter end"*: In that eternal world beyond this life.

Proverbs 23:17, *"all the day long"*: The rest of your life.

Verse 18, *"an end"*: An eternal hereafter. *"expectation"*: Hope.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

As we celebrate on this Easter Sunday the resurrection of our blessed Lord and Savior, we will study the wonderful prophecy of Him in Psalm 2. It is generally stated in the New Testament that David, the second king of Israel, was the inspired writer of this Psalm. The first two verses are quoted in Acts 4:25-26 by the disciples of Christ in their prayer as they called upon God after being threatened by the authorities for preaching in the name of Jesus. As verse 3 says, the "bands and cords" of Jesus were rejected and cast away by the Jewish leaders. But then verse 4 and 5 declares that the Lord God in Heaven laughs and holds their opposition in derision, wrath, and displeasure. And in verse 6 shows that, despite the people's rejection, God set Jesus as king upon the holy hill of Zion, His Church.

In verse 7 we have Christ declaring the decree that the LORD God had said unto Him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." The apostle Paul in his message to the people, as recorded in Acts 13:33, quoted this declaration, and said that this was referring to Christ's resurrection from the dead. In verse 8 we have the LORD God speaking further, saying to Christ that He would give to him the nations of the world and the uttermost parts of the earth. Then in verse 9 He said that

Christ would break them with a rod of iron into pieces. Jesus Christ quoted this to John in Revelation 2:26 and 27, "...He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." This means that Christ and all of His faithful followers will prevail, overcome, and condemn all who refuse to submit to their eternal authority.

The last three verses to this Psalm contain the counsel for us to be wise and instructed to serve the Lord Jesus with fear, rejoice with trembling, and embrace the Son. We should do this faithfully lest His fierce anger be turned loose on us. The closing statement declares that all who put their trust in Jesus will be greatly blessed with eternal life and happiness.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How can we be certain that this Psalm is a prophecy of Christ?
2. Why is Christ so many times rejected by humanity?
3. How does God and Christ look at man's opposition to them?
4. What should every person do in true wisdom about it all?
5. What will be the state of those who put their trust in Him?

#### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is contrary to the selfish, vain, and proud ways of this present evil world. It is offensive and undesirable to the majority of humanity. Worldly pleasure, earthly wealth, and outward beauty is bred in the hearts and lives of children when brought up without any godly influence. We can see in the history of Israel, the nation that God chose to work through to show His power and holiness, how the current of selfishness and spiritual darkness works contrary to reverence and respect for the Almighty Creator. The world in Noah's time had drifted to where "every imagination of thoughts of men's hearts was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. How much worse has it become as the years and centuries have come and gone since then! This present age and world we live in now is ripening up fast

for eternal destruction that will soon come when Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will burst through the skies and melt it all to nothing. It will mean so, so much for us to be obedient to His New Testament standard of holiness and purity of heart and life that will enable us to escape the terrible destruction that is soon to "come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-36. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Hal was a man who really thought he knew it all. It was not uncommon for him to brush off counsel and advice, and to let you know that he was just fine and could do it his way. The thing was, he wasn't successful in much of anything, yet he insisted that his way was just as good or better than anyone else's. He lived year after year in this way, shouldering his way through, and making life difficult for his loved ones and himself, because of his obstinacy.

The thing most serious was that Hal was this way about spiritual things as well. He knew people who were very close to God, who could have helped him and instructed him. He was raised in a place where he could hear deep, spiritual, anointed preaching from God's Word, but it seemed to "go in one ear and out the other." One time he told his pastor, who had tried to encourage him to attend services, "I don't get much out of preaching. It doesn't do anything for me."

What happens to a person like this? Does he eventually "turn out right"? Does he just "happen" upon the right formula on his own and "somehow" make it into Heaven at the end?

Well, the tragic way Hal's life ended tells the sad story. A friend happened to find Hal one day, stretched out under his jacked-up car, making some repairs.

"It's not safe with just a flimsy jack, Hal. Don't you think you should get some blocks?"

"Naw, I don't need 'em. Ain't that dangerous?"

It was a sober report we got the next day, that Hal's car had fallen on him, pinning him under it. How long he was pinned before he died, none of us ever knew. Did he have an opportunity to make peace with God? We can only hope so.

Hal's story drives home the truth of this verse in our lesson: "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." (Proverbs 19:20.)

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

**APRIL 15, 2012**

**BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE**

Joshua 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Proverbs 24:5 A wise man *is* strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

Joel 3:9 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong.

2 Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

3 ...Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

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

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. I Corinthians 16:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To be a real, true, and successful Christian a person must be spiritually strong in heart, soul, and mind to use the spiritual weapons God has supplied us with, which includes the truth of His Word, faith and submission to His Word, confidence and hope of salvation for the soul and body, and fervent, earnest prayer for one's self and for others.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Joshua 1:9, "*dismayed*": Broken down.

Proverbs 24:5, "*wise man*": Valiant warrior.

Joel 3:9, "*prepare war*": Sanctify a holy war. "*come up*": Rise up to diligent action.

Verse 10, "*plowshares*": Earth digging tools. "*pruninghooks*": Trimming knives.

II Corinthians 12:9, "*my strength made perfect in weakness*": Paul said in chapter 13, verse 4, "For though he (Christ) was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." Christ's glorious strength was given to him because He was obedient to the death of the cross. We, as His followers, must also bear the weakness of the flesh and earthly things, if we would partake of His strength and eternal life. "*glory in my infirmities*": Take pleasure in sufferings in the flesh. "*necessities*": Dire needs and limitations of this mortal state.

Verse 10, "*when I am weak*": Weak and unable in my own abilities. "*I am strong*": Endued with the power of God.

Ephesians 6:10, "*power of his might*": Strength of His purpose and force.

Verse 11, "*wiles*": Methods of trickery.

Verse 12, "*principalities*": Ruling influences. "*powers*": Worldly forces. "*spiritual wickedness in high places*": Opposing powers in the spiritual realm.

Verse 13, "*having done all*": Measured to everything required by God.

Verse 15, "*preparation*": Readiness.

Verse 16, "*above all*": Over all and upon all else. "*quench*": Put out of force; overcome. "*fiery darts*": Discouraging and opposing accusations.

Verse 18, "*watching thereunto*": Being on guard for this same cause. "*perseverance*": Persistent decision and unfailing determination. "*supplication*": Fervent and continued petitioning in prayer.

I Corinthians 16:13, "*quit you like men*": Be men!

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The Old Testament's accounts include physical wars and conflicts and soldiers giving up their human life. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not partake of that kind of warfare. He told Pilate in John 18:36, "...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." The mainstream of the Jewish nation and their leaders were, as was Pilate, ignorant of the real purpose and principle of our Lord Jesus Christ. The warfare that Jesus set in motion is a spiritual warfare, the conflict between the soul of man and the unseen spiritual powers of Satan and sin. In our lesson today is revealed the true strength that God and Christ is calling for us to take on and fight with. Joshua fought literal battles to possess a literal earthly land. In the New Testament Christ is the Captain and Leader of an army of men and women, boys and girls who are fighting spiritual powers of satan, the enemy of all righteousness. Christ was crucified through weakness. He did not try to defend Himself or carnally fight with His enemies. But He fought the great fight of faith and was victorious and rewarded with the resurrection of eternal life. He was strong, as He wants us to be strong and more than conquerors over the spiritual powers against us.

God is not pleased for His people to engage in carnal warfare, fighting in the flesh. The real warfare He is calling us to is fighting and overcoming the devil and all of His devices of sin and wickedness. Note the armor that we are called to put on. And remember that Christ wants us to be strong spiritually and overcome, not our fellow man, but the powers of satan and sin.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. In what way does our Lord Jesus Christ want us to be strong?
2. What kind of weapons are we to use in our warfare?
3. What kind of enemies and foes are we to war against?
4. How can we be weak, and yet be perfectly strong?
5. What does it mean to "be a man!"

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Captain and Leader in the Christian life, came into this world to bring the reality of spiritual values and things much more needed than earthly and fleshly things. Note a few of the spiritual things Jesus brought forth. He spoke in John 3 of a spiritual birth. He spoke in John 4 of spiritual water. He spoke in John 5 of a spiritual resurrection from sin. He spoke in John 6 about spiritual bread. He spoke in John 10 of a spiritual Shepherd (which He was) and His disciples as being spiritual sheep. Then through the New Testament Scriptures are other spiritual things revealed. There are spiritual treasures and riches, spiritual beauty, spiritual health and healing, spiritual eyesight and hearing, and spiritual growth.

Then there is spiritual Jew, spiritual circumcision, and spiritual writing of God's law in our hearts. There is the spiritual Jerusalem, the true city and Church of God. And, as our lesson brings out, there is spiritual strength that we need to experience and possess. I remember one time I was being bothered by things that others were doing and saying. I was being irked and it kept coming to my mind. All of a sudden the Spirit of God spoke plainly and forcibly to my soul: "Be a man!" Oh, I came right to attention and rebuked the devil and got the victory I needed. God wants us to be strong in heart, soul, mind, and spirit. We must be good soldiers in spiritual things, as our lesson brings out so clearly. May the Lord help each of us to gain this spiritual strength and be overcomers as He wants us to be! We can do this if we make it our sincere prayer and desire to the Lord, to our Christ Who overcame it all on our behalf.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

I Corinthians 16:13. "Watch ye:" You have many enemies; be continually on your guard; be always circumspect:



1. Watch against evil;
2. Watch for opportunities to receive good;
3. Watch for opportunities to do good;
4. Watch over each other in love;
5. Watch, that none may draw you aside from the belief and unity of the Gospel.

"Stand fast in the faith:" Keep in your ranks; do not be disorderly; be determined to keep your ranks unbroken; keep close together. On your unity your preservation depends; if the enemy succeeds in breaking your ranks, and dividing one part of this sacred army from another, your rout will be inevitable.

"Quit yourselves like men:" When you are attacked, do not flinch; maintain your ground; resist; press forward; strike home; keep compact; conquer.

"Be Strong:" If one company or division be opposed by too great a force of the enemy, strengthen that division, and maintain your position; if an attack is to be made on any part or entrenchment of the foe, summon up all your courage, sustain each other; fear not, for fear will enervate you. Your cause is good; it is the faith, the religion of Jesus; He is your Captain in the field; and, should you even die in the contest, the victory is yours. (Clarke's Commentary, Volume VI)

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**APRIL 22, 2012**

### **HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear.

I Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation. a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which* is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

II Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God wills and desires for His children to be holy and without blame before Him in love, for He is holy. Christ gave His life for us that we might be holy and acceptable to God. It is for us to deny ungodliness and turn away from sin in every way, and live a holy and unspotted life for Him right here in this present evil world.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 1:3, "*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*": All the benefits of grace and victory to lift us up above this sinful world to a heavenly plane of righteousness and holiness before God.

1 Peter 1:13, "*gird up the loins of your mind*": Be taught of God and bring every thought and attitude of your heart in subjection to what is pleasing to Him. "*Be sober*": Be serious, solemn, weighty, and of earnest desire.

Verse 14 "*not fashioning*": Not conforming to be like. "*former lusts in your ignorance*": Desires and appetites of the heart that you had before being enlightened.

Verse 15 "*holy*": Sacred, clean, pure, and wholly consecrated to God. "*all manner of conversation*": Every kind of behavior.

Verse 17 "*pass the time of your sojourning here in fear*": Live your life on earth in reverence and respect to what is pleasing to God.

1 Peter 2:15, "*chosen generation*": A people selected and approved in the sight of God. "*peculiar*": Being special and beyond the usual run of society. "*marvelous*": Miraculous and wonderful.

Romans 12:1, "*beseech*": Entreat, exhort, and invite. "*present*": Lovingly offer. "*reasonable service*": Worthy and qualified action.

Verse 2, "*be not conformed*": Do not pattern after. "*transformed*": Changed to be like Jesus. "*prove*": Examine and discover.

Romans 6:19, "*your members*": Your eyes, ears, hands, feet, and, above all, your tongue. "*iniquity unto iniquity*": From one sinful behavior to another one deeper and worse. "*righteousness unto holiness*": Justification unto complete sanctification.

Verse 20, "*free from righteousness*": Not restrained nor controlled by righteous principles.

Verse 22, "*free from sin*": Completely delivered from the sinful way of life.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In Leviticus 11:44 and 19:2 is found the expression quoted in 1 Peter 1:16 of our lesson. God is a holy and righteous Creator. He created man and woman in the begin-

ning in His holy image, but because they yielded to the devil it threw them and their descendants under the power of sin. God worked with different ones such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham to establish the principles of faith; and then by Moses gave His holy law that helped mankind to be able to see where they are wrong and displeasing in His sight. And, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to show us the way of love and obedience to Him, and He made the sacrifice of His body to atone for our sins so that we can be able to obtain forgiveness and grace to help us to overcome the power of sin.

In our lesson today we have drawn a clear testimony from the Holy Scriptures of God's desire and good pleasure for us to accept Christ and be able, by His grace and help, to overcome the power of sin and to live a holy and unblameable life for Him. His grace can be our means of success, but we must be humble and obedient to His counsel and commandments. We can do it, if we have a mind and willingness to submit to Him and trust His unfailing help and grace.

Sin must be overcome and eliminated from our hearts and lives if we would live acceptably before God and be accounted worthy to obtain that eternal life that Christ died for us to have. It should be our ardent and unfailing desire to be a partaker of this great salvation and have the victory in our souls over all sin. We have churches and religious movements in the world that try to teach that we cannot live free from sin. Part of the daily prayer of many, many poor deluded souls is, "Lord, forgive us of our many sins." But, in the light of the Scriptures we have in our lesson today, we can be persuaded that the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ that He purchased for us can give us the victory we need over sin. We can, by His help and Holy Spirit anointing, overcome every stain of sin, and all that is displeasing in God's sight, and live a life pure and holy.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did God have in mind for us before the creation?
2. What is the grace Jesus brought and what can it help us do?
3. What must we do on our part to overcome the power of sin?
4. What kind of sacrifice do we need to make before God?
5. What are the members that we need to yield to God?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What sin or transgression is there that we cannot overcome and cease to have rule over us? Our lesson tells us that we are to yield our members as servants to righteousness unto holiness. Lying, cursing, anger, vulgar talk, adultery, fornication, covetousness, pride, hatred, envy, jealousy, and all the other ways and habits that sin can fasten to a person's heart and life can be overcome and completely eliminated. We have to repent of these evils and take our stand against their influence. With prayer and earnest seeking the Lord we can overcome these awful sinful habits and ways of life. We can be holy and without blame before God in supreme love and devotion to Him and His Holy Word. Let us not be deceived by the devil and believe false prophets who teach that we cannot live free from sin. The grace of God is sufficient if we will apply ourselves aright and be submissive to His holy will.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the Lesson Background, Bro. Leslie noted that Peter quoted from Leviticus 11:44. This chapter stood out to me as having great relevance to living holy in Christ. In this chapter, the Lord was explaining what the Israelite nation could eat and those things he did not want them to eat; A type of our spiritual food under the gospel. We cannot eat or partake of all the junk food that is found in the world and maintain good spiritual health. We must recognize there is a great difference between things that are clean and unclean. Especially, in a society that is calling good evil and evil good.

My daughter, Lucinda, enjoys her work as a nutritionist. She encourages and counsels people towards good healthy diets that will help build and strengthen the bodies' immune system. If the immune system is weakened or broken down we become more susceptible to sickness and disease. As our physical diet affects the natural man; so our spiritual diet affects our inner man. If our spiritual immune system becomes weakened through too much sugar in the worldly junk food, we become more susceptible to sickness, disease, failure, and even death. This greatly depends on what we eat and how we exercise!!!

What do we allow our minds and spirit to feed on? What thoughts and feelings do we allow? Is it clean or unclean—

wholesome or junk? "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The Lord has provided the sacrificial Lamb of God, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word to enable us to be holy unto Himself. Let us avail ourselves of what the Lord has provided.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**APRIL 29, 2012**

### **BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD**

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

James 2:14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works. when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

**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:** For faith to be effectual and acceptable with God there must be definite action and obedience to God's Word and commandments on our part.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

James 1:24, "*straightway*": Immediately.

Verse 25, "*perfect law of liberty*": The full and complete doctrines of God's word that points us to full and complete deliverance from sin and transgression. "*doer of the work*": One who obeys and carries out to the full what the Word of God commands and instructs us to do.

James 2:14, "*works*": Action and obedience.

Verse 20, "*vain*": Foolish.

Verse 22, "*wrought*": Accomplished and fulfilled.

Verse 25, "*Rahab the harlot*": We want to insert at this point what Adam Clarke in his Commentary wrote: "It is exceedingly probable that the word in Hebrew and in Greek that we translate *harlot*, should be rendered *innkeeper* or *tavernkeeper*, as there is no proper evidence that the person in question was such a woman as our translation represents her. She was afterwards married to Salmon, a Jewish prince; see Matthew 1:5."

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today deals with a very important truth. The Scriptures plainly reveal in the histories of people who obtained favor and blessings from the Almighty that such were fully and faithfully obedient to His Word and Commandments. Verse 21 of this first chapter of James counsels us to "lay apart

all filthiness (uncleanness) and superfluity of naughtiness (overflowing of badness), and receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word (to grow in our hearts), which is able to save your souls." God wants His Word to be written in our affections and desires, more than just in our minds and thoughts. This Bible "B" in our lesson today is "Be a doer of God's word." James pictures a hearer that is not a doer as a man who views himself in a mirror, and then goes off and forgets what he looks like. It is surely true that a person can read in the Bible and fail to take it to heart as he should. It is not how much one hears that is going to profit, but how much they can remember and put into action. And this our lesson declares that the one who looks into the Word and puts it in action in his ways and deeds will reap the wonderful blessings of God.

From the second chapter of James we are taught to not only have faith, but also works. These works are the deeds accomplished in obedience to God's Word. He states that the devils believe in God and tremble. But we know that they do nothing in obedience thereto. Then we have two examples of obedience and proper works that perfected and made effectual the faith in the lives of people. The first one was Abraham in his obedience to God in offering his son Isaac upon the altar. The other one was Rahab who received the messengers from Israel who came to spy out Jericho. The account of this in Joshua 2 is very interesting. This woman had heard of Israel and how God had subdued their enemies before hand. Their hearts were melted and she showed kindness to these two Israelites. hid them on her roof, asked for their favor and safety, and let them down out of her window to escape.

There are other examples in the Old Testament that illustrate the value of obedience to God. Noah obeyed God and worked at building an ark to be the means of him and his family escaping the awful flood. There were also other moves that Abraham made in obedience to God, such as leaving the land of his nativity and going on a pilgrimage, not knowing where he was going. There was Moses who gave up his rank in Egypt to suffer affliction with the people of God. (Hebrews 11:23-29.) The Israelites, in obedience to God's command, marched around Jericho seven days and the walls fell down. Many others through the ages have experienced God's blessings by being obedient to His directions. Daniel in the face of



the danger of being thrown in the lion's den went right ahead with his usual prayer three times a day. God spared him from the lions. But, greatest of all, was the example of obedience our Lord and Savior showed in allowing Himself to be crucified by the evil people of His day. It is a solid fact that we had best take diligent heed to. We must obey and submit to all of God's Word if we want His goodness. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What do we do to ourselves if we fail to be a doer of the Word?
2. What illustration shows how we can forget and fail to be a doer?
3. Who is it that believes and trembles without any obedience?
4. What two Bible characters were mentioned who were doers?
5. What does our Memory Verse declare about this?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It means so much for us human beings to take God's Word and what the Bible teaches seriously and be willing and obedient to all of it. Isaiah 1:19 says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." We know that, according to Romans 5:19, "...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Satan worked to allure Adam and Eve to disobey the command of God concerning the forbidden fruit, making it appear to be profitable and beneficial. And so the devil still works today to beguile men's minds and get them to look on things forbidden in the Scriptures as desirable and worth while.

The counsel given by the New Testament writers has been proven to be wise and accurate directions, given by God, for us today. Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, "...that women adorn themselves in modest (decent) apparel, with shamefacedness (not fancy and show-off) and sobriety; (soundness of mind and self-control) not with broided (fancy and decorated) hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 1 Peter 3:3-4 echoes the same counsel, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward

*adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, (jewelry) or of putting on of apparel (adornment); 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." How wise to be submissive to these holy words of counsel!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The heart of a parent is made glad when their children graciously do those things they are instructed to do. Likewise, it is pleasing to the Father of mortal man when His creation follows the instructions given in His Holy Word. We can be assured that those instructions have been given for our good and man will find the greatest joy by diligently following what God has commanded. Yet, there is a foe of God that would like to convince all humanity that this is not true and that more pleasure and joy would be found by doing things that are contrary to God's plan. One of the ways satan accomplishes his purpose is through deceptions. James 1:22 of our lesson today calls attention to one of those deceptions that people fall prey to when they are "hearers only." This verse says these folks are deceiving themselves. It is important for a person to hear the Word of the Lord, for there is knowledge in hearing. It is also important for a person to put into practical application those things they know, otherwise they begin to discount God's Word and rationalize away the truth they have been given the privilege of hearing. Rationalizing away the truth creates an attitude in the heart that is not completely honest with one's self. As this dishonesty prevails, that person soon becomes comfortable hearing the Word of the Lord preached from week to week and maybe even maintain a high Christian profession, yet their lives are far from what God would be pleased with.

How easy it is to slip into a deception of this nature can be illustrated by a survey that reportedly was conducted among drivers. In this survey a group of drivers were asked if they thought their driving skills were above average or below average. According to the survey, 85% of the people thought their own driving skills were above average. Well, if this survey was a true cross sample of the population, it would be impossible for that percentage of drivers to be above average.

Some obviously had a mistaken impression of their driving skills.

What I have observed happens to some folks is that they do obey the Lord in certain areas of their life, but then there are other areas that the Lord has dealt with them, perhaps many times about, and they have failed to move in those areas. In their mind they completely justify themselves by the things they feel they have done and will not budge any farther. The light of the Lord then moves on and they are left a spiritually darkened shell that is devoid of the vibrant Spirit of God. Doing all of the will of the Father is a serious matter that each of us needs to give diligent heed to. For the future of our eternal soul depends on hearing the Father say "well done," not "well heard."

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**MAY 6, 2012**

**BE PATIENT**

Ecclesiastes 7:8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Psalms 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.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations:

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

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.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** In your patience possess ye your souls. Luke 21:19.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To successfully serve the Almighty God we must be faithful and obedient to Him without fail, regardless of how long we may have to suffer and wait for His help and deliverance from trouble.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Ecclesiastes 7:8, "*patient*": Long enduring, suffering, and waiting.

Psalms 37:7, "*Rest in the Lord*": Be silent, calm, and still with hope and trust in the Lord. "*fret not thyself*": Do not allow yourself to be fired up with anger.

James 1:2, "*count it all joy*": Esteem it very beneficial. "*divers*": Different kinds.

Verse 3, "*trying of your faith*": Making good proof of your confidence in God. "*worketh patience*": Fully accomplishes.

James 5:7, "*husbandman*": Farmer. "*early and latter rain*": Full and complete season.

Verse 8, "*stablish*": Set fast and be resolved to be ready to meet the Lord.

Verse 9, "*Grudge not*": Do not murmur or contend. "*behold*": Keep in full view. "*standeth before the door*": May come at any time.

Verse 11, "*end of the Lord*": The purpose and outcome of God's dealings.

Hebrews 6:11, "*diligence*": Earnest eagerness.

Verse 12, "*That ye be not slothful*": Lest you become dull or lazy, with no sense of godly fear.

Verse 13, "*swear*": To declare with an appeal to a higher power.

Hebrews 10:35, "*Cast not away your confidence*": Do not give up your persuasion and assurance. "*recompence*": That which is promised.

Luke 21:19, "*possess ye*": Save and gain forever.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Patience is a very vital ingredient of the true Christian faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many things in life that we must learn to bear with and endure. It is not a bed of roses to follow Jesus and follow His example. And we do not get the answer to our prayers and petitions to the God of Heaven just when we might expect. And some prayers are never fully answered in the way we might so desire. So we have to endure with patience those times of disappointment.

Our first two scriptures from the Old Testament introduce this thought of patience very well. The patient in spirit and whoever experiences delay and slow fulfillment can testify to what waiting faithfully can attribute to the welfare of the soul. And our Heavenly Father knows what good is accomplished in the soul of man through times of suffering and waiting on Him for deliverance and help. We just have to learn to take delay, and long periods of waiting and yearning, with courage and resignation to our Creator.

James starts his epistle with wise counsel about enduring temptations and hard trials. They help bring about in the heart of man the vital and valuable ingredient for the welfare of the soul. He mentioned the patience of Job as a good example for us to remember and pattern after. And in that wonderful book of God is portrayed the hard and difficult

experiences that Job had from God as he was put to the hard test. And we have other examples of faith and courage also in the Scriptures. Think of Joseph, captive in Egypt and beset by many dark and difficult experiences, being for over 20 years separated from his dear father, Jacob. Remember especially the last two years of this ordeal when he was forgotten by the butler to whom he gave the plea to make mention of him before the king. Don't you know that those over 720 days were heavy and full of distress? But the day finally came when he was delivered and enthroned in power and blessings!

And in Hebrews we have mentioned again the wonderful Abraham, faithful servant of the great God. It all illustrates the great value that God places on whosoever endures long seasons of waiting and enduring. We are called to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God. So let us keep steadfast in our confidence and faithfully go through whatever we are called to go through to obtain the fulfillment of God's wonderful promises.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is learning to patiently wait on God so important?
2. What characters mentioned in our lesson portray this thought?
3. Why is pride such a hindrance to having patience?
4. What is the main thing desired by the Saints of the Lord?
5. What must be experienced in order to work patience?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We are exhorted in our lesson in Hebrews 6:12 to "...be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." And the greatest of all the promises that God has made unto us is that as spoken of in 1 John 2:25, "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life." Paul spoke of this in Philippians 3:8-11 how he counted all things but loss and worthless in order to "win (or possess) Christ." And he proceeded to name those things in Christ he was pursuing after: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness...but that which is through the faith of Christ...That I may know (experience) him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being

made conformable unto his death: *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*" All along the Christian life are found places and experiences of being patient and waiting on God. In my life I obtained a godly and wonderful wife through faith and patience, waiting on the Lord for the "go ahead" before telling her about it. After I received witness that she was to be the one, and that I was not to tell her until He showed me to, it was nearly a 2-year wait of patience. That was a great and difficult thing for me, but it was worthwhile. We have been rewarded many times over for the long wait we had. How much more will the receiving of the crown of life in that last great day be to us if we steadfastly hold our faith and patience in the Christian life! The flesh and our own selfish desires go against faith and patience, but it is worthwhile to be obedient to God all the way! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

At some point in my life I wrote a definition on the margin of my Bible: "Patient: undisturbed by obstacles, delays, and failures." Every time I catch a glimpse of the little note, written in bright blue ink, I receive a challenge.

How can an earth-dimmed human being, unable to see the future or into the hearts of men, unable to direct my own steps, prone to forget the deliverances of the past, and prone to repeat the mistakes of the past, learn to be patient?

It's going to take an entire transformation of heart. Most importantly, it's going to take ceasing from our own way and having the old self-life crucified with Christ. After all, it's the self-centered view of carnal man that causes him to be annoyed with the failings of others, who are—surprise!—full of faults, just like himself; upset with things beyond his control that bring obstacles into his life, like physical illness or the weather; angry with delays to his schedule and plans, such as a sick baby or backed-up traffic; and irritated with his own imperfections and malfunctions—losing a small screw down in the motor, dropping the box of pins, smashing a finger in the door.

When we weren't saved, these things could make us anywhere from inwardly seething and fuming to outwardly swearing and ranting. But we are new creatures, transformed by the renewing of our minds, and have given the Holy Spirit full permission to teach us His life. Instead of feeling that we

should control and look down on others, the Holy Spirit quiets us into an humble estimation of ourselves and a gentle forbearance with others. That simple change goes a long way in keeping us serene in the difficulties of life.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**MAY 13, 2012**

**BE FAITHFUL**

Psalm 31:23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Proverbs 28:20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

Matthew 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

5 And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after:



6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 7:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? Proverbs 20:6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To please the LORD God and receive His great blessings we must faithfully follow and obey all of His commandments with a true and honest heart, believing and following the example laid out for us by His Son, Jesus Christ.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 31:23, "*saints*": Godly, holy, and faithful people to God. "*preserveth*": Guard, protect, and maintain their cause. "*faithful*": Firm, steadfast, and always true.

Proverbs 28:20, "*maketh haste to be rich*": Seeks hurriedly above all else for earthly wealth and riches. "*not be innocent*": Be guilty of sin before God.

Luke 16:9, This is what Jesus counsels us to do after His account of the steward who, when faced with losing his stewardship, used his control over his lord's possessions to make friends with those who were in debt to his lord by cutting their accounts short. What Jesus is saying in this verse means simply this: Use the earthly riches you have to help the poor and those in need, and by this obtain friends with the angels who, when your earthly life is finished, will receive you into eternal dwellings in Heaven.

Verse 10, "*that which is least*": Earthly wealth. "*much*": Spiritual wealth.

Verse 11, "*unrighteous mammon*": Money. "*true riches*": Riches of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, faith, holiness, and undying hope.

I Corinthians 4:1, "*so account of us*": Reckon and respect us to be. "*stewards*": Managers and overseers.

Verse 2, "*Moreover*": It is surely true.

Hebrews 3:1, "*Apostle*": Leader; One entrusted with responsibility. "*profession*": Testimony and declaration of belief.

Verse 2, "*in all his house*": In all of his work and responsibility before God.

Verse 5, "*testimony*": Prophecy or witness beforehand. "*spoken after*": Fulfilled and brought to pass in later times.

Revelation 17:14, "*called*": Invited and given opportunity. "*chosen*": Received as well pleasing and accepted. "*faithful*": True and without fail or error all the way to the end.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another "Be" in the catalog of things that are of utmost importance in obtaining eternal rewards in eternal life. We have chosen several scriptures concerning what it means to be faithful in the various stations of life and responsibilities before our God and His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. We want to emphasize the thought expressed in our Memory Verse from Proverbs 20:6, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" To be faithful means to be steadfast, unmoveable, responsible, and true. Let us also consider what Jesus said to the poor Saints in Smyrna, when He told them in all of their suffering, tribulation, trials, and adversities to be faithful unto death, and He would give them a crown of life. God is looking for people to give their hearts to Him wholly and be faithful and true unto the end of this mortal life. Satan will use his crafty tactics and sly cunning ways to influence us to fail and go into error along the journey of life. But we can be faithful and overcome the tactics of the devil, even as those who have gone before us were faithful. Mention is made of Moses and how he was faithful in all his work, responsibility, and leadership of the children of Israel. We are to consider Jesus Christ as a prime example of faithfulness to God, even to the obedience of allowing Himself to be crucified as an atonement for the sins

of mankind. We are to consider these wonderful examples, especially our Lord Jesus, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Christ gave the parable of the unjust steward, who used what he still had control of before it was to be taken away, to win friendship and hope of being taken in when he was to be put out. This is such a good comparison to our mortal life and possessions that are soon to be taken away by death and our departure from this fleeting mortal life. Let us be faithful to use what we have been invested with for the glory of God and the good of our fellow man, both in earthly things and in the spiritual treasures of grace, godliness, and goodness.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is faithfulness to God and His grace so vitally important?
2. Who are some of the ones who proved to be faithful to God?
3. What are things that are least that we must be faithful in?
4. What are the true riches that we must also be faithful in?
5. Why is a faithful man not so easy and common to be found?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God Almighty is faithful. There is no failure in Him in His grace and goodness and help toward humanity. Jesus Christ, His Son has been preached and proclaimed and proven to be faithful and unfailing. And all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen. (II Corinthians 1:19-20.) This means that they are unfailing and positively true. We are to come to the Lord for His grace and salvation "with a true heart in full assurance of faith, and "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised." (Hebrews 10:22-23.) Jesus was faithful and obedient to His Father, and all who will be faithful and obedient to Him will share in His eternal glory. The soul of every man needs to be honest and receptive to the truth of the Gospel of Christ. There must be a submission on every one's part to give up the world and one's selfish ways and consecrate to live the rest of one's earthly life

in faithfulness and obedience to the will of God. We must not allow earthly pleasures, treasures, and fleshly allurements to influence us away from the way of the Lord. Satan will do his utmost to try to decoy us away from the Christian standards of holiness and faithfulness to God. But we can overcome and reap the reward of eternal life at the end.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In II Kings, we read of a mighty man of valor who was also a leper – Naaman. He learned of a prophet in Israel who could take this dreaded disease away. When Naaman was instructed to dip in the muddy Jordan river, he refused because of so many other (more beautiful, clean) rivers he could visit in his own homeland. This menial task seemed perhaps too humiliating for a mighty man of valor. His servant pointed out that had the prophet told him to perform some great, honorable task, would he not have done that? And Naaman did receive his healing by obeying the prophet's instructions and dipping seven times in the muddy Jordan River.

Many times we cast about, wanting to do something great for the kingdom of Heaven, but are unwilling to dip in the muddy Jordan. However, sometimes these unseen and menial tasks are the very ones that the Lord magnifies himself in: five loaves and two fish used to feed the multitude; an alabaster box of spikenard to anoint Jesus' feet, water at a wedding feast. Faithful means being responsible in the "little" as well as the "much."

And consider this: what would have happened to Naaman had it not been for the faithfulness of one little slave girl—his wife's young maid?

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**MAY 20, 2012**

### **BE YE THANKFUL**

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

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms

and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Psalm 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

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

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

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

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

I Thessalonians 5: 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

II Corinthians 9:15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 15:57.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God has been so good to us humans and blessed us with so many blessings, both earthly

and heavenly. We owe Him all thanks and praise and adoration, and we should offer our gratitude and worship to Him continually, "that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:15.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

Colossians 3:15, "*to the which ye are called*": Invited to enjoy the peace of God with one another in love and unity. "*thankful*": With grateful appreciation.

Verse 16, "*dwelling in you*": Be in your hearts and lived out in your lives. "*admonishing*": To caution or reprove gently.

Psalms 50:14, "*pay thy vows*": Pay or give to God what you owe to Him, and pay what you owe to your fellow man.

Psalms 100:4, "*bless his name*": Bow down in reverence and adoration to the honor of His wonderful name.

Philippians 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing*": Do not be anxious or worried about anything. "*supplication*": Begging, pleading, and making earnest requests.

Verse 7 "*passeth all understanding*": Goes beyond what we can take in or comprehend. "*keep your hearts and minds*": Protect our desires and thoughts from discouragement and frustration.

Ephesians 5:1, "*dear children*": Well beloved and highly favored.

Verse 2, "*sweet smelling savour*": An enjoyable fragrant odor or smell. This is what Christ was to God in submitting to the death of the cross for our salvation. And so we want to walk in that same love for one another.

Verse 3, "*becometh saints*": Suitable and proper in God's sight.

Verse 4, "*filthiness*": Impurity. "*jesting*": Vulgar joking or making fun. "*not convenient*": Improper and inconsistent.

II Corinthians 9:15, "*unspeakable gift*": The gracious God and our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon us poor and needy mortals many, many gifts of love and goodness. And we need to, without ceasing, offer our thanks to Him for them all. We thank Him for life, breath, our being, and for the gift of His Son and the salvation He has brought to us. But the gift of His sweet, comforting, strengthening, guiding, and uplifting Holy Spirit living and abiding in our hearts can be this unspeakable gift. What greater blessing can the Almighty bestow on us than

His actual living presence coming down and blending with our spirit in unspeakable joy?

I Corinthians 15:57, "*victory*": Complete deliverance from sin and triumph over death.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Being thankful and expressing our gratitude from our hearts to God is a very vital and important disposition to have. It is very beneficial to the inner man to faithfully feel and express one's thanks for the blessings experienced by the goodness of our Creator. In our lesson today we have gathered a number of scriptures that truly show how needful it is to be thankful and to express it in prayer and communion with God.

The New Testament scriptures in our lesson bring out the need for us to be thankful so well. And in Psalm 50 we have the LORD God speaking to His people Israel concerning their sacrifices that they had offered to Him. He makes it plain that it is not the animal sacrifices that He desires, but it is the offering of thanksgiving and obedience that avails with Him. Then in Psalm 100 we have it further expressed concerning how we owe much thanks and praise to our Creator. He created us, and we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. He is so good and we need to express ardently our thanks and gratitude to Him without fail. It is something that God looks for and receives gladly. To enjoy His blessings without any return of thanks and appreciation is a bad way to be.

We want to keep in mind and add up the many wonderful blessings that the Almighty God has poured out upon us. But the gift of the Holy Spirit that His Son Jesus opened up for us to experience goes beyond them all. Oh, how we need to seek for it, receive it, and diligently follow His leadings and guidance all the way through this short earthly life. The great plan of salvation has provided everything we need to enable us to be saved, and preserved all the way through this time world unto the day of His coming. Let us hold fast and be faithful to Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some of the wonderful blessings from God?
2. Why should we offer thanks and praise to God?
3. What causes people to not give thanks as they should?

4. What are the greatest blessings that God has bestowed?

5. What does it do for the soul of man to express thanks to God?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Being thankful and faithful to express often our gratitude to God for His blessings will help us to be faithful to Him and to overcome the tactics of the devil. If Eve had thought of the wonderful blessings she and Adam already had, and been expressive to God for them, she may have avoided the awful trouble that came down upon them. The many trees and kinds of fruit that was theirs to enjoy along with the fellowship with God were so good and satisfying. It is the same today with us. Being thankful and acknowledging the blessings we have from God will help us to overcome in the time of temptation. Being thankful is the right attitude and disposition to maintain. Count your blessings and express to God in prayer your joy and gratitude for them. Yes, we have some hard places and things to suffer and endure. But we have so many things that we can be thankful for too.

Despite all the physical and earthly troubles we encounter on life's road, the spiritual blessings of salvation, grace, mercy, victory, peace, faith, love, and hope are enough to lift up our spirits with joy and will help us to bear bravely the difficulties that we encounter. We cannot expect everything to be ideal and easy. And, really, the hard places that we suffer have a good effect on our spiritual life, as the Saints down through the years have proven to be. So let us exercise our hearts and minds to be thankful to God, and daily express our thanks to Him. Live above the hard places with joy and assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing...Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5.11-13. The clime of Heaven is filled with thanksgiving. When we offer sincere thanksgiving and praise we enter in accord with a great host that does the same. Thankfulness on our part expresses a spirit of reverence, worship, thoughtfulness, humility, love, respect, contentment, and joy.

Hearken to the tragedy of Romans 1:21 which says, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." This scripture is being fulfilled in our American culture. He created us, gave us life and breath, air to breathe, beauty to behold, families, all the good wholesome food that nourishes us, the world and all of its fullness, including the mountains, trees, flowers, grass, the seas, and all they contain, and yet as humans we can fail to give Him the reverence and thankfulness that is due unto Him. There is a dark picture for persons or nations that fail to thank their Creator. "Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**MAY 27, 2012**

### BE BAPTIZED

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:36 And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

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

Colossians 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** By being baptized in water we testify that we are completely surrendered and given over to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and are determined to follow Him all the way to eternal glory.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 3:15, "*Suffer it to be*": Permit it to be done. "*becometh*": Is suitable and proper.

Verse 16, "*straightway*": Immediately. "*lo*": Behold!

Matthew 28:18, "*All power*": All force, mastery, and control.

Verse 20, "*observe*": Completely obey and follow.

Romans 6:3, "*baptized*": Buried and fully submerged. Just as in being baptized in water we are put completely under the water, so in being saved from sin and death by the life of Jesus Christ we are submerged and covered over with His power and grace and raised up to a holy plane of life and obedience to His Word.

Verse 4, "*buried with him*:" Just as Jesus died and was buried in the grave, we must die to sin and this present evil world. "*walk in newness of life*": Live a holy and unblameable life to His glory and honor.

Colossians 2:10, "*complete in him*": Fully supplied and accomplished in Christ to live victorious over sin and the present evil world. "*head*": One who fully controls, directs, and sustains.

Verse 11, "*circumcision made without hands*": The spiritual severing of one's self from all sinful ways and practices.

Verse 12, "*the faith of the operation of God*": One's personal confidence in God's power and obedience to His Word and submission to His perfect will.

Galatians 3:27, "*put on Christ*": Are clothed in heart and mind with His likeness.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

John the Baptist had been baptizing people who came to hear him as he preached repentance and readiness to receive the Messiah who was about to come. In our lesson we show how Jesus Christ Himself came to John to be baptized. When John objected, Jesus told him to let it be so, for it was needful for him to do so. Jesus set an example for us who give up the

world and the ways of sin to live for God. And we see that it is a requirement for a person who gets right with God to be baptized in water as a figure of dying out to sin and being buried to everything, but rising up to live the life of a Christian. Then we have what Jesus said in His commission for His disciples to follow in going to preach the Gospel to the world. He said to baptize them. And we have in our lesson the conclusion of Peter's message on the day of Pentecost to the people gathered there. Being moved with what had been seen and heard, the people wanted to know what they should do. And Peter told them to repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus so that they could also receive the Holy Spirit as he and the other disciples had.

We also include the account of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch unto whom he had preached about Jesus, and how he was baptized. How glorious that the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip while the eunuch went on his way rejoicing!

Then we have Paul's teachings on what baptism was really a symbol of. He points out that the real meaning of baptism was death to sin and being submerged in Christ to be able to be risen to walk in newness of spiritual life and grace. We die to sin, this present evil world, and all the ungodly lusts of the flesh, and then we are baptized and buried in the watery grave as a sign that we are dead, but then we are raised up from the water to show that we are risen to live the life of a Christian. Oh, it is all so plain and simple, but if we will earnestly carry it all out, we can live for the Lord in this evil world, and be a partaker of His eternal resurrection to immortality in the world to come.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Jesus come to John to be baptized by him?
2. What did Jesus commission His disciples to do?
3. What does being baptized in water mean in a spiritual sense?
4. What kind of life should follow baptism?
5. What does baptism point to in the future?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Water baptism shows being dead to sin and buried with Jesus to be raised to walk with Him in newness of life. But it also points toward the baptism of laying down one's life for the

faith of the gospel of Christ. I want to tell of a dream that the Lord gave me that opened up my heart to this thought of baptism pointing to suffering and death for our Lord Jesus Christ.

In my dream I was told by an older minister brother that I needed to be baptized. I responded by declaring that I had already been baptized, and that I did not need to be baptized again. But the brother, along with others, kept telling me that I must be baptized, and got me going with them down to the water. In my dream I finally stopped and said, "I want to know what this is all about!" The answer that was given to me was three passages of scripture that I will present at this point.

The first one was Luke 12:50, the words of our Lord Jesus: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The next one was Matthew 20:23 where Christ told James and John: "...Ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ..." And the third one was I Corinthians 15:29, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" All three of these were pointing to laying down one's life for the Lord and the Gospel. Many, many precious Saints down through the ages have been baptized in giving their lives for Christ and their faith in Him. It may be so with us. Are we willing to prove our love for Christ in baptism unto natural death?

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Baptism is an ordinance of the Church of God to be practiced by believers today. This ordinance was given by God, it was entered into by Jesus and the believers of the early morning church, and enjoined upon all believers by Christ. We understand that baptism is a symbolic testimony of a work of grace that has already occurred in a believer's heart. For a believer to meet the conditions for salvation they must humble their heart before God and repent of their sins with godly sorrow and purpose in their heart to do the will of the Lord from that day forward. As they plead for mercy from God for their sins and believe that the blood of Christ was shed to atone for those sins, they find peace from the load of guilt and condemnation that rested so heavily on their consciences. This is the work of salvation. The duty of the Christian is to then follow on and obey the voice of their loving Master. One of the first

steps following this conversion should be to follow Jesus in the ordinance of baptism. This ordinance should not be shrugged off by a believer and thought of as something not necessary for them, it is important to obey the Lord in this, if it is at all possible. There is a great spiritual blessing in baptism for the believer and it brings joy to the heart of God and also to His people. The Scriptures say there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, and a baptism ceremony is a time of joy for God's people as well. A new birth has taken place in the Kingdom of God and rejoicing is in order.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**JUNE 3, 2012**

### **BE OF GOOD COMFORT**

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah *that* bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Isaiah 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her. all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon *her* knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

II Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

II Corinthians 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work. II Thessalonians 2:16-17.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God wants to comfort and encourage every human being on the face of the earth to have faith in Him, believe and follow His beloved Son Jesus Christ, obey the good Word of His counsel, trust His wisdom and faithfulness, and overcome all darkness, gloom, and discouragement that satan would seek to bring on us.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Isaiah 40:1, "*Comfort ye*": Show pity, consolation, tender compassion, and encouragement.

Verse 2, "*Jerusalem*": The old literal Jerusalem was chosen by God as the center of His government and place of worship for His people Israel. But so many things happened through the years that were displeasing to God, and caused much sorrow and trouble. Finally Jerusalem was destroyed by the armies of Babylon and the people were taken away captive. But Isaiah is inspired of the Holy Spirit to speak of a better day in the future when Jesus was to come and build a New Jerusalem that would never pass away. This is what Isaiah is speaking of in these verses: "*her warfare is accomplished*": Her conflicts are finished. "*her iniquity is pardoned*": Sin and transgressions are forgiven. "*double for all her sins*": Just recompence. The salvation of Jesus Christ was to heal all the sorrows and bring peace to the hearts of men.

Isaiah 51:1, "*look unto the rock whence ye are hewn*": Consider where God has brought you from. "*the hole of the pit whence ye are digged*": Remember the horrible pit of sin that God brought you out of.

Verse 2, "*Look unto Abraham your father*": Remember how God blessed Abraham and Sarah and rewarded them for their obedience and faithfulness.

Verse 3, "*Zion*": This is pointing to the New Jerusalem in the New Testament that Christ was to establish and bring into being.

Isaiah 66:10, "*Jerusalem*": This spiritual city of God, New Jerusalem, is spoken of in Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 3:12, and 21:2-10.

Verse 12, "*borne*": Carried.

II Corinthians 7:4, "*boldness*": Assurance and courage. "*glorying of you*": Rejoicing about you.

Verse 5, "*without were fightings*": All around were conflicts and controversies.

Verse 7, "*consolation*": Inward encouragement.

II Thessalonians 2:17, "*stablish*": Firmly settle and anchor you.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Starting from the wonderful prophecies of Isaiah we have the comforting and encouraging words that portray so sweetly and so clearly the loving compassion and good will of the God toward us poor and needy human beings. Amid the sorrows and crushing disappointments that are so abundant in this



world we have the words of comfort that God speaks to assure us of His mercy and eternal purpose to help us to find peace and happiness in Him.

The 40<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah is a message of encouragement and comfort. It foretells the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, in verses 3-5. Verses 6-8 are quoted in I Peter 1:24-25 in speaking of the Word, which by the Gospel is preached to us. The rest of the chapter is so rich with encouraging words about God's greatness and His good will toward us. Then from the other two scriptures from Isaiah 51 and 66 we see more words of comfort concerning what God was going to bring to pass in the salvation and spiritual blessings that Christ was to bring.

In our New Testament scriptures we find more wonderful writings from the apostle Paul that expresses the comfort that God wants us to have in our hearts. "We through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4. How sweet are his words in II Corinthians 1:3-4 concerning the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort! Jesus said in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Then we have Paul speaking about the troubles he suffered and how God comforted him by the coming of Titus, and by what he told Paul about the Corinthian brethren and of their mourning and fervent mind toward him. His message was one of comfort and good will from our Father in Heaven. If we will look up and behold with an open mind the great message of the Bible, there will be comfort and consolation abounding toward us that will help carry us through the troubles we might have to suffer in this present evil world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does the Word of God have so many comforting thoughts?
2. What Jerusalem and Zion is the prophet Isaiah speaking to?
3. Why does the soul of man need comfort and encouragement?
4. How can we be comforted right in the face of trouble and sorrow?
5. What is contained in the gospel of Christ that is so comforting?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

By His loving messages of peace, mercy, grace, salvation, hope, victory, success, and comfort, our Lord Jesus gives assurance to our hearts of acceptance with God and help from His Almighty Hand. And because of His obedience to His Father in submitting to the horrible death of the cross. He was raised to life eternal and is at the right hand of God interceding for us who are living for Him. Let us all be of good comfort and hold fast to Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Have you ever thought about God comforting you like that? Taking you up in His arms, holding you, soothing you, singing softly to you, reminding you of good things and happy things—God really does that for His children. Another Scripture says that God heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3). When I was reminded by God how I have tenderly bandaged my loved ones' cuts and scrapes. I got a mental picture of the tenderness with which He holds my heart in His hands and binds it up.

Now, if I have indeed found Christ to be this gentle and comforting, if I have experienced His tender feelings of mercy toward me, I am instructed to "be likeminded, having the same love." (Philippians 2:1-2.) He comforts us so we can comfort. He binds us up so we can gently hold others who are wounded. In our efforts to minister to one another in our gatherings, do we remember that to prophesy means to speak unto men "to edification, and exhortation, and comfort?" (1 Corinthians 14:3.) Can we be like Titus in our lesson, who, just by his coming, comforted Paul, bringing further tidings of comfort from the saints? Or are we going about from one place to another bringing gossip or unprofitable tales of woe, gloom, or criticism?

A good example to follow is Barnabas, who was called the son of consolation. (Acts 4:36.) He indeed sheltered Paul, the newcomer of whom everyone was suspicious, and did stand in support for young John Mark, who obviously needed someone to bolster him and help him "grow up."

So, be of good comfort. In your own heart, receive Christ's tender comfort, and then, turn around and be of good comfort to others.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

**JUNE 10, 2012**

**BE OF GOOD CHEER**

Matthew 9:2 And, behold, they brought to him (Jesus) a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Matthew 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after a long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

Romans 12:8 ...He that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence, he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

II Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There are many difficult and dismaying situations that we will meet up with as we journey through this fleeting world. But we can be cheerful in heart through it all if we keep Heaven in view and be victorious over all, even as our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, overcame in His earthly pilgrimage.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 9:22, "*palsy*": Loss of feeling, power, or ability to move. "*be of good cheer*": Have courage, comfort, and confidence.

Matthew 14:22, "*straightway*": Immediately, right away. "*constrained*": Told them it was necessary.

Verse 25, "*fourth watch of the night*": Between the hours of 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Acts 27:21, "*long abstinence*": Several days being without food because of the turmoil they were in.

Romans 12:8, "*with simplicity*": Being very sincere and generous.

II Corinthians 9:7, "*not grudgingly, or of necessity*": Not sadly, but gladly.

John 16:33, "*overcome the world*": Conquered, prevailed, and triumphed over Satan, sin, and the spirit of this present evil world.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

It is easy to be cheerful, happy, and contented when everything is going right, pleasant, co-operative, bountiful, with little or no opposition, bright, enjoyable, agreeable, and without hindrance or bewilderment. But we know that there will not be so much of such as this in our mortal lives. No, we cannot expect every thing to be ideal and desirable. As our Memory Verse states in the words of our blessed Lord and Savior: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Trouble, adversity, hardship, opposition, and difficulty we will have plenty of. "But," Jesus declared, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. And how did Jesus overcome? I John 5:4 declares: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This was the victory by which Christ overcame and conquered. He believed that His Father, the Almighty God, was going to bring Him up from the dead unto eternal life, an eternal life that He would be able to share with all who believed in and followed after Him

Jesus came to bring good cheer, comfort, hope, consolation, courage, and valiant victory for the souls of mankind. Jesus was pleasant, kind, loving, and gracious to the people of His day. True, He had to come up against evil and dark-hearted men, who retaliated against Him and sought to destroy His life and influence. But, while Jesus was heavy-hearted and the object of hatred and wrath from the world, He overcame and kept the faith that His Father would bring Him forth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

To the poor man stricken with palsy He brought cheer and healing. To His storm-tossed disciples out on the rolling billows of the sea of Galilee He brought words of cheer and courage. Even Peter endeavored to walk above the waves at Christ's invitation. And so can we walk above the tossing billows of the troubles we will meet in our earthly pilgrimage.

Then we have mentioned in our lesson the stormy times that the apostle Paul encountered with the Jews' opposition and persecution, and also the horrible storm that came upon the ship he was being taken to Rome in for the name of the Lord. But, though it looked like all hope was gone, Paul was

comforted by the Lord and was able to bring cheer to those on the ship with him.

Our last two scriptures about showing mercy with cheerfulness, and being a cheerful giver has some challenging things for us to brace up with a lot of extra determination. It is not always easy to be a cheerful giver. But in it all, if we will pray and seek the Lord earnestly He will sustain and help us to "be of good cheer" anyway. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How did Jesus bring comfort and cheer to those of His day?
2. How did Jesus overcome the world?
3. How can we be cheerful in the midst of trouble and sorrow?
4. What must we do in the face of dark and hard problems?
5. Why can we give and help others and not let it distress us?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our precious Heavenly Father, through the inspiration of His sweet Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of His holy people, has given to us a wonderful and abundant array of hymns and spiritual songs that have been the means of cheering and comforting and encouraging His Saints down through the years. I can testify joyfully of the blessing and spiritual uplift that these songs have meant to me. Since I gave up the world and the attraction of worldly songs and music, I have massed in my heart and memory a great treasury of songs that cheer me day and night, and it seems that they are getting richer and sweeter to my soul as I get on up the way of life. They are such a blessing in the worship services we have with the Saints here at home and wherever we go in the work of the Lord.

What a Friend We Have In Jesus, My Jesus I love Thee, Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah! To God Be The Glory! The Faithfulness of God, The Lord Is My Shepherd, Blessed Assurance, Tell Me The Story of Jesus, and Happy In The Savior; these are just a few of the blessed spiritual songs that feed and cheer the soul! What a blessing these faithful men and women have

passed down to us who were inspired of the Holy Spirit to write them! And, they never get old. They are fresh and new every time we sing them. They truly bring cheer and comfort to the souls of the redeemed. Songs of victory and salvation, peace, joy, hope, and zeal for the Lord are so beneficial in the Christian's life and labors. Let us keep them ringing in our hearts forever!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"There is a vast difference between happiness and blessedness. Paul had imprisonments and pains, sacrifice, and suffering up to the very limit; but in the midst of it all, he was blessed. All the beatitudes came into his heart and life in the midst of those very severe conditions.

Paganini, the great violinist, came out before his audience one day and made the discovery just as they ended their applause that there was something wrong with his violin. He looked at it a second and then saw that it was not his famous and valuable one.

He felt paralyzed for a moment, then turned to his audience and told them there had been some mistake and he did not have his own violin. He stepped back behind the curtain thinking that it was still where he had left it, but discovered that some one had stolen his and left that old second-hand one in its place. He remained back of the curtain a moment, then came out before his audience and said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: I will show you that the music is not in the instrument, but in the soul." And he played as he had never played before; and out of that second-hand instrument, the music poured forth until the audience was enraptured with enthusiasm and the applause almost lifted the ceiling of the building, because the man had revealed to them that music was not in the machine but in his own soul.

It is your mission, tested and tried one, to walk out on the stage of this world and reveal to all earth and Heaven that the music is not in conditions, not in the things, not in externals, but the music of life is in your own soul." (*Streams in the Desert*)

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**JUNE 17, 2012**

**BE MARRIED TO CHRIST**

Isaiah 54: 1 Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name: and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Isaiah 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee. and thy land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Revelation 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.



8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even to him who is raised from the dead*, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Romans 7:4.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** By believing in Jesus Christ and obeying His Word we are forgiven of our sins and fully cleansed from ungodliness and sinful ways, words, and thoughts, thereby making us a part of the holy Church of God, the Bride of Christ.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 54:1, "*O barren*": This scripture is quoted in Galatians 4:27 as part of Paul's statement about being free from the Mosaic law system and being a partaker of the faith of Jesus Christ. He presented the two sons of Abraham, one by his bond-woman, Hagar, and the other by his lawful wife, Sarah. He adapted this to the two covenants, that of the law and that of the faith of Abraham. He also compared them to the two Jerusalems: the old earthly city and the "Jerusalem which is above," or spiritual. So we see then that this is a direct prophecy of the New Testament Church of God, which is the Bride of Christ.

Verse 5, "*Lord of hosts*": The Almighty God of the multitude mentioned in Revelation 7:9 "which no man could number." "*Redeemer*": This is defined as one being next of kin who would buy back a relative's property and marry his widow. This refers to Jesus Christ who bought us back to God by His precious blood and thereby purchased for Himself a spotless Bride, which is the New Testament Church.

Isaiah 62:4, "*Hephzibah*": My delight is in her. "*Beulah*": Married. These are names given to the new spiritual Jerusalem which is made up of all the great multitude who are saved and made holy through the blood of Jesus.

Verse 5, "*thy sons marry thee*": This is spiritual language describing how the souls of the redeemed in Christ will be united with the Church in love and faithfulness.

Ephesians 5:23, "*saviour of the body*": Christ will save His people, His Church from all evil and will protect and care for them through all the years of time.

Verse 25, "*gave himself for it*": Was obedient to God to give His life and die for the sins of mankind.

Verse 26, "*sanctify*": Make it completely holy and pure. "*washing of water by the word*": Cleansing the soul of man from sin and transgression through obedience to the Word of God as revealed in Christ.

Verse 27, "*wrinkle*": Marks of deterioration and old age. "*any such thing*": Any kind of deformity or imperfection.

Verse 29, "*nourisheth and cherisheth it*": Upholds, cares, sustains, and lovingly guards and protects.

Revelation 19:6, "*Alleluta*": Praises be to Jehovah! "*omnipotent*": All powerful.

Verse 9, "*called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*": Invited to share with Christ and all of His redeemed saints their eternal happiness in glory.

Romans 7:4, "*dead to the law*": Changed from the old Mosaic law system to the spiritual grace and full salvation that Christ purchased for us. "*by the body of Christ*": Through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

What a wonderful and beautiful lesson we have from the Holy Scriptures! Starting with the prophecies of Isaiah and into the writings of the New Testament we see the great plan of God unfolded in bringing forth a spotless Bride for His Son Jesus Christ to have and enjoy forever and ever. As we have already brought out in the Word Definitions, our first scripture in Isaiah is quoted by the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:27, referring to the new Jerusalem which is spiritual, the Church of God which Jesus purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28. Isaiah also prophecies of Zion and Jerusalem as being married to Christ, being His delight and loving wife.

Paul takes up the thought in our scripture text in Ephesians 5, picturing Christ and the Church in such a glorious way. Washed by obedience to His Word, and through the atonement for sin by His blood, we can obtain victory and success in living a holy life to be a part of the pure and spotless Bride of the Lord Jesus.

And we have it pictured in the Revelation that God gave to John. The Bride, the New Jerusalem, the Church of God, is

made up of people who are obedient and faithful and well pleasing to Christ and God. Whosoever will can take of the water of life freely and prevail to be a part of that spotless bride who will reign and dwell with Christ in that eternal world to come.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What relationship has the true Church of God with Christ?
2. What price did Christ pay to purchase a spotless Bride?
3. What must we do to be a part of this Holy Wife of Jesus?
4. What is the future of this glorious Bride and Bridegroom?
5. What kind of fellowship does the Church have with her Husband?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Church of God, thou spotless virgin, Church of Christ for Whom He died, Thou has known no human founder, Jesus bought thee for His Bride. Sanctified by God the Father, built by Jesus Christ, the Son, tempered by the Holy Spirit, like the Holy Three in One. God Himself has set the members in His body all complete. Organized by Jesus only, Oh, the union pure and sweet! Church of God, beloved city, Thou art of celestial mold; Lo! From God and out of Heaven came the City of pure gold. God's own holiness within thee, His own beauty on thy brow; glorified in His own image, this thy wondrous portion now. Church of God, in Heaven written, thine the risen life of Christ, and the treasures to Thee given, never, never can be priced. Far above this world's confusion, walking close by Jesus' side, leaning on His loving bosom, is the Church, His chosen Bride!

—Bro. D. S. Warner

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,..." We learn much about the spiritual by seeing and interacting with the design and order of the physical. Marriage is ordained of God, sacred, and beautiful when in harmony with the Divine plan and it teaches us many things concerning our marriage to Christ.

"There be three things which are too wonderful for me...."  
One being - "the way of a man with a maid." It is truly wonderful to view a young couple as a young man seeks to earn the respect, admiration, and love of a young lady thru courtship. Through this process of praying together and spending time with each other to know each others character, personality, ideals, goals and dreams; many come to a point where they realize they are in love and want to share their lives together. I remember the day, when I asked my wife if she would marry me. I could almost hear the wedding bells when she looked deeply into my eyes with a resounding-"Yes!"

The goodness of God leads men to repentance. The Lord endeavors to win our affection. He stands at the door of our heart and knocks, beckoning with desire to give us life, hoping we will open the door. He desires to enter with us into a solemn covenant and sacred trust, hoping to share life with all of its joys and sorrows and in the end to welcome us into eternal life.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**JUNE 24, 2012**

**BE MERCIFUL**

Psalm 18:25 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright;

26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.

Psalm 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 *He* is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; but *he that* is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

Proverbs 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth; but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; but he honoureth him that hath mercy on the poor.

Proverbs 21:21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

Micah 6:8 He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 Beye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. James 2:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Almighty God has shown such great mercy and kindness toward us poor and helpless human beings, and shall not we be merciful and compassionate and forbearing with one another?

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 18:25, "*merciful*": Kindness, tender compassionate feelings to others just as God has been to us.

Psalm 18:26, "*with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward*": With the crooked God will show Himself contrary and difficult.

Proverbs 14:31, "*reproacheth*": Curses and dishonors.

Colossians 3:12, "*elect of God*": Chosen and approved of God. "*bowels of mercies*": Tender feelings of compassions.

Verse 13, "*Forbearing*": Kindly putting up with others.

James 2:13, "*mercy rejoiceth against judgment*": Mercy will override and prevail against condemnation.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another "Be" that is so important for every human soul. Were it not for God's mercy, kindness, forbearance, and forgiveness, we would none of us have any hope or chance to get any help from Him. He is a merciful and gracious God as the scriptures in different places bear out.

Psalms 116:5 so sweetly expresses it like this: "Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." Now if God is so merciful and willing to forgive and justify the guilty who come to Him, how much more ought we to be merciful and loving to one another and to all men!

Our first scripture is from David's song written after the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all of his enemies and from the hand of King Saul. It was a several year duration that David was exiled from home and friends while he was being hunted and hated by Saul. As some of his psalms bear out, he went through great turmoil and sorrow. But God had mercy upon David and brought him out and he became king in Saul's place. David had mercy on Saul and refrained from taking his enemy's life especially on two different occasions. So therefore he could declare that "with the merciful Thou wilt show thyself merciful." And we have some expressions from Proverbs that bring out the beauty of being merciful to others. Micah 6:8 states that God requires us to love mercy, not only when it is coming to us, but when we have place in our hearts for mercy to our fellow man.

Then in the New Testament we have Paul's counsel, so beautiful and good, of maintaining merciful and compassionate feelings for others. And in our Memory Verse James declares that if we have judgment with no mercy we will have the same toward us, and that mercy will overcome judgment. It can be that way in our hearts as we behold how the tender mercies of our Creator prevailed over the guilt and condemnation that we were worthy of.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Where would we all be if God had not had mercy on us?
2. What damage does bitterness and unforgiveness do to the soul?
3. Why must we in mercy forgive and show kindness to others?
4. What does a cruel and unforgiving person do to himself?
5. What do we find if we follow after righteousness and mercy?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the Giver of life, breath, and our being, is a kind, loving, patient, gracious, and merciful Father. All the creation is upheld and preserved by His merciful lovingkindness. He has borne with

mankind through the centuries and is even at this present hour holding back His wrath and impending judgment, being "...longsuffering to us-ward. not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9 "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west. so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD piteth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we *are* dust." Psalm 103:10-14 Oh, how great is His mercy toward us poor and needy people!

One of our Scriptures is from the opening words of Christ's sermon on the mount: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Let us notice some of the other beatitudes listed here in Matthew 5:3-10. "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Consider these various conditions of heart, soul, and mind that are mentioned in these sayings of our blessed Savior.

To be poor in spirit means to be aware of one's dire need of help and mercy from God. This eliminates pride and vanity of heart and mind. Those who mourn are grieved and lamenting their woeful condition before God and are yearning for help and mercy. The meek are those who are mild, gentle, tender hearted and humble. They have no ill feelings and bitterness toward others. They are merciful and kind. Those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness and earnestly desirous of pleasing God will have no feeling against their fellow men. Hatred and bitterness will not work in their hearts. This goes along with the attitude of merciful kindness. And the pure in heart who are able to see and understand God and His holy gracious way will also be of a merciful attitude toward others. And it is the same for the peacemakers and those suffering from persecution and hardship.

So we see that all of these beatitudes are of close kinship with being merciful and kind as our great and wonderful

Creator proves to be. A merciful attitude is surely worth all effort and decision it takes to truly have. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a story of a family that lived near a small town in one of the northeastern states who suffered a disastrous fire to their home. Thankfully the family was all saved from the fire, along with a few cows and a few pieces of furniture they managed to rescue from the rapid burning flames. As they were surveying what remained of their still smoldering home a neighbor drove up to see what the excitement was all about. There before his view laid the ruins of his neighbor's home. After some moments of poking around in the charred remains, he finally said to his long time neighbor as he shook his head, as if in unbelief. "If there is anything I can do just say the word." Then he drove away, leaving behind only his empty words.

• Other neighbors came also, but instead of asking what they could do, for it was obvious that the family had lost nearly everything, they returned with things they had available, beds, mattresses, potatoes, vegetables, cooking utensils, clothes, and even hay for the cows. These neighbors did more than make a dry offer to help, they did what they could to comfort and help the ones who had lost so much.

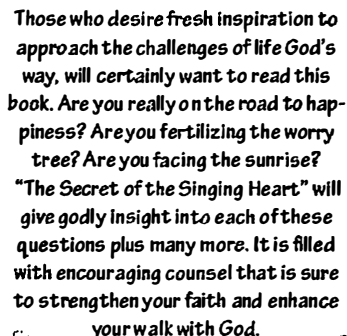
Mercy is a function of love. It was God's love for man that caused Him to send His only begotten Son to teach, to save, to heal and to give more abundant life. It is God's will that we also have love for one another and that love will cause us to have mercy as well. Mercy can be acts toward others of a physical nature and also of a spiritual nature. Jesus identified some specific examples in Matthew 25:35-36 that would especially pertain to those of the household of faith. These included feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, sheltering and clothing the stranger and the needy, visiting the sick and those in prison. I Thessalonians 5: 12 identifies some acts of mercy that deal with things of a spiritual nature. These include, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble minded, supporting the weak, being patient toward all men and not rendering evil for evil. These lists could be greatly expanded with the use of other scriptures but it should also include praying for the sick and afflicted, and forgiving those who have wronged us. May God help us all to have a loving heart that is filled with mercy toward our fellow man.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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