

# Timeless Sermons



By  
Paul D. Murphy



***Timeless  
Sermons***

FOR  
NOW AND ETERNITY  
*Volume II*

**Paul D. Murphy**

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## FOREWORD

From my almost earliest remembrance, I was privileged to hear brother Paul D. Murphy powerfully proclaim God's Word. He and my preaching father, Curtis C. Cates, have been friends all through those years, as have brother Murphy and I. Brother Murphy has been a preacher of the gospel for more than seventy years. He is eighty-nine years of age, having been born into the family of A. A. Murphy of Booneville, Mississippi, on August 6, 1913, one of thirteen children. He presently resides at 605 Brookside Drive, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35476; 1-205-339-9320.

Brother Murphy's early life was spent on a farm in Prentiss County, Mississippi, during which time he became a professional prize fighter, winning the lightweight championship of the State of Mississippi at age fifteen. He has been an even more gifted and devoted fighter for truth. After having joined the Baptist Church at age sixteen and become a Baptist preacher for two and one-half years, during which time he became more and more dissatisfied with Baptist doctrine [It did not harmonize with what his Bible taught], Paul was baptized into Christ by brother J. L. Rogers. Several years later, enabled by Dr. and Mrs. S. L. Pharr and the Booneville, Mississippi, congregation (where brother Pharr was an elder), brother Murphy attended Freed-Hardeman College and Harding College.

The preaching of brother Murphy was always powerful and true to The Book. He not only helped to establish forty-three congregations and to build thirty-two church buildings, but he also preached in more than 378 gospel meetings within fifty miles of his home. More than 15,000 responded to the gospel invitation when he preached, in thirty-six of the fifty states. He also preached extensively over radio and television, as well as through the printed page. His tract "Why I Changed Churches" had led to many people having been converted, as some 800,000 copies have been distributed widely. Brother

Murphy also served as an elder for over two decades.

Countless preachers have been encouraged by Paul D. Murphy, including the writer. Back in the 1960's, I was privileged to lead singing in several gospel meetings he preached. And, he preached through the years in gospel meetings where I was located and in congregations nearby, where I could attend. His preaching was always chocked full of Scripture, fervent, and loving. He spoke without notes and with authority. Being very unselfish and generous, he often preached without remuneration where the work was struggling to get underway.

Because of poor health, brother Paul D. Murphy is unable to fill the pulpit. However, he is ever active in studying the beloved Word and writing original sermons, hundreds of which have been put into print. The book you now hold in your hand contains fifty-two powerful Biblical, timeless sermons that need to be preached in every pulpit in the land, and indeed, throughout the world. Brother Murphy has been cared for and lovingly supported by his devoted wife, Geunita, and their daughter, Claudia Loyette, who holds the Ph.D. in English from the University of Alabama and is a teacher of English, Drama, and Speech in Pickens Academy, Pickens County, Alabama.

The Lord's church in Foley, Alabama, where the Murphys once labored, some years ago established the **Paul D. Murphy Scholarship Fund** in the Memphis School of Preaching. They, the East Pointe congregation in Tuscaloosa where brother and sister Murphy are members and where our son Andy Cates is the preacher, and other congregations and individuals have given generously into that scholarship honoring the great work of brother and sister Murphy and the truth for which they have so greatly sacrificed and worked for many years. The School of Preaching is honored to be having a part in the printing and distribution of this volume.

Curtis A. Cates, Director  
Memphis School of Preaching

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## PREFACE

Many of the sermons appearing in this second volume have been preached in towns and cities in at least thirty-six states during the author's long and fervent ministry. This material was prepared by him during this past year. Regretfully, he was forced to retire from pulpit preaching in 1989 because of ill health, after sixty-eight years of going up and down the land, telling the story that never grows old. In controvertibly, it is his zeal for the Lord's work that continues to flourish, making this compilation possible, even as his physical strength diminishes.

This book is being sent forth with the hope that it will bring glory to God and honor to Christ and His church, salvation to the lost, the last, and the least, as well as enhancing the spiritual lives of those who read and profit from its lessons. The more a person reads and ponders the scriptures, the more he/she realizes that the only accurate stance toward them is one of awe and reverence.

These sermon outlines are original with the author, and he has garnered them from many years of private study and meditation and from sitting at the feet of great Bible scholars and preachers.

This book is warmly dedicated to all gospel preachers, young and old, who boldly preach the Word without equivocation. I still stand amazed at the power of the Word, specifically its power to save those who obey the commands written therein.

It is also lovingly dedicated to my devoted and gracious wife, Geunita Sample Murphy, who, for the past sixty-two years, has blessed my life richly with her nurturing love and humble wisdom.

Paul D. Murphy  
Northport, Alabama  
July 2000





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# WHY DON'T YOU OPEN THE DOOR?

1

Revelation 3:20

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As you look at this text, you see Christ standing at the door of a lukewarm church and knocking for admittance. Christ, who is the very personification of zeal, will not dwell in a lukewarm church nor member. Isaiah 59:17; Psalms 69:9; John 2:17
- B. Where God and Christ dwell, there is a burning fire. Exodus 3:1-4; John 2:17
- C. A little boy looked at a picture an artist had painted that was hanging on the wall. He looked at it closely and asked his Dad who the man was standing at the door. His father replied, "Son, that is Christ." The little boy fired a center shot when he said, "Then, why don't they let him in?"
- D. In the picture presented in the text, Christ is standing and not sitting. He is ready to come in. Note the tense of the verb— "I stand at the door." It is not "I am going to stand" nor "I was standing." "I stand" is present action and implies continual action. But as He stands there, He is being treated with insulting indifference.
  1. Christ is there today but may not be tomorrow. Luke 9:51-56 You had better open the door for Christ *now*. II Corinthians 6:2
  2. Not only is Christ standing, but He is calling: "If any man will hear my voice." Hebrews 3:7-8; 12:25
  3. Christ is knocking at the door of the heart of every sin-sick soul. The phrase says, "any man," which means rich or poor, black, white, red, or yellow, the best or the worst, the educated or the illiterate.

4. Christ is no intruder. He will not knock the door down and break in. The phrase, "if any man will," means that your salvation is pivotal: it turns on your own will. God is willing. Are you? Matthew 16:24; 23:37; Revelation 22:17; John 5:40
5. Now let us ask and answer the question, "Why don't you let Him in?"

## II. DISCUSSION; WHY WON'T YOU OPEN THE DOOR?

- A. Is it because you don't feel the need of Him in your life like the church at Laodicea? Revelation 3:17
  1. He is your greatest need. John 15:5; Psalms 40:17; 109:22; Luke 10:42
- B. Is it because of your love of money like the rich young ruler? Matthew 19:16-22
  1. Your soul is worth far more than anything you will ever possess. Matthew 16: 24-26
  2. When you die, you will leave it all.  
I Timothy 6:6-10 & 17-19; Luke 12:19-21
- C. Is it because we are afraid to confess Him in front of others like the rulers? John 12:42-43
  1. Some people think they will lose their standing in the social circles in which they move.
  2. If you are ashamed of Christ, one day He will be ashamed of you. Matthew 10:32-33
  3. You can't be saved by faith only; you have to arise and open the door to Christ. James 2:24
- D. Is it because we choose to betray Him like Judas? Matthew 26:14-16
  1. Are you selling Him down the river?
  2. Are you like agents, preachers, and others who sell out to the highest bidder?  
II Peter 2:1-3

- E. Are you like Peter who denied Him at first?  
Matthew 26:69-75
1. He was too weak for hostile company.
  2. Are you a lot like Peter? II Timothy 2:12;  
Matthew 10:32-33
- F. Are you like Pontius Pilate, trying to be neutral in your life? Luke 23:13-25; Matthew 27:19-24
1. He was a moral coward. Are you?
  2. You cannot be neutral. Matthew 12:30
- G. Are you like Felix, waiting for a more convenient season? Acts 24:25
1. The convenient time for Felix, as far as we know, never came. Actually, it is never convenient to give up sin and accept Christ.
  2. It is foolish to wait for something that will never happen. Psalms 39:7
- H. Are you like Saul of Tarsus who didn't want to give up his church? Acts 26:5
1. He persecuted the Lord's church. Acts 8:3; 9:1
  2. He was ignorant and prejudiced. I Timothy 1:13
  3. But when he learned the truth, he obeyed. He gave up his church for the Lord's church. Galatians 1:13-16; Acts 9:6; 22:16;  
I Corinthians 12:13
- I. Are you like Agrippa who was almost persuaded by Paul to open his heart to Christ, but he refused to take the last step? Acts 26:26-29
1. He was so close but so far away.  
Mark 12:28-34
  2. When I was preaching in Foley, Alabama, a young man whom I knew was killed near his home. Someone remarked, "How sad! He lost his life within sight of his home." So many will be lost within sight of their heavenly home.

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. Jesus is knocking at your door today.  
Revelation 3:20
- B. Tomorrow you may be standing and knocking at  
His door. Luke 13:23-28; Matthew 25:1 -13
- C. Do with Him now as you will want Him to do  
with you then.

# JESUS: THE WONDERFUL CHRIST

2

Isaiah 9:6

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Words may be cheapened by light and frivolous use. Our age is fond of applying superlative adjectives to the most common place things, In modern parlance, the simplest of things are "wonderful," "magnificent," "colossal," or "stupendous." If ordinary things are described this way, how would we describe Christ, a sunset, or heaven?
- B. Movies might be to blame. For example, there was a movie producer who became a teacher. He developed exaggerated vocabulary for his grading scale. Instead of using words like "fair," "good," and "excellent," he used "wonderful" and "stupendous." To an adolescent girl everything is "just too cute."
- C. But Bible writers were not extravagant in their use of words. In the Bible, the word "wonderful" is not applied to many things.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Jesus is wonderful from many viewpoints.
  1. He has wonderful eyes. Revelation 2:18; 2:23; I Peter 3:12; Hebrews 4:13; Proverbs 15:3
  2. He has wonderful ears. I Peter 3:12; Proverbs 28:9; John 9:31
  3. He has wonderful shoulders with which to bear our burdens. I Samuel 55:22; Matthew 11:28-30; I Peter 5:7 (Text: The government is on His shoulders.)

An Irishman, who was a pack peddler, was picked up by a kind hearted man in his pickup truck. The truck driver noticed that the Irishman kept his pack on his back, so he asked him, "Pat, why don't you take your pack off your back, so you can rest better." "Faith, Sir," said

the Irishman, "I didn't know you had room enough for me and my pack, too." That is like many Christians. They think the Lord doesn't have room enough for them and their troubles, too.

4. He has wonderful arms with which to strengthen His children. The song "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" is a good reference to this. Psalms 89:21; Deuteronomy 33:27; Luke 1:51
5. He has wonderful hands with which to save. Isaiah 50:2; 59:1-2; Proverbs 1:24; Romans 10:21
  - a. He has wonderful hands with which to bless your children. Mark 10:13-16
6. He has wonderful feet. Revelation 2:18; 2:1; Acts 10:38; I Corinthians 15:24-27
7. He has a wonderful heart with which to love us. John 3:16; 15:13; I John 4:9-10; II Peter 3:9
8. The Bible contains His wonderful words. Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:22-25; John 12:48; 7:46; Psalms 119:129  
We see His words referred to as "beautiful words" and "wonderful words."
9. He has prepared a wonderful home in which to receive His people. John 14:1-6; I Peter 1:4; II Corinthians 5:1-4; Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Everything about Christ is wonderful.
2. His invitation, sinner friend, is wonderful.  
Matthew 11:28-30



# WOE TO THEM THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION

3

Amos 6:1-6

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. It is sad to hear a rebuke when we might have heard praise. I Corinthians 11:17-22
1. A preacher friend of mine told me that one of the elders asked him why he never praised him. The preacher said, "Because you've never done anything worthy of praise. So, why don't you get busy and do something praiseworthy, and I'll be happy to praise you."
  2. All of us like to be complimented, but sometimes a rebuke is needed. Happy is the man who knows when and how to rebuke and when and how to give praise. Proverbs 9:8; 17:15; 27:5; 28:23; II Timothy 4:1-5; Isaiah 58:1-2; 5:20

## II. THERE IS ONE KIND OF EASE THAT IS GOOD FOR US, AND THAT GOD WANTS US TO HAVE.

- A. It is the ease that is freedom from fear and anxiety. Ezekiel 33:14; Jeremiah 6:16; Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-8
- B. The ease in the text is condemned because it means "neglecting one's duty." The Jews felt secure in the presence of great danger; that is the greatest danger. I Corinthians 10:12
- There were 230 people flying on a plane who felt at ease as they left Miami, Florida, but they died when the plane crashed a few minutes later.

### **III. THERE ARE CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS OF EASE.**

- A. We can have a secure feeling because of a place. Amos 6:1
  - 1. Some trust in their church membership and say, "Well, I've been baptized, and I go occasionally. Isn't that enough?" It is not. Titus 3:1; 1:16; I Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42
  - 2. Some say, "I'm a member of a church." But is it *the* church? Matthew 16:18; 15:13
  - 3. Some trust their morality, but that isn't enough. Acts 10:15; 11:14-15
- B. Many people are at ease because they are ignoring the day of penalty. Amos 6:3
  - 1. Now people are not afraid of the Judgment Day; it's a lot like people in Noah's day. Ecclesiastes 8:11; II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 24:38-39
  - 2. If you knew the Judgment would be today, would you make any changes in your lifestyle? If people believed this, the churches would be full, and there would be more people than any preacher or elder could baptize.

### **IV. THE FEELING OF EASE IS OFTEN CAUSED BY THE LUXURY OF PROSPERITY.** Amos 6:4

- A. Members of the church are often much more interested in gold than in God. I Timothy 6:9-12
- B. Covetousness is an awful sin; it is numbered with drunkenness and adultery and murder. Galatians 5:19-21

### **V. THE FEELING OF EASE IS THE REVELRY OF SINFUL PLEASURE.** Amos 6:5-6

- A. Today people have all kinds of pleasure. I Timothy 3:4; Matthew 8:14

- B. Many of us in this century are pleasure and entertainment crazy. Think of how much money some people spend on big screen televisions and media centers or built-in tennis and racquetball courts; some churches spend large sums of money to build gymnasiums. But, how much do they spend to send missionaries to preach? Or to support orphan homes? Or to sponsor a local soup kitchen?

## **VI. THE FEELING OF EASE CAUSES US TO BE UNCONCERNED ABOUT OTHERS.** Amos 6:6

- A. A lack of concern for others is one reason members of the church do not give liberally.  
Lamentations 1:12; I Corinthians 16:1-2;  
Acts 11:27-30
- B. Judas did not care about Jesus nor about himself.  
John 12:6
- C. The priest and Levite did not care about the wounded man on the road. Luke 10:25-37
- D. We need to exhibit the spirit of Christ. Luke 19:45;  
Titus 2:11-14; II Corinthians 8:9; Romans 8:9;  
Ephesians 5:26
- E. We need to be like the model church in the first century. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32
- F. We need to look at the needy world through the pain wracked eyes of Christ.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

1. We need to remember the results of being at ease.
2. People who are at ease are lost and doomed for eternal hell; they need to repent and arouse.  
Revelation 3:15-21
3. The rich fool perhaps realized the results of being at ease and lounging in the lap of luxury and prosperity, but it was too late for him "This night shall thy soul be required of thee." Do you care enough to awaken and change?

# WHAT WILL YOUR ANSWER BE? 4

Job 31:14

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We know God has the right, so does He question man? Genesis 3:9; 4:9; Job 38:1-3
- B. You should always be ready to answer. I Peter 3:15. What is your hope?
- C. Your answer will be judged later. Your papers will be graded. Some will receive an "H" for hell. Acts 17:30-31; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15  
Your papers will be in the book of life and in your book of deeds.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. These questions should be answered.
  1. Whose son is Christ? Matthew 22:42
    - a. Some say Christ is the bastard child of Mary.
    - b. Many say He is God's son. Then why do they not obey?
  2. Whose shall those things be? Luke 12:20
    - a. Where is your treasure? Matthew 6:19-21
  3. Where is your wedding garment? Matthew 22:11-12
    - a. We must put on Christ. Galatians 3:26-27
  4. Are all of your things, such as your feelings, money, and loved ones, ready? If not, why? You can't use excuses like, "Wait till I feel better," "I need more money," or "I can't leave my loved ones."
  5. What will you do with Jesus? Matthew 27:22
  6. How shall we escape? Hebrews 2:3
    - a. Matthew 11:20-24; 7 AA-21-23
  7. What shall it profit a man? Mark 8:36-38

8. What shall the end be? I Peter 4:17;  
II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 6:15-17

### **III. CONCLUSION**

- A. Your answer determines God's answer. Matthew 25:34
- B. Depart ye that are cursed. Matthew 25:41
- C. What will your answer be?

(Have your song leader lead the congregation in "What Will Your Answer Be?")

# THE POUTING SON

5

Luke 15:25-32

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Many sermons are preached on the prodigal son, but few are preached on the elder son. The story is incomplete without both.
- B. The sin of the prodigal son represents publicans and sinners, for his were sins of the flesh. But the sins of the elder son represents the sins of the Pharisees. His sin was one of disposition. This is just as bad as any sin of the flesh. But importantly, the son who was guilty of some sins of the flesh "came to himself." The sins of a bad attitude or a selfish disposition are not so easily admitted and corrected. When this story ends, the pouting son still has a selfish disposition.

## II. A STUDY IN CONTRASTS OF THE CHARACTERS AND SINS OF THE SONS:

- A. The prodigal son's sins were being:
  - 1. Disobedient.  
He left of his own accord, but he was dependent upon his father and said, "Give me my inheritance." When he came back home, he said to his father, "Make me as one of your hired servants." There is quite a difference in his going and coming.
  - 2. Wasteful (the definition of "prodigal"). He spent all of his money and wasted his reputation on riotous living. He lost his good name and all of his inheritance.
  - 3. Immoral. He kept company with harlots.
  - 4. Weak. In the far country he was weak, but when he had nothing left, he showed

strength of character and came home to his father.

B. The elder, pouting son's actions were:

1. Obedient and hard working "in the field."  
No doubt, many would hold him up to be a role model.
2. Moral. He had had an opportunity to sow his wild oats, but he had not. As a result, he had received a "double portion" of his inheritance.
3. Strong. But it is not until the end of the story that we find out the weakness of his character.

C. The elder son's sins were:

1. Anger. He was very angry at his father and his brother, who had returned from the far country. It's not a sin to get angry, but too many get angry at the wrong thing and at the wrong time. Ephesians 4:26; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Proverbs 16:32; 25:23; I Corinthians 13:5; Mark 3:5
2. Sulkiness and pouting. He "would not go in" to celebrate his brother's homecoming.
  - a. Some church members are like him and won't celebrate others' return and reformation.
3. Self-righteousness. He said, "I never sinned." Luke 15:29
  - a. There is no hope for someone who cannot see his own sins. He is like the Pharisee who saw only the sins of others and not himself. Matthew 7:1-5
  - b. There is no forgiveness for this man or anyone like him. Note that the Father came out to him just as he had the prodigal son, but what a difference in

the attitude of the prodigal son and the pouting son.

4. Self-pity. He said to his father, "Thou never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." It is doubtful that he had any friends because he thought only of himself. Proverbs 18:24

He had no pity and compassion for his returning brother but only pity for himself. He should remember that he did not possess his possessions. His father told him, "All I have is thine." Obadiah 1:17; I Corinthians 3:21-23 The pouting son had all these things, but he was still whining because his father had never given him a kid.

5. Envy. He told his father, "Thou killest for him the fatted calf." Why couldn't he be happy his brother was home again? I Corinthians 13:4; 12:26 How do you feel when others are honored? Romans 12:10
6. Contempt. He referred to his brother as "this thy son." He would not even call him "brother." How many prodigal sons have been kept from the Father's house because of the ugly and spiteful attitude of an elder son?
  - a. A lady once said to me concerning another church member, "He's no brother of mine." And I said to her, "You're no child of God."
  - b. We all have the same Father, and thus, we are all brothers and sisters. Matthew 6:9; 23:8; John 5:1-3

D. The effects of the elder son's sins:

1. His sin was one of disposition and was as evil as any fleshly sin. Romans 8:9
2. He sinned against his brother in behaving



- this way. John 13:34-35; I John 3:14-15; 4:20-21; Matthew 18:6; Romans 14:13; Hebrews 12:12-13
3. He sinned against his father. His father loved him and was deeply wounded. I John 4:8; Matthew 22:37-40
  4. He sinned against himself. He made himself miserable. He shut himself out of the celebration. No unforgiving son can have fellowship with God.
  5. He made the whole family unhappy. Many elder sons rob their congregations of happiness.

### **III. CONCLUSION: THE APPROACH OF THE FATHER TO THE ELDER SON:**

- A. The father went to the heart of the malady and spoke to it.
- B. The father told the pouting, elder son, "Thou art ever with me."
- C. He also said, "All I have is thine." What wonderful love this shows. Psalms 84:11; Philippians 4:19 How could he be selfish? I Corinthians 3:21-22
- D. Did the father accomplish his purpose? We cannot say.
- E. As the curtain falls on this family, the prodigal son is on the inside, and the elder son is on the outside. The father's only power is his love for his sons. If that fails, he has nothing else.

## WHY CAN'T THEY SEE IT?

6

Matthew 13:1-17

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Briefly give the setting of the text. Some who listened to Jesus saw the truths He presented in His parables, and some did not. Why is that?
- B. There were these two farmers who got into an argument as to which one had the most rats in his barn. They argued and argued, and then they finally agreed to go to each other's barn and put their argument to the test. The first farmer stationed the second one at the side of his barn, and the first one went to the other side of the barn with a long pole and ran the pole up inside the barn and shook it very hard. He then called out to the other farmer, "Do you see any rats?" The other farmer said, "I'll admit, you do have a lot of rats, but I still maintain I have many more." So, the two farmers left and went to the second one's barn and went through the same procedure. The second farmer asked the first one if he saw any rats, and the first farmer said, "No, not a one." The other farmer shook his pole even more vigorously, and he called out, "Do you see any rats?" The first farmer said, "No, not a single one." The second farmer was shocked by his answer, so he laid down the pole and came around the barn. There he saw the other farmer with his eyes tightly closed. Of course, he didn't see any rats because he wasn't looking. And that is why many folks cannot see certain truths today.

### II. DISCUSSION

- A. Sometimes when I preach on certain themes, some

good brother will ask, "Why can't they see it?"

- B. In this sermon I will show why some can't see it.
1. I preach on baptism. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38  
Some of the brothers and sisters say, "That's so plain. Why can't they see it?"
  2. I preach on putting the kingdom first.  
Matthew 6:33 Why can't you see it?
  3. I preach on forgiveness. Matthew 6:14-15  
Why can't you see it?
  4. I preach on Christ and the church. Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:22-25 Why can't they see it?
  5. I preach on being present at the church services. Hebrews 10:25 Why can't you see it?
  6. I preach on the Lord's Supper on every Sunday. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20-34  
Many say "Why can't they see it?"
  7. I preach on giving as we have been prospered. I Corinthians 16:1-2 Why can't you see it?
  8. I preach against drunkenness. Ephesians 5:18-19 Why can't they see it?
  9. I preach on church discipline. Matthew 18:15-17 Why can't you see it?
  10. I preach on winning souls. Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16 Why can't they see it?
  11. I preach on loving and praying for your enemies. Matthew 5:44-46 Why can't you see it?
  12. Add anything that you deem appropriate.

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. Can you see the truth regarding these matters of serving God faithfully, treating your fellow man with respect and dignity, and worshiping as God would have us every Sunday?

# WHICH?

## Matthew 19:18

7

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. *Which* introduces a question, important or unimportant. Let us refuse the unimportant and devote our consideration to the important.  
II Timothy 2:23
- B. What are some of the important questions which have to do with salvation?

### II. DISCUSSION

- A. There are two ways to begin each day: with prayer or without prayer. With which one do you begin your day? Psalms 55:17; Daniel 6:10; I Timothy 5:5
- B. There are two ways of spending the Lord's Day: idly or devotionally. You spend the Lord's Day in one of these two ways. Which way do you spend it? Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10
- C. There are two classes of people in the world: the saved and the lost. To which class do you belong? Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:47; Luke 13:23-29; Matthew 7:21-29; Acts 2:37-41; 16:30-34; I John 2:3-4; 5:1-3; Matthew 16:18; James 2:10
- D. There are two masters: God and Satan. You are serving one of these two masters. Which one? Matthew 6:24; John 6:44; Matthew 12:30
- E. There are two kingdoms in the world: the kingdom of darkness (Satan-Matthew 12:26) and the kingdom of Christ. You are a citizen of one or the other. To which one do you belong? Colossians 1:12-14; Matthew 16:18-19; John 3:3-5
- F. There are two roads from time to eternity: the broad road and the narrow road. Which one of

these two roads are you traveling? Matthew

7:13-14; Isaiah 35:8-10

- G. There are two deaths which people die. Some die "in the Lord" and others die "in their sins." You will die one of these two deaths. Which one will it be? Numbers 23:10; John 8:24; Revelation 22:14; 21:8 & 27
- H. There are two places to which people go: heaven or hell. You will go to one of these two places. To which one will you go? Matthew 25:46

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. There is but one of two choices you can make today: to answer the invitation or to reject the invitation. You can say "Yes" to God, or say "No" to God. Which one will it be? II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8; Joshua 24:15; Proverbs 1:24-28

**8**

**SOME LESSONS WE LEARN  
FROM THE APOSTLES:  
WE CAN SEE OUR OWN LIVES  
MIRRORED IN THESE MEN**

Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19;  
Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:13

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Jesus made disciples by teaching them: He chose twelve men from His disciples. They were busy and mature men. He cannot use lazy men.
- B. He knew these men and made no mistake in choosing them. John 2:24-25; Acts 1:24  
He spent the night in prayer before choosing them. Luke 6:12 Before choosing preachers, elders, deacons, or teachers, we would do well to follow His example. I Timothy 5:22
- C. It is profitable to take a good look at these men, since in one or more of them, we can see our reflection. Ask yourself the question, as you study them, which one represents me?
- D. They were all different. All types of men are needed in the church. One type is just as important as another.

### **II. JOHN**

- A. He is called the "beloved." He wrote much about love and was a concrete example of love. Jesus loved him more than the others because he was more lovable. John 13:23; 21:20
- B. How do you compare with John? Love has its degrees. Mark 10:21; II Corinthians 9:7

### **III. MATTHEW**

- A. He was the practical businessman. Matthew 9:9

- B. His type is needed in the church today. Acts 6:3;  
I Timothy 3:5
  - 1. A man once said to me about one of the  
elders in the local church, "I've observed that  
a man who cannot manage his own business  
affairs well certainly cannot manage the  
Lord's business as an elder."
- C. How do you compare to Matthew?

#### **IV. PETER**

- A. He was a bold and fearless leader, and he was  
given the keys to the kingdom. Matthew 16:18-19  
We need leaders like him today in the church.
- B. He was impulsive and quick to speak; he made  
mistakes, but he always was quick to correct them.  
Matthew 26:31-35; 69-75
- C. He was a bold preacher who was not afraid to use  
the personal pronoun "you." Acts 2:36; Isaiah 58:1;  
Acts 4:16-29
- D. How do you compare to Peter?

#### **V. ANDREW AND ANANIAS**

- A. Andrew was a quiet worker. John 1:40-42; 6:8;  
12:22.
- B. Ananias, a certain disciple, baptized Saul. Acts  
9:10-18; 22:12-16. We never hear of Ananias  
again.
- C. How do you compare with Andrew and Ananias?  
Are you looking for praise and recognition?

#### **VI. THOMAS**

- A. He is the honest doubter. He always saw the dark  
side of the proposition; he saw all the difficulties  
of discipleship, but he was honest about his  
doubts. When he saw evidence, immediately he  
acknowledged his mistake and believed.  
John 20:24-25

- B. Many become idle like John the Baptist, and get into a doubting castle, but when they investigate and are convinced, they never doubt again. Matthew 11:1 -6; 14:3
- C. How do you compare with Thomas?

## **VI. JAMES**

- A. He was sturdy pillar in the church. Later he was beheaded by Herod. Acts 12:1,2
- B. Do you identify with him? Galatians 2:9
- C. Do you look more like a pillow than a pillar? I Timothy 3:15

## **VII. PHILIP**

- A. He was a servant to all. John 1:43-45; 6:5; 12:21
- B. Do we identify with him? Matthew 20:20-28; I Corinthians 9:19-22

## **VIII. JUDAS**

- A. He became a traitor.
- B. His life became one of tragic degeneration. Who punished Judas? There was no court. He punished himself. Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:25, 41; Luke 16:25
- C. Do we identify with Judas? Have we sold out to the evil one? Psalm 41:9; II Timothy 4:10; I Timothy 6:9-10

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

- A. May we all be able to identify with Christ. II Corinthians 3:18
- B. Obey the gospel and thus be transformed into His likeness. II Corinthians 4:3-6



# WALKING THROUGH DARKNESS WITH GOD

9

Job 29:1-3

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. There is a difference in walking through darkness and walking in darkness.
  - 1. A sinner walks in darkness. John 3:19; I John 2:9-11; 1:6; I Thessalonians 5:4-6
  - 2. Saints walk through darkness. Job 29:1-3; Psalms 23:4
- B. Joseph is a good illustration of one who walks through darkness. Genesis 37-50
  - 1. Note especially Genesis 45:1-8; 50:15-21.
- C. Joseph is an example of the providence of God in the lives of His people. Romans 8:28
- D. More space is devoted to the life of Joseph than to any other Old Testament character except Abraham. Why? It is not to fill up space but to show how God cares for those who walk with Him through the difficult places in life. Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:10-17
- E. Comment on Romans 8:28; this is not a promise to all people but to those who love God. I John 5:3 Being "called according to His purpose" means being called to be a preacher, elder, deacon, or Christian. II Thessalonians 2:14
  - 1. It is not being called miraculously, but by the gospel, to be in His church. Ephesians 3:8-11

## II. GOD WAS WITH JOSEPH.

- A. Three times the record says God was with him: Genesis 39:2,21,23.
  - 1. Is God with you? II Chronicles 15:2; I Chronicles 28:9; Amos 3:3; Matthew 12:30

2. If God is for us, who can be against us?  
Romans 8:31

### **III. GOD HAD A PLAN FOR JOSEPH**

**ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.** Romans 8:28

- A. Review Joseph's experiences in reverse order, beginning in Genesis 45:5-7.
  1. We can't always see God's plan for us at the beginning, but we can at the end. Joseph didn't see God's plan when he was cast into pit by his brothers, or when he was sold as a servant, or when he was in prison, or when he interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker. He didn't even see God's plan when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, and then later became prime minister of Egypt. But he sees it now. So, can we see God's plan in the place where we are?
- B. Why am I here in the pulpit preaching this morning? I would not have believed it many years ago.
- C. Show how God overruled each experience in life to bring Joseph to where he was.
- D. We need to look back and see how God has lead us through all the dark places of our lives and brought us safely through it all. He will lead us safely through the dark valley of death.

### **IV. HE WILL KEEP US IN DARKNESS UNTIL HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED HIS PURPOSE.**

- A. Consider how God had a plan for Paul.  
Galatians 1:15-16
- B. Look at what God did with Jeremiah.  
Jeremiah 1:4-8
- C. Look at how God used David. Acts 13:36; 13:22

## V. WE ARE ALWAYS WALKING TOWARD THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY. Romans 8:28

- A. Joseph's life has a wonderful ending. Genesis 50:15-22
- B. Why did God make such evil men heads of nations?
  1. Think what these men did to Joseph.
  2. Think how these men later changed. Genesis 49. God does not judge us by the most wicked thing we do but by the most noble thing we do. Even so, should we judge others in that way?
  3. Why did Joseph not go home during all the years he was prime minister? It was only 200 miles over a smooth road. He thought his father had forgotten him. And he wanted to forget his father and brothers. He even named his first son Manasseh, which means "I have forgotten." It is sad to forget. God uses us when we change.
  4. God did not make all those bad things happen to Joseph, but He brought good out of them.
    - a. We may fall through carelessness and break a leg, but God can overrule it for good. We're never as close to God as when we're lying on our backs looking up.
    - b. A little baby dies, and this breaks our hearts, but he/she could have lived and later become a murderer, etc. God can bring good out of tragic things by bringing heaven closer to us. No one can defeat a child of God. Proverbs 3:5-6

## VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Let us walk in light. Psalms 119:105; I John 1:7-10

# WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY SINS?

10

I John 1:5-10

## I. INTRODUCTION

Give the setting of the text and discuss how sin is a part of our lives, but we can receive forgiveness.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. All of us have sins. I Kings 8:46; I Samuel 2:2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; James 3:2; I John 1:8-10  
If we say we have no sins, we deceive ourselves.
- B. Are we like the elder son? Luke 15:29
- C. You cannot spell "sin" without the "I," and where is the "I"? It is smack dab in the middle of the word.
- D. The word, "sin," has in its sound the hiss of the serpent, and in its glamour, the gleam of the fang. Its wages is death. Romans 6:23

## III. WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR SINS?

- A. One person says, "I'll forget I have any, so maybe they won't really exist." You may forget about your sins, but God doesn't forget unless you get rid of them. Hebrews 8:11; Acts 2:38; I John 1:7-8
- B. Another person says, "I'll run away from sin." But where will you run? Psalms 139:7-12
- C. Someone else says, "I blame it on others."
  - 1. Adam blamed his sin on Eve, and Eve blamed her sin on the serpent, and they both insinuated that their sin was God's fault. Do we do this?
- D. Another person says, "I'll cover up my sins." You cannot cover up your sins; God knows everything. Proverbs 28:13; Proverbs 15:2

- E. Many of us say, "I'll simply let time take care of sin. After all, time heals all wounds."
  - 1. Time will not erase sin. Only the blood of Christ can erase sin. We must have them washed away in the act of baptism that is symbolic of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection: so then, we become dead to sin; we are buried with Christ in baptism, and we arise to walk a new life with the blood of Christ continuing to cleanse us from our sins. Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5; I John 1:7
- F. Some people say that they'll get rid of their sin tomorrow or at a more convenient time when they put off obeying God's will. God says we must do it NOW. II Corinthians 6:2; Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-17
  - a. We should plan for eternity, not tomorrow like the rich fool did. Luke 12
  - b. We should not say "wait for a more convenient time" like Felix did; this time never came for him as far as we know. Acts 24:25

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. If you don't get rid of sin, it will get rid of you. Romans 6:23

# UNTO

11

Hebrews 12:1-2; Luke 9:62

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The word "unto" means to, toward, in the direction of, or until.
- B. It never means to go backward, Luke 9:62; Hebrews 12:1-2
- C. The word "unto" is badly misused and abused. Many quote it as "until." Many sectarians abuse it by trying to make it mean "because of." In Acts 2:38, as used in the revised version, it always looks forward and never backward. It means "because of" with reference to baptism. It would mean the same thing with reference to repentance. In Matthew 26:28, it is used in reference to Jesus' shedding His blood. The same expression is used in Acts 2:38.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Your faith is unto. Romans 10:10
- B. Your repentance is unto. Acts 11:18
- C. Your confession is unto. Romans 10:10
  - 1. Your baptism is into. Galatians 3:27
- D. Our hope is unto the end. Hebrews 6:11; 3:6; I Peter 1:3
  - 1. Abraham's hope was unto the end. Romans 4:18, 21
- E. Our words are unto the end. Revelation 2:26; 22:12; Ephesians 2:10; I Corinthians 15:58; John 9:4
- F. Our perfection is unto the end. Hebrews 6:1
- G. Hold fast unto the end. Hebrews 3:14; Revelation 3:11
  - 1. It is like a person falling off a precipice who grabs a bush and holds on for dear life.

- H. We are called unto liberty. Galatians 5:13; I Peter 2:9; Galatians 5:1
1. We do not have a license to do evil. I Peter 2:16
- I. God called you unto holiness. I Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 12:14
1. Perfecting holiness is like a bud that becomes a perfect flower, or a child who tries to become a perfect man. II Corinthians 7:1
- J. Turn away from profane and babbling ungodliness. II Timothy 2:15-18
1. Many preachers just babble the words of God. I Timothy 6:20
- K. Many turn away their ears from the truth. II Timothy 4:1-4
1. An attitude will not endure an action. Some churches hire and fire preachers trying to get the right one to suit them because they won't listen to the truth.
- L. Be obedient unto the end. Philippians 2:6-11
1. We should always obey in all things. Philippians 2:12-13
- M. Have patience unto the end like Job. James 5:7
1. Being patient is a running virtue, not a sitting down virtue. Hebrews 12:1  
The fable of the hare and the tortoise is a good example of patience.
- N. We should go unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:20
1. The Lord will go with you.
  2. When I was a small child, I was afraid of the dark, but I was not afraid when my Dad went with me.
- O. Confirm God unto the end. I Corinthians 1:7-8; Acts 14:22
1. To confirm is to establish and strengthen. You

- should not baptize a baby. A person should not be baptized and confirmed before maturity.
- P. We should acknowledge God unto the end.  
II Corinthians 1:13; Mark 8:38
1. We should keep confessing to Him.  
II Timothy 2:12

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. We exhort all who have not obeyed the gospel to:
1. Believe unto. Romans 10:10
  2. Repent unto. Acts 11:18
  3. Confess unto. Romans 10:10
  4. Be baptized into. Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27
- B. God wants us to be faithful unto, not until, the end. Revelation 2:10



# WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?

12

Joshua 4:6-7

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Give the setting of the text.
- B. They were to remind them of all that God had done for them. Man is eternally prone to forget. The word "remember" is a word of frequent mention in God's word.

## II. OUR PURPOSE IN THIS SERVICE IS:

- A. We have gathered here today not to dedicate this building. It was dedicated when the first material was brought to this lot.
- B. We are having this service to remind ourselves and our children why this building was erected, and what it means to us.

## III. DISCUSSION

- A. This building means vision. Some of us saw the need. Proverbs 29:18
- B. It means wise planning and the execution of those plans. We must make plans and work out the plans. Revelation 3:2 How many are idle dreamers and make plans but fail to work the plans.
- C. This building means you counted the cost. Luke 14:25-33
- D. This building means dedication and sacrifice. Exodus 36:1-7  
Note: They had to be restrained. In many instances today, we have to beg and exhort. Really stress this point.
- E. This building means cooperation; it is a working together. Every man should share in the work and

have a mind to work. Nehemiah 4:6; II Corinthians 8:13; Galatians 6:4-5

1. I like a religion that has "we" and "us" in it and not "they."
2. We should always be united in our work. In unity there is strength. President Lincoln said, "United we stand, divided we fall."

There is a story about a father and his four sons. He gave each son a stick and told them to break his stick. This they each did with the utmost ease. Then he tied several sticks together and told each son to break the bundle of sticks. They could not, and thus there is the lesson of strength in unity.

F. This building means you love the Lord and His cause.

1. You are willing to give Him first place in your lives. Matthew 6:33
2. One man or woman can build a house for himself that costs \$50,000 or \$75,000, but ten people in some places are not willing to build a neat, commodious meeting house for the Lord.
  - a. God's ancient people were dwelling in houses that were called costly, and the house of the Lord was lying waste. Haggai 1:2-9
  - b. When you build a building in the community, you command the respect of outsiders. Acts 2:46-47

G. This building means that you have a place to meet and worship God in His own appointed way.

1. This building is not church, but the place where the church meets. Let's never confuse the two.  
There's not a sacred brick or piece of timber

in this building.

2. This is a place where we can meet and enjoy sweet fellowship together in worshipping God. Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Corinthians 14:23; Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2
3. We sing, pray, preach, give, and eat the Lord's Supper here. Ephesians 5:19; Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 11:20; Acts 20:7; note verse 33

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. Let us always use this building to glorify God.
- B. Let us advertise this building by loving one another. John 13:34-35
  1. A young boy passed one congregation to go to another which was much farther from his home. He was asked why. He said, "Because they love a little fellow over there."

## TWO SEARCHING QUESTIONS 13

Acts 9:5-6

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. These questions were asked by Saul of Tarsus.
1. When we first catch a glimpse of him, he is a persistent persecutor of the church. Acts 7:58; 8:3; 9:1
  2. The second glimpse of him shows him to be a praying, penitent sinner. Acts 9:5-20; 22:1-16; 26:9-19
  3. The third glimpse shows him to be a powerful preacher. Romans 1:14-17; I Corinthians 15:1-4
  4. A fourth, and the last glimpse, shows him as a patient prisoner in Rome. Acts 28:30-31
- B. The answer to the second question is contingent upon the correct answer to the first question. Hence, let us consider this question.

### II. WHO ART THOU, LORD?

- A. A man once said to me that when he asked this question, he was a saved man. I reminded him that to the Jews, any superior person was Lord. I Peter 3:6 I also reminded him that if he were saved, he didn't know it. The Lord didn't know it, and Ananias didn't know it. And if he were saved, he was one of the most miserable saved men I'd ever read about.
- B. But who is Lord? What's the answer to this question? Consider Christ's question to Peter and Peter's answer. Matthew 16:13-30
1. The Christ is not one of many. He is the Son of the living God, not one of many Sons. I Corinthians 8:6
  2. Peter answers our question in Acts 2:36. He says He is the same Jesus whom "you

crucified." Jesus brings before us the name of a man and therefore our brother. Romans 8:16; Hebrews 2:11 & 17 He is the Lord, Ruler, King, Commander, Christ, and our Savior. He is the only Savior. Acts 4:12

3. Thus our question, "Who art thou, Lord?" is answered. Now we are ready to consider question two.

### III. LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?

- A. Saul was asking the right person. Only Jesus can tell you. John 6:68; Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 17:5; Acts 3:22-23
- B. "What" denotes an inquiring mind: anything. Lord, just name it, and I'll do it. I Samuel 3:9
- C. "Wilt thou" means *you* only can tell me, not some man who will tell you just to believe him.
- D. "Have me" implies *you*, not your grandma, grandpa, mother, father, brother, or sister, but *me*.
- E. "To do" means not to feel, not to jump benches, or wallow in saw dust. It means not to see, but to do. Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46
- F. The Lord told him to go into the city, not here but there. Acts 9:6 "Thou must do" was the only thing he was told to do: that he was told to be baptized. Therefore, in order to be saved, one must be baptized. Acts 22:16 Just as the body is washed in the water, the blood of Christ cleanses us from sin. John 3:7; Hebrews 10:22; Revelation 1:5

### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Thus, the greatest two questions that ever fell from the lips of mortal man were answered.
- B. If you will do what Saul did, you will be saved and made happy in the Savior's love.
- C. Saul did it immediately. Why will you not? Galatians 1:16; II Corinthians 6:1-2

## WHICH VERSE WILL CONDEMN YOU?

14

Hebrews 9:27; II Corinthians 5:10;  
Romans 14:10-12; Matthew 25:30-46

(We will be gathered as nations but judged as individuals.  
Revelation 20:11 -15)

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Several years ago a gospel preacher, with whom I was well acquainted, told this story. He was called to California to preach the funeral of a young man whose father and mother were dear friends of his. The young man was a notorious sinner, and in a drunken rage, had killed his wife and then himself. The preacher traveled by train from Tennessee, and all the way there, he wondered what he could say at the funeral service. He decided to read Revelation 21. At the funeral he stood up and began reading verses 1-7 of that chapter, but he stopped before reading verse 8. He said it just occurred to him that the young man was guilty of all the things mentioned in this verse, and he thought that this verse would forever condemn him. This put me to thinking – what if I'm condemned, and now I ask myself and you all – just what verse will condemn us at the day of Judgment? Revelation 20:11-20
- B. Remember, if we keep the whole law and break one part of it, we are guilty of breaking all. James 2:10

### II. WHICH VERSE WOULD CONDEMN YOU IF YOU SHOULD DIE TODAY?

- A. Christ will be the judge. John 5:22; II Corinthians 5:10, Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; II Timothy 4:1

- B. As He opens the book and reads Revelation 20:10-11, if you are turned away from those gates so beautiful and that home so fair, which verse will pronounce your eternal condemnation?
1. Will it be Mark 16:16, John 3:18, or 8:24?
  2. Will it be Luke 13:3-5 or Acts 17:30?
  3. Will it be Matthew 10:32-34 or Romans 10:8-10?
  4. Will it be Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, or John 3:3-5?
  5. Will it be Hebrews 10:25?
  6. Will it be I Corinthians 16:1-2?
  7. Will it be Matthew 6:14, 18:21-22, or 18:35?
  8. Will it be Matthew 22:35-40?
  9. Will it be Matthew 19:9 or 5:32?
  10. Will it be any of the sins mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 or Revelation 21:8?

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. You had better examine yourself now, and if you are guilty of any of these, you had better make it right now.

# A CHEAP RELIGION

15

I Kings 12:25-33

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Give the setting of the text.
- B. Jereboam had his own easy way.
- C. Many like him want the easy or cheap religion.
- D. Jereboam's religion was different from David's.  
II Samuel 24:22-24  
His religion was also different from Paul's.  
Philippians 3:7-8
- E. The Lord's way is up a rugged hill of duty. Matthew 7:13-14 The strait and narrow way is difficult and costly.
- F. Men like Jereboam want to change the Lord's way.  
Jeremiah 5:30-31; Isaiah 30:9-10; II Timothy 4:1 -5  
But God's way cannot be changed. Revelation 22:18-19

## II. SOME WANT TO DEVISE AN EASY PLAN OF SALVATION.

- A. We must wait on the Lord; we can't do anything alone. We must have the Holy Spirit. We can't just bow before our radio and say "Let us pray with you."
- B. You must be saved by the Lord's way, not by faith only. Matthew 16:15-16 & 24; Acts 2:38; 22:16

## III. SOME THINK THAT IMMERSION IS TOO HARD.

- A. Some say immersion is too hard. Sprinkling and pouring are much easier.
- B. Five times the Bible locates Philip and the Eunuch in water. "Both" is mentioned twice. "They" is mentioned twice. Acts 8: 26-39 Then the verse says "He baptized him." Acts 8:38



- C. Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:14 say that baptism is immersion, and that there is one baptism.  
Ephesians 4:5

#### **IV. MANY SAY ONE CHURCH IS JUST AS GOOD AS ANOTHER. YOU CAN JOIN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE.**

- A. The Bible says fifteen times there is one body, and four times that this body is the church, and then adds that there is but one church. I Corinthians 12:20
- B. Sectarians compromise with all the groups and make it cheap and easy. Many are never against anything. And some of them are even in the church.  
I Corinthians 2:10-13; John 17:20-23; Matthew 15:13

#### **V. MANY WANT AN EASY OR CHEAP SERVICE AND WORSHIP.**

- A. They think you will go to heaven any way, just attending whenever. Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25
- B. They think it's all right to leave off the Lord's Supper. They have no doctrinal preaching. They offer entertainment, programs, a service dedicated to the memory of an outstanding man, or Christmas, and other days instead of the Lord's Day. Choirs and soloists sing for the congregation, and the preacher often reads a sermon with little emotion or apparent connection to its message.
- C. Many ignore the scriptures about giving, or they give pittance. They're saying that you can be saved while robbing God for selfish pursuits. I Corinthians 16:1-2; Malachi 3:8-10
- D. Many want no discipline in the church. They think it is all sin, and that they're letting the wheat and the tares grow together. Matthew 13:28-30  
The field is their world, not the church. Matthew 13:38; I Corinthians 5:13; II Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17

## **VI. MANY WANT AN EASY OR CHEAP DIVORCE AND WANT TO REMARRY.**

- A. They want a divorce for any cause and go unrebuked. Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-9; Romans 7:1-4  
They need to count the cost and pray. It's too late to be sorry. Many live together without marriage.

## **VII. CONCLUSION: SOME SAY YOU CAN'T FALL FROM GRACE, OR IT IS TOO HARD TO LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE.**

- A. They make going to heaven cheap or easy. Amos 6:1
- B. You must pay the price. Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:25-33; John 15:1-8; II Peter 1:5-11; Acts 14:22
- C. You must be faithful. II Timothy 4:6-8; Revelation 2:10

# WHY SHOULD WE LOVE CHRIST?

16

I Peter 1:8

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. Briefly comment on the text. No man today has seen Christ. A man in a testimonial meeting said, "I saw Christ, and He spoke to me like a man." I asked him what He'd said, and the man said he had forgotten.

B. "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

C. Some people think that some things are better felt than told.

A boy wrote his girlfriend a letter. He said, "There's not a mountain too high for me to climb for you, nor a river so wide that I wouldn't swim for you, nor a desert so hot and dry that I wouldn't cross for you," Then he added in the P.S. "I'll see you Saturday night if it's not raining."

Do you love Jesus as you should? You had better.

I Corinthians 16:22

Some tell Christ how much they love Him when they really should say, "I'll see you next Sunday morning if it doesn't rain."

## II. WHY SHOULD I LOVE CHRIST?

A. You should love Christ because of what He has done for you. He loves me. Remember that Christ's love for you and me is personal. "He loved me" as though I were the only person living. John 15:12-13; Galatians 2:20

B. He died for me. Isaiah 53:1 -12 (Read the chapter slowly and change the pronouns to me and my: my griefs, my sorrows; He was wounded for my transgressions and for my iniquities; He received

the chastisement of my peace, and with His stripes I am healed). At the heart of the gospel is, Christ died for our sins. I Corinthians 15:3

- C. I should love Christ because He saved me from my sins. I Timothy 1:5  
Show how Christ saved Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul.  
Christ saved me and added me to His church. Acts 2:47.

### **III. I SHOULD LOVE CHRIST BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS DOING FOR ME NOW.**

- A. He is interceding. Hebrews 7:25
- B. He is bearing our burdens. I Peter 5:7
- C. He can be touched with our infirmities. Hebrews 4:15
- D. He helps me to overcome temptations. Hebrews 4:15; 2:18
- E. He censors my prayer and presents it to God. John 14:13; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17

### **IV. I SHOULD LOVE CHRIST BECAUSE OF WHAT HE WILL DO FOR ME.**

- A. He will come again. John 14:1-3
  - 1. When? Perhaps when there is enough salt to save us, like Sodom and Gomorrah and the antideluvians (the people of Noah's day). We don't know when He will come. Mark 13:32
  - 2. He will raise the dead. John 5:28-29
    - a. He will raise all the dead in the same hour.
    - b. He will raise all the dead in the same day. John 6:40; 12:48
    - c. There will be no room for leaving a thousand years in between His comings.
  - 3. He will judge all men.
    - a. We must give an account if we are not forgiven. II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews

9:27; Revelation 20-11-15

He will never leave me. Matthew 28:20;  
Hebrews 13:5-6

- b. He will say to "Come" to some, but He will not say it to all.
- c. He will say to some "Depart." Matthew 7:23; 25:46

# WHY SOME FAIL TO ENTER 17

## THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF HEAVEN

Luke 13:22-28

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The gate is attractive and appealing because of where it leads.
- B. We are all travelers from time to eternity.
- C. Before entering any road, we should be sure it leads to our desired destination.
- D. Many miss the right road and instead travel the road that seems right. This is a terrible tragedy. Proverbs 14:12
- E. Many are not willing to pay the price.
  - 1. The road is straight and difficult. Many fail because their road is not straight. They want to be carried to heaven "on flowery beds of ease."
- F. Let us note some reasons why many fail, and to them your attention is now invited.

### II. DISCUSSION

- A. They seek only casually. They have no burning desire to go there. You must seek with all your heart. Jeremiah 19:13; Matthew 6:33; Psalms 119:1-2  
They want to have a fire escape, just in case they need it.
- B. They do not strive. You must strain every nerve, like an athlete in a contest. II Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:1
- C. Many are more interested in others, like Peter. John 21:21-22  
Like the man in our text wanted to know about

others. He should have asked, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?"

- D. Many are not seeking and striving diligently. Luke 15:3-9
  - 1. He sought until he found it. Luke 15:8-10
  - 2. She sought diligently until she found it. Luke 15:11
  - 3. He came to himself (got his right mind) and said, "I will." And he arose and went. He did not go the way of hypocrites or exhibit self-righteous ways.
- E. Many fail because they do not make sufficient preparation. Matthew 25:1-13  
They wait until it's too late (i.e. deathbed repentance). Proverbs 1:24-28
- F. There will be a lot of disappointed people at the wondrous gate. Luke 13:22-28; Matthew 7:21-23

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. Are you willing to pay the price to do His will? Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 14:25-33
- B. Are you one of those He never knew? Matthew 7:22-23  
Or are you one He did know, but now He knows not? Luke 13:23-27; Matthew 25:12
- C. The tragedy of all tragedies would be to hear the judge of all the world say to you, your husband, your wife, your son or daughter, "depart from me to walk the burning marl of eternal damnation forever and forever."

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RECEIVE CHRIST?

18

Colossians 2:6

(It is a scriptural expression.)

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Many talk glibly about receiving Christ as their personal Saviour, but they have no scriptural concept of how it is done or what it means. They have received a fatal delusion.  
II Thessalonians 2:10-12
- B. Like the young prophet, they have believed a lie.  
I Kings 13
- C. Hence, the importance of our theme, what and how does one receive Christ, and to this theme your attention is now directed.

## II. WAYS BY WHICH WE DO NOT RECEIVE CHRIST:

- A. We do not receive Christ by faith only. John 1:11-13; James 2:24; John 12:42
  - 1. The word of God gives the believer power, but he must use that power.
  - 2. A young man buys a marriage license, but he and his wife must use that power together. The gospel has the power to save. Romans 1:16 We must obey it. I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9
- B. We do not receive Christ by saying, "I am a sinner" and having prayer, as Billy Graham and others teach. Proverbs 28:9; John 9:31  
The sinner said "God, have mercy on me." Luke 18:13-14.  
But he was already a child of God, or else he could not enter the temple. Ezekiel 44:6-9



- C. Prayer cannot contravene God's law of pardon.  
Mark 16:15-16  
This does not say, "he that beheveth and prayeth shall be saved" nor does it say, "he that believeth and squealeth shall be saved," but it does say "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."
- D. Peter did not say to those more than 3,000 listeners on the day of Pentecost, "Hit the sawdust trail" or "Sign this decision card" or "Come to the front, and we'll have prayer for you, and we'll give you some literature." Rather he said, "Repent and be baptized." Acts 2:38

### III. WAYS BY WHICH WE DO RECEIVE CHRIST:

- A. How then does one receive Christ?
1. A person receives Christ by receiving His word. Acts 2:41; James 1:21-25; Colossians 1:3-6; 1:23
  2. A person receives Christ by receiving the gospel. I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:6-9
  3. A person receives Christ like the Samaritans did. Acts 8:5 & 12-17
  4. A person receives Christ as the Eunuch did. Acts 8:22-39
  5. Again, a person cannot receive Christ without receiving His word. John 12:47-48; II John 9
- B. To receive Christ you must receive or obey the gospel as:
1. The listeners on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:36-41
  2. Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:6 & 22; 26:19
  3. Lydia. Acts 16:13-15
  4. The jailor. Acts 16:25-34
  5. The Colossians. Colossians 1:23; 1:4

- a. They had to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Matthew 3:8; Colossians 3:5-8
  - b. They confessed their sins and confessed the name of Christ. Colossians 2:2
  - c. They were baptized. Colossians 2:12; 3:1
- C. We must continue to walk with Christ and receive Him.
- 1. We walk as He walked. I John 2:6
  - 2. We must be rooted and built up as a young plant (and not be a tumbleweed). Psalms 1:3
  - 3. We can walk with Him by continuing in the faith. Colossians 1:23; Revelation 2:10; Acts 2:42

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. Now have you received Christ?
- B. Receive Him as those did who heard the first sermon that was preached to them (i. e., those on the Day of Pentecost, the Samaritans, the Eunuch, Lydia).
- C. When you do receive Christ, you can go on your way rejoicing.

# A SERMON FROM OUTSIDERS 19 TO INSIDERS

Matthew 5:38-48

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Frequently when you go to some place to preach, some good brother will come and inform you that there are several outsiders present, so be sure to preach to them in this sermon. I'm reversing his suggestion and let them preach to the insiders.
- B. It's sad but true that full many a time, some outsiders put insiders to shame. My brethren, this ought not so to be. Briefly comment on Matthew 5:38-48.
- C. Let us in this sermon note a few examples.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. The Centurion. Matthew 8:5-12.
  - 1. He preached a powerful sermon on faith.
    - a. Christ commended him and no doubt caused some insiders to hang their heads in shame.
    - b. Discuss his great faith. "Speak word only," etc.
    - c. Do you have that kind of faith? Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19; 4:6-7
- B. The Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37
  - 1. What a powerful sermon on love and care!
  - 2. Contrast what he did with the priest and levite. They represent insiders. You?
  - 3. How do you compare with them? James 2:14-26; Philippians 2:19-21; I John 3:17
- C. The Ten Lepers. Luke 17:11-19
  - 1. What a powerful sermon the Samaritan preached. Who returned to express his gratitude!

2. In gratitude is one of the most repulsive sins in the catalog of sin and yet one of the most common.
  3. Are you one of the nine? **Or the one?** Ephesians 5:18; II Timothy 3:1-5
- D. Cornelius before he became an insider. Acts 10:1-2
1. He preaches a powerful sermon to many insiders and puts them to shame.
  2. Note his good traits.
    - a. A devout man, deeply religious, had convictions and stood for them. Do you?
    - b. Feared God. Do you? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Acts 10:34-35
    - c. Gave much. Do you? Or little of your means?
    - d. Prayed always. Do you? I Thessalonians 5:17
    - e. A just man. Are you? Acts 10:22
    - f. Ready to hear all that God commanded. Are insiders? II Timothy 4:1-5

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. What do you more than others? Matthew 5:47; James 1:22-25; Matthew 10:20-24

# CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

20

John 6:66-69; 14:1-6

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Christ is the answer to problems in our lives, but not because of a sign posted on the highway or in a person's home.
- B. The purpose of this lesson is to show how Christ is the answer to all of life's problems.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Christ is the answer to the problem of religious division.
  1. Children go to the same school together; business men work together five days a week. Many parents live together, but on Sunday, they can't worship together. Impress this thought.
  2. Make Christ the center of your family life and gather all around Him; your family with Christ in it will be as one and will submit to His will.
  3. Answer His prayer for you and accept the message of Christ. John 17:20-21; Acts 4:32
  4. When His plan is accepted, we will submit to His will. Ephesians 4:1 -6; I Corinthians 1:10-13; 14:33
  5. Christ and the Father are one because Christ submitted to God's will. John 6:38; 8:29  
If I should take the blue print of this building and go to China and build a structure according to the blue print, I would have the same building; it wouldn't be a building that was nearly like it, but it would be exactly like this building. This is another example: if all of Russia should submit to Communism, then all

people in Russia would be Communists.

6. Think of ten young people who are seated on the front pews, and they respond to the invitation.

They submit to Christ, confess their sins, and are baptized; they become as one with Christ. But two say that's not what my parents did. I'll follow them. So, these two are divided from the rest who are one with Christ.

Christ won't add a husband to one church and his wife to another, or a son to one and a daughter to another. Acts 2:47

- B. Christ is the answer to the problem of juvenile delinquency.

1. Describe the current conditions in our society of students killing students and teachers and parents.
2. Jesus is the head of the family, and He offers a way out of all problems.
3. The world seems to be seeking an answer to its problems, but the answer will be found through human wisdom. Therefore, it will never succeed. Jeremiah 10:23; I Corinthians 1:21-25; 3:18-20
4. Brother Oscar Paden was a great elder in the Lord's church in Lubbock, Texas. He had six children: the four boys became preachers and missionaries, and the two girls were great Bible school teachers. News reporters interviewed him and asked him for the formula for rearing his children. He smiled and said, "I got my formula from the Lord. I lived Christ before them because they won't listen to your advice and ignore your example. We had daily devotions in our home. The children were taken, not sent, to all church services. I sent them to Christian schools where God's word

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. "Why" is a word of frequent mention in the Bible and in the English language. It is a word that is used to begin a question or to state surprise. We use it to impress something of supreme importance upon your mind, and to this theme your attention is now invited.
- B. Consider why the Lord said "Why" to Haggai. He was building his house for himself and not for God. Haggai 1:2-7

**II. DISCUSSION**

- A. Gideon's "why" was one of faithlessness and doubt. Judges 6:13.
1. "If" is an exclamation of doubt.
  2. We should never doubt that God is with us and can do great and mighty things with us if we will trust Him. Show how God used Gideon to deliver His people.  
"If God be for us, who can be against us?"  
Romans 8:31 & 35-39; I John 5:4; Philippians 4:13 One man and God constitute a mighty majority.
- B. Here are some of the "why's" of Christ:
1. Jesus asked the multitudes who were following Him, "Why are you worried?" Put the kingdom first, and it will eliminate the world. Matthew 6:25-34
  2. Again, Jesus asked His followers, "Why beholdest the mote, (little splinter) in thy brother's eye and considereth not the beam (telegraph pole) that is in thine own eye?"  
Matthew 7:1-5

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- a. This passage shows that Christ used humor in teaching. Imagine a man with a telegraph pole sticking out of his eye trying to cast a little splinter out of his brother's eye.
  3. Jesus asked His disciples, "Why are ye fearful?" Matthew 8:26; Hebrews 13:5-6
  4. Jesus asked the multitudes following Him, "Why call me Lord and do not the things I say?" Luke 6:46
    - a. Are you obeying Him? Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21-23
  5. And He asked God the Father, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Mark 15:34
    - a. The greatest heartbreaking experience that our Lord endured was death on the cross. God forsook Him because sin separates us from God and Christ. He had the weight of the whole world of sin upon Him. II Corinthians 5:21
- C. The "why's" of Peter:
1. He asked the Jews, "Why marvel?" Acts 3:12
    - a. Jesus can do greater things for you. Acts 3:12-19
  2. Peter asked Ananias, "Why hast Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" Acts 5:3  
 Ananias and Sapphira were the first examples of sin in the first century church: they lied to Peter and the leaders of the church, and most importantly, to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.  
 And as a result, they were struck dead. Satan, the father of lies, had filled their hearts with sin. Satan always fills hearts that are empty. Matthew 12:43-45.  
 Don't give Satan any room in your hearts,

but instead fill your hearts with good things.  
Luke 22:3; Romans 12:19-21; Ephesians 4:27  
Our hearts and lives should be full of good  
works like Dorcas. Acts 9:36

D. The "why's" of Pilate:

1. "Why? What evil hath he done?" Matthew 27:23
  - a. Pilate was asking, "What's wrong with Christ?" I Peter 2:22-25; Hebrews 4:15; I John 3:5

E. The "why's" of Paul:

1. He asked the Christians at Rome, "Why do you judge your brother?" Romans 14:10-12
  - a. Judge yourself so as to be not a stumbling block.
  - b. God and Christ will judge you. Acts 17:30-31; II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 2:1-3
  - c. He asked the Christians at Corinth, "Why do you glory as if the things you possess are your own?" I Corinthians 4:7

F. The "why" of Ananias:

1. He asked Saul of Tarsus, "Now why tarriest thou?" Acts 22:16
  - a. Why do you tarry? Why do you hesitate to do God's will?

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. Why not obey Him now? II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8
- B. You may have many excuses but not one reason.
  1. A preacher asked a man who was offering excuses for not obeying the gospel to go home, get a pencil and paper, and write down every reason he had for not obeying the gospel.

The man came the next night and was baptized. He said he could think of many excuses, but not one reason.

# THE DISAPPOINTING JESUS 22

Matthew 7:21-23

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Many sermons have been preached on "Jesus, the Son of the Living God," "Jesus, our Savior, and our Mediator," "Christ, our Best Friend," "Jesus Christ, the Final Rewarder of Those Who Diligently Seek Him," "Marveling at the Marvelous Man," and "Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."
- B. But in this sermon we wish to consider Him as "The Disappointing Jesus."
- C. "Don't disappoint me" is one of the most motivating expressions anywhere.
- D. We dislike the thought of disappointing people.
  - 1. A little boy overheard two men talking about their dog. One was a setter, and the other was a pointer. He ran home and asked his daddy if their dog was a pointer or a setter. His Dad replied, "Neither son. He's a disappointer and an upsetter." The dog was kept for sentimental reasons.
- E. How often we must disappoint Jesus, but we are discussing how and why He is a disappointment to others.

## II. JESUS DISAPPOINTED HIS OWN RACE.

- A. His own people rejected him. John 1:11; 6:15; Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:1-5
- B. The Jews were disappointed in Him when He made a Samaritan the hero of a parable. Luke 10:30-37
- C. No one wanted to be near Him during His trial, especially when Pilate wrote, "Kings of the Jews." John 19:19-22

- D. Those following Him were disappointed in Him when He complimented the centurion. Matthew 8:5-13

### **III. JESUS DISAPPOINTED RELIGIOUS RACKETEERS OF HIS DAY.**

- A. He made many changes in the Jews' house of prayer. Matthew 21:12-13; John 2:14-17
- B. He made many changes in worship, abolishing the Jewish law. Matthew 15:8-9; Matthew 23
- C. On occasion Jesus disappointed even the faithful apostles, Paul and Peter. Matthew 16:21-23; II Corinthians 12:7-9

### **IV. JESUS DISAPPOINTED PLEASURE SEEKERS.**

- A. Jesus disappointed one of His followers who wanted His blessing and asked Him to make his brother divide the inheritance with him. Luke 12:13-21 Instead Jesus taught a lesson on covetousness and told the young man that life doesn't consist in things but in the way we live. There's a great difference between making a life and making a living.
- B. He disappointed the mother of Zebebee's children who wanted her sons to have places of honor in His kingdom. Matthew 20:20-23
- C. He disappointed those who were expecting another big feed. John 6:26; Philipians 3:18-19
- D. Today He is still disappointing anyone who will not assume self-denial and follow Him. Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33

### **V. JESUS DISAPPOINTED CURIOSITY SEEKERS.**

- A. He did not perform miracles to draw a crowd or

to make things more interesting. Matthew 12:38-39; Acts 17:21

- B. Much to some of His followers' disappointment. He performed signs and wonders in order to prove His own divinity. John 20:30-31

#### **VI. JESUS DISAPPOINTED HIS OWN FAMILY.**

- A. His brothers in the flesh did not even believe in Him. John 7:3-5
- B. Jesus expects us to put Him before our own family members and do His will: such a great expectation is ironically a great disappointment to many. Matthew 10:36-37; 12:50

#### **VII. JESUS DISAPPOINTED HIS DISCIPLES.**

- A. He disappointed His disciples who wanted Him to discipline others. Luke 9:51-62; 24:21; John 21:1-2; I Peter 1:3; Acts 1:5-6; Mark 16:11; John 6:66-68

#### **VIII. JESUS DISAPPOINTED THE RICH YOUNG RULER.**

- A. This young man wanted compliments from Jesus, not a lesson in loving money. Matthew 19:16-22
- B. The rich young ruler would probably have done most anything else but the one thing he was told to do. Many of us are like him because we want to be told what we desire to hear.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. Some will learn that it takes more than a belief in the Bible to be saved. James 2:24
- B. Not all religious people will be saved. Matthew 7:21-23
- C. Not all baptized people will be saved. Revelation 3:5
- D. Not everyone who calls on the name of the Lord

- will be saved. Matthew 7:21; Luke 13:23-30
- E. Indeed, many will be disappointed in Jesus on the day of Judgment.

# THE MAN WHO PUTS MANY 23 CHURCH MEMBERS TO SHAME

Acts 10:1-48

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Review Cornelius' conversion.
- B. Many think morality will save them.
- C. Cornelius was a good man, but he was not a Christian.
- D. A preacher once preached about Cornelius: where the record says he was "a centurion in the Italian band," the preacher paused and said, "He must have been a good musician because he belonged to the Italian band." Where it says that Cornelius "gave much alms," this preacher pronounced it "alum" and paused again and said, "Not only was he a good musician, but he was also a good doctor. It says here that he gave much alum to the people."

## II. HOW DO YOU COMPARE TO CORNELIUS?

- A. If you are a member of the church, please stand by the side of Cornelius and have your picture taken.

How do your deeds, prayer life, and attitude compare to his?

## III. CORNELIUS WAS:

- A. A devout man.
  1. This means he was a dedicated man; he knew what he stood for, and therefore, he didn't fall for everything.
  2. Are we wholly dedicated and consecrated to the cause of Christ? Ecclesiastes 9:15; Romans 12:1; Galatians 2:20



- B. A God-fearing man.
  - 1. Do we fear God? We should not fear Him with a cringing, slavish fear but with a fear mingled with awe and profound respect. Hebrews 12:28
  - 2. It is a fear that trembles at the thought of offending a just and holy God.
  - 3. To "fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 To "fear God and work righteousness" is the same thing. Acts 10:34-35; Psalms 119:172
- C. A good influence in his home.
  - 1. "He feared God with all of his house." He was a lot like Joshua. Joshua 24:15
- D. A very generous man. He "gave much alms to the people."
  - 1. He was not tight-fisted or stingy. Do we give a little out of our much, or much out of our little? Mark 12:41-44
- E. A prayerful man. He "prayed always."
  - 1. It is significant to note that God heard him. Acts 10:31
  - 2. God will hear anyone who will hear Him; He won't hear anyone who won't hear Him. Proverbs 28:9
  - 3. God heard Daniel from the first day he prayed. Daniel 10:12
  - 4. Do we pray *always* or just when we get into trouble? I Thessalonians 5:17

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Christ once asked, "What do ye more than others?" Matthew 5:47
- B. Do you do more than Cornelius?

## The Twenty-Third Psalm

24

Psalm 23:1-6

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The twenty-third psalm is one of the most beloved passages in the whole Bible. It is one of those characteristic Bible passages in which so much is said in the fewest possible words. There are only 118 words in this passage, but they are brimful of eternal significance. This psalm is loved and appreciated by the young and old alike. It has brought hope to the hopeless, comfort to the sorrowful, and shed a halo of glory over the beds of the sick and dying. It is so beautiful that some have called it the "nightingale" psalm.
- B. It is just possible that David was sitting by an open window and musing. Psalm 39:3. Perhaps he saw some gazing sheep in the distance. Then his mind went back to his boyhood days when he was a shepherd. He recalled how, in protecting them, he had killed a lion and a bear. Then he realized as never before that someone was taking care of him, and he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write these beautiful and gripping words. Let us consider them prayerfully and carefully.

### II. "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

- A. The Lord is not just a shepherd but *my* shepherd.
1. A group of women are admiring a beautiful little baby. One of them has eyes beaming with love. What is the difference? To the other woman, this is just a beautiful little baby. To this woman it is *my* baby.
  2. If we can truthfully say that "the Lord is my shepherd," then this solves the problems of life.

Illustration: An actor and an old preacher were crossing the Atlantic on a ship. In order to pass the time, the passengers prevailed upon both the actor and the preacher to recite the twenty-third psalm. The actor did so eloquently. The people applauded. Then the preacher cited the words slowly and hesitantly with deep pathos in his voice. When he had finished, there was not a dry eye in the audience. Someone asked him why the people applauded the actor, but wept when he had read the psalm. He replied, "That man knew the psalm, but I know the shepherd." Do you?

- B. This phrase means that we have assurance.
  - 1. "The Lord is" suggests the perfect assurance of hope. Hebrews 6:11
  - 2. David doesn't say "I think" or "I hope" or "I suppose" because he *knows* that the Lord is his shepherd.
  - 3. We can also know that the Lord is our shepherd. I John 2:3-4; John 10:4 & 14; II Timothy 1:12

### III. "I SHALL NOT WANT."

- A. Because the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want for anything. He supplies all our needs. Psalms 34:9-10; 37:25; 84:11; Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:25-33; Luke 22:35
- B. I will not want for rest.
- C. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures."
  - 1. Sheep feed from 4 o'clock in the morning until about midmorning. The shepherd makes them lie down with undigested grass in their stomachs, so it would be disastrous for them to drink any water right away. They chew

their cud in contentment. In the same vein, the Good Shepherd makes us lie down in perfect contentment with assurance that He cares for us. Philippians 4:6-8; Isaiah 26:3

D. "He leads me beside still waters."

1. Sheep have heavy wool, and because of this, they cannot swim, so the wise and good shepherd leads them to quiet and still waters.
2. The Lord, our shepherd, gives us peace and quiet when there is chaos and disorder all around us. Matthew 5:6; John 6:3; Matthew 14:16; Hebrews 13:5-6
3. "He leadeth *me*." This is a personal relationship we have with the Lord. Psalms 73:24; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 10:3-4

#### IV. "HE RESTORETH MY SOUL."

- A. David had sinned, and he needed restoring. We all have sinned and need restoring. Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19
- B. The Lord restored to David the "joy of his salvation." And He can and will do that for us. Psalms 51:12

#### V. WE SHALL NOT WANT FOR COMPANIONSHIP AND COMFORT IN SORROW.

- A. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff; they comfort me." The good shepherd uses the rod to chastise gently the stubborn older sheep, and he uses the staff to reach across a gulley or down a hill and pick up a lost sheep or lamb who is caught in a bush or has wandered off.
- B. We are not always led in green pastures. Sometimes the way is dark and gloomy, and cares

seem insurmountable. But He leads us safely through to the other side.

- C. Like a train passing through a dark tunnel in the middle of the night, but then comes out into the light, sometimes our lives are like that train in the tunnel. We must always remember that the Lord is our shepherd.

## **VI. WE WILL NEVER WANT FOR PLENTY AND PROSPERITY.**

- A. "He prepareth a table before me...." Christ has a big table spread for us at His great feast. John 4:23 &34
- B. At Christ's table we will experience joy unsurpassed. I Peter 3:8; John 16:33; Acts 16:25

## **VII. WE WILL NOT WANT FOR A HOME AT THE END OF THE WAY.**

- A. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Goodness and mercy accompany the Good Shepherd's flock as they journey toward the end of their lives.
- B. "The house of the Lord" is the eternal home in heaven for all faithful followers. John 14:1-6; I Peter 1:4; II Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 21:1-27
- C. As a good shepherd leads his sheep at the end of the day to their home, so Christ will lead us on to our home in heaven.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

- A. Make the Lord your shepherd now by hearing and obeying His word. John 10:27-28; Matthew 11:28-30

# THE BLESSED MAN

25

Psalm 1:1-6

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This is one of the truly great Psalms of David. It is short but brimful of eternal significance.
- B. It begins like the beatitudes begin, with the word "blessed" (which means happy).  
Read Matthew 5:1-11 and illustrate how these verses in the New Testament, as well as this psalm, are a recipe for happiness.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Here we see three characters:
  - 1. The ungodly—he who is without God.
  - 2. The sinner—he who is a transgressor of the law of God.
  - 3. The scorner—he who openly rebels against God. (also see I Peter 4:17-18)
- B. Here are three characteristics:
  - 1. Counsel—the ungodly has his counsel.
  - 2. Way—the sinner has his way.
  - 3. Seat—the scorner has his seat.
- C. There are three degrees:
  - 1. "walketh"—bad.
  - 2. "standeth"—worse.
  - 3. "sitteth"—the worst.

A good illustration of this is the comparison between the cow and the frog. The cow gradually wades out into the water, but the frog goes in with a "kerplunk." He just dives right in. This also reminds me of when we young boys would go to the old swimming hole. Some would wade in, but most of us would just dive right in.

Another comparison is the country boy going to the city for the first time to see the sights. He sees the neon signs of the night club. Outside he walks back and forth and seems indecisive. Then he goes on in, and eventually sits down and makes himself comfortable.

### III. THE HAPPY MAN

- A. He delights in the law of the Lord day and night.
  - 1. Tell me what you delight in all the time, and I'll tell you what you are.
- B. He meditates and reads and digests God's word. Meditation on the Word is what mastification is to food. Acts 17:11, I Timothy 4:13; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalms 119:97
- C. He is like a tree:
  - 1. That is planted. He is not like a tumbleweed that is caught up with every wind and breeze.
  - 2. That is planted by the river. Being by the river, the tree gets plenty of moisture and does not have to depend on the caprice of rain to keep it moist and healthy.
  - 3. That bears fruit. This tree fulfills its purpose. Matthew 21:19; John 15:1-8  
All Christians must live and thrive and bear fruit, not just exist to save burial expenses.
  - 4. Whatever this tree does, it shall prosper. No one can defeat a child of God. III John 2; Joshua 1:7-9

### IV. THE UNGODLY ARE NOT BLESSED OR HAPPY.

- A. The ungodly man is not happy. Isaiah 48:22; 57:20-21
- B. The ungodly person is like chaff; he/she has no stability. Matthew 3:12; Ephesians 4:14
- C. The ungodly cannot stand in the day of

Judgment. II Corinthians 5:10-11; Matthew 25:31-46; I Peter 4:17-18; Revelation 6:12-17; Matthew 7:21-27

- D. The ungodly cannot be numbered in the congregation of the righteous. Matthew 25:31-33
  - 1. You cannot be saved just because you are a member of a church. Matthew 13:41-42; Revelation 3:15-21

## **V. CONCLUSION: GOD KNOWS ME AND DOES NOT WANT ME TO PERISH.**

- A. Loved ones do not know me as God does.
- B. The ungodly shall perish. Luke 13:5; I Peter 4:18; Matthew 25:46



# THREE HEART SEARCHING 26 QUESTIONS

II Kings 4:26

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Relate the story of the text in II Kings 4:8-37.  
Here was a great woman who attracted a lot of attention.
- B. We should learn many good lessons from Old Testament stories. Romans 15:4
- C. This woman was discerning; she had good judgment. She recognized "this holy man of God." II Kings 4:9
  - 1. All of us need discerning eyes. Hebrews 5:14
  - 2. We need to be able to discern false teachers. Matthew 7:15-16; II John 1:9-11; I John 4:1
- D. This woman was hospitable. II Kings 4:8-10; Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13; I Timothy 3:2; I Peter 4:9  
And preachers should especially appreciate hospitality and show it. II Kings 4:13-14
- E. This was an humble woman. II Kings 4:13; Matthew 18:3-4

## II. "IS IT WELL WITH THEE?"

- A. This is the proper order of questions. What must I do to make it well? Acts 9:6; 16:30-31
- B. Things must be right with ourselves before we can help others. Matthew 7:1-5; John 21:21-22; Luke 22:32

## III. "IS IT WELL WITH THY HUSBAND?"

- A. We must begin at home to make things right in our lives. I Peter 3:1-4  
The "sanctified" are the saved. I Corinthians 7:13-14

One woman told a preacher, I'm not going to tell my husband what to do anymore, but I am going to start showing him what to do."

#### IV. "IS IT WELL WITH THY CHILD?"

- A. Are you training your children by precept and example? Proverbs 22:6  
You must train and restrain them. I Samuel 3:13; Proverbs 13:24  
When you are disciplining them with a switch or paddle or some kind of discipline rod, you certainly should not be abusive, but there is such a thing as "beating the *hell* out of them."  
Proverbs 23:13-14
- B. A good formula for training a child consists of four simple rules: have daily family devotions, take, not send, the children to church, live Christ before them because they can't hear what you say when what you're doing is ringing so loudly, and send them to a Christian college. And you will receive your wages. Exodus 2:9
- C. You must bring them up, not send them up, and the only way to know how to do this is through examining the scriptures. I Timothy 3:4-5; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21

#### V. CONCLUSION

- A. Is it well with you? If not, make it well today and believe, repent, confess, and be baptized.
- B. Is it well with your husband? If not, make it well by becoming a Christian and thus, showing him how a Christian should live. I Peter 3:1-7
- C. Is it well with your child or children? If not, train them. Proverbs 22:6; II Timothy 1:5

# WHAT GOD REQUIRES

27

## Deuteronomy 10:12-13

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. By virtue of all that God has done for us, he does require something. God made us, preserves us, and redeems us. John 3:16; Romans 8:32
- B. The attitude of some is that He requires too much. Some think that He requires nothing, and in return, is owed nothing. God doesn't require the lame man to walk, the blind man to see, or the deaf man to hear. Matthew 25:24-30; Luke 12:13-21; II Corinthians 8:12
- C. David's attitude was one of gratitude and thanksgiving. Psalms 116:12-14; 68:19
- D. To whom much is given, much is required. Luke 12:48; II Corinthians 8:12
- E. Just what, then, does God require?

### II. WE MUST FEAR GOD.

- A. He requires us to fear the Lord, not with a slavish, cringing fear, but with godly fear. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Hebrews 12:28
- B. We should fear and tremble at the very thought of offending a just and Holy God.
- C. He requires that we serve Him with reverence and godly fear. Hebrews 12:28
- D. If a person is a God fearing man/woman, he/she will do what God says. He will fear God and keep His commandments. Acts 10:2; 10:33-35; 10:48
- E. The man who fears God is the same man who works righteousness. Proverbs 9:10 & 12

### III. WE MUST WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS-NOT JUST THE WAYS THAT SUIT US.

- A. His ways are not our ways. Isaiah 55:8

1. We must walk in all of His ways, not just some of them. James 2:10
- B. We must agree with Him. Amos 3:3
  1. Like Enoch, who walked with God after his son was born. Genesis 5:22  
Every father should follow his example.
  2. Like Zacharias and Elisabeth, who agreed with Him. Luke 1:6
  3. Like Abraham, who did not question Him. Genesis 17:1

#### **IV. WE MUST LOVE HIM.**

- A. There is no greater command than to love God. Matthew 22:35-37; John 14:15 & 21
- B. To love God is to love His children and to keep His commandments. I John 5:1-3
- C. Baptism is one of His commandments. We must be baptized to advertise our love. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 11:48; James 2:10
- D. We must be faithful to Him. Revelation 2:10

#### **V. WE MUST SERVE HIM WITH ALL OUR HEART AND SOUL.**

- A. There is no room for any other god. Matthew 4:10; 6:24
- B. We must serve God, not man. God has bought you, and you are His servant. I Corinthians 7:23
- C. We should not serve God with a divided heart. Hosea 10:2

#### **VI. WE MUST KEEP ALL OF HIS COMMANDMENTS.**

- A. If we knowingly trample one commandment under our feet, we are guilty of all. James 2:10  
You should never ask which commandments you are to keep. Matthew 19:18

- B. Keeping His commandments is not grievous. This doesn't bring sorrow. I John 5:3
- C. Keeping His commandments is for our good. There is a blessing tied to every commandment. Deuteronomy 10:13; Romans 8:28; James 1:25

## **VII. CONCLUSION.**

- A. Are you doing what God requires?
- B. If not, begin today. If you know He commands you to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, then you don't deserve to know anymore until you do this.

# WHO CARES IF I GO TO HELL? 28

Psalm 142:4-5

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Someone asked me if I believe the flood story, the Sodom and Gomorrah story, or the story of the whale swallowing Jonah. I answered, "Yes. I believe these things because I believe in Christ, and Christ placed His stamp of approval on these stories." Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:32; Matthew 11:23-34; II Peter 2:4-8; Matthew 12:40
  - 1. I told the questioner that if the Bible had said that Jonah swallowed the whale, I would believe that, too. The God I serve is a big and powerful God and can do anything He wants to do. Some people seem to be serving a small and weary God.
- B. Then he asked me if I believe that there is a hell. "Yes, I believe there is a hell because I believe in Christ, and He talked more about hell than He did about heaven." Most of those who say they don't believe in hell want to leave heaven in the Bible.
- C. If we had more hell in the pulpit, we'd have less hell in the pews.
  - 1. A man once quit the church. The preacher went to talk with him. He said that the reason he quit was because the devil was in the pulpit. (He didn't like the preacher.) The wise preacher said to him, "Brother, the devil is not in the pulpit. You've got things mis-located. The devil is in the pew. He is in you."
- D. A preacher I knew quite well said he inadvertently used the word "hell" in the pulpit. The next night, a mother said to him, "My little girl asked me why you used an ugly word in this pulpit." He

said that he resolved then and there never to say "hell" in the pulpit again. He was so sweet and accommodating.

- E. If I were on the road to New Orleans, there would be 234 signs along the way pointing me straight there. Therefore, I believe it exists. The New Testament speaks of hell 234 times, so make the application.

## **II. HELL IS A REAL PLACE JUST LIKE HEAVEN.**

John 14:3; Matthew 25:41; Acts 1:25

- A. To believe in one is to believe in the other.
- B. Hell was not prepared for man. It was built for the devil and his angels. If you go there, you are only an intruder.
- C. There are passages to prove the existence of hell. Daniel 12:3; Psalms 9:17; Matthew 5:22; 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 10:26-30; II Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:10-14; 21:8
- D. The fire of God is different from the fire of men.
  - 1. The bush Moses saw is a good example. Exodus 3:2-3
  - 2. Elijah saw the fire of God. I Kings 18:36-38
  - 3. The fire of man is quenched. The fire of God is not. Matthew 3:12; Mark 9:43-46

## **III. HELL IS A PLACE OF CONSCIOUS AGONY.**

Luke 16:19-31

- A. In the Bible people remembered being in things in hell. One saw, heard, felt, and knew the despair. We take all of our faculties with us to hell.
- B. Those already there don't want you to come (because it's separation from God).

## **IV. WHO CARES IF I GO THERE?**

- A. The devil doesn't.

- B. Lukewarm members of the church don't care if I go to hell.
- C. Some preachers don't even care.
- D. Some elders of the church don't care.
- E. Some fathers and mothers don't care if I go to hell.
- F. Some husbands and wives don't care.
- G. Do you care?

#### **V. WHO IS GOING THERE?**

- A. Religions people who didn't take the time to investigate are going to hell. Matthew 7:21-33
- B. Hypocrites are going to hell. Matthew 23:33
- C. Backsliders are going to hell. II Peter 2:20-22
- D. Lukewarm church members are going there. Revelation 3:15-18
- E. The ungodly groups are going there. Galatians 5:19-22; Revelation 21:8

#### **VI CONCLUSION**

- A. Heaven is your promised land. (Sing the song, "I am Bound for the Promised Land.")
- B. Don't miss your chance. Mark 16:15-16; II Peter 1:5-11
- C. Where will you spend eternity?



# WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH? 29

Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The word "church" is used in two senses: local and universal.
- B. Most people are more concerned about what is wrong with the church instead of what is right with the church.
- C. A man once said if he ever found the right church, he'd become a member. My reply was, "From your viewpoint, you'll never find the right church, and if you did, they would not take you in. And if they did take you in, the church would not be right any longer."
- D. But in this lesson we are concerned about what is right, and not with what is wrong, with the church.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Its head is right. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18-24; Ephesians 5:23; Hebrews 5:8-9; John 8:29; I Peter 2:21-22; I John 3:5; John 8:46
- B. Its creed is right. II Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25; Psalms 19:7
- C. Its system of worship is right. I John 4:24; Matthew 15:8-9; Acts 2:42  
The congregation should sing, pray, give, teach, and partake of the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:7
- D. Its foundation is right. I Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 2:20; Matthew 7:21-27
- E. Its name is right. Matthew 16:18
  - 1. The name the members wear should be right. Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16; Acts 26:28

- F. Its financial system is right. I Corinthians 16:1-2;  
II Corinthians 9:6-9
- G. Its mission is right. Every member is a soul  
winner. Acts 8:4
- H. Its destiny is right. Ephesians 5:25-27  
I want to be presented to God, so I must be a  
member of the right church.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

- A. Get right now. If I live right, I'll die right, and I'll  
have the right to the tree of life. Revelation 22:14

## WHY I AM WHAT I AM

30

I Peter 3:15; I Corinthians 15:10

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Give the setting of the text. You can't be ready without getting ready. The text is divided into three parts:
  - 1. Set Christ apart; "sanctify" means to set apart. Exodus 13:2 & 12
  - 2. Be ready. Proverbs 24:26; 15:28
  - 3. Have meekness and fear.
- B. You must give a reason based on the word of God. Isaiah 8:20; I Peter 4:11
  - 1. Some are what they are because of tradition, parents, friends, convenience, popularity, likes and dislikes.
- C. Giving a reason implies a knowledge of God's word, as well as serious thinking. Proverbs 15:28
  - 1. In appreciating God's word, we must show wisdom and devotion (or "meekness and fear"). Colossians 4:6
  - 2. Some questions do not deserve an answer. Proverbs 26:5

### II. WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH AND NOT SOME OTHER RELIGION:

- A. Christ built only one church. Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 12:20  
Fifteen times the Bible says there is one body, and four times, it says the body is the church.
- B. All others will be rooted up when rooting time comes. Matthew 15:13

### III. WHAT DID YOU DO IN BECOMING WHAT YOU ARE?

- A. I did what 3,000 did on the day of Pentecost, what

Saul of Tarsus did, what the jailor did, and what the Eunuch did.

- B. Thus, I am a Christian only and only a Christian.

#### **IV. WHAT IS REQUIRED IN WORSHIP, OR WHY DO YOU WORSHIP AS YOU DO?**

- A. We must worship scripturally. John 4:24
1. We must worship "in spirit and in truth."  
John 17:17; Matthew 15:8-9
  2. We must sing, pray, teach, preach, eat the Lord's Supper, and give liberally and cheerfully.
- B. It makes a difference. Leviticus 10:1-2; Genesis 4:3-5; Hebrews 11:4

#### **V. WHAT MUST ONE DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?**

- A. Some say you can't be lost. Once you are saved, you are always saved.
- B. The Bible teaches you can fall, how you can keep from falling, and what to do after you fall.
1. You can fall: Galatians 5:4; I Corinthians 10:8 & 12; Hebrews 6:1-6; II Peter 2:20  
I asked an exponent of this theory if a child of God could get drunk. He said, "Yes." Then I asked him if he could die while he was drunk. He said, "God wouldn't let him die while he was drunk." I told him that if I believed that, I'd get drunk, stay drunk, and live forever. He had no answer.
  2. How to keep from falling: II Peter 1:5-11; I Corinthians 9:27.
  3. What to do after falling: Acts 8:18-24 (Show that Simon the sorcerer is a concrete example of someone falling from a saved to an unsaved condition).

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

- A. You must obey the gospel and remain faithful unto death. Revelation 2:10; Galatians 1:6; Hebrews 12:15; Colossians 1:23

# WAITING TO DIE

31

## II Kings 7:3

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This passage is a human interest story written in the Old Testament, that was not written to fill up space, but was written for our profit. It is a story from which we can learn. II Timothy 3:16; Romans 15:4
- B. This story suggests many fine lessons.

### II. LEPROSY RENDERED ONE UNFIT TO LIVE IN THE CITY WITH OTHERS.

- A. Those infected were sent outside of the camp until the infection was gone. Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:3
- B. Sin excludes one from the Kingdom of Christ. Colossians 1:13; Galatians 5:19-23; Ephesians 5:11
- C. There is no human cure for leprosy. This characteristic makes it similar to AIDS. There is also no human cure for sin. Sinners must be forgiven or punished. Only God can forgive us of our sins, and we must comply with His conditions.

### III. WHY SHOULD WE JUST SIT HERE? WE WILL STARVE TO DEATH. II Kings 7:3

- A. Sinners just sit and wait to die because they do not search for the Lord. Ezekiel 18:31; Romans 6:23; Deuteronomy 30:19; Hebrews 2:3; Acts 22:16; 2:38; Mark 16:15-16
- B. Some churches and church members sit and wait to die, like soldiers "marking time." Revelation 3:1-4; Ephesians 5:14

### IV. THE PRODIGAL SON MADE A COURAGEOUS RESOLVE.

- A. Two roads were opened to him. Which road did he take?

- B. The force of will is the greatest force in the moral universe.
  - 1. Only death can stop the force of will. Luke 12:13-21
- C. The prodigal son said, "I will arise." Luke 15; Matthew 21:28
- D. The door will not open if we do not knock. If God knocks we must open the door. Salvation, like a pivot, depends on will. Matthew 7:6-7; Revelation 3:20; 22:17
- E. Don't just sit and die. Ezekiel 18:31

#### **V. GOD USES INSIGNIFICANT PEOPLE, AS WELL AS GREAT PEOPLE, IF WE WILL LET HIM.**

- A. He uses lepers. They are, at first, selfish with their first aid, but later will share it. Matthew 25:18
- B. They go tell of it to others. I Timothy 4:16; John 4:35
- C. Christians must share the good news of Christ and salvation with others. Ezekiel 3:17-20; Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:4
- D. If you had a remedy for AIDS or cancer, would you keep it and share it, or would you lose it?

#### **VI. DO NOT DOUBT GOD'S WORD.**

- A. Like Elisha, we should believe. II Kings 7:1-2
- B. All things are possible with God. Matthew 19:26
- C. Don't doubt the Word of God. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 7:11:6:33; Romans 8:28; I Peter 5:7

#### **VII. CONCLLTSION**

- A. Arise now. Acts 22:16; II Corinthians 6:2
- B. The prodigal son confessed, "I have sinned against heaven and against you." His father felt compassion for him, and threw his arms around him. Confess to your Father and come home. Luke 15:18-20

# VICTIMS OF OUR OWN WILL 32

## Esther 3-7

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Relate the story of Haman. Tell how he let one man ruin his life: he hated Mordecai so much that he wanted to get rid of the whole Jewish race. (Many today have that same attitude toward blacks or Jews or other races). Mordecai would not bow down to him. Haman was so full of himself: he had a good eye on himself, a bad eye on Mordecai, and no eye at all on God. If you could have bought him for what he was worth and sold him for what he thought he was worth, your fortune would have been made. His pride brought him low and ultimately destroyed Him. Proverbs 16:18; 29:23
1. Picture Haman going through the streets boasting about the commands he had suggested to the king regarding the killing of all Jews. Then relate his tragic death—how he was hanged on the gallows that had been built for Mordecai. Esther 7:9-10
  2. Indeed Haman was a victim of his own will, but so is everyone who dares to follow in his own footsteps and not acknowledge God's will.
- B. In no way is the care, the love, and the righteousness of God seen more than in His treating us exactly as we have treated others. Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 26:52; Genesis 9:6; Galatians 5:15
1. Cannibals will eat cannibals.
- C. There is no just ground for complaining, so we should guard our actions.



## **II. WE WILL REAP EXACTLY AS WE HAVE SOWN.**

- A. One of the New Testament principles is "you reap what you sow." Galatians 6:7-8; Matthew 7:1-2
  - 1. An elder's wife once remarked to me years ago, "Brother Murphy, I've noticed that all who have tried to hurt you have gone down in defeat and disaster."
- B. Joseph's brothers meant evil, but it all turned out well, and Joseph saved their lives. Genesis 42:21
- C. Ahab was a very evil man, but God's will was worked out. I Kings 21:1-19 (Note verse 19); I Kings 22:1-38
- D. "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine."

## **III. WE SHALL RECEIVE EXACTLY AS WE HAVE TREATED OTHERS.**

- A. We become victims of our own will. Matthew 7:1-2
- B. He will receive judgment without mercy who showed no mercy. James 2:13
- C. It is often easy with your advantages to condemn others.
- D. I must deal more critically with myself than with others. Remember the rich man in hell. Luke 16:24; Proverbs 21:13

## **IV. CHRIST WILL TREAT US EXACTLY AS WE HAVE TREATED HIM.**

- A. When we sin against His brethren, we sin against Him. Matthew 25:40; Acts 9:5; I Corinthians 8:12
- B. People of the world and people in the church need to learn this great truth.
- C. God doesn't settle all His accounts in October ( at the end of the harvest or the end of the fiscal year).

1. A man who was a skeptic said to his neighbor, a very religious man, "What advantage do you have over me? We both farm side by side, and in the harvest, I reap as much as you do." His neighbor replied, "Friend, you should remember that God doesn't settle all of His accounts in October." Ecclesiastes 8:11
  2. Payday is coming, as it did to Haman, and others who defy God.
- D. Someday you can and will truthfully affirm, as did Adonibezeb, "God hath required me."  
Judges 1:5-7  
God grant that you may be able to utter these words favorably and not regretfully.

## V. CONCLUSION

- A. We should treat God and His Son now as we will want them to treat us at the last great day.  
Proverbs 1:24-28
- B. All of us are victims of our own will.  
Matthew 16:24; Revelation 3:20-21; 22:17; John 5:39

# WHAT ADVANTAGE HATH 33 THE CHRISTIAN OVER THE ALIEN SINNER?

Romans 3:1-4; 2:28

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Paul asks and answers this question. He states much every way. He is speaking primarily of the Jews and Gentiles. But by an easy transition, the application can be made to the Christian and to the alien sinner.
- B. Let us carefully and prayerfully note some of the differences.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. Sinners often say, "None of us is perfect," or "All of us are sinners." They are right, and they are wrong. Genesis 6:8-9; Job 1:1; Romans 3:23
- B. But when they say, "I'm as well off," how wrong they are. What, then, is the difference?

## III. ONE SINS WILLFULLY; THE OTHER DOES NOT.

- A. A Christian does not willfully sin. I John 3:9; 5:18; James 4:17
- B. One who does is worse off than before his/her conversion, II Peter 2:18-22; Hebrews 10:25-28
- C. A rejecter of Christ willfully sins. John 15:22; James 4:17

## IV. ONE HATES SIN; THE OTHER LOVES SIN.

- A. God hates sin, and so do His children. Romans 12:9; Psalms 119:104; 97:10; Revelation 2:6; I John 2:15-17; Matthew 22:37-40; I John 3:10

- B. The sinner loves sin and Satan. John 3:12, 48; Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:15

#### **V. ONE TRIES TO LIVE ABOVE SIN; THE OTHER IS CONTENT TO LIVE IN SIN.**

- A. Christians put up a fight to conquer sin. James 1:13-15; Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; I John 5:4; Romans 12:21; I Corinthians 9:27; Matthew 4:4
- B. Sinners put up no fight. They are satisfied to live in sin. Romans 6:15

#### **VI. ONE HAS A PLACE OF CLEANSING; THE OTHER DOES NOT.**

- A. The blood of Christ cleanses the child of God who sins. John 1:7-10; Hebrews 10:21
- B. God could help the willful sinner, but He does not. Isaiah 1:18

#### **VII. ONE HAS A PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS; THE OTHER DOES NOT.**

- A. Simon the sorcerer was a first century Christian who only had to pray for forgiveness. Acts 8:22; I John 1:9
- B. All who turn away from God will not be heard by God. Proverbs 28:9; John 9:31

#### **VIII. ONE HAS A PROMISE THAT ALL THINGS WILL WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD; THE OTHER DOES NOT.**

- A. All things will work together for good only to those who love the Lord. Romans 8:28; I John 5:2; Psalms 84:11
- B. Sinners have no refuge when trouble comes; actually, they have nowhere to turn. Isaiah 59:1-2

**IX. ONE HAS AN ADVOCATE (LAWYER) TO PLEAD HIS CASE BEFORE THE BAR OF ETERNAL JUSTICE; THE OTHER DOES NOT.**

- A. Christ is the advocate for all Christians. I John 2:1-2; Hebrews 7:25
- B. The sinner stands hopeless and helpless. Ephesians 2:12

**X. ONE IS DEPENDING UPON CHRIST; THE OTHER IS DEPENDING UPON HIS OWN MORAL GOODNESS.**

- A. There is only one hope, it is through Christ. Ephesians 4:19; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:23
- B. The sinner is utterly hopeless. He has no comfort in his hour of need and article of death. John 15:3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Psalms 23:1-6

**XI. ONE IS HEADED FOR HEAVEN; THE OTHER IS HEADED FOR HELL.**

- A. You can't go to heaven and travel the road that leads to hell. Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; 14:1-3
- B. Heaven is prepared for faithful Christians. Matthew 25:34
- C. Hell is prepared for sinners. Matthew 25:41-46

**XII. CONCLUSION**

- A. These are nine differences between the Christian and the alien sinner.
- B. Come to Christ, and enjoy all the many blessings He has to offer you. Ephesians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:20; Proverbs 1:24-28

# YOU WERE THERE

34

Matthew 27:36

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Humanity gathered at the foot of the cross.
- B. Human nature has remained the same throughout the years.
  - 1. Who is your representative in the Bible?
  - 2. Do you relate to those who participated in the crucifixion?
- C. It was a strange and motley group that surrounded our Lord during His last earthly hours. A variety of motives prompted their presence.
  - 1. Some were there under the command of soldiers.
  - 2. Some were pilgrims who were there by chance, such as Simon, who bore the cross.
  - 3. Some were there out of curiosity.
  - 4. Others were there to criticize.
  - 5. Some were there out of genuine sympathy.
- D. What would have been your attitude?
  - 1. A Prussian general, when he first heard of the Lord's crucifixion, drew himself to attention and said, "Had I been there with my soldiers, it would have never happened."
- E. You were there representatively. (Have the congregation sing, "Were you there?")

## II. YOU WERE THERE.

- A. The Pharisees, scribes, priests, and Levites were there.
  - 1. Was there an organized religion there? If so, why?
  - 2. Who were condemned by our Lord? Matthew 15:8-9; 23:1-39

3. Were those who condemned Him and others kept out of the kingdom? Matthew 23:13
4. "Whoever does not believe will be condemned." Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21

### **III. A BLOOD THIRSTY MOB WAS THERE.**

- A. Four days before the crucifixion, He was praised. Matthew 21:8-9
- B. There was a shrewd application of mob psychology.
- C. Briefly follow the leaders here. They never feared a gospel sermon and will never be saved. Matthew 15:14; Isaiah 9:16

### **IV. THE ROMAN SOLDIERS WERE THERE.**

- A. They were disgusted cynics.
- B. Many who were there represented denominationalism.
- C. The Roman soldiers were a great deal like those who are Godless Russians, and the Greeks were like Catholics.

### **V. THE INDIFFERENT CENTURION WAS THERE. Matthew 27:45**

- A. He saw evidences of Christ's true identity.
- B. He knew and said that He was "truly the Son of God."
- C. He represents those who know but will not obey. James 4:17; Ecclesiastes 8:10

### **VI. SIMON OF CYRENE WAS THERE. Matthew 27:32**

- A. Simon of Cyrene was unwilling to carry the cross, but he was compelled to do so.
- B. Carrying a cross was a very offensive duty.

Galatians 5:11

- C. The plan of salvation, prayer in school, and the testimony of the cross has been quietly legislated out of polite society; these things seem offensive to some people. II Timothy 3:12

## **VII. THE DISCIPLES WERE THERE.**

- A. The disciples forsook Jesus in His hour of greatest need.
- B. They left when His cause was weak.
- C. Peter followed afar off. He proposed to be far enough back not to be held responsible for the cause from which he fled. But he, nevertheless, wanted to be close enough that if anything happened, he would be on hand to enjoy it.
- D. Some of the disciples had enough religion to make them miserable. Revelation 3:15-18

## **VIII. GODLY WOMEN WERE THERE.**

- A. The godly women were the last to arrive at the cross and the first to reach the tomb.
- B. Even today there are still those who put the kingdom first.
- C. Somebody represented you; somebody represented me. Who, friends, represented you?

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

- A. Now is the time to decide. Matthew 27:22



# THE GOOD SUPPER THAT WAS GROWING COLD

35

Luke 14:16-24

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. A certain man, and it can be any man, is the main character in this parable.
- B. This man made or prepared a great supper. It took a lot of time and much expense.
- C. He invited many, but he needed to know how many to prepare for and to expect.
- D. No doubt, many had promised to come to his supper.
- E. So, he sent his servant to remind them about the supper; thus, they could not plead forgetfulness.
- F. The first person the servant talked to didn't have an excuse, but he quickly manufactured one.
- G. An excuse is the skin without the sausage; it is a lie wrapped up in tissue paper.
- H. The supper was growing cold because the invited guests failed to come. How would you have felt had you been the host?
  - 1. Years ago during a gospel meeting where I was the local preacher, the visiting preacher and I were invited to supper with one of the members of the church. I was called a distance away to preach a funeral, and I was late in getting back. I had completely forgotten about the supper engagement. The man who had invited us came within talking distance of the church building and said, "Preacher, what's wrong with you? We prepared supper and waited until it got cold, and you didn't show up." I apologized profusely, but that didn't appease him. He

said, "You'll never put your foot under my table." And I never did.

## II. LET US LOOK AT THESE EXCUSES OFFERED FOR NOT ATTENDING THE SUPPER.

- A. The first man said, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go see it."
1. How insulting! How foolish? Would you have bought a piece of land without looking at it carefully? And furthermore, would you think you had to go look at it in the dark? This is a ridiculous reply.
- B. The second said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go prove them."
1. Would you buy five yoke of oxen without examining them? And then, would you want to prove they can work in the dark? How silly to think about this.
- C. The third said, "I have married a wife and therefore cannot come."
1. These excuses are progressive—the first man and second man both are saying "Please excuse me," but the third man simply says, "I cannot come." He wasn't polite enough to say "excuse me."  
Does this follow? Wouldn't most men leave their wives to go fishing or hunting or golfing or to watch a football game? But this man said that he couldn't go to the supper. Why couldn't he take his wife along?
- D. The supper is growing cold, and the host is getting angrier by the minute.
- E. What is your excuse for not accepting the Lord's invitation to become a Christian? How do your excuses stack up in comparison? The Lord has sent me to remind you to come. Matthew 11:28-30;

Revelation 22:17; Mark 16:15-16; II Corinthians 6:2;  
Hebrews 3:7-8

### III. LET US LOOK AT YOUR EXCUSES.

- A. "I'm not good enough." Aren't you good enough to get good enough? I Timothy 1:15; Luke 5:32
- B. "I'm already good enough." How good is good enough? Acts 10:1-4
- C. "I'm afraid I can't hold out to live the Christian life." It looks like you're doing a pretty good job holding out not to come. Why don't you hold in and not out? I Corinthians 10:13; Romans 14:4; Philippians 4:13
- D. "I'm too young." Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; 12:1; I John 2:12-13  
Who makes the best ball players or doctors or teachers or lawyers? Where does the Bible say that on a certain birthday, you are now accountable for your actions?
- E. "I'm too old." II Peter 3:9; Acts 21:16; John 3:4  
"All" includes you.
- F. "I cannot leave my friends." Mark 10:28-30;  
Philippians 3:7-8  
You'll leave them one day.
- G. "There are too many hypocrites in the church."  
Matthew 23; Acts 4:12  
Hypocrites are everywhere—at the work place, at school, at the mall. You are smaller than a hypocrite if you try to hide behind one.
- H. "The road is too narrow." Matthew 7:13-14  
The road gets better farther along. Proverbs 4:18  
Does the road lead to where you want to go?
- I. "It's too unpopular to be a Christian." Acts 28:22  
It's better to be unpopular and go to heaven than be popular and go to hell.
- J. "I need more time to think about it." Acts 24:25;

II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:8-9

How long does it take you to make up your mind  
that you want to go to heaven and not hell?

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. None of those men shall taste of my supper.  
Proverbs 1:24-28

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Briefly comment on the context.
- B. "Contrariwise" occurs three times in the New Testament. I Peter 3:9; Galatians 2:7; II Corinthians 2:7
- C. It is used to show how one thing is opposed to another. It illustrates what a thing is, and what a thing is not, both the positive and the negative elements.
- D. In Galatians 2:7 Paul is telling the brethren what he was against, and what he was for.  
An "hour" was the smallest measure by which they counted time in Paul's day. Had he lived today, he would have said "not for a second." All must be opposed to false teachers and teaching and stand up for the truth.
- E. In II Corinthians 2:7 Paul is telling the brethren to forgive the man who had been withdrawn from after he had repented. They should be against his sin but be forgiving to anyone who repents. What would you have done? Even before he repented, what would have been your attitude?  
II Thessalonians 3:15
- F. In our text Paul is telling the brethren what to be against and what to be for. I Peter 3:9  
What would you do toward those who mistreat you? Would you pay them back in the same coin as they send?

**II. ALL PREACHING SHOULD BE CONTRARIWISE.**

- A. Our preaching today should be contrariwise—both

positive and negative.

Some never preach against anything.

1. Two thirds of Timothy's preaching was negative. II Timothy 4:2
  2. Eight of the ten commandments are negative. Exodus 20:1-17
- B. Christ's preaching was both positive and negative. Matthew 5:21-26  
It was contrariwise: Matthew 5:27-32 & 33-37; 38-42 & 43-48; Matthew 7:21-29.
- C. Peter's preaching was contrariwise. Acts 2:36-41; I Peter 3:9
- D. Paul's preaching was contrariwise. Some have said that wherever he went, he either started a revival or a revolution. Acts 17:6 & 16-32

### III. THE PLAN OF SALVATION IS CONTRARIWISE.

- A. Hearing is contrariwise: it is not hearing alone but hearing and doing. Mark 12:29; James 1:22-23
- B. Believing is contrariwise: it is not believing alone but putting belief into practice.  
We are not saved by faith only. Acts 16:31; James 2:24; John 12:42-43
- C. Confessing is contrariwise: it is not confessing alone but proving by your life that Christ is Lord. Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 6:46; Acts 8:36-39; Philippians 2:10-11
- D. Baptism is contrariwise: it is not just the act of baptism, but it is also changing. The act is symbolic of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. You must be dead to sin and live a new life. Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Acts 2:42; 22:16; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 20:7
- E. Living right is contrariwise: not only by living soberly, righteously, and godly, but also by

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. Titus  
2:11-12

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. You cannot please God just by coming to worship only, but you must also do His will. Ecclesiastes 8:11; Ezekiel 33:31-32; John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9
- B. You must obey today; not some other time. Proverbs 27:1; II Corinthians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:7-8 & 13

# SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM 37

Matthew 6:33

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Give the setting of the text. Matthew 6:25-33
- B. This is to be done on a daily basis (verse 34), and so it eliminates worry.

## II. IT IS AN ORDER.

- A. There is a great order of commands. Matthew 22:35-40; Exodus 20:1-17
- B. All hang on the law like a peg on the wall.
- C. The biggest thing that one can do is to keep the commandments. One version of the Bible says that keeping the commandments is everything. I Corinthians 7:19  
The whole duty of man is to keep the commandments. Ecclesiastes 12:14
- D. We can't just *say* we'll keep the commandments, but we have to do it. Matthew 7:21-23; 23:1-3

## III. SEEKING THE KINGDOM FIRST IS AN OBLIGATION BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US.

- A. We must keep our priorities in their proper perspective.
  - 1. There are things in life of supreme importance; some things are of secondary importance, and other things are of no importance. We need to learn to put first things first.
  - 2. There was a woman whose house caught on fire, and she ran into the flames to get all her valuables, but a fireman heard the cries of a baby, and he ran in and got it. The woman



called out, "Oh, I had forgotten about my baby."

- B. We must be Godlike. I John 4:9
- C. It is base ingratitude not to love God and Christ who have loved us so much. Luke 12:13-21; 17:12-19
- D. How would you feel if you went to a great deal of trouble to prepare a big supper, and no one whom you invited appeared? Luke 14:15-24
- E. Where are your priorities?

#### **IV. SEEKING MUST HAVE AN OBJECT.**

- A. The object is the kingdom of God.
- B. What is the kingdom?
  - 1. It is not meat and drink. Romans 14:17
  - 2. It is the church. Matthew 16:18-19
  - 3. You are in it, and it is within you. Luke 17:20-21; John 3:5
    - a. You are in the kingdom if you have done the will of God. Matthew 7:21
    - b. You are in the kingdom if you have been converted. Matthew 18:3 If you have been converted, you have been born of water and the Spirit because this equals the same thing.
- C. The kingdom is like a treasure or a costly pearl bought by a wealthy merchant. Matthew 13:44-45
  - 1. Mr. Heinz, creator of the "Heinz 57" sauces, pickles, marinades, etc., had a plaque that set on his desk with this motto: "God first, family second, pickles third." He must have lived by this because he was certainly successful in the business world. Many people put God third. There are just two places to go and two things to do. Which do you put first?

## **V. SEEKING THE KINGDOM FIRST HAS A PROMISE ATTACHED TO IT.**

- A. The promise is "all these [other] things will be added unto you." Do you believe God? Acts 27:25
- B. God is able to keep His promises. Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:25-34; Psalms 84:10; Ephesians 3:20; Romans 8:28

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

- A. David sums it up by telling us how God takes care of His children. Psalm 37:25

# A REALITY CHECK

38

I Thessalonians 5:21

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Dan Rather, a noted CBS news commentator, in his evening news report, has a segment he calls "Reality Check," in which he investigates some current event or medical discovery to see if it is true.
- B. Let us run a spiritual survey or reality check to see if some of the things we believe are real.

## II. IS GOD REAL?

- A. Some deny His existence and thus brand themselves as "fools." Psalms 14:1  
People then just said it in their hearts; now people say it aloud in schools, colleges, public places, etc.
- B. A little boy, who lived next door to an atheist, loved to visit him. When the man got seriously ill, in order to show his friends that he still did not believe in God, he had posted on the headboard of his bed, "GOD IS NOWHERE." One night the little boy was sitting with him, and the man fell asleep. The little boy reached up and wisely changed the letter "W" to make it read "GOD IS NOW HERE."
- C. We see God in nature. Psalm 19:1
  - 1. Nature declares His existence.
  - 2. The Bible declares His name. Genesis 1:1
- D. There are many illustrations for this argument:
  - 1. A house declares the existence of its builder- Hebrews 3:4
  - 2. Go to an island that you think is uninhabited, and you may find a house. This is evidence that someone was there.

3. I have a wristwatch, and on the back is written the name of the watch maker. Even so, the Bible and nature declare that God exists.
4. Someone asked an old saint, "Do you know that God exists?" He replied, "God is as close as my hands and feet, and He is closer than breathing."

### III. IS CHRIST REAL?

- A. Some say He was just a good man but not the Son of God. He said that He was God's Son. How could such a good man lie?
- B. We need to stand up by the side of Peter and say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:13-20 He is not a son, but the Son of the living God.
- C. Christ is real, and if you don't believe it, you are a damned man or woman. Mark 16:16  
And you are doomed to an eternal hell. John 8:24; Matthew 25:46

### IV. IS THE DEVIL REAL?

- A. The Bible says he is real. Genesis 3:1-15; Job 1:6-7
- B. The devil is the very antithesis of what God is. John 8:44
- C. He is a murderer, and there is no truth in him. He is the father of lies.  
In contrast, God is *Savior* and the personification of the truth and is always doing good. Romans 3:4
- D. The devil seeks us out to destroy us. And he lies to us, saying he can give us things we want. If the devil had anything good to give, he's too mean to give it to us. So, why serve him?
  1. These two little boys were walking home

from church, and in Sunday School that morning, the teacher had taught them that the devil is real and alive and all around us. One boy said to the other, "Do you believe in the devil?" The other boy said, "Why, no, he's your Daddy, just like Santa Clause." In contrast to the devil, God seeks us to save us. Luke 19:10; I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:8

## V. IS SIN REAL?

- A. We live in a world of sin and sinners. You don't even need a Bible to know that sin is real; all you have to do is read the newspaper or watch television or listen to the radio. Sin is everywhere today.
- B. Sin is a real disease, and all of us are afflicted with it to some degree or another. Romans 3:24; Ecclesiastes 7:20; I John 1:8-10
  - 1. Christ is the great physician and has the remedy for all kinds of sin. Luke 5:31-33
  - 2. If sin is not cured, it will bring death. Romans 6:25; John 8:24

## VI. IS SALVATION REAL?

- A. Ask the people on the day of Pentecost who heard Peter's sermon. Acts 2:36-47
- B. Ask the Samaritans. Acts 8:8
- C. Ask Philip and the Eunuch, Acts 8:26-39
- D. Ask Paul. Acts 22:16; II Corinthians 6:10
- E. Ask Cornelius. Acts 10:1-48
- F. Ask the jailor. Acts 16:30-34
- G. Ask any Christian. I Peter 1:8; Philippians 4:6-8

## VII. IS HELL REAL?

- A. Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:46

- B. If there is a heaven, then there is a hell. John 14:1-6  
The same Bible that speaks of one speaks of the other. Many people want to take out hell and leave in heaven.
- C. Ask the rich man if hell is real. Luke 16:19-31
- D. Some people use "hell" only as a mild curse word and do not accept the reality of the place.
- E. If you don't believe in hell now, you will later.

### **VIII. IS HEAVEN REAL?**

- A. It is a prepared place for a prepared people. John 14:1-6
- B. Paul said, "I know heaven is real, for I have been there." II Corinthians 12:2-5; 5:1-3
- C. The apostle John exhausts the English language trying to describe the beauties and joys of heaven. Revelation 21:1-5 And we know that the half has not yet been told.
- D. I want to go there. Don't you? It is far more beautiful than we can dream of. Matthew 25:1-13 & 34; Revelation 22:14

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

- A. Christ's invitation is real. Matthew 11:28-30
- B. Come now, and you will discover in your own heart that all these things are real.

# **WAITING FOR SOMETHING THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN OR WAITING FOR THE DEAD**

**39**

**Judges 5:28-30**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Give the setting of the text: tell how Israel was avenged in battle and how Sisera was brutally killed by Jael. Tell also about the grief of Sisera's mother and the leadership of Deborah and Barak.
- B. Deborah knew her place. She gave advice and counsel.
- C. The background: the chariots of iron were destroyed by one iron nail.
- D. The text; regardless of the guilt of Sisera or the doom that was his, we can't help but feel sorry for his mother.
- E. She was waiting for something that would never happen; she was waiting for the dead.
- F. This is similar to David's feeling for Absalom.  
II Samuel 18-33

## **II. YOU ARE WAITING FOR THAT WHICH WILL NEVER HAPPEN IF YOU ARE WAITING FOR YOUR MORALS ONLY TO SAVE YOU.**

- A. There are many lessons suggested here. Let us note some of them.
- B. You are waiting for something that will never happen if:
  - 1. You are waiting for good morals to save you.
    - a. A most popular doctrine is the "good old man."
    - b. You can be a good moral man and not believe in Christ. Hebrews 11:6; John

3:14-18 & 36; 8:24; Mark 16:16

- c. You can be a good moral man and not repent. Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3-5
- d. You can be a good moral man and not confess Christ, Matthew 10:32
- e. You can be a good moral man and not be baptized, and thus be born again. Acts 2:38; 22:26; I Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5
- f. You can be a good moral man and not love God. I John 5:3; Matthew 22:35-40  
A little boy misquoted John 3:16 and said "God gave His only forgotten Son."
- g. You can be a good moral man and neglect the family who needs you the most.  
Let the church make all the sacrifices and then [you] be around to get the eternal reward.
- h. You can be a good moral man and make God a murderous fiend. John 3:16  
Did God give His only begotten Son when it was unnecessary?
- i. There were many good people before Christ came. Why did He die? Romans 5:6-7

### **III. YOU ARE WAITING FOR THAT WHICH WILL NEVER HAPPEN IF YOU ARE WAITING FOR A DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

- A. The world accuses us of not believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, but we do. There are two schools of thought:
  - 1. Bring your hand down directly on the stand.  
(This means the Spirit has no medium.)
  - 2. Put the Bible on the stand and bring your



hand down on the Bible. (That's what we believe through the word; hence, the word is the Spirit's medium).

- B. We believe that every conversion is begun, carried on, and consummated by the Holy Spirit.  
But how does the Spirit use the sword? Ephesians 6:17  
Seven times the record says, "If any man has ears, let him hear." Revelation 2&3
- C. The Spirit uses a medium. II Samuel 23:2; Nehemiah 9:30; Acts 1:16
- D. If the Holy Spirit operated directly, what could He do that God's word cannot do?
1. The word converts. Psalms 19:7
  2. The word makes us wise unto salvation. II Timothy 3:15
  3. The word gives light. Psalms 119:130
  4. The word gives understanding. Psalms 119:104
  5. The word quickens. Psalms 119:50
  6. The word sanctifies. John 17:17
  7. The word saves. James 1:21
  8. The word purifies. I Peter 1:22
  9. The word cleanses. John 15:3
  10. The word makes men free. John 8:32; Romans 6:17-18
  11. The word gives us faith. Romans 10:17; John 20:30-31
  12. The word builds us up. Acts 20:32
- But the Holy Spirit directly does not do any of these things.  
If the Holy Spirit did these, since He is a part of the Godhead, then God would be responsible for the lost, and preaching would be unnecessary. Romans 10:13-15

**IV. WE ARE WAITING FOR SOMETHING THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN IF WE EXPECT TO BE SAVED WITHOUT A PURE HEART.**

- A. You must give up many things to be saved. Philippians 3:7-8; Isaiah 48:22; 57:20-21
- B. You must hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized to be saved. Romans 5:15; Philippians 4:6-8; Acts 15:9; Ephesians 2:14
- C. You must have a pure heart to be saved. Matthew 5:8; Proverbs 4:23; I Peter 1:22-25
- D. You must have trust in God to be saved. Isaiah 26:3

**V. IF YOU EXPECT TO BE SAVED OUT OF THE CHURCH OR TO BE SAVED IN THE CHURCH AND BE UNFAITHFUL IN IT, THEN YOU ARE WAITING FOR SOMETHING THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN.**

- A. A good man can't be saved out of the church. Genesis 28:17; Isaiah 46:13; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23-26
  - 1. If we can be saved out of the church, then we can be saved without faith. Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6
  - 2. If we can be saved out of the church, then we can be saved without repentance. Luke 13:3-5
  - 3. If we can be saved out of the church, then we can be saved without confession. Matthew 10:32
  - 4. If we can be saved out of the church, then we can be saved without baptism. Mark 16:15-16; I Peter 3:21
- B. A bad man cannot be saved in the church, II Peter 2:20-22; Matthew 13:41-42

## VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Be wise and be saved today.
- B. There will be no more convenient time than now.  
II Corinthians 6:2
- C. You need to tremble now and come without delay.  
Acts 24:25

## **SEEING THE DIFFERENCE 40**

Hebrews 5:12-14

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were told by God not to eat the forbidden fruit, for they would surely die, but the serpent said they would not die; instead they would become as wise as gods. They soon found out who was telling the truth. Genesis 3:1-5
- B. Solomon prayed to God for discernment to see things differently and use good judgment as the new king of Israel instead of being so naive. I Kings 3:5-10
- C. The first things we teach little children is that certain things are harmful (i. e., snakes, fire, etc.), and other things are harmless (i. e., rabbits, kittens, etc.).
- D. We must teach the Lord's people the difference between the holy and the profane, and the clean and the unclean. Ezekiel 44:23; 22:26

### **II. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AND THE TEACHINGS OF MEN.**

- A. There is a difference between the traditions of men and the law of Christ. Mark 7:1-10
- B. If Christ taught the same as the traditions of men, then there would be no difference.

### **III. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCHES OF MEN.**

- A. Christ built His one church. Matthew 16:18; Psalms 127:1

- B. If one church is as good as another, then men are as wise as Christ and can build one as good as He did.

#### **IV. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP.**

- A. One is vain, and one is true. Matthew 15:8-9; John 4:24
- B. There is a difference between ignorant worshipers and true worshipers. Acts 17:23-25
- C. There is a difference between the true God and a false god, the right Spirit and a false spirit, and the right way and the wrong way. John 4:24; John 17:17
- D. There are no mechanical instruments of music in the true way to worship in church.  
One preacher said, "It was scriptural to have mechanical music because God told David to worship with a psaltery (the man pronounced it "peasultree").  
We must know the difference between the old and new covenants; if there were no difference, we would still be offering lamb and goat sacrifices and burning incense. Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:9

#### **V. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURE RELIGION AND POOR RELIGION.**

- A. One is true, and one is in vain. James 1:26-27
- B. One is faithful; the other is not. Revelation 2:10
- C. One is an obedient religion; the other is not. Hebrews 5:8-9
- D. One is a poor religion, and one is not. James 2:14-26
- E. The Jews had their religion, but ours today is different. Galatians 1:14; Acts 26:5

## **VI. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SELFISHNESS AND HOSPITALITY.**

- A. True religion requires faith and knowledge. Hebrews 13:1-2; I Peter 5:9
- B. Some of us may not have knowledge.
- C. Men are selfish by nature and don't want to be hospitable. Matthew 16:24; Titus 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:29; Matthew 22:35-40
- D. Abraham was hospitable to an angel. Genesis 18:1-8
- E. The Shunammite woman was hospitable to a prophet of God. II Kings 4:8-10  
Lydia was hospitable to Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Acts 16:15
- F. We are commanded to be hospitable because we may be entertaining angels unaware. Romans 12:13; I Timothy 3:2

## **VII. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LAW AND INCIDENTALS.**

- A. There is a difference between faith and opinion. Opinion may have its origin in revealed sense or common sense or nonsense. Acts 6:2
  - 1. There are opinions about how to teach or where to baptize or how much to pay the preacher.  
However, there is a great deal of inconsistency sometimes about people's opinion regarding taking money out of the church treasury to contribute to orphan homes, yet they take money out of the treasury to build the preacher a home. James 1:27

## **VIII. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENTERTAINMENT AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.**

- A. People argue about the type of building that should be built and its annexes; the building itself needs only to be a visual asset and a comfortable and commodious place, not one for entertainment. Hosea 8:14
- B. Some congregations have "children's church" and women preachers. Is that scriptural?

## **IX. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORALITY AND CHRISTIANITY.**

- A. Cornelius was a good moral man who was not a Christian. Acts 10:1-2; 11:13-14
- B. A person can practice the Golden Rule and not be a Christian.
- C. What did Peter say to the people on the day of Pentecost who asked, "What shall we do?" Did he say, "Just do right and treat everybody like you want to be treated"?

## **X. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHARACTER AND REPUTATION.**

- A. Reputation is what men think of us.
- B. Character is what God knows about us.
- C. Some think more of their reputation than they do their character. Proverbs 22:1; Jude 16

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

- A. There is a difference between now and later. II Corinthians 6:2
  - B. There is a difference between what your parents may say and what the Lord says. Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:25-33
  - C. There is a difference between the way that is right and the way that "seemeth right." Proverbs 14:12
-

**THE MAN GOD CALLED  
A FOOL OR  
TWELVE HOURS TO LIVE**

**41**

Luke 12:13-21

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Jesus, at the height of His popularity, did not have standing room in His audiences. Luke 12:1
- B. He preached what His listeners needed to hear, not what they wanted to hear.
  - 1. He often talked about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and called them names.
  - 2. He talked about hell and mentioned hell many more times than heaven. Luke 12:4-5
  - 3. He talked about God's providence in our lives. Luke 12:6-7
  - 4. He talked about the sin against the Holy Spirit. Luke 12:10
  - 5. He talked about divine inspiration. Luke 12:11-12

**II. HOW ONE LISTENER REGARDED JESUS' TEACHING TYPIFIES LISTENERS TODAY.**

- A. A man interrupted His sermon who was not particularly interested in any of the above subjects. About what was this man thinking? It would be interesting to know what you all are thinking about now.
- B. This man was thinking about his brother. Many listeners say to me after I preach, "Oh, I wish Brother Smith or Brother Jones could have heard this one!" And I always answer, "I just wish that all who are present have heard the sermon."
- C. This man was thinking about material things and



what Christ could do for him, not what he should do to be saved.

- D. Jesus knew that this man was speaking for the masses; therefore, He drew the man's picture with His parable of the rich fool.

### **III. JESUS SOUNDED A NOTE OF WARNING:**

- A. To lend emphasis, Jesus tells the man and all listeners to "take heed" or beware.
  - 1. If we see a sign that says "BEWARE OF DOG," we are very careful not to rouse him.
- B. Jesus said "beware of covetousness."
  - 1. Covetousness is the most damning sin of all the ages. Colossians 3:5-6; I Timothy 6:6-11; Exodus 20:17
- C. Jesus said, "A man's life does not consist of the things which he possesses."
  - 1. A person's living might consist of the things he has but not his life. Some people are more interested just in making a living than in living a life.

### **IV. IN THE PARABLE THE MAIN CHARACTER IS A CALLED "A CERTAIN MAN."**

- A. This man has no name because he could be any man; he is an Everyman figure.
- B. This certain man had ground that "brought forth plentifully." We infer from this that the man was an honest farmer who toiled in his fields and knew how to make good crops.
- C. This certain man "thought within himself." Thinking can be good, but this man had a poor eye on his neighbor, a good eye on himself, and no eye at all on God.

### **V. THIS MAN' S MISTAKES:**

- A. His major mistake was leaving God out of his

plans. He uses the devil's favorite pronouns "I" and "my" five times each, and not one time does he mention God,

1. We must put God first in our lives. Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 3:5-6; James 4:13-17
- B. This man thought he could feed his soul on corn, soybeans, and fodder—things a farmer stores in his barns. John 6:20-27; Matthew 4:4; 5:6; Psalms 119:72
- C. He laid up his treasures in the wrong place.
  1. He said to himself; "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years."
- D. He thought he had a lease on life and would live for many more years to come.
- E. He disregarded God's presence in his future.
  1. "No man knows what a day may bring forth." Proverbs 27:1
  2. He should have said, "If God wills, I shall live." James 4:13-18

## **VI. THIS MAN HAD TWELVE MORE HOURS TO LIVE.**

- A. God told him, "Thou fool!"

What a horrible thought—to be called a fool by God.

  1. This man loved his work, loved his possessions, loved his own ability to profit and manage and prosper, but he gave God absolutely no acknowledgment. Indeed he was a fool.
- B. God said to him, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?"
  1. He had twelve hours to think about dying.
  2. He had twelve hours to draw up his will.
  3. He had twelve hours to ponder a lifetime of

regrets and mistakes.

4. He had twelve hours to think about God's rhetorical question: "It doesn't really matter" is the answer to the question because when we die, we leave it all behind.

## VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Do we have twelve hours? Are we guaranteed this?
- B. How long do you expect to live?
- C. So many, like this man, die before they intend to and have made no provisions for a will or what is to become of all that is left behind. Most importantly, they have made no provision for their souls' destiny.
- D. We need to develop the wisdom of living each day as though it were our last, for it could be.
  1. We should be like Paul. Acts 21:13;  
II Timothy 4:6-8
- E. May God grant that we may not imitate this certain man. Let us not be "so was he."

# THREE WOES OF REVELATION 42

## Revelation 9:12

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Someone has said that a text taken out of its context becomes a pretext.
- B. At the risk of having a pretext for my text, I am taking the text out of its context and using it as a text for our subject.
  - 1. Illustration: A preacher who preached on Revelation 6:5 called "balances" "bellows" and made the application to a blacksmith who uses his bellows to blow on a small spark of fire until it becomes a big flame. He said that God would use His bellows of love to blow on the little spark of love in the sinner's heart until it became a great flame. A man sought out the preacher after the service and informed him that he had mispronounced "balances" and called it "bellows." The preacher thanked the man for correcting him but begged him not to tell anyone because he had made a better sermon by calling the word "bellows."
- C. I am not discussing the woes of the text, but I am using them as a storyline point to present the three woes that we must all face and deal with in a regular sequence.

### II. THE WOE OF DEATH;

- A. Death comes to all. We are born into the world with a cry, and we leave the world with a sigh.
- B. All of us have a rendezvous with death.  
"The brightest names that earth can boast just glisten and are gone."

- C. Death in God's word is always measured by a day. Psalms 90:9-12; Proverbs 27:1
- D. Death is an appointment all of us keep. Hebrews 9:27
- E. Life is set forth in the Bible in terms of transient metaphors:
  1. Life is as a vapor. James 4:13-18
  2. Life is just a few days. Job 14:1
  3. At the very point of death, our physical bodies quit functioning; "the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken; the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel is broken at the cistern." Ecclesiastes 12:6  
The spinal cord is severed; the brain stops; the heart stops pumping blood throughout the body. The body is separated from the soul, and this is death.
- F. There is one heartbeat between you and eternity. When you are on the highway in a car, you are three feet from death.
- G. There is just three feet between you and death. I Samuel 20:3.  
Death is our last experience in this life, and it is only a woe if we are unprepared for it.

### III. THE WOE OF JUDGMENT:

- A. All will be there "when the roll is called up yonder." Hebrews 9:27; II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-13; Matthew 25:30-46
- B. We cannot escape the Judgment: it is a day of reckoning for every individual. We will not be judged as churches or as families or as husband and wife or as tribes but as individuals. Romans 2:2-3; Romans 14:11
- C. It is a woe to go to the Judgment unprepared. Matthew 25:46

#### **IV. THE WOE OF HELL:**

- A. Hell is a terrible reality; it is no joking matter. Matthew 8:12; 13:41-42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30-46; Revelation 21:8
- B. As you travel along any interstate highway, you will see signs telling you there are certain towns and cities ahead; big cities will have several exits off the interstate. You may never have visited these places, but you know they exist because of the signs. By way of analogy, you know hell exists because of the signs pointing toward it and the warnings in the Bible.
- C. Many will go to hell. You can't travel a road that leads to hell and then go to heaven. Matthew 7:13-14  
The rich man who wanted his brothers saved learned this truth too late. Luke 16:19-31
- D. Hell is a woe to the unprepared (and no one is really prepared for hell). Revelation 20:11-15

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

- A. If you want to escape these woes, you need to prepare now. II Corinthians 6:2
- B. Heaven is a prepared place for those who are prepared to see God. John 14:1-3
- C. Hell is not prepared for mankind; it is prepared for the devil and his angels. When man goes there, he is an intruder. Matthew 25:34

# THE KIND OF REVIVAL WE NEED

43

Psalm 85:6; 138:7; Habakkuk 3:2

(This can be a two part sermon.)

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Do we need a revival? We do when:
1. the church has left its first love; Revelation 2:5
  2. the church is teaching false doctrine; Revelation 2:12-17
  3. the church is guilty of fornication and is eating food sacrificed to idols; Revelation 2:18-26, I Corinthians 8 & 10:16-23
  4. the church is dead; Revelation 3:1-6
  5. the church is lukewarm (too cold to be hot, and too hot to be cold). Revelation 3:14-19.
- B. What kind of revival do we need? We need the kind that will make this church what God wants it to be.

## II. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL MAKE THE CHURCH AWAKE, ALIVE, AND ACTIVE.

- A. From the figurative language in the Bible used to describe the church, we see this need:
1. The church is the army of God fighting a war with sin and Satan. Ephesians 6:10-19
    - a. Dead and sleeping soldiers are, of course, inactive and can't win wars.
  2. The church is the body of Christ, and its purpose is to save the lost. I Corinthians 12; James 2:26
  3. The church is a tree whose branches bear fruit. John 15:1-8

4. The church is a runner running a race.  
Hebrews 12:1
  5. The church is the light of Christ shining.  
Matthew 5:16
  6. The church is the salt of the earth curing it  
of sin. Matthew 5:13
- B. Picture the church today. It has a few workers,  
and many are active. Where are their activities  
centered?
1. Old Shep, the dog, spent his whole day  
chasing cars, but when we needed him to  
chase rabbits or squirrels, he was too tired.  
Some people in the church are very active  
and busy, but busy doing what?
  2. We need people in the church to be alive and  
very active. Ephesians 5:14; Revelation 3:1 &  
15-20; Romans 12:11; 13:11; I Corinthians  
15:58

### **III. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL MAKE THE CHURCH EVANGELISTIC.**

- A. Every member in the church needs to be  
evangelistic. Acts 8:4; Ephesians 6:17
- B. Everyone in the church needs to pray. Prayer  
should always precede a revival. Acts 6:4
  1. Pray for lost souls, Romans 10:1-2
  2. Pray that a door will be opened.  
II Thessalonians 3:1
  3. Pray for the preacher. Ephesians 6:18-19
  4. Pray for the laborers. Matthew 9:37-38

All these prayers should be genuine and not  
like a wish list.

Illustration: When I was a boy in school, the  
teacher had us write a letter to Santa, telling  
him what we wanted for Christmas, and I  
did, telling him I wanted a rifle. Then she



told us to pray for it. Well, I did that also. A few days later I asked her, "When is Santa going to answer these letters and our prayers?" She said, "Oh, we were just doing that for fun." Praying should be a serious matter, not a fun thing to do.

- C. Picture the church today in its attitude toward attending a revival and working for it.
  - 1. Some people won't even attend any of the revival services.
  - 2. Most people won't give anything extra for the revival—their time or their money.
    - a. Think about how much money people spend on luxury items.
    - b. Think how much time people spend on relaxation and recreation.

#### **IV. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL MAKE THE CHURCH SPIRITUAL.**

- A. Those who are spiritual need to help restore those who have turned away from the church. Galatians 6:1; I Corinthians 3:1
- B. We must be Christ-centered in order to make the church spiritual. Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:20
  - 1. Instead, some are centered on other things:
    - a. some are building-centered;
    - b. some are preaching-centered;
    - c. some are treasury-centered;
    - d. some are attendance-centered;
    - e. some are entertainment-centered; and
    - f. some are activity-centered.
- C. We must be conscious of God's presence every hour in order to make the church more spiritual. Acts 9:31; Matthew 18:20
- D. Worldliness in all its forms must be driven out to have a spiritual church. Romans 12:9; Ephesians

5:11; I Thessaionians 5:22

1. There are heart sins, such as pride, envy, jealousy, malice, hatred, and unforgiveness.
  2. There are sinful habits, such as cursing, drinking, gambling, and cheating.
  3. There are popular amusements, such as dancing, pornographic movies, and vulgar videos.
  4. There are major crimes, such as robbing banks, murder, rape, and embezzlement. All of the above will sap the church of its spirituality and will deteriorate the influence of the church in the community, robbing the congregation of God's blessings.
- E. Every revival must be characterized by repentance and prayer in order to make the church spiritual.
1. Repentance should be genuine, or it is ineffectual.
  2. Prayer should be much more than a formal recitation. James 5:16

## **V. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL MAKE THE CHURCH MORE BROTHERLY.**

- A. When we are born again, we begin our spiritual growth. I Peter 3:22-23; I John 5:1
- B. We must work on our attitude in order to make the church more spiritual.
1. Some people in the church are so cold and unapproachable that meeting them is like taking a trip to the Antarctic region and bumping into icebergs.  
Illustration: A man was drowning in icy waters, and another man took a pole and thrust it toward him, but the drowning man's hands kept slipping off the pole. He cried out, "Turn the pole around. You have the icy

end toward me."

Is your disposition like that icy pole? Are you cold and uncaring?

- C. We need to "bear the infirmities of the weak."  
Romans 15:1
- D. We should look forward to fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Psalms 1:1-6; 84:10; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:1

## **VI. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL MAKE THE CHURCH APOSTOLIC.**

- A. All our teachings and practices should go "back to the Bible." This is not just a slogan.
- B. The doctrine of the apostles is little known and heeded today, and there are two reasons for this:
  - 1. some preachers are ignorant, and
  - 2. some members don't want to hear it.
- C. Some people are doing everything in the name of religion today.
- D. The church needs to be truly apostolic in everything: faith, repentance, confession, and baptism; the entirety of the worship service, with singing, praying, teaching, preaching, giving, and taking the Lord's Supper every week; and the organization of the local congregation, with its elders, deacons, minister(s), teachers, and personal workers (almost everyone is qualified).
- E. The doctrine of the apostles is to use the God-given name for the church.

## **VII. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL AFFECT HOME LIFE, BUSINESS LIFE, AND EVERYDAY LIFE.**

- A. We need to restore the home to its God-given place in society. Titus 2:1-5; Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 8:20

- B. We need to allow Christianity to be a part of our business life.
- C. We need to have Christianity reflect in our everyday lives. Luke 9:32; Hebrews 3:13; Acts 2:46-47; 5:42

### **VIII. WE NEED A REVIVAL THAT WILL BE LASTING.**

- A. We do not need a July 4th fireworks celebration that flares up and then flickers out. Matthew 13:20-21; Luke 8:13; Acts 2:42; Galatians 1:6-8
- B. We do not want folks to be warmed over for a little while; otherwise, the church will be just that-lukewarm and despised by God. Revelation 3:14-16
- C. The goal of any revival is to help the church "go on unto perfection."

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

- A. Let us pray as David did for this revival. Psalms 85:6
- B. Let us pray as one good brother did, "O God, send us a revival and begin with me."

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. There has been much misunderstanding about the church. The Lord knew that there would be; therefore, He gave us a letter in order that all phases might be more easily understood.
- B. When any question arises concerning the church, just turn to the church letter and find the answer.

**II. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

- A. When someone asks me what church I belong to, and I answer, "The body of Christ," he/she never asks, "Which body?" Everybody knows that Christ has only one body. And anyone who can see through a ladder can see that the body is the church. Fifteen times the Bible says there is one body, and four times, it says that the church is the body of Christ.
- B. The church is the body of Christ. Ephesians 1:22-23

**III. WHAT IS IN THE CHURCH?**

- A. You don't need to ask your preacher what is in the church; just turn to the church letter. Ephesians 2:14-22 Note verse 16.
- B. Christ did not build one church for the Jews and one for the Gentiles; nor did He build 300 churches so we could choose whichever one suits us. He built only one church. Ephesians 2:15-16

**IV. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?**

- A. God had a purpose in building the church; it was not an accident. The purpose existed in the mind of God from the beginning of time. Ephesians 3:11

- B. The purpose was not to be a social club or service organization. The purpose was and is "to make known the manifold wisdom of God" in saving mankind.
- C. The church is the only institution that offers eternal salvation for every person. Acts 2:47

## **V. HOW MANY CHURCHES ARE THERE?**

- A. There are as many churches as there are Gods and Lords. Should a person, then, accept any God or the Lord of his choice?
- B. There is one church described in the Bible. Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 12:20
- C. In America today there are 300 churches, but in the Bible, there is only one.

## **VI. WHAT IS CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH?**

- A. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.
- B. He is the head and the Savior. Ephesians 5:22-23
- C. Paul uses the relationship of the husband and wife to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church. Ephesians 5:22-33

## **VII. SHOULD THE CHURCH BE MILITANT AND AGGRESSIVE, OR SHOULD IT EXIST TO SERVE MAN'S SOCIAL NEEDS?**

- A. It does exist to wage a militant and aggressive warfare with Satan and sin. The church does not need weaklings and cowards. Ephesians 6:10-18; Proverbs 24:10
- B. The church should be like Gideon's army: the cowards and tearful men were sent home (22,000 left that day). Judges 7:1-3
- C. The "armor of God" is what the Christian is supposed to wear as he fights sin and Satan.

Ephesians 6:11, 14-17

1. The "armor of God" is not like the armor of man. David and Saul wore armor into battle. I Samuel 17:38
2. We are commanded to wear the whole armor of God, not just part of it. Many want to wear only some of it. James 2:10
3. The Christian wears the whole armor to face the enemies. Ephesians 6:12; II Corinthians 10:4-5
4. Man's armor worn into battle does not always protect the soldier's loins. But the truth is the loin protector for the Christian who is going into battle against the father of lies. John 8:32
5. The "breastplate of righteousness" protects the Christian from the fiery arrows of the evil one.  
It is like a policeman's bullet-proof vest.
6. The Christian has his feet "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."  
Ephesians 6:15  
No soldier goes into battle barefooted, but there are a lot of barefooted church members who are unprepared for battle. Romans 10:15
7. Above all, the Christian must wear the "shield of faith." This is the most important piece of his/her armor and battle accessories.  
Hebrews 1:1 & 6; I John 5:4
8. The Christian must also wear the "helmet of salvation." Ephesians 6:17; I Thessalonians 5:8; Romans 8:24
9. The best weapon the Christian can have is the "sword of the Spirit." Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12 This weapon is an offensive one, and the person using it should use it for that purpose.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. All soldiers in God's army are volunteers; they're not draftees. They must endure unto the end.  
II Timothy 2:3
- B. God's army does not want deserters or traitors or disabled soldiers.
- C. Jesus is the captain of our salvation. He has never lost a battle against Satan and sin, and He has never commanded a sounding trumpet to blow a note of retreat. His victory hymn is "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Hebrews 2:9-10
- D. We must wage a good warfare against Satan and his evil ways. II Timothy 1-3; 4:1-5, 6-8, & 12
- E. We must never surrender. Revelation 2:10



# THE SINS THAT CRUCIFIED JESUS

45

Luke 23:33

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. These four words of our text are heart gripping. They constitute the world's greatest crime. They are brimful of eternal significance. Let us consider them.
1. "There"-the place is Golgotha Hill.
  2. "They"-the perpetrators are the Jews. Acts 2:36
  3. "Crucified"-the painful death that has long since been outlawed.
  4. "Him."-the person was the innocent who died for us.
- B. Perhaps all the sins that are committed today are seen at the crucifixion of Jesus. Men are still crucifying Him. Hebrews 6:1-4 If we are to be consistent, we may condemn ourselves as we condemn those who crucified Him. Romans 2:1-4 Are we guilty? Let's take a good look at these sins and search our own hearts and see if we are guilty.

## II. THE SIN OF IGNORANCE:

- A. Some of the people who crucified Jesus did not really know what they were doing, and Jesus asked God to forgive them. Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; I Corinthians 2:8
- B. Some of the people at Jesus' trial and death could have known what they were doing. John 5:39; Isaiah 1:3
- C. Many sin today because of ignorance and their lack of knowledge about the Bible. Matthew 22:29;

John 7:17

- D. Some today have closed their eyes from the truth.  
Matthew 13:10-15

Illustration: A man in Arkansas was teaching a Bible class, and he read Acts 2:29. He mispronounced the word "sepulchre," calling it "sea pucker." This learned teacher asked if anyone knew what a "sea pucker" was. Everyone present shook their heads. "Well," he said, "I'm not real sure I know, but I consider myself a sort of Bible scholar and well versed in the scriptures. And I think a sea pucker is a great, big bird that flies over the sea and then puckers." They all marveled at the teacher's knowledge of the scriptures. And the point of this story is that ignorance destroys. Hosea 4:6

### **III. THE SIN OF THE HATRED OF GOOD:**

- A. Jesus went about doing good, and He was hated.  
Acts 10:38; John 15:25
- B. Jesus once asked, "Why stone me for a good work?" John 10:31-32
- C. Many love darkness rather than light. John 3:19;  
I Thessalonians 5:4-8
- D. Evil always opposes good. Micah 3:2; Luke 5:8  
Illustration: A prostitute was dying in the hospital, and a good woman brought her a large bouquet of beautiful lilies. She cried out, "Take them away. I can't look at them; they remind me of my sinful life."

### **IV. RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE STEALS AWAY THE POWER TO THINK: IT IS THE THIEF OF MAN'S SOUL.**

- A. Prejudice means to "prejudge" or judge before knowing the facts.

Illustration: A judge in East Texas had just been elected. He knew little about the law. In the first case brought before him, the prosecutor presented his case; then the defense attorney stood up to present his case and defend his client. The judge said, "Sit down. Sir. I've made up my mind. I think this man is guilty, and anything good you say would only confuse me."

- B. Prejudice is the child of ignorance. It makes us have preconceived ideas.
- C. "There is none as blind as those who will not see."  
Matthew 13:10-15
  - 1. Jesus had condemned the false worship of the Pharisees. Matthew 15:8-9
  - 2. Many people today hate the church because of their prejudice, and this has taken away their power to think.

## V. THE SIN OF ENVY:

- A. The sin of envy is the sin of a little person.  
Romans 12:10; Matthew 27:18
  - 1. Envy makes us pine at another person's good fortune.
  - 2. How do you feel when you hear someone else receiving a compliment?
- B. Envy is the fatal disease that eats away at the vital parts of a person's character. Proverbs 14:30
- C. Envy keeps bad company. Galatians 5:19-21
- D. The sin of envy in the church today is a sign of immaturity. I Corinthians 3:1-3
- E. Envy is the little end of the tap root of division in the church. James 3:16
- F. Envy should be laid aside as a worn out garment.  
I Peter 2:1-2
- G. Love is the only cure to rid ourselves of envy.  
I Corinthians 13:4

## **VI. THE SIN OF THE LOVE OF MONEY:**

- A. Judas sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver.  
Matthew 26:14  
Many people in the church today love money so much that had they lived back when Judas was offered thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus, they would have under bid him. Judas couldn't have touched their offers with a fifty foot pole.
- B. The love of money is a sin very apparent today.  
I Timothy 6:10 & 17-18
- C. This is the sin that made the soldiers lie about someone stealing Jesus' body. Matthew 28:15
- D. This was the first sin in the first century church.  
Acts 5:1-11
- E. Many people today are selling their souls for their love of money. They have betrayed the church and perverted the gospel. II Peter 2:1-2
- F. Some preachers are in preaching just for the money; they demand a certain amount of money to preach in a revival or speak on a lectureship or conduct a workshop. They love money far more than they love God or their profession.
- G. Many church members simply refuse to contribute.

## **VII. THE SIN OF LYING:**

- A. The chief priests and the council that put Jesus on trial hired false witnesses to testify against Him.  
Matthew 26:59-60
- B. These same chief priests and council members paid soldiers to lie about Jesus' body being stolen.  
Matthew 28:12-15
- C. Lying is a sin that has been here since the beginning in the Garden of Eden when the serpent lied to Eve about eating the forbidden fruit and its consequences. Genesis 3:4-5
- D. Some people lie when they leave out parts of the

truth. Other people tell little "white lies"; a lot of adults tell "business lies."

Illustration: Two little boys were selling lemonade. The first little boy sold his lemonade for 10 cents, and the other sold his for 5 cents. A man stopped by the first boy's lemonade stand and asked him why he was selling his lemonade for 10 cents, when the other little boy only charged 5 cents. He grinned and said, "Well, Mister, a cat didn't fall in my lemonade." In a few minutes the second little boy ran over and asked his competitor, "Why did you tell that man a cat fell in my lemonade?" The boy replied, "Oh, I didn't say that. I just said the cat didn't fall in my lemonade, and I let him draw his own conclusions."

E. All liars will be cast into hell. Revelation 21:8

### **VIII. THE SIN OF MORAL WEAKNESS:**

- A. Pilate exhibited the sin of moral weakness: he had no moral backbone and couldn't stand for the truth, but he knew what to do. Matthew 27:15-29; Luke 23:13-16
- B. Many are like Pilate today; they know the truth, but they want to remain neutral, and they are too weak to obey. John 12:42-43
- C. Many people sacrifice the truth for expediency.

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

Are you crucifying Jesus? Hebrews 6:1-4.

# THE LAST INVITATION TO MAN

46

Revelation 22:17

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. If I had been corresponding with a good friend upon any given subject, and he was now writing his last letter and last words upon that subject, these last words would be of great interest to me. God is writing His last letter by the hand of His faithful amanuensis, John. There will be no more written words. Revelation 22:18-19  
John lifts his hand and with the pen of inspiration writes, "What shall those words be?"  
More instruction? A condemnation? A promise?  
No, these words shall be an invitation.

## II. GOD INVITES

- A. Someone once said, "As soon as God closed the gates of Eden to man, He opened the door of repentance to man."  
B. For 2,500 years. God has been inviting man through the fathers:  
1. Noah. Genesis 7:1  
2. Moses. Numbers 10:29  
3. Prophets. Isaiah 1:18; 55:1  
4. The wise Solomon. Proverbs 1:24-28

## III. THEN CHRIST CAME.

- A. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of man be." Matthew 23:37; 11:28-30  
B. He came to call sinners. Luke 5:32  
C. All things are now ready. The dinner bell is ringing from heaven.  
1. When we were growing up on the farm,

mother would always ring the dinner bell to call us to dinner.

2. Christ sends servants to ring the bell. Luke 14:16-24

#### **IV. CHRIST SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

- A. The Holy Spirit is our comforter. John 16:7-13; Acts 2:36-41
- B. Through His word, (not some still, small voice) He still invites. Revelation 22:17; Hebrews 3:8

#### **V. BRIDE SAYS COME**

- A. The church is the bride of Christ. Revelation 21:9; II Corinthians 11:2; Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:22-32
- B. "In the last days the Lord's house shall be exalted, and all nations shall flow unto it." Isaiah 2:2-4; Acts 2

#### **VI. "LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME."**

- A. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes on me shall never thirst." John 6:35; 7:37; Proverbs 25:25
- B. God planted eternity in the heart of man that nothing else can satisfy. Wealth, popularity, prestige, sinful pleasure, earthly wisdom, power, nor conquest can satisfy this feeling.

#### **VII. "LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY COME."**

- A. A figure from a caravan crossing the desert is famishing for water. Men form a line. When, and if, one of them finds water, he calls to the man next to him, and he passes the word on down the line. "Water, we have found life-giving water." Isaiah 12:3
- B. Share Christ with others. Revelation 22:17; John 1:40-48, Isaiah 2:2-4

## VIII. AND WHOSOEVER WILL.

- A. Two are classes in the world; the whosoever will's and the whosoever won'ts.
- B. These classes include everyone, except babies.  
Matthew 19:14
  - 1. Nicodemus, an adult, asked Jesus, "Can a man be born when he is old?" He can, but not many do. I Timothy 1:15
- C. If God just said, "Paul," I would not know whether he meant me. There are so many Pauls in the world. If He had said "Paul Murphy," I still wouldn't know if He were calling me. There are so many Paul Murphys in the world. If He had said, "Paul Murphy born in Mississippi," I wouldn't know. If he were born in Prentiss County, I wouldn't have known. If He had said, "Born on August 6, 1913," I wouldn't have known. But when He said, "Whosoever will," I know that means me.

## IX. WILL

- A. Salvation turns like a pivot upon our own will.
- B. Whoever overcomes the world will sit with Christ on the throne. Revelation 3:21; Matthew 16:24; Luke 15:18
- C. "Let" does not mean compel, or vote, or reject.
- D. Let him drink.
  - 1. A Baptist preacher said, "You don't have to do anything." Later he said he was thirsty and came to a fountain and looked for a place to put his foot to pump the water. Then, as he bent over, he saw a sign, "Stoop and Drink." The fountain was electrically operated. He said, "That's the way you are saved. You don't have to do anything. You just stoop and drink."  
How silly! Stooping and drinking are actually



doing something.

2. Take of the water of life freely.
  - a. It's free, but you have to take and drink. Isaiah 55:1-3
  - b. The poorest of the poor and richest of the rich are all saved alike: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. John 3:16; Acts 17:30; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:38

## **X. CONCLUSION**

- A. Come now. The good supper is growing cold.  
Luke 14:15-24

# THE FOUR BIGGEST FOOLS 47 IN THE BIBLE

Luke 12:13-21

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The word of God is absolutely unsparing in its treatment of sin.
  1. Its terminology is merciless. There is no respecter of persons. A man who lies is a liar. A man who steals is a thief. A man who kills is a murderer. A man who commits adultery is an adulterer. The man who plays the part of a fool is called a fool.
- B. The men after God's own heart were fiercely condemned: David, Solomon, Abraham, Moses, and Peter.
- C. If one lives the life of a fool true to his unswerving attitude toward sin, the Bible calls him a fool.

This is harsh, but it is the only way that one can describe the actions of certain men.
- D. Those whom we shall mention are types of men and women of our own day. Fools of yesterday leave their representatives, or counterparts, in the world today. Looking at them, many are looking at their own picture. Any man can find his own life story in the Bible. Hebrews 4:12; I Corinthians 10:6,11

## II. ABNER, THE DARE DEVIL FOOL. II Samuel 3:33

- A. Relate the story of Abner, and how he had slain Asahel. Then he fled to Hebron, a city of refuge. He was safe from Joab, the avenger of blood. But

later, he grew restless and came to the gate of the city and was slain.

- B. Abner died the death of a fool because:
1. He unwillingly placed himself in the hands of the enemy.
  2. Like many today, he engaged in questionable pursuits. I Thessalonians 5:22
    - a. A man, who had quit drinking, tested his strength by going into a bar to show his buddies that he had conquered the desire for strong drink. Soon he was overcome, and later was lying in the gutter.
  3. Abner was a dare devil fool because he perished right at the gate of salvation. Many today are like him or like Agrippa. Mark 12:28-34; Acts 26:28

### III. HEROD, THE EGOTISTICAL FOOL. Acts 12:20-24

- A. Describe his death.
- B. Like many in the church, Herod's guiding motive was to be seen of men. Matthew 6; II John 9-10
- C. Like some outside the church, he didn't feel the need for God.
1. A man in Pascagoula, Mississippi, once said to me "You won't get me." I said, "We don't want you, and if we had you, we couldn't use you. And when you're dead and in hell, the church in Pascagoula will be grandly marching on." I went home with him and before I left, he told me he was an honest man. I challenged him to come hear me preach the next night, and if he were honest, I'd baptize him. He did come the next night. I preached on excuses, and as I came to the conclusion of my sermon, I took a piece of

chalk and wrote these words: "Dear sinner, All things are ready. Come now. Lovingly, The Lord." Underneath I wrote, "Dear Lord, I pray these people have no excuses. Sincerely, (your name)."

Then I left a blank and held up the chalk and related my talk with the man. I said that he had told me he was an honest man, and I said "Sir, if you are honest, you'll either come up here and write your name under the word, 'Sincerely,' or come to obey Christ." He came immediately and said, "You invited me. I have no reason for not coming. I have come to obey the gospel."

If you are honest, you'll do likewise.

#### **IV. ANANIAS, THE HYPOCRITICAL FOOL.**

##### **Acts 5:1-11**

- A. Relate the story of Ananias.
- B. He was a hypocritical fool because he tried to play the double game. Hebrews 4:13; Proverbs 15  
What about your giving? Do you lie about it?  
I Corinthians 16:1-2
- C. He was a fool because he lied to God; nothing he had was his own. I Corinthians 6:19-20

#### **V. THE AVARICIOUS FOOL. Luke 12:13-21**

- A. Give the setting of this parable.
- B. Importantly, he was not a fool because:
  1. he was rich, or I Timothy 6:17-18. We should make all we can but not can all we make.
  2. his ground was productive.
- C. He was a fool because:
  1. he thought he had a lease on life;
  2. he was selfish;
    - a. He used the devil's pronouns: "I" and

"my," 10 times.

3. he left God out; and
4. he made no preparation for the future.

## VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Don't be a fool.
- B. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable time.

## TRAVELING BY SUPPOSITION 48

Luke 2:41-50

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Everything that occurred in the life of Christ, from the cradle to the grave, was fraught with eternal significance. John 21:25; Luke 2:7-14
- B. At the age of twelve, every male was required to attend the Passover, and Jesus went to the Passover with His parents, Joseph and Mary.

### II. JESUS' PARENTS TRAVELED A DAY WITHOUT JESUS; HAVE YOU EVER DONE THAT?

- A. After the days of the Passover were fulfilled, they started for home, and they traveled a day's journey without Jesus being in their company.
- B. "They knew it not." Luke 2:43
  - 1. Have you ever gone a day's journey without Jesus? Have you ever missed worship? Have you ever gone where Christ would not go? Matthew 18:20
  - 2. They could have known, and so can we. John 5:39; Acts 17:11
  - 3. Of all the people whom you would least expect to be lost without Jesus, we would not think of His parents.
    - a. They just took for granted that He was with them. Think how many people lose their children because of carelessness and neglect. Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:1-3
    - b. Have you made sure that Christ is with you? II Peter 1:10

### III. JESUS' PARENTS WERE TRAVELING BY SUPPOSITION.

- A. Are we traveling by supposition? Proverbs 14:12  
We had better check our road map.
- B. We must travel on the right road if we go to heaven. Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; 10:1; Galatians 3:26-27
- C. Many will miss heaven because of supposition. Matthew 7:21-23
- D. Many careless church members are traveling by supposition. Matthew 25:24-30; Revelation 3:14-22

### IV. NOTICE WHERE JESUS' PARENTS SOUGHT FOR HIM.

- A. They looked for Him among their kinfolks and acquaintances. Luke 2:44
- B. Many today have ancestor religion: if it was all right for Grandma and Grandpa, then it's all right for me. Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:25-33
- C. Many in the church are not there by regeneration but by generation. John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5-6  
Illustration: A woman came to hear me preach, and she was terribly upset because I had said, "If you have been immersed, you have been baptized, and if you haven't been immersed, you haven't been baptized." She told me that I had preached her mother to hell. I told her kindly that I didn't know her mother and didn't know she was deceased or even if she were in hell. I said, "I can't preach people into heaven or hell; all I can do is preach so as to try to keep people out of hell by telling them what the Bible says." And if her mother were in hell, she certainly wouldn't want her daughter to go there. This lady was baptized a few days later. Luke 16:27-31
- D. If we decide to follow Jesus, we must leave our

father or mother or anyone who stands in our way from serving Him.

Illustration: Brother G. C. Brewer, a great preacher of another era, had been preaching only five years when a man got terribly angry with him and told him after the service, "You just preached my mother to hell!" Brother Brewer asked the man how long she had been deceased, and he said, "Fifteen years." And Brother Brewer said, "Well, if she's in hell, she's been there ten years before I started preaching."

#### **V. THEY LEFT JESUS; HE NEVER LEFT THEM.**

- A. Where did you leave Jesus? John 6:60-71; I Chronicles 28:9; II Chronicles 15:2; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6; Psalm 23
- B. If you are a prodigal son or daughter, you had better return home. He is waiting where you left Him. Luke 15
- C. If you have substituted something or someone else for Him, you had better give it up and come to Him. Your salvation can be found nowhere else. Acts 4:12; Jeremiah 2:13

#### **VI. CONCLUSION: YOU WILL FIND JESUS WHERE YOU LEFT HIM.**

- A. Joseph and Mary found Him where they had left Him—in the temple.
- B. It took Joseph and Mary three days to find Him. You can find Him today. II Corinthians 6:1-2
- C. Don't wait too late and don't keep Him waiting. Proverbs 1:24-28; Revelation 3:20



# THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK

49

Deuteronomy 32:31

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Moses is warning the Lord's people not to turn away from God after his death. Deuteronomy 31:29
- B. The Israelites had been given the words of the law. Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32
- C. God had wonderfully blessed them. Deuteronomy 32:10-18
- D. He had been their rock and fortress. Deuteronomy 32:4
- E. As Moses predicted, they turned from God to idols.
- F. Their rock was not the rock of God's faithful children. Psalms 115:1-9
- G. History has always repeated itself.
  - 1. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus not to endure false teachers. Acts 20:28-31
  - 2. As God's ancient people, they went into apostasy, and it began with the elders.
  - 3. The Bible describes the duties of the elders (or bishops or pastors or shepherds). There are no archbishops or cardinals or a Pope. II Thessalonians 2:1-12; I Timothy 4:1-3; I Timothy 4:1-5
  - 4. Modern day churches have departed from the doctrine of the apostles: there are women preachers, instrumental music, solos, testimonies, etc. II Timothy 4:1-3; Revelation 22:18-19

## II. A DISCUSSION OF THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE LORD VERSUS THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF OTHER CHURCHES:

- A. We must cleave to rock of our salvation and build on him. Matthew 7:21-29
- B. The rock of those who are departing from the faith is not our rock. Hearing and doing, we build on the rock. Hearing alone, we build on the sand. Both will be tried by the storm and the flood. Only the rock the trials will stand.
  1. Atheism and infidelity stand for their rock, but that is not as our rock. They are fools. Psalms 14:1 They themselves are being judges here; it is better to be judged well here and in the hereafter.
  2. Universalism means that all are saved. We believe that all who obey the teachings of the Bible are saved; we are saved if they are right, and we are saved if they are wrong. And they are not. Matthew 7:13-14; II Thessalonians 1:7-9  
Their rock is not our rock, they themselves being judges.
  3. Some believe in the faith only theory. We believe in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. If they believe what we believe, then all of us are safe, but their rock is not our rock. James 2:24; John 12:42-43; Acts 2:38
- C. Some people believe that sprinkling and pouring are as good as immersion.
  1. Therefore, if immersion is as good as sprinkling and pouring, we are safe if he is safe, and we are safe if he is not. Five times the Bible locates Philip and the Eunuch in the water: "both" is used twice; "they" is used

twice, and "he baptized him." Acts 8:38-39  
Baptism is a burial. Romans 6:4 Certainly,  
their rock is not our rock.

D. The church of the Lord is not one of the other churches.

1. If one church is as good as another, then we are building on a solid rock, but in that case, the Lord's church would be as good as theirs. But one church is not as good as another, for the Lord built the only one that He is the head of; it is the only one He bought with His blood and gave Himself for. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:21-22; 4:4; 5:25; I Corinthians 12:20  
Fifteen times the Bible says there is "one body," and four times, it says that "the body is the church." Surely, their rock is not our rock.

E. The name to wear is Christian without any other adjective.

1. Some religious people believe that one name is as good as another. Then the name "Christian" is good if theirs is good, and it's good if theirs is not. Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16; James 2:7 One name is not as good as another.

F. The Lord's Supper is offered every Sunday.

1. They say that once a month or once a quarter or once every fifth Sunday or once a year is all right to offer Lord's Supper. We eat the Lord's Supper every Sunday. If they are right, we are right; if they are wrong, we are still right. Clearly, their rock is not our rock.

G. We should be faithful unto death. Some religious people believe "once saved, always saved." We believe that if you are faithful, you will be saved.

Therefore, if they are right, we are certainly safe, if they are wrong, we are still safe. Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:1-4

Again, their rock is not our rock, and they have made themselves judges over us.

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. It is better to build on the solid rock of Jesus and "make your calling and election sure." Matthew 7:21-28; II Peter 1:5-11

# THE NOMINAL FAMILY

50

Matthew 13:45-49

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Meet the nominal family; it is a well-known family with thirteen members, and each one has different characteristics, though some are twins or close cousins.
- B. We will go up Dolittle Street until we come to Shirkers Avenue.

## II. THE FIRST MEMBERS WE WILL MEET ARE TWINS.

- A. One's name is "Never Been There," and her twin sister is "Once in Awhile."
- B. They are both dressed in fabulous excuses.
- C. Their favorite expression is "it's all right with me." But what they do is not all right with God. Luke 14:16-24

## III. THE THIRD CHILD IS NAMED "NEVER PRAY."

- A. He thinks praying is just for preachers or elders. He prays only when someone in the family is seriously ill, or when a disaster strikes, such as a hurricane or tomado
- B. He knows nothing about what the Bible says about praying. "Pray without ceasing." I Thessalonians 5:16; Acts 2:42; Matthew 6:4-6

## IV. THE FOURTH CHILD IS NAMED "NEVER STUDY."

- A. He never has time to study the Bible, but he can read the newspaper for an hour or watch

television for three hours or sleep for eight hours. If we sleep eight hours a night, and we live to be sixty years old, we've slept twenty years of our lives.

- B. He knows everything there is about football, his favorite major league baseball team, and hunting turkeys and deer.
- C. His favorite expression is "you just don't understand." Acts 17:11
- D. He is so ignorant of the Bible that he thinks Dan and Beersheba were husband and wife and that Priscilla and Aquila were two sweet little old maid sisters and that the epistles were the wives of the apostles. He also thinks that Pharaoh told Moses, "You almost persuaded me to be a Christian."

#### **V. ONE OF THE YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN IS BROTHER HOBBY RIDER.**

- A. He is anti-orphan homes, anti-Christian colleges, anti-fellowship hall and eating a meal in the building.  
A little boy was riding his stick horse, and the preacher asked him, "Son, is that your hobby horse?" He said, "No Sir, I can get off of it anytime."
- B. He simply doesn't use common sense. Acts 19:9; II Timothy 2:2; Romans 14:22; Acts 6:2

#### **VI. ONE ADULT CHILD IS BROTHER SLEEPYHEAD.**

- A. He can stay awake three hours at a football game, and he hollers so much that his voice is hoarse so that he can't sing in church on Sunday. Then, he's too sleepy to stay awake to hear the sermon.
- B. When he sleeps, he is insulting the preacher and distracting those around him.

A man who attended church where I preached in Foley, Alabama, had to be awakened to take the Lord's Supper.

- C. Dale Carnegie suggested that a person could get a long pole and put a feather on the end of it and reach up and tickle the preacher. Ephesians 5:14; Romans 13:11; Matthew 26:40

## **VII. THE MOTHER OF THIS FAMILY IS SISTER INDIFFERENT.**

- A. She spends her time in church looking around, writing notes, and playing with babies.
- B. She doesn't expect to apply the lesson to her life, so why waste time listening to it? Revelation 3:14

## **VIII. A YOUNG ADULT IN THE FAMILY IS BROTHER CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER.**

- A. He dares anyone to knock off this chip, so he can give them a piece of his mind.
- B. He knows the faults of everyone in the church, but he is blind to his own faults.
- C. He never speaks unless he is spoken to.
- D. He will miss out on heaven and God's love because of his ill feelings toward others.

## **IX. ANOTHER ADULT IS BROTHER NO-WORK.**

- A. His favorite expression is "let George do it." Mark 13:34
- B. In a large family, there are always a few lazy people. Most of us would rather have to deal with ignorant siblings than with lazy ones. Matthew 25:24-29; Galatians 6:4

## **X. ANOTHER YOUNG ADULT IS SISTER CRITICAL.**

- A. She is looking for motes in everyone's eyes, but

she can't see them for the beams in her own.

Matthew 7:1-5

1. A mother went to see the soldiers march, and she said that they were all out of step except for John, her son.
2. A woman went over to visit her neighbor who was always criticizing everyone in the neighborhood. They were talking, and they noticed that another neighbor lady had just hung out her clothes to dry. The critical lady said, "Just look at those clothes! They sure do have a lot of spots on them." Her visitor replied, "Those spots you see are on your window panes."

## **XI. THE OLDEST FEMALE ADULT IS SISTER GOSSIP, AND HER FIRST COUSIN IS SISTER BUSYBODY.**

- A. Gossiping is a terrible sin, as is being a busybody; they both keep bad company. I Peter 4:16; I Thessalonians 4:11; I Timothy 5:13; Romans 1:29-30
- B. Some people will damn themselves to hell because of their tongues. Proverbs 26:20-22
  1. A lady in the community was always keeping it in an uproar. The preacher went to see her one day and told her to take a bag of feathers and go through the neighborhood and spread them everywhere. Because she liked the preacher, she did what he asked. He came back to see her a few days later and said, "Now go and gather up all those feathers you spread around the neighborhood." She said, "Oh, I can't. That's an impossible task." And he replied, "And neither can you gather up all the gossip



you've spread and undo the damage your tongue has caused."

## **XII. A MIDDLE AGED MEMBER OF THIS FAMILY IS BROTHER LUKEWARM.**

- A. He is, above all the rest, the most hopeless member of this doomed family. If he doesn't change, he certainly is going to hell. The sad part is that he doesn't know any of this; he is self-deluded. Revelation 3:15-18

## **XIII. CONCLUSION**

- A. Are you a member of this family?
- B. You can disassociate yourself from this family and change your habits. II Corinthians 6:17-18
- C. Some are worthy. II Timothy 2:19-23; Revelation 3:4

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. This is the only time that the word "pulpit" occurs in the Bible. Think how its use has spread throughout churches and other places of meeting throughout the world today. What an influence! I Corinthians 5:6
- B. Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Zerubbabel had restored the temple, and Ezra, the scribe, had restored the law.
- C. Let us note how he read and how the audience listened. Preachers today can learn much from this incident. Romans 15:4

**II. THE KIND OF PREACHING EZRA DELIVERED IS A MODEL FOR ALL PREACHERS.**

- A. Ezra opened the book of the law. Nehemiah 8:5
  - 1. Preachers today should open their Bibles and preach from them, not the newspaper or another church's bulletin or some current events magazine.
  - 2. Christ preached from the law book. Luke 4:16-20; 24:45-49
    - a. Christ used the mountain or a ship as His pulpit. Matthew 5-7; Luke 5:1-3
  - 3. Paul opened the law book. Acts 20:7  
He used the Areopagus as his pulpit. Acts 17:19
- B. Ezra prayed when he opened the book of the law. We should pray when we open the Bible. How often do we pray when we open the Bible? Do we just forget to do it? Acts 6:4

- C. Ezra caused the people to understand. Nehemiah 8:7-8

Preachers and teachers should do so today. Acts 8:30-40; Luke 24:45

- D. He read the words distinctly and helped it make sense so that the people could understand what the law said. Nehemiah 8:8

This is what all preachers should do, not speak in some kind of elevated language that no one can understand. Ephesians 3:4 & 8-9; Acts 26:16-18

1. Illustration: Brother J. W. McGarvey, a great Bible scholar and preacher, once said, "The greatest compliment I have ever received was by a little ten year old girl who said, 'I understood everything you preached about tonight.'"

Farmers know they have to put the hay down where the calves can get it, as well as the cows. Do preachers understand this analogy?

- E. Ezra preached and read from the early morning until midday. Nehemiah 8:2-3

1. The people were attentive. Nehemiah 8:3  
Would you have stayed and listened? Many want the message short and sweet and the revivals to be 2-3 services.

2. Paul preached a very long sermon—until midnight. Acts 20:7  
Would some of us have been like Eutychus who fell asleep and fell out a window? Acts 20:9

3. The longest sermons I have ever heard preached in my adulthood were delivered by Brother Gus Nichols from Jasper, Alabama. He never preached a sermon less than ninety minutes.

Today many people would probably walk out on him.

### **III. MANY PULPITS ARE USED TO PREACH ERROR.**

- A. Many churches teach "once saved, always saved," and you can be saved by "faith only." This is simply in contradiction with the teachings of the Bible.
- B. Many preachers will be eternally doomed and damned for their erroneous teachings. II Timothy 4:1-4; Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9

### **IV. AS THE PULPIT GOES, SO GOES THE CHURCH.**

- A. A good church must have a sound preacher. I Timothy 1:3; 4:16; II Timothy 2:2 & 15-18; 4:1-4; Titus 2:1; 7-8; Isaiah 8:20; 9:16; 30:8-10; Jeremiah 5:30-31
  - 1. An elder in a church in Mobile, Alabama called a good friend of mine who is an excellent preacher, and he said, "Would you be interested in working with us? We are in desperate need. We are dead at the switchboard."

### **V. A GOOD PULPIT MUST HAVE GOOD PEWS.**

- A. Like in Ezra's day, we need good listeners. Nehemiah 8:2-5  
Illustrations: A man in a congregation didn't like the preacher, so he quit attending. One of the elders went to visit him and encouraged him to come back. He told the elder that he wouldn't be coming back because he said, "You have the devil in the pulpit." The wise elder replied, "You've got things mislocated. The devil's not in the pulpit."

He's in the pew, and he's in you."

A lady once said to me, "I don't like the way you preach. Your preaching makes me nervous." And I said to her, "I don't like the way you listen, and according to what some have said, you need to be nervous, so you will repent. No one repents when they feel good; they repent when they feel bad." People don't go to the doctor when they feel good; they go when they feel bad.

- B. What kind of listener are you? Nehemiah 8:3; Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18; Matthew 13:10-15; Acts 7:51-57; James 1:22-25
- C. The average preacher can preach a lot better than the average church member can practice.

## **VI. TO SOME THE PULPIT IS ONLY A TARGET.**

- A. People come in late to the services; they take a back pew; they fold their hands and say in their hearts, "Here I am, and I want you to sing to me, and if your singing isn't good, I'll tell others what a mess you've made. And Preacher, I've got news for you. You'd better make this short and sweet. If you don't, I'll get up and go home and never hear one of your sermons again." I always tell people who act like this to go on home and go to hell like a gentleman or lady until they can change their attitude.

## **VII. THE PULPIT CANNOT DO WHAT INDIVIDUALS MUST DO.**

- A. The most powerful preaching that can be done is often done without saying a word. I Peter 3:1-2; II Corinthians 3:1-3; Ezekiel 3:17-20
  - 1. Remember the beginning lines of a poem: "I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one any

day; I'd rather one would walk with me than merely point the way."

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

- A. May we receive the word in our good and honest hearts.
- B. May we rejoice to hear it so that God will bless us as He blessed the listeners that day who heard Ezra. Nehemiah 8:6 & 9-10; Luke 8:15; Acts 8:39

# PERFORMING AN AUTOPSY 52 ON SARDIS

Revelation 3:1-6

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. John wrote seven letters to seven churches. Why seven? Not all the churches were in Asia; two were at Colossee and Hierapolis. The number seven connotes completeness in the Bible. Perhaps choosing seven indicates the condition of churches throughout all subsequent time, or one church may experience all these conditions during the history of its existence.
- B. There are three churches that could be characterized as both good and bad: Ephesus, Thyatira, and Pergamum. The church at Sardis was not good as whole, but "a few had not defiled their garments." The churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia were nothing but good. And then there was nothing good in the church at Laodicea. It might be well to ask ourselves which church represents us?
- C. Some say there are no differences in one of the Lord's congregations. They say that one is as good as the other. But I believe that this is not so. Going out of one into another is like going out of summer into winter or like going out of a garden of thorns and thistles into a beautiful rose garden.
- D. They said, "We are alive." God said, "You are dead, and you don't know it."
- Illustration: This father always brought his little daughter some candy or an apple when he came home from traveling. He wore around his neck a ball of asafetida to ward off colds, the flu, etc. One dark, rainy night, he came home, and as

always, the little girl ran out of the house to meet him. But as she got closer, she smelled the asafetida (when it gets wet, it has a horrible smell) and wouldn't go hug him. Instead she cried out, "Mama, come help. Daddy's dead, and he doesn't know it."

The church at Sardis was dead, and they didn't know it.

Another illustration: A rather learned Black preacher announced to his congregation that he was going to preach a funeral next Sunday, and he wanted everyone to be present. He didn't name the person. The house was full that Sunday. He preached on the church at Sardis and had a casket with a mirror inside it. He asked everyone to come to the casket and view the remains. When they walked by, they saw their own reflection.

## II. THE CHURCH AT SARDIS:

- A. An autopsy is performed for two reasons:
  - 1. to find the cause of death, and
  - 2. to help the living know what caused the death.
    - a. The church need not be dead to learn a lesson.
    - b. No person or church ever said, "I'm dead."
- B. Let us notice some similarities between a dead body and a dead church.
  - 1. No corpse can do anything for itself. John 15:5; Philippians 4:13
  - 2. A corpse is quiet. I Thessalonians 1:8-9

Illustration: Two men were walking through a morgue. One began to cough. His friend said, "That's a pretty bad cough you have." "Yes," he replied, "but any of these corpses



would be glad to have it."

3. Too many preachers are quiet when they should speak, like sheep before shearers should cry aloud. Isaiah 56:10-11:58:1-2; Acts 8:32

C. Everybody speaks well of a corpse.

1. No one says, "You dirty rat." According to the way some preachers talk at funeral, all will be saved.

Illustrations: A preacher was saying good things about an ungodly husband and father, and the mother said to her little boy, "Son, go up thar and see if that is your old man in that casket."

2. Some preachers always emphasize the good points and overlook the bad ones.

D. Most do not preach on hell and sin as they stand before a corpse but on the mercy of God and heaven.

E. Embalming can make a corpse look better.

"They're all dressed up and have nowhere to go."

F. Some church buildings are beautiful and clean, and the members who attend wear their best clothes, and all of this is to keep up appearances. Matthew 23:25-27

### **III. WHAT CAUSED THE DEATH OF THE SARDIS CHURCH?**

A. A good reputation makes a good impression.

Analogy: This church was traveling on its past momentum. It was like my father's old T model Ford; going up a hill, you raised the speed, then turned off the engine and coasted down hill to save gas. The Sardis church was living on its past performance (its name liveth but is dead).

Matthew 6:1-5

- B. They were not watching for the return of Jesus.  
Matthew 24:36-51
- C. Some of them had defiled garments, like the world. Revelation 16:15 They had been wallowing in the mire. II Peter 2:20-22; II Corinthians 7:1; Revelation 7:13-14
- D. John didn't tell a few of them to leave.
- E. They made plans, but they didn't carry them out. Revelation 3:2 (The not perfect have many plans left unfinished).

#### **IV. A LIVE CHURCH IS JUST LIKE A LIVE BODY.**

- A. They both hunger and thirst. Matthew 5:6
  - 1. Have you lost your appetite?
- B. They both have good vision. Proverbs 29:18; John 4:35
- C. They both love. Luke 10:27-37 Dead men and dead churches don't love.
- D. They have ears to hear.
  - 1. They cry for the lost. Acts 16:9
  - 2. They cry for the poor. Proverbs 21:13
  - 3. They listen to God's word. Jeremiah 5:30-31; Isaiah 30:8-10; II Timothy 4:3-4
- E. They are involved in meaningful activity, not entertainment. James 2:14-26

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

- A. Let us heed the Lord's admonition. Revelation 3:3-5



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