

*When God shuts a door He opens a window*

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# The Baptist Examiner

**Baptist Is Our Middle Name****Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries***"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" — Isaiah 8:20.*

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## BAPTISM RECONSIDERED

By Ray Waugh, Sr., Midland, Texas



### Introduction

When brethren add requirements to being "saved by grace through faith" or requirements beyond, "He who believes on the Son has everlasting life," they have turned aside from the Word of God. Truly, they have turned aside from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit! In a very real sense, they are both mocking the God of Glory and they are blaspheming the truth of His Holy Word.

### Paul's Concern

How can men and women who have been "saved by grace through faith," having believed in truth that Jesus is the Christ, put upon the lost a burden that they themselves do not bear? I confess to you that I do not know! What they are doing really is indulging in a "works salvation" just as those Judaizers in Galatia in that distant day. How can those who actually have eternal life turn aside from the plain teaching of the Apostle Paul, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9)? How can those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ find it within their hearts to reject the Word, "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ

liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:18-21)?

Some brethren, it seems, are deceived concerning the means of their own salvation and the method of their own redemption. They, then, turn and go about to deceive others, even as "the Judaizers" in Galatia in that distant day. It is imperative, therefore, that those of us who are able to realize that our salvation has been by the grace of God, that our salvation is by the grace of God, and that our salvation will be by the grace of God that we take a stand like that of the Apostle Paul. We need to cry again and again, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2, 3).

### Salvation By Believing

Those who have become "Judaizing Galatians" at heart some-

times turn to the results of salvation rather than to the salvation itself. In the process, they "put the cart before the horse," as it were. Thereby, they emphasize the word, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway" (Acts 16:33), and forget that eternally important cry, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31). These stress "the washing" and "the baptism" as though they had something to do with the Philippian jailer and his family being redeemed. Needless to say, these turn aside from the further word, "He set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:34).

If there had been infants in that family, could they have believed? To all reasonable and rational mortals, the answer should be rather simple. Across the centuries, however, dishonest pastors, dishonest theologians, and dishonest men of God have emphasized and re-emphasized, "...thou shalt be

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

By Edwin B. Fountain, Garfield, Georgia

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Verse 23 of this same chapter exhorts us to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" that is, be faithful to Christ who is faithful to us.

In verse 24 we are exhorted to "...consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:" We are to be considerate of one another, give evidence of our faith by our works and be an inspiration to one another. To do this we must be aware of one another. We must be in the company of other Christians. If we never see each other we cannot exhort, inspire, give consideration or show forth the evidence of our faith to our Christian brethren.

Then in verse 25 Paul exhorts them to avoid an evil, into which some believers had then fallen and into which many have fallen today, that is, the evil of neglecting the congregations of the saints, and to be even more faithful in attending these assemblies as we see the day approaching when the Lord will come again.

### An Admonition

Paul admonishes the brethren to be faithful in attending the assemblies of Christ's churches in the words, "Not to forsake the assembling," etc. It is a Christian duty. In the Old Testament the people of God assembled themselves together as they had been instructed by God. And in the time of Christ



they were gathering regularly on the Sabbath in the synagogues for we read that Jesus regularly went to them and taught in them.

On the Day of Pentecost His disciples were gathered together in prayer and worship "with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). And there are many other references of the gatherings of God's people in the New Testament.

But besides these instances we have the Lord's words concerning assemblies in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This is a promise He has made to His New Testament Baptist churches, not to just anyone who says that they are a Christian. All believers are possessed of the Holy Spirit but He is in that assembly that has continued in the faith and doctrine handed down by our Lord and His disciples from the day He founded His church when He was here on this earth, when He said, "I will build My church..."

Many neglect the duty of assembling. We don't expect unbelievers to come to our worship services but we should and do expect those who profess to be believers to be there every time the church doors are open and to be in the church of their membership and to be there because they love to be there, desire to be there, and long to be there to hear the Word and praise their Lord and Saviour.

Assembling is of the utmost importance: because God demands and infinitely deserves our service. Because of the church, it is to be visible and not just a visible building. It is to be a public union of people, the Lord's people. These people are the stones and for a stone to be missing is to weaken the entire edifice. And, we ought to assemble because of ourselves, for our holiness, comfort, and

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## The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Eugene P. Helton

### FORGETTING GOD

"O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked



ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about

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## THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

Eugene P. Helton

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## FORGETTING

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so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them" (Jeremiah 2:31-37).

Have you ever forgotten God? I would say so. To my shame, I must confess that I surely am guilty of forgetting God at times. Many folks forget God and then excuse themselves and think that God will overlook what they've done. "...my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

NOVEMBER 19, 1994

PAGE TWO

## Editor's Update

By Pastor Eugene P. Helton, Editor

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By the time you receive this issue of The Baptist Examiner, I will have been pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church and editor of The Baptist Examiner for one full year. It has been a demanding yet exciting year. We have truly been witness to many of "the wonderful works of God." I stand amazed in the presence of the Lord at the progress made in the work of the Calvary Baptist Church this year. I suppose my faith was weak because the Lord has exceeded my expectations. "GREAT THINGS HE HATH DONE!"

On Sunday night, October 9th, the Lord led Jean Sparks to request membership in Calvary, on the promise of her letter from the Bethany Baptist Church, Rushtown, Ohio. Jean is going to be another of the wonderful additions the Lord has made to the Calvary Baptist Church.

This past year has been a time of learning as well as a time of trial and some tribulation. Most recently I've gone through an exhaustive evaluation of myself and the overall ministry of the Calvary Baptist Church. I know the Lord brought me here for a purpose. The church desperately needed a healing kind of ministry. Calvary needed to understand once again her purpose. Calvary needed direction and compassionate leadership. Calvary needed to be rescued and started in an upward direction. God's grace has brought about a great change in just one short year. Great is our Lord! Praise and glory belong unto Him and Him alone!

We here at Calvary are looking forward to the coming year, with great anticipation. As our faith and our faithfulness increases, surely the Lord will bless exceedingly. That's the way our Lord is. That's what the Word of the Lord teaches. The Lord will bless faith and faithfulness. The coming year could be the greatest year in the history of the Calvary Baptist Church. If we practice Christianity and not just preach Christianity then the blessings of God will be abundant. We are excited at the possibilities. "I just feel like something good is about to happen."

Until the next time, may our Lord bless you richly!



2:32).

We must be careful lest we become guilty of forgetting God. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" (Deuteronomy 4:9-10). As children of God we have seen and heard of many of "the wonderful works of God." Not only are we responsible

to remember these things; we are also responsible to teach them to others and especially to our children and their children. We should not forget the experience of standing before God; hearing His Word; being convicted of sin; and coming to repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood for salvation. We must remember to fear God. At times, our love is not strong enough. When love is not strong, then we must be motivated to serve God by fear. This is a healthy fear which keeps us doing the things He would have us to do.

When things are going well sometimes people will forget God. "And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee

great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 6:10-12). Oh how the Lord has blessed this pastor. I didn't deserve His goodness; I didn't earn these blessings. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..." (James 1:17). It was the Lord that delivered me from Egypt (sin). It was the Lord that delivered me from the house of Pharaoh (Satan). I must never forget that this good life of great blessings are because of His love for me and His goodness to me. "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish" (Deuteronomy 8:17-19). "And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side" (Judges 8:34).

To forget God is to become a spiritual coward. Sometimes children of God are afraid of what family and friends and co-workers may think and do if they are too Christlike in their presence. Sometimes we are afraid to risk suffering reproach for the cause of Christ. "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made of grass; And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" (Isaiah 51:12-13).

To forget God will ultimately lead to tears. "A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have per-

verted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God" (Jeremiah 3:21).

The Word of God is clear in its' message of warning to those who forget God. The redeemed who forget God will not be blessed in the present life. The lost that forget God will experience eternal punishment in hell. "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips: In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow" (Isaiah 17:10-11). "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22).

I ask you once again, have you ever forgotten God? Have you ever forgotten to thank Him? Have you ever forgotten to praise Him? Have you ever forgotten to worship Him in His house? Have you ever forgotten to give Him His tithe? Have you ever forgotten to study His Word? Have you ever forgotten to talk to Him?

The dying thief said to Jesus: "Lord remember me." How can we ask the Lord to remember us, if we so easily forget Him?

May our Lord bless you!

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

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## The Baptist Examiner Bible Study Lesson

By Clyde T. Everman, Deacon  
Calvary Baptist Church • Ashland, KY

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### The Tower of Babel Genesis 11:1-9

The events recorded in these verses were worldwide in their effect on mankind. This was the confusion of tongues brought about by disobedience. God had commanded the sons of Noah, **"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth"** (9:1). God had decreed how this was to be accomplished. He had appointed the area where each group of the human race was to dwell. God **"determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation"** (Acts 17:26).

But again man rebels against God. Although Nimrod is not mentioned here but in Genesis 10:10 it is said that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel. From this we learn that Nimrod had set up himself to be king. It would seem that like the Antichrist that is yet to come, Nimrod had set out to become king of the world.

There is much about Nimrod that show him to be a type of the Antichrist. The name "Nimrod" means "the rebel." One of the titles of the Antichrist is "the lawless one" (II Thess. 2:8). In the second place, Nimrod's rebellion was an open revolt against God. God's decree was a government by the people (9:6) not by a dictator. **"Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord"** means he, in open rebellion against God, went about to establish his own way. In Daniel 11:36 it is said of the Antichrist, **"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous**

**things against the God of gods."** Four times the word "mighty" is used to describe Nimrod. It is said of the Antichrist, **"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and luing wonders"** (II Thess. 2:9). Nimrod's headquarters were in Babylon. We find the Antichrist called **"the king of Babylon"** (Isa. 14:4) and in Revelation 7:3-5 we find him connected with **"mystery Babylon."**

Not only did Nimrod set up Babel as his headquarters he also set up a system of false worship in the building of the tower. Babel (Babylon) throughout the Word of God is given not only as a wicked city, a stronghold of Satan, but also a system of false religion. In Revelation 17:5 she is referred to as **"the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."** All the pagan religions of the world can be traced back to the ancient Babylon religion. The many gods and goddesses of Rome, Greece, India, Egypt, and the others, all sprang from Babylon. The cults of our day are of the same system. Not only was the ancient Babylon religious system the source for the pagan religions but it has invaded and corrupted much of the Christian world. Where did the worship of "the mother of God", the "Queen of Heaven", and prayers to the saints, and all the other ritualism and idolatry come from? Yes, even in the true churches of the Lord there are traces of the Babylon religious system. From what source did we get the religious holidays which the Christian world observes in December and in the spring if it did not come from the pagan religions?

I believe that in Romans 1:18-32 we have a description of departure of Nimrod and his followers from the Lord. They willfully left the One true God and in direct disobedience to His Word went about to establish their own system of religion. When they knew God they worshipped Him not as God but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

**"And the whole earth was of one language, and one speech."** Up to this time the descendants of Noah all spoke the same language, the same, no doubt, that had been spoken before the flood. The human speech and language of mankind has always been a trouble source for the "evolutionist." To quote H.M. Morris: "The faculty of human speech and language is truly one of the most amazing attributes of mankind. The evolutionist is utterly unable to explain the unbridgeable gulf between the chatterings of the animals and the human language" (The Genesis Record, page 267).

Verse 2 tells us that as the people journeyed from the east they came to a plain in the land of Shinar. When they reached the fertile plain in the Tigris-Euphrates valleys they chose this spot as a good place to make a permanent dwelling place. **"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth"** (v. 4). So with brick and slime they proceeded to build the city and the tower.

Nimrod and his people working to build the city and the tower thereby making a name for them-

selves, reckoned without God. God is longsuffering and often lets man go his own way, but man cannot upset or defeat the purpose of God. The purpose of God after the flood was for the descendants of the three sons of Noah to multiply and fill the earth, not to settle down in one place. The Lord seeing that the people under the leadership of Nimrod were flatly disobeying Him said, **"Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech"** (v. 7).

As Nimrod and his men had held a council to disobey God, God now called a "council" in heaven, **"let us."** All three of the Godhead were in this council. Men had willfully refused to obey God to fill the earth, dividing into separate units of government as God has decreed, rather wishing to remain under one centralized government. Is this not the aim of men today? Is that not what the Antichrist will attempt to accomplish, one world government? We are reminded of what is said in Psalm 2:2 **"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord...."** But verse 4 states **"He that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."**

But God put a stop to all the building by one act. All He had to do was **"confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."** What mass confusion there must have been when this happened! This was truly an "unknown tongue meeting" without an interpreter, no one understanding the  
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## WORSHIP

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usefulness are identified with our assemblies.

"Our knowledge is yet imperfect, our faith feeble, our hope clouded, our love languid and our graces weakly." Our strength lies in the body, the local body, for every part of the body is only as strong as the whole. No part is separate and strong in and of itself.

### A Specific Duty Stated

**"But exhorting one another...."** To gather together in the house that has been built for the Lord's worship is in itself a silent kind of exhortation and a potent one. But the text means something besides this. We are to be deeply interested in the welfare of our immediate Christian family and so take advantage of these gatherings to aid and exhort one another as the need may be.

We are to exhort one another to vigilance and watchfulness. Throughout the Scriptures we read such phrases as, **"Be sober," "Watch ye, stand fast," "Let us not sleep," "Be ye also ready."** They are there for a reason.

Paul in II Thessalonians 4 writes about the resurrection of the saints and the second coming of our Lord and at the end of the passage tells the Thessalonians to use this knowledge as words of comfort and to use them to comfort one another. We are to be vigilant and watchful.

We are to exhort one another to determination and constancy. That is, a determination to be obedient to the Word of God and to be constant in our obedience. We read such phrases as **"Be strong," "Hold fast the profession," "Be not moved"** or **"Hold fast that which thou hast."** Be determined, be constant for therein is obedience.

We are to exhort one another to zeal and diligence. Zeal and diligence in our study of the Word, in prayer, in service, in the fulfillment of the Great Commission: **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** Zeal and  
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## The Baptist Examiner Pulpit Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060



**If a pastor of a church has been divorced and remarried, should this be a concern to sister churches with regard to fellowship? Should this be a determining issue of his being invited to speak in other churches?**

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This question reminds me of the man in court accused of beating his wife who was asked the question "Have you stopped beating your wife?" and he must answer with only a yes or no. Before answering these questions with a yes or no I need to explain my position on this matter. I find nothing in the Scripture that would prevent a man who has been divorced and remarried from being a pastor. The argument that a man who is divorced and remarried has two wives is false. Our government does not consider this to be true neither did Jesus Christ. When Christ told the woman of Samaria to go call her husband, her reply was that she had no husband. His answer was "...Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou HAST HAD five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly" (John 4:17, 18).

The qualification that a man must be "...the husband of one wife" in order to be a bishop (I Timothy 3:2) is not saying that he cannot have been divorced and remarried. It means that he must in the true sense of the word be a husband to his one wife as one translation gives it. In Matthew 5:44-45, the Christian is told to "Love your enemies...that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." This does not mean loving your enemies makes you children of God, only faith in the shed blood of Christ can do that, but means that by doing so you are being like

your Father—true children of the Father, you are acting like your Father; I believe the phrase, "must be the husband of one wife" carries a similar meaning. In order to be a bishop, a man must be a true husband to his wife. Paul told all husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church...so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:25-28).

Now I answer both questions with a resounding no. It should be of no concern of churches in the matter of fellowshiping or inviting such a one to speak in other churches.

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This is one of those "hot potato" issues that has always been debated in our circle of churches. To answer the first part of this question I would say that our fellowship centers in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a brother, including a minister of the gospel, should sin against the Lord and the church, he can and should be restored into fellowship. Let us say that a minister commits the sins of adultery, murder, theft, or other sins. Could we forgive him and then continue fellowshiping with him? Of course the answer is yes. We ought to forgive even as Christ forgives us our many trespasses! If however, that minister or any person refuses to repent of their sins and seek restoration, they should be disciplined by the church! Now, some ministers are divorced at no fault of their own. I have known of cases where a woman went bad and ran off with another man. He then meets and marries a Christian lady. Does this mean we can't fellowship with that man? I don't think that would be consis-

tent. If we can forgive someone for murder, theft, idolatry, and other acts, does this mean that divorce is worse than these things? There are Scriptural grounds for divorce and re-marriage. The grounds are adultery, fornication, and other sexual sins.

Now in answer to the second part of the question, "Should this be a determining issue of his being invited to speak in other churches?" I believe that every New Testament Baptist church has the distinct right to invite in their pulpit those men who they deem sound in the faith. The Scriptures indeed give paternal qualifications, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly." Obviously, if a pastor does not have some stability in his own home, how shall he provide counsel for other homes? If he has a rebellious wife and children, it will not be a godly testimony for his ministry. If the minister himself commits adultery or is abusive to his wife and children, he is not fit for the pastorate anyway!

Some may think by my answers that I am evading the "hot potato" issue! The longer I go on in the ministry, the more convinced I am that I don't have all the answers for every problem. Why would God use and even bless a minister who has been divorced and remarried? I believe I know such men in that number. I must leave it to God. Truly every one of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an answer for our own works. I just hope I will continue faithful to my Master until that hour. I hope and pray that I can be the kind of husband and daddy to my family that will bring the greatest glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray the same for each church as well as every true minister of the gospel.

**CAST YOUR  
BURDEN ON  
THE LORD**

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Church  
Ashland, KY



Speaking for myself, I can quickly answer this two part question with, No, to both parts. The divorced, or divorced/remarried church member, be they man, woman, deacon or pastor, should have no bearing with regard to equality to church entitlements. Our recent forum questions have been dealing with church fellowship in one way or the other. Emphasis has been given on the importance of fellowshiping with our churches of like faith and order. The divorce/remarriage issue has long been a matter of concern with some which has often led to dissolution of fellowship and even hard feelings between brethren. In my opinion, this should not be. Fellowshiping should be based upon common bonds of truth and our show of love for each other and to our Lord in a Christ-like spirit. In fact, a pastor could be orthodox, well-versed in the Bible, eloquent, (maybe even good looking), and yet lack a most important ingredient to fellowship; that is love. The matter of divorce/remarriage is with some, controversial, yet most churches belong to one camp or the other. The matter would be best left between the individual and God. Our judgment of Christians and our church members should be confined to what the person's life indicates today, not what he/she has done in the past. The signs we should look for in a pastor or preacher are his love for God, his desire to preach the Word of God, a compassion and love for the church, a burden for the lost, setting a good example, and a Christ-like spirit.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man

put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13).

A pastor was once asked if a certain man whom we shall call John, belonged to his church. His reply was: "No, John doesn't belong to the church although his name does appear on the roll." The inquirer, a little confused by his answer, asked the difference between belonging and having his name on the roll. "It's like this," as the pastor explained, "John's time doesn't belong to the church. Neither does his affection, his energy or his money."

"What sort of membership does John have in your church?" asked the outsider.

"It is a bit difficult to explain. He never refers to 'my church' and my pastor.' It is always 'those people' and 'that preacher.'"

"Since his visits to the church are so infrequent, he has no feeling of belonging to the church family, and the church has never become a spiritual home to him. It would be stretching the point to say that John belongs to the church. To be perfectly honest, I guess there isn't an ounce of John that truly belongs to the church."

*If it wasn't for the optimist, the pessimist would never know how happy he wasn't*

## THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME

By Pastor Charles Lybrook, Waverly Road Baptist Church, Huntington, West Virginia

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:17-24).

Makeno mistake about it, while Christ is certainly the very center of all Scripture, man, God's masterpiece of creation, is the reason for the Bible. Man, God's masterpiece of creation, was created for the pleasure and the fellowship of the Creator, and none can tell the splendor of that pleasure and that fellowship as it existed in those remote annals of time. We can only imagine what it must have been like for man and God to walk together, commune together, in an atmosphere unsullied by sin. We are given a very slight glimpse of it, I believe, in the words of Genesis 3:8 where we read, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Evidently this was the prospect of all their days, indeed the very highlight of every day, to be with God, their Creator Father. This would have been the best part of every day in a day when every day was perfect. In a day when there was no sin, no sickness, and no death. But then

came the awful tragedy of sin. Man sinned against God his Creator, and that sin separated man from holy God, and man, being separated from God, was dead, spiritually dead. John Phillips, in his book, *Exploring Genesis*, commenting on chapter 3:7-8 says: "What a tremendous success it was. There must have been joy among the demons when the news came that the father of lies had triumphed so spectacularly over creatures made in the image and likeness of God. First we note their plight. 'And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.' What a wretched discovery! Before the fall, Adam and Eve were probably clothed with light, because God covers Himself with light as with a garment (Psalms 104:2) and because the Lord Jesus, in His transfiguration, was similarly arrayed (Mark 9:2, 3). The moment they sinned, Adam and Eve saw the light go out. The death of the spirit within them caused the light to be extinguished and, suddenly, the physical side of their being was thrust into a prominence it had never had before. They knew they were naked. That was the knowledge for which they had sold their place in paradise, their daily fellowship with God, and their prospects of life for evermore."

But little did Satan and the forces of evil know that God had a plan, a sovereign God cannot be taken by surprise. All surprises have been reserved for the devil and his group, and what a surprise it must have been to Satan when, behold!, God Himself stepped out of heaven to satisfy His own just demands, to satisfy His own law of death for sin, and in the person of His only begotten Son, go to Calvary, and by His own death, buy back His fallen creature.

This, my dear people, was what God, in Christ, was doing in this world. He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, the old rugged cross (I Peter 2:24). Man, because of sin had been separated from God, the Father, and driven

from the garden of Eden, from the presence of God, and now we find God in this world to reconcile man again to Himself. II Corinthians 5:19 states: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." And now we come to our subject: THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME. Where the subject is concerned, home is heaven, the Father's house (John 14:1-3). It is that "City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Home, for the saint is that BETTER COUNTRY, that heavenly country (Hebrews 11:16). It is heaven, a prepared place for a prepared people. Think of our subject dear reader, the subject is of "HOME."

(1) THE PLACE WHERE THE NAMES OF THE SAINTS ARE WRITTEN DOWN. Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 10:20 "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (see Revelation 17:8; 21:27). This is where the way of the cross leads to "HOME."

(2) Not only is this the place where our names are written down, but also THE PLACE WHERE OUR TREASURES ARE KEPT IN STORE FOR US. See Matthew 6:20; 19:21; Luke 12:23; and Revelation 3:18.

(3) This place that we so affectionately call home, our heavenly home, is also THE PLACE WHERE JESUS, OUR PRECIOUS REDEEMER IS (Hebrews 12:2; John 14:1-4; Acts 1:9; 7:55-56). This, my dear brother and sister, is that place from which He is coming again very soon to receive us unto Himself, even as He promised in John 14:3. (See also Philippians 3:20; 4:1; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:53-58).

It is truly wonderful to contemplate our heavenly home. We love to read about heaven in our

Bibles. We love to think of the glorious time when He shall suddenly appear to take us home, we sing of that glorious resurrection morn when all the saints of God shall rise. Yes, we love to sing of the home over there. We think of meeting our loved ones who have gone on before us and of seeing Jesus, precious Jesus. Oh, how I want to see Him who loved me and who even now is living for me on high (see I John 2:1-2).

But the only way there is, is by way of Calvary. It is the way of the cross that leads home. The only persons that Jesus will receive when He comes again are those who have been to the old rugged cross, them that have, under the mighty power of true Holy Spirit conviction, repented of their sins and trusted God's Christ as their Saviour. So it truly is THE WAY OF THE CROSS THAT LEADS HOME. This was the weight and substance of His words to Nicodemus in John 3:7, "...Ye must be born again." This was the weight and substance of the instructions given to the Philippian jailer, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). You do not get to heaven but by way of Calvary. It is the way of the cross that leads home. This is the message given to Cornelius and the people who were gathered together with him to hear the words of salvation at the mouth of the apostle Peter (see Acts 10:24-48). It always thrills my heart when I read this account of the salvation of these Gentiles. What a precious scene of God's salvation it is. I never read this without feeling a deeper love for it.

Now, I must say this. This is the message that the rich man of Luke 16:19-31 chose to ignore. My friend, to ignore this message is to fit oneself for hell. It is to become a vessel fitted to destruction (Romans 9:22). So, yes, THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME. Will you, by faith, come to Calvary today by believing God's report about yourself, that you are a sinner in need of this great salvation (Romans 3:10-23), and then by putting your complete trust in God's own Son who, when the wages of our sins was death, died for us and as us. Will you come by faith to Calvary today?

"But we preach Christ cruci-  
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## WORSHIP

(Continued from Page 3)

diligence in missions for there is a promise attached, the promise of His presence. He is with those churches of His that practice missions, those that send and support.

And finally, we need to gather because we can exhort each other to courage and perseverance. Standing alone is difficult but if we obey the commands of our Lord we don't have to stand alone. If we assemble ourselves together we know that we are not alone. Our brethren and sisters are there to help us and pray with us and for us and be concerned about us and our courage.

### A Powerful Motive is Supplied

"As ye see the day approaching." Doubtless referring literally to the day of the destruction of Jerusalem, when the disciples would be exposed to the calamities predicted by the Saviour (Matt. 24) and be scattered and persecuted over the face of the world.

But for us there is a day approaching. The day of His appearing. That truly momentous day when the "trumpet of God shall sound" and those who belong to Him are caught away to be with Him, and not just for a time but for all eternity. That trumpet will signal the beginning of eternity.

As we see that day coming closer and closer we should be more and more faithful in attending the assembly of our church, not just any church. And I believe that it also indicates that we should begin to have more gatherings of our churches, more services than we have had in the past. Not only more faithfulness in assembling but more assembling. Is three or four times a week enough? Most of our churches only meet two days a week. What do we do the other five? Let us give it consideration.

The Apostle has exhorted us to gather and not to neglect this duty, but the house of God should be the delight of every Christian. Our hearts should be there and we should rejoice when the time comes to go into the house of the Lord. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm  
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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR  
SUBSCRIPTION THIS YEAR??

## BAPTISM

(Continued from Page 1)

saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31), and they have gone forth to "baptize [by some method] for salvation." Dishonestly, religious practitioners of a thousand and one kinds have emphasized the need of "baptism" as it relates to salvation, and they have left their religious hosts in ignorance of the fact that the Philippian jailer believed "in God" and that he "believed with all his house"! (All who were in his house were able to believe! The Word of God is absolute!)

There is no salvation by any "washing"!

There is no salvation by any "baptism"!

As it was on the Day of Pentecost, so it continues to be several years later in Philippi. And that word yet rings true even in this latter hour of this 20th century, **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"** (Acts 2:41). Those on the Day of Pentecost who received the Word of God had believed as Peter had done some years before that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:16). This is the emphasis of the word, **"...Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart"** (Acts 2:37). As the Philippian jailer would later do, so in that day, these cried, **"...unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?"** (Acts 2:37).

It is then, that we learn the wondrous truth!

They that received his word were baptized!

Understandably, some men and some women across the centuries have attempted to emphasize the importance of "water" in salvation on the basis of the supposed words of Peter, **"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 2:38). All such, needless to say, have refused to accept or to believe the words of Peter, **"...Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead... This is the stone which was set at**

nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12).

Did Peter believe in "water salvation"?

This would have been the place to teach!

### Devices of Some

All who find themselves so deceived and all who find themselves deceiving others with desperate unbelief and a supposed salvation by some means other than believing must know that they do lie. Those who are involved in emphasizing "salvation by water" or "the salvation of infants" without their believing and by the means of that water must know, too, that they are employing the Scriptures deceitfully in the interest of their own personal, ecclesiastical, denominational, or their own practical evil purposes. It matters not what a person's denominational or religious persuasion may be, all such unscriptural device has been, all such unscriptural device is, and all such unscriptural device ever shall be antichrist in origin, in actuality, and in issue!

Sadly, many religious brethren's actions are much like those of the man who stood and prayed **"...God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess"** (Luke 18:11-12), and they go on in their self-righteousness and deceive many who will listen to them. These may sometimes boast that they do not "look to water," or "to works," or "to ritual," or "to the sacraments" for salvation. Nevertheless, when these limit salvation to those who have "made Jesus Lord of their lives," those who have "made a good confession," those who "have been faithful in their observance of the 'Sabbath,'" and those who "have been faithful in tithing," "church attendance"—as Calvin once did—ad infinitum, are making mock of the wondrous truth, **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..."** (John 3:36).

When men or women add any requirement to the word of Jesus, **"He who believes on the Son has everlasting life,"** we can know that the Judaizers who once labored in Galatia are present among us. All who would add

any requirement whatever to believing on Jesus Christ for salvation have turned aside from the cry of the apostle Paul to the Philippian jailer, **"...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31). All who would add any requirement whatever to believing on Jesus Christ for salvation have indicated that they despise the teaching of the apostle John, **"...Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God"** (I John 4:2).

### Definitive Insight

Though all such brethren may be as fully saved, redeemed, and eternally secure as was Peter in that hour when Jesus said, **"...Get thee behind me Satan"** (Matt. 16:23), they are antichrists, everyone! Thankfully, however, out of one side of their mouths, we often hear them say, **"He who believes on the Son has everlasting life"** and **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."** Thankfully, too, some who will hear them when they give forth with this emphasis and be eternally redeemed. Sadly, however, out of the other side of their mouths, we hear them laying down legalistic requirements of a multitudinous sort for those who wish to be saved.

All such brethren are double-tongued!

All then must be intellectual hypocrites!

It should be rather evident that these brethren never have read, or they never have heard, or they never have understood what God was saying to us through the apostle Paul in the hour that He emphasized: **"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire"** (I Cor. 3:10-15).

## THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe, First Baptist Church, Harrison, Ohio

### The Missionary Spirit is a Spirit of Surrender

In Acts chapter nine the Lord delivered to us the inspired story of a man named Saul. Saul had already dedicated his life to the pursuit of law and philosophy. Some think that Saul was in line to be the next leader of the Sanhedrin court.

But Jesus had a different plan for Saul. He was going to be a believer and a missionary. Saul would be the last person on earth to surrender to the Lord and the support of the Gospel. But Christ Jesus met him face to face on his trip to Damascus to imprison and kill believers in Christ. This meeting changed Saul's life. Saul began to have a missionary spirit. This missionary spirit began when Saul met Jesus, and it begins in the life of every person when he meets Jesus face to face and is challenged by Jesus Christ with plans for his life and his work. That is the way missionaries get to their fields of work: Christ meets them face to face, and they surrender by His Spirit to do the difficult work ahead of them.

### The Missionary Spirit is a Spirit of Service

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

When the Lord meets us face to face and challenges us with decisions of life, he expects us to give him reasonable service.

What is reasonable service? It is service which is simply the best that we have to offer him. He gave his best to us; we should give our best to him.

### The Missionary Spirit is a Spirit of Sacrifice

Both missionaries and church members who are not missionaries should have a spirit of sacrifice.

I Corinthians 9:11 **"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"**

It is a great privilege to give of our carnal means to support mission works of all kinds through our local Baptist churches. To him be glory in the church!

### A Missionary Spirit is a Spirit of Self-examination

None of us examines self



enough! We are so busy examining everyone else that we can hardly get done what God has for us to do.

We should not be so naive. Notice II Corinthians 13:5 **"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be repro-bates?"**

We most always recognize the first part of this verse **"...whether ye be in the faith."** But we do not realize the next part: **"prove your own selves."** The Greek word for prove means to scrutinize or to recognize as genuine under examination.

We need to look at ourselves to see if we are genuine.

Many a man has taken his family to a faraway mission field, only to realize that he is not genuinely called to the field. Many pastors have gone to "bigger" churches only to realize after examination that they are not genuinely equipped or qualified or perhaps even called to the church.

This is a serious matter, and we do not do this enough. This reflexive noun, translated "your own selves," turns our attention inward to our own sins, our own qualifications, our own dedications, our own doxology.

Mark it well. God is examining us every day, and we are to examine ourselves with His own Word that we may know that we are called by His Spirit. Then we may better understand the MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

**Send me, Lord**



## THE TWO CITIES OF DAVID

By Pastor Robert Barkman, Gethsemane Baptist Church, Marengo, Ohio

"And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David" (II Kings 14:20).

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David)" (Luke 2:4).

Within the pages of the Holy Scriptures, we find that there are two cities, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, which are called by the name "the city of David."

Bethlehem is linked to David because David's birthplace and ancestry was there (I Samuel 16:1-18; Ruth 4:11, 18-22). Jerusalem is linked to David because he reigned in Jerusalem as the King of Israel and Judah (II Samuel 5:5).

The relationship between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is not limited to the life of King David. Both are also linked based on their relationship with Christ, the "Root" and "Son" of David (Rev. 22:16; Matt. 1:1).

During Christ's earthly stay, Bethlehem was His birthplace (Micah 5:2; John 7:42; Matt. 2:1); while Jerusalem was the place of His death, resurrection and ascension (John 19-21; Acts 1).

Truly, they are not simply the city of King David, but they are the city of the Divine David (Christ) as well.

What do these cities of David teach us about Christ? We can learn of both His Deity and His Kingship.

### I. His Deity

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

In this verse, we find that Bethlehem was prophesied to be the birthplace of One whose "goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." This is a clear declaration that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of God Himself. Christ, the Divine David, was God Himself.

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jeremiah 3:17).

In the above prophetic verse, describing Judah's return from the Babylonian captivity, we find that Jerusalem was recognized as the city where JEHOVAH dwelled and worked. Throughout the Old Testament scriptures, we find that God's dwelling place among man (the temple) was located in Jerusalem (II Chron. 30:1; Isa. 2:3; Dan. 6:10). Jerusalem was known as the dwelling place of God.

When we see that Christ's life is linked with both Jerusalem and Bethlehem we can learn that Christ truly was God Himself.

### II. His Kingship

Once again, we must turn our attention to Micah 5:2.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among

the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Notice, we find that the ruler of Israel would come forth from Bethlehem. Christ was not only God Himself, but He was the true Ruler (King) of Israel (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; John 1:49).

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17).

Christ ministering in Jerusalem also teaches us that He was a King. Jerusalem was the city recognized as the throne of JEHOVAH. In other words, Jerusalem is where Jehovah's reign took place (Psa. 48:2).

As we see Christ's relation to both Bethlehem and Jerusalem we can learn that Christ is our King.

Oh, what a great Lord we serve. He is both King over all (He deserves our service) and the only God (He deserves our worship). May we all remember His greatness when we read of the two cities of David.

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14).

## A Woman's Touch

By Wendy Barkman

### In Times of Famine

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12b). Bread and water are needed to sustain our physical health, and it is His Word that allows us to grow and mature spiritually. Extreme scarcity, in either of the two, and we have famine. Let us examine the disastrous and devastating results, when there is not enough food and water to keep alive all the people of a nation. What about the country where pastors are no longer teaching and preaching His Word?

After reading the many accounts of famine of food and water, involving the nation of Israel, it becomes quite obvious that the very youngest and the most innocent, infants and children, were made to suffer in the cruelest and most barbaric manner. I am referring to the savage act of cannibalism. Mother and fathers consumed and devoured their own children (Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:48-57; Lam. 2:20, 4:10; Ezek. 5:10). These events were a result of Israel's disobedience to God. One of the saddest accounts of human despair, found in the Bible, involves two mothers who

were so hungry, because of severe famine in Samaria, that they agreed to kill and eat their own sons (II Kings 6:24-30). The problem came about when one son was boiled and eaten, and the other mother hid her son (either to protect him from human consumption, or so that she could eat him herself). What a pathetic picture of our own desperate attempts to work things out for ourselves.

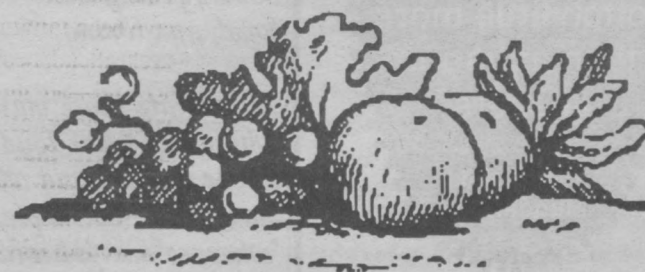
What about our own country, "the land of opportunity", a nation founded on Biblical principles, "church" buildings on every street corner, a nation where we are free to study and learn His Word? What about the fact that a dust covered copy of the Bible can be found in almost every home, lying on a table for all to see? How can it be that such a country can make laws, giving women the right to murder their unborn babies? With all of the "church" buildings and all of the Bibles, we (pastors, Sunday school teachers, parents) have failed miserably to teach and preach His Word. People are not being convicted of sin. Sin is no longer sin. Abortion is not murder; it is a woman's right. Our people are starving. We are being destroyed, because of our lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Disobedience and famine and, once again, the young and innocent have become its victims. They have become the victims of the most hideous crime in our nation's history.

## Attitude

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."

By: Charles Swindoll

Not what we say about our blessings but how we use them is the true measure of our thanksgiving



THANK HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS

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## BIBLE STUDY

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other one, all were speaking in different tongues. This brought the work to a sudden halt. We need to note that God reversed this in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the ability "to speak with other tongues" and all who heard them said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

"And from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

## WORSHIP

(Continued from Page 5)

122:1). We all stand in need of exhortation and we all need to be stimulated in our work and in our giving.

Every believer needs to be reminded constantly that the Day is approaching. We are finite, we tend to forget in the trials and business of the day.

God has commanded the attendance of His people for worship, prayer, exhortation, for ourselves and for others and for a remembrance of what is soon to happen, Jesus is coming again.

## LEADS HOME

(Continued from Page 5)

fied, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23-24).

(Article taken from: The Baptist Missionary; July/August 1994).

"The early disciples were fishers of men, while modern disciples are often little more than aquarium keepers"

Malcolm Muggeridge

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## Beatitudes for the Home

*Blessed are the husband and wife who continue to be affectionate, considerate, and loving after the wedding bells have ceased ringing.*

*Blessed are the husband and wife who are as polite and courteous to one another as they are to their friends.*

*Blessed are they who have a sense of humor, for this attribute will be a handy shock absorber.*

*Blessed are they who love their mates more than any other person in the world and who joyfully fulfill their marriage vows of a lifetime of fidelity and mutual helpfulness to one another.*

*Blessed are they who attain parenthood, for children are a heritage of the Lord.*

*Blessed are they who remember to thank God for their food before they partake of it, and who set apart some time each day for the reading of the Bible and for prayer.*

*Blessed are the husband and wife who humbly dedicate their lives and their home to Christ and who practice the teachings of Christ in the home by being unselfish, loyal, and loving.*

*Blessed are those mates who never speak loudly to one another and who make their home a place where seldom is heard a discouraging word.*

--Baptist Bulletin Service

## COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED AND AFFLICTING THE COMFORTABLE

By Jack Whitt

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). "Now we exhort you brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (I Thes. 5:14).

I wish to convey with the aid of the Scriptures given, this most important role of all who concern themselves with the needs of others. This is especially directed to pastors and preachers but of course all true Christian witnesses are involved with this subject. For the pastor/preacher, the matter of expounding upon God's Word bears great responsibility in choosing acceptable words deemed appropriate to the occasion. A big part of a preacher's ministry should be visiting and comforting the physically afflicted. By the same token, efforts are to be made to speak and to warn those who are lost and will not escape Hell without hearing and believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And so it behooves each of us to be ready and willing servants, adapting always to the various needs in our churches and the community.

A true concern for all mankind, both our brothers and sisters in Christ, and as well all the unsaved, vilest sinners, should make us more aware of the much needed attendance we can give to the ministry as Jesus Himself would have us do. "Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable." In simple explanation, we mean, we are to use the talent God has given us, to be a comfort to the sick, the downcast, the poor, the weak, the widows and the fatherless, but then we are to preach to those who are comfortable in living for the pleasures of this world and have no desires toward God. Just as the physically and mentally afflicted need comforting, so do the spiritually afflicted need made uncomfortable in knowing "their sins will surely find them out." The Apostle Paul exhorted his young counterpart, Timothy to "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). This

is still good advice for preachers today. We should never fear reproach for preaching the truth as long as it is to God's glory and our desire that it be a blessing for those who listen.

I would agree to the great need in ministries that offer comfort to the many in such need in our present day. But as to this matter, I would here inject the following quotation from a man by the name of John Henry Newman. He said: "Those who make comfort the great subject of their preaching seem to mistake the end of their ministry. Holiness is the great end, comfort is a cordial, but no one drinks cordials from morning to night." Mr. Newman makes a good point. Is it not most likely the average church member pays little attention to messages condemning worldly lifestyles? Is it likely that most church members are no more holy today than they were ten or twenty years ago? God's Word tells us we are to be holy. "That we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4b). We must be reminded the truth of God's Word is at times "an uncomfortable truth." But brethren, there are times when we need to be shown the error of our ways and not be too proud to change and conform to God's will and purpose for our

lives. It is our Christian duty to love and appreciate God's Word even when we are afflicted by it. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11).

There is another consideration as to the matter of comfort not dealing with those herein described. It may seem all well and good as we sit comfortably in our pews and listen as the preacher gives assurance of our eternal security and we feel safe in knowing this (and we ought to). Baptists love the doctrines of grace (again we should). Shouts of "amen" will be elicited on such sermons if at no other time. But preach on holy living, separation from the world, ungodly lifestyles, which many church members partake in today, and most likely not a peep will be heard from the average church audience today. The preacher who stands for righteousness and opposes sin will be unpopular to many churches today (thank God not all), yet if he preaches with compassion, conviction, longsuffering, and godly fear, and if his aim is to make better Christians of his congregation; if he leads by example and desires to please Jesus and glorify God, then most surely he will be blessed of God.

Psalm 95:1, 2, 6

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

