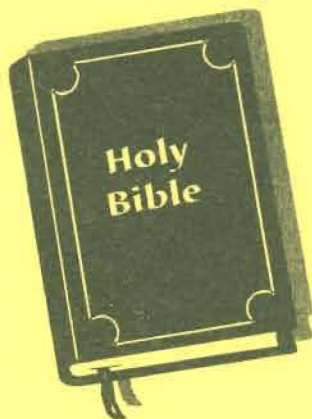


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**THEME:
"PRECIOUS CHRISTIAN VALUES"**



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THE NATURE AND VALUE OF PROPHECY

Clayton Winters

Text: Hebrews 2:1-2 ¹ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. ² For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Introduction:

- A. Our text asserts that at different times in divine history God used various ways to communicate His will to His creation – a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-5), the mouth of a donkey (Numbers 22:28-30), the dream of a heathen idolater (Daniel 2), or an enemy of His church (Acts 5:34-40).
- B. These are all interesting and profitable for our study, but our main concern for this lecture is to explore three distinct lines of prophecy relative to redemption which differ widely, but establish beyond a possible doubt that “God has spoken.”

I. A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY:

- A. By the word of prophecy we mean plain, predictive statements that clearly point out in graphic detail forthcoming events in God’s scheme of redemption.
 - 1. The Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4,5).
 - 2. All nations blessed through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 18:22; Galatians 3:16).
 - 3. The virgin birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23-25).
 - 4. The crucifixion of Christ (Psalm 22; Matthew 27:33-44).
 - 5. The ascension of Christ (Daniel 7:13,14; Acts 1:9-11).
 - 6. Daniel’s prophecies of the establishment of the Kingdom of heaven and even the details of the time schedule of the event (Daniel 2:44; 9:24-27).
- B. The apostle Peter calls this a “more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19).

II. A PICTORAL DEPICTION OF THE EVENTS THROUGH SYMBOLISM:

- A. If an artist should describe beforehand an accident scene that would be a “word of prophecy.” However, should he then turn to his canvas and draw a detailed picture of the scene that would leave no room to doubt his foreknowledge of the event. This is what God has done through symbolism.

1. The unblemished, male Passover lamb picture beforehand the sinless Savior who became our Passover when He offered Himself for our sins (Exodus 12:5; 1 Corinthians 5:7).
 2. The brazen serpent lifted in the wilderness for healing was symbolic of Christ being lifted on the cross for the healing of the nations (Numbers 21:8,9; John 3:14,15).
 3. The Old Testament temple as God's place of worship stood as a type (symbol) of the Church of Christ, the place from which we glorify God (1 Kings 8:26; Ephesians 3:19-22).
 4. The high priest entering the most holy place with blood on the day of atonement, typified Christ presenting His blood before the throne of God in heaven to make atonement for us (Hebrews 9:11-24).
- B. Thus the redemptive scene has not only been plainly predicted through prophetic utterance, the divine artist has also sketched its details in vivid color on the canvas of time. How could we expect more? Yet more has been given.

III. A PRE-ENACTMENT OF REDEMPTION BY THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD:

- A. The Artist has foretold in easy-to-understand language the events of redemption. He then stepped forward and sketched the scenes on His canvas through symbolism with unmistakable accurateness. But even more, He chose a cast of characters, placed them on the stage and then pre-enacts many of these significant events. This is, perhaps, the least taught means of prophecy, but it is a very real, and a very powerful one.
- B. National Israel often performed on the stage of history pre-enactments of the coming scheme of redemption. At first these may seem but mere coincidences, but the avalanche of incidents finally rush over us with such force that we are forced to accept it as inevitable.
1. Abraham had two sons: one by a bondwoman (Ishmael) and one by a freewoman (Isaac). The two women and their sons are an allegory of the two covenants (Galatians 4:22-31).
 2. God called His son (Israel) out of Egypt: He also called His Son (Christ) out of Egypt, with the same Scripture cited as evidence of both (Hosea 11:1,2; Matthew 2:19-23).

3. Israel endured the wilderness temptation for *forty* years: Christ endured the wilderness temptation for *forty* days (Hebrews 3:7-18; Luke 4:1,2).
4. Many of the events of King David's life portrayed vividly the Christ who would sit on David's throne (Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-31).
5. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the consequent Babylonian captivity caused Rachel to weep for her slain children. This was also true of the slaughter of the innocent children by Herod; and the same Scripture is used as evidence of both (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:17-18).
6. Israel observed the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), but it was a pre-enactment of the Sabbath rest which remains for the faithful people of God (Hebrews 10:4-11).

Conclusion:

- A. What, then, is the precious value of such prophecies? They present a line of evidence over 4,000 years long of the hand of God in the Old Testament, of the inspiration of the divine record, and of its infallibility.
- B. Thus, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we should let them slip (Hebrews 2:1-4). Prophecy shows that the Bible is a Book we can safely trust.

PROPHECIES OF CHRIST AND THEIR FULFILLMENT

J. R. Pugh

Introduction:

- A. Prophecy defined
 - 1. Prophecy deals with events and human affairs, which do not happen in a casual order, but are unpredictable. More than a good guess.
 - 2. Defined – *“a miracle of knowledge, a declaration or description or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to foresee discern or conjecture.”*
- B. Character of prophecy
 - 1. Peculiar to Bible
 - 2. Prophecy pervades the Bible
 - 3. It is very minute in its specification
 - 4. Fulfillment of prophecy is clear
 - 5. Occasionally of a nature to be opposite as to what unguided human intelligence would predict.
- C. Purpose of prophecy
 - 1. To give hope and prepare the world for the coming of Christ
 - 2. To prepare for the heavenly nature of His kingdom.
 - 3. Bear witness to the truth of Christianity and the scheme of redemption.
 - 4. To teach others of God’s goodness and saving grace.
 - 5. To build faith in God’s word and build your love for Him
- D. Significance of predictive prophecy**
 - 1. Concludes a divine author behind Old and New Testaments. Author is the same for both.
 - 2. Establishes the fact that God does exist

3. Authenticates the Deity of Christ
 4. Demonstrates the Inspiration of the Bible
- E. Prominence of Messianic Prophecy in the Old Testament
1. Runs like a golden thread through the Old Testament.
 2. The great body of Old Testament prophecy relates directly to the advent of the Messiah.
 3. "To Him bear all the prophets witness." (Acts 10:43)

I. JESUS APPEALED TO PROPHECY

- A. Jesus often stressed the events in His life were the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets. (John 5:39ff; Matthew 13:14; 11:10; 21:42; Luke 4:20-21, etc.).
- B. The apostles in their preaching cite the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament which He fulfilled (Acts 3:18; 10:43; 13:29; 1Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:2).

II. THE PROPHECIES

- A. The place of His birth (Micah 5:2=Matthew 2:1-6).
- B. Of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12=Luke 1:32).
- C. Born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14=Matthew 1:21-25).
- D. Slaughter of infants (Jeremiah 31:15=Matthew 2:16).
- E. Will escape into Egypt as a child (Hosea 11:1=Matthew 2:14).
- F. Introduced by John the Baptist (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1=Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 1:17).
- G. Anointed by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 61:1=Luke 4:16-21).
- H. Sent to deliver the people (Isaiah 61:1-3=Luke 4:16-21, 43).
- I. His ministry in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2=Matthew 4:12-17).
- J. How people would treat Him (Isaiah 53:3=John 1:11; 12:37)
- K. Triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9=Matthew 21:1-9).

- L. Betrayal/Trial/Crucifixion.
1. Sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12=Matthew 21:1-9).
 2. The money to be used to buy Potter's Field (Zechariah 11:13=Matthew 27:3-10).
 3. The disciples to forsake Him (Zechariah 13:7=Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:27).
 4. He was silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7=Matthew 27:12-14).
 5. He was wounded and bruised (Isaiah 53:5=Matthew 27:12-14).
 6. His hands and feet to be pierced (Psalm 22:16=Luke 23:33; John 20:25-27).
 7. He was crucified with thieves (Isaiah 53:12=Mark 15:27-28).
 8. He was to pray for His persecutors (Isaiah 53:12=Luke 23:34).
 9. The people were to shake their heads at Him (Psalm 22:7=Matthew 27:39).
 10. The people were to ridicule Him (Psalm 22:18=Luke 23:35).
 11. His garments to be parted and lots cast (Psalm 22:18=John 19:24).
 12. His cry (Psalm 22:1=Matthew 27:46).
 13. His bones were not to be broken (Psalm 34:20=John 19:33,36).
 14. His side pierced (Zechariah 12:10=John 19:34-37).
 15. Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9=Matthew 27:57-60).

Conclusion:

- A. A prophet would rise like Moses but greater (Deuteronomy 18:15-17=Acts 3:20-22; John 5:46, 47). Jesus fulfillment of law and prophets (Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 3:18; 10:43).
- B. What should be the reaction if we establish that Jesus did fulfill Old Testament Prophecies?
 1. Divine author behind Old and New Testament; author of both the same.

Precious Christian Values

2. Gives credence to the fact that God does exist.
3. Authenticates the Deity of Jesus
4. Demonstrates the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

“Be not faithless but believing...” (John 20:27).

PROPHECIES OF THE CHURCH FULFILLED

Benny Burns

Introduction:

- A. Texts: Luke 24:44; II Peter 1:19-21; Hebrews 1:1-2
 - 1. ALL prophecies have already been fulfilled.
 - 2. The church of Christ, The Gospel of Christ, Salvation in Christ were all in the mind of God before the world began
 - 3. The Church was not an after-thought of God when the Jews rejected Christ.
- B. Biblical Prophecies of The Church Are Exceedingly Valuable
 - 1. The prophecies of the church were many.
 - 2. Let us notice a few in Biblical order.

I. GENESIS 12:1-7:

- A. The promise to Abraham had the far reaching results of the church.
 - 1. Galatians 3:25-29
 - 2. The land promise? Genesis 12:7 never fulfilled? Pre-millennial's unanswerable argument?
 - a. Joshua 21:43-45
 - b. Joshua 23:14

II. II SAMUEL 7:1-12

- A. The light of Biblical prophecy is seen again to David and his seed.
- B. Psalm 48:1-3
- C. Psalm 118:14-26
 - 1. The day that the Lord hath made.
 - 2. The day of Pentecost, when the church was established (Acts 4:10-12).

III. ISAIAH 2:2-3

- A. Isaiah picks up the beam of Biblical prophecy and shines forth the church to come in Jerusalem.
- B. The mountain of the Lord's House was predicted a way ahead of time.
 - 1. Micah 4:1-2 a minor prophet seconded the prediction.
 - 2. Zechariah 13:1 prophesied of the blood of Jesus that would purchase the church and cleanse our sins.
- C. Isaiah 46:13 a very interesting prophesy.
 - 1. Salvation would be in Zion
 - 2. Hebrews 12:22-23 the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy.

IV. THE OLD TESTAMENT IS FULL OF PROPHECIES OF THE CHURCH:

- A. Daniel 2:44-45 – fulfilled in Matthew 16:16-18
 - 1. Jesus promised, prophesied to build the church, even before some of these would die (Matthew 18:28).
 - 2. A real predicament for pre-millennialist.
- B. Haggai 2:9 fulfilled in Ephesians 2:12-17
- C. II Chronicles 7:11-16 fulfilled in the Church
- D. I Kings 5 & 6 a thorough survey in Old Testament history of the church to come.
- E. I Corinthians 15:23-27 another revealing prediction of the church and its future.
- F. Revelation 12:10-17 still another revealing predicament of the church.
 - 1. We can win (verse 11)
 - 2. The church is indestructible (Daniel 2:44, Hebrews 12:28, Matthew 16:18).
- G. The Church of Christ

THE VALUE OF REDEMPTION THE GLORIOUS CROSS OF CHRIST

Kenneth Chambers

Introduction:

- A. There is nothing attractive about the cross. The real cross, I mean. The cross on which Jesus was crucified was an instrument of execution. It was a gibbet. It was ugly, cruel and bloody. The modern world finds it completely repulsive. (Glory In The Cross, p. 11; By: Leon Morris)

- B. Crucifixion was a horrible form of death, one of the most shameful and cruel methods of execution. Josephus described it as “the most wretched of deaths.” Cicero referred to crucifixion as the “extreme penalty,” as “that plague,” and as “a most cruel and disgusting punishment.” He also said, “the very word cross should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes and ears.” (The Compelling Power of the Cross, pp. 42-43; by John Hobbs)
 - 1. It deliberately delayed death until maximum torture had been inflicted. The victim could suffer for days before dying.
 - 2. It seems to be invented by ‘barbarians’ on the edge of the known world and taken over from them by both Greek and Romans. When the Romans adopted it, they reserved it for criminals convicted of murder, rebellion or armed robbery, provided they were also slaves, foreigners or other non- persons. (The Cross of Christ, pp.23-24; By John R.W. Stott)

- C. Christ is good, beautiful and wonderful. His interested love is a picture in itself; His forgiving patience melts into my feeling. His passion rends open my heart, but what is he for, and what shall he be made to me the salvation that-I want? (The Atoning Death of Christ, p. xi; By Ronald Wallace). This leads to the Glorious Cross of Christ. (Galatians 6:14).
 - 1. Glory or glorious means, “fame and honor won by great deeds; adoration and praise in worship; beauty, magnificence; a thing deserving praise and honor.’ (Oxford American Dictionary).
 - 2. To Glory In, taken from Galatians 6:14 means to “boast, joy or rejoice.” (Vine’s Expository; p. 153).
 - 3. Glory, taken from the noun, DOXA, primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honor resulting from a good opinion. (Vine’s Expository; p. 153).

We will look at The Glorious Cross of Christ by looking at The Plight of Man; The Portraits of the Cross and The Power Produced By the Cross.

Discussion:

I. THE PLIGHT OF MAN:

- A. In Genesis chapter 1 at the conclusion of each day's creation God said, "it is good" except at the conclusion of day six when he had made man, he said it was "very good."
1. God created man in His own image after His likeness, (Genesis 1:26-27).
 2. Of all creatures created by God man is the only one created after His own likeness, God also made every provision for man's welfare (Genesis 3).
 3. Since God made man in his own image-surely he belonged to God. Thus God had full right of control or ownership. But, God allowed man to exercise his free moral agency.
 4. Adam and Eve chose to eat of the forbidden fruit, (Genesis 3:1-6).
 5. Year's later Ahab the King of Israel followed the same pattern of behavior, (I Kings 21:19-20).
 6. It is apparent that this description of Ahab's action is fully applicable to the behavior of Adam and Eve. They sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of God.
 7. Likewise mankind today is selling himself to sin, not realizing he is entering the worse kind of moral bondage, (Ephesians 2:1-3; John 8:34; Hebrews 11:24-25).
- B. This observation affords the necessary bridge to The Cross of Christ. The Portraits of the Cross present a picture of the greatest act of love known to man which provides this bridge of reconciliation.

II. THE PORTRAITS OF THE CROSS:

- A. To bring out what the death of Christ has done the New Testament writers use some great words, the exact significance of which we may miss since we do not share their thought world. Redemption; Propitiation; Reconciliation; Covenant; Justification and Sacrifice. These are Portraits of the Cross.
1. Redemption: A ransom price paid for the release of prisoners or slaves.

- a. Man has sold out to the bondage of sin (John 8:34).
 - b. Jesus gave his life as a ransom, (Matthew 20:28; I Peter 1:18-21).
2. Propitiation: (Hilaskomai) means to appease; the turning away of anger usually by the offering of a gift.
- a. The Bible is very clear that God's wrath is exercised toward all evil, (Psalm 7:11; Colossians 3:6; Habakkuk 1:13).
 - b. This word (concept) is never used of any act whereby man brings God into a favorable attitude or gracious disposition.
 - c. It is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character, through the provision He has made in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, (I John 2:1-2; 4:10; Romans 3:21-26).
3. Reconciliation: A homely word for making up after a quarrel. restore to friendship. Katallaso "*to change from enmity to friendship*". (Vine's p. 260)
- a. Henry Thayer, p.333 says, "in the New Testament of the restoration of the favor of God to sinners that repent and put their trust into the expiatory of the death of Christ."
 - b. When man sinned he became God's enemy. It was man who broke the fellowship. (Isaiah 59:1-2).
 - c. The Bible teaches that the death of Christ is God's way of re-establishing the broken fellowship, (Romans 5:8-12; Colossians 1:20-22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).
4. Covenant: A promise or undertaking; a mutual undertaking between two parties or more each binding himself to fulfill obligations.
- a. God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1-2, 9-14) and with the people of Israel (Exodus 24:1-8). Unfortunately the people persistently broke this covenant by their sin.
 - b. God promised a new covenant, which would have as its basis divine forgiveness, (Jeremiah 31).

- c. Jesus spoke of His blood as inaugurating the new covenant, (Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20).
 - 5. Justification: This is a legal concept. The act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal (Vine's p. 2840).
 - a. We see the meaning in the instruction for settlement of legal disputes in Deuteronomy 25.
 - b. Paul makes an extensive use of this imagery. He sees sinners facing condemnation, God taking action in the person of His Son. Those who are in Christ are free, (Romans 3:24-25).
 - 6. Sacrifice: This is an act of offering. The verb THUO used of sacrificing by slaying a victim.
 - a. The people stood by their altars in solemn awe before the religious ritual that saw animals slaughtered in their stead and watched the sacrifice go up in flames.
 - b. To the Christians such sacrifices could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:4), but they formed a vivid picture of what Jesus did when he offered Himself, (Ephesians 5:2).
- B. All of these portraits help us to see that the cross of Jesus was indeed glorious. It provided to God for man what man could never have done for himself.

III. POWER PRODUCED BY THE CROSS:

- A. The Cross of Christ is the power for the forgiveness of sins, and justification of the sinner, (Romans 5:6-8; 6:1-4).
- B. The Cross of Christ is the power of deliverance from the rule of the flesh, (Galatians 5:24).
- C. The Cross of Christ is the power of motivation for the Christians (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).
- D. The Cross of Christ is the power of appreciation, (Romans 1:14-16).
- E. The Cross of Christ is the power of dedication, (Romans 12:1-2).

- F. The Cross of Christ is the final and ultimate proof that God loves us, (John 3:16-17).

Conclusion:

1. Can we now understand how that a symbol that many people of the ancient world called “a scandal,” “foolishness.” “a stumbling block,” “sheer absurdity” has become a symbol that hangs in most every Christian church, adorns most Bibles and is worn as jewelry by many people young and old.
2. Look at the Cross of Christ once more through the word picture of John Newton’s hymn, “He Died For Me.”

*I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood:
He fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.*

*Oh, can it be upon a tree
The Savior died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is still
To think He died for me!*

THE BRUISING OF SATAN'S HEAD

Jim Lewis

Introduction:

- A. The value of anything is determined by the price paid. The greatness of the loss of a soul is seen in the price paid for the redemption of the soul.
- B. Three essential truths revealed in Genesis 3:15
 - 1. Satan is the enemy of the human race
 - 2. He would place a spiritual barrier between Satan's people and God's people.
 - 3. The representative seed of the woman (i.e., Christ) would deliver the death blow to Satan, but in so doing would be bruised Himself.
- C. The conflict between Satan and his forces and the Christ would be long and brutal.
 - 1. Christ would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil.
 - 2. Satan would bruise the heel of Christ in his efforts to destroy him.
 - 3. The bruising of Satan's head points eventually to the crucifixion wherein Christ would destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

I. THE POWER OF SATAN IS NOT TO BE UNDERESTIMATED:

- A. The nature of his power is borne in his name.
 - 1. He is Satan, which means "an adversary", hence, an enemy of God (Revelation 12:9).
 - 2. He is the devil, which means slanderer (Revelation 12:9).
 - 3. He is Abaddon and Apollyon, meaning destroyer (Revelation 9:11).
 - 4. He is Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24).
 - 5. He is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).
 - 6. He is the prince of devils (Matthew 12:24); of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); and of this world (John 14:30).

7. He is the ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:12).
 8. He is the tempter (Matthew 4:3).
 9. He is the wicked one (Matthew 13:19).
 10. He is the serpent (Genesis 3:4).
- B. His power is manifest in his works.
1. He is the author of sin, a murderer and a liar (John 8:44; Romans 5:12).
 2. He robs the word of God from the hearts of men (Matthew 13:19).
 3. He blinds men to the glorious gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).
 4. He desires the servants of God to sift them as wheat (Luke 22:31).
 5. He spreads snares for mankind (2 Timothy 2:26; 1 Timothy 3:7).
- C. Christ bruised Satan's power on the cross
1. This day of darkness brought forth light to expose evils of Satan.
 2. Truth triumphed over lies.
 3. Love triumphed over lust (1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 4:1-11).
 4. Righteousness triumphed over unrighteousness
 5. In the cross were atonement, salvation, reconciliation, and life. Christ accomplished everything that Satan desired to destroy in His death and resurrection.

II. THE OBJECTIVE OF SATAN WAS DEFEATED BY THE CROSS:

- A. Satan's objective is to be worshipped, to take that which belongs to God.
1. Seduced Eve into seeking to be like God (Genesis 3:5,6). Attempts to bring God down to man's level and man up to God's level.
 2. Envious of Job's serving God (Job 1:6-12)
 3. Begged Jesus to worship him (Matthew 4:8,9). Offered all he had.
- B. He desires the destruction of the souls of men.

1. *"...walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (I Peter 5:8).
 2. Brought death, sorrow, separation from God into the world.
 3. Unable to attack God directly, he directs his attack toward man, a being created in the image of God.
- C. The death and resurrection of Christ delivered Satan a fatal blow.
1. Souls in bondage are set free through the blood of Christ.
 2. Worship extols the Almighty Sovereign God (Revelation 4:8-11).
 3. Christ, through His death, brings life, joy, and fellowship with God. "...through death he [Christ] might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:57).

III. THE DESTINY OF SATAN (AND HIS FOLLOWERS) IS SEALED BY THE CROSS:

- A. There is a hell.
1. Various descriptions (Matthew 13:42; 25:30; Mark 9:48; Revelation 20:10; Daniel 12:2)
 2. A place prepared for Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).
 3. Everlasting (Matthew 25:46).
- B. There is a judgment
1. All will be there (John 5:28, 29; II Corinthians 5:10).
 2. Our destiny is determined by our deeds (Revelation 20:11-15).
 3. It is assured by the resurrection of Christ (Acts 17:31).
- C. There is victory over Satan in the cross
1. Must take up the cross.
 2. Must fight; properly armed (Ephesians 6:10-18)

3. This great victory is only through “the blood of the lamb” (Revelation 12:9-11).

Conclusion:

- A. Jesus came to conquer man’s problems: sin-death-hell.
 1. Victory over sin came in the offering of His souls for our sins (Isaiah 53:10).
 2. Victory over death came in the resurrection of His body (I Corinthians 15:55-57).
 3. Victory over hell came in the preaching of the gospel (Mark 16:15-16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- B. The death of Christ was vicarious, vicious and victorious (Isaiah 53:4-10).

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Terry Townsend

Text: Luke 15:11-32

Introduction:

- A. To determine the value of Christian fellowship, one must first define the word “*fellowship*” (koinonia).
 - 1. “*Partnership, i.e. participation, or social intercourse, (to) communicate, communion, contribution, distribution*” (**Strong’s**)
 - 2. “*Association, community, communion, joint participation, sharing*” (**Thayer**).
 - 3. “*The sense of community which Christians share as they work and pray together, encouraging and comforting one another*” (**Concise Dictionary**).

I. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP DISCOURAGES FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD (v. 16).

- A. The parable teaches us a valuable lesson on the difference between one’s friendship with the world and one’s fellowship with those of like precious faith.
 - 1. The lost son quickly learns the difference between the two.
 - 2. Back home he had a family that loved him, a family that cared for him, and a family that encouraged him.
 - 3. The world offered him heartache and pain.
 - a. “*And he would fain (long) have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him*” (vs. 6).
 - b. Did the world care? Was the world concerned about his welfare? Where were his worldly friends when he needed them the most?
- B. We learn from the parable that those whom we associate (fellowship) with often determine the course of action we take in life.

1. The lost son allowed his association with the world to lead him away from his family.
 2. I Corinthians 15:33 – *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”*
 - a. Paul is simply saying, *“Do not be fooled or tricked, fellowship with the world can lead you astray.”*
 - b. Turn that passage around: *“Do not be deceived, Christian fellowship produces good behavior; godly lives.”*
 - c. Ephesians 5:11 – *“But have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*
 3. God’s Word tells us what happens to those that fellowship with the world.
 - a. James 4:4
 - b. I John 2:15-17
- C. A small taste of Christian fellowship ought to discourage anyone from becoming a friend of the world (Colossians 3:12ff; Hebrews 10:25; I John 1:7).

II. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP DELIVERS A MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THOSE THAT ARE LIVING IN SIN (VS. 17-19).

- A. When the lost son came to his senses, he remembered how good things were back home.
1. No doubt he recalled the countless times his family had encouraged him.
 2. No doubt he recalled the countless blessings his father had bestowed upon him.
 3. In his darkest hour came this thought, this message of hope!
 4. He would return and ask his father for forgiveness (II Corinthians 7:10- *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...”*).
- B. Christian fellowship can deliver a message of hope to those that are living in sin.

1. To those that have left the faith, it delivers hope.
 - a. The world takes on the mindset of Satan (I Peter 5:8)
 - b. Christianity takes on the mindset of Christ (Philippians 2:5)
2. To those who have never obeyed the gospel of Christ, it delivers hope.
 - a. Christians have what the world needs, the Gospel message.
 - b. Is this not a message of hope (Romans 6:23)?
- C. Christian fellowship has great influence on society, and it has the potential of delivering that message of hope to those living in sin!
 1. Acts 2:41-47
 2. Matthew 5:14-16

III. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP DRAWS GOD'S PEOPLE CLOSER TOGETHER (Vs 20-24).

- A. The fellowship we enjoy as Christians should draw us closer to God and to each other.
- B. Consider the parable
 1. As the penitent son returns, he is embraced immediately by his father.
 2. It was a time of celebration, a time of rejoicing, a time of fellowship!
 3. *"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found"* (Vs 24,32).
 4. Can you see the two being drawn closer together?
 5. James 4:8- *"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."*
 6. As the world withdrew itself from the lost son, the father drew ever closer.
- C. The parable teaches us a great lesson on how we are to treat each other, and how that treatment determines our closeness.

1. As the father forgave the penitent son, we too should forgive others their sin (Matthew 6:14; Luke 17:3).
2. As the father had love for the son, we too should have love one toward the other (John 15:12; Romans 12:10).
3. As the father accepted the son, we too should accept one another through Jesus Christ our Lord (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 4:1-6)

Conclusion:

- A. Indeed, there is value in Christian Fellowship.
 1. Christian fellowship discourages friendship with the world.
 2. Christian fellowship delivers a message of hope to those that are living in sin.
 3. Christian fellowship draws God's people closer together.
- B. Blest Be the Tie That Binds:

*"Blest be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds, is like to that above.
Before our Father's throne, we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
We share our mutual woes; our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again."*

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

David Pharr

Introduction:

- A. Two things have been frequently preached regarding worship: that it must be scriptural in content (John 4:24), and that Christians have a duty to participate (Hebrews 10:25). These are essential truths. But for this lesson we are considering the value of worship. Someone may say, "*I don't get anything out of it.*" That is, they find no value in worship. Surely God does not expect us to participate in something that has no value.
- B. Several places in Psalms remind us of the meaning and significance of worship. (Keep in mind that many points in the Old Testament are the same in principle as in the New.)
 - 1. God deserves our worship (Psalm 29:2; 95:6; 107:8).
 - 2. People with right hearts seek the opportunity (Psalm 55:14; 122:1).
- C. Worship has value in many ways. This lesson will focus on what is its chief value. Of course it has value in that it pleases God. But we want to emphasize that **worship helps us to remember that God is God**, to keep a perspective of reverence.

I. THIS IS AN IRREVERENT AGE:

- A. Hebrews 12:28 says that the way to serve God acceptably is with reverence and godly fear. But our age has a casual attitude about God. Not only is His name blasphemed, but He has been reduced to "*the Man upstairs*," a sort of grandfather figure who tolerates most anything and requires nothing. We seem to have forgotten that He is God and we are men; that He is the creator and we are His creatures; that He is the "*Judge of all the earth*" and that we will be judged. "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psalm 111:9).
- B. I remember the first time I met the late R. C. Walker. He introduced himself at a preacher's meeting. He said he had a good sense of humor and enjoyed jokes. "*But*," he said, "*I do not tolerate jokes that make fun of my wife, nor do I tolerate jokes that make fun of my Lord and His church.*"

II. PSALM 100:1-4 EMPHASIZES THIS POINT. (Notice especially verse 3. Here are some other things that need to be considered):

- A. Do you remember Moses at the burning bush? *"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5).*
- B. Or recall the vision given to Isaiah, when he saw *"the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,"* and the seraphim angels constantly praising: *"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:1-3).*
- C. Reverence is emphasized in the third command of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:7). Jesus taught us to pray, *"Hallowed be thy name."*
- D. Do you understand the point of Habakkuk 2:20; Psalm 46:10?
- E. Psalm 89:7 applies to our own assemblies. How much irreverence does the Lord see? We are not critical of those who tend to necessary things, such as tending children, but we sometimes see some things which we are sure the Lord sees.
- F. Commenting on Ecclesiastes 5:1-2, Franklin Camp wrote: *"We are here called to reverence and thoughtfulness in the assemblies. There are entirely too many giddy, flippant, and impious, merry people in our assemblies. We do not, or at least we should not, go to worship to talk, but to listen. All things light and foolish should be put out of our minds and hearts before we assemble to worship. We should go to the assemblies with our ears open toward heaven, anxiously waiting to hear and commune with God."*
- G. Psalm 8:3-4 reminds us of the need for reverence and gratitude.
- H. In the awesome presence of the Almighty we dare not lift up our heads, but with bowed hearts implore, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."*

III. OUR SINGING INCLUDES PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. ALL SCRIPTURAL SONGS HAVE VALUE, BUT I AM ESPECIALLY IMPRESSED WITH THOSE, WHICH ACKNOWLEDGE THE GREATNESS, THE MAJESTY, AND THE HOLINESS OF JEHOVAH.

- 1. "How Great Thou Art."
- 2. "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah! From the Heavens Praise His Name; Praise Jehovah in the Highest..."

Precious Christian Values

3. "To God Be The Glory, Great Things He Hath Done."
4. "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early In The Morning Our Song Shall Rise To Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty!
God Over All And Blest Eternally."

MASS MEDIA IN CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

Eddy Craft

TEXT: Matthew 28:19-20 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 always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Mass Media in Evangelism is one of the great ways we have to evangelize in our generation. This media has been used by denominations and others effectively for years and in the last several years by the Church of our Lord. When I moved to Saltville, Virginia our brethren presented only one television program. I often wondered why we were not using this media.
- B. Over twenty-two years we received our chance to begin our television work in this area. It did not take long for us to realize that we had, at our fingertips, a media to use that would allow us to reach more in one given Sunday that we could one-on-one in a lifetime. This is not to in any way belittle one-on-one evangelism because that is important as well. They both have a place.
- C. The coverage of this program has the potential to enter an estimated three to five million homes in East Tennessee and West Tennessee, Southwest, Virginia, Western North Carolina, Eastern Kentucky and Mississippi (in addition to the local viewing area, the program is televised out of Hazard, Ky. and Jackson, Mississippi). God has truly given us an effective tool in spreading His great word!
- D. God was interested in mass media. This is seen in God's time frame.
 - 1. Babylonian captivity gave us the synagogues.
 - 2. The Persians gave us law and order.
 - 3. The Greek Empire gave us a universal language.
 - 4. The Roman Empire gave us roads.
 - 5. The bringing of His Son into the world at the right time - Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

6. God's providence in the preceding points helps us to see His interest in mass media!

E. Using mass media, especially television, in evangelism is important because of the following reasons:

I. BECAUSE WE HAVE THE RIGHT MESSAGE:

A. We preach the same message the apostles preached in the First Century. (Acts 2:22-23; 3:14-17; 7:51-54).

B. We present Jesus as the only way to salvation. (Acts 3:22-23; 4:10-12)

C. We see this beautiful truth of the past and present in the preaching of Phillip, Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. We preach the same messages today; the truth about the kingdom (church), the truth about the name of Christ (authority), the truth about baptism in God's plan of salvation.

II. BECAUSE WE HAVE THE RIGHT MOTIVES:

A. We, like the First Century church, do not rely on games, goodies, gadgets and gumdrops to spread the saving message of Christ's gospel. We have a compulsion to tell the story even in the face of persecution.

B. The First Century church would not let persecution keep them from preaching the gospel. (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29; 5:40-42).

C. We must maintain the right motives in preaching the gospel.

III. BECAUSE WE HAVE THE RIGHT METHODS:

A. The early church was a praying people. Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

B. We need to learn that the method that we use to preach the gospel is very important.

C. A close look at the methods of the early church will help us a lot.

IV. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT RESULTS THAT WE EXPECT:

A. Notice the success of the First Century church. Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were

added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

- B. With this kind of success in the first century why should we expect any less in the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The Lord's church today must be an exact replica of the first century.
- B. We will be blessed if we replicate their message, motives and methods.
- C. Only when we become and remain what they were, will we truly have their mighty results and thus be pleasing and accepted by Christ, the Head of the church. Ephesians 1:22-23 ²² And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

THE VALUE OF EVANGELISM
House to House Evangelism
Charles White

Introduction:

- A. It's been said too often, "*Door knocking and going house to house to try to convert people is a waste of time.*"
- B. As kindly as I can, may I observe: "*Nonsense to that nonsense!*"
- C. Jesus said the early church went to where the people lived and it is pure twaddle to assert otherwise.
- D. Such an attitude, it seems to me, is an attempt to free ourselves from the greatest commission ever given to man.

I. AN OBJECTIVE ANSWERED FROM LUKE 10:7 – “Go not from house to house.”

- A. **The full context is:** Luke 10:3-7 ³Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. ⁴Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. ⁵And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. ⁶And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. ⁷And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.
 - 1. This is the third phase of Luke's limited Commission.
 - 2. It is obvious that the Lord is telling the disciples to have faith in God for their sustenance and "go not from house to house" begging for bread!
- B. The three phases of the Limited Commission are a study.
 - 1. **Phase 1:** the **Lord Himself**, along **with the apostles**, went to every village (Luke 8:1,2)
 - 2. **Phase 2:** the Lord gave the power over devils to the **apostles** and told **them** to go and preach the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:1,2).
 - 3. **Phase 3:** the Lord appointed "**other seventy also**, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1,2).

4. Jesus set the example by leading the apostles in village-to-village, city-to-city, house-to-house evangelism.
5. The apostles and the seventy learned the lesson well and did the same thing.

II. THE EARLY CHURCH LEARNED AND MAINTAINED THIS CONCEPT.

- A. The Jerusalem church enjoyed fellowship house to house (Acts 2:46) which resulted in favor with the people "*And the Lord added to the church daily: such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47).
- B. The apostle Paul used the household to evangelize Ephesus (Acts 20:20-21).
- C. "*And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*" (Acts 5:41).
 1. The key words in this passage are **daily...every house...ceased not.**
 2. The "house-to-house is a waste of time" attitude is a reflection of many, many Christians' abject failure to even begin to attempt to restore this facet of New Testament Christianity.
- D. The church met in the house of Aquila and Pricilla (Romans 16:3-5; I Corinthians 16:19).
- E. The church met in Nymphas' house (Colossians 4:15).
- F. The church met in Philemon's house (Philemon 1:1,2).
- G. There was saints even in the household of Caesar (Philippians 4:21-22).

III. TWO OTHER OBJECTIONS TO THE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE METHOD:

- A. "*We live in different times and people don't want you at their door.*"
 1. Over 7000 studies by mail since 1997 in our work prove otherwise.
 2. We make plans around objections, not halt doing anything.
 3. Mass media, mass mail, our postage reply card concept, radio, television all will work if "*the people had a mind to work*" (Nehemiah 4:6).

4. The Lord will surely hold us responsible if our entire concept of religion is to attend services, be good people in the community and hire preachers to do our evangelism for us.
- B. *“The ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’ part of the Great Commission was only for the New Testament day and God never intended such to be a permanent part of Christians’ activities always.”*
1. See “Introduction, number 2.”
 2. We are in business to sow the “seed which is the word of God” (Luke 8:11) and how can the seed be sown if each Christian is not actively involved in seed sowing?
 3. If this objection be true, we must also *eliminate “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved”* in our teaching.
 4. Colossians 1:23 needs to be underlined in our Bibles and inscribed in our hearts: *“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”*
 5. Restoration of doctrine and restoration of practice is the aim of the pre-denominations movement to go back to the Bible.
 - a. **Denominational Bible study:** A study of the teachings of a denomination, which may use the Bible as a reference, book; if a denomination teaches something that is not in the Bible, that teaching is studied.
 - b. **Non-denominational Bible study:** A study of the Bible without denominational creeds (beliefs) inserted into the study, but which may also have some more modern religious teachings popular among denominations.
 - c. **Pre-denominational Bible study:** A back-to-the-Bible only study which goes beyond all denominational teachings, both old and new and which focuses on what the Bible actually teaches than what men say the Bible teaches.
 - d. The pre-denominational approach is our current emphasis in our Good News Outreach work.

6. Matthew 23: ²³ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to **leave the other undone**". Let us not be modern day Pharisees by leaving anything out of our work for the Lord.

IV. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

- A. Each Christian, and not just our leaders, must have the spirit of Jeremiah 20:9: *"The I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."*
- B. The heart and core of the local work of the church must be centered around seed sowing. Let's avoid using the slogan "soul winners" and replace it with "seed sower's."
 1. I recommend the approach we're using in Good News Outreach.
 2. This approach can get the gospel out to every house in a short period of time.
- C. Brother Marshall Keeble said: *"Pray. But when you get off your knees hustle."*
- D. Let the preacher do his work, which is to sow the seed himself and **mobilize** the local church to be seed sowers.
- E. House-to-house evangelism still works, it worked in the New Testament and it's still a most effective way to get the gospel into people's hands!

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE HOME

David Smith

Introduction:

- A. The need for God-centered homes is scarcely emphasized to the degree it should be. Yet, the integrity of both the church and the nations is largely dependent upon the holiness of the home. Without a fortification of Christian influence in the home, the nation will continue its moral atrophy and the church will continue to lose souls to the world.
- B. Each member of the home is therefore charged with a working knowledge of his or her role in producing the necessary influence to affect positively the church and the nation, as well as the home itself. Christian influence in the home cannot be underestimated, or lessened in its intrinsic worth.
- C. Fullest appreciation of the value of this influence in the home can only be reached when its impact upon the family unit is viewed from both the internal and external standpoints. The Bible, of course, remains the standard from which these perspectives will be judged (II Peter 1:3).

I. WITH MANY EXTANT DANGERS, THE HOME NEEDS GODLY INFLUENCE TO PREVENT INFILTRATION BY THE DEVIL:

- A. Humanists boldly declare that the home is the primary subject of its attack. Through the home, humanism hopes to destroy society and religion.
 - 1. While humanism takes many forms, atheism and the evolutionary theory are its most effective tools. Yet, the popularity of these godless beliefs is shattered by homes where God is exalted as Supreme. When enough homes become centered upon the Christ, then humanism will soon lose its stranglehold upon the nation (cf. James 4:7).
 - 2. Since Postmodernism is deceptive, then proper influence in the home provides each member of the home with the necessary sense of perception and awareness to know with certainty what is dangerous and what is not.
- B. To be sure, proper influence in the home is necessary to draw to an end the rampant immorality both in and out of the church.
 - 1. Homosexuality, premarital sex, dancing, immodest dress, et cetera, is all sins that must be exposed for what they really are – works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

2. The home is certainly responsible for guarding against these devices of the devil; Christian influence in the home is necessary for such a defense.
- C. Without proper influence in the home, members of that home are subject to any number of false doctrines. A simple investigation of the current apostasy in the church will reveal that the prominence of liberalism can be traced to the lack of proper influence in the home.

II. MORE IS AT STAKE IN THIS MATTER THAN SOME SUPPOSE:

- A. The salvation of souls is at stake.
1. Parents are the primary factor in what the children will do and become. Those children who have been trained properly by their parents are not likely to refrain from obeying the Gospel. This outcome, of course, is predicated upon both parents being faithful Christians (Ephesians 6:1-4); otherwise, to teach and do not is hypocrisy.
 2. Family members share the responsibility of doing their part to get the family to heaven. While Noah saved his family (Hebrews 11:7); this cannot be said of many today. Proper influence must be maintained in order to reach the shores of glory.
- B. Spiritual training for children is the responsibility of the home (Ephesians 6:4; cf. Proverbs 22:6), not the church. Naturally, this cannot be accomplished properly without the right type of influence in the home—Christian influence.
- C. Consequently, proper respect for the authority in each of the divine institutions—the home, the church and the civil government—is dependent upon the existence of godly influence in the home (Ephesians 6:2).
- D. And, as respect for authority grows, the existing problem of irreverence for divine things [especially manifested in worship services] fades.

III. THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF A HOLY HOME IS PHENOMENAL, BUT THIS CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT EFFORT:

- A. Every member of the home must know and do his/her part.
1. Fathers/husbands must be the spiritual provider for the home, as well as the supplier of the family's physical needs (Genesis 2:18-25; I Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 5:22-28; 6:1-4; cf. I Corinthians 14:34-35).

2. The wife/mother must submit to the leadership of her husband, as his leadership accords with the doctrine of the Christ (Ephesians 5:22); she must also assist her husband in providing righteous instruction for her children (Titus 2:3-5; Ephesians 6:1).
 3. Children must submit to the righteous instruction of their parents (Ephesians 6:1).
- B. Naturally some will ask “how” this task may be accomplished.
1. Each member of the family must exalt the Bible for what it is—the mind of God on page (I Corinthians 2:6-13; II Timothy 3:16-17). Likewise, meditation upon it must be made a daily part of each family member’s life. Families should consider setting aside a designated time each day for the entire family to study the Bible together.
 2. Parents must discipline erring children. Contrary to popular belief, this is the right thing to do (Proverbs 23:13-14; 29:15). But, parents should not forget to shower praise upon their children for those actions which are right (Ephesians 6:4; cf. Luke 15:24,32).
 3. Men and women must seek marriages, which are in harmony with the Lord. There is nothing good about adulterous unions or even marriages where neither the man nor woman has a genuine love for the other. Likewise, a Christian should not marry a non-saint; this is injurious to the spiritual welfare of the Christian, and in most cases ends in apostasy.

Conclusion:

- A. The Sacred Text is replete with teachings on the essential nature of godly influence in the home.
- B. Because of its value to the home, then each member of the home should seek to keep priorities according to the divine order (Luke 14:26); God must be first in all things.
- C. When each member of the home does his/her part in maintaining Christian influence, the world will be changed significantly for the better and the church will be greatly strengthened in her purpose and mission.

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Jim Dearman

Introduction:

1. Have you considered the fact that all Christians live on a hill?
2. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus spoke these words about His followers: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”
 - a. When we become Christians, we move to the hill where others see us.
 - b. We become lights shining in a world of darkness.
3. In the previous verse, Jesus uses the illustration of salt to describe the child of God: Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
4. Within the context of Matthew 5:13-16, there is very important teaching from our Lord relating to being Christians in the communities where we live.
5. Remember, Jesus said every Christian lives on that hill where we are seen by others.
6. Let us now notice how Jesus tells us to live on that hill where we are seen by others.

Discussion:

I. IN MATTHEW 5:13, JESUS REMINDS HIS FOLLOWERS THAT SALT PRESERVES.

- A. Salt preserves by its very presence in the world.
 1. The Christian has a preserving influence by his presence.
 2. Remember Abraham’s plea for Sodom in Genesis 18.
 - a. If ten righteous souls had been found in the city, God would have saved it.
 - b. This demonstrates the potential preserving power of the righteous individual in the world.

- c. This incident also shows us that God recognizes righteousness on an individual basis.
- B. However, salt must maintain its purity to have a preserving influence.
- 1. In Palestine the salt was not completely pure, and when exposed to the elements, it would lose its savor.
 - 2. The same is true of the church and every individual member.
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:13 speaks of holding “the pattern of sound words.”
 - b. Paul appealed to the Christians at Rome to stop being conformed to the world and to be transformed by the power of the gospel in their lives (Romans 12:1,2).
 - 3. When the salt mixes with the elements of the world, it loses its preserving power.

II. AS SALT PRESERVES, JESUS SAYS LIGHT PROJECTS (MATTHEW 5:16).

- A. Jesus referred to Himself as the light of the world (John 8:12).
- B. He made us lights as His followers (Ephesians 5:8).
- C. We are to let the light of Christ shine through us to a world in the darkness of sin.
 - 1. Philippians 2:12-15 tells us our lights shine as we obey the teachings of Christ, showing the world how to live.
 - 2. Peter tells the Christians to “proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).
 - 3. Therefore, we are to project and proclaim by our lives and teaching, as we have opportunity to tell others about Christ.
 - a. Salt suggest that we are.
 - b. Light suggests what we do.

- D. Matthew 5:16 teaches us that influence is (1) personal; (2) projectable; (3) perceivable; (4) productive; and (5) perpetual.

Conclusion: The Christian's influence in the community is indeed a powerful force.



