



SERMON OUTLINES

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**21ST CENTURY
SERMON OUTLINES**

BY THE

STAFFWRITERS

OF THE

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**P.O. Box 345
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**COMPILED BY
JOHN T. POLK II**

Preface

These sermon outlines are sent forth with the prayer that the recipient use them to the glory of Almighty God and for the furtherance of His kingdom, the churches of Christ.

They are submitted by the Staff Writers of the *Gospel Gleaner*, a subscription-free publication that is mailed quarterly to all those who desire it. The *Gospel Gleaner* remains on the narrow way but with broad appeal to all who “strive to enter” (Luke 13:24).

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You should quickly see that each writer brings to Bible study a unique but thorough approach and notice the variety of subjects, Scriptures, and strength of each sermon. If this volume finds receptive hearts as we pray it will, there may be another to follow.

May God bless each one to enter His kingdom.

**John T. Polk II, Compiler
January 18, 2003**

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FORWARD

Someone has pointed out that there are two kinds of preachers: some have to say something and others have something to say. These lesson sketches are definitely for the latter group and are sent forth with the pure desire to help supply preachers with much needed and good material solidly based on the never-failing and all-prevailing Word of God. Every lover of the truth will get a significant measure of good from these powerful presentations.

If these outlines do not come up to the reader's expectation, we beg forbearance and liberality in forming any judgments.

"Christ crucified" is evermore the theme of the public proclamation of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18-29; 2:2) and these men would never preach anything else.

Many thanks is tendered to all who helped put this volume together and may our great Jehovah, whose we are and whom we serve, and without whose goodness and mercy nothing could ever be accomplished, take this book and bless it to the good of all who read and use it.

Realizing the need to please God in our preaching, these staff writers of the Gospel Gleaner pray that these outlines may be used to the glory of God and to strengthen His precious Kingdom (I Corinthians 10:31).

Bill Dillon

Discouragement

By Bill Dillon

Introduction:

1. Discouragement is a fact of life for every human being.
2. The Bible warns repeatedly about dark and dreary days of discouragement (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22).
3. NOTE: In Deuteronomy 33:24-27 God lifts the veil of the future for His chosen people to see. He was saying to them, Your future is going to be rough." Along with the warning was a cluster of promises to impart encouragement. There will come a day in all our lives when God will hand us a pair of "iron shoes" to wear.

Discussion:

I. The Causes of Discouragement

1. The pressures of life. – We are harassed by demands and deadlines; bruised by worry, adversity and failure; and broken by disillusionment.
2. The power of words – Sometimes unfair or uncalled for or inadvertent remarks can have a "downer" effect on our minds (Proverbs 18:21; James 3).
3. The presence of sin – Our own shortcomings and failings. We struggle in life, lose our balance, slip and fall (Romans 3:10, 23).
4. A sense of loss – A loss of security, confidence, friendship, strength, health, control, etc. can feed the flames of discouragement.

II. The Cure For Discouragement

1. Learn to live one day at a time (Matthew 6:34; Luke 21:19).
2. Learn to live each day in faith (I John 5:4; Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 9:29).
"Faith is dead to doubts, dumb to discouragements, blind to impossibilities, knows nothing but success. Faith lifts its hands up through the threatening clouds, lays hold of Him who has all power in heaven and on earth. Faith makes the uplook good, the outlook bright, the inlook favorable, and the future glorious." -----Dr. V. Raymond Edman
3. Learn to lean. During times of discouragement, it's important for all of us to refocus our attention on the Lord. We can do this by meditating on His promise, memorizing His Word, and reflecting on His character (Psalm 46:10).
4. Learn to give encouragement to others (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
 - a.. Don't underestimate a pleasant smile and a pat on the back.
 - b. Observe and mention admirable character qualities you see in others, such as: Punctuality, Sense of Humor, Tactfulness, Honesty, Loyalty, Compassion, Diligence, Vision, etc.
 - c. Letters and notes of appreciation.
 - d. Cultivate a positive reassuring attitude.
 - e. Gifts and favors when appropriate.

- f. Cultivate the art of seeing the positive in the weather, events, and the varied circumstances of life. The good is there awaiting to be discovered by an observant individual. (Philippians 1:12; 4:4, 5, 11, 12; 2 Corinthians 1:4-12).
5. Learn to seize the day ("carpe diem")
"This day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not born to the morrow. He, therefore, that enjoys the present, if it be good, enjoys as much as possible." – Jeremy Taylor
6. Learn to encourage yourself (1 Samuel 30:6; 2 Timothy 4:17; Psalm 27:13).
7. Learn to look to the future. With God "all will come right."
"Tomorrow is another day."–Scarlett O'Hara, in *Gone With The Wind*. Things will get better

Conclusion:

1. A wise man said:
"One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement...It is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet."
2. The beautiful part about encouragement is this: **Anybody** can do it!
(Acts 3:19; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 3:21).
3. Jesus Christ has encouraged us all.

Guilt

By Bill Dillon

Introduction:

1. Guilt is a peace-robber and a soul-killer.
2. It has been stated that most people are harboring some form of guilt in the inner chambers of their souls.

Discussion:

I. Defining Guilt

Guilt is a product of the mind which occurs when a person realizes that he has violated moral, religious or ethical standards. With the realization of wrong-doing comes a regretful or sorrowful feeling.

II. Types Of Guilt

1. Objective guilt. This is justified guilt. This guilt can be healthy because it can lead us to get our lives right with God. See Acts 2:37, 28
2. Subjective guilt. This is unjustified guilt. This guilt is needless and self-induced. Unhealthy guilt feelings are a way of life for some people.
3. In either case the result is the same: loss of peace and happiness (Proverbs 28:1; Isaiah 57:20, 21).

III. Results Of Guilt

The results of guilt are as varied and different as the persons who have the feelings. Some of the major reactions to guilt are:

1. Self-condemnation
2. Blame game. "I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his need to cast blame on others." *Forbes Magazine*, June 5, 1995, page 198. See Genesis 3:7-13
3. Pessimism and suicide. See Matthew 27:3-5
4. Martyr complex.
5. Physical illness. See Psalm 32
6. Growth and change.
7. Forgiveness. See Psalm 51:1-3

The last two items are the positive and healthy aspects of guilt. They come through handling guilt God's way.

IV. Some Causes Of Guilt

1. Violating your conscience. From early childhood our minds are impressed with a sense that some things are "right" and "wrong." Man is affected by every experience he has had as well as every positive and negative thing he contacts. See Acts 23:1; I Timothy 4:2
2. False conscience development. A man was taught it was wrong to mow lawns on Sunday. He had a difficult time with others who "worked on Sundays." Actually the Bible has no direct teaching about working on Sundays.

3. Just thinking you have done wrong. There is no evidence to support your thoughts, but you just feel you are a "bad person."
4. Perfectionist attitude.
5. Unrealistic expectations. Some standards are impossible to reach.

V. The Cure For Guilt

Note: Some "guilt complexes" need professional help to overcome. However, much guilt can be adequately dealt with by use of the following:

1. Admit you are experiencing guilt.
2. Write down what you are feeling guilty about.
3. Examine the standard you supposedly violated. Is it valid?
4. Is someone trying to manipulate you?
5. Remember the past cannot be changed. See Philippians 3:13, 14
6. If you are guilty, confess it to God. See I John 1:8, 9
7. Never doubt the power of the blood of Christ. See Revelation 1:5; I John 1:7
8. Remember the Bible teaching on forgiveness. See Micah :18, 19; Psalm 103:8-14
9. Acknowledge you are not perfect. You cannot always please everybody.
10. Remember, after you are forgiven, any and all guilt feelings that arise do not come from God.
11. Pray for wisdom to deal properly will guilt.

Conclusion:

1. Only the guilty need to feel guilt. The forgiven are free.
2. Matthew 11:28-30; I Peter 3:21.

THE MOST POPULAR THIEF IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

By Dennis Gullledge

(Luke 23:39-43)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The thief on the cross, as we commonly style him, is almost as widely known as Jesus.
 - A. There were two thieves on two crosses.
 - B. No one knows his name, his father's name or any details of his career (malefactor, [KJV] means, "one who uses violence to rob openly").
 - C. He is known almost exclusively for a single brief sentence uttered in his dying hour: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Lk. 23:42).
2. Thieves are not generally a popular breed, but this one is.
 - A. He is popular with denominational preachers who have built popular, but false, doctrines around him.
 - a. He is used to teach salvation by faith only.
 - b. He is used to teach salvation merely by verbalizing the Lord's name (Cf., Mt. 7:21).
 - c. He is used to teach salvation without baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - d. He is used to teach salvation without being in the church (Cf Acts 2:41, 47).
 - e. He is used to teach "death bed" salvation.
 - B. He is popular with honest, but misinformed folk who want to see the thief as an example of conversion to Christ.
 - a. The book of Acts is the "book of conversion." Not Luke. Not Romans.
 - b. Who is it that asks, "What about the thief on the cross?" Not the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38); not the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8); not Cornelius (Acts 10).
 - c. The thief on the cross is not an example of New Testament conversion, but of covenant restoration of an Israelite under the Law of Moses (Mt. 9:6; 15:24).
 - C. As such, the thief was not only a robber of money in life, but is now a robber of souls in death.
 - a. The first criminal career was by his choice.
 - b. The second criminal career is by the choice of many others.
3. When did the thief on the cross come into his popularity?
 - A. It was when men began trying to justify doctrinal positions denying baptism as a condition of pardon for alien sinners.
 - a. The argument is: "The thief was saved without baptism. Why not me?"
 - b. In response some will insist that he may well have been baptized (Mt. 3:5-6).
 - c. He could not have been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - B. Someone asked a brother, "What do you in churches of Christ teach one to do to become a Christian?" The brother answered with Acts 2:38. The questioner replied, "Then Jesus lied to the thief on the cross."

DISCUSSION:

I. A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE APPLIED.

- A. That fundamental principle is stated in Hebrews 9:16-17.
 - 1. This is proper legal terminology involving a "last will and testament."
 - 2. My parents had their respective wills that went into effect upon their deaths.
- B. Some cases of forgiveness of sins occurred before the death of the testator - Jesus (Mt. 9:6).
 - 1. Jesus forgave the paralytic (Mk. 2:5, 10).
 - 2. Jesus forgave the woman (Lk. 7:36-48).
 - 3. Jesus promised salvation to Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:9-10).
- C. Other cases of forgiveness/conversion came after Jesus' death and resurrection:
 - 1. In preparation Jesus gave the great commission to the apostles (Mk. 16:15-16).
 - 2. The book of Acts tells how the great commission was carried out.
- D. Whatever one may say of the thief on the cross he is no example of a lost sinner today.
 - 1. He lived and died under the covenant law of God for Israel.
 - 2. He did not live under the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

II. STUDY OF THREE WORDS.

- A. Kingdom: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Vs. 42).
 - 1. What kingdom did the Jews have in mind when they tried to force Jesus into it? (Jn. 6:15; Mt. 11:12).
 - 2. What kingdom did the disciples of Jesus have in mind when they wanted positions of power within it? (Mt. 18:1; 20:20-21).
 - 3. What kingdom did Joseph of Arimathea wait for? (Mk. 15:43).
 - 4. We have some idea:
 - a. The Jews typically expected an earthly kingdom with a political king.
 - b. The apostles had similar expectations 40 days after resurrection (Acts 1:6).
 - c. Could the thief have known more about the kingdom than did the apostles? To assume that the thief understood the spiritual nature of the kingdom - the church (Col. 1:13) - is to assume that he knew what the apostles did not yet understand.
- B. Paradise: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Vs. 43).
 - 1. Paradise is used of "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2-4).
 - 2. Paradise is used figuratively of heaven (Rev. 2:7).
 - 3. Paradise is the happy state of the dead in hades (Lk. 16:19-31; 23:43).
 - a. Jesus would not come down from the cross to save himself, or to enter his kingdom.
 - b. He said, in effect, "You have a misconception of the kingdom. I will build my kingdom, but I am going by way of the cross" (Mt. 16:18).

4. Jesus' spirit did go into the hadean realm when he died .
 - a. He did not remain there (Acts 2:31).
 - b. His body was in the grave (Mt. 12:40), it did not decay (Acts 2:31), he had not ascended to his father prior to his ascension (Jn. 20:17).

C. Saved.

1. Nothing in the text speaks of the thief being saved in Christ.
 - a. Jesus did not promise to save him as an alien sinner (Acts 16:30).
 - b. Jesus did not add him to the church (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).
2. The Lord had power to forgive sins (Mt. 9:6).
3. Now, that power continues through his apostles and their teaching (Mt. 16:19).
4. The thief on the cross was another example of Jesus forgiving a Jew under the Law of Moses.

CONCLUSION:

1. It seems that some people are more interested in the thief on the cross (and theories built up around him) than the Savior on the cross (and his gospel).
2. Jesus will save us by what he did on the cross. The thief will not save us by what he did.
3. We preach Christ crucified - not the thief (1 Cor. 1:23).

IF I HAD BUT ONE SERMON TO HEAR

By Dennis Gullede

(Acts 8:26-35)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In 1906 Charles Reynolds Brown was preaching in the San Francisco bay area.
 - A. That spring, on the Sunday called "Easter," he and other preachers in the area spoke to full houses.
 - B. Years later he mentioned that Sunday in a lecture at Yale University.
 - a. He said: "How differently I would have preached, if I had known that many of those in my audience were hearing the last sermon they would ever hear."
 - b. No one could have known that the great San Francisco earthquake would hit on the following Wednesday.
 - c. Many of them would be killed before another Sunday rolled around.
2. How many sermons have you heard in your lifetime?
 - A. Hundreds? Thousands?
 - B. Someday we will all hear our last sermon.
 - C. How often do we say, "Nothing is certain, but death and taxes" and yet we don't think it applies to us? (Jas. 4:13-14).
3. What sort of sermon would you want to hear if you knew it to be your last?
 - A. Would you want it to be some grand and beautiful effort or a scholarly presentation upon some obscure theme? Probably not.
 - B. Would you prefer just a simple statement of the essence of New Testament Christianity and your duty before God? Probably so.
4. Fortunately, the Bible gives us an example of a man who, so far as the record reveals, was to hear only one sermon.
 - A. At least one sermon was all he needed to hear to make a difference in his life.
 - B. He may have heard many more sermons in the years to follow (if he lived that long).
 - C. We also have the Scriptures of the sermon he heard preached and we know the preacher.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE SETTING OF THE SERMON.

- A. The subject was the Ethiopian eunuch.
 1. He had traveled about 1,000 miles to Jerusalem in order to worship Jehovah.
 2. He had fulfilled his obligations at the temple and was returning to Africa.
 - a. His dedication to religion is admirable.
 - b. Little did he realize he was devoted to a dead religion (Eph. 2:14-17).
 3. He encountered a gospel preacher sent from God.
- B. Our text tells the story of the great sermon that was preached (Acts 8:26-35).

II. PHILIP PREACHED JESUS (Vs. 35).

- A. Jesus was the very theme of Philip's text from Isaiah 53:7.
 - 1. His life, his death, his exaltation.
 - 2. Philip showed that Isaiah was speaking of Jesus and not himself (Vs. 34).
- B. Today, we are not limited to the Old Testament for Scripture to preach Jesus.
 - 1. Perhaps Philip told of Jesus coming in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4; Jn. 1:14).
 - 2. Maybe he included the preaching of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:11).
 - 3. He might have spoken of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (Mt. 1:20-21).
 - a. The Ethiopian would have passed through Bethlehem on his way home.
 - b. Down this very road Joseph & Mary must have traveled on their flight to Egypt.
 - 4. He might have included some of the facts of Jesus' boyhood years (Lk. 2:52).

III. THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF JESUS.

- A. He may have mentioned Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan (Mt. 3:13-17).
- B. Immediately after his baptism he was led away into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15).
- C. Then, he began his public ministry at age 30.
 - 1. The choosing of the twelve apostles (Mt. 10:1-4).
 - 2. The eunuch might have been acquainted with some of them.

IV. THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

- A. Perhaps Philip recalled some of the marvelous parables of the Lord.
 - 1. Could he have mentioned the parable of the sower.
 - 2. If so, maybe the eunuch saw himself as the good ground.
- B. Maybe, Philip told him about the wonderful Sermon on the Mount.
 - 1. This Jesus was the one who would "preach the gospel to the poor" (Lk. 4:18).
 - 2. Jesus commissioned his apostles to carry this same gospel after his ascension (Mk. 16:15-16).
- C. It is possible that Philip told of how the miracles of Jesus confirmed his message as being from heaven (Jn. 3:2).

V. SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS OF JESUS' LIFE.

- A. The transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8).
 - 1. This might have opened the eyes of the Ethiopian to the end of the Law (Vs. 5).
 - 2. This would impress him with the need to serve Christ only.
- B. The crucifixion (Mt. 27).
 - 1. The betrayal.
 - 2. The unfair trial.
 - 3. The thieves upon the crosses:
 - a. Jesus' ability to forgive sins on earth (Mt. 9:6).
 - b. One thief died in sin - one thief died to sin.

- C. The resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-3).
- D. The church that he promised and built on Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 1. Philip must have known the great commission of Christ (Mt. 28:18-20).
 - 2. He knew how the first converts responded to the gospel (Acts 2:37-38).

VI. THE RESULT OF THE SERMON.

- A. The Ethiopian wondered what hindered him from obeying the gospel (Vss. 36-39).
- B. Philip had preached to him Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. If I were not a Christian and hearing the last sermon of my life, I would want it to be a sermon about Jesus Christ.
- 2. Even as a Christian, it is still the story that never grows old.
- 3. If not, I would want, at the end, to become a Christian in the ancient New Testament way.

SALVATION IN THREE TENSES

By Dennis Gulledge

(1 Corinthians 10:1-6)

INTRODUCTION:

1. This lesson has its basis in two Old Testament passages:
 - A. Genesis 12:1-5. "[A]nd they went forth into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came" (Vs. 5).
 - a. Abram and family started once before to go "into the land of Canaan" (11:31), but into the land of Canaan they came not.
 - b. It's one thing to start and quite another to finish a journey.
 - c. How many start for heavenly Canaan, but fail along the way? (Heb. 4:1).
 - B. Numbers 1:45-46.
 - a. Is there not significance in the fact that of the more than 600,000 fighting men that were "saved out of Egypt," only two - Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan? (Num. 26:63-65).
 - b. They shared in the first salvation [out of Egypt], but failed of the second [into Canaan].
 - c. Why? Because of their unbelief! (Heb. 3:12, 18-19).
2. We, too, may receive the present salvation from past sins which the gospel offers, but fail of eternal life in heaven (Heb. 4:9, 11).
 - A. The Bible teaches that one is saved from past sins in baptism for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:16).
 - B. The Bible teaches that faithful Christians continue in a saved relationship as they work out their own salvation with "fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).
 - a. Salvation (eternal life) is the gift of God (Rom. 6:23).
 - b. That we must do something to receive it ought to be obvious here.
 - C. The Bible teaches that faithful Christians have the hope of eternal salvation in heaven (Rom. 6:22; Heb. 6:18-20; 1 Pt. 1:4-5).
3. This fundamental principle, not commonly understood, is accountable for much confusion over the question, "When does a Christian possess eternal life?"
 - A. Every believer in the false impossibility of apostasy doctrine affirms that a Christian has eternal life as a present possession and can never lose it.
 - B. A number of passages state that the Christian has eternal life (Jn. 3:14-16; 5:24).
 - a. The word "hath" (5:24) is a future present that denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but is so certain that it may be thought of as a present reality.
 - b. The words "heareth" and "believeth" (5:24) are perfect tense and mean, "he that keeps on hearing and believing has eternal life."
 - C. Eternal life is a hope and a promise (Rom. 8:24-25; Tit. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25).
4. Have you ever noticed the three tenses in which the Bible addresses our salvation?

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE IS SALVATION IN THE PAST TENSE.

- A. The forgiveness of past sins is promised to the penitent believer who is baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 3:25).
- B. God's forgiveness removes the barrier between man and God - sin (Isa. 59:1-2).
- C. It changes the human condition:
 - 1. From guilt and alienation to justification and reconciliation to God.
 - 2. From being out of Christ to being in Christ.
- D. This is what Peter meant when he said, "Save yourselves..." (Acts 2:40).
 - 1. We are not saviours. We are sinners in need of salvation.
 - 2. Salvation is in meeting the conditions of the gospel (Acts 16:31-33).
- E. Then, the blood of Christ that washes away past sins (Mt. 26:28) continues to work on behalf of the faithful Christian (1 Jn. 1:7-8).

II. THERE IS SALVATION IN THE PRESENT TENSE.

- A. Paul referred to salvation in the present tense (1 Cor. 1:18)
 - 1. We don't need to entertain any doubt about that.
 - 2. If someone asks, "Do you know you are saved?" if you are a faithful Christian you can say, "yes."
- B. God gives us help in living out our salvation (Phil. 2:12; 2 Pet.1:10).
- C. This help comes to us through God's Spirit via the word of God (1 Cor. 6:11):
 - 1. They were "washed" - this was in baptism (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26).
 - 2. They were "sanctified" - this was through the word of God (Jn. 17:17).
 - 3. They were "justified" - this was by the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:9).
- D. In this sense the faithful Christian is in a saved relationship (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7).
 - 1. Can he lose that relationship? Yes!
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 1:6; 1 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 3:12

III. THERE IS SALVATION IN THE FUTURE TENSE.

- A. The third great promise of God is eternal life yet to come (Rom. 6:22-23).
 - 1. Eternal life is spoken of as a present possession (Jn. 5:24; 6:47; 17:3).
 - 2. Eternal life is spoken of as a future hope (Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:30; Tit. 1:2).
 - a. Do these passages contradict?
 - b. We must remember that passages such as John 5:24 speak in the future present - an event so certain that it is spoken of as a present reality.
- B. Eternal life will only be realized in the world to come (Mt. 25:46).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Salvation in the past tense is when forgiveness of sins is realized in Christ.
- 2. Salvation in the present tense is when we faithfully abide in Christ.
- 3. Salvation in the future tense is when we arrive in heaven at last.

RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT ZEAL

By Dennis Gullede

(Colossians 4:12-13)

INTRODUCTION:

1. You cannot read the New Testament without being impressed with the zeal of the first century church.
 - A. We are blessed to live in a time when the New Testament church, doctrine and worship have been restored.
 - B. It may be that we need to restore some of that New Testament zeal as well.
2. Zeal stands in sharp contrast to apathy, indifference and lukewarmness.
 - A. The progress of the New Testament church is dependent upon the zeal of its members.
 - B. Zeal is the fuel that propels the engines of the church to make it go.
3. Zeal has an interesting definition:
 - A. It is a verb in the Greek meaning "to seek or desire eagerly" (Vine).
 - B. This definition shows that zeal must have an objective and this objective determines its true worth.
 - a. Some people are zealous for power, wealth, fame or false religion.
 - b. Christians must be zealous for the Lord, truth and right.
 - C. Zeal is not:
 - a. A mere excitement
 - b. A loud voice
 - c. A quick decision
 - d. A heated argument
4. Zealous people in the Bible include:
 - A. Jesus (Jn. 2:17).
 - B. Paul before his conversion to Christ (Phil. 3:6)
 - C. Jews of Paul's day (Rom. 10:2).
 - D. Epaphras (Col. 4:12-13).
5. What are some of the areas wherein we need to restore New Testament zeal?

DISCUSSION:

- I. IN THE AREA OF KNOWLEDGE.
 - A. Paul recognized the Jews as having zeal without knowledge (Rom. 10:2).
 1. Paul compares them to the Gentiles (9:30-31).
 2. Why did they fail? (9:32-33).
 - B. Of the two qualities (zeal or knowledge) which is more important?
 1. I don't know. One is an orphan without the other.
 2. Zeal without knowledge is a dangerous fanaticism.
 3. Knowledge without zeal is stoicism.
 - C. Knowledge in this context is not general, but specific:
 1. It means knowing what God has taught on how one is justified.
 2. This knowledge the great body of Jews did not possess.

- D. Others, by example, show us what zeal and knowledge can do:
 1. Zeal to know Christ prompted the Ethiopian to learn more (Acts 8:31).
 2. Zeal to know caused Sergius Paulus to "hear the word of God" (Acts 13:7).
 3. Zeal to know urged Bereans to be daily students of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).
- E. What does zeal do for you?
 1. Does it bring you to the assembly of the saints more than just Sunday morning?
 2. Does it prompt you to study your Bible more - and in Bible class?

II. IN THE AREA OF OPPOSING SPIRITUAL ERROR.

- A. There probably has never been a time when as many false doctrines have been taught and accepted as they are now.
 1. Past generations have said the same, but how can they compare to today?
 2. Men shamelessly alter the Scriptures - make them the basis of teachings, practices and institutions not authorized by the New Testament.
- B. Some in Paul's day were more zealous for the wisdom of men than the simple gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
 1. False teachers were very zealous in Jesus' day (Mt. 23:15).
 2. They are equally zealous in our day - which is why they are so believable!
- C. Some, by example, show us their zeal against error:
 1. Jesus (Jn. 2:17)
 2. Paul (Acts 20:30-31; Gal. 2:11).
 3. John (3 Jn. 10).
- D. You need not expect the lukewarm and apathetic members of the church to rise up and oppose error.
 1. Reaction to false teaching will come from those who are on fire for Christ.
 2. Zeal is a feeling of indignation against anything injurious to its object.

III. IN THE AREA OF EVANGELISM.

- A. Evangelism calls for the highest degree of zeal on the part of those who love the lost.
 1. Some people love this world and need to be advised of a better world to come.
 2. Some people are in the grip of false teaching, bigotry and prejudice and need to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly.
 3. Some people just need to hear the truth for the first time.
- B. Some, by example, show us their zeal for evangelism:
 1. Jesus (Lk. 19:10).
 2. Christians at Jerusalem (Acts 8:4).
 3. Paul (Rom. 10:1).

- C. You will not find weak, lukewarm or indifferent brethren in the work of saving souls.
 - 1. This work is for those whose hearts are aflame for the Lord.
 - 2. We need zealous workers in -
 - a. Our teaching program
 - b. Our visitation program
 - c. Our benevolence program

CONCLUSION:

- 1. New Testament zeal should be a fire burning in the heart of every New Testament Christian.
 - A. It is from love for God, Christ, his church and the lost of men.
 - B. It is a faith in God that will not shrink.
 - C. It is a heart that will trust God for strength and courage to bear life's burdens.
- 2. A zeal that springs from anything else is not New Testament zeal.

HOW IS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE?

By Dennis Gullede

(1 Peter 2:21)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus Christ is our example in every area of our lives.
 - A. We are to fix our eyes upon him as we run our heavenly race (Heb. 12:2).
 - B. We are to look at him as our pattern for living (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Jn. 2:6).
 - C. We are to follow him in suffering for righteousness (1 Pet. 2:21; 4:15-16).
2. In our text, Peter, the once impulsive apostle, learned much about imitating Christ.
 - A. He did not use the typical word tupos for "ensample" (Phil. 3:17).
 - B. He used the word hupogrammon (hupo, meaning "under," and gramma meaning "to write")
 - C. Jesus is the underwriting of our lives.
3. There are some ways that religious people erroneously insist that Christ is our example.
 - A. We see this in the area of baptism.
 - a. Some say that since Jesus was sinless when he was baptized that baptism is for saved people.
 - b. Others say that baptism is merely to "obey God" as Jesus obeyed God being baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15).
 - B. Does Jesus' being our example mean that we are to do everything he did and for the same purpose that he did?
4. The following points might help us to see how Jesus is our example.

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME THINGS JESUS DID WERE INCIDENTAL AND NOT INTENDED FOR US TO FOLLOW.

- A. He learned work in a carpenter's shop (Mt. 13:55).
 1. We are to learn to work (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8).
 2. I don't know anyone who would say we are restricted to be carpenters because Jesus was.
- B. Jesus chose not to marry, but he supported marriage (Mt. 19:5-6). Does that mean we should refuse to marry? No.
- C. Jesus had no children, but he loved them (Mt. 18:1-3). Does that mean that children should not be the fruit of marital unions? No.
- D. Jesus had no place to call home (Lk. 9:58). Does that mean we should reject home ownership? No.
- E. Jesus was baptized at age 30 (Lk. 3:23). Does that mean that we should wait until the age of 30 to be baptized? No.

II. SOME THINGS JESUS DID BECAUSE HE WAS A JEW LIVING UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES.

- A. Jesus obeyed perfectly the Law under which he lived (Gal. 4:4)
 - 1. He was circumcised as an infant (Lk. 2:21).
 - a. This was a seal of the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:7-11).
 - b. It is not required of Christians today (Gal. 5:2-3).
 - 2. He worshipped in the synagogues on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:16; cf Col. 2:16-17).
 - 3. He kept the Passover (Lk. 22:13-15; cf., Col. 2:16-17).
 - 4. He taught Jews to keep the commandments of God through Moses (Mt. 19:17; Acts 2:37-38).
- B. Jesus practiced all these things, but they are not bound upon us (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 3:24-25).

III. SOME THINGS JESUS DID WE MUST FOLLOW IN PRINCIPLE, BUT NOT IN IDENTICAL ACTION.

- A. Jesus was circumcised (Lk. 2:21). We are spiritually circumcised in baptism (Col. 2:10-13).
- B. Jesus paid taxes (Mt. 17:24-27). We are to pay taxes (Rom. 13:6).
- C. Jesus washed the disciple's feet as an example of humility (Jn. 13:5-15). We are to be humble (Jas. 4:6, 10).

IV. SOME THINGS JESUS DID WE SHOULD FOLLOW IN PRACTICE, BUT FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE.

- A. Jesus observed the Lord's Supper immediately after eating the Passover (Mt. 26:26-29).
 - 1. He did so in order to institute the memorial in his kingdom (Vs. 29).
 - 2. It was not his purpose to remember himself. We must (1 Cor. 11:23-25).
- B. Jesus showed us that we ought to give our lives for the brethren (1 Jn. 3:16).
 - 1. We may die for the brethren.
 - 2. But, we cannot do it for the same purpose that Jesus did (Mt. 26:28).
- C. Jesus was baptized (Mt. 3:13).
 - 1. We cannot be baptized for the same purpose that Jesus was baptized (Mt. 3:15).
 - a. What is righteousness? (Psa. 119:172).
 - b. Jesus was baptized to full all that God would require.
 - 2. He was not baptized as were others seeking John baptism:
 - a. He had no sins to confess (Mt. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:22).
 - b. He had no need of repentance or forgiveness (Mk. 1:4).
 - 3. Some brethren teach that one being baptized does not need to understand that it is for the remission of sins - just "obey God."
 - a. Jesus had no lack of understanding of his purpose when he was baptized.

- b. If Jesus is our example here (and he is) then, we should have no lack of understanding when we are baptized.
- c. Our purpose for baptism differs from the baptism Jesus received (Acts 2:38, 47; 22:16).

V. IN SOME THINGS JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE IN PRINCIPLE, PRACTICE AND PURPOSE.

- A. Consider his example of love, service and compassion (Rom. 15:2-3a).
- B. We can follow him completely in these and other areas.

CONCLUSION:

1. As our example Jesus is perfect in:
 - A. Character
 - B. Teaching
 - C. Model
2. May we -
 - A. Strive to be like him.
 - B. Be careful to teach and live what he taught.
 - C. See accurately how is our example.
3. If you want to make Jesus your example come to him now.

BIBLE DEFINITION OF A FOOL

By Guy F. Hester

I. INTRODUCTION

1. "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:22)
2. The word "fool" has different meanings.
3. In this passage it is a term of contempt, and Jesus tells us never to use it in that sense when referring to someone else.
4. He who does so "shall be in danger of hell fire."
5. But the word "fool" is not always used as a term of contempt.
6. Many times in the Bible people are called fools. It is in this sense that the word is used in our lesson today.
7. "One who is deficient in judgment, unwise, or acts foolishly is a fool."
8. A fool is the opposite of one who is wise (1 Corinthians 3:19-20).

II. WHO DOES THE BIBLE CALL FOOLS?

A. Those who won't listen to advice.

1. Proverbs 1:7; 23:9; 1:22; Proverbs 15:5.
 - a. The man who just won't listen to advice is a fool in God's sight.
 - b. Such a man thinks he know it all Proverbs 18:2; 12:15; 28:26.
 - c. The man who despises wisdom and instruction, and pays no attention to good advice; but rather trusts in his own heart, and is right in his own eyes, the Bible calls a fool.
2. Let us not be fools in this respect.

B. Those who disregard warnings.

1. Proverbs 14:16; Proverbs 22:3.
 - a. There are many warnings given us in the Bible.
 - b. These warnings must be heeded.
2. How foolish to pass on and pay no attention to them.

C. Those who persist in doing evil are fools.

1. It isn't easy to correct this kind of a fool
 - a. Proverbs 13:19; Proverbs 10:23; Proverbs 26:11; Proverbs 12:23; Proverbs 13:16.
2. How foolish for one to persist in that which he knows is not right.

D. Those who believe everything they hear.

1. Proverbs 14:15.
 - a. It is foolish for a man to believe everything that he hears.
 - b. This is characteristic of thousands. i.e., Supermarket tabloids.
2. Some believe everything they hear in religion, 1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:15.
3. How wise the people of Berea were - Acts 17:11
4. Don't be a fool in that you believe everything you hear.
 - a. Weigh all things in the light of the Scriptures.
 - b. Hold only to those things for which you have a thus-saith-the- Lord.

E. Those who make a mock of sin.

1. Proverbs 14:9, and some can sin with no remorse - Jeremiah 8:12
2. Sin is a rebellion against God and separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2). How can one regard sin so lightly?

3. Some even make a joke of it, and laugh about it as though it didn't matter very much.
 - a. Such people have no regard for right.
 - b. They can act sinfully and speak sinfully without blush on their cheeks or shame in their hearts.
 - c. Such people God calls fools.
 4. Let us not be fools in that respect, but may we realize the awfulness of anything that brings reproach upon God.
- F.** Those who get mad too easily.
1. Proverbs 18:6; 14:7; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Proverbs 14:29; 27:3.
This is what the Bible says about those who are contentious and get mad easily.
 2. Don't let anger make a fool of you.
- G.** Those who talk too much.
1. Ecclesiastes 10:14; Ecclesiastes 10:12; Proverbs 10:19; 15:14.
 - a. We are not dealing with man's classification, But God's.
 - b. I'm simply letting God himself tell who fools are.
 - c. Throughout the Bible and especially in the writings of Solomon, fools are described for us.
 - d. It behooves us therefore to take special note of all that is said, lest we be found among the foolish one's.
 - e. Proverbs 18:7; 15:2; Ecclesiastes 5:3; Proverbs 29:11; 18:13.
 2. There are so many passages in the Bible dealing with our speech that time would not permit a reference to all of them, but this phase of our lesson would not be complete without referring to the language of our Lord in Matthew 12:35-37. Heaven is keeping a record of every word that we speak, and some day we shall have to give an account of the same.
 3. How careful we ought to be in every word that is uttered lest we be fools in this respect.
- H.** Those who drink alcohol.
1. Proverbs 20:1; 23:32.
 - a. Just as a serpent's bite is dangerous and an adders sting is be avoided or shunned; so is strong drink. How foolish it is for one to deal with strong drink.
 - b. POEM
 The preachers and do-gooders, I know what they say,
 About the evils of drinking and traveling the broad way,
 But I'm a grown man and I don't care what they think'
 It's nobody's business if I take a drink.
 He drank down a beer, and then three or four,
 He said, I'm all out, but I'll go get some more.
 He jumped in his car and out of the driveway did spin,
 I'll put the peddle to the metal, he said with a grin.
 The neighbors were all awakened by the sound of the crash,
 The clashing of metal, the breaking of Glass.
 Mommy, Oh mommy, the small child's voice said,

But mommy couldn't answer, she was already dead.
 The father was dying, in his own blood he lay,
 The drunk was unhurt as they led him away.
 He said, I'm a grown man and I don't care what they think,
 It's nobody's business if I take a drink.

=Guy F. Hester=

- c. The place where strong drink is sold is sometimes called a **bar**--How true that is!

A bar to heaven, a door to hell; Whoever named it, named it well.
 A bar to manliness and wealth; A door to want and broken health.
 A bar to honor, pride and fame; A door to grief and sin and shame.
 A bar to home and a bar to prayer; A door to darkness and despair.
 A bar to honored, useful life; a door to brawling, senseless strife.
 A bar to all that's true and brave; A door to every drunkard's grave.
 A bar to joys that home imparts; A door to tears and aching hearts.
 A bar to heaven, a door to hell; Whoever named it named it well.

=Author Unknown=

2. We only have to check the statistics throughout our nation, as well as other nations, to see the evil effect of strong drink.
 - a. How foolish people act under the influence of it.
 - b. Lives have been lost; Property has been destroyed; Shameful acts have been done; Homes have been broken; Hearts have been made to ache; and we could go on and on telling the results of strong drink.
 3. Nobody starts out to be an alcoholic but statistics show that a shocking percentage of all social drinkers become alcoholics.
 - a. The Bible is right, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 4. Don't let alcohol make a fool of you--"Abstain from all appearance of evil"(1 Thessalonians 5:22)
- I.** Those who say in their heart, "There is no God!" (Psalms 14:1).
1. Let such foolish ones tell us now the world came into existence, and where life came from, and how the regulation of the universe is accounted for, and what keeps all the elements of nature in place, and the thousand and one things that those who do not believe in God have never been able to explain.
 - a. It would be just as plausible to believe that Webster's Unabridged Dictionary resulted from an explosion in a print shop as to believe that this universe with its marvelous workings simply happened by chance. Such is preposterous!
 - b. There is just too much evidence not to believe in God.
 2. Back of every design is a designer, and back of every work is a workman. Just so, back of creation is a Creator.
 3. No wonder the Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."
 - a. Man's denial of God does not lessen the reality of God's existence.
 - b. Some day all must face God then all will know for sure that there is a God.

4. Don't be a fool in waiting until then to come to the realization that God does exist.
 - a. The judgment will be an awful day for those who doubt His existence- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.
 - b. I plead with you to study the Bible, which reveals God, that you might come to believe in God--(Hebrews 11:6)

III. CONCLUSION.

1. Every individual who does not make adequate preparation for eternity is a fool.
2. In one of the Lord's parables he tells us of five who were wise and five who were foolish.
3. Those who did not make adequate preparation the Lord called foolish.
4. Are you wise or foolish in this respect?
5. To make adequate preparation one must not only believe in Christ, but he must also repent of his sins and turn to Christ. He must confess Christ before men, and be buried and raised with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins. 6. He must put on Christ and it is in baptism that he does this--Galatians 3:27.
7. To make adequate preparation one must "...seek...first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).
8. Adequate preparation has not been made until one has given himself completely to the Lord, and is faithful and diligent in His service to the Lord.
9. Don't you be a fool in a failure to prepare adequately for eternity.
10. Time is running out and you have not time to lose (2 Corinthians 6:2).

ONE MUST BE IN CHRIST TO BEAR FRUIT

By Guy F. Hester

I. INTRODUCTION:

1. **TEXT** - (John 15:1-8).
2. Just as a branch detached from a grapevine cannot bear grapes, neither can one who is not in Christ bear fruit.

II. DISCUSSION:

- A. One must first get into Christ.
 1. Many think they are in Christ who are not in Him.
 2. Can't believe into Christ, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10).
 3. Can't repent into Christ, for repentance is "unto life" (Acts 11:18).
 4. Can't confess into Christ, for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).
 5. These are all "unto" toward or in the direction of getting into Christ.
 6. It is by baptism that one gets into Christ.
 - a. Galatians 3:26-27, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - b. Romans 6:3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"
- B. Must stay in Christ.
 1. **TEXT**--"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear "fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (v.4); "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (v.6)
 2. Abide in Him by adding "Christian Graces" (2 Peter 1:5-11), "they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful" (v.8).
- C. What kind of fruit does the Christian bear?
 1. Branches in a grapevine produce grapes.
 - a. Branches in Christ (Christians) produce Christians.
 - b. "We have been saved to save."
 2. Paul was fruit bearing Christian.
 - a. He said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1).
 - b. (Philippians 4:8-9). "Things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...of good report" will result in producing good fruit.
 3. The example of a good clean Christian life will produce fruit.
 - 1 Timothy 4:12; Matthew 5:14-15; 1 Peter 3:1-2.

III. CONCLUSION:

- A. The fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" are "fertilizer" to the soul of the Christian making him that he "should neither be barren nor unfruitful."
 1. Only in Christ can one enjoy the fruit of the Spirit or bear fruit for Christ.
- B. Get in Christ, stay in Christ

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

By Guy F. Hester

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A.** I believe this is a question of fundamental importance because there is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding in the religious world today as to just what the church of Christ or the New Testament church is.
1. We shall be using these two terms interchangeably or synonymously throughout this lesson because the church of Christ is the only church that is even mentioned in the New Testament.
 - a. We have become so accustomed to thinking of the church in denominational terms that is nearly impossible to separate, or disassociate these terms in our minds.
 - b. No one supposes Paul or Peter, or any of the other apostles, belonged to a denomination.
 2. We have thousands of cases of conversion recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles, and of all the conversions recorded in the book of Acts there is not a single hint that anyone ever joined a human institution of any kind.
 3. Yet all Christians in apostolic times belonged to the church.
- B.** In the New Testament, there are many allusions to the body of people who make up or compose the church of Christ.
1. Church is alluded to as the Lord's "vineyard." (Matthew 20:1).
 2. The church is also alluded to as a "sheepfold" (John 10:1).
 3. The church is alluded to as "God's temple" (Ephesians 2:21).
 4. The church is also spoken of in the New Testament as "God's elect" (2 Timothy 2:10).
- C.** We should not confuse these allusion with the terms which are especially used to designate the church.
1. Since the church is unlike any other institution, it has been presented to us by some very striking pictures in order that we might better understand and appreciate it.
 2. It depends altogether on the angle from which we look upon the church as to which of these pictures we use.

II. DISCUSSION.

- A.** First of all IT IS THE CHURCH!
1. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).
 - a. From the second chapter of the book of Acts we learn that Jesus did exactly what He said He would do on the first Pentecost following His resurrection.
 - b. From that time on the church was spoken of as a reality, or something that was already in existence.
 2. The term "church" is from the Greek word "ekklessea" and means "a called out congregation." (EK meaning out and KALEO meaning called)
 - a. According to the definition it may be applied to any gathering.
 - b. The ancient Greeks used the term primarily to designate a political body.

- c. Stephen spoke of the Israelites in Moses' time as "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).
 - 3. While the term "church" signifies no more than "a called out congregation," The church of Christ has much important meaning than simply a called out group or assembly.
 - a. The Bible teaches that the church of our Lord is composed of immersed believers in Christ, who have been called out from the world, and who associate themselves together to worship God "In spirit and in truth."
 - b. It is a Spiritual house over which Christ reigns as head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- B.** Second the church is pictured to us in the Scriptures as THE KINGDOM.
 - 1. Whether we speak of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of heaven, we have in mind the same institution (John 17:10).
 - a. The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of God; and the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ.
 - b. It is often spoken of as the kingdom of heaven because it is from heaven and not of this world (John 18:36).
 - 2. Biblically speaking, the church and the kingdom signify one and the same institution.
 - a. Matthew 16:18-19 - The church and the kingdom are spoken of in this passage in practically the same breath and are used interchangeably.
 - b. Of course Jesus was speaking of the same institution when he used these two terms.
 - c. So when Peter used "the keys of the kingdom" on the first Pentecost to make known the terms of entrance into it, he made known the terms of entrance into the church at the same time.
 - 3. In Luke 22:17-30 we have a very significant statement regarding the establishment of the kingdom and the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 - a. From this passage we learn that Jesus instituted His Supper to be observed in His kingdom, which was soon to be set up.
 - b. Then a short time later we find the apostles and early Christians observing the Lord's Supper in the church.
 - 4. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The breaking of bread in this passage refers to the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 - 5. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).
(This passage shows that it was the practice of the church to assemble on the first day of the week to commemorate the Lord's death by communing at His Table in the assembly, or the church.)
 - 6. It is evident that the church and the kingdom are one and the same institution. (If not, then the Lord's Supper, which was to be observed in the kingdom, was never really put there, as Jesus declared it was; or else someone is guilty of stealing it out of the kingdom and placing it in the church, where it never should have been.)

- C.** Third, the church is pictures to us in the Scriptures as GOD'S BUILDING (1 Corinthians 3:9).
1. "Spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:19-21).
 2. While this divine institution, the church, which Christ came into the world to establish is sometimes called a "building," let us not suppose it is a material building.
 - a. If we speak of the meeting house as the church, we mean, of course, the place where the church meets to engage in in worship.
 - b. The church is not made up or composed of wood, shingles, nails, bricks, and mortar.
 3. The church of Christ, is a spiritual building or as Peter calls it, a "spiritual house" made up of individual Christians, who have been born the "family of God."
- D.** The church is pictured to us in the Scriptures as THE FAMILY OF GOD (1 Timothy 3:14-15).
1. The term "house" as used in this passage signifies "household" or "family."
 - a. Hezekiah - "Set thine house in order" (2 Kings 20:1).
 - b. Twenty six times the Old Testament speaks of the "House of David" - his family.
 - c. Cornelius "feared God with all his house" (Acts 10:2).
 - d. Paul and Silas told the Philippian Jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy house" (Acts 16:31-33).
 - e. These references were to their families, not a literal house or building in which they lived.
 2. In the process of conversion man is pictured as "being born again" (John 3:3). The figure most commonly used to express our relationship to God after conversion is that of a "son" or "child" (Galatians 3:26-27; 1 John 3:1-2).
 3. By the new birth, man becomes a child of God, and by the same process becomes a member of God's household or family.
 - a. It is possible for one to join a denomination,
 - b. but the only way one can enter the family or household of God is by a new birth.
- E.** The church is also pictured to us in the Scriptures as THE BODY OF CHRIST.
1. Christ is the head of the body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).
 - a. These and many other passages make it very clear that when the New Testament speaks of the body of Christ, it is speaking about the spiritual body or His church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
 - b. Baptized believers in Christ, make up or compose the spiritual body of Christ, His church.
 2. It is very important for us to observe that all Christians are in Christ (Galatians 3:26-28; 2 Corinthians 5:17). One cannot be a new creature, or a child of God out of Christ.

3. The Bible further teaches that all who are in Christ are in His body (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).
 - a. To be a Christian is to be in Christ, and to be in Christ is to be in His body, and His body and the church are one and the same thing.
 - b. Therefore, it follows that all Christians are in Christ's church.
4. The same process that saves one makes him a member of the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). Therefore, in answer to the question, "What is the church of Christ?" It is the only institution in the world composed entirely of ALL who have been saved through obedience to the gospel of Christ.

III. CONCLUSION.

- A.** When we look at the church from all the angles presented in the New Testament we get a beautiful picture of it.
 1. If when we think of the church, we have in mind a group of Christians who have been called out of the world, and who associate themselves together to worship God, then it is a church.
 2. If we think of Christ as our King and all His disciples as His subjects, then it is a kingdom.
 3. If every Christian is thought of as a necessary part of a great structure, then it is a building.
 4. If we have in mind the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, then it is a family.
 5. If we look at it as an organization over which Christ reigns as head and in which all Christians are members, then it is a body.
 6. But all these different pictures are used to set forth the same institution.
- B.** Jesus came into this world to establish one, and only one, institution through which to save all mankind. So in order that we might get a better conception of it, and appreciate it more fully what the church of Christ is, and what it means to us, all these different figures have been used to represent it.

The Precious Seed

Luke 8:5-8

Introduction:

1. Everything was created full-grown. They were brought into existence by the direct power of Jehovah God.
2. But, since that time, everything has is being perpetuated by seed.
3. The same is true in the spiritual realm. The kingdom of God was begun with extraordinary demonstrations. Acts 2
4. Since Pentecost, is has been perpetuated by seed. Our text calls that seed, "The Word of God."
5. Now we shall consider three things about this seed:

I. The *Power* of The Seed.

- A. It is incorruptible. I Pet. 1:23-25
 1. Unlike natural seed, it is not subject to decay.
 2. It "lives and abides", in contrast to the flesh.
- B. It produces life. Psa. 119:50; Jn. 6:63; I Cor. 4:15
 1. The Word of God is the only life germ.
 2. Without the word no one is converted to Christ.
 3. There are no converts to Christianity apart from the preaching of the word. Every case of conversion in the book of Acts proves this point.
 4. What of the doctrine of a "direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart in conviction and conversion separate and apart from the word of God?"
 5. We are responsible to preach the gospel. Mk. 16:15
 6. "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom brother?"
- C. It produces life after its kind. Gen. 1:11, 12
 1. Natural seed has no power to produce otherwise. Plant a pumpkin seed and you don't get watermelons or squash.
 2. The word of God will produce nothing but a Christian. It takes something besides the word to get a hyphenated Christian of a denominational variety.
 3. Some want to mix the word with their creed book, manual, or latter day revelation.
 4. Can we re-produce the New Testament church today? Yes. We have the same seed they had in the first century.
 5. Some people think they are Christians by the power of someone else's suggestion that they are! It must be because we have the witness of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:17

II. The *Perils* of The Seed.

- A. The peril of the hard soil. (vs.12)

1. Here the soil is trodden under foot and devoured.
 2. This is the unreceptive heart from which the devil steals the word. The Devil's purpose vs. God's purpose. II Pet. 3:9
 3. The word never profits anyone unless it is mixed with faith. Heb. 4:2; Rom. 1:18-32; Heb. 3:7-13; II Pet. 3:5
 4. Some find their pleasure in unrighteousness, and the word is replaced with delusion and falsehood. II Thes. 2:9-12
- B. The peril of the rocky soil. (vs. 13)
1. Here the soil receives the seed, but life is soon cut short.
 2. The shallow heart gives the word only a passing interest.
 3. Church membership without conviction is useless.
 4. In the heat of persecution and tribulation, spiritual life withers away. (Example: The Galatians. Gal. 1:6; 5:6, 7)
- C. The peril of the thorny soil. (vs. 14)
1. Here the soil receives the seed, but then robs it of its fruitage.
 2. The cluttered heart gives the word only a divided interest.
 3. The difference between those who leave all to follow Jesus, and those who are self-righteous, and materialistic, and will not repent. Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:2
 4. A good example of such a person is Demas. II Tim. 4:10

III. The *Protection* of The Seed.

- A. Good seed is safe when it is in good ground. Production is a sure thing! There is never a failure.
- B. When is a heart a "good and honest heart?"
1. It seeks harmony in what inspired writers wrote. II Cor. 4:2; II Tim. 2:15
 2. It investigates before making a decision. Acts 17:11; I Thes. 5:21; I Jn. 4:1
 3. It will ask for guidance in learning. Acts 22:10
 4. It will be glad when helped to understand. Acts 2:41
 5. It will repent as soon as it is convicted. Rom. 2:4; Acts 16:33
 6. It will obey immediately upon learning what to do. Heb. 5:8,9; Acts 24:25
 7. It will walk in the light that it has. I Jn. 1:7; Jas. 4:17
- C. The fruit is brought forth "with patience." There must be a "giving of diligence" on our part. II Pet. 1:5-11

Conclusion:

1. Friend, you have received the word?
2. Now, what kind of heart do you have? Every heart here, and not here is illustrated in this old, and simple story.
3. Remember the word blesses every heart that it is allowed to enter and abide.

Jesus, Please Excuse Me!

Luke 14:15-24

Introduction:

1. This parable certainly speaks of the invitation going to the Jews. They rejected the gospel, and the gospel went then to the gentiles.
2. Have you carefully considered how flimsy these excuses were? That after being notified of the event, they make excuse for not coming.
3. Is it not so today, that our investments, jobs, and domestic cares keep us from accepting Christ? No man has a sound logical reason for not following Christ. The best he can do is offer an apology and try to place the blame on something or someone else.
4. We are going to consider some excuses people give. You will encounter these in your soul winning efforts. They may well be the reason why in a few moments from now some will not respond to the invitation.

I. "I Just Don't Understand Enough Yet."

- A. We ought to understand what we are doing. Jn. 8:32; Matt. 13:15
- B. How much do we need to know to become a Christian?
 1. That you are a sinner. Rom. 3:23
 2. That Jesus is the only Savior. Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:15
 3. What Jesus said to do to be saved. Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38
- C. What are you doing with the truth you already know and understand? If you wait until you know everything, you will do nothing. Walk in the light you have. Acts 2:41; 8:36; 16:33

II. "I'm Already Better Than Some of Your Members."

- A. Consider these facts before we go any further.
 1. There is a difference between a hypocrite and a weak member. Rom. 14:1; Gal. 6:1, 2
 2. God may have already forgiven that person. Matt. 7:1
- B. We might have some hypocrites in this church, but:
 1. But, we preach Christ. II Cor. 4:5
 2. People only counterfeit the real thing.
- C. Consider what is going to happen to these people... and YOU! WE may have some on the roll, but God doesn't. Matt. 13:47-50. Better to tolerate a few here than to be in hell with all of them!

III. "I Have Done Some Awful Things In My Life."

- A. Everybody sins... some are worse than others for sure.
- B. Is your condition worse than some the Bible talks about?
 1. The Jews who crucified Jesus? Lk. 23:34; Acts 2:23, 36
 2. Saul of Tarsus? I Tim. 1:13-15; Acts 22:16
- C. You are the very person Jesus came to save. Lk. 19:10; Isa. 1:18; Rev. 1:5; 7:14

IV. "I'm Afraid That I Cannot Hold Out."

- A. Where did you learn that the Christian life is too hard? From a faithful Christian or a modern day Judas? The way of sin is hard! Prov. 13:15; Matt. 11:28-30; I Cor. 10:13
- B. What are the consequences of what you are saying?
 - 1. You are counting on your strength. Phil. 4:13
 - 2. If you wait till you are perfect, you will never come.
- C. Please consider these two things:
 - 1. If Jesus saves you today, he will be your savior tomorrow.
 - 2. There is a second law of pardon. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:7-9

V. "I Will Be Condemning My Loved Ones."

- A. What you do with neither save nor condemn them! It will not be the cause of their salvation, or the reason for their damnation.
- B. They no doubt were as good as you say they were.
 - 1. Did they live by what they knew and understood to be right?
 - 2. Are you living by what you know and understand?
- C. We all have loved ones that have died lost! Matt. 7:13, 14; one thing for certain, they don't want you to be. Lk. 16:19-31

VI. "I Am Waiting On My Mate To Come With Me."

- A. It is wonderful to be concerned about others- but in the end, the judgement will be personal. Rom. 14:12
- B. Your first obligation is to the Lord. Matt. 10:37. While you are waiting on them; He is waiting on you.
- C. You should come ahead and use your influence for Christ. You cannot force, but you can lead. I Pet. 3:1

VII. "I Intend To Do It, But Not Now."

- A. How much time do you have? Can you say in terms of the calendar or the clock? We have two appointments to keep, but no card telling us when they will be! Heb. 9:27
- B. The Bible warns against procrastination. Prov. 27:1; Matt. 24:44; II Cor. 6:2; Jas. 4:13,14
- C. There will be a time when it will be too late. Gen. 6:3; II Pet. 3:9, 10; Rev. 22:20; Jn. 12:48

Conclusion:

- 1. God has never accepted excuses. Text says the Lord was angry.
- 2. The Devil never runs out of excuses. Is it his lie, our Lord's love that will touch your heart?
- 3. How do you think that excuse will sound on the judgement day?
- 4. Many a man has lost a treasure while carelessly handling it. So it is with many and their soul.
- 5. Many might have come had they had your opportunity.

The World's Best Loved Short Story

Luke 15:11-32

Introduction:

1. Very few speakers can capture attention, impart a message, move hearts, and conclude in FEW words. Jesus could. It was the "master" at parables who told this story. It is often called "the pearl of the parables."
2. Various interpretations have been offered. When the background is considered, this story is one about "attitudes." It is a rebuke of the cold hearted and self-righteous attitude of the Pharisees.
3. Four different "attitudes" are illustrated. What are they?

I. The Attitude of *Rebellion*. (vs. 11-16)

- A. Sin always involves "self-will." Prov. 14:12; Rom. 6:16
 1. This is the exact picture of sin. I Jn. 3:4; 5:17
 2. This is not a case of ignorance. Like the sheep. Isa. 53:6
 3. It is not the pull of gravity. Like the coin.
 4. But, willfulness. Like Adam, not Jesus. Jn. 6:38
- B. Sin always breaks fellowship with the Father. Isa. 59:1, 2
 1. All men depart from God by choice, not chance.
 2. Free moral agency will not be violated by our maker.
 3. This distance is not physical, but spiritual.
 4. There are two places God cannot be found: in Hell; or in the heart of a rebel. Eph. 2:12
- C. Sin always leads to spiritual bankruptcy. Rom. 6:23; Prov. 13:15
 1. Riotous joy. I Pet. 4:4, 5; Heb. 11:24, 25; Ecc. 12:1
 - a. One might as soon quench a fire by throwing fuel on it as to conquer lust by gratifying it.
 - b. Sinners leaning on other sinners is a pitiful sight.
 2. Wasted possessions, (family and friends; body and brain; and heart and soul.) Eph. 4:17
 3. Enslaved degradation, (the charm of sin always fades and leaves an awful habit.) Jn. 8:34; II Pet. 2:18, 19
 4. Note: what he wasted, he never regained. "There is nothing so easy as waste. It does not require any genius to waste property, to waste beauty, to waste life." (Joseph Parker)

II. The Attitude of *Repentance*. (vs. 17-21)

- A. Repentance calls for reflection. We must think about the past, the present, and the future. Lk. 13:3-5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30, 31
 1. Not all insane people are innocent!
 2. The consequences of sin must be faced and admitted.
- B. Repentance call for resolution. "I will...I will..."
 1. The motive might be low (felt need). Still we must come.

2. Motives for repentance. Rom. 2:2-4; II Cor. 5:10, 11
- C. Repentance calls for removal. "And he arose and went." Mt. 21:29. Some let it stop only with reflection or resolution.

III. The Attitude of *Remission*. (vs. 22-24)

- A. God does not condone sin. The Father did not follow the son into the far country. Jas. 1:13-15
- B. God wants to forgive sin. He was looking for the son to return home. John 3:16; II Cor. 5:21; II Pet. 3:9.
 1. This shows salvation is conditional, not universal.
 2. For the alien sinner. Acts 2:38-41; 26:27, 28
 3. For the erring child of God. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9
- C. God's forgiveness is based on grace; and it is full and free. Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 8:12; Isa. 55:7
 1. The son was not put on probation; or harassed with reminders of his wrong doing.
 2. The gifts: robe, ring, shoes, feast, are all significant. Eph. 1:3; I Cor. 6:9-11

IV. The Attitude of *Resentment*. (vs. 25-32)

- A. This resentment came from self-righteousness—a dangerous sin; for it will keep one from seeing the truth about self. (II Cor. 13:5)
- B. Self-righteousness will lead to other sins, (hatred, envy, falsehood, malice.) Gal. 6:1, 2; Eph. 4:28; Jn. 13:34, 35; I Jn. 1:10
- C. Sins of the disposition are just as sinful and damning as are the sins of the flesh. Gal. 5:19-21

Conclusion:

1. In this parable we have:
 - a. A warning—a sinner will suffer for his sins.
 - b. An example—all who sin as the prodigal must repent as the prodigal.
 - c. An encouragement—God receives the penitent regardless of their past.
2. Where are you today in relationship to the Father's house?
 - a. In the "far country" because of willful sin?
 - b. Or "at home", yet in sin because of your disposition.
 - c. The Father's house ought to be on our mind. Jn. 14:1-3
3. Is their joy in heaven over who you are and what you have done?
4. This young man did not procrastinate. The extension of mercy is always without exception, and so it is right now.
5. As we to sing this grand invitation song, remember that your heart is bringing you every moment closer to heaven or hell! Arise not just to sing, but to come to the Father in gospel obedience. Acts 22:16
6. God is calling the prodigal. Come without delay.

The Value of A Dollar

Luke 16:9-13

Introduction:

1. This is indeed a very difficult passage to interpret. It seems that all of the characters are rascals to some degree or another. Learn: To use the present opportunity to prepare for the future.
 - a. Vs. 8. It takes time, effort, and sacrifice to improve anything: business, sport of leisure; and our spiritual well being.
 - b. Vs. 9. We should use our abundance to help others.
 - c. Vs. 10, 11. The way we handle small matters proves our fitness to handle bigger things.
 - d. Vs. 13. The slave has no time to call his own. If we belong to the Lord, we belong to him totally, or not at all.
2. Many of our Lord's illustrations involve the principle of stewardship.
3. Often we hear it said, "He doesn't know what a dollar is worth."

I. Some Things A Dollar Cannot Do:

- A. It cannot buy redemption. I Pet. 1:18, 19
 1. What is redemption. Rom. 6:16-18
 2. Foolish notions. Indulgences, purgatory, etc.
 3. Only Jesus. Eph. 1:7; 5:25
- B. It cannot buy Apostolic power. Acts 8:20
 1. Explain what Simon saw and wanted.
 2. Peter could have cured his "silver and gold" shortage had he been like some today. (holy water out of Jordan, napkins, etc.)
 3. Modern day pretenders all have dollar marks in their eyes!
- C. It cannot buy the Lord's favor or good will. Rev. 3:15-17
 1. How many churches emphasize their attendance, contribution, physical facilities, often in comparison to another congregation.
 2. The Lord is not concerned with these things! Acts 10:34, 35
- D. It cannot buy peace of mind or happiness. Matt. 27:3-5
 1. Ecc. 2:3-11 "Vanity and vexation of spirit... no profit under the sun."
 2. Prov. 15:15, 16- "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."
 3. Many would give all they have for a clear conscience.
 4. Only Jesus can bring contentment and happiness. Jn. 16:33; Rev. 14:13
- E. It cannot buy immortality for the body. I.k. 8:43, 44
 1. Everyone who goes to the doctor... will eventually die.
 2. Only Jesus can give immortality. Jn. 11:25, 26
- F. It cannot buy a home in heaven. I.k. 16:19-31; 1 Tim. 6:7

1. Ecc. 2:18- "...unto the man that shall be after me." Psa. 49:10- "...men die, ...and leave their wealth to others."
2. Matt. 16:26- "What is a man profited if..."

II. Some Things A Dollar Can Do:

- A. It can bribe a man to sin. Matt. 26:15; 28:12
 1. It has made a fool out of many a politician. Isa. 1:23
 2. It has caused many an apostasy. I Tim. 6:10
 3. "Money getting has well been called unhealthy when it impoverishes the mind, or dries up the sources of the spiritual life; when it extinguishes the sense of beauty, and makes one indifferent to the wonders of nature and art; when it blunts the moral sense, and confuses the distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice; when it stifles religious impulse, and blots all thought of God from the soul."
- B. It can influence a false teacher. II Pet. 2:3, 14, 11; Rom. 16:17, 18
 1. I have had denominational preachers they could not come over to the truth because they would lose their retirement!
 2. Remove the collection basket and motivation is gone!
- C. It can take care of death and taxes. Matt. 17:27; Gen. 23:9, 16
 1. This was the only "real estate" that Abraham owned in the promised land!
 2. These two things are recognized as ever remaining with man.
- D. It can buy friends for a while. Prov. 19:4
 1. The prodigal son probably had friends as long as the money lasted. (Luke 15)
 2. It is always sad to watch church leaders court the wealthy.
- E. It can provide for our family. I Tim. 5:3-8
 1. I don't have a good word for "dead beat dads." (or moms.)
 2. Christ system of righteousness involves a duty to family.
- F. It can carry on the work of the church.
 1. Feed the hungry.. Acts 2:45; 4:35; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2
 2. It can support the preaching of the gospel. Phil. 4:16
 3. "Church is always needing something." Man had a little boy that was always needing something. He doesn't need anything now. You see, he died! So it is with the church!
- G. It can testify against us. James 5:1-5 (see Matt. 25:31-46)

Conclusion:

1. It is not what we eat, but what we digest that makes us strong.
It is not what we make, but what we save that makes us rich.
It is not what we read, but what we remember that makes us wise.
It is not what we claim, but how we live that makes us Christians.
2. In the end, we give an account to God. Rom. 14:12

Jesus Weeping Over Jerusalem

Luke 19:41-44

Introduction:

1. The Christ was to be a “man of sorrows”, (Isa. 53:3). Three times we are told that he wept. We are never told that he smiled and laughed.
 - a. John 11:35, at the tomb of Lazarus. Tears of sympathy.
 - b. Luke 19:41-44, (Matt. 22:37) at the sight of Jerusalem.
 - c. Hebrews 5:7, (Lk. 22:44) in Gethsemene. Tears of grief.
2. This is indeed a strange setting.
 - a. Jesus is making His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is a week before His crucifixion.
 - b. At first it was “hail him”. Then it was “nail him.” Men are fickle!
 - c. While others shouted for joy, Jesus wept.
3. What made Jesus weep over Jerusalem?

I. He Wept Over Their False Religion.

- A. What made their religion false?
 1. They had Moses and the prophets. Lk. 16:29
 2. They had failed to comprehend the message of the Old Testament about Him. Jn. 5:30-47
 3. They crucified Jesus the week of the Passover; which means they missed the one they had been looking for. I Cor. 5:7
- B. What does the Lord see in our city?
 1. Lip service without heart service. Jn. 14:15; Mk. 7:6
 2. Self-righteousness and not His righteousness. Rom. 10:1-3
 - a. Different plans of salvation. Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38
 - b. Different ways to worship. Jn. 4:23, 24; Mk. 7:7, 8
 3. Spiritual blindness, which is still a curse upon the people. Matt. 13:14-16; Eph. 4:18; II Cor. 4:3, 4
- C. Our greatest need today is to:
 1. Proclaim the platform for religious unity. Eph. 4:3-6
 2. Exhort our own brethren to faithfulness. Heb. 10:22-25

II. He Wept Over Their Cold Hearted Discipleship.

- A. Jesus had given them the details about discipleship.
 1. It's terms. Lk. 9:23-27
 2. It's tests. Lk. 9:57-62
- B. What does the Lord see in our city?
 1. Division among His professed followers. Jn. 17:20, 21
 2. Unattended assemblies and unsupported programs. Heb. 10:25; I Cor. 15:58
 3. Undisciplined members. I Cor. 5:5-8
 4. The altar of sacrificial living forsaken. Mal. 3:8; Rom. 12:1

- C. We fail to recognize the church as the only and true body of Christ.
 - 1. Christ is the head. Eph. 1:22, 23 (direction/ authority)
 - 2. We are the members. 1 Cor. 12:13-27 (function together)
 - 3. All spiritual life is in the body. Jn. 15:1-7

III. He Wept Over Lost Souls.

- A. What did Jesus see when He looked at an audience of people?
 - 1. Not their clothing, hair do's; whether ragged or rich.
 - 2. He saw their spiritual emptiness. Matt. 9:36
 - 3. Jesus does not look at our physical possessions except in how they affect our souls. Lk. 12:16-21
- B. What does Jesus see when He looks at our city? (Luke 15)
 - 1. He still sees lost sheep. Lost through careless wandering.
 - 2. He still sees lost coins. Lost through the pull of gravity.
 - 3. He still sees lost sons. Lost through willful wandering.
- C. We need to have more tears for the lost. Psa. 126:5, 6
 - 1. It is only now that we can show concern.
 - 2. It is only now that they can be saved from sin.

IV. He Wept Because of Impending Judgement.

- A. Jesus told them, "If thou hast known."
 - 1. He knew what was going to happen in thirty-five years.
 - 2. The Roman army brought on one of the worst blood baths in human history. The great Temple was destroyed. More than 1,500,000 Jews were slain.
- B. What does Jesus know about this city?
 - 1. He knows that He will open up our cemeteries. Jn. 5:28, 29
 - 2. He knows that He is going to destroy the world. II Pet. 3:10-12
 - 3. He knows that He is going to judge his house. Mt. 13:47-50
 - 4. He knows that He will judge the lost. II Thes. 1:7-9
- C. What then?
 - "When the church has sung it's last hymn.
 And the preacher has prayed his last prayer.
 And the people have heard their last sermon,
 And the sound has died in the air;
 And Bible lies closed on the pulpit
 And the pews are empty of men
 And we all stand facing the record,
 And the great Book is open, What Then?"

Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus wept because of sin. It past, present, and future work!
- 2. Some will not weep till it is too late. Jer. 8:20
- 3. Dying father told one son "good night"; the other "good bye."

CHRISTIANS OR MUSLIM/ISLAM

By John T. Polk II

John 8:37-47

INTRODUCTION:

1. Most people know Islam from stories about a *jihad* (holy war), or the *Shi'ites* blowing "somebodies" up, or of the *fatwa* (opinion on canonical law of a Mufti) against Salmon Rushdie and his The Satanic Verses (1989). The *fatwa* was declared lifted by Iran's Premiere, Rushdie appeared in TV interviews, THEN the mufti in Iran said a *fatwa* cannot be lifted -- oops! One-fifth of the world claims Islam.
2. Others may hear of "The Nation of Islam" (a.k.a. "Black Muslims"), which began in America in Detroit, Michigan in 1930 by Wali Fard Muhammad. Its submission is not of all men to Allah, but of all men to Black People who they claim are gods. One of his disciples, Elijah Poole (a.k.a. Elijah Muhammad) continued the movement, which came to include Malcolm X and Cassius Clay (a.k.a. Muhammad Ali).
3. The *Qur'an* (a book claimed to be final revelations from God through Muhammad) says: "Lo the religion with Allah is *al-Islam* (the Surrender) to His will and guidance" (Sura 3:19). Thus *Islam* means "submission to God", and *Muslim* means "one who submits to Islam". They are NOT properly referred to as "Muhammadans". Not until Muhammad gave his last speech to his followers, however, did he certify this religion for them: "This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you. I have chosen Islam to be your faith." (Sura 5:3)
4. The Apostle Paul praised his Jewish brethren for their "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:2-3) This truly describes the Islamic peoples of the world.
5. To my Muslim friends, I will be using the Scriptures which the *Qur'an* admits are from "Allah...for He has already revealed the Torah [O.T.] and the Gospel [N.T.] for the guidance of men, and the distinctions between right and wrong." (Sura 3:3). Their *Qur'an* is divided into *sura* (chapter) and verses, which helps in citing their book of religion.
6. The Confession and 5 Pillars of Wisdom are the basic requirements to be Muslim, and we will notice these in this lesson.

The *Shahadah* (open testimony) is:

"la ilaha illa 'L-Lah, wa Muhammadan Rasul Allah"

(There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God)

I. There Is No God But One

- A. Mark 12:29-30 ("Deuteronomy 6:4, 5")
1. The Premiere Commandment to the Israelites.
 2. Islam, Oneness Pentecostals, and Jews today teach a misunderstanding of this passage
 3. How can they teach the first statement, but not the second (Mark 12:30, 32-34)?
- B. This is the reason for Jewish rejection of Jesus Christ
1. John 1:11-12
 2. John 8:37, 41-42, 56-59
 3. John 10:30-33
 4. Matthew 26:63-66 "I adjure you by the living God that you tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!'"
 5. BECAUSE JEWS, PENTECOSTALS, MUSLIMS BELIEVE THAT GOD IS ONE, THERE CANNOT BE ANYONE ON EARTH WHO CLAIMS TO BE THAT GOD.
- C. This misunderstanding is "anti-Christ", for it denies there ever was The Son of God in the flesh:
1. I John 2:22- "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son."
 2. Colossians 2:9- "For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"
- D. Without Jesus, "to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68)
1. To draw us to God - John 6:44-45; 12:32
 2. To die for us - Galatians 2:20
 3. To mediate for us - I Timothy 2:5
- E. Muslims cannot accept any humanity of God:
1. They accept Creator (Genesis 1:1 [*Allah* is but the Arabic spelling of the Hebrew spelling of "*Elohim*"]) but nothing of weakness cf Romans 9:20, 15, 18; I Corinthians 1:18, 25
 2. Shirk is the cardinal and only unforgivable sin in Islam, to compromise God's Unity by giving Him a partner: "*Unbelievers are those who declare: 'Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary' (Qur'an sura 5); 'The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was no more than Allah's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary: a spirit from Him...Allah forbid that He would have a son!'*" (*Qur'an* sura 4)
 3. If, as Muslims teach, Jesus is *Kalimat-Allah* (the Word of God), how is it blasphemy to serve Him?
 4. *Muslims, thus, deny Jesus' death on the cross:*
 - a. *Qur'an* Sura 4:158: "They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: 'We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah.' *They did not kill Him, nor did they crucify Him, but it appeared so to them.*"
 - b. "what they knew about it was sheer conjecture; they were not sure that they had slain him. *Allah lifted him up to His presence*" *ibid*
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19-Muslims, Pentecostals, Jews cannot admit this claim
 - d. *Muhammad did not die for others' sins* cf I Corinthians 1:13; 15:3, 12-15, 17

II. MUHAMMAD IS HIS PROPHET

- A. *Born in AD 570 in Mecca, Arabia, of the Quraysh people, who trace their ancestry to Abraham through Ishmael.* He father died before he was born, mother died in 6 years, raised by his grandfather, then uncle. Married at 25, began his "call" in a cave where angel, Gabriel, supposedly revealed matters to him. When his wife died, he is given a "revelation" that multiple wives are approved, and he took 11. His daughter, Fatima, married his cousin, *Ali*, and the *Shi'a* sect claims this line. Other *kaliphs* led the movement in conquering much of the world. The European Crusades of the Roman Catholics were military campaigns to regain the Middle East. *Muhammad died in 632.*
- B. *He "developed" his doctrine from his surroundings: from paganism to monotheism; from poverty to giving; from humility to power; Jewish and Catholic opposition made his special day of the week Friday; BUT retained heathen practices: circling the Kaa'ba, a former temple of idols where a black meteorite rock is imbedded; praying to Mecca, where the Kaa'ba is found; etc. cf Luke 2:46-47; John 7:45-46; Matthew 7:28-29*
- C. NO PROOF OF "PROPHET-HOOD"!
1. No Mosaic statement Deuteronomy 18:18-19, 21-22; John 5:46-47
 2. No Miracles Deuteronomy 13:1-3; John 20:30-31; 21:25
 3. No Message
 - a. I Corinthians 14:37 God's Word Speaks
 - b. Luke 3:21-22; Mark 9:7-8; John 12:28-30 God Spoke
 4. No Murder
 - a. Jesus was mocked Luke 22:63; 23:11, 36 cf I Peter 2:21-23; Acts 17:32
 - b. "Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. Allah does not love the aggressors. Kill them wherever you find them...Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme. But if they mend their ways, fight none except the evil-doers" (*Qur'an* sura 2) cf. John 18:36; 6:15

III. PRACTICE

- A. *"5 Pillars of Islam":*
1. *Shahada* - repeated often daily and for many reasons [INTRO #6];
cf Hebrews 1:1-3
 2. *Salat* - ritual prayers 5 times a day (dawn, after noon, 2 hours before sunset, after sunset, 2 hours after sunset. Remove shoes, wash feet, hands, parts of his face, turn towards *Kaa'ba* at Mecca; cf Matthew 6:5, 7
 3. *Zakat* - ritual alms for unfortunate PLUS *Sadaqa* - voluntary offerings;
cf Ephesians 4:28; 2 Corinthians 8:3, 5
 4. *Saum* - fasts, usually in month *Ramadan*
 - a. 29 or 30 days and 9 days earlier each year;
 - b. cannot even swallow spit, touch member of opposite sex, play games of chance;
 - c. only daylight hours beginning when a white thread is distinguished from a black thread;
 - d. more money on food spent and more quarrels this month than any other time of the year;
 - e. nighttime for food, sex, or "fun"; cf Matthew 6:16-18; Colossians 2:18-23
 5. *Hajj* - pilgrimmage to Mecca if affordable in life. cf John 4:21, 23

B. Qur'anic Commands:

1. Women - "*Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to their beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them.*" (Qur'an Sura 4:34)
cf Ephesians 5:28-29; I Peter 3:7
2. "Heaven"? - "*As for those that have faith and do good works, We shall admit them to gardens watered by running streams, where, wedded to chaste virgins, they shall abide for ever.*" (Qur'an Sura 4)
3. "Hell"? - "*Those that deny Our revelations We will burn in Hell-fire. No sooner will their skins be consumed than We shall give them other skins, so that they may truly taste Our scourge.*" (Qur'an Sura 4)
4. Drinking and Gambling - "*There is great harm in both, although they have some benefit for men; but their harm is far greater than their benefit.*" (Qur'an Sura 2)

CONCLUSION:

1. The question for Muslims and all men is: "What do you think then of Jesus - whose Son is He?" Matthew 22:42
 - a. at birth? not Joseph's Hebrews 10:5; Luke 1:34-35; Matthew 2:18-25
 - b. at baptism? not "a Baptist"! Matthew 3:15-17
 - c. at transfiguration? not "a prophet" Matthew 17:1-5
 - d. at death? not "king of the Jews" Matthew 27:37; John 19:19-22
 - e. at resurrection? Matthew 28:1; Romans 1:4
2. No amount of zeal, good works, conquests, or service to Islam can take replace obedience/submission to Jesus Christ I Thessalonians 5:9-10
3. Matthew 28:18-20 is not obeyed by following *The Qur'an*.
4. "If you love me, keep My commandments" (John 15:13)

Take Your Vitamins By John T. Polk II

Introduction:

1. "Vitamin" is "food element essential to life".
2. No artificially-created, or "synthetic", can convey life because life has not been duplicated in test tubes.
3. There are dietary fundamentals: **Minimum Daily Requirements**, but these **do not adequately** adjust to current daily needs.
4. Physical bodies lose health without proper vitamin intake.
5. Christians may be "weak and sick" (**I Cor. 11:30**) also by failing to take spiritual vitamins.

Discussion:

1. Vitamin A

a. Resists infections

- i. stored by the body in the liver;
- ii. released by the presence of alcohol;
- iii. alcoholics die of pneumonia, flu, liver cirrhosis due to an inability to fight infections;
- iv. cold remedies' best ingredient is the small amount of alcohol, and vitamin A does the work.
- v. Synthetic "A" is toxic or lethal when over-used.

b. A-ttendance

- i. **Heb. 10:25**-constantly-used;
- ii. not enough stored on "Sunday morning" alone (MDR)
 - (1) **I Cor. 16:1-2**-only "giving" service "required"?
 - (2) **Acts 20:7**-only "communion" service required?
- iii. **Acts 2:42**-all of these activities are indigenous to the worship assemblies;
- iv. "synthetic assemblies" are any where the Word of God is not preached. These have a toxic or lethal effect upon one's soul, and one can "burn one out" from wanting to attend true worship (**Jno. 4:24**).

2. Vitamin B

a. In the Complex state, converts food to usable energy

- i. water-soluble and requires replenishing daily;
- ii. a tool the body uses to gain the most "life-sustaining" nutrients from all else consumed.

b. B-ible Study

- i. **Acts 20:32**-capable of taking over where the personal presence of an Apostle left off;
- ii. **Matt. 12:35**-when consumed within the heart, helps understand and enjoy life to the fullest, for out of the heart are the issues of life (**Prov. 2:6-2**);
- iii. **I Jno. 5:4**-faith wins and comes from the Bible (**Rom. 10:17**);
- iv. **Matt. 4:4**-sustenance, whether source or strength, comes from God's Word.

3. Vitamin C

a. **strengthens cell walls and wards off invasion by viruses and colds**

- i. Helps in the formation of collagen ("glue-like" substance) which thickens cell walls;
- ii. literally helps hold connective tissues together;
- iii. water-soluble and quickly used up; hence necessity for replenishing throughout the day.

b. **C-hores**

- i. **Matt. 25:41-46**-good deeds for others as we have opportunity (**Gal. 6:10**);
- ii. **Lk. 17:10**-there's no MDR, for once done, there will be others who need to be served;
- iii. THERE IS NO PROVISION FOR **STORAGE** OF CHRISTIAN CHORES TO BENEFIT OTHERS (**Matt. 25:1-13**);
- iv. These must be daily done and are easily used up.

4. Vitamin D

a. **From sun-light on the skin;**

- i. prevents ricketts, bone weakness;
- ii. lack creates noticeable changes in the skin and within;
- iii. can get too much.

b. **D-evotion ("prayer")**

- i. **I Jno. 5:14**-intelligent requests are heard;
- ii. **Phil. 4:6-7**-includes all types of appeals to God;
- iii. lack brings changes towards those without and weaknesses within religious framework ("skeleton") of the soul;
- iv. DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF ALL OTHER VITAMINS AND CANNOT COMPLETELY SUSTAIN ONE'S SPIRITUAL NEEDS.

5. Vitamin E

a. **increases blood's ability to transport oxygen;**

- i. increases healing ("regenerative") property of blood supply;
- ii. relieves the strain of smog and air pollutants;
- iii. reduces, therefore, scar tissue on wounds;
- iv. improves mental facilities and physical capabilities;
- v. synthetic can be toxic and lethal.

b. **E-scape from the world;**

- i. **Rom. 12:1-2**-must be renewed without the world's burdens on us, to permit "breathing room";
- ii. **I Cor. 15:33**-need to avoid constant contact with world;
- iii. monasticism, whether in activities or on campuses, is "synthetic" escape, and contrary to Jesus Christ (**Jno. 17:15**).

Conclusion:

1. There are other officially-recognized vitamins, but these should give us enough to begin improving our spiritual strength.
2. **This "parable" should encourage us to go beyond the "one-a-day" or spiritually "once-a-week" philosophy which weakens us all.**
3. **MDR is rarely enough of everything for a day**, because each one has stresses that demand extra amounts of various vitamins.
4. **"Weak and sick" people sometimes need a "shot" of vitamins** to boost them toward a normal level of activity, and so also do Christians.
Repentance is the shot (Acts 17:31; 2:38).
5. Let's take our vitamins for daily health and share them with others.

A Translation of the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

By John T. Polk II

Introduction:

1. Without Divine inspiration, the Bible would be the most unreliable book known.
2. **Emperor Diocletian** ordered wholesale destruction of the Bible (A.D.302). But **Constantine** and commanded large numbers of Scriptures be made available to the churches of his day (A.D.330). God has preserved some 5500 small to large "fragments" of the New Testament until today.
3. The Bible is "the living oracles" entrusted to man (**Acts 7:38**).

Discussion:

I. INSPIRED.

A. The Word of God is word-for-word inspired.

1. God Breathed into Adam's lungs and "man became a living being" (**Gen.2:7**), SO God Breathed into some men's minds "that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (**I Cor.2:12**).
2. Thus "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (**2 Tim.3:16-17**).

B. Those "inspired" men were:

1. the "holy men of God [who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (**2 Pet.1:21**), and
2. Given revelation from God so that "these things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (**I Cor.2:13**).
3. To use words that were "not with persuasive words of human wisdom" (**I Cor.2:4**) and
4. Not to "worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (**Matt.10:19-20**).

C. GOD **REVEALED HIS WORD** BY INSPIRATION AND **SELECTED ITS WORDING** FROM EACH INSPIRED MAN'S VOCABULARY, AND **GUIDED ITS WRITING** THE SAME AS IN PREACHING!

1. Paul had preached the Gospel of Christ in Corinth (**Acts 18:8; I Cor. 15:1-11**) but stressed his writings were equally inspired (**I Cor.14:37; 2 Cor.10:11; 13:10**).
2. Those who read his inspired words "may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (**Eph.3:3-5**).
3. He claimed "we are not writing any other things you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end" (**2 Cor.1:13 Cf v.14**).

II. Why is a Majority Text important?

- A. Under the Old Law of Moses, the original writings of Moses were gone, but accurate copies were provided by God.
1. He replaced destroyed texts (**Jer.36:1-4,20-32**);
 2. hid texts until they were found by those who appreciated them (**2 Chron.34:14-19**), and
 3. Had them copied by kings and believers (**Deut.31:9-13, 34-36; 17:14-20**).
 4. Jesus quoted these copies as accurate (**Jno.5:37-47; 3:14-16**) and
 5. The apostles so regarded them also (**Acts 2:16-21, 25-28, 34-36; 3:13-26; 13:27; 26:27-28**).
- B. In the first century, the Holy Spirit:
1. Told Christians which books were inspired (**Col.4:16; 2 Pet.3:15-16; I Thess.5:27; 2 Thess.2:15; Lk.1:1-4; Philemon 19**);
 2. Gave some the gift of "discerning of spirits" so they could tell authentic from false Scripture (**I Cor.12:10; I Jno.4:1-3; 2:20-21; Rev.2:2**);and
 3. Gave access to Scriptures that they might accurately judge one's preaching (**Acts 17:10-11; Lk.24:15, 25-27, 44-45**).
- C. **One must use a text of the Bible that represents the majority reading of known manuscripts (lit. "hand-writing") evidence, OR ELSE be at the mercy of uninspired men to tell us what manuscripts are important and which are not.**
1. Jesus prayed "for those who will believe in Me through their word" (**Jno.17:20**);
 2. The Holy Spirit then gave a 100% accurate text with a 100% accurate choice of books (canon);
 3. Then men must let the majority of God's Text be shown in a translation and minimize their own influence of it. If not, why not?

III. TRANSLATION

- A. In the New Testament (Greek metatithami) it means "to transfer two things one of which is put in place of the other".
1. God "changed" the priesthood of Aaron (and the Levites) into the order of Melchizadek (**Ex.28:1; Num.18:1-7; Heb.7:1-12**);
 2. Jacob's remains were "carried back" to Shechem from Egypt for burial (**Acts 7:15-16**);
 3. Enoch was "taken" from life to life beyond (**Heb.11:5; Gen.5:21-24**).
- B. In each of these cases the translation gave the equivalent as accurately as possible.
1. Since the Bible has been inspired by God word-for-word, when uninspired translators "translate" it they will be reflecting each word God has given in the "new" language.
 2. Once in the "new" language, punctuation, word order, capitalization, paragraphing and even adding italicized words may complement it, but not to the detriment of its truth!
 3. The translation, thus, becomes the inspired Word of God in a "new" language.
 4. ***In its writing***, the Holy Spirit miraculously guided men in choosing their words--***in its compilation***, the Holy Spirit miraculously guided men in their selection of books--***in its translation***, the Holy Spirit non-miraculously guides those who would accurately express it in a new language!

IV. TEXT.

A. One must read the Preface, Foreword, Introduction, or Apparatus of a book claiming to be the Bible to know if it is indeed a translation or a deliberate and devilish "tampering" with the truth.

1. Most "modern versions" fall into this latter category, for they have been done by those who either did not reflect the majority reading of the thousands of manuscripts available, **OR**
2. Didn't care whether they subjectively interpreted its truth, **OR**
3. Deliberately changed its meaning to preserve some false doctrine they wished to hold that the Bible did not teach to their satisfaction.

B. The King James Version (1611) AND the New King James Version (1979) are the only times the Majority Text has been translated into English and therefore the only versions this speaker recommends as being the Word of God in English.

Conclusion:

1. One must approach God's Word with the same reverence He demanded of Moses at the burning bush **Exodus 3:5-6**
2. Every book, every statement, every word specifies truth, and only "the truth shall make you free" **John 8:32**
3. Now hear Jesus' invitation to every sinner: "**Mark 16:15-16**"

An Outline Of Jude = Finality By John T. Polk II

[God Is Proficient]

I. Actual Authority Jude 1-3

- A. Of This Scripture v. 1a
- B. Of This Salvation v. 1b
- C. Of This Salutation v. 2
- D. Of This Station v. 3

II. Acts Of Apostates Jude 4-19

A. Perverts vs. 4-11

- 1. back door v. 4a - stealth, blind-siders, creepy Cf Galatians 2:4-5
- 2. front door v. 4b - God is not deceived ("ungodly") Cf Galatians 6:7
- 3. side door v. 4c - change one thing for another Cf Romans 1:22-32
 - a. **twist** "grace" into lasciviousness
 - b. **and shout** denial of Deity
- 4. Remember how God dealt with this kind before:
 - a. He saved Israel & destroyed unbelieving Egypt v.5 Cf Exodus 1-15
 - b. He spared not even rebelling angels v. 6
Cf 2 Peter 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:18-20; Genesis 6-9
 - c. He destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah for "strange flesh" v. 7
(1 Cf 2 Peter 2:7-8; Genesis 18:16-19:29
(2 THESE 3 SINS(in reverse order c, b, a) HE STILL OPPOSES v. 8
 - d. He is superior in His ways, even with the Devil vs. 9-10
(1 His "archangel" Michael v. 9
(a contended (διακρίνω - separating by hostility, used of...
(1) the Devil Jude 9
(2) apostates Jude 22
(b disputed - verbal disturbance
(c did not "revile" (βλασφημία - slander, injurious speech,
Matthew 12:31-32; 15:18-20; Ephesians 4:31-32)
(d trusted God's judgment
Cf Zechariah 3:1-2; Exodus 22:28; Acts 23:1-5;
2 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 10:30-31
(2 Devil's people, on the other hand... v. 10
(a speak "naturally" - unreasoning animals Cf 2 Peter 2:12
(b speak pollution v. 11 Cf I John 2:16
(1) "way of Cain" - lust of the flesh Cf Genesis 4:1-16
(2) "error of Balaam" - lust of the eye Cf Numbers 22-25
(3) "rebellion of Korah" - pride of life Cf Numbers 16

B. Deceivers vs. 12-15

- 1. moral wrecks v. 12a (σπιλάς - reef in the sea); Cf 2 Peter 2:13
- 2. purposeless clouds v. 12b; Cf 2 Peter 2:17
- 3. wasted trees v. 12c-d
 - a. fruitless Cf Mark 11:12-14, 20-22
 - b. rootless ("twice dead") Cf 2 Peter 2:22
- 4. useless as battering waves of the sea v. 13a Cf Isaiah 57:20
- 5. meaningless as comets (ἀστéρες πλανήτης) v. 13b

6. God's word of condemnation wavers not vs. 14-15
 - a. since Enoch's day v. 14 Cf Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5
 - b. "convict all who are ungodly..." v. 15
 - (1 in deeds
 - (2 in manner
 - (3 in harsh words
- C. Gripers vs. 16-19
 1. Let's hear it *from* the bad guys v. 16
 - a. "murmurers" (γογγυστής - secretly complaining
 - b. "complainers" (μεμψίμοιρος - griping about one's fate or lot
 - c. following their own heart's desires (ἐπιθυμία - craving what is forbidden, I Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 2:18; 3:3; I John 2:17)
 - d. puffed words (ὑπέρογκος - extravagant, arrogant, 2 Peter 2:18)
 - e. marveling at faces (θαυμάζω πρόσωπον)
 2. Let's hear it *for* the good guys vs. 17-19
 - a. READ THE NEW TESTAMENT not listen to them vs. 17-18
 - b. REMEMBER THEIR UNHOLY NATURE! v. 19

III. Actions From Above Jude 20-25

- A. Building Yourself Up vs. 20-21 (Begin inside)
 1. with faith v. 20a Cf Acts 20:32
 2. with prayer v. 20b Cf I Thessalonians 5:17, 25
 3. with diligence v. 21a Cf Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 13:11, 14; Ephesians 2:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
 4. with expectation v. 21b Cf Titus 2:11-13; Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Peter 3:11-12
- B. Lifting Others Up vs. 22-23 (Work outside)
 1. Save some through mercy --
 - a. because of our common understanding of their sins v. 22a
 - b. exercising our good spiritual judgment v. 22b Cf Galatians 6:1
 2. Save some through fear (φόβος, terror, dread, 2 Corinthians 7:5)
 - a. like firemen rescuing victims v. 23a
 - b. like providing clothes for "burned-out" families v. 23b
- C. Looking Over & Up vs. 24-25 (Focus topside)
 1. Him who is able to...
 - a. "keep you from stumbling" v. 24a Cf I John 5:18; Psalm 119:11
 - b. "present you faultless" v. 24b
 2. Him "Who alone is"... v. 25
 - a. "wise"
 - b. wonderful ("glory and majesty")
 - c. weighty ("Dominion and power")
 - d. without time ("Both now and forever. Amen")

Jude's Jousts:

- **Of the 9 "Judes" in the New Testament, this one is probably a half-brother of Jesus Christ** (Matthew 13:55), and thus, the brother of James so identified by Paul (Galatians 1:19).
 1. This James is NOT the brother of John, son of Zebedee, who had already been killed by Herod (Acts 12:1-2).
 2. Jude, half-brother to Jesus Christ, probably wrote this letter from Jerusalem with help from Peter, whose 2 Epistle was sent out from "Babylon" (a.k.a. "Jerusalem" I Peter 5:13).

- **With its 25 verses, Jude is a "crash course" in Bible prophecy and Old Testament lessons, and with finality closes the door to future speculation or revelation of God's will.**
 1. **"The faith" has been "once for all"** (ἄπαξ - done so as to never need repeating, Hebrews 6:4 ["once enlightened"]; Hebrews 10:2 ["once purified"]; Hebrews 12:26, 27 ["once more" indicating the only other time God would give His law like at Sinai was through Jesus Christ, Hebrews 1:1-4, jtpII]; I Peter 3:18 ["suffered once for sins"];) **"delivered [past tense, jtpII] to the saints."**
Jude 3
 2. *Unless a time limit is added i.e.,* Hebrews 9:7 ["once a year" or only one time each year, the designated length of time, jtpII];
 3. *Or an addition is mentioned i.e.,* I Thessalonians 2:18; Philippians 4:16 ["time and again" and "once and again"]; *it meant "once and only once without repetition!"*
 4. The word CAN mean something done with the *possibility* of repetition, but not in Jude 3. For example, as of 2 Corinthians 11:25 Paul was "once" stoned but could be again sometime; Christ appeared "once" as sacrifice for men's sins and though His sacrifice will never be repeated, He will appear "a second time" to finish His deliverance of the saved. Men "die once" physically, but may also die spiritually in the "second death" of Revelation 20:14-15 (Hebrews 9:26-28). "Once Divine longsuffering" delayed the flood till Noah's ark was finished (I Peter 3:20), but He is now also "longsuffering" till more repent (2 Peter 3:9, 15).

- **From whence did the quotation from "Enoch, the seventh from Adam" Jude 14 originate?**
(1) SOME ASSUME IT MUST BE A WRITTEN BOOK, such as the "Book of Enoch," an apocryphal book known by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian, and first published in English in 1821.
 1. *However since Scripture is progressively written, and since the "Book of Enoch" contains many details of revelation not fully explained until Jesus Christ came, it is "overloaded" and cannot have been written before the New Testament times!* As for example, no one knew God's name, Jehovah/I AM until it was revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:6, 13-17; 6:2-3).
 2. There are a few Scriptures which quote outside sources, but only a truth it contained, NOT as an endorsement of the entire work, i.e., Joshua 10:12-14; Acts 17:23, 29; Titus 1:10-14. **ADDITIONALLY, NOTHING IS SAID IN THIS VERSE ABOUT ANY "BOOK"!**

3. *Enoch's* verbal prophecy would have been known to God who could have inspired Jude to record it for the first time ever, as was done with a statement of Jesus not recorded until Acts 20:35.

*(2) However, since God's inspiration caused men to speak above their own personal knowledge on occasions (I Peter 1:6-12, 20-21), **GOD REVEALED SOME THINGS HE HAD SAID AS NEEDED AND WITHOUT PREVIOUS INCLUSION IN SCRIPTURE.***

1. As, for example, Jude 9. Where, when, and why this conversation took place, none knows, for the only revealed details of Moses' death were in Deuteronomy 34:1-6 until this verse!
2. *There is no more need to find a "book of Enoch" for Jude 14 than to seek a "book of Michael the archangel" for his statement quoted in Jude 9!!*
3. Mankind's futile efforts to find God-inspired truth outside the Bible's 66 books are as futile as probing "outer space" to prove the godless creation "faith" of evolution!!
4. The willfully ignorant will not become believers if archeologists found every scrap of every step godly men traveled, while ignoring what the Bible actually said occurred! Neither will they find evolution proven away from the Earth when they refuse to see abundant evidence of the Creator ON Earth and the Bible's completion of revelation about Him (Hebrews 11:1, 6; Romans 1:18-25)!

Lego Lessons **By Allen Webster**

Introduction: As you came into the auditorium today, you should have been given a single Lego piece. What was your initial reaction?

- Curiosity – this is unusual. What’s going on today?
- Indifference – some of you may have thrown it away or gave it away to a child
- Refusal – It’s possible that someone here even refused to accept his Lego.
- I’m sure that none of you were overjoyed to get a Lego piece. One Lego isn’t worth much.

Those Legos are a useful modern-day illustration of the same point Peter made in 1 Peter 2:5.

EVERY LEGO PIECE IS PART OF A SET (Rm. 12:4-8).

Word Studies:

Office, *praxis*, function; ministry, *diakonia*, attendance, aid, service; exhorteth, *parakaleo*, “to call near, invite, comfort, pray;” simplicity, *haplotes*, singleness, sincerity (without self-seeking), bountifulness; ruleth, literally, to stand in front of (pro, “fore”, in front of,) *proistemi*, to stand before, to preside, be over, rule. Diligence, “*spoude*, “speed”, dispatch, eagerness, earnestness; earnest care, forwardness, haste; cheerfulness, “*hilarotes*, root meaning, merry (“hilarious”), prompt or willing.”

- On July 20, 1969, the world watched as astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon. Who can forget the moment when he said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"? What we probably don't remember is how many people were involved in getting Mr. Armstrong to the moon. In all, there were 218,000 people working behind the scenes to make that historic moment possible.

You can't do much with a single Lego. You need a whole lot of them to make something. The piece you received today came out of a bucket with a total of 400 pieces. Any single part of the human body gets its importance from being connected to the body.

- Think about your hair. No doubt, most of us spend a fair amount of time working with our hair—washing it, drying it, combing it, getting it cut. Yet the minute your hair is cut, the part which has been separated from the body is thrown in the garbage and discarded. It has lost its value and purpose. The same thing is true of any other part of the body. Even vital organs such as hearts and brains are without value when they are separated from the body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). No one is insignificant in the church. Never say, “I’m not important. I don’t make much difference. Whether I quit or not doesn’t matter.” Every person has a role to play. Every person has a place to fill. Perhaps no one else can do what you do as well as you can.
- Lego illustration: In the Lego set I bought, there are 400 pieces. Only one was a wrecker truck hook. One of the projects pictured is making a wrecker truck! In very much the same way, you might be the necessary part in some great work for the Lord.

As a part of a set, legos are made to fit together. The great difference between Lego pieces and plain blocks are the little raised circles on the top of each piece which interlock neatly with the bottoms of other pieces. As Christians, we are made to fit together (Rm. 12:4-8). Regardless of color, size, age, background.

WE ARE STRONGER GROUPED TOGETHER

The only way to make anything useful is to team up with others.

- At a county fair, the townspeople held a horse-pulling contest. The first-place horse ended up moving a sled weighing 4,500 pounds. The second-place finisher pulled 4,000 pounds. The owners of the two horses decided to see what these horses could pull together. They hitched them up and found that the team could move 12,000 pounds. By working separately, the two horses were good for only 8,500 pounds. When coupled together, their synergism produced an added 3,500 pounds. It's a hard lesson for us, but unity consistently produces greater

results than individual endeavors. "Teamwork divides the effort and multiplies the effect." * Our Daily Bread, Special Edition, Day 15 (McHenry)

A sound (healthy) church "edifies" its members (Rm. 14:19, *oikodome*, "architecture, confirmation; building"). Rephidim was where Moses smote the rock and water came forth. With the armies engaged in battle in the valley below, Moses held up his rod, and as long as the rod was held high, the Lord's people prevailed in the battle. But when the Moses' hands grew tired and the rod was lowered, Amalek prevailed (Ex. 17). Aaron, the brother of Moses, and Hur sat Moses on a rock, and standing on either side of him, they held his hands and arms high with the rod, and victory was theirs!

- A business partner became very upset when he realized he was carrying more than half the workload. To vent some frustration he sought the counsel of a friend. Over lunch, the hardworking man shared his grievance. Quietly and patiently the friend heard out this distraught worker. He then reached for a glass of water and shared a significant truth. "Water is the foundation of life. All the planets we know about are barren, because they don't have water. For water to exist there must be teamwork, but that teamwork isn't mutually equal. Water is made up of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, H₂O. Hydrogen has to work twice as hard as oxygen. If a business (marriage, friendship, or church) is to thrive, we must be willing to sometimes work twice as hard as others."
- **Do You Just Belong?**
Are you an active member The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just content To have your name on the list?
Do you attend the meetings And mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home instead And criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part To help the work along?
Or are you satisfied To be a "just belong"?
Do you ever go and visit With the members who are sick,
Or leave the work to just a few, And talk about the "clique"?
Think this all over, member, You must know right from wrong,
Are you an active member Or do you just belong?

IF WE GET CROSSWAYS WITH THE OTHERS, WE DETRACT FROM THE BEAUTY OF THE WHOLE (Eph 4:1-6; Rm. 12:3; 14:19-21).

Word studies:

Ephesians 4:1-6: *Endeavoring*, *spoudazo*, "to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest;" *keep*, *tereo*, "to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon; to detain in custody; to withhold or keep unmarried;" *bond*, *sundesmos*, "a joint tie, ligament, band, bond."

Romans 14:19-21: *dioko*, "to flee; to pursue; to persecute" (same root as "deacon"); *evil*, *kakos*, "worthless; depraved, injurious; wicked;" *offended*, "*skandalizo*, "scandalize;" to entrap, trip up; entice to sin."

We are going through a doubly challenging time—a fast-growing congregation in a building program. It is easy to get growing pains.

- Madalyn Murray O'Hair was interviewed on Public Television. During the course of this interview it was noted that Ms. O'Hair seemed to have a lot of clout. The interviewer asked why she didn't organize the atheist movement better so as to be a stronger power. She responded with a telling answer: "Because every time a bunch of atheists get together, all they do is argue." Christian unity should always demonstrate regenerated believers working in cooperation and love to extend the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, though, churches sound more like Ms. O'Hair's camp of disagreeables. "The Church's Mission," Bill Donahue, Seeds Tape Ministry, Feb. 3, 1992

The church thrives when its members fit together—complementing one another's talents to be productive for the cause of Christ (Psa. 133:1). Harmony is one of the loveliest things in life...a family working together in time of crises...a team playing closely together to win the game...an orchestra playing in unison. The church that has unity in the Spirit has hope for growth. The church that has unity in the Spirit has hope for growth. The church that is bickering and fussing is doomed to decay and division.

- In the late 1800s, there were just two deacons in a small denominational (Baptist) church in Mayfield County, Kentucky. The two deacons hated each other and always opposed one another. On a particular Sunday, one deacon put up a small wooden peg in the back wall so the minister could hang his hat. When the other deacon discovered the peg, he was outraged that he had not been consulted. The church took sides and eventually split. The departing group formed a new church, called The Anti-peg Baptist Church. *New Life for Your Church*, Doyle L. Young, 1989, p. 63

Jesus blesses the peacemaker (Mt. 5:9). Division is the work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It is devilish and hateful (Jas. 3:14-16). It is a cause of infidelity and unbelief (Jn. 17:20-23).

- A denominational preacher met with his deacons to discuss an important recommendation to the church. After a lively debate the deacons brought the issue to a vote. To the preacher's surprise the raised hands indicated all but one deacon favored the recommendation. The preacher was so pleased with the balloting that he asked the one dissenting deacon if he would reconsider his vote so they could come to the business meeting with a unanimous agreement. The cantankerous deacon gruffly replied, "Preacher, as long as I'm around, ain't nothin gonna be unanimous." What a legacy! *Preacher Talk*, Vol. 3 Tape 2, 1995

Unity does not come inborn or naturally. Unity is made. Ephesians 4:1-6.

Unity of organization: one body

The body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23), thus we hold that there is just one church that is pleasing to God. There was only one purposed (Eph. 3:11), prophesied (Isa. 2:1-4), promised (Mt. 16:18), purchased (Acts 20:28), preached (Eph. 4:4), presented (Book of Acts), and preserved (1 Cor. 15:24). We do abhor division in religion (1 Cor. 14:33; Jn. 17:20,21; 1 Cor. 1:10) (cf. "Pie Religion"). We plead for men to cease their religious division.

Unity of purpose: one hope
 Unity of life: one Spirit
 Unity of authority: one Lord
 Unity of teaching: one faith
 Unity of practice: one baptism
 Unity of worship: one God

Our attitude toward keeping peace in the church extends to diet and drink, to every common scene of life (Rm. 14:19-21). We are to "strive for" that harmony (Phil. 1:27; *strive together, sunathleo*, "to wrestle in company with, to seek jointly;" 2:1-3; Eph. 4:3).

- Cooperation in the church is imperative. We must all work together, just as the members of our physical bodies must cooperate with one another. Just to keep your balance while standing still, you need to work about three hundred muscles. If that much effort is needed to stay idle, how much more cooperation is needed to move forward! * Houston Post

Heaven notices very carefully the relationship among brothers and sisters in the kingdom because the way brethren treat each other is the way they treat Christ (1 Cor. 8:12—Paul is asking us to ask ourselves before doing something to a fellow Christian, "Would you do that to Jesus?"). No kingdom divided against itself can stand (Mt. 12:25).

- Lou Holtz started his coaching career at the University of Minnesota. During his first year there, he distributed T-shirts with the word "TEAM" printed on them in big block letters. Underneath, in tiny print, was the word "me." Holtz understood the truth that success comes through placing the team's objectives above personal ambition. (See Philippians 2:3.) *Pryor Report*, Dec. 1992, p. 1

Unity must be kept. Some have studied the history of some congregations and found it can take fifty years to recover from a division. The worst damage is done to the children. Bickering churches, filled with fussing and negativism

and hard heads, do immeasurable harm to their children, creating wounds that sometimes never heal. Like Abraham, we must say, "Let there be no strife ...between me and thee...for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8).

A vocal minority with its fears and negation keeps the brakes on. A governing of the kingdom of God by filibuster and intimidation, threats to leave, veiled or otherwise. The few must be "pruned" so the tree can have good health and much fruit. Let such members know that "We are going to tie down the throttle and clear the tracks for a great work for Christ. You will either have to get on board and work with us for the Lord, or get out of the way so you don't get run over!"

To dwell above with
the saints we love
O that will be glory.
To dwell below with
the saints we know
Well, that's another story!

Unity is kept by positive attitudes (Heb. 12:15) No church, family, or school can thrive under a constant spirit of mistrust, suspicion, ill will, or negativism (Gal. 5:15). The twin demons of jealousy and envy destroy the life of any church. On the other hand, both experience and observation demonstrate that the church that has members who share good times together, who eat together and, in general, have wonderful opportunities to cultivate friendship, seldom have any trouble. Love is the badge of discipleship (Jn. 13:33,34; 1 Cor. 15:10; Col. 3:12-14). If a church becomes harsh, caustic, and unmerciful, it loses the very spirit of the one whose body it claims to be. As Christ was full of mercy and compassion, so must those be who follow Him (1 Pet. 2:21).

- A sweet little girl wandered away from her home in a winter storm and could not find her way back. Neighbors and friends gathered to search for her, but without success. Long into the night they searched. Finally, someone suggested that they all join hands to cross the fields to see if they could find her. Later that night they did find her, but her little body was frozen and lifeless. The mournful cry of the mother was, "Why didn't you join hands sooner?"

IF WE ARE NOT IN OUR PLACE ALL THE TIME, WE CAN WEAKEN THE STRUCTURE (Mt. 12:25).

One lost lego or puzzle piece can ruin the whole structure or puzzle. There are four other essentials to unity. First, there is the sense of **belonging** (1 Cor. 12:14-18). Every member of the body must feel loved, accepted, fully welcome. The "fringe" members must be brought in to the middle. Church growth experts explain that unless a new member developed friends quickly, he would stay in the fellowship for six months or less. But if a new member made six close and caring friends within the first year, the likelihood of his remaining in the church increased over 80 percent. There are said to be three groups in every church:

"Those who make things happen."
"Those who watch things happen."
"Those who never know what happened."

Groups 2 and 3 need to move to group one.

Word Study:

1 Cor. 12:24: *tempered, sugkerannumi*, "to commingle, to combine or assimilate"
12:25, *schism, schisma*, "a split or gap;" *care, merimnao*, "to be anxious about."

Second, there is the recognition of the **value** of each member (1 Cor. 12:20-24; Eph. 4:16). Every Lego piece is essential in making a design. Leave just one piece out and the design is different—less than what it otherwise would have been. The warring factions at Corinth did much harm (1 Cor. 12:12-27). There are a number of *different members of the body*. There are a variety of duties. There is a close and intimate connection between all the members. There is a *common importance* and value of each member, no matter that some are better looking, or larger, or appear to be more valuable than others. There is a *community of feeling*, a deep spirit of sympathy of each member for the other. There is harmonious working together of all body members such as the hand and the foot, eye

and ear, heart and lungs. There is *mutual dependence*, one supplying what the other may need. And finally, most important of all, there is a *vital union* of all *the members of the body with the Head, who is Christ*.

- Jess Moody speaks of the tools in the carpenter's hands: Mr. Hammer was presiding at the meeting of the tools. Brother Screwdriver complained, "Brother Hammer must go because he is always making noise, always knocking." Hammer responded, "Brother Screwdriver has to go because he has to be turned around all the time to get him to do his job." Someone else said, "Brother Plane has to go. He always wants to just touch the surface. He never goes deep." Plane added, "Brother Sandpaper has to go then because he is always rubbing people the wrong way." Brother Sandpaper spoke up: "Then Brother Saw has to go because he's always cutting things up and leaving sawdust all over the place." Just then the Carpenter of Nazareth came and said, "I need all of you. We have a job for each of you to do." Mr. Hammer said, "Here am I, Lord. Use me!" Mr. Screwdriver said, "Here am I, Lord. Use me!" Mr. Plane said, "Here am I, Lord. Use me!" Mr. Sandpaper said, "Here am I, Lord. Use me!" Mr. Saw said, "Here am I, Lord. Use me!" So when each gave himself to the Carpenter, together they built: a church for the preaching of the Gospel; a bridge for understanding and love; a house for the Lord's family to grow. This is what happened when the tools were put into the hands of the Carpenter and used as they were intended.

Third, there is **team spirit** built when sacrifice and good work are rewarded with satisfaction (1 Cor. 12:25-31).

Each month in one congregation at an all-church fellowship dinner, they seek to express thanks to some members of the congregation doing an especially good job. A beautiful Bible or plaque is awarded to these folks.

If in life of the church every Christian would determine never to hear a single word of criticism against an elder, preacher, or any member of the body of Christ, we would have the precious unity Christ requires. The devil works hardest on the churches that have a vision and are making advances. Why should he bother the dead churches?

- Fielding Yost, one of the great coaches of American football, had a team one year at Michigan that had an amazing record. The team was undefeated during the regular season, and what is phenomenal is that it had not been scored on in all ten games. It won the right to play in the Rose Bowl and went on to beat Stanford, 49-0! A reporter asked Mr. Yost if he would explain his success as a coach, and especially with this team. He replied, "I believe it is the speech I give the boys at the beginning of the year. In this two-hour lecture, I teach these young men a lesson on love." The reporter was disbelieving that a coach would lecture about love to a group of rough and tough football players. But Mr. Yost went on to say: Yes, I believe *that* lecture is the secret of success, not only in football, but in every endeavor of life. I talk to the boys about love. I teach them three things to love: to love the game, to love to win, and to love their teammates.

Fourth, there is the **common vision** of ultimate victory that draws members together (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 2 Cor. 2:14). The old saying is true, "The whole world follows the man who knows where he is going!"

One congregation has a "Welcome Home" ministry. Several couples form teams that meet once a month, and all new members are invited to the homes for meals to introduce them to other Christians. In this way, new members get to eat a meal and visit with fellow members four to six weeks in a row. One tool that has been a blessing to many congregations is the pictorial directory board. A picture of every family of the congregation is placed in the lobby and entrance area. For new families of the church and those who visit, there is not a more popular spot in the building. One advantage the pictorial directory board has over the printed pictorial directories is that it can easily be kept up-to-date.

Conclusion: The stirring description of the first Christians is that each determined to do his part, "which also they did" (Acts 11:29-30).

Adapted from Ross Mitchell and John Gaines

MOTHERS “HIGHLY FAVORED OF GOD”

By Allen Webster

Of all the young women in the world at the time, God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. The angel informed her that she was "highly favored" of God (Lk. 1:28). The angel did not immediately tell Mary how she was to be favored by God, that she was God's choice to bear and to be the mother of the Messiah. That came later in the conversation. The angel had to give her time to adjust to the shock of his spectacular appearance. For right now, he simply announced that she was to be highly favored by God.

It is important for mothers to see that they are “highly favored of God” just by being allowed to be mothers. God favors all of us, of course: He saves us, uses us—a phenomenal privilege and an awesome responsibility to make ourselves available to receive His favor. But godly mothers must especially be highly favored of God.

God has highly favored mothers with a powerful influence.

Do you ever consider your mother's contribution to your life? Philadelphian Anna Jarvis did. Which is why she suggested celebrating Mother's Day in 1907. Congress later set aside the second Sunday in May, and the florists of the nation are financially grateful. Most of the great men of the earth have.

- ▶ Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865): No man is poor who has had a godly mother.
- ▶ George Washington: The greatest teacher I ever had was my mother.
- ▶ Napoleon Bonaparte: Let France have good mothers, and she will have good sons.
- ▶ Sir Winston Churchill: If we want to change our nation, begin by enlisting the mothers.
- ▶ Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887): The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.
- ▶ Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894): Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall A mother's secret love outlives them all.

John D. Rockefeller could have owned the entire florist industry. As a child, he was used to rigid discipline. One day, he was being spanked by his mother. In the middle of that process, he began to suggest that he was being punished unjustly, and to his amazement, he succeeded in convincing his mother. However, she responded, “Very well, son, but we have gone so far that we may as well continue. It will be credited to your account for next time.” His mothers' wisdom would influence the credit and debit phase of his future mega-success.

Sometimes power and wealth cause a man to forget how much of his character is the direct result of his mother's love, patience, and teaching. Forgetting your mother's influence can cause you to wander from the path to eternal success. That is why our Creator implores us to not forsake our mother's teaching (Prov. 1:8).

- ▶ At the church program a little boy was to recite the Scripture he had memorized for the occasion. When he got in front of the crowd, the sight of hundreds of eyes peering at him caused his to forget his memory work. Every line that he had so carefully rehearsed faded from his mind and he stood there unable to utter a single word. In the front row, his mother was almost as frantic as the little boy. The mother gestured, moved her lips, trying to form the words for the boy, but it did no good. Finally, the mother, in desperation, whispered the opening phrase of the memorized Scripture: "I am the light of the world." Immediately the child's face lit up and a smile appeared on it as she said with supreme confidence: "My mother is the light of the world!" Of course, everybody smiled and some laughed out loud. Then they soberly reflected that the girl, in some ways, was not far from wrong. For the mother is the light of the child's world.

- ▶ As Noah's wife, let mothers instill in their boys God's principles so they can live righteously when all their companions are evil (Gen. 6:1-6).
- ▶ As Rachel, let mothers train children to avoid the strong temptations of the teen years (Gen. 39).
- ▶ As Jochabed, let mothers train children to love and serve God above the world's riches (Ex. 6:20; 2:1-10).
- ▶ As Hannah, let mothers teach children to pray (1 Sam. 1:11,19-28).
- ▶ As the Shunammite woman, let mothers teach their children to be at peace (2 Kgs. 4:26).
- ▶ As Elizebeth, let mothers teach children to be righteous before God (Lk. 1:6).
- ▶ As Mary, let mothers teach children to obey God (Lk. 2:51; Jn. 2).
- ▶ As the Canaanitish woman, let mothers cry to Jesus that he might help their daughters (Mt. 15:21-28).
- ▶ As Mary, John Mark's mother, let mothers teach children to value worship assemblies (Acts 12:12; 2 Tim. 4:11).
- ▶ As Lois and Eunice, let mothers teach the value of unpretended faith (2 Tim. 1:5).

On the other hand, some mothers use their powerful influence on their children in the wrong way. Consider some of the mistakes made by some mothers mentioned in the Bible:

- ▶ Do not teach them to disobey God, as Lot's wife did (Gen. 19:17,26).
- ▶ Do not teach them to be troublemakers, as Jezebel did (1 Kgs. 16-19).
- ▶ Do not teach them to be immoral, as Potiphar's wife did (Gen. 39).
- ▶ Do not teach them to use deception, as Sarah and Rebekah did (Gen. 12; 26).

It is a good thing to be a teacher of good things. It is a much better thing to be a "show-er" of good things (1 Cor. 11:1; Tit. 2:3-5). "Actions speak louder than words." Children turn out to be in large measure what their mothers *lived* before them. Ezekiel said, "As is the mother, so is her daughter" (16:44). Notice that it is not what the mother says that determines what her daughter will be, but the example she sets. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).

ILLUSTRATION: Preacher received letter from a mother. Criticized him severely and unfairly. Also criticized every other preacher she knew. Last paragraph, "I have five children, they all HATE God and the church." Is it any wonder why?

In order to be the proper example for the child, a mother must be a faithful Christian (Mk. 16:16; Mt. 6:33; Heb. 10:25).

God has highly favored mothers by encouraging them (Lk. 1:36,37).

Imagine the roller coaster Mary has been on with the message of the angel. She has just been told that she would miraculously bear the Savior of the world with the power of the Holy Spirit and God. Don't you think she needed some encouragement at this time? God provided her with two great strongholds:

Fellowship with other godly mothers. He told her about the news of one her relatives—Elizabeth, who was beyond child-bearing age, had conceived a son in her old age and was not six months pregnant. This demonstrated God's power and visiting Elizabeth would encourage Mary. Right after this conversation that was the first thing Mary did (1:39-56). As soon as Elizabeth saw Mary she was filled with the Holy Spirit and told her, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (1:39-42) Don't you think Mary needed that encouragement? Elizabeth was the only person on earth who could understand what Mary was feeling. Maybe this is why she stayed with Elizabeth for three months. Isn't it something how God seems to provide these people in our lives when we need them the most? Have you

ever been weak in your faith and someone comes along to give you encouragement? Mary needed encouragement just like we do today to strengthen our faith (Acts 22:32).

Assurance of His great power: Listen to verse 37 again, “For with God nothing will be impossible.” One translation says, “God can do anything!” When Mary heard and meditated upon this simple statement she was bound to be encouraged. Can you think of any better encouragement that God could have said that would have made a bigger impact?

- ▶ We ask God, “Father, how can I raise a child in this world without them falling to the many devices around them.” God replies, “God can do anything!”
- ▶ We ask God, “Father, how can I overcome the trials in my life?” God replies, “With God nothing is impossible.”

Have you ever asked God those, “how can I” questions? God’s reply is, “You can’t, but with God anything is possible” (Gen. 18:14,26; Num. 11:23; Jer. 32:17,27; Zec. 8:6; Mt. 19:26; 28:20; Mk. 10:27; Lk. 18:27; Phil. 3:21). This is God’s great power of encouragement. Mary received encouragement in her time of fear, and wondering.

God Himself was going to look after the whole matter. The child’s conception and growth during pregnancy and His birth and life were under the shadow and wing of Almighty God. It was God’s power that saw to the whole operation, not the presence of power of an angel or of a man or of any other creature. Isn’t this what Christian mothers are asked to do today? Yes, the moral lapse of this world is frightening (drugs, alcohol, school shootings, and peer pressure). It puzzles us how we can raise a righteous child in such an unrighteous world. If Mary were here today to give mothers advice, she would probably say, “trust in God.” As humans we can’t comprehend this power – but trust God. Someone said, “As a mother, my job is to take care of what is possible and trust God with the impossible.”

The Lord would be with Mary. She did not walk through life alone. God was with her. Mary’s life had pleased God to the point that He could favor her and be with her. She allowed God to walk with her and look after her life, so God was able to be with her. Isn’t this what every mother needs in raising children? When you look at all the things happening in our world today and the problems people are having with their kids – I want God to be with me as a parent (Acts 17:27).

Mary was blessed among women. Mary was to be blessed and to be called blessed by men of all generations. At least once a year people around the world remember the mother who bore the Messiah into the world. There are denominations who put on plays about the birth of Jesus, and I am sure any of them would tell you that the best parts to play would be Jesus and Mary. Now, the Bible never indicates we are to celebrate the birth of Christ or to worship or pray to Mary, but because of her life and her station in life, she would go down in history as one of the most beloved women of all times.

At the wedding feast of Cana, she commanded the servants to do whatsoever Jesus commanded (Jn. 2:1-10). Those are the most important words she ever said.

God has highly favored mothers by using them to change the world.

If this world is going to be turned around it is going to start with mothers. They are the only ones who can change the next generation. When Napoleon was asked what it would take to win the war, he is credited with saying, “France needs good mothers.” Napoleon said in a crucial period in the history of France, “What we need is more mothers--not more women with children—but more women who are real

mothers." So it is today. We need more mothers, for in their hands lies the future. He also said, "Let France have good mothers, and she will have good sons."

Countless times each day a mother does what no one else can do quite as well. She wipes away a tear, whispers a word of hope, eases a child's fear. She teaches, ministers, loves, and nurtures the next generation of citizens. And she challenges and cajoles her kids to do their best and be the best. But no editorials praise these accomplishments—where is the coverage our mothers rightfully deserve?

—James C. Dobson (1936-) And Gary L. Bauer (1946-)

THE BRAVEST BATTLE

The bravest battle that ever was fought,
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;
"Twas fought by the mothers of men.
Nay, not with cannon, or battle-shot,
With sword, or nobler pen;
Nay, not with eloquent word of thought,
From mouths of wonderful men.
But from deep in a welled-up woman's heart—
Of woman that would not yield,
But bravely, silently bore her part—
Lo! There is a battlefield!

How did God plan to get His people out of Egypt? He had Jochebed raise Him up a leader. How did He plan to prepare the way for Jesus? He had Elizabeth raise Him up a John.

The power of training is greater than that yielded by politicians, militaries, and the media. Rome conquered Greece militarily; but Greece conquered Rome through her philosophy. Values taught at mother's knee is more powerful than guns and dynamite. "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world."

Let mothers pray fervently for their children (Gen. 21:16-18; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15; Jas. 5:1).

Young soldier in faraway land. Mother had told him that she would pray for him at a certain time each day. Was tempted by a young woman. Looked at his watch and realized that at that time his mother was praying for him. He did not sin.

Conclusion:

- ▶ Six hundred students at a university were asked to write the most beautiful word in the English language. Four-hundred and twenty-two wrote the word "mother." One-hundred and twelve wrote "home."

Eli—A Father who Saved the World, But Lost His Sons

By Allen Webster

Introduction:

Forget the spotted owl and the snail darter; responsible fathers are a far more important endangered species:

- ▶ About 36 percent of American children live apart from their biological father.
- ▶ About 70 percent of juveniles and young adults in long-term correctional facilities did not live with both parents while growing up.
- ▶ Fatherlessness is judged a contributing factor in as many as 3 out of 4 teen suicides and 4 of 5 teen psychiatric admissions.
- ▶ More than 30 percent of births today are to unmarried women; most of these children will always live in mother-only homes.
- ▶ About half of all children in the United States will experience parental divorce.

Eli had lost his influence over his sons and as a result caused his family to lose the priesthood (1 Kings 2:26-27,35; see 1 Tim. 3:4-5). How tragic when a servant of the Lord (especially a high priest) fails to win his own sons to the Lord! David made the same mistake with Adonijah (1 Kgs. 1:6) whom he never told “no.” It eventually got Adonijah killed. After he was told he could not be king, he was told to “lie low.” But he soon came back with another request and Solomon had him killed (1 Kgs. 2:13-25).

Fathers, give you children these four gifts that money cannot buy...

LOVE

Children naturally love their fathers; fathers should naturally love their children.

- ▶ “My dad is the best dad ever. I would kiss a pig for him.” –1st grader
- ▶ “Sometimes as a joke I’ll put my stinky socks in his briefcase, so at work the next day he will think of me! He’s always at the concerts and plays that I’m in, even though he lives about an hour away.” –4th grader
- ▶ “Although we have a firm foundation, there is one thing I would like to hear more of...I wish my dad would say that he loves me more often. I know he does through his actions. I mean, what kind of dad would do all this for someone he didn’t love. But every night before I go to bed I say: ‘Night Dad. Love you. See you in the morning.’ And he says, ‘Uh huh!’ I wish that sometimes he would say ‘I love you’ back.” –9th grader

These quotes from an essay contest by the National Center for Fathering¹ call attention to the need for emotional involvement of fathers with their children. In homes that believe the man is the head of the house (Eph. 5:23; 6:1), emotional involvement has not always reached priority level. The demands of bread winning and discipline have sometimes taken precedence. This was a problem in ancient times. The last verse of the Old Testament prophesies of one who “will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers...” (Mal. 4:6). (Luke 1:17 interprets this as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ.)

¹ The National Center for Fathering is a non-profit research and education organization whose mission is to champion the role of responsible fatherhood by inspiring and equipping men to be more engaged in the lives of children. The Essay Contest and submitted essays are the property of the National Center for Fathering. www.fathers.com

² *shachar*. “be (up) early at any task (with the impl. of earnestness).” It implies starting discipline early before rebellion has set up and will be hard to change.

children and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." (Mal. 4:6). (Luke 1:17 interprets this as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ.)

TEACHING:

While camping in a national park, Bill struck up a conversation with Ray, who was shaving in the campground restroom. Bill asked Ray what he did for a living. Ray replied, "I'm a juvenile rehabilitation counselor." After a little pause, Bill said, "Yep, I'm a parent too." *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1992, p. 64

The neglect of early religious education, connected with a wholesome and affectionate restraint, is the ruin of millions. Parents cannot do God's work, and God will not do theirs.

Kids make great parrots—especially when you don't want them to repeat what you say. One father learned the hard way when he invited his boss over for dinner. He was hoping to score a few extra points with his superior but ended up losing it all when his young son asked the boss, "Where are your cards? Dad says you're not playing with a full deck." —*Parade*, March 10, 1991, p. 11

Fathers can make a difference! The Bible gives them a lot of credit by assuming they can bring their children "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Christian parents must wake up in the emotional side of rearing children. Ephesians 6:4 is the passage about bringing up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It is also an admonition not to provoke them to anger. The parallel passage (Colossians 3:20-21) warns against exasperating children, causing them to "lose heart." Someone said, "Soft is the heart of a child, do not harden it." In 1 Thessalonians 2:5-11, Paul compares himself to "a father with his own children" (and to a nursing mother) when he describes his emotional interaction with new Christians. He speaks of gentleness, tenderness, fond affection, and encouragement. He tells them they are "very dear" to him. It is important to express as well as to feel these emotions.

First-graders were asked to draw a picture of God in their Sunday School class. Their finished products contained some interesting theology. One child depicted God in the form of a brightly colored rainbow. Another presented Him as an old man coming out of the clouds. An intense little boy drew God with a remarkable resemblance to Superman. The best snapshot came from a little girl. She said, "I didn't know what God looked like, so I just drew a picture of my daddy."

A group of young boys were debating whose father was the best. This discussion highlighted who their fathers knew. The first boy started the debate by claiming his father knew the mayor. He was soon topped by the second boy who said, "That's nothing. My dad knows the governor." The stakes were getting pretty high, and the eavesdropping father wondered what his young son would say about him. The little boy shot back, "So what! My dad knows God!" Could your son say that? May our children always be able to say, "My dad knows God!"

Someone has well said, "Children are not likely to see much of a Father in God, unless they see something of God in their father" (cf. Lk. 1:6).

TIME:

- ▶ It is easier for a father to have children, than for children to have a father.
- ▶ A little girl looked her dad in the face and said, "You're better than just a father. You're a DADDY!"

Every Christian home should be concerned about the hearts of the fathers and their children. If time is any measure of the heart, many fathers have improvements to make. The research of Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner showed the dichotomy of how much time fathers think they spend with their children and how much time

they actually share. When fathers were asked to estimate how much time they spent playing and interacting with their small children, estimates averaged from fifteen to twenty minutes per day. Microphones were then attached to the fathers and the “average dad-child times was *thirty-seven seconds* a day.” In a 1994 study concluded that fewer than 25% of children average even an hour a day of “relatively individualized contact” with their fathers. The average is less than 30 minutes. That’s in two-parent households. The numbers are dismally lower in other homes. This reminds us a little of the Genesis record of one father: “And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money” (31:14,15).

One cartoonist drew the characterization of a young boy standing next to his father’s recliner. The father was engrossed in the sports page, while the impatient boy pounded the leather of his baseball glove. Finally the energetic little guy said, “Play with me or trade me!”

Get Rid of Him?

Some kids talked their mother into getting a hamster. Everybody agreed to the acquisition as long as the children took care of their new pet. They named him “Danny.” Within two months the little rat would have died had the mom not assumed full responsibility for his care. She finally decided it was time to give Danny to a new owner and called the children in to break the news. One child commented, “I’ll miss him; he’s been around a long time.” She agreed, “Yes, but he’s too much work for me, so he needs to go.” Another child suggested he might be able to stay if he ate less and wasn’t so messy. But Mom was firm and said, “Let’s go! It’s time to take Danny to his new home.” Then in unison the kids wailed, “Danny? We thought you said *Daddy!*”

This story is humorous, but it has a serious punch line. Divorce is doing to many children exactly what these feared. Read carefully what God thinks of this in Malachi 2:14-16 and Matthew 19:4-9.

DISCIPLINE:

Eli was a careless father (2:12-36). Eli failed to *restrain* (*kahah*, “to be weak, to despond; to grow dull”) his sons. The *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* has he “frowned not upon them.” Eli did try to talk to them (2:23-25), but it was too little, too late. He contented himself with a gentle reproof, and did not severely rebuke, punish, and effectively curtail their embarrassing lifestyles. He did not use the authority that God had given him, as a father, as a high priest, as a judge, and a chief magistrate against them, as the law of God commanded him to do. Solomon said, “Open rebuke is better than secret love” (Proverbs 27:5).

Eli put his family ahead of God. He restrained them not in the sense that he did not remove them from their office. It was inexcusable for Eli to permit his sons to remain in the priestly office. He did not deprive them of the power to do mischief, which as a father, high priest, and judge, he could have done. Eli had honored his sons above Jehovah (2:29), which was a form of idolatry. Jesus taught, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mt. 10:37). The sin was mainly the sons’; but the guilt was largely the father’s. He who tolerates evil that is in his ability to suppress, is an accomplice, and the blood of the doers is red on his hands. He make himself a partaker of the guilt. Those in authority will have a great deal to answer for if they make not the sword they bear a terror to evil workers (Rm. 13:1-6).

Eli should have been strict with them when they were young, and have punished them severely when they would not listen to his injunctions (Prov. 13:14).

Solomon said, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes²” (Prov. 13:24). “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Prov. 19:18). “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”

(Prov. 22:15). “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest³ him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Prov. 23:13,14). “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame... Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:15,17).

If any in our permissive society object to corporeal punishment, let them be reminded that God, as the perfect Father, uses chastening to correct His children (Heb. 12:5,6).

Let parental authority be tempered with fatherly affection, yes, but do not neglect the discipline. Parental affection, alone, infallibly degenerates into foolish fondness; and parental authority, alone, frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny when standing by itself. The first sort of parents will be loved but not respected; the second sort will be respected (dreaded), but will not be loved (esteemed). In the first case obedience is not exacted, and is therefore felt to be unnecessary, as offences of great magnitude pass without punishment or reprehension. In the second case, rigid exaction renders obedience almost impossible; and the smallest delinquency is often punished with extremes, which, hardening the mind, renders duty a matter of perfect indifference. Parents lay these things to heart: remember Eli and his sons; remember the dismal end of both! Teach your children to fear God—use wholesome discipline. Begin in time, mingle severity and mercy together in all your conduct, be diligent, and earnestly pray to God for success.

Conclusion:

▶ Children are a poor man’s riches. —English Proverb

Three Pictures: Tim Kimmel is a well known author who does much of his work at a large roll-top desk in his office. On the top of this desk are a unique set of pictures. To the far left is a photo of the place where he was born—Jamison Memorial Hospital. At the far right is a picture of the place where he will most likely be buried—Graceland Cemetery. Between those two pictures is a photograph of his wife and children. It’s a daily reminder of where life began, where it will end, and what really matters during the in-between time. Life is short, so seize the moments with your family.

³ This is a word with a wide range of meanings. It obviously does not give a parent permission to injure a child. The word *nakah*, can simply mean, “to strike (lightly or severely, lit. or fig.); clap.”

GRANDPARENTS

By Allen Webster

Introduction:

The Bible speaks of *grandparents* only once (2 Tim. 1:5), but it mentions "children's children" ten times (Gen. 45:10; Ex. 34:7; Deut. 4:25; 2 Kgs. 17:41; Psa. 103:17; 128:6; Prov. 13:22; 17:6; Jer. 2:9; Ezek. 37:25), and "son's son" six times (Gen. 11:31; 21:23; Ex. 10:2; Deut. 6:2; Jd. 8:22; Jer. 27:7). It is Scriptural, therefore, to study a lesson on "grandparents." Godly grandparents ought to be honored. A gray head is not something to be colored or covered, but cherished (Prov. 16:31; 20:29).

Every age has its special problems; grandparents are no exception. As the sand drips through the hourglass, the physical man gradually weakens (2 Cor. 4:16-18; cf. Deut. 34:7; Ecc. 12:3-5). It's okay to learn to laugh at the aging process. Someone wrote, "You know you're getting old when..."

- ◆ Most of your dreams are reruns.
- ◆ The gleam in your eye is from the sun on your bifocals.
- ◆ Your "little black book" contains only names ending with M.D.
- ◆ You get winded playing checkers and dialing long distance wears you out.
- ◆ The airline attendant offers you, "coffee, tea, or Milk of Magnesia."
- ◆ You sit down in a rocking chair and you can't get it started.
- ◆ Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
- ◆ Your children begin to look middle-aged.
- ◆ The little gray-haired lady you help across the street is your wife.
- ◆ You sink your teeth in a nice juicy steak...and they stay there.
- ◆ You watch a pretty girl go by and your pacemaker makes the garage door open.
- ◆ Your knees buckle, but your belt won't.

Grandparents and grandchildren get along notoriously well. They have a lot in common. Besides having the same family tree, genes, and bloodline, they often can relate for social reasons.

One boy sat beside his aged grandfather. The boy says, "Sometimes I drop my spoon." "I do too," replied the old man. "I often cry," continued the boy. The old man nodded, "So do I." "But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems grownups don't pay any attention to me." Just then the boy felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand. "I know what you mean," said the little old man.

Grandparents have a lovely way, of bringing joy to every day.
By finding thoughtful things to do, to show the love they have for you.
They always seem to understand, they always lend a helping hand.
They're someone special--someone dear, who are loved more with each passing year.
Grandparents are so many things, it's hard to describe the joy they bring.
They are a wonderful blessing from above, for, most of all, grandparents are *love*. Author Unknown

THE BLESSINGS OF BEING A GRANDPARENT

The sunset years should be the best time of all. Responsibilities have diminished; lusts have subsided (Ecc. 12:1,2); wisdom has taught its lessons (Job 32:7); and the fruit of the Spirit has had time to blossom and bear (Gal. 3:22,23). While it's thrilling to taste youth's nectar, drinking from the vintage of old age can be far more satisfying (Prov. 23:22). Most of us enjoy December more than March. Grandchildren are a "crown" to be worn in old age (Prov. 17:6). If God allows one to reach an age old enough to have grandchildren, it should be considered a blessing (Psa. 128:6). A man can let his wife know he loves her by giving her a dozen long-stemmed roses; his small grandson can do the same with a fistful of dandelions.

THE DUTIES OF BEING A GRANDPARENT

Grandparents need to realize how much they are needed. One man prayed, "Let me live until I die." It is sad that sometimes grandparents quit living and start dying.

- ◆ Bear Bryant once said, "If I quit coaching football, I'll die within a year." It only took one month.
- ◆ Caleb, though eighty-five, still felt like he had some fight left in him (Jos. 14:12).
- ◆ When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was well advanced in years, an admirer asked him how he was able to remain so vigorous and write so beautifully. He pointed to an apple tree and replied, "That tree has been there a long time, but I never saw prettier flowers on it than those it has right now. Its branches display a little new wood each year, and I suppose that is what accounts for the lovely blossoms. Like that apple tree, I still grow new wood each year."
- ◆ The spring, like youth, fresh blossoms doth produce, but autumn makes them ripe and fit for use; So age a mature mellowness doth set on the promises of youthful heat.
- ◆ The older some things get, the more valuable they are. The old redwoods of California and the ancient streets of Europe and Palestine attract thousands of tourists each year. Any attempt to update them would diminish their worth.

God has a purpose of grandparents. Christians don't retire at 65. God wants our last years to be our best years (cf. Psa. 92:14; Lk. 2:25-38).

Someone has said, "Life is not a pyramid dwindling toward its peak. Rather it is an inverted pyramid with its point in the soil and its wide base flaring toward heaven" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16).

Grandparents should try to leave an inheritance to their grandchildren. In many cases, a financial "headstart" in life can come from grandparents (Prov. 13:22). This is not always possible, but grandparents should *always* leave a spiritual inheritance of faith to their grandchildren (2 Tim. 1:5).

Socrates said over 2,000 years ago: "Could I climb to the highest place in Athens, I would lift my voice and proclaim: 'Fellow citizens, why do ye turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth and take so little care of your children to whom one day you must relinquish it all?'"

The only way you can guarantee that you will be reunited with your grandchildren is to make reservations for them in heaven where you can be together forever. Grandparents should consider carefully their decisions for they often affect generations yet unborn (Ex. 34:7; Psa. 103:17). We all live downstream.

- ◆ "I saw tomorrow look at me, From little children' eyes,
And thought how carefully we would teach if we were really wise."

- ◆ THE BUILDER:

An old man, going down a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim--
That sullen stream held no fears for him;
But he turned, when he reached the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength in building here.
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again will pass this way.
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build you this bridge at eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head,
"Good friend in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today,
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me

To a fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I'm building this bridge for him." William Droomogool

Grandparents should serve as mentors for their grandchildren. Because families are so much more fragmented--because of work, divorce, death, misfortune--than in past generations, there is more of a need than ever for grandparents to teach "common sense" things to their grandchildren (fishing, sewing, changing oil) (Tit. 2:3). One of the most useful functions a person can perform is "grandparenting." Grandparents are especially needed in a world where so many mothers have entered the workforce. Our protests to the contrary do not change the fact that many children are growing up without spending much time with their mothers and fathers. Grandparents have a unique opportunity to help fill that gap. If you live near your grandchildren, try to influence them as often as you can. If you do not, make the best use of each precious moment you have with them. Who knows? You may be another Lois. That grandchild of yours may be another Timothy.

Grandparents should set a good example for their grandchildren (2 Tim. 4:7,8; Tit. 2:1-6). The white head is a crown of glory, but only if it is found in the way of righteousness (Prov. 16:31). There is no beauty in a life that grows old without Christ. The gray head of a sinner is a symbol of shame and disgrace. It signals a life of spiritual failure. Some do not get better with age; they get worse. Some begin to murmur and complain (Phil. 2:14). They tend to exaggerate their problems and minimize their blessings. Someone said, "The older a man gets, the farther he had to walk to school as a boy." At the funeral of a man prominent in the community, some elderly women were talking about the deceased. "It's really too bad about him," one said. "He had the same thing I've got, only mine's a lot worse." We should try to avoid this attitude, for it will not set the right example for grandchildren. Others give in to the sins of gossip and criticism (Jas. 3:2-11). The road to success is always under construction. But a gray-headed Christian is something worth imitating.

- ◆ A small boy asked his playmate, "Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses?" His friend surprised him by saying, "No, not if I had a pair like my Grandma's. You see, she sees how to fix a lot of things, and sees a lot of things to do on rainy days; she sees when folks are really tired and worried; and she always sees what will make them lots better." He went on, after thinking for a minute, "She always sees what you meant to do, even if you don't do things just right. I asked her one day how she could see that way all the time, and she said it was the way she has learned to look at things as she grew older. So it must be her glasses."
- ◆ In his book, *The Best is Yet to Come*, Henry Durbanville tells of a woman who was utterly charming. Everyone noticed the grace with which she conducted her life. Durbanville tells of a younger woman who one day approached her and said, "I think you are perfectly beautiful." I suppose that in itself is not an unusual comment, but this lady was not what the world, which prides itself in youth and glamour, would deem to be beautiful. The woman's response to the compliment was a classic: "Well, I should be dear. After all, I'm 74 years old!" Her assumption was that with that much time to work on one's life, things ought to be looking good (cf. 1 Pet. 3:4; 2 Cor. 3:18).
- ◆ In the plastic-surgery office where I work as a nurse, a 92-year-old patient was preparing to have reconstructive surgery on her nose. She was extremely sharp and knowledgeable, asking many good questions about the procedure. Just as the doctor was getting ready of the surgery, the woman said, "Now, doctor--make me beautiful." "Are you kidding me?" he replied. "You're already beautiful." "Well, in that case," said the elderly woman, "don't mar me" (*Reader's Digest*, 1993).

Grandparents should tell their grandchildren the great things God has done (Ex. 10:2).

THE DUTIES OF BEING A GRANDCHILD

God wants grandchildren to "not forsake" their grandparents (Psa. 71:16-18). The ancient heathen left their old family members to die. That rarely happens today, but one can be cast off, even if supplied with a good mattress and excellent food. An old person needs room and board, but he needs love even more. These can be lonely years, especially when most of one's friends and perhaps even a mate have passed on. We must acknowledge their worth (honor) to us by caring for *all* their needs. They should spend time with their grandparents. Think of Jacob and Joseph. An old man needs food and shelter, and this Joseph provided. An old man needs respect and honor, and this Joseph extended willingly. But also, an old man needs to see his grandchildren (Prov. 17:6)! This Joseph provided

by taking his sons to visit with their aged, sick, and nearly blind grandfather (Gen. 48). This is bound to have helped the lads, and it helped their grandfather. All God's laws work together (Coffman).

- ◆ Yesterday was an old man's birthday. He was 91. He awakened earlier than usual, shaved, and put on his best clothes. Surely they would come today, he thought. He didn't take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community, because he wanted to be right there when they came. He sat on the front porch with a clear view of the road so he could see them coming. Surely they would come today. He decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came. He has six children. Two of his daughters and their married children live within four miles. They haven't been to see him for such a long time. But today was his birthday. Surely they would come today. At suppertime he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with them when they came. About 9 o'clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out lights, were, "Promise to wake me up when they come." It was his birthday and he was 91.

- ◆ Poem:

Don't send me flowers when I'm gone, if you've neglected me.
For when my eyes are closed in death, their beauty I won't see,
Or smell the blossom of the rose whose fragrance fills the air
That comes too late to bring the joy of knowing that you care.
Don't call, your sorrow to express, to loved ones when I'm gone.
It's now I need the phone to ring, when I am all alone.
Just some expression that you care, perhaps a visit, too,
To ease the loneliness I bear, is all I ask of you.
I need to feel that although shut-in, of you I'm still a part.
Don't fail me when I need to share the feelings in my heart.
Although I can't come and be with you, to worship and to pray,
I still have needs that you can meet, if you would come today,
Or make a call or send a note, or offer up a prayer.
Just don't forget I need some sign that tells me that you care.

M. Beaumann, *Christian Woman*, Jan./Feb. 1997.

Resolve this week to spend some time with your grandparents if this is possible. Send a card. Make a call. Talk an extra long time, you will not regret the long distance bill when they are gone and you cannot call them again.

God expects grandchildren to show respect to their grandparents (Lev. 19:32; 1 Tim. 5:1,2,4). Once forty-two young men made fun of Elisha, and God sent two she-bears out of the woods to maul them to death (2 Kgs. 2:23,24). This gang of ruffians was taught the hard way that God wants the older generation respected.

God wants grandchildren to seek their grandparent's counsel (Prov. 19:20). Some children and teens seem to think that they know everything, and that their parents and grandparents know nothing. All grandparents are not senile! (96% of those over 65 are not, Dr. James Birren at the University of Southern California). Old age has been where youth has yet to travel. Through the lens of a thousand yesterdays, the aged see clearer the providence of God. By the magic carpet of memory, they can help others bypass life's rough places. On the hilltop of "threescore and ten," they see God's hand in the dark valleys of youth (adapted from Harold G. Taylor). In youth, we *wonder*; in age, we *know*. It was David, an old man, who said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25).

Conclusion:

One of God's great blessings in old age is grandchildren. Though children do not always realize it until they miss it, having grandparents is one of the most pleasant experiences in life. Let's cherish each other.

Allen Webster ● PTP '98 ● Special Occasion: "Grandparent's Day"

