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Sermons

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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STRIKING THE SOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

While pondering in my mind about what to call this book, one possibility for a title that I thought of was: "Sundry Sermons." Although obviously I did not use this, it did seem to state the essence of what the book is—a collection of fifty of my written sermons, each of which deals with a different topic. The reader may find some of the same thoughts or subjects mentioned in more than one of these sermons, however, no effort has been made to arrange the various topics in related groups.

The title of this book is taken from the first sermon, "Striking The Source." This book, as well as two others by the author, has been prepared with the use of modern electronic equipment, including a PC—personal computer; a word processor program with spell check function; a Bible program with three translations and Strong's Dictionary; and a laser printer. Alas, however, all of these modern marvels still don't work any better than the ability of the fellow who punches the keyboard. Therefore, think it not strange if you find typographical mistakes and grammatical errors in this book. I accept all the blame for any such flaws. Nevertheless, the equipment probably made the book more error free than it would have been otherwise.

Regarding the things which Jesus did, the apostle John wrote: "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John 21:25 The public is being flooded today with books that should not be written and books which have no real eternal value. I do hope that the reading of this book will prove to be spiritually worthwhile for all who take time to do so, and I send it forth with the prayer that Christ may be glorified in all that is written herein—from cover to cover.—Duane V. Maxey, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, February 19, 1993

STRIKING THE SOURCE

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Sermon 1

STRIKING THE SOURCE

A number of years ago, I read a story, which may contain more humorous fiction than fact. It told of two worldly friends who went to Coney Island, and the last "attraction" they visited was a shooting gallery where they had celluloid balls propelled by jets of water. The balls rose and fell and when they fell, they fell out of sight. The idea was to hit them as you saw them. The first of the two friends shot all the cartridges in his rifle, but didn't hit one of the balls. Then, the second man picked up a gun took careful aim, shot once, and all of the balls fell. His incredulous friend said, "Bill, that's the most wonderful shooting I ever saw in my life! How on earth did you do it?" Bill replied, "I shot the fellow working the pump!" (adapted from "Knew What To Do")

Whether this seems humorous to you or not, when our aim is real, vital, and spiritual, it is no joking matter. We must know what to do, and allow the Holy Ghost to "zero-in-on" and strike a death blow at the source of the problem.

STRIKING THE SOURCE ELIMINATES SYMPTOMS

In the humorous story above, the second marksman, supposedly, disregarded trying to knock down the numerous, uprising targets individually, and instead he shot down the source of every one of them- the man working the pump. When the source was eliminated, then every symptom of his working immediately disappeared as well.

Although it was for a bad cause, Ahithophel gave Absalom some good advice along this line when Absalom was trying to totally defeat David: "I will smite the king only: and I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace." 2 Sam 17:2-3

Ahithophel advised to quickly strike David only, the source of opposition to Absalom. He perceived that if this one, key individual was eliminated, then all of the other opposition to Absalom's rule would also be eliminated as a result. However, blinded by his own pride, Absalom delayed, and followed the counsel which inflated his ego and contributed to his total destruction.

In like manner today, multitudes refuse to let the Holy Ghost quickly reveal and remove the source of their sin problem. They delay in favour of some proud and dramatic, but false, solution for the symptoms of sin...one which will elevate their ego without eliminating their sin, either outwardly or inwardly. As a result, their symptoms continue, their solution is forfeited, and their certain defeat and destruction are forthcoming. "All the people shall be in peace" from the troubling symptoms of sin only after God is allowed to strike a death blow to their source.

STRIKING THE SOURCE ERADICATES CARNALITY

Hallelujah! The glorious truth is that "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom 6:6 "Knowing this" is vital, for when God provided for our deliverance from sin in this life, He directed a deathblow to more than the symptoms of sin, guilt, and condemnation. The very "kingpin" of sin in the human heart, "our old man," is this very moment "crucified with Christ!" The only "might," or question, that there is in regard to his immediate and total destruction is concerning whether the Christian will walk in that light and obediently seek, and receive the deliverance. With the accuracy of David's aim at Goliath, the Holy Ghost will direct one sin-killing, shot of second-blessing holiness fire into the heart of every Christian who meets the conditions. Carnality will be destroyed and all of its symptoms will then be "stopped short, never to rise again, when the old man dies!"

Praise the Lord! This is more than a fancied, human assumption. It is nothing less than the fiery, Divine assassination of the "old man," the complete purging of the Adamic-nature from our hearts! "Knowing this" personally is our blessed privilege and responsibility, for God's Spirit calls us to this work of grace, and bears witness with our spirit when we are entirely "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb 10:10

STRIKING THE SOURCE NECESSITATES SINCERITY

A rather humorous story, which may be true, goes something like this: During the depths of the depression, president Hoover visited Charleston, West Virginia, where he was not popular. At a ceremony, they gave him a twenty-one gun salute which boomed from cannons close by. Then, following the firing of the last cannon, a heckler remarked: "They missed him!"

Of course they missed him. The guns weren't fired for his execution, but for his honor. Furthermore, the cannons were, no doubt, not aimed at him, and they may have fired only blanks. The application? This: It is possible to make a lot of public noise when one is supposedly seeking the destruction of the old man, noise which in reality is nothing more than loud blanks fired in his honor instead of for his execution. Twenty-one long and loud nights of public seeking could be nothing more than "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

God does not lay the emphasis upon either sounds or silence in our seeking so much as He does upon absolute sincerity. After much vocal and physical commotion at a public altar, the sad truth about some in regard to the old man is: "They missed him!" In spite of all their clamor, carnality is still alive and well in their hearts. When it comes to getting sanctified wholly, there simply is no substitute for a deep-seated sincerity, fervent desire, and resolute determination to have the real source of one's sin-problem removed from the heart, no matter what God may require before He does the work. Those who do sincerely seek the destruction of carnality may, or may not, make a lot of noise when they pray through. One thing they do make-They make way for the Holy Ghost to go behind their symptoms and beneath the surface of their emotions, so as to strike the sanctifying, death blow to their old man. Then, when "the fellow who was working the pump" of carnality is destroyed, they are no longer troubled by the springing up of any of his many symptoms.

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Sermon 2

HE DIDN'T KNOW IT

Jeremiah 17:9 "Who can know it?"

John 2:24, 25 "Jesus...knew.."

He knew he had it in his bosom, but apparently he did not know the deadly potential it carried within itself to suddenly strike and slay him. Consequently, tragically, the Florida school boy quickly died that day!

Perhaps it was because of its beauty or its deceitfully docile, friendly behavior when he touched it. Whatever it was that enticed him to do so, when he saw the Coral snake lying there in the sun, he gently and carefully picked it up and put it in his shirt pocket, close to his heart. While he rode the bus to school, ran into his classroom, and studied arithmetic and reading, the snake nestled there in his pocket quietly. Then came recess time, but even during a ball game, when the boy "batted and ran the bases," still "the snake slept peacefully," there in is his pocket.

However, after the bell rang ending recess, as the children were "lined up at the door of the school building...one classmate gave the boy a shove, pushing him against the child in front of him...When their bodies collided the snake struck, emptying its gland of poisonous venom. The boy screamed and fell to the ground struggling for breath. In a short time, the boy was dead in spite of all efforts to revive him." (quoted portions and story from and article by E. Cunningham, Herald of Holiness, 8/15/86)

This was indeed tragic, and the writer quoted from in the above story, likened this sleeping snake in the boy's pocket to the deadly potential of carnality lying dormant within the human heart, truly an apt comparison. The little boy knew that he had that snake in his bosom, but apparently he was unaware of the sudden death that could strike him if he left it there!

Carnality, like the Coral snake, often garbs itself in outward beauty and can behave in deceitfully docile ways for long periods of time, until it is riled. Many individuals know that they have it on board. They know it is in their heart, but do they know the sudden potential it has for bringing about, ever so quickly, their spiritual and eternal death?! "Who can know it?"

WHO CAN KNOW THE DECEITFULNESS OF CARNALITY?

"Jesus knew what was in man." John 2:25 He knew that, when man fell, satan had implanted within the heart of humanity the very nature of the Serpent himself! Jesus knew how that a deadly spiritual poison, shot forth from the sinful nature in fallen man, was more lethal than that of any Coral snake, and could suddenly paralyze and suffocate every good thing within him, and turn him

into a deadly devil demanding the crucifixion of the Son of God! "Jesus did not commit Himself" to Carnality, for He knew its deceitfulness. It can look so pretty, and then suddenly act so nasty! It can sing Hosanna one moment, and shout "crucify Him" the next! It can be docile and sweet, then deadly and sullen, more quickly than a cloud can cover the sun! "My brethren, these things ought not so to be," but they are, when one has the deceitfulness of carnality still on board! James 3:10 Jesus not only knew carnality then, He still knows it. He, and He alone, can remove the deceitful "make-up" that it wears and reveal to a soul its eternal repulsiveness to God, and its poisonous potential in the heart: "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." Rev 2:23

If that little, Florida school boy had known what it really was he had on board, and what it was going to do to him if he left it in his pocket, no doubt he would have cautiously and quickly done his best to get rid of it! How urgently some professors of holiness need to discover what they really have on board beneath their pretty profession! With what increased clarity, some saved individuals need to see the danger of delaying the Divine removal of carnality from their heart. How quickly Jesus would reveal these things, if many individuals would just get earnest and honest enough to listen to Him!

WHO CAN KNOW THE DEATH THAT CARNALITY BRINGS?

Every sinner can suddenly know the tragic consequences of carnality when it is riled!: "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them" when carnality snuffs out their life and sends them into eternal death! Job 21:17 Every saved individual, who has not truly been sanctified wholly, can know, by sad experience, the sudden paralysis and suffocation of spiritual life when carnality is riled! Also, "as the serpent beguiled Eve," even sanctified individuals can fail to "touch not the unclean thing," reach out and take of the forbidden, and in so doing receive the nature of the Serpent back into the secret pocket of their heart! Such people are sure to be riled when their backslidden, carnal heart is crossed, or when the preaching gets too hot!

WHO CAN KNOW THE DELIVERANCE FROM CARNALITY?

Honest individuals, who will not deny the revelation of the Holy Ghost to them, that it is on board in all its deadly potential, can find deliverance from the carnal mind. Earnest individuals, who are genuinely "born of the Spirit," and who do not delay until carnality has paralyzed and suffocated their spiritual life, can quickly be delivered from carnality through the purging "sanctification of the Spirit."! 1 Peter 1:2 Sanctified individuals can know continued deliverance from the carnal mind, as long as they carefully "touch not the unclean thing."

Careless individuals, who disobediently touch the unclean thing, also take the unclean thing back into the secret pocket of their heart. You can't have the one without the other! As with Adam and Eve, disobedience brings depravity into the heart. However, cleansed and carefully kept, individuals know sweet deliverance from the carnal mind now, in their hearts, and shall know it forever in heaven!

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Sermon 3

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO WITH JESUS

Mat 27:19 Have thou nothing to do with that just man.

Heb 4:13 All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.

Josh 22:24 What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?

A SOLEMN STORY WHICH CARELESS TEENAGERS SHOULD HEAR

She sat there in the service that Sunday as I announced the above subject for my message, and read the accompanying scripture. I had known her, for some 5 years, to be a beautiful, Christian girl with long hair, modest apparel, and a tender, sweet spirit. Now, however, as she sat there that Sunday with her family, I was aware that satan had been fiendishly at work to defile, deceive, and destroy this precious soul, just 17 years of age.

I sensed that morning that God was also at work, trying to help her avoid falling into the snare of the devil, and the Holy Spirit helped me to preach the message, bearing the truth home to her heart. Point by point I elaborated upon the subject—"What You Have To Do With Jesus":

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM UNAVOIDABLY

We cannot follow the advice of Pilate's wife and "Have nothing to do" with Jesus, for as Hebrews 4:13 proclaims, He is the One with Whom "we have to do," whether we want to or not.

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM MANIFESTLY

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He said to Nathaniel: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." John 1:48

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM CONVICTINGLY

1 Ki 17:18 "And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance..?" The Spirit helped me as I spoke of how we have to do with Jesus convictingly in the Person of the Holy Ghost, Who reproves "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 17:8

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM FEARINGLY

With this point, I used Joshua 22:24-25: "In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? ..so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, with Whom we have to do!

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM WORSHIPFULLY

Hosea 14:8 "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, and observed Him.."

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM SANCTIFYINGLY

Mark 1:23-24 "There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth?" We have to do with Jesus as the One Who casts out the unclean spirit from us so that He can make us pure.

YOU HAVE TO DO WITH HIM FINALLY

John 2:4 "Woman, what have I do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." But, the hour is coming when we shall each have to do with Jesus as our Eternal Judge. We may spurn Him temporarily, but finally, we must face Him at the judgment.

God was there throughout the message, and as we closed that service, the Spirit had faithfully done His work upon her soul. As I recall, she raised her hand for prayer. I did not know that this would be the last time she would ever be in one of our services, nor did any of us realize that within 6 months this young 17 year old girl would be in eternity.

Feeling that God was concerned about this precious soul, and that satan was doing his worst to lead her to damnation, I called her home in the effort to get her back to church the next Sunday. She had left home, but her mother succeeded in getting her to call us. She declined the invitation, and informed me that she was going bowling. It saddened me to hear her say that. It seemed so different from what she had been, chaste, and separated from worldly pleasures. Adding to that sadness, she let me know that she scheduled her activities about two weeks in advance.

I sensed trouble ahead for this precious, eternity-bound soul as she ventured away from the faith and godly restraints of the past in favor of a deceptively delightful fling in the world. I knew how young people often fail to foresee the devastating pain behind those deceitful pleasures, particularly young people who begin to travel for the first time out into the ways of the world. And, I realized that the One with Whom she had to do might someday, some way, interrupt her "two-weeks-in-advance schedule."

I could not "book" her then for our fellowship, but "we have to do" business with God when, and as, He ordains, whether it fits into our schedule or not. I did not realize how soon, nor how tragically,

the plans of this young woman would be interrupted. Three days ago, she went into eternity-according to God's schedule. She had not planned two weeks in advance to be involved in that awful accident. She did not realize as she drove down that road with the young man whom she planned to marry that she had a nearer date with destiny, arranged by the One with Whom she had to do.

Flung from the vehicle as it rolled, she was gravely injured, but mercifully the Lord gave her a few more days. She was helicoptered to a nearby hospital, barely clinging to life. Initially, as she was questioned about her relationship with God, I understand that she did not reply that she was saved. Finally, however she responded in the affirmative that she was saved. But, in spite of every gallant effort to save her life, and in spite of all the prayers that were offered up in her behalf, after a matter of just a few days following her unplanned accident, it was the will of the One with Whom she had to do that she meet her appointment with death.

I sincerely hope that while the Lord painfully, tragically, interrupted her earthly plans, He was able by this means, through her utter repentance and desperate faith, to rob satan of her soul and usher her safely out of this deceitful, sin-cursed world into the pure, eternal bliss of Heaven.

One thing is certain: She, and each of us, will one day face Christ at the Eternal Judgment Bar of God, for He is the One with Whom we have to do finally, and for eternity. That, dear reader, no matter how young you may now be, is "What You Have To Do With Jesus"—Duane Maxey, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, 5/25/89

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Sermon 4

HOW THE LORD IS FAITHFUL

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son...

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God...

The Lord would have us know that He is faithful. He has proven this to countless thousands across the centuries, and He continues to prove His faithfulness to all that trust and obey Him. Let us briefly consider some of the ways that the Lord is faithful:

HE IS FAITHFUL TO CALL US TO REPENTANCE

"God is faithful, by Whom ye were called..." It will be proven at the Judgment that the Lord has been faithful to call us to repentance! "I came...to call... sinners to repentance." Mark 2:17

A bright young boy heard, and was deeply impressed by the text: "My son, give me thine heart." Prov 23:26 He thought "time enough yet." Then, 10 years later, he heard the same text, but again thought, "time enough yet." Next, 20 years later, he again heard the same text, "My son, give me thine heart." He thought to himself, "Visit foreign countries before you decide." However, while visiting Paris, France he was stricken with cholera, and died! His last words were: "Too Late"!

God's call to repentance was not too late! He could have been saved if he had properly responded while the Lord was faithfully calling him! The following story, which may have occurred during the Civil War, is a good illustration of how the Lord's faithfulness to call us to repentance is prompted by His great love for us:

Major Whittle used to tell the story of the aged Quaker named Hartmann, whose son had enlisted in the army. There came the news of a dreadful battle, and this old father, in fear and trembling, started to the scene of conflict that he might learn something concerning his boy. The officer of the day told him that he had not answered to his name, and that there was every reason to believe that he was dead. This did not satisfy the father, so, leaving headquarters, he started across the battlefield, looking for the one who was dearer to him than life. He would stoop down and turn over the face of this one and then the face of another, but without success. The night came on, and then He continued his search with a lantern. Suddenly the wind, which was blowing a gale, extinguished his lantern, and he stood there in the darkness hardly knowing what to do until his father's ingenuity, strength and affection prompted him to call out his son's name, and so he stood and shouted, "John Hartmann, thy father calleth thee." All about him he would hear the groans of the dying and some one saying: "Oh, if that were only my father." He continued his cry with more pathos and power until at last in the distance he heard his boy's voice crying tremblingly, "Here, father." The old man made his way across the field shouting out, "Thank God! Thank God!" Taking him in his arms, he bore him to

headquarters, nursed him back to health and strength, and he lives today. (from One Thousand Illustrations)

Like John Hartmann's father, the Lord, in His great love toward us, searches for us in our lost and dying state, and calls each of us personally to repentance. His love goes beyond that of any earthly father. John Hartmann's father focused his compassion and call toward only one among many. The Lord's concern, compassion, and call is for each and every one of us. He is "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Not one is left fallen without One Who comes calling to him personally. Happily, many respond unto salvation!

A man once heard a sermon from the text: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve.." Josh 24:15 In disgust, he went to a different church that same afternoon, and he heard the same text—by the same preacher! That night he went to a third church, and again he heard the same text—by the same preacher! He responded to the Lord's faithful call and was converted!

HE IS FAITHFUL TO CALL US UNTO HOLINESS

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.." 1 Tim 1:9 "For God hath..called..us unto holiness." 1 Th 4:7 There is a second, crisis experience which God wills that every saved individual obtain in this life. Thus, God is faithful to call every soul, who is genuinely born again, to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby the heart is cleansed from the carnal nature!

J. B. McBride relates how he was called unto holiness. He was genuinely saved and was preaching the gospel before he was sanctified wholly. He and his wife had been attending a holiness meeting. He writes:

On the second Sunday of the revival, I had to leave the meeting and go to fill an appointment for my pastor, six miles away. It was just about three miles from my home, as I was riding through a skirt of woodland, that the Lord met me. As truly as He ever met Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus, He met me that day. He said to me, "Where are you going?" My reply was, "To preach the Gospel." Then He said to me, "Have you ever read, 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work?'" My reply was, "Lord, that is all that I have heard for ten days; that is Second Timothy 2:21." He said to me, "Are you going to persist in the ministry without the Divine preparation for service?" Oh, what a question! I said, "Lord, I will not make another attempt, nor go another step, unless Thou dost sanctify me." And there and then, on horseback, I said one eternal "Yes" to all the will of God, never to take it back. Suddenly, something like a bucket of hot water struck me on the head, and went all through me until billows of fire and waves of glory swept over my soul, and burned to my being's extremity; and the Holy Ghost came in and was a "witness also" that the work was done. Thank God, I got in under the Old Constitution! Strange as it may seem, all of this transpired in a few moments, and I reached my appointment on time, and took for the text: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (J. B. McBride, "Knowing God," pgs. 20-22)

Praise God! The same Lord called me also to the same experience, and performed the same work of grace in my heart! "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it." 1 Th 5:24

HE IS FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE US AND TO CLEANSE US

"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 Praise God! The Lord is not only faithful to call us, He is also faithful to do the work to which He calls us. He calls us to salvation, and does the work of forgiving us after we thoroughly repent. Then He calls us to holiness, and does the work of cleansing our heart after we totally die to self.

A small boy, who had done something wrong, found himself amid a roomful of elders, who were stern-faced, in hope that he would understand the seriousness of his offense. He looked at his nurse and relatives one by one with a tearstained face, and when he saw no sign of relenting, he burst into tears and asked: "Oh, won't somebody forgive me?"

Yes, thank God, we do have Someone Who does forgive and does cleanse when the Divine conditions are met. His name is Jesus, and, whatever work of grace it is to which He is calling you, "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it!"

HE IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP US

"But the Lord is faithful, Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." 2 Th 3:3 He did not save us and sanctify us wholly in order to throw us away at the first opportunity! While indeed He cannot keep us if we disobey, His desire and design is to establish us and to use us in His work! Therefore, He is faithful to clearly warn us if a certain act or course of action would be sinful. Unlike satan, He does not muddy the waters of our minds so as to hide our stepping stones and plunge us into the stream of sin! He is not the author of confusion! He makes the path of the just "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov 4:18

Instead of accusing a Christian of sin after an act, He shines His Divine light on the thing before it is done and makes it quite clear if that act would be a sin. Satan confuses with vague accusation after an act. Christ keeps us from evil with clear revelation before an act! Satan desires to have the soul so that he can cast it into degradation and damnation. Christ died to save every soul so that He could keep it, cleanse it, and lift it into glorification and eternal salvation!

He is not anxious to let go of any soul. He bought each of us with the ultimate price, and just as men jealously guard that for which they paid a fortune, so the Lord carefully keeps those whom He has "purchased with His own blood!" "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor 10:13 Christ will keep all those Whom He has saved if they simply trust and obey.

HE IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP HIS PROMISES

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised." Heb 10:23 As he was about to pass off of the scene, Joshua said, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." Josh 23:14 Men sometimes fail to keep their promises because of treachery, neglect, inability, or death. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Jesus never fails to keep his promises! He is truthful, not treacherous; diligent, not negligent; all-powerful, not unable; and alive forevermore, not dead! In Jeremiah 33:14 we find these words: "I will perform that good thing which I have promised." Praise God! "I have proven Him true. What He says He will do. He never has failed me yet!" Not one thing has failed, or ever shall, of all that He has promised us. He is faithful to keep His promises!

HE IS FAITHFUL, EVEN IF WE BELIEVE NOT

"If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." 2 Tim 2:13 God is faithful, even when unbelieving humanity doubts Him! I read a story similar to the following:

A little boy had been to Sunday School and was riding home on a streetcar. He had received at Sunday School a little card with the verse on it: "Have faith in God." As he rode along in the streetcar, he held the little card out the window in the current of air created by the motion of the car. Suddenly, the air current snatched the card from his grasp, and the little boy pulled the signal cord and yelled: "Stop the car! I've lost my faith in God!" Perhaps realizing how much that card meant to the youngster, the streetcar driver stopped the car until the little boy's lost "faith in God" card was safely retrieved into his possession. Then, the streetcar was again set in motion.

Paul wrote: "all men have not faith." 2 Th 3:2 Jesus said: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8 Part of the iniquity that abounds in these last days is the iniquity of unbelief! It may not seem as dirty as the moral degradation that is abounding, but the iniquity of unbelief is as black as satan's heart! When faith is thrown to the four winds, its time to "stop the car" and retrieve it, for without faith "it is impossible to please" God, and to make it safely through life and into heaven.

"The mist of darkness is reserved for ever" for those who plunge over the precipice of time in unbelief and land in outer darkness! The unbelief of many does not change the fact of God and His Truth. "He cannot deny Himself." To the contrary, He will reveal Himself when Christ "cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him (in their unbelief): and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of Him."—Rev 1:7 "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!" John 20:29 "For we walk by faith, and not by sight." 2 Cor 5:7

HE IS FAITHFUL TO WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness..." Rev 3:14 Jesus told his disciples: "If it were not so, I would have told you." John 14:2 He told Pontius Pilate: "...for this cause came

I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." When one is truly saved, Christ always bears witness to that fact. Likewise, when one is truly sanctified wholly, Christ always witnesses by His Spirit that it is so. When it is "not so" that one is saved or sanctified, He also bears witness to that negative truth, through the conviction of the Holy Ghost. He is faithful to witness of the truth in this life, and He will faithfully reveal what is, and is not, so at the Judgment!

HE WILL BE FAITHFUL TO COME AGAIN

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." Rev 19:11 Jesus said: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3 He was faithful to come the first time, and He will be faithful to come again, just as He said He will. The Bible tells us that some will question the fulfillment of Christ's promise to come again, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for..all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Pet 3:4 None, however, should doubt the faithfulness of Jesus to come again, for on the Day of the Lord all shall be utterly convinced of that fact:

Jude 1:14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

There will be no doubters as to the Lord's faithfulness on that awesome Day. Happy shall they be at His appearing who were before that time convinced of His faithfulness, and who were faithful to Him as His children. Throughout eternity, where their faithful Lord is, there shall they be also.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 5

TAKE THEM DOWN

Oliver Cromwell once visited Yorkminster Cathedral in England, and his attention was drawn to twelve silver statues of the apostles, which stood near the ceiling of one of the cathedral apartments. Looking upon them for a moment, he said, "Who are those fellows standing yonder?" After being informed, he exclaimed, "Take them down...and let them go about doing good." Accordingly, they were melted down and put into his treasury.

Before Oliver Cromwell could use those silver apostles, it was necessary that they be taken down. Likewise, it is sometimes necessary for Christ to take us down spiritually before He can use us. Thus, perhaps often, the essence of His prayer to the Father for His followers is: "Take them down":

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LOFTY PEDESTALS

Rom 10:6 ...Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?..

It is not the carnally ambitious "ascenders" that God really uses in the Church. Many who have high ecclesiastical position may fancy themselves to be pillars in God's temple when in fact they are a positive hindrance to His cause. What they "hold up" is not the structure of the Church, but rather the progress of the Church.

Twice the Bible tells us that "before honour is humility." Prov 15:33; 18:12 Honor and usefulness in Christ's kingdom are never found on the top shelf of proud ambition. They are always found on the bottom shelf of genuine humility. Thus, can we not imagine Jesus praying for some who are too concerned about "who shall ascend" into this or that position in the Church: "Father, take them down from their coveted and lofty pedestals of carnal ambition. Melt them and purge them in the refining fire of the Holy Ghost, so that they can be remolded and truly used in Thy kingdom." The following story illustrates how those who esteem themselves too highly hinder, more than help, the cause of Christ:

During the Revolutionary War, a man dressed in civilian attire rode horseback along a road. As he did so, he noticed some American soldiers attempting to lift a quite heavy log into position during the construction of a blockhouse. They seemed to need another hand, while off to their side another soldier barked orders: "Heave! There she goes. Heave!" As they continued to struggle, with not quite enough help, the man who happened by addressed the soldier who was busy giving orders without helping the others: "Why don't you help them?" "Sir," came the reply, "I am a corporal." "Indeed," the stranger responded, "I did not know that; I ask your pardon, Mr. Corporal." Dismounting without further ado, the man lent a willing hand until the job was done. Then, wiping the honest sweat from off his brow, he turned to the corporal and remarked: "The next time, Mr. Corporal, you have a bit of work like that in hand, and too few men to do it, send for the Commander-in-Chief, and I'll come

again and assist you." Then, General George Washington left the astounded "corporal" to his own reflections, and rode off!

This little corporal's attitude harmonized with that of another who was said to have prayed: "Use me Lord, use me....in an advisory capacity!" The sad fact is that there are many whom Christ cannot use in any capacity in His kingdom, until they are taken down from their lofty, but mistaken, estimation of their abilities.

John Wesley one day came upon a man who was down on his knees breaking stones. Whatever the instrument was that he was using, he seemed to be doing so with ease from his kneeling position. As preachers are prone to do, Wesley made a spiritual application of what he beheld, saying: "Ah, I wish I could break the hearts of some who hear me as easily as you are breaking those stones!" Looking up at Wesley, the man replied: "Did you ever try breaking them on your knees?"

Ah, that's it, isn't it? When we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and confess to him our utter worthlessness and helplessness apart from His grace, then we can influence others for Christ and be truly useful and fruitful in His kingdom. I once read of a government agent who was interested in helping a man get irrigation water to some of his land, and he said something like the following: "I can make your field fruitful, if it lies low enough." When we get low enough, Christ can send a floodtide of His Spirit into our souls and thereby make us fruitful in every good work for Him.

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LITTLE PETTINESS

Prov 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil...

Prov 24:29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me...

Men who are truly great, are too big to be little. They have been melted in love's fire, and they have a magnanimous heart which is moved with compassion and pity, even toward an enemy who is suffering:

When William McKinley was running for Congress, back in the days of the horse-drawn coaches, a reporter for an opposition newspaper was following his campaign. Frequently he wrote things which annoyed McKinley. Still, McKinley admired the shrewdness and talent with which the young man wrote, and felt compassion toward him because he was poorly clad and had a persistent cough, perhaps resulting from his thin attire in the cold weather. One particularly cold night, McKinley was commuting by horse-drawn coach to another speaking engagement, when he heard that familiar cough, and realized that the young reporter was riding above and outside with the driver. He ordered the coach stopped, stepped out, and looking up, he said to the reporter: "Young man, get down here!" Thinking that surely McKinley's wrath was about to fall upon him as the result of his negative reporting, the reporter got down. Extending a coat to the young man, McKinley said, "Here, put this coat on!" Rather surprised, the reporter responded: "But Major McKinley, maybe you don't know who I am. I'm the reporter from the opposing paper. I've been giving it to you every night, and I'm going over there tonight to cut you to pieces!" "I know that," answered McKinley, "but you put this

coat on, and get in the coach where it's warm, so you can do a good job." If a politician can show such magnanimity, how much more ought we to show it who profess to be followers of the compassionate Christ.

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LEAVING THE UNION

Isa 8:12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

When we hear the word "confederacy," we think of those who seceded from the Union. I'm glad that I'm not in hell tonight! I'm glad that I'm a part of the Family of God! There is a union in the Body of Christ, and we should desire to promote that union, that unity of the Spirit. This does not mean that we must belong to, or stay affiliated with any particular denomination. It does mean that we should not conspire with those who would, by their rebellion, secede from the God-ordained restraints which are clearly set forth in His word. Decrying Churchanity is one thing, but defying heaven-sent reproof and counsel is quite another.

Paul made it clear that those who are in subjection to Christ are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." 1 Cor 9:21 We must be careful that we do not equate freedom from the legalistic rules of a denomination with complete freedom to do as we please. Those who are "free from righteousness" are not really free, for they are "the servants of sin." Rom 6:20 Those in our Civil War who seceded from the Union were those who advocated and defended slavery. Let us not be confederate with any whose freedom from others brings them back under slavery to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Those who advocate such false freedom need to be taken down from their proud error, freed from the dominion of sin, and brought back into the true liberty of the Spirit in union with Christ.

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LOST FORTUNES

Prov 3:28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Proverbs 3:28 above, is echoed in James 2:15-16: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" The inferred answer is: "It profits nothing." They are losers who thus refuse to give to others that really need their help. There is truth and instruction in the following tombstone inscription: "What I gave away, I saved; what I spent, I used; what I kept, I lost." What we give to Christ, and what we give to others as He directs, is what we save. All of the rest is either lost by spending it, or lost by keeping it. After Cromwell spied the wealth in those silver apostles, just sitting there on their high perch doing no good, he ordered them taken down so that their wealth could go about doing good where it was needed. In too many cases, even real Christians need to reach up to the high shelf of their hoarded resources and take them down so God can use them, or they will lose them. At the Judgment, we shall each realize that "what I kept" for self, "I lost" forever.

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LOVELY, PAST HISTORY

Eccl 7:10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

Why were the old days better? It really isn't wise to be always asking this question, for no matter how good things were with us once upon a time, we cannot return to those days, nor can we live on lovely, past history. If one has lost ground spiritually, a more pertinent question would be: Why were things better with me spiritually in days past than they are now? Hosea's unfaithful wife seems to be a type of those who have been unfaithful to Christ. She recognized that with Hosea things were better with her in the past, and she resolved to return to Hosea:

Hosea 2:7 And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

Returning to the former days is always impossible, but returning to the One Who made our former days better is often possible. Hosea's restoration of his fallen bride, was "according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel.." **Hosea 3:1** Christ longs to restore the fallen and to renew the romance of a close relationship with Him. What He did before, He can do again:

The Salvation Army installed a plaque within the church building in England where William Booth was converted and where He received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The plaque told of how this spot was the place where these events of the past took place, and the building became a shrine for the admiring, Salvation Army people who visited there. One day, an old Salvation Army officer visited the shrine and the plaque, and then asked the minister who had custodial care of the place: "Can a man say his prayers here?" The minister replied, "Of course a man can say his prayers here!" Then, the old Salvation Army officer dropped to his knees, and lifting up both hands heavenward, he prayed: "O Lord, Do it again! Do it again!"

The Church of Christ is not a museum wherein we are to ever focus upon the memorials of the past. In many cases, it is time to take them down, and instead lift up our hands and our hearts in earnest prayer for God do again for us what He did in former days.

TAKE THEM DOWN FROM LINGERING PROCRASTINATION

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?..

God once used the plaintive question of a little boy to burn upon his father's heart an urgent call to foreign missions:

In coming home one night, driving across the vast prairie, I saw my little boy John hurrying to meet me. The grass was high on the prairie, and suddenly he dropped out of sight. I thought he was playing, and was simply hiding from me; but he did not appear as I expected he would. Just then the thought flashed across my mind, "There's an old well there, and he's fallen in!" I hurried up to him,

reached down in the well and lifted him out; and as he looked up in my face, what do you think he said? "Oh, papa, why didn't you hurry?!" Those words never left me. They kept ringing in my ears until God put a new and deeper meaning into them, and bade me think of souls without God and without hope in this world; and from that vast throng a pitiful, despairing, pleading, cry rolled into my soul, "Oh, why didn't you hurry?!"

God has taken some down from lofty positions in answer to the higher, and more urgent call to preach the gospel in the regions beyond. "Better late than never" is not always so. While God does sometimes work slowly, still, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Eccl 3:1 When God's call is urgent, our attitude should be: "Better never late."

LIFT THEM UP

Rom 10:6-7 Say not in thine heart...Who shall descend into the deep?

Aren't you glad that the Gospel of Christ is balanced? It does not consist in negatives only. There is always a positive side to the gospel! God's ultimate purpose in taking His children down is that He might lift them up into His warm and wonderful presence forever. At least before Pentecost, doubting Thomas seems to have had a negative outlook quite continually. After Christ had announced that Lazarus was dead, He said to the disciples, "nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him." John 11:15-16

What a gloomy prediction! Christ was not leading his disciples into a trap where they would all descend into the grave with Lazarus! No, He was going to Lazarus to raise him from the dead, and thus give Thomas and all of us a preview of how He shall quicken and lift His people from death and decay into the eternal life and light of His presence! The Psalmist seemed to be suffering from the negative atmosphere around him when he prayed: "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Psa 4:6

May God help us as we pass through dark valleys that we not become descenders in our outlook. For all of us who are Christians, the best is yet to come! I plan to be among that happy throng who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Don't You? "On that bright and cloudless morning" when Christ returns, the prayer of Psalm 28:9 shall have its ultimate fulfillment.

Psa 28:9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 6

THE RUNAWAY RIVER

Isaiah 27:12...from the channel of the river unto the stream...

Rivers have both channels and streams, but the life-giving power of a river does not lie in its channel but rather lies in its stream. It is the living, flowing, moistening, saturating, current of water, and not the channel which is so vital to the production and sustenance of life around it: "and every thing shall live whither the river (the flowing stream) cometh." Ezek 41:9 Channels do not make rivers. Rivers make channels! Living streams cut their own channels, but channels never create streams. Thus it is also in the spiritual realm. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." Psa 46:4 Jesus likened the Holy Ghost to flowing rivers of living water, and the emphasis of Christ's message was not upon the receiving of a channel, but upon the vital necessity of receiving the living stream of His Spirit!

Therefore, the focus of our concern should be primarily shifted from the channel of the river of holiness unto the stream Himself. Channels do not create the living Stream of the Spirit. It is the Spirit Who cuts the channel for the issuing forth of His stream through the life of each sanctified individual. We may have the dry bed of empty profession and the high banks of total separation from the world without really having the living Stream of God's Spirit. "The river of God is full of water!" Psa 65:9 There is more to holiness than the channel of holy standards. "There is a River" with powerful, living "streams," Whom we must receive and release to flow through our outward life howsoever He directs and whithersoever He will. He cannot be retained or restrained by those whose interest and focus is foolishly fixed upon channeling Him through only their own preconceived and prejudiced river banks.

The Holy Ghost Himself reserves the right to cut the channel through which He will flow forth in the outward life of those He controls: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." Prov 21:1 Of a certainty, the Spirit of God never cuts the channel so wide in a sanctified person's life that it encompasses sin and worldliness, but He does cut that channel "broader than the measure of man's mind," who is hung-up more on retaining the traditional channel than on releasing the Holy Ghost to flow whithersoever He will.

I read recently of a town somewhere in the USA which had been left "high and dry" by a runaway river. For centuries perhaps, that river had run down its traditional channel. The town grew up beside it, and fishermen who came to fish in the river brought a good business to the town. No one apparently expected that river to do anything but go on flowing down its accustomed course, but the river surprised them. One day it began cutting a new channel above the town, and soon the stream circumvented the town, leaving its people in consternation. Faced with the loss of income from the fishermen and every other benefit which the town had been accustomed to receive from the presence of the flowing stream, some talked about going upstream to dynamite the river back into its

traditional course. From what I remember reading, I think there may have been a legal question as to whether they had the right to do that.

Brethren, I don't know what has happened about that river. I suspect that the renegade stream may still be happily flowing down its newly cut channel, and the crestfallen citizens of that town, no longer able to bait, are debating how to get the runaway river back into their own channel. Meanwhile, the attention of the fishermen has perhaps been shifted "from the channel" that once was "to the stream" that now is—flowing through newly cut banks.

Need one make the spiritual application? If we assume that the Spirit God will only, always, flow through our own traditional riverbed and banks of separation, and if we focus primarily on the channel instead of upon the stream, then we too may find ourselves "high and dry" spiritually, abandoned by the Living Stream of God's Spirit. Our surprise at His unexpected departure from our private, prejudiced channel could be followed as well by the realization that there isn't enough dynamite on earth to turn Him back into our dried-up waterway. Unable to bait any more spiritual business, and engrossed in debate about who has the water rights, we may forlornly watch as the crowd of spiritual fishermen abandon us, the channel that once was, for the stream that now is.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 7

PROPER NAMES

Gen 27:17-36 And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. 21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. 22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: 28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee. 30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. 33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. 35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing. 36 And he said, IS NOT HE RIGHTLY NAMED JACOB? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.

Gen 32:24-28 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, WHAT IS THY NAME? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Names mean a lot to God. Even a casual study of the Bible on this subject reveals this fact. Repeatedly, God ordained certain names for individuals, or changed the name of a person. He even has specific names for things: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." Psa 147:4 Even though wicked men often name things wrongly, God always calls a person, place, or thing by its proper name, its correct designation. As Christians, we should take care that we also name properly. The wrong label on a bottle of poison can cause someone to ingest that which will kill them, and in the spiritual realm improper naming can lead a person to "drink in" that which is eternally fatal.

PEOPLE SHOULD BE CALLED BY THEIR RIGHT NAME

I should call myself by my right name:

Jacob called himself Esau when he stole his brother's blessing. He flew a false flag to get what he wanted without being the true heir of those things. Finally, when Jacob got honest, he called himself by his proper name: "And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob." Gen 32:27 Then the Lord blessed him, and changed his name to Israel.

Even so today, many are calling themselves Christians without being truly so. They have never "done according as" God "bade" them. They ascribe to themselves the name Christian without obeying Christ's commands: "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Isa 4:1 Those who call themselves by Christ's name must forsake all sin: "The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim 2:19 It is just as false for those who live in sin to call themselves Christians as it was for Jacob to call himself Esau. In every way, we must call ourselves by our right name before we can escape God's eternal cursing and inherit His eternal blessing.

I should call others by their proper name

"Is not he rightly named Jacob?" Strong's defines the name Jacob as follows:

3290. Ya'aqob, yak-ak-obe'; from H6117; heel-catcher (i.e. supplanter); Jaakob, the Israelitish patriarch:—Jacob.

Of course, one can call another by his proper name, but do so with an improper attitude. Still, though Esau's remarks were no doubt spoken in a bitter irony, it did indeed appear that Jacob's name and Jacob's actions had matched perfectly. Further, one need not be in bitterness to call others by the name which suits the way they live. If a man is sinning every day in word, thought, and deed, and openly admits the same, then it should be obvious that he is a sinner, and I should not call him a Christian. "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner," then I should cease calling him brother, lest I put my stamp of approval on his unholy conduct and so dishonour the name of Christ. 1 Cor 5:11

On the other hand, when God has forgiven an individual, no matter how far he, or she, has fallen into sin, I dare not call that person "common" or "unclean": "And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Acts 10:15

There is no room in God's household for us to address any forgiven brother or sister with the words: "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Isa 65:5 God showed Peter this: "And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common...And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:15, 28 We dare not label as "common," or below the level of our association, one whom God has cleansed with the blood of Jesus. We dare not shun him from our company. Even though God plainly showed this to Peter, he later fell into that very practice, and Paul openly rebuked him for it:

Gal 2:11-14 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Peter's unwarranted segregation of himself from the Gentile Christians and with the Jewish believers, who felt themselves holier than those cleansed Gentiles, was frustrating, not furthering, the grace of God. When by their behavior the Judaizers called the Gentile believers "common," Peter, by both his actions and his words, should have continued to call them "brethren," and he should have continued to eat with them in hearty fellowship. Who would not agree with that? However, before we judge Peter, perhaps we should take a close look at what sometimes still happens in ecclesiastical circles today. Refusal to recognize other, genuine Christians as brethren, and refusal to fellowship with any outside of one's own group, is not something which ceased to occur in the Church after the incident at Antioch. All too often this unworthy behavior is apparent even to this present time. Sometimes it takes more courage to call a brother "brother," and treat him as such, than to call a sinner, "a sinner". In any case, may God help each of us to be charitable enough, and brave enough, to call others by their proper name.

ONE SHOULD CALL THE LORD BY HIS PROPER NAME

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?" Mat 10:25 In God's eyes, "it is enough for the disciple to be" what he should be, but his is not enough in the eyes of many who misjudge and misname those who do not measure up to their false standard. They called the Lord Himself by the wrong name, and they will do the same to us. We, however, must be careful to call ourselves, others, and our Lord, by the right name.

Jesus said: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." John 13:13 God has "given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil 2:9-11 As we call Him by His proper name, He also commands us to do what He says: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46 All who obey Christ reverently call Him Lord, yet not all who call Him Lord will enter His heavenly kingdom: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Mat 7:21

PLACES SHOULD BE CALLED BY THEIR PROPER NAME

"And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."-Isa 1:26 "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."-Gen 28:17 Places which should be named "The Gates of Hell" are often given heavenly designations by the devil.

A righteous Scotsman was passing a place one day with a young man. Exotic music and the seemingly entrancing atmosphere and enticement of the place attracted the attention of the young man. He asked, "What is that?" It seemed so heavenly. The old Scotsman firmly gripped the young man's arm and replied: "That, is Hell!" He called the place by its right name.

It is time we labeled some places by their proper designation in God's sight: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate...Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms." Isa 47:1, 5

Even a place of worship cannot be properly called the House of God when it lacks the "dreadful" convicting power of the Holy Ghost. It cannot be rightly named "The City of Righteousness, The Faithful City" until faithful judges cast away all evil, for "Judgment must begin at the House of God." 1 Pet 4:17

THINGS MUST BE CALLED BY THEIR PROPER NAME

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isa 5:20 Such is the eternally tragic error of multitudes today! The vile act of sodomy has been designated as "good" in the minds of many who have accordingly received "in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." Rom 1:27 Sin is being pawned off as "sweet," and vast numbers are perishing from the "bitterness" of its poison. In the religious realm theologians, who are "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight," are calling the "darkness" of satanic falsehood the "light" of God's Spirit as they blindly give "heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Isa 5:21; 1 Tim 4:1

OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION DETERMINES OUR NAMING

If we are right with God, we will name a thing rightly. If we are not right with God, then often we will both misjudge and misname people, places, and things. For example, the attitude toward God's House of those to whom Malachi wrote was: "Behold, what a weariness is it!..the table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible!" Mal 1:12-13

Like so many today who would label a visit to God's House as "a bad trip," these people put the wrong name on it because they were not in a right relationship with God. Micah prophesied to some with a similar attitude: "Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophecy...O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Micah 2:6-7 We might paraphrase this quotation thus: "You who are called the house of Jacob, if you really were the house of Jacob, wouldn't you enjoy and benefit from the preaching of God's Word?" "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.." Rom 2:17 Behold, we are called Christians, but if we really are Christians wouldn't we relish hearing God's Word preached? Wouldn't we brand The Lord's Day and God's House a big blessing to our souls? Of course we would.

It is already past time for many to return to a right relationship with God, so that they can, and do, call every person, place, and thing by the proper name. Hear the Lord's admonition and promise:

Isa 58:13-14 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 8

NEHUSHTAN

2 Ki 18:4-5 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. (margin_a piece of brass) He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

In the midst of a fierce storm, Jesus' disciples wakened Him as He slept peacefully in their boat. "Master, Master, we perish!" they cried in their fearful alarm. Then, in response Jesus arose, probably not hurriedly but with a serene, quiet composure, and hushed the hostile waves by His command. Next, after all was calm, Jesus, perhaps after looking each of them in the eye, asked a very penetrating question: "Where is your faith?"

The disciples, like many of us are prone to do at times, had misdirected their faith. Their faith for salvation from the sea's angry waves had been placed in the boat instead of in God. This misdirected faith had been placed in a manmade, material object which they knew was about to sink instead of saving them. In their desperation the disciples were forced by circumstance to remove their faith from the material object and place it in Jesus, the Maker and Master of every created thing, both material and spiritual. When in their urgency to be saved, the disciples put their faith where it belonged, in Him, then they were saved.

The experience of the storm-tossed disciples was meant to illustrate to every man that faith in things cannot save us, and that faith in Christ alone can and does bring immediate salvation. Through circumstances, those men in the storm were forced to abandon faith in any and every thing and lodge it in Jesus. This is what everyone is forced to do before they are genuinely saved from sin.

Good king Hezekiah wanted Judah, like himself, to trust in the Lord. Consequently, he broke down the material idols in which his people had begun to trust. But, he went a step further, and destroyed a material thing which God Himself had ordered made by Moses—the brazen serpent. The destruction of this sacred thing might have seemed like sacrilege to some. Was not Hezekiah going too far? The destruction of idols was one matter, but to break in pieces a thing which Moses had made under Divine direction, was that not both irreverent and unwarranted? No, not at all. As a matter of fact, he was probably inspired of God to do so, for Judah had begun to misdirect their faith, placing it in the brazen serpent, a visible thing, instead of placing it in the invisible God.

Hezekiah, no doubt prompted by God Himself, destroyed this visible object so that Judah would properly direct their faith to the Invisible One Who alone can save. God had ordered the construction of the brazen serpent as a symbolic type of Christ, Who was made both sin for us and salvation for us on the cross: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man

be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14:15
Serpent-bitten Israelites were saved by looking to the brazen serpent, but God never intended that Israel put their faith in that material object. Properly directed, their faith was to be in the invisible God Who was, at that time, using this visible, material means to save them, but when that material object began to be worshipped, instead of the invisible Saviour, it was time for that thing to be destroyed.

God is an invisible Spirit, and we are not and cannot be saved by visible things. Even though the crucifixion scene was momentarily visible to the physical eye, we cannot materially, with the natural eye, now behold it unto salvation. Though men who saw Christ nailed to the cross "have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" in a visible, tangible way. 2 Cor 5:16 First and foremost now, Jesus is "a quickening Spirit." Also, the essence of His cross and His sacrificial death is spiritual, not simply material and physical. Therefore, all men, everywhere, at all times, in every generation, can spiritually look to Christ and look to His cross and be saved. I say Hallelujah!

Dear heart, no human, man-made, visible thing can save you. I read in yesterday's paper how that an estimated 15 million Hindus had begun immersing themselves at the confluence of two so-called sacred rivers, believing that "a dip in the rivers on this astrologically auspicious day will free them from the cycle of reincarnation and allow them to achieve salvation." (Spokane Chronicle, Monday, Feb. 6, 1989)

You say, how awful that they would place their faith in a river for salvation! Yet, beloved, there are many holiness folk who are making a similar mistake, and in such a subtle way that they don't even realize it. The wooden altar at the front of the church has become their Ganges river and the trip down the aisle to it has become their sacred pilgrimage. Like the poor, blinded Hindu they repeatedly make the pilgrimage, plunge into the altar, and come up just as unsaved or unsanctified as they were when they first began the trips many years ago. How sad! To the Hindu we would say, "Where is your faith? In your ceaseless works of walking and washing? In the material water of this river? Look away from these man-made walks and works! Look away from this material river. Look spiritually to the Cross! Look by faith unto Jesus, and be saved right now!" That's what we'd say, isn't it?!

Let me translate that right down to where many are, and perhaps have been for years. Dear struggling seeker for salvation or for entire sanctification, "Where is your faith?" Is it in your ceaseless walks to the altar and bathing in your tears? Is it in the wooden mourner's bench, or your continued seeking? Look away from these man-made walks and works! Look away from this material, man-made altar! "We have an altar" in heaven, invisible to earthly eyes, sprinkled with Jesus' blood. Look spiritually by faith unto Christ's sacrifice offered in your behalf upon that altar, and be saved right now, or sanctified wholly right now! Pronounce "Nehushtan" upon the man-made works and things in which you have been foolishly placing your faith, and put your faith only in the blood of Christ and you will immediately experience the salvation and cleansing which you have been so long seeking in vain.

It may seem almost sacrilege to you to destroy these supposedly sacred things as that in which you trust. Nevertheless, be like Hezekiah, and dare to do so, regardless of what others may think. Shift your faith from the little sinking ship of material things and human strivings, and lodge it totally in Christ. He will not let you down. You won't sink. You will be saved and sanctified wholly!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 9

THE REWARD OF SALVATION

Luke 15:11-24 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Romans 4:4-5 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

The reward spoken of in the above verse is God's salvation for humanity through Jesus Christ. In the following paragraphs of this message, Let us consider five things about that reward:

IT IS A FREE REWARD

The only way God gives anyone the reward of salvation is "freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom 3:24 It is a reward that Jesus "purchased with His own blood," and we may receive it only as God's free gift. Acts 20:28; Rom 5:15 There is, however, much misunderstanding and misinterpretation regarding the fact that salvation is a free reward. Therefore, let us consider first what this does not mean, and second what the fact of salvation being a free gift does mean:

This does not mean that nothing must be done to receive it.

Lost humanity, like the prodigal son, is far separated from God the Father while feeding the swine of filthy, fleshly lusts in the devil's hogpen of sin. The prodigal knew that he must do some things

to reach the place where his father could receive him and be gracious unto him. He had to "repent...and do works meet for repentance." Acts 26:20 In order to reach the place where it was possible for him to receive any benevolence from his father, it was necessary that he do the work of removing from the hogpen, and the work of retracing his past steps so as to return to his father.

This pictures quite clearly the fact that, while salvation is a free gift, every sinner must do those things which are necessary in order to return unto God so as to make it possible to receive the free reward of salvation from God the Father: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord," and then "He will have mercy upon him; and...abundantly pardon." Isa 55:7

Those who fancy that they have received the free gift of salvation, while continuing to feed satan's swine in the hogpen of sin, are greatly mistaken. It is impossible to indulge in sin and at the same time enjoy true salvation from sin. Satan's hogpen and the Father's arms are not synonymous. They are far, far apart, and one must leave the former and make the spiritual trip unto the latter before God either can, or will, bestow the gift of salvation.

Yes, the trip back to God is in one's heart, but before inward progress toward God can be made one must be totally willing to put his physical feet in motion also. No sinner can advance inwardly back to God who is unwilling to make some actual, bodily journeys of restitution, such as: trips to confess evil deeds; trips to ask forgiveness for wrong attitudes; and trips to make restitution where one has wronged another in any way. Indeed, it is possible to make it inwardly all the way to the Father's arms based on one's intent to "add feet to his prayers" later. However, God expects those physical journeys to be made, and he who breaks his vow to do these works meet for repentance cannot retain his salvation, because in so doing he has again sinned against God.

What many fancy is their free gift of salvation is in reality their false gift of deception! Many such individuals have indeed not attempted to earn salvation, but neither have they ever inwardly reached the place where it was remotely possible for God the Father to give the gift of salvation to them! The heart simply cannot return to God when one is unwilling to right past wrongs, and when one's affections and actions are still in the pigpen of sin. God's call to every prodigal sinner in the mire of his sins is still: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate...touch not the unclean thing," and then "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you.!" 2 Cor 6:17-18

This does mean that nothing can be done to earn or deserve it.

The prodigal knew that he had to reach the place where his father could help him. However, realizing his total unworthiness, he planned to ask his father for a job so that he could earn what he needed. When he got home he discovered that his father was joyously willing to supply all that he needed, and much more, but none of his father's benevolence was for sale. He was not willing that his son attempt to earn any of it by his works, and his benevolence was not bestowed upon him because he was worthy! Are there not some sincere seekers who, while disavowing any belief in salvation by works, yet in reality feel that they must earn, by their protracted seeking, that place which will give them the right to receive this gift? However, no matter how honestly, earnestly, brokenly, and lengthily one may seek, he can never reach the place where he is worthy to receive this

reward! Happily, we can reach the place where we are welcome to receive it! Praise God! I'm glad that I know that by personal experience!

One day a poor girl ventured into the garden of the Queen's palace at Balmoral, and approached the gardener, telling him that her mother was lying very ill, and that she longed for a flower. The child had saved a few pennies and wished to buy a rose for her sick mother. The gardener informed the girl that the Queen had no flowers for sale. The Queen herself happened to be in the greenhouse and overheard the conversation. As the child was turning away sorrowful and disappointed, the Queen spoke to her and let her know that while indeed the Queen did not cultivate flowers for sale, the Queen did have flowers to give away; and, suiting the action to the word, she lifted from the basket into which she had been snipping the flowers a handful of rare roses and gave them to the child! (from 1000 Illustrations)

Hallelujah! Precious heart, if you have fully returned to the Heavenly Father's arms within His garden of grace, don't hesitate because you feel unworthy to take the magnificent, full bouquet of salvation that He extends to you! You can never earn it, but you may soon enjoy its exquisite beauty and heavenly fragrance if you will but reach out and take what He offers to you as His free gift!

IT IS A FAITH REWARD

The hard work of repentance brings you to the place where you can receive the free gift of salvation. The Heavenly Father extends the gift to you, through His Son, and by His Spirit. The hand of faith must reach out and take it!: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." God requires that, by faith, we rely upon nothing but the blood of Jesus to receive His free gift. When we do that, and reach out by faith to receive what He offers us, then God counts our faith in Jesus' blood for our righteousness, blots out the past, and puts us in actual possession of this wonderful free gift!

IT IS A FOUND REWARD

I do not write concerning things which you cannot know, by experience, for yourself, for "So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it!" Prov 24:14 Free grace provided it. Forsaking sin makes it possible. Faith receives it. Full Realization by the witness of the Spirit makes it known! You must, and may know, by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit with your spirit, that you have indeed received the forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance among them which are sanctified! Acts 26:18 Don't settle for less! Find it so for yourself!

IT IS A FULL REWARD

"A full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under Whose wings thou art come to trust." Ruth 2:12 When Ruth forsook all to come with Naomi into Israel and under the shadow of the Almighty, she did not then realize the great fullness of the reward which would progressively unfold to her. It began to unfold soon after she made her eternal choice, and it shall continue to unfold to her from its fullness forever!

So it is for those who receive and keep the reward of salvation. "Christ Jesus is made unto us," progressively: "wisdom," to fear God and forsake sin; "righteousness," to blot out our sins and to restore our spiritual life; "sanctification," to purify our hearts so that we may serve God acceptably and to see God in heaven; and finally, "redemption," to bring us resurrection with a spiritual body, ascension to meet Him in the air, and eternal communion with the Triune God, the holy angels, and all the blood-washed throng in the New Jerusalem! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared, throughout eternity, for them that love Him!" 1 Cor 2:9 Those who receive and keep this reward through life shall joyously experience its immeasurable magnificence forever!

IT IS A FAR EXCEEDING REWARD

He that is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," is the One who shall reward us in the New Jerusalem. Eph 3:20 No doubt, what we shall receive there as Christ's free gift will far exceed our fondest expectations. I can imagine one in heaven who has begun to taste of its eternal blessedness exclaiming to our Savior: "Why should the King recompense it me with such a reward?!" 2 Sam 19:36 Nothing that you and I shall have done or suffered in this life will suffice as the reason for the eternal gifts which shall be ours with Christ throughout eternity. The answer is found at Calvary. There, out of the measureless storehouse of God's love for each of us, Christ fully paid the price, that He might "freely give us all things," including that which He shall unfold to us beyond the veil. Rom 8:32 "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" 2 Cor 9:15

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 10

THE JUST SHALL COME OUT OF TROUBLE

Proverbs 12:13 declares that "the just shall come out of trouble," and in numerous incidents recorded in God's Word we see this truth proven over and over again. Those who trust and obey the Lord will always, at some point, come out of whatever trouble may befall them. God's Word declares it, and I believe it, don't you? Yes, dear troubled saint, be of good cheer, for God has promised you that, as surely as His Word is true, the time is coming when you will come out of all of the problems and troubles which now beset you.

JOB CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

Beset by bad news on every hand, bad advice from wife and friends, and boils from head to foot, he endured affliction and declared his determination to keep on believing amidst it all. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust him," Job asserted. Job's profession of utmost trust in God was like that of Isaac's faith in his father Abraham when he willingly allowed himself to be placed on the altar in mount Moriah-devotion to, and belief in the goodness of, the one who was holding the knife of fate. You know the rest of Job's story. Job came out of trouble and received twofold more than he ever had before. Hallelujah! "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all."

JOSEPH CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

Cruelly mistreated and sold into slavery by his brethren, falsely accused by the licentious wife of Potiphar; imprisoned and forgotten in the dark, Egyptian dungeon; 13 years from the beginning of all his trouble, Joseph came out of it into the fulfillment of his youthful dreams. What a "coming out" he had! It seems typical of the honour which Christ will bestow upon all the just when they are resurrected at Christ's revelation: "Pharaoh...arrayed him in vestures of fine linen...and made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, bow the knee..!" Gen 41:42-43 Can we not see from this that God will make this wicked world bow down before Christ in the First Chariot and before all of the just in the second chariot "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." 2 Th 1:10

DAVID CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

Neither the jaws of a lion, the paws of a bear, the spear of Goliath, nor Saul's jealousy, javelins, and journeys of extermination succeeded in destroying him. Like Joseph, David went through years of trouble after being Divinely chosen as a youth before being brought out of trouble and up into the position which he was ordained to fill. Perhaps the reason for the protracted trouble of both Joseph and David is stated in Prov 15:33 and Prov 18:12: These two references state that "before honour is humility." Humility, not ability, prepares a man for a position of honour in Christ's kingdom. Who

is it that God places in high position under Christ and over His flock? The Bible says: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." 1 Tim 3:6

Often those whom Christ places in high position in His Church are those who have learned the lessons of humility through years of abasement and trouble. When their humility outweighed their ability in their own eyes, then God brought them out of their sore trials and up into positions of high honour in His kingdom. Too many today are reaching for honour as if it is to be found on the top shelf beside their imagined ability when honour is only to be found on the bottom shelf with their genuine humility. Perhaps both Joseph and David needed the lengthy time of trouble through which they passed in order to learn that "before honour is humility." Likewise, God did not use Moses when he felt able within himself to deliver Israel.

After Moses was forced to abandon his carnal might in Egypt, and after he keenly realized his weakness and lack of ability in himself to be a leader, then God called him, exalted him into a position of high honour, and mightily used him to deliver Israel from Egypt. Whatever the reason why God allows His people to come into trouble, if they allow Him to refine them in the process, then the time always comes when they come forth as gold out of their crucible of fiery testing. Then, they are fit for the Master's use and vessels unto honour in His great Household.

DANIEL AND THE 3 HEBREW CHILDREN CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

The decree of a heathen king and the degree of a heated furnace could not consume them. They went into their trouble because of a conflict in their worship, but they came out of it because of their confidence in God. The heathen were unhappy, but they refused to be unholy. For a while It looked like Daniel would be food for the hungry lions and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would be fuel for the furnace, but Daniel came out without a scratch and his friends escaped without "the smell of fire" upon them! Again it was proven that "the just shall come out of trouble."

MORDECAI CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

In spite of the murderous plotting and trouble created by the wicked Haman, Mordecai and the Jews came out of it unharmed. Haman was hanged on his own gallows, and Mordecai inherited the honor and position which Haman had carnally coveted.

JESUS CAME OUT OF TROUBLE

Acts 2:22 tells us that Jesus was "a man approved of God." As a Man, He lived a perfectly just life among an unjust people, yet never did He stray from the perfect will of God. Can we not hear Him say: "behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Lam 1:12 Trouble like no other trouble which men experience befell Jesus when He suffered for us, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God! He went into it for us, but hallelujah, He came out of It "because It was not possible that He should be holden of it!" Acts 2:24 The trouble of death could not hold Him any more than a spider web could successfully bind a Mack truck to a tree. A Greater than any earthly Samson broke the bonds of death "as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire." Judg 16:9

All of the just will be brought out of their earthly trouble by the same power that raised Christ: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you" then the fire of the Holy Ghost will Incinerate the bonds of death like tow for you also on resurrection morning. Hallelujah!

OTHERS ALSO HAVE COME OUT OF TROUBLE

Numbers of other individuals have also proven that "the just shall come out of trouble," but what shall I more say? The time would fail me to tell of Jehoshaphat, and of Hezekiah, and of Jeremiah, and of Nehemiah; of Peter also, and Paul, and of the early Christians, who through faith came out of trouble. As this writer views it, the Bible teaches that the saints of Christ's Church will pass through, and come out of the trouble of the great tribulation:

Rev 7:13-14 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which CAME OUT OF great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Whether or not my readers agree with the above stated prophetic interpretation, we can all see that on the Day of the Lord all of us who have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb shall joyously come forth out of all of our earthly tribulation and trouble into the eternal freedom and bliss of Christ's presence. As the words of one song put it: "Troubles and cares on every hand, more than our souls can understand, but there will come a better day, after a while." Heb 10:37 tells us: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Should we never escape from any of our troubles before that time, it will still be worth it all when we see Jesus and begin to experience "the glorious liberty of the children of God!"

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 11 HOCUS FOCUS

1 Sam 9:20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Focusing the attention of one's mind on the wrong object can bring one embarrassment, wrong judgment, discouragement, and defeat. How one can be embarrassed by such an hocus focus is illustrated in the following story:

A man and his wife were entertaining a gentleman at tea who had a red nose. The focus of the woman's mind was upon the fact of their guest's red nose, for she feared that one of her children might make an embarrassing remark. After the children had been dismissed from their presence, having passed the test quite well, the woman "heaved a sigh of relief, turned to her tea urn," and asked their guest, "will you have one or two lumps of sugar in your nose!" (from a book by W. Parker & E. St. Johns)

Yes, focusing on the wrong object can result in real embarrassment, and it is also true that often because of hocus focus the minor flaws of others are over-magnified and "therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Hab 1:4 I heard of one describing another as so narrow that "if a fly landed on the bridge of his nose it would scratch both of his eyes out." Instead of focusing on the narrowness of his brother, that man had done better to remember that one with "a flat nose" was disqualified for the priesthood under Moses, and one can be too broad as well as too narrow in his views as a Christian.

Like Pinnochio, our own nose could get oversize if we falsely focus on what we consider the extreme narrowness of another. On the other hand, one can hocus focus on the mote in his brother's eye through the knothole of a beam in his own eye. It is still possible, with the wrong focus of our attention, to forcibly strain the gnat out of our brother's spiritual soup while permissively swallowing a two-hump camel out of our own. The more we set our mind on the wrong thing, the more likely it is that embarrassment or wrong judgment will result. The needless troubling and distraction of our spirit may also result.

In the above scripture, Samuel told Saul not to set his mind on his father's lost donkeys. God had already taken care of that little matter. They were found, and it was time to focus his attention on far more important matters-God's immediate plans for both Israel and himself. How easy it is to focus too long on the minor chase and thereby miss the major challenge and channel of our Divine call.

We can become so troubled with trifles that we never see or pursue the essentials. God will always help us with the lesser concerns if we keep them in their proper perspective and focus primarily on the fulfillment of the weightier matters of our duty in His calling and kingdom.

Like so many of us, Peter often focused on the wrong object. Beautifully typifying how we walk by faith and not by sight as our mind is stayed on the All-powerful Christ, Peter "walked on the water, to go to Jesus." Then suddenly the focus of his attention was shifted, and "when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.." Faith had focused on Christ, making it possible for him to do the impossible. Now fear was focusing on the crisis, "and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me." After saving him, Jesus asked him "wherefore didst thou doubt?" Mat 14:29-31

We all know why he doubted. It was because he failed to stay his mind on Christ and instead set his mind on the boisterous elements around him. It is easy to make that observation. It is not always easy to make the application of Christ's lesson here in our own lives when the crisis is on. Too often we emulate both Peter's faith and good beginning and later Peter's failure and panic by focusing upon the crisis instead of upon our ever-present Christ.

Like Peter, our purpose is to "go to Jesus," all the way. Our perils are ever threatening over the tumultuous pathway to Him, making it humanly impossible to finish our course and reach His arms. Our ability to stay on top and step steadily forward, without sinking spiritually, comes to us moment by moment from Christ through the focus of our faith upon Him. And, it is the inward peace which we receive from Christ as we focus upon Him that enables us to walk above the sea of sin, over the waves of trouble, and through the contrary winds of satanic resistance, all the way to Jesus.

Christ does not promise us constant peace without. If we focus on having Christ still the storm before we walk on, we will sink in our hesitant unbelief and drown in our discouragement. On the other hand, if we stay our mind upon Christ, He will give us perfect peace within, and power without, to stay on top and make it all the way through life's storms into His eternal presence.

However, it is not only in life's storms that we are in danger of focusing wrongly. It is just as possible to do so in life's calm, when we have pause to compare what the Lord requires of us with what He lays upon another. Like so many of us, Peter wrongly focused his attention more than once. On a different occasion, he focused on Jesus' plans for John, saying, "and what shall this man do?" Most of us are quite familiar with Jesus' reply: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Perhaps it seemed to Peter that Jesus' future plans for him were going to include some pretty rough and undesirable things and he wanted to know if John too was going to have equal hardships. Christ had just prophesied to Peter that he would have to endure being forced to go where he did not want to go in his old age. Can you imagine Peter then wondering to himself, "But what about John, this one who seems to be a particular favorite of Jesus? Is the Lord going to be fair and put him through tribulation also? Or, will John have it easy all the way into the eternal kingdom?" Such thoughts may indeed have been running through Peter's mind, for Jesus' answer to his question seems like a mild rebuke: "What is that to thee?"

Peter was not to focus on Christ's pathway for John. Whether John's road was going to be easier than his, or rougher, was not to be Peter's concern. Christ alone would determine the proper course for each of his disciples, and none of them was to focus on, and humanly judge, the fairness of his lot in life by comparing it with that of another. Each disciple's single focus must be upon individually following Christ: "What is that to thee? follow thou me." It is not uncommon for satan to whisper to some saint who is passing through great personal trials: "Look at John over there! See how easy he's having it? It's not fair, is it?" But if that saint keeps on being a saint, he will steadfastly declare: "Get thee behind me, satan," and keep his mind and heart focused upon personally following Christ with the sweet, submissive persuasion that "My Jesus knows just what I need."

The crisis experience of entire sanctification purges the heart from the inward tendency to pity self and to doubt the goodness of God. Still, entire submission to God's will every step of our way, regardless of what we must suffer, is required if we are to retain our deliverance from those tendencies. Ever and anon satan would have us pity ourselves and try to save ourselves by coming down from the suffering of our personal cross in the will of God. In the effort to thus persuade us, many times satan will point to another of whom such things seemingly are not required. But what satan knows, and what we should realize, is that if we fall for his hocus focus we will not thereby save ourselves but will, rather, sink ourselves into defeat, and possibly into destruction.

Rom 8:31 "What shall we say to these things?"-to the flaws of others, to the foolish little things of no eternal consequence, to the frantic winds and waves threatening to sink us, to the present or future path of John, my brother? We need say nothing to them. No matter how loud may be their questions or threats, Christ's counsel to each of us is quite clear. We are not to set our mind upon these things, either judgmentally or fearfully. Instead, we must steadfastly focus upon Christ, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith."

We need not hocus focus and fail. Heaven's gates will be open at the end of the journey for those who fix their focus upon Christ and follow Him, without distraction, all the way to our eternal home: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isa 26:2-3

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 12

OUR LIBERTY WHICH WE HAVE IN CHRIST

The title of this message is a portion of Galatians 2:4-"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Using the seven letters L-I-B-E-R-T-Y in an acrostic fashion, let us note seven things about "our liberty which we have in Christ":

IT IS LOVE-BOUGHT LIBERTY

A poem by Rose Hartwick Thorpe, entitled "Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight," beautifully illustrates this. During the time when Oliver Cromwell ruled England, a young soldier named Basil Underwood was found guilty of some offence and sentenced to die at the sounding of the evening curfew. Bessie, the young woman he was soon to have married, passionately interceded for his life, even to Cromwell himself, but all to no avail. Finally, in loving desperation she went to the old, deaf sexton who was to toll the huge bell which would sound Basil's death-knell. As "Old Curfew," the sexton, made his way to the church where he had faithfully rung that bell for many years, Bessie tried to persuade him not to ring the bell that night:

Slowly England's sun was setting o'er the hill-tops far away,
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day,
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,
He with footsteps slow and weary, she with sunny floating hair;
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful, she with lips all cold and white,
Struggling to keep back the murmur, "Curfew must not ring tonight."

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,
With its turrets tall and gloomy, with its walls dark, damp, and cold,
"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die,
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is nigh;"

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton,-every word pierced her young heart
Like the piercing of an arrow, like a deadly poisoned dart,-
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew from that gloomy, shadowed tower;
Every evening, just at sunset, it has told the twilight hour;
I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right,
Now I'm old I will not falter,-Curfew, it must ring tonight."

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful brow,
As within her secret bosom Bessie made a solemn vow.
She had listened while the judges read without a tear or sigh:
"At the ringing of the curfew, Basil Underwood must die."
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright;
In an undertone she murmured:-"Curfew must not ring tonight."

With quick step she bounded forward, sprung within the old church door,
Left the old man treading slowly paths so oft he'd trod before;
Not one moment paused the maiden, but with eye and cheek aglow
Mounted up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and fro
As she climbed the dusty ladder on which fell no ray of light,
Up and up,-her white lips saying:-"Curfew must not ring tonight."

She has reached the topmost ladder; o'er her hangs the great dark bell;
Awful is the gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to hell.
Lo, the ponderous tongue is swinging,-'tis the hour of curfew now,
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath, and paled her brow.
Shall she let it ring? No, never! flash her eyes with sudden light,
As she springs, and grasps it firmly,-"Curfew shall not ring tonight!"

(Clinging to the ponderous tongue, Bessie muffled its sound with her
hands as she hung suspended beneath the bell swinging to and fro)

Out she swung-far out; the city seemed a speck of light below,
There 'twixt heaven and earth suspended as the bell swung to and fro,
And the sexton at the bell-rope, old and deaf, heard not the bell,
Sadly thought, "That twilight Curfew rang young Basil's funeral knell."
Still the maiden clung more firmly, and with trembling lips so white,
Said to hush her heart's wild throbbing:-"Curfew shall not ring tonight!"

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped once more
Firmly on the dark old ladder where for hundred years before
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed that she had done
Should be told long ages after, as the rays of setting sun
Crimson all the sky with beauty; aged sires, with heads of white,
Tell the eager, listening children, "Curfew did not ring that night."

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell; Bessie sees him, and her brow,
Lately white with fear and anguish, has no anxious traces now.
At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands all bruised and torn;
And her face so sweet and pleading, yet with sorrow pale and worn,
Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light:
"Go! your lover lives," said Cromwell, "Curfew shall not ring tonight."

Wide they flung the massive portal; led the prisoner forth to die,-
All his bright young life before him. `Neath the darkening English sky
Bessie comes with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with love-light sweet;
Kneeling on the turf beside him, lays his pardon at his feet.
In his brave, strong arms he clasped her, kissed the face upturned and white,
Whispered, "Darling, you have saved me,—Curfew will not ring tonight!"

Like Justice, deaf to mercy's plea, the old sexton did what law demanded. Like Jesus, Who muffled in His hands on the cross, the death-knell of our eternal doom, Bessie did what love designed to save the one she loved. And, like Basil, whose liberty was love-bought, we all, though totally unworthy, may escape the just Curfew of Eternal Death through Jesus' death in our behalf. As He hung suspended on the cross, "Awful (was) the gloom beneath (Him), like the pathway down to hell," but now, having obtained eternal redemption for us all, He "comes with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with love-light sweet" and joyously lays our pardon at our feet. Hallelujah! Love-Bought Liberty in Christ is within the reach of every obedient soul this very hour!

IT IS INDEED LIBERTY

Only those freed by Christ are free indeed.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36 It is "our liberty which we have in Christ." He is not "free indeed" who is not "in Christ".

Satan is not free indeed.

He has only a seeming liberty, not true liberty. Along with all of "the angels that sinned," he is.."delivered..into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Pet 2:4 His binding was accomplished by Christ at Calvary: "No man (Christ) can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; (satan) and then he will spoil his house." Mark 3:27 Since Calvary, Christ has had satan bound while He busily goes about spoiling the devil's goods. Lucifer "kept not his first estate," and now he is "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" while Jesus spoils his kingdom. Jude 1:6

Sinners are not free indeed.

They are "free from righteousness," yes, but in bondage to sin, for "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Rom 6:20; John 8:34

Sinning religionists are not free indeed,

"While they promise (others) liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption." 2 Pet 2:19 A so-called Christian of that type tried to help me once when I was a backslider, but when I heard him candidly tell me how he had been overcome by the temptation to look at pornographic literature, I knew he couldn't help me, for he himself did not have real deliverance from the bondage of sin. Sincere as some of these sinning religionists might be, their promise to others of liberty in Christ

does not ring true while they are compelled to confess that they themselves are in bondage to corruption. Through Christ, those who partake of the Divine nature have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet 1:4 They are free indeed from it, and can tell others by personal experience that liberty in Christ is more than a theological "standing" and is, rather, an actual "state" which is truly free from the dominion of satan and sin.

Self-righteous legalists are not free indeed.

St. Paul said Hagar was a type of the "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Gal 4:25 When Jesus promised true liberty to certain of the Jews, they boasted, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be free?" His reply to them was, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:33-34 Neither their relationship to Abraham nor their rigid adherence to Moses' ceremonial law had made them free indeed. They were still the servants of sin, and so captivated by carnal hatred that Jesus told them, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because My word hath no place in you!" Those, whose boasted spiritual freedom in Christ is accompanied by hatred toward others who refuse to wear their legalistic straight jacket, are grievously mistaken about their relationship with God. Their holiness is nothing more than a holocaust of carnal hatred spawned in the pit of hell. In spite of all of their minute exactions to the letter of the law, which they would force on others, Christ's Word has no place in them. If it did, they would be free indeed from the carnal pleasure they take in spewing venomous remarks toward and about those who refuse to be subject to their notions.

IT IS BONDAGE-DESTROYING LIBERTY

Christ came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa 61:1 Those who have received His Spirit "have not received the spirit of bondage." Rom 8:15

Bondage to satan is destroyed.

Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Bondage to sin is destroyed.

This includes bondage to the Condemnation and Heaviness of sin-Rom 8:1-3; Mat 11:28; bondage to the Commission and Habits of sin-John 8:34; bondage to the Carnal nature of sin-Rom 6:6,18; and bondage to the Corruption and Hell of sin-"The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom 8:21

Bondage to self-destructive hang-ups is destroyed.

Hosea 13:9 "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help." Hallelujah! I thought that I'd probably suffer from certain self-destructive spiritual hang-ups until the day I died, but Jesus delivered me from them! In Him is our help. He will destroy for you that hang-up that holds you

captive and defeats you over and over again. Many people live tormented lives spiritually. Satan has taken advantage of their human reasoning and weakness so that they tend to destroy themselves spiritually. They stretch the requirements of God into such ridiculous extremes for themselves that the angel Gabriel couldn't live up to them, and they always come short of those false extremes. Thus, they repeatedly believe themselves to be backslidden when they are not. Their trouble is not that they are slidden back, but rather that they are stretched forth beyond measure. Eventually, the mind and body snap back like a rubber band from their unattainable, self-destructive goals, and their soul is plunged into darkness and defeat.

The scripture says, "Be not righteous over much...why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" Eccl 7:16 You see, "over much righteousness" is not true righteousness at all. It has gone beyond the border of true righteousness into the realm of the ridiculous. It will require you to "make right" what was never wrong in the first place, or what was simply the result of faulty, fumbling humanity. The fact is, while the simplistic and idealistic goals of "over much righteousness" seem like where you ought to be living, they are like the illusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow-always beyond reach and never where you are. Dear heart, God does not torment His children with demands which are beyond our ability to attain. Stop stretching yourself beyond measure! Many holiness folk will need the third work of grace before they measure up to their extreme ideals of holy living.

It was a great deliverance to me when the Lord finally got it through to me that He did not require the glorified life in this world, only the sanctified life. "He knoweth our frame" and "remembereth that we are dust," subject to a vast multitude of human imperfections while serving Him with a perfect heart. When I was assured of these things, then I was enabled to rest in the enjoyment of true holiness and stop torturing and destroying myself with the unattainable standards of "over much righteousness". Many miserable holiness people need a bondage-destroying deliverance, and, Christ has it for them!

Bondage to men is destroyed.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare." Prov 29:25 St. Paul testified: "I be free from all men." I Cor 9:19 And, it is this state into which Christ would have us all come-where we are not fearfully, slavishly in bondage to any person, bad or good. When Peter cursed and denied Christ, he was in bondage to bad men. Then, after he was sanctified, he experienced boldness instead of bondage to bad men. Acts 5:29 However, though he was sanctified, he was still in bondage to good men. When certain good men came from James to Antioch, Peter altered his behavior through bondage to their opinion. For allowing himself to be swayed by the notions of these good men, Paul "withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed." Gal 2:1-13

Beloved, the most subtle form of bondage among holiness folk is bondage to good men and their notions. While Peter capitulated to their pressure, Paul testified: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that truth of the gospel might continue.." It may be hard sometimes, but in order that the "truth of the gospel" (as different from men's notions) may continue, you may need to assert your freedom, even from good, godly men who try to bring you into line with their ideas and policies.

IT IS EVER-INCREASING LIBERTY

2 Cor 3:17-18 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty-But we are changed..by the Spirit.." The increase of our liberty in Christ does not come because the world around us, or sin, has changed, but because "we are changed". Let me illustrate this:

A baby is born into a home, and as that child changes and matures, while the dangers around the child remain the same, the parents give that child increasing liberty. Let the hot stove in the living room and the various hazards in that child's environment represent the dangers of sin: First, the child has Crib Liberty, which is practically none at all. Next, the child has Playpen Liberty as he or she grows and changes. But as junior grows even more, so that he can climb over the slats of the playpen, instead of building higher sides on his protective prison to keep him from touching the hot stove, you give him greater liberty. Third, the child receives Room Liberty-can crawl or toddle around the room. You spank the hand if there is an attempt to touch the hot stove, and you teach your child how to avoid, by choice, that which is hazardous. Next, the child is given House Liberty as the growing up process has increased his or her ability to handle that increased liberty. Later, the child receives Property Liberty, which is followed by Neighborhood Liberty and Area Liberty. Continuing to change and mature, your child is given Town Liberty, and somewhere in the teen-age you grant Car and Vicinity Liberty. Finally, when that child has become legally of age, you give him or her Total Liberty, and that's when you kick `em out and insist that they pretty much shift for themselves.

Do you get the picture? Never do the hazards around your child change, and never does your basic concern for your child's safety change, but as the child changes and matures you grant increasing liberty. This is not only proper, but necessary for the good of your child.

Parents can fail to do this and end up with "babyish," adult children which cannot make decisions and distinctions on their own because Daddy or Momma always insist on doing it for them. They cannot "shift" for themselves because their overprotective and foolish parents never let them sit in the driver's seat!

Pastors can fail to do this, in the spiritual realm, and end up with spiritual babies who are 45-65 years. old and afraid to "tie their shoes," so to speak, without getting the pastor's permission or approval. Shame on any pastor who so injects himself into the personal lives of his people that they feel compelled to get his sanction on even the most nonessential matters.

The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 5:12-6:3 deals with the necessity of us getting our spiritual senses exercised to discern for ourselves both good and evil, so as not to remain a spiritual babes when we should be "of full age." Concerning such a growing up and going on to mature spiritual perfection, he says, "This we will do, if God permit." Beloved, God does permit, yea, even require, that we "go forth and grow up" spiritually. Mal 4:2 He does not want us to live our whole spiritual existence in the "crib" or "playpen" of human restriction, where others must delineate and decide for us between good and evil. The trouble is, often others, or we ourselves, disallow this God-given liberty to make moral distinctions for ourselves through the spirit's individual guidance and enlightenment.

Entire denominations can so stifle the spiritual growth of their people within the crib and playpen of human legislation, that nearly their whole population is unable to make moral distinctions for themselves. Malachi proclaimed that the "Sun of Righteousness" would arise with "healing," not "holding" in His wings, and that the result of this healing would be that we would "go forth, and grow up!" God's message to those who would forever hold His people in bondage and stunt their spiritual growth is: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Exo 8:1

IT IS RESPONSIBLE LIBERTY

The hot stove of sin, the hazards of this wicked world, are all around us. We do not have liberty so that we can carelessly touch them! You have a responsibility to God and to your own soul not to violate certain moral boundaries lest you incur His righteous wrath and lose both your liberty and your soul. True Christian liberty is not irresponsible license. It is responsible and lawful in relationship to God, to self, and to all others.

Therefore Paul wrote: "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Gal 5:13 We see also from this verse that true Christian liberty is loving as well as lawful. Thus Peter wrote: "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness.." 1 Pet 2:16 One who flaunts his liberty in the face of another in order to maliciously bring inward pain to that person has violated "the law of liberty". James 2:12 For, the primary aspect of the law of liberty is love, toward God, and toward our neighbor as toward ourselves.

This is not to say that we should fear what others think about our liberty in Christ, but rather that we follow love in the exercise of that liberty where it affects others. Paul said: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak," and "If (my liberty to eat) meat make my brother to offend (leads him to do what he believes to be wrong), I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." 1 Cor 8:1-13

Perhaps above and beyond every other consideration, we should endeavor to make sure that the exercise of our liberty furthers, rather than hinders, the advance of Christ's kingdom on earth. Paul wrote: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews...And this I do for the gospel's sake.." 1 Cor 9:19-23 Paul was more concerned about the spread of the gospel than he was in exercising his liberty everywhere all the time. This should be one of our primary concerns as well. If the exercise of our liberty furthers the gospel, fine, but if it impedes the advance of the gospel, then we should refrain from using it whenever and wherever this is the case.

IT IS TESTED AND TRIED

In Galatians 2:4-5, Paul speaks of some who "came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour." Satan will test your liberty. Don't give place to the devil! Eph 4:27 Men will test your liberty. Give place by subjection, no, not for an hour.

Former President Lyndon B. Johnson was said to have made this statement to those around him: "There's ants around here and there's elephants, and I'm the only elephant!" Such domineering may be the way politics works; it may be the way some presidents have run the government, but it is not the way the Church of Christ is to function. While respect is proper toward men, when it is due, in the government of the Church, Christ, the Head of the Body, is the only Person to whom we owe total subjection and obeisance.

IT IS YOUR LIBERTY!

"..This liberty of yours.." 1 Cor 8:9 Patrick Henry's statement concerning political liberty must express your personal feeling about the matter of spiritual liberty: "Give me liberty, or give me death." It is obtained and retained only when you would rather die physically than to be without it. However, this high priority which we must give to our spiritual liberty must be equally and simultaneously given to the spiritual laws upon which that liberty stands.

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said: "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both." Your liberty in Christ is based upon the law of God which is written upon the pages of the Bible and upon the fleshly tables of your heart. We cannot treasure our liberty and privileges in Christ and trash the law and principles of God from whence those freedoms spring. If we value the former and violate the latter we, of necessity, forfeit both.

In my humble opinion, a prime example of those who have made the fatal mistake of treasuring liberties while trashing the laws upon which they stand is the ACLU-American Civil Liberties Union. They represent an increasingly prevalent attitude in our nation which threatens not only the loss of our laws, but the loss of our political liberty as well, for law and liberty are Siamese twins which never survive when they are severed from one another.

A valid warning to us both as Americans, and as Christians, is: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours" be lost by valuing it more highly than the foundational laws upon which it stands. Nations, churches, and individuals have all made this fatal mistake in the past.

Happily, however, this need never rob us of our liberty, for "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein...this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:25 Those who equally value the law of God and the liberty of God, which has transformed their entire being, are Divinely preserved from satanic attacks, human attempts, and selfish attitudes which would destroy this twofold treasure.

"Our liberty which we have in Christ" is yours to obtain, retain, and enjoy throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. "Stand fast therefore in liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal 5:1

O Church below, beset by foe,
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in His control,
Thy liberty in law!
(Adapted From America The Beautiful)

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 13

SEVEN STEPS FORWARD

Exodus 14:15 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.

Isaiah lamented that Israel had "gone away backward," and Paul wrote to Timothy of those who had "swerved, having turned aside." Moses told Israel: "stand still," but God said, as He always does to His people, "Go forward!"

The story is related of old Bro. Jones. He would get up and repeatedly testify in church services: "I'm not making much progress, but I am established." Over and over again, he would give this same testimony until it really got boring to hear him. Well, one day it rained and rained, and old Bro. Jones took his team and wagon and got a load of logs, or something that was really heavy. As he started home, he went down a road that was saturated with rain water. That road had turned into a bog, and the wheels of Bro. Jones' wagon sunk in clear down to the wagon bed. He tried and tried, but his horses just couldn't get that wagon unstuck. Wouldn't you know it? The preacher happened by, and after he saw the situation, he said: "Well, Bro. Jones, I see that you are not making much progress, but you are established!"

Humorous, isn't it? Yet, seriously, we all know how easy it is to get bogged down spiritually, especially while trying to progress from Egypt to Canaan. The devil loves to get people discouraged and sunk down into some spiritual quagmire between the Red Sea and Jordan, but God ever says, "Go forward"! The following illustrates the spirit that God would have each of us display:

An army officer asked for volunteers for some dangerous mission, and he had men standing abreast before him as he did so. He said that he was going to turn his back, and every man that decided to volunteer was to step one step forward. However, when he turned around, he was disappointed to see the men still standing all abreast of one another. "What?" he exclaimed, "is there no one who will volunteer to step forward, and go on this mission?!" "Sir," said someone who was looking on, "They have all stepped forward!"

I say hallelujah! What a beautiful display of the spirit and attitude that God wants His people to have. With that sort of willingness and courage, you can make it into spiritual Canaan, and all the way into the City-Foursquare! Now, using the letters F-O-R-W-A-R-D, let us note 7 ways God would have us go forward:

BY FAITH IN HIS WORD

Exo 4:2-4 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled

from before it. 4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:

When God called Moses, He asked him, "what is that in thine hand?" Moses replied: "A rod." When Moses cast it down to the ground, the rod "became a serpent, and Moses fled from before it." Then, when he took the serpent "by the tail," it again "became a rod in his hand." Now, let me make the following application: What do we have in our hand?_a Book, God's Holy Word! If we cast the rod of God's Word down to the ground in unbelief, it will become "a serpent" from which we must flee. Why? Because when God's Word is cast down in unbelief, it then becomes satan's word, and it will "sting like an adder, and bite like a serpent" those who have cast it down.

Now, consider this further application: How should we take satan's sinister suggestions and lies? Take them "by the tail," because they're 180 degrees backward from the truth! Moses "caught" the serpent "by the tail," and it turned back into a rod. Hallelujah! The Lord can help us "catch" the devil in his lies to us! Just take him backwards, and you will have it turned into God's Word. But, be careful that you don't take him by the "mouth" like mother Eve did, or you'll be poisoned by his falsehoods and deceitful perversions of God's Truth!

Further, notice what happens when you exalt the rod of God's Word above your sea of difficulty. Israel was boxed in by an impossible predicament on both sides, an impassable sea in front, and an impenitent prince on their heels. Still, God said: "Lift thou up, thy rod...over the sea, and divide it!" Praise God! There was no way out, and no way back, but there was a way through! If we lift up God's Word above and over our difficulties, instead of casting His promises down in unbelief, then a Divine division of our impassable sea of difficulty will appear, and we can go through. Then, because we triumphantly held up God's Word in steadfast faith, we can sing the song of triumph over the enemy, and sometimes our problems are so completely removed from our sight that we "see them again no more for ever!" Exodus 14:13 Praise His wonderful Name!

BY OBSERVANT OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

Napoleon once rode ahead of his troops into a stream and cried out, "Soldiers, follow your commander!" If we observe Christ, and obey Him, we must go forward spiritually, for He ever leads us on. His command to us is: "Soldiers, follow your Commander!" If we lag behind, we can neither observe, nor obey Him. We should not fear to obey our Divine Leader, for He has promised: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." Isa 45:2-3

Isn't that wonderful?! He knows both your name and your need! Believe Him; observe Him; and follow Him in obedience, and you will break through every barrier and into spiritual Canaan, and someday inherit the eternal riches of heaven. Those who fail to keep their eyes on Christ by continual obedience to Him may discover too late that they aren't where they need to be spiritually in order to make it in to heaven:

I read of how when Perry's expedition was traveling across an ice-flow toward the North Pole, they traveled for some time, thinking that they were making progress northward. But, to their dismay, when they finally reckoned their position by the polestar, they discovered that the entire ice-flow had been drifting south! Had they thought to read their position by the polestar, instead of judging their position by that beneath, before, behind, and around them, they would have discovered their drift earlier! What a perfect picture of what happens to entire holiness denominations. They begin to drift in relationship to our spiritual "PoleStar," Jesus Christ. But, because they are all together in a group, and take their eyes off of Jesus, they measure their progress by unscriptural, unreliable methods, and they fail to detect their subtle, but often fatal, drift away from Christ and toward the world and hell!

Paul wrote: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise!" 2 Cor 10:12 We dare not measure our spiritual progress by the holiness people we are among. Neither is it wise to reckon our spiritual location by that which is past, present, beneath, or before us. Our true position spiritually can only be known by seeing where we are in relationship to the "Pole-Star," Jesus Christ. A person or crowd that is drifting backward in relationship to Him is not really going forward, no matter how progressive they appear to be by worldly methods of measuring advancement or growth!

It is a paradox, but true: one can be "a progressive backslider." One can be drifting dangerously near the drop-off into dark damnation, while at the same time driving dramatically ahead with a group of people whose hearts are spiritually as frozen as an Arctic ice-flow! Goal after goal may be reached organizationally, numerically, financially, and materially while people, at the same time, are drifting backwards spiritually. It can all seem like such tremendous spiritual progress if one is not wise enough, and concerned enough, to reckon his or her spiritual location from Christ instead of from all of the false reckoning points round about us these days.

A man was contemplating stealing a thing, and he looked all around to see anyone was watching. A little child saw what he was doing, and asked him, "Did you look up?" Ah, that's it. We need to look up to Christ daily and let Him show us where we really are spiritually, lest drifting or stepping backward we imperil our never-dying souls.

If one has backed up on God and into eternal peril, while priding himself in his accomplishments, God may take drastic measures to stop him, and to get him moving forward again:

Two men were painting a picture on the ceiling of a cathedral and were standing on a scaffold high above the pavement below. One of the artists stepped back to view his work, and was about to step back again and accidentally plunge to the pavement below. His fellow worker saw his peril and quickly threw a brush forward onto their painting, suddenly "blotching" it. The one who was about to step backward off the scaffold rushed forward in amazed anger at what his partner had done. One can imagine that what struck the backstepping artist at first as a senseless act, he soon saw in a different light when his partner explained why he did it. The intentional "mess-up" may have saved his life!

In like manner, no doubt, God sometimes allows the pretty, little scene in our life to be "blotched" by some sudden, ugly occurrence which at first seems so unnecessary, but which we later see was His way to keeping us from falling and to get us moving forward again spiritually.

BY REMOVING AND GOING AFTER THE ARK

Josh 3:3-4 "Ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." Whatever one is seeking, God does his best to jar us loose so that we will start really "going after it" with all of our heart. Still, while God wants us to follow Him with enthusiasm, we must patiently allow Him to do the leading: "Yet, there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go.." The picture here is of one who is to keep pace with the Spirit's leadings, without either lagging behind or running ahead. The scripture says: "Be not as the horse (prone to bolt and run ahead), or as the mule (backward about going forward!)." Prov 32:29 Timing is important with God. He's never too early, never too late, but always at the right place at the right time. Thus, He wants us to follow Him forward.

I heard or read a humorous story about a fellow who decided to run his rotary lawn mower over a frog and butcher it with the blade. To his amazement, however, after he ran the mower over the frog, there it was still in one piece. He did this several times, and always the frog would be there in one piece without a mark on him. Finally, the fellow ran the mower over the top of the frog, and left it there with the blade whizzing around. Then, he knelt down and peered underneath to see how it was that the mower blade never did hit him. What do you think? When he looked under his mower, there the frog was jumping that blade like a jump-rope every time it spun around, with perfect timing! Can you believe it!? No? Well, I don't either, and it doesn't sound too smart to be looking under a lawnmower with the blade whizzing away. Don't do that, but the story illustrates what I'm trying to get across—timing is sometimes crucial.

It is not only important to make progress spiritually, it is also important to move forward in time with the checks and promptings of the Spirit. King David told Amasa: "Within three days...be thou here present." Amasa was like many others are about appointments, and he "tarried longer than the set time." As the result of his tardiness, he not only failed the king, but also his enemy, Joab, took advantage of him and butchered him. Lack of being on time cost him both his position and his life. On the other hand, Ahimaaz wanted to be a witness to David of an event, and ran ahead of the slower Cush. His witness, however, was vague and foggy: "I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was." Cush's witness was slower in coming, but it was clear and certain. David knew definitely, from his witness that Absalom was dead. Follow the stately footsteps of the Holy Ghost in your seeking for holiness and you will not have a foggy witness about whether old man is crucified. You will know it with clarity and certainty, by the definite witness of the Spirit, that you are sanctified wholly!

BY WITNESSING GOD'S MIRACLE

When Israel was to enter Canaan under Joshua's leadership, it was the miraculous work of having the Jordan river divided that they needed. In this instance, the moment this miraculous work was performed they had the witness of it with their physical senses: "Hereby shall ye know...the waters

shall be cut off." It is the work of having the carnal nature "cut off" from our hearts that we must have performed for us if we are to enter spiritual and eternal Canaan. Therefore, we should concentrate on meeting God's requirements to get the work done, and when we do that the witness will be ours as well. In other words, aim at receiving the work and don't worry about the witness, for when you do totally what you must to have carnality cut off, you will obtain witness to that fact. But, you say, Bro. Maxey, what must I do? Israel's priests had to take one, all-important, step_a step which typified two things:

Total Death to Self

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan (=Yardane, a descender), and we must be "buried with Him by baptism into death.." Thus, the step into the Jordan is seen to typify total death to self. We can only step out onto the sunny banks of spiritual Canaan after first becoming "descenders" into total death to proud, carnal self.

Total Dependence on Jesus' blood to sanctify us

"Our old man is crucified with Him!"..When our death to sin-nature is united in the Jordan with His death for sin-nature. Then instantaneously, miraculously, and knowingly, the carnal nature is cut off! Hallelujah! I found that when my death to self was perfect, and my dependence on Jesus blood was perfect, the work was done, and the witness was mine! Go forward in total death to self and total faith in Jesus' blood, and I guarantee you, you will know the work is done!! Our death must perfect, but so must our dependence on nothing but the blood of Jesus. Often, people who have totally died out fail to also totally depend on the blood of Christ. It is impossible to receive either the work or witness of entire sanctification until both feet rest in Jordan's brink_the foot of Death to self and the foot of Faith in Jesus' blood. Plant both of those feet down firmly in Jordan's stream, and God will do the work of cutting off the carnal nature, and you will know beyond a doubt when it happens!

BY ATTACK

Israel was not to rest on the Canaan side of Jordan, but they were to attack Jericho and every other city in the land. Thus we see Canaan rest from sin is not rest from service . For each of us there remaineth very much land to possess, in the human, and there is still a holy warfare in which we must fight for Christ. Sanctification is certainly not stagnation. It is rest from inbred sin, but not rest from actively doing God's will.

When one of President Lincoln's generals failed to attack the enemy as he should, Lincoln complained: "I cannot bore with an auger that is too dull to take ahold!" As I recall, he fired him and replaced him with a general who knew how to "carry the battle to the enemy!" May the Lord help each of us to not be "too dull to take ahold" of whatever challenge Christ wants us to advance. He may need to "fire us" if we don't attack as we should.

BY REMOVING HIDDEN HINDRANCES

Israel was initially defeated when they attacked Ai. You know the story. Let us notice 3 hidden hindrances which must be removed if God's army is to go forward:

The Hindrance of Self-confidence

Israel said, "Make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few." They overestimated themselves and under-estimated their enemy. Bear in mind that this occurred after they were in Canaan. Say mister, sister, you can fail, even after you get sanctified, especially if you get too self-confident. God doesn't want us to cast away our confidence, just our over-confidence.

The hindrance of Sin in the camp

You know the story of Achan's hidden transgression, and how it hindered Israel's forward advancement and victory over Ai.

A soldier, who was carrying the flag, or standard, for his army, saw that if he could rally the troops to take a certain hill, then they could carry the battle. So, he mounted the hill, and held up the standard to the troops below. Someone cried out: "Bring the standard down to the troops!" "No," he replied, "Bring the troops up to the Standard!"

When the enemy gains a victory, and steals a march against God's army, like that of Ai over Israel, then humanity, especially unsanctified humanity, cries out: "Bring standard down to our level," but God says, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." Isa 59:19 After the defeat of Israel by the men of Ai, God demanded that Israel come up to His, high and holy standard, and put away sin from their midst. When they did, Ai fell, instead of Israel. Lower the standard, and every time Israel will fall even lower. Keep lowering it, and the same thing will be repeated, over and over again, until anything and everything is permissible—and permeated with the filth and rot of hell. Its time some folks stopped demanding that the standard be lowered, because the only way forward is by lifting high the bloodstained banner of the cross!

The hindrance of straining out gnats while swallowing camels

Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, (that's the gnats) and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith (that's the camels): these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." Mat 23:23-24

To continue along the line of that comparison, failure to pay tithes can indeed hinder your spiritual progress, but that omission weighs no more than a "gnat" compared with the much heavier, "camel" omissions of failure to exercise self-judgment, failure to show mercy to others, and failure to have faith in God. These are the things which really block the spiritual advancement of every individual and every church.

Perhaps you have heard, or read, the humorous story about a man ordered soup in a restaurant. After the waiter had set the bowl of soup before him, the man saw two big ears sticking up out of the soup. Calling to the waiter, he complained: "There's a hare in my soup!"

In too many cases, it is time to be less concerned about the gnat in a brother's soup, and start taking a good look at the two-humped camel sticking up out of one's own bowl!

BY DOING NOW WHAT IS LEFT UNDONE

A young civil engineer came to the Northwest to construct a bridge across a mountain chasm. He worked with his crew for days, weeks, and months. Finally, at the close of one day, the project was almost finished. The bridge was nearly secure. There was only about one hour's work left to tie things in solid and finish the job. The young engineer said: "Men, come back after supper tonight, and I'll give you one day's pay for one hour's work, and we will finish the job." "No," they replied, "We have other arrangements." The engineer begged them, making an even better offer: "Men, come back tonight and I'll give you two day's pay for that one hour of work!" Again they replied: "No, but why you so urgent?" Explaining the reason for his concern, the engineer said to them: "If a great storm should break tonight, a torrent of water could wash down that chasm and wipe out the bridge, and destroy all of our labour up to this point!" "No," they said, "it won't rain for months." But it did! The violence of the current which swept down that chasm washed away into destruction all of their progress and construction up to that point!

Oh, the great losses which have sometimes come, all because at the crucial time people fail to "go forward" just a little bit farther, just a little while longer, and finish, while they may, what they have left undone! Think of it! Multitudes nearly complete the work of repentance, but not quite all is done that they know they should do, and they end up having been almost saved, but completely lost! No doubt many have nearly made it into spiritual Canaan, but for lack of one more trip to an altar of prayer, or for lack of doing one more thing that God has told them to do, they have forever forfeited their chance to enter in. There are moments when the admonitions found in Hebrews chapter 4 must be heeded, if ever one expects to be sanctified wholly:

Heb 4:1, 11 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it...Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

The word being preached, did not prophet most of those who came out of Egypt under Moses. For lack of one more step of obedience, they were forever shut out of Canaan. What about you? Are you hearing God's command to "go forward"? Is this your hour to be saved?—to be sanctified?—to volunteer your service to God where some Christian soldiers are needed? Do now what Christ is asking you to do, lest tomorrow be forever too late!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 14

VITAL TO THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

Phil 1:12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

When it comes to the advancement of the gospel, there are some things which are peripheral, and not central, in their importance. These marginal trappings which lie on the fringe may either enhance or inhibit somewhat the promotion of the truth, but they are not that which fuels the force that forwards Christ's kingdom. There are other things which are primary to the promotion of truth, things which greatly hinder the advancement of Christ's kingdom when they are lacking. Consider the following things which are vital to the furtherance of the gospel:

CONCERN

Concern "lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ" is vital "unto the furtherance of the gospel." 1 Cor 9:12 While in one sense "the Word of God is not bound," and the Lord declares that "it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," in another sense, it is possible for men to "hold" or hinder "the truth" of God's Word. 2 Tim 2:9; Isa 55:11; Rom 1:18 "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against..men who hold the truth in unrighteousness" ..who wickedly, willfully hinder God's Word. No doubt, He is also grieved when one of His children blunder in the human and block the "free course" of the gospel through their channel. 2 Th 3:1 Those of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ in truth should be concerned "lest we" unintentionally, but actually, "hinder the gospel of Christ" through our human failure to perceive or perform His will.

CONSENT

Consent to hear and obey the gospel is vital to its furtherance through each individual. As Stephen proclaimed the gospel under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, his hearers "stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city, and stoned him..!" Acts 7:57-58 They would consent to hear no more, and got rid of the preacher! In our country, those who thus "hold the truth in unrighteousness" probably wouldn't kill the preacher They might just not come back to hear him again. Even good people can sometimes so focus on the faults of the man doing the preaching that they "hinder the gospel of Christ" from coming into their minds and reaching their hearts But, beloved, if you wait for a faultless angel from heaven to preach the gospel to you before you hear and heed it, you will wait in vain. Heb 13:22 says, "I beseech you brethren, suffer the word of exhortation." We must consent to hear and heed the gospel preached to us through human instruments, or we shall repeatedly thwart the furtherance of the gospel to and through us!

CONSECRATION

Consecration to Christ and His message to all men everywhere is vital to the furtherance of the gospel. "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Mark 8:35 Paul wrote: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more...and this I do for the gospel's sake!" Few there are who are willing to serve others within an organization of believers that unitedly they all might "gain the more." Too many insist on being "free from all men" in their efforts to advance the gospel. But, we must be willing to serve others or many times we will impede the progress of God's message.

One drop of water by itself cannot move much, but united with others it can become part of a vast body of water with the pent-up power mighty enough to break through the dam which holds it back and flood the lowlands beneath it! Paul was painfully aware of the unconsecrated independence of many in his time: "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Phil 2:20-21 "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord" and become "servant unto all" that unitedly we might "gain the more?" 1 Chr 29:5

CONSISTENCY

Consistency is vital to the furtherance of the gospel! Our lives must demonstrate more than a "professed subjection to the gospel." 2 Cor 9:13 "I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." It is difficult for a baldheaded man to sell hairgrower. It is equally difficult to get people in the world to "buy the truth" from people in the church who are not honest enough to pay their bills! People see it when a professed Christian or preacher does not walk "uprightly according to the truth of the gospel," and they will shut off "the water of the Word" when it is coming to them through a bad pipeline.

CONCESSION

Concession on nonessentials is vital to the furtherance of the gospel "Nevertheless we have not used this power (over you); but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." 1 Cor 9:12

Sir Emerson Tennent tells of an adventure he had in Ceylon while riding on a narrow road through the forest. He heard a rumbling sound approaching, and directly there came to meet him an elephant, bearing on his tusks a large log of wood which he had been directed to carry to the place where it was more needed. Tennent's horse, unused to these monsters, was frightened, and refused to go forward. The elephant, seeing this, evidently decided that he should himself get out of the way. But to do this he was obliged to take the log from his tusks with his trunk and lay it on the ground, which he did, and then backed out of the road between the trees till only his head was visible. But the horse was still too timid to go by. Then the thoughtful elephant pushed himself farther back, till all of his body except the end of his trunk had disappeared. Then Sir Emerson succeeded in getting his horse by, but stopped to witness the result. The elephant came out, took the log up again, laid it across his tusks and went on his way. (#1382 Dict.111.)

There are times when one is carrying his load obediently down the "narrow road" that it is best not to demand the "right of way" and thus create a needless "standoff" and stalemate to the progress of the gospel. That polite pachyderm rumbling down the road in Ceylon could have exercised his superior power over the horse and rider to force them off of the road and out of his way. Instead, with added difficulty to himself, he displayed more graciousness than many who profess holiness, and yielded the right of way to those weaker than himself so as not to hinder them on their way. He was even willing to back almost completely out of the picture to remove himself as a hindrance to their progress.

What an amazing example that elephant was of how we as sanctified Christians should act when differences of opinion arise concerning nonessentials! There are times during such confrontations when we should not insist that things go our way, and concession is the most Christ-like course we can take. Instead of making himself a big hindrance unnecessarily, that elephant made himself a big blessing. By a sweet, sanctified display of "honour preferring one another," even so can we at times "yield the right of way" to others and thereby promote "the furtherance of the gospel." If we will listen when His Spirit thus speaks to us, God, "Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth," will let us know when it is time to make concession, "lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." Job 35:11

CONSTRAINING LOVE

Constraining love is vital to the furtherance of the gospel: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." 2 Cor 5:14 The love of Christ constrains us to further the gospel, not because we need to have more people, but because more people need what we have! They are "alienated from the life of God" which we possess and will eternally die "the second death" unless they receive it.

Those who are "filled with the Spirit" feel inwardly constrained to "give vent" to the gospel_express it to the lost, expand with it into all the world, or expire themselves if they don't!: "For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me..as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst..I will speak that I may be refreshed..!" Job 32:18, 19 "I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay!" Jer 20:9

CONSTANT PRAYER

Constant prayer is vital to the furtherance of the gospel: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." 2 Th 3:1 Deeply rooted obstacles which hinder the furtherance of the gospel will not automatically go away when we bring the gospel message, nor can they be dislodged by human effort alone. But, in answer to the constant, concerted prayer of His people, God can and will send a mighty flood of the power of His Spirit, uproot the obstacles, clean out the channel, and give "free course" to His Word and work. Do you hear the "unspoken request" of another who is trying to further the gospel in an area that may be even more difficult than your own, and will you respond to that Spirit-prompted call?: "Pray for us, that The Word of the Lord may have free course...even as it is with you." 2 Th 3:1

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 15

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Luke 1:35 The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee...

In the above verse we can see that "The Holy Ghost" is "the power of the Highest" Who came upon and "overshadowed" an individual. Thus, may we not think of Him as the great "Shadow of the Almighty"? While in one sense "the Father of lights" has no "shadow of turning," in another sense let us consider the Holy Ghost as God's Shadow, projecting the living presence of Deity above upon humanity below as He constantly moves upon the hearts of men: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and...shall overshadow thee..." James 1:17; Luke 1:35

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY SHOWS US

The Shadow of the Almighty shows us the living reality of God! As the moving shadow of a man does not speak of itself, but rather draws our attention to the living person who is projecting it, even so the Holy Ghost, God's Shadow, moves across the pathway of our spiritual consciousness. While indeed He is God Himself, He does "not speak of Himself," but draws and directs our attention above to the fact that Jesus lives, that God is real, and that man is accountable to his Sovereign Creator. A shadow is direct evidence of the substance above and behind it. We have learned by experience that our eyes can trace the one to the other, and that the projection of a shadow proves the existence of the substance which casts it. We know it is so.

Thus it is also, in regard to our knowledge of spiritual realities: "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.." 1 Cor 2:10 When God the Father "overshadows" our spiritual awareness by the projection of His Spirit upon our hearts and minds, we come to know "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "The Shadow of the Almighty," in the Person of the Holy Ghost, moving upon us here below, has proven to us the existence of the living God above. The One is to us the direct evidence of The Other, and all human reasoning and questioning to the contrary is overruled by it. We know that He is! We know that Jesus lives! Further, we know that judgment is coming for each of us at the great tribunal of the Living God!

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY CONVINCES US

"I will send Him unto you, and when He is come, He will reprove (or convince, cf. margin) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.." John 16:7, 8 When the Holy Ghost "overshadows" an individual with "the power" of heaven-sent conviction, the person is "reproved"

and "convinced" of some things! He is convinced that sin is not the harmless, excusable thing he once considered it, but that it is the thing which will destroy him with its poison and damn him with its guilt! "under the Shadow of the Almighty," the sinner becomes convinced that he is not the "pretty good fellow" he had been picturing himself as, but that he is an ugly, repulsive, condemned character in the sight of God as the result of sin in his heart and life. Once he thought otherwise, but now he begins to think of himself as the worst of the worst, the chiefest of sinners, and totally unworthy of redemption!

As the power of overshadowing, Holy Ghost conviction grips an individual, he also becomes convinced of true righteousness, God's righteousness. He sees that his standard concerning what is really right has been far too low, coming way short of the glory of God's "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord!" "Under the Shadow of the Almighty," a man is convinced not only of the fact of Divine judgment to come, but he also persuaded that it will be for every man, including himself; and that it will be fair and eternally final. Of all these things, and many more, we are convinced when overshadowed by Holy Ghost conviction.

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY CONVEYS US

When the Holy Ghost overshadows us, He conveys us out of sin if we yield to His pleadings and urgings: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity...They that dwell under His shadow shall return..." Hosea 14:1, 7 Yes, when the Holy Ghost overshadows us, He does so not just to show us the reality of God and to convince us of our need, but also to convey us out of sin and back to God! Isn't that wonderful! The following story illustrates this:

A young man, the only son of a New England farmer fell into ways of dissipation at college and contracted gambling debts which he could not meet. He was arrested for forging the name of a friend of his father. After he was tried, convicted, and sentenced, he escaped from the deputy on the way to prison and hid in the far west. The father toiled on; secured money to cover the forgery, got a pardon from the governor for his son, and spent several thousand dollars to hire a private detective to find him. It so happened that the detective was the former deputy, from whom his son had escaped. The young man's father gave this former deputy a note for his son and sent him west to find him. He did find him, in a San Francisco gambling hell. The room in which he was found had but one entrance, so that escape could only be made by the door through which the detective entered. No sooner had he come into the room than the young man recognized the detective as the deputy from whom he had escaped, and supposed that he had been hunted down at last and would be arrested and taken back to prison with increased punishment. He determined, if possible, to escape. He rushed for the door and as he passed the old former deputy, he struck him, felling him to the floor; but the former deputy succeeded in keeping his grip on him until he could speak.

"Stop, John! I've not come to arrest you, but to put into your hands the governor's pardon, and to take you home to your father, who sent me to find you!" The young man rejected the governor's pardon, thinking that if he did return it would still be to face his father's just anger and to live as an outcast in the community where he was born. "But, John," said the ex-deputy, "that is not all; I have a letter from your father which he bade me put into your own hands; here it is." The young man took it and looked long upon the superscription, and then broke the seal. Out of it fell the canceled note,

with the bank cashier's receipt for payment in full, and the letter read as follows: "My Dear Boy: The miserable debt is paid; the governor has pardoned you. Your father has never ceased to love and long for you, and freely forgives you. Come home to me." For a moment the young man gazed upon the letter he held in his hands; and then, for the first time in years, his heart was touched. His lips trembled, tears came into his eyes, and falling upon a chair, he sobbed out his sorrow and repentance. Then, looking up, he reached out his hand to the ex-deputy and said: "I will go back with you. Take me to my father." (adapted from 1000 Illustrations)

Dear heart, have you long been overshadowed with heavy, Holy Ghost conviction? Are you thoroughly convinced of your need? Don't try to escape from "under the Shadow of the Almighty." Instead, let the Holy Ghost convey you out of sin and back to the Heavenly Father who loves you still and longs for your return!

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY CONVERTS US

It is by the transforming power of The Holy Ghost that we become the sons of God. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The miraculous birth of the Son of God was the result of the power of the Highest overshadowing Mary. We too must, and may, be miraculously born of the Spirit: "Ye must be born again...But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name..." John 1:12; 3:7 Hallelujah! In yielding to the pull of the Spirit, we discover that He not only exerts His Divine power to convey us out of sin, but also to convert us into the sons of God: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY KEEPS US

As long as we obediently remain "under the Shadow of the Almighty"—We will be safe: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Psa 91:1, 4; We will be singing: "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Psa 63:7; We will be saved by the blood of Jesus: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High" spiritually, is abiding in the place where the cleansing blood of Jesus has been sprinkled—"and over it the cherubims of glory" are "shadowing the mercy seat." Heb 9:5

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 16

SEVEN THINGS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

Acts 20:35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Yes, we ought to remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, but too often we forget that spiritual fact. Also, we can fail to apply this truth in other areas of our lives, besides the giving of money

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE LOVE

Mat 5:44-46 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

How are we to bless those that curse us? By loving them, for in the giving of our love to those who do not first love us, there is an even greater blessing for ourselves_the warm smile in our heart of God's pleasure and approval!

"He drew a circle that left me out,
A rebel, an heretic, a flout.
But Love and I had a wit to win.
We drew a circle that took him in!"

From whose circle are you left out? Give him, or her, the encircling of your warm Christian affection. Draw that one into your fold of friendship by your attitude and expression of love for him. You will quickly receive God's blessing by what you have unselfishly given, and, sooner than you may think possible, you could be sweetly included in the circle of that one who has now left you out.

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE UNDERSTANDING

Who does not want to receive the benefit of the doubt from another in regard to his motives and intent in the doing or saying of a thing? Surely none of us wants to be misunderstood and misjudged when our motive was right and our purpose was pure. We want to receive understanding from the brethren when our words and actions are being weighed. What a blessing it is to us when some brother or sister reads the purity of our intention and defends us before those who are misjudging our words or actions. Yes, what a blessing it is to us when we receive understanding! But Jesus said that it is more blessed to give, and that includes the giving of understanding. What? Go to all of the

trouble to really fathom that fellow? It is so much easier to make a snap judgment, a quick criticism, because after all, he is wrong! Therefore, his motive must be wrong! But, is it? Have I unselfishly given him "the benefit of the doubt"? Has he received from me first the understanding which I would desire that he give me?

According to Jesus' statement, It is even more blessed for me to give understanding to others than it is for me to receive that hoped for understanding from them. How often we feel cheated when others do not bless us with the gift of their understanding, but perhaps even more often we rob ourselves of God's greater blessing by failing to give that same, kind understanding to others.

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE MERCY

You remember how wonderful it was when you received mercy from the Lord: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity..!" "O Happy Day, O, Happy Day, When Jesus washed my sins away!" Hallelujah! What a blessing that day was to my soul, and to all of those whose sins are forgiven. Thank God for His Mercy and Forgiveness! Is it possible that it could be more blessed to give mercy to others than to receive it from God?

Jesus said: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Then, His next utterance was: "Blessed are the pure in heart." Those who are pure in heart are givers of mercy and forgiveness. Like their God, they are "ready to forgive" the moment their forgiveness is sincerely requested. They are not known for their quickness to give or to pass judgment, but rather, they are known for their readiness to extend mercy. Often they do not receive mercy, but always they give it. No wonder they are blessed!

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE APPRECIATION

Who does not welcome an occasional word of thanks from some appreciative person for a job well done? No one particularly enjoys being "un-thought-of" or "unthanked" by those for whom, and with whom he lives and labors. There are times, when one is tempted to discouragement, that a little word of appreciation comes as a great blessing. It lifts the heart and helps lighten the load! You know what I'm talking about.

You know how good it felt to receive those encouraging words that day when satan had been telling you that nobody noticed, or even cared, what you were trying to do. Perhaps many had voiced their criticism and silence had sealed the lips of others. Then, that someone warmly expressed appreciation of you, for being what you are and for doing what you are doing. A tear coursed down your cheek. Your soul was lifted and encouraged. Someone warmly blessed you with their thoughtful, thankful expression of appreciation.

Perhaps you recall another time when you were even more blessed_the time when you saw that brother or sister passing through the valley of Baca and you made it a well for that heavy-hearted one with your cheering words of appreciation. He, or she, was greatly encouraged by your kind remarks, and you were Oh, so blessed in your soul for having given them!

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE SUPPORT

Paul wrote: "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." You remember how David ordered that Uriah be put up at the front of the battle and then that his "support" be withdrawn. How unlike the Lord David's heartless order was at that time. Jesus would never treat His soldiers thus. He always supports those he sends to the battle. He always upholds His own. He undergirds the weak. What a blessing it is in times of human weakness to know that underneath are "The Everlasting Arms" of Christ!

Yet, it is even more blessed to give support than to receive it, to boost God's cause, than to be boosted by those who are furthering it. It is more blessed to lend support to a weak, struggling soul, than to borrow strength from one stronger than ourselves. "Two are better than one; because one will lift up his fellow," and the fellow who does the lifting up is more blessed than the one who receives his loving support. We should be strong in the Lord so that we can be the fellow who unselfishly boosts. Then, though we do not help others with an eye toward what we can get in return, still, we thereby receive the greater blessing.

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE LOYALTY

"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" Prov 20:6 Those who are faithful and loyal are scarce these days, and there never has been overabundance of such. Unlike David's disloyalty toward his loyal servant Uriah, God is always faithful and just. He is loyal to us: "..He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb 13:5 We can count on that promise. What a blessing it is to receive that loyalty from our Savior.

However, the question is: Can He count on me? Can he count on you? Will we be loyal to Him and to the people and place He wants us to serve? "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." Prov 25:19 "In time of trouble," the Lord can't depend on a man to carry his appointed load if he is "a foot out of joint"! Eventually, those who get "out of joint" in their proper place of loyal attachment in the body of Christ also become spiritually swollen, sore, and crippled in the performance of their God-given tasks. In contrast, a loyal, faithful "doer of the work" that God has given him, where God has set him, "this man shall be blessed in his deed!" James 4:25

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE LIFE

One cannot receive the fullness of the Spirit without being a giver of life, for "The Spirit" always "giveth life." "Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," gave His life that we might receive life! When we are saved we receive spiritual life: "the gift of God eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In contrast, we are sanctified only through the total giving of our life to Christ as a living sacrifice. They are indeed blessed who receive life when they are saved, but they are even more blessed who then give their lives in full consecration to the Lord, for theirs is the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

IN CONCLUSION

When Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, He stated a truth which God Himself knows by experience. In 1 Tim 1:11, God is referred to as "the blessed God." Is it not so that God is "the blessed God" because He is the greatest of all Givers? The Father is blessed; the Son is blessed; and the Holy Spirit is blessed, because giving is inherent in the nature of the Triune God. No doubt Jesus knew, even while He was here on earth, the surpassing blessedness which comes by being a Giver. When the principle which He put forth and exemplified becomes the practice of our hearts and lives, then we too share in His joyous knowledge that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 17

FOUND BUT FORGOTTEN

Ecc 9:14-17 There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: 15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. 16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. 17 The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

Like the little city in the above story, each of us is, spiritually, small and weak within ourselves and by ourselves. Like the great king, satan besieges the soul of each individual to conquer and destroy it. Like the poor wise man, Jesus has provided deliverance for the little city of our soul by His death on the cross. Sadly, like the citizens of the little city, many individuals find the Savior during their crisis, only to forget Him soon afterward or somewhere down the line. Let us consider several reasons why the Savior is found but forgotten:

BECAUSE OF A LACK OF URGENCY

The little city realized its immediate peril as the enemy ominously displayed both his purpose and power to destroy it. They were afraid and frantically searched for a savior and found him in their fear and helplessness. Then, they forgot him after their deliverance when urgency was replaced with complacency. His salvation became to them a past history instead of a present necessity. In their sense of security they felt no need for either their savior or for his salvation any longer.

In like manner, many forget Christ after the crisis. We must never forget the present necessity of our Savior and His salvation, "for still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe," and we shall not "escape if we neglect so great salvation" that Jesus provides for us this very moment! His salvation is not simply a past history during the crisis of our conversion. It is a present necessity during the entire course of our warfare through life. To forget the urgency of our immediate need for deliverance from satan's assaults on our soul is to forget the Savior and in our false sense of security to lay ourselves open to spiritual and eternal destruction at the hands of the devil.

BECAUSE OF A LACK OF HUMILITY

When the city of our text was delivered, it was little and had few inhabitants. It was humble in its circumstance and condition. Perhaps, however, after its deliverance it grew in size and population. It may have begun to feel important and powerful, and thus preferred to forget both its humble beginning and the lowly one who brought it salvation when it was small and weak. Who knows? Such a transition from humility to proud self-exaltation has caused more than one church, more than one person, to forget the lowly Nazarene Who saved them when they were little in their own eyes,

and lost in their weakness and wickedness. How often is the Savior found in humility, only to be later forgotten in proud self-importance and self-sufficiency!

BECAUSE OF A LACK OF IDENTITY

The little city was saved when it identified both who and what would bring salvation. Who would bring salvation?—the poor wise man. What would bring salvation? —the wise man's wisdom. When we willingly go forth to Jesus, without the proud camp of this world, and identify with Him, being willing to bear His reproach, then He saves us by His blood. Hallelujah! The world pooh poohs the idea of identifying with Christ as the Man of our salvation and His cross as the means of our salvation. Nonetheless, while "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness...unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor 1:18

By His wisdom, God has provided for our deliverance from all sin through the death of His Son, Who "though He was rich, yet for (our) sakes He became poor, that (we) through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor 8:9 In the eyes of the world, Christ has nothing to offer, but this "same poor Man" is "rich unto all that call upon Him" out of the depths of their spiritual poverty. When we identify ourselves with Him and His cross in utter spiritual bankruptcy and total repentance, then all of the exhaustless wealth of eternal salvation becomes our inheritance. Yet, when we forget Him and forsake the reproach of His cross, we again become complete spiritual paupers, even though we may, like the Laodicean Church, say that we are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

BECAUSE OF A LACK OF RECEPTIVITY

In its hour of distress the little city listened to the poor wise man, and by his wisdom he delivered it. However, when those people forgot him, the poor man's wisdom was despised, and his words were not heard. "The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." Eccl 9:17 When men get quiet before God, and when every satanic argument and distraction is shut out, then Jesus' words are heard. When one is really receptive to the truth, and quieted in total honesty, the still, small voice of Christ comes through more clearly than the loud voice of fools on their way to hell. Yet, when neglect and disobedience dulls our receptivity of God's Word, then the cry of fools drowns out the voice of the Spirit. Unless this condition is corrected, salvation will be forfeited and Christ will be forgotten. The advice of fools will rule our way and the advancement of years will take us farther from truth and closer to hell. How imperative it is that we retain our receptivity of the wooings and warnings of the still, small voice of Jesus. We must never despise His Word and dull our receptivity of hearing the truth, for one does so at the risk of total apostasy and final damnation.

BECAUSE OF A LACK OF CHARITY

No doubt the poor wise man was loved when by his wisdom he delivered the city. Heartfelt thanks was expressed to him, and his praises were heard throughout the streets and lanes of the little city. They were so grateful for his kindness. His name was revered and his family was honored with him. Charity for their champion abounded. Perhaps he was even told: "We will never forget you, nor what

you have done for us." Nevertheless, they did forget him. As the memory of that mighty deliverance faded into the past, their love for him waxed cold. There were no more thankful recollections and repetitions of that dramatic event. The praises of their savior's name were no more heard, and his family was no longer honored. Finally, their savior himself was forgotten, and with all love for him gone, though his wisdom had not changed, his words began to be despised. It is a picture of what can happen to any of us who have been delivered by the Savior if we allow our fervent charity for our great Champion to wax cold. May our love for him, and for all of His Family, always "be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength," lest we forget, lest we forget.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 18

SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION

2 Th 2:13 ..God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

For as long as this writer can remember, holiness people have made a distinction between salvation and sanctification. Generally, the term "salvation" is used in reference to the first work of grace, and the term "sanctification" is used in reference to the second work of grace. However, Biblically and strictly speaking, it is a mistake to separate sanctification from salvation, for every part of our salvation is "salvation through sanctification."

We might picture sanctification in our minds as God's holy, restrictive channel through which we obtain the new birth, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and "the grace that is to be brought unto (us) at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet 1:13 In all three of these works of grace we experience some aspect of sanctification.

SANCTIFICATION IN THE FIRST WORK OF GRACE

Repentance brings into the seeker's life:

Sanctification from the practice of sin

The work of sanctification includes both a cleansing from sin, and a setting apart for holy use. Before we can be cleansed from our past sins and be saved, we must allow God to set us apart from the practice of sin. On our part, that sanctification from the practice of sin means genuine and total repentance, so that we turn from the committing of all known sin and utterly, eternally forsake it. There is no real salvation through Christ apart from this complete sanctification from the practice of sin.

This truth can be seen in 1 John 3:3, 6, 8: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure...Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him...He that committeth sin is of the devil.." No one has the real hope of salvation in him who has not sanctified himself from the practice of sin so as to be pure from its performance even as Christ was pure. How was Christ pure in regard to the practice of sin? The Bible says that He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Pet 2:22 They are in great error who fancy themselves to be saved without totally sanctifying themselves from the practice of sin, for "he that committeth sin is of the devil," not of Christ.

Justification brings to those who have repented and believed:

SANCTIFICATION FROM THE PRODUCT OF SIN

Praise God for sanctification from the product of sin! When we are justified by the blood of Jesus, God sets us apart from the awful product of sin—guilt, condemnation, fear, degradation, and final damnation. How wonderful it is to be able to truly sing: "My God is reconciled, His pardoning voice I hear. He owns me as His child. I need no longer fear. With confidence I now draw nigh, with confidence I now draw nigh, and Abba, Father, Abba, cry!" When this sanctification of the Spirit first dawns upon the consciousness of the penitent seeker, it often evokes spontaneous tears of gratitude and shouts of joyful praise unto our merciful Father and wonderful Savior. To be set apart from the awful product of sin and then to stand justified in God's sight among the redeemed is a blessing known only to those who have been truly saved.

Regeneration brings into the heart of those who receive salvation:

SANCTIFICATION FROM THE PREFERENCE OF SIN

1 John 3:9 "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The sinner prefers to sin because he is of his father, the devil. On the other hand, as long as the spiritual seed of Christ remains in one who is born of God, he cannot sin. This is not to say that it is impossible for one to fall into sin after having been born again. It is to say, however, that as long as he remains a child of God he cannot knowingly, willingly commit sin. The true child of God has no preference for sin, no desire in himself to do evil. Instead, with God's own seed, or nature, within themselves, the children of God hate sin and have an abhorrence of it.

I once read a story close to the following: A woman, who loved roses, decided one day to cut some of them. Back near the center of one of her rosebushes, she spotted a particularly beautiful rose, which she wanted to cut. Carefully, she maneuvered her hand into the rosebush to do so. Suddenly, she felt something cold begin to coil around her arm. She quickly drew her arm back out of the rosebush, and to her horror, there was a black snake wound around her arm! With utter revulsion and fear, she violently shook her arm until the serpent was flung loose from her limb!—and from that day onward, she would not go near that rosebush. Her hatred, fear, and abhorrence of snakes was stronger than her attraction toward the roses on that bush.

The Spirit of Christ within the true child of God shrinks from the very appearance of evil. When the serpent tempts one who is born again to commit some vile deed, the reaction is often like that of Joseph when Potipher's wife plied him with her filthy lust: "He refused, and said unto his master's wife..how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen 39:8-9 The fact was, that as long as Joseph's love for God was supreme, he could not commit that sin. Likewise, one cannot retain the life and love of Christ within himself and at the same time commit sin.

Paul wrote: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal 5:17 What evil a man would do without the Spirit of Christ in him, he cannot do as long as the Christ's Spirit remains within him. Sin and the Spirit of Christ are opposite and contrary to one another. Where one exists

the other cannot. When one knowingly, willingly sins, the Spirit of Christ is forced to depart, but while one remains born of God's Spirit, sin cannot enter his life—he cannot commit sin.

Those who are sanctified from the preference of sin in regeneration not only hate sin and love righteousness, they also fear sin because they know that committing sin will rob them of their spiritual life. The woman at the rosebush experienced not only revulsion, but also fear, when she saw the snake coiled around her arm. She felt threatened by it, and therefore she violently flung it loose and away from herself in order to avoid the harm it might bring her. This is the same reaction which those have who retain the new birth. They fearfully fling away from their souls that in which they see the serpent, and that which they perceive is a threat to their spiritual life. Furthermore, those who are wise don't waste time trying to find out for sure whether the "snake" is poisonous. They prefer to shake loose immediately from all appearance of evil, lest they discover too late that the thing was deadly and damning. Thus it is with those who are sanctified from the preference of sin and who retain their regeneration.

SANCTIFICATION IN THE SECOND WORK OF GRACE

The baptism of the Holy Ghost brings into the heart of the regenerate:

SANCTIFICATION FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF SIN

While in this writer's view holiness people have generally failed to teach the fact of sanctification in relationship to the first work of grace, it is also my firm belief that others have failed to see the fact of a deeper work of sanctification which God has provided for His people in a second, definite work of grace. In holiness circles, that second work of grace is sometimes referred to as "entire sanctification," which is a good term because it properly recognizes the fact of sanctification in the first work of grace.

Holiness people also speak of being "sanctified wholly" in the second work of grace. This, of course is taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Greek word for "wholly" here is "*holoteles*," which is defined by Strong's thus: "complete to the end, i.e. absolutely perfect:—wholly." "*Holoteles*" is a compound of "*holos*" and "*telos*," and judging from Strong's definition of these two words, "*holoteles*" carries in it the idea of completeness in every whit, throughout, and unto the uttermost. (see Strong's, numbers 3650, 3651, and 5056)

Just how much sanctification is available to us in this life? According to the meaning of the word "wholly" (*holoteles*), in 1 Th 5:23, there is enough to sanctify us absolutely, perfectly, throughout every whit of our being, and unto the uttermost point of our need! Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Christ is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Hallelujah! God can, and will, fix us up so good, that in the uttermost depth of our hearts "where sin abounded, grace (does) much more abound." Rom 5:20

Romans chapter 7 may very well describe the struggle with the sin principle of one who is born again:

Rom 7:22-23, 25 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members...So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

"The law of sin" does indeed still remain in the hearts of those who are born again, until, and unless, they obtain more grace than they received at the time of their new birth. They err, however, who teach that Paul described a bondage to "the law of sin" which must continue to the end of this life. His teaching on this subject did not end with Romans chapter 7. In Romans 8:2 Paul declared: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

There is a second, crisis experience of grace available in this life whereby God's born again children are made free indeed from the carnal enslavement of the sin principle. Provisionally, our Adamic nature was destroyed when Christ died on the cross: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom 6:6

Every child of God is called to this experience of entire sanctification, and Christ will do this great work for us now: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Th 5:23-24 Sinners are commanded to cleanse their hands, but Christians are directed to purify their hearts, for we will need to have a pure, sanctified heart in order to dwell with God in heaven:

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Psa 24:3-4 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

SANCTIFICATION IN THE THIRD WORK OF GRACE

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

Glorification with Christ at His return will bring to the triumphant saints:

SANCTIFICATION FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN FOREVER!

At the revelation of Christ, His angels will "gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Mat 24:31 The Bride of Christ will be given the grace of a glorious,

spiritual body, like unto His own glorious body: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.." Phil 3:20-21

Then, at the Judgment on that Day, the holy angels will "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Mat 13:41-43

Blessed with the glorious grace of Christ's likeness, the finally triumphant saints of God will enter in through the gates into the Holy City, New Jerusalem. There, they will be forever with the Lord, and forever sanctified from the presence of sin:

Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Rev 22:14-15 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 19

WHY MANY ARE FOUND WANTING

Ecc. 1:15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

Dan. 5:26-27 God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

Unexpectedly, suddenly, God added up, or numbered, Belshazzar's account and weighed him in judgment. Though he was unprepared, the time had arrived when no longer could that which was crooked "be made straight," and that which was wanting could not "be numbered," or credited, to his account. The final opportunity for subtracting his sins and for adding the weight of God's righteousness to his heart and life was gone forever. The weightiness of what he knew was never added to the moral poundage of his character and behavior. Like many others who have been suddenly weighed in the Divine balances, he was found sadly wanting, and will suffer the consequences of this throughout eternity!

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF LIGHTNESS

Many are found wanting because of their lightness! Weighed in God's balances, they are too light, like Belshazzar, with that which is holy, weighty, and eternal. With flippant disregard and desecration of that which God designed for holy use, Belshazzar defiled the sacred vessels of God's temple and made light the very night he was slain!

Others who were found too light, and too late to repent, have met a similar fate. Before Divine judgment fell, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked...he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Deu 32:15 "Through the lightness of her whoredom," Judah "defiled the land," and was carried away into Babylonian captivity. Jer 3:9 Instead of faithfully, soberly warning her of the weighty consequences of her behavior, "the prophets of Jerusalem" actually contributed to her defilement "by their lies, and by their lightness!" Jer 23:14, 32 The Jews during Jesus' earthly ministry "would not come" to the Divinely prepared feast of salvation through Christ, "but they made light of it (*amaleo*-neglected it), and went their ways.." Mat 22:3, 5 Soon judgment fell; Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews were dispersed for nearly 1900 years!

Then "How shall we escape, if we neglect (*amaleo*-make light of) so great salvation?!" Heb 2:3 We shall not! As a faithful minister, Paul purposed to help the Corinthians. He wrote of this to them, saying, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?" 2 Cor 1:17 The "night is far spent, the day" of being weighed in God's balances "is at hand!" Rom 13:12 How desperate is the need for sober warning from the pulpit to many who are too light, and nearly too late to repent! Lest they be

found eternally wanting, they must soon hear and heed God's admonition: "Be afflicted and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness!" James 4:9

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF A LACK OF FORESIGHT

Many are found wanting because of their lack of foresight. They fail to look beyond the present. Even before his lighthearted revelry, the prodigal son erred by failing to look ahead to the inevitable consequences of his contemplated course of action. He failed to foresee that his selfish and headstrong abandonment of his father would eventually rob him of all that was good and precious. The time came, however, as it will for all who abandon the service of God, that he "began to be in want."

God's pronouncement to prodigal Israel was: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.." Deu 28:47-48 We should all foresee that those who take their own way will meet their own want somewhere down the line. If not in time, they will meet it in eternity at the judgment.

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF ONE'S LEADER

Many are found wanting because of their leader. They are not following the Lord, but instead some other guide. David confidently said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.." Sadly, those who follow the Gurus inspired by the god of this world, will one day awake to the fact that they are wanting in true righteousness, in spite of their zealous devotion to a false notion. Only those who follow the Lord all the way "shall not want" a place "in the house of the Lord forever." Those who have been blind followers of the blind will fall into the ditch of eternal darkness, and will dwell there forever.

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF LAXITY AND LAZINESS

Many are found wanting spiritually because of their laxity and laziness. They are spiritually too sluggish to seek until they find what they desperately need. Only when they are prodded by pointed preaching, will they even begin to seek publicly and feebly, but when they are left alone in private they abandon even that faint effort in favor of their ease. They get their sleep, but they never get saved or sanctified. They are too lazy for that.

Proverbs 6:6-11 sounds like a divine alarm clock ringing: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide (in her seeking), overseer, or ruler, (to make her seek) provideth her meat in the summer, (on her own initiative) and gathereth her food in the harvest. (while she may) Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, (quickly) and thy want as an armed man."

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF ONE'S LIST OF PRIORITIES

Many are found wanting because of their list of priorities. Perhaps they have no actual list of what comes first, second, third, etc., in their lives. Nevertheless, if they did make such a list honestly, it could be seen that their spiritual wants were certainly not at the top of their list. Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," and then every other necessity would be added unto us. If we are not to be found wanting in God's balances, spiritual needs must hold the priority over all other needs in our seeking.

Paul wrote to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." Titus 1:5 Those who plan to enter the eternal kingdom of God at the second coming of Christ, must now set in order the things that are wanting in their lives, and the supply of their spiritual needs must head the list of their priorities. I once read a wise little poem which went something like the following:

Seek ye first, not earth's desirings,
Ceaseless longings, vain aspirings,
But your precious soul's requirings,
Seek ye first!

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF ONE'S LEVEL OF OBEDIENCE

Many are found wanting because of their level of their obedience. The number six is the number of man, and we can see in it the completion of all that man may and must do—six days he is to labor and complete his work before resting the seventh day. Six waterpots were at the place of the wedding in Cana where they wanted, or lacked, wine. Jesus told the servants to "fill the waterpots with water." They filled, not four or five of them, but all six of them "up to the brim." They could not turn the water into wine, but they could, and did, fully complete what Christ told them to do. Then He performed the miracle.

The reason why many want, or lack, the experience of salvation or entire sanctification is that the waterpots of their obedience to His requirements have never been totally filled. They may have done most of what Christ has told them to do, but never quite all. Is He saying to you: "These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone?" The moment you leave absolutely nothing undone, you will then experience the miraculous joy of sins forgiven or of "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ!"

FOUND WANTING BECAUSE OF LOST OPPORTUNITY

Many are found wanting because of their lost opportunity. They failed to use their final opportunity for the supply of their spiritual needs. Now, after it is too late, they may be willing to seek the Lord, but the doom of their spiritual deficiency is forever fixed. They waited until tomorrow to do what they should have done yesterday, and that tomorrow never came!

A plot was contrived to assassinate Archias, a chief magistrate in one of the Grecian states. The day arrived for the plot to be carried out. Archais was more than half dissolved in wine and pleasure when a courier from Athens arrived in great haste with a packet for him. That packet contained information which revealed the conspiracy. Archais was urged to read the information immediately since it concerned "serious affairs"! Instead, he replied, "serious affairs tomorrow," and continued in his revelry. Like Belshazzar, that same night he was slain!

Reader, are you wanting salvation? or holiness of heart? Don't be too light and too late! Obediently, let Christ meet your need while your opportunity remains.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 20

GRIPPED BY GOD'S WORD

Zechariah 1:6 But My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?

Job 6:25 How forcible are right words!

"Where the word of (The) King is, there is power" to grip the heart of a sinner so that he cannot shake loose! Eccl 8:14 Unable to escape the grip of God's Word at the judgment, Christ rejecting sinners will be forcibly held under the all-revealing light of holy truth and condemned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48 With no way to escape, those who have neglected so great salvation will be held by God's Word in the eternal confines and torments of the damned.

In this world, we should "know what withholdeth," or what holdeth wickedness in check. It is the restraining power of God's Word through His Spirit, and "He who now letteth (or restraineth) will let, until He be taken out of the way." 2 Th 2:6-7 However, in eternity the restraints of God's Word against evil will never "be taken out of the way." Satan, his angels, and all of the impenitent wicked will be confined forever within the grip of God's Word in the place of His wrath, "and they shall not escape."

Happily, there is an earlier and better result from being taken hold of by the Word of God. Being gripped by the power of Jesus' words can result in conviction, conversion, and eternal salvation. "By the word of God the heavens were of old," and "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store.." 2 Pet 3:5, 7 The same Word which shall forever confine the wicked in the regions of the damned is this very moment keeping some from slipping into hell: "O bless our God..which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." Psalms 66:8, 9 "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." Psalms 94:17-8

One who is gripped by the convicting power of God's Word is awakened and becomes "wide-eyed" to his peril: "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." Psalm 77:4 When one realizes that he has fallen into the hands of the living God, and is tightly gripped by the unshakable awareness that the next moment he could be dropped into eternal damnation, then sin appears exceeding sinful: "I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me." Jeremiah 8:21 One's sins, which had been following after him then catch the sinner, and he feels his guilt: "mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head.." Psalm 40:12

As the Word of God continues to grip the sinners soul, he senses both God's wrath against sin and the extreme folly of living in sin: "Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power...How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! How oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in His anger." Job 21:6-7, 17 The fear of hell destroys the enjoyment of his sins: "pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. (the truth of God's Word) My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me." "The pains of hell gat hold upon me...I called upon the name of the Lord." Isa 21:3-4; Psa 116:3-4 O happy day, when a sinner so fears dropping into the lake of fire that the pleasures of the world are spoiled and he begins to call upon God!

So fearful does one become of going to hell when he is gripped by unshakable, Holy Ghost conviction, that he is led to the place of repentance, where he stops sinning. Previously, his testimony was: "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy.." Eccl 2: 10 But now, under awful conviction, he repents of all looseness and flirtation with evil and is "withheld from sinning." Genesis 20:6

Furthermore, being gripped by Godly fear, the sinner, like Jonah, stops running from God: "Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." Psa 48:6 Jonah "found a ship going to Tarshish," but when God got ahold of that ship "so that the ship was like to be broken," then "fear took hold upon them there" and Jonah stopped running and started repenting. The hand of God, as it were, closed around him, as he was swallowed by the whale, and baptized him in the billows of the great deep. He felt like he was in hell, and before the Lord was through with him, he was plenty glad to change his direction and do God's will: "Out of the belly of hell cried I...I will look again toward Thy holy temple." Jonah 2:2, 4 All who have been brought to such a place of utter repentance have realized the futility of running from the hand of God: "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Psa 139:9-10

When the Word of God takes hold of a man, he is pulled out from among the ungodly, upon whom the wrath of God shall soon and suddenly fall: "And while he lingered, the men (angels) laid hold upon his (Lot's) hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and brought him forth, and set him without the city." Gen 19:16 Like Lot, many are reluctant to separate from the world and must be mightily pulled out by the grip of Holy Ghost conviction before it is too late for them to be saved.

Finally, it is the grip of Jesus, the incarnate Word, that lifts a man out of the pit of sin and sets his feet upon the Solid Rock: "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep?" Mat 12:11-12 Hallelujah! Aren't you glad for the day that Holy Ghost conviction gripped your soul, and when you felt hopelessly sunk in the quagmire of sin, then Jesus reached down with that same mighty grip, and lifted you out! Praise His wonderful Name! "My heart was distressed `neath Jehovah's dread frown; And low in the pit where my sins dragged me

down I cried to the Lord from the deep, miry clay, Who tenderly brought me out to golden day!"
—H. L. Gilmour

Dear heart, it is both a fearful and wonderful thing to "fall into the hands of the living God." Heb 10:31 In Jesus' eyes, you are much better than a sheep, and He purposes a better destiny for you than that of confinement in eternal damnation. If He is gripping your heart with old-time, Holy Ghost conviction just now, then thank Him for getting ahold of you. Cooperate with Him, and let Him pull you up, and lift you all the way out of sin. He wants to elevate you "from the depths of sin and sadness to the heights of joy and gladness." Will you let Him do that for you through His grace? You'll never be sorry for it if you do.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 21

"TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN"

1 Sam 9:27;10:6, 9-11 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul...stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God...the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man...And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?

When a person truly becomes a Christian, that one is spiritually "turned into another" individual. He, or she, "is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor 5:17 So remarkable is the change which is Divinely wrought in this transformation that those beholding it often marvel: "...The people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?" This turning of a person into a shining child of Heaven's King, who was beforetime a shameful child of hell, is really beyond human description, but let us here consider several aspects of how it occurs:

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN MIRACULOUSLY

"The God of Jacob turned the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of waters." Psa 114:7-8 When Moses smote the rock in the desert and waters gushed forth, that rock had no artesian well within it, just waiting to burst forth after one little impact upon a fracture that already existed. All such satanic reasonings to the contrary, God performed a miracle there, and transformed a flinty, old, dry, solid rock into a fountain of water! I say Hallelujah! God can so smite with Holy Ghost conviction, a hardened, dry-eyed sinner, that the depths of his soul are broken up and his eyes become as a fountain of tears as he weeps his way to God and then rejoices in real salvation! That, mister, is a miracle, and not the result of some natural process.

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN REGENERATINGLY

When satan touches a man and thereby turns him into another man, the result is degeneration. Such was the case when God, through Jeremiah, lamented the fallen state of Israel: "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?" Jer 2:21 One need but honestly behold to see how satan, through sin, has turned man into a degenerate creature, fallen and foreign to God. Nevertheless, where sin abounds, grace can much more abound. With His uplifting and regenerating touch, Jesus turns a man back into the noble creature he was meant to be, wholly right with God and man and fit to inhabit heaven.

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN INSTANTANEOUSLY

It did not take God eons, or light years, to create the universe: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made..He spake, and it was done!" Psa 33:6, 9 God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," instantaneously! Gen 1:3 Even thus it was, when God turned Saul into another man: "And it was so, that when he turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart," instantaneously! 1 Sam 10:9 "In the twinkling of an eye," we too are transformed. The process leading us to that moment, and the progress we make spiritually following it, may require much time, but the touch of Christ upon the penitent soul turns him into another man instantaneously.

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN INWARDLY

"And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart.." It was not another body, not another mind, not another environment, which Saul received, but it was another heart. Saul was "turned into another man" inwardly, "and there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched." 1 Sam 10:9, 26 The transforming touch of God upon a man's heart is his first and most desperate need, not a change in his physical health, mental capacity, or outward circumstances. Reformation of a man from the outside in never really changes him spiritually, but regeneration from the inside out does the job. Immediately, he has a new heart, and progressively this new, "hidden man of the heart" brings noticeable changes in his "outward man". "Old things" in his outward life "pass away," and some quite suddenly.

Other old things may pass away gradually as he walks in the light, for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov 4:18 Inwardly, however, he is a sheep, and it generally isn't long before he begins to feel very uncomfortable wearing wolves clothing, being in their company, feeding on their food, or even using their bark. Instead, he begins to look like a sheep, flock together with other sheep, follow the Good Shepherd, enjoy His green, spiritual pastures, and use the language of the Lamb of God—all because "God gave him another heart". Hallelujah!

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN SOBERLY

This matter of being "turned into another man," however, is not simply a matter of sweet possibility. It is a sober necessity, which will determine our eternal destiny. A man must be either turned into a Christian, or he will be "turned into hell" eternally, for we shall inhabit either heaven or hell, not so much because of what we have done as because of what we are.

Therefore, God must sober the "happy-go-lucky" sinner to that realization before He can transform him into the man he must be to dwell with a Holy God in a holy heaven: "The night of my pleasure hath He turned into fear unto me...Our dance is turned into mourning...woe unto us, that we have sinned...Cleanse your hands ye sinners...let your laughter be turned into mourning." Isa 21:4; Lam 5:15-16; James 4:8-9 When God transforms a man's pleasure in sin into pangs of holy fear and cries for mercy, that man is moving toward the place where he can be turned into another man, fit for heaven. You can laugh your way to hell, but you must "move with fear" in order to be spiritually transformed by God and then transported to heaven. Heb 11:7

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN PENITENTLY

Fear of going to hell because of what we are must move us into total repentance, which always precedes the miracle of regeneration: "Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, Seek Him that turneth the shadow of death into morning.." Amos 5:7-8 Thorough repentance leads the sinner to stop using the wrong judgment that turns good into evil and evil into good in his assessment of things. He begins to "esteem all (of God's) precepts concerning all things to be right." Psa 119:128

Furthermore, he stops sinning, and, instead of "leaving off righteousness," he purposes from henceforth to always do right as God gives him the light to see it. In utter abandonment of all wickedness, and in complete acceptance of all righteousness, he penitently seeks Him Who alone can turn the shadow of his eternal death sentence into the morning of mercy and new life in Christ.

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN JOYFULLY

While seeking the Lord under heavy, Holy Ghost conviction, "Ye shall weep and lament," but when your repentance is complete and the knowledge that you are forgiven replaces the fear of judgment and hell, then "your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" John 16:20 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" and who knows that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus by the sweet assurance of the witness of the Spirit. When Godly sorrow worketh complete repentance, then that sorrow is suddenly changed into sweet and rapturous joy when you know that you know you are saved!

TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN BELIEVINGLY

Sinner friend, it is important for you to believe that Christ really can change you into another person. Have you ever caught a glimpse of the person He plans to make of you through His grace?

A melancholy lawyer moved into a new community and immersed himself in his new law practice. Townspeople sometimes observed him walking alone at the eventide with his head bowed, and a look of mental distress upon his face. One day he confessed to an artist, who had a downtown studio, that he had made one, sad, terrible mistake in his life. The artist said nothing, but weeks later he invited the forlorn lawyer to view a portrait in his studio. Accepting the invitation, the lawyer was surprised to see there a portrait of himself, only there, in the portrait, he stood erect, with his shoulders thrown back, and his head lifted up. Ambition, desire, and hope were written on his face in that portrait. Regarding this sunny, positive portrait of himself for a few moments, the vision of what he could become was born in his heart, and he said, to himself, "If he sees that in me, then I can see it. If he thinks that I can be that, then I can be that man; and what is more, I will be!" (adapted from McCartney)

Dear sinner friend, pictured on the canvas of Jesus' grace is His portrait of you—not the old you, which you have known in the hopeless and forlorn pathways of sin, but the new you, the person He plans to turn you into by His transforming power—sunny, and bright in the sweet assurance of

salvation, no longer bowed by sin's burden, but upright, reflecting the likeness of Christ, and filled with a sure and steadfast hope of eternal life.

When Jesus sees, and knows, that you can be just as He has painted you in His will, then you can be that new you, and what is more, you will be!—when His Spirit comes into your heart. If you hear Christ bidding you, come to Him, just now, in full repentance of your sins, and in complete trust in His blood to wash away your guilty past, and thou, even thou, shalt be "turned into another man.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 22

WHY THE LIVING CHILD SURVIVED

Isa 38:19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day..

1 Ki 3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

Praise God! Isn't it wonderful to have spiritual life!? I don't want to lose that, do you? The living, the living presence of Christ within us is that which spontaneously springs up with praises to God, even amidst the pressures and problems of life! It is more than a fantasy; it is a fact! It is more than a form; it is a force that lives and moves and has its being within us and flows out from us like rivers of living water! It is a spiritual child of Divine birth which changes our hearts and challenges hell.

Satan does not concern himself with the dead children of professing Christianity, but he is mightily concerned about the living children of praising Christianity! Like the ancient Pharaoh of Egypt sought to immediately destroy every new-born male child of Israel, so Satan designs to quickly kill the spiritual life of each one who is born again into the church, lest that life be a threat to his kingdom!

In I Kings 3:16-28 we have the story of two women who were contending before King Solomon for possession of a "living child". Let us now liken that "living child" to the spiritual life within us as part of the church of the firstborn, and with that in mind, let us consider four reasons why "the living child" survived:

BECAUSE IT WAS NOT SMOTHERED

1 Ki 3:19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

One child, according to the accusation, had been accidentally smothered by its mother. There is a difference between mothering and smothering!

I read some time ago of an Israeli mother who hid with her child during an Arab commando attack, and in the effort to muffle the child so as to keep it from betraying their presence, she accidentally smothered it! Her desire was to protect its life, but her deed killed it!

This can also be the case with a pastor or leader. When he is greatly concerned about "the living child" of his church, and zealous to protect that life from the enemy, he can, if he isn't careful, "overlay" them with unnecessary restraints and suffocate their spiritual life! "The living child" must not be so restricted that it cannot breathe, or it will die, no matter how well-intentioned the smotherer may be. "blanket coverage" may seem like good spiritual insurance, but when a pastor or leader so

"overlays" his people that they feel compelled to get his opinion before making minor, personal decisions, then it is time to cancel that policy and let freedom ring!

This is not an appeal to let every man do that which is right in his own eyes, but rather, it is an appeal to let every man be personally directed by the Spirit within the bounds of his obligations to God and the church. Life must be challenged, but not choked, checked, but not chained by a leader. We all need room to breathe spiritually, and we must not allow our church to become a shroud of death instead of a shrine of life. May the Lord help us not to be so overbearing in our effort to defend spiritual life that we destroy it in the process.

BECAUSE IT WAS NOT DIVIDED

1 Ki 3:25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

Obviously, this would have been a deadly division had it occurred. Happily, it did not. Satan loves to split the church right down the middle and thereby slay the spiritual life within it. He knows that when the unity of the Spirit is destroyed, then the vitality of the Spirit is dead as well. With the division of the living child, as proposed, there was no chance that either half of the child could survive. No wonder Paul warned the Romans to "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" which they had learned "and avoid them!" Rom 16:17

One thing is sure. The one who would rather see the living child divided and dead rather than to lose possession and control of it, is not the true mother. When Solomon ordered the division of the child, the false mother was all for it, but the true mother revealed herself by her immediate unwillingness to divide and kill the child, even though she must give it up to prevent its death.

Even so, a true spiritual leader, who has travailed to bring forth life in the church, would rather lose control of his own spiritual children than to see them slain by division! We do not know that the woman who was accused of smothering her baby actually did so. In point of fact, she may have carefully mothered it, and her accuser's baby may have died as a result of neglect. The scriptural account of this story does not reveal whether it was the accuser or the accused who was the true mother. It does reveal that the true mother would rather die herself to her own rights than to witness the death her own son. Thus, Solomon discerned the false from the true, and thus those who are false or true to the "living child" of the church may be distinguished as well.

BECAUSE IT WAS NOT MISPLACED

1 Ki 3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

If indeed the living child had been briefly kidnapped, the king passed judgment and saw to it that the right one was given possession of the child. Christ will not allow His true church to be kidnapped and controlled by those who did not travail for its life and who do not have its best interests at heart. He has a way of seeing to it that the motherers, and not the smotherers; the unselfish, and not the

ambitious, are placed in the position of leadership over the life of the church. Those who accuse in order to obtain control soon find themselves void of all true spiritual life and in dominion of that which is dead. Those who would rather die maligned and misrepresented than to divide and destroy the church of the living God need not be concerned about possessing their possessions. Christ will recognize them for what they are in their heart of hearts, and will reward them with their proper stewardship in His Household. He will place "the living child" of His church in the care of those who share His genuine, self-sacrificing love for its continued unity, vitality, and purity.

BECAUSE IT WAS NOT DEVOURED

Rev 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

From the moment we receive spiritual life, our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!" 1 Pet 5:8 Obviously, a defenseless child would have no chance by itself against a devouring dragon or lion. God's children, however, are not left by themselves to withstand the devil. Jesus has assured those who are born of God: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb 13:5

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes!
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!
-George Keith

As we walk in the highway of holiness with Jesus as our Guide and Defender, we joyfully discover that "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." While we are not exempt from their loud roars, when we reach the place in our journey where some satanic beast seems certain to slay us, we find that in the narrow way "it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there...and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads!" Isa 35:8-10

The dragon did not devour the child mentioned in Revelation 12. Instead, that child was "caught up unto God, and to His throne." Rev 12:5 I mean to survive as a "living child" of God and be caught up in the rapture at the last trump, don't you?! Praise the Lord! We can make it in if we stay alive, and stay spiritually united with the Body of Christ where, and as, He directs us.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 23

CREATING A SPIRITUAL CLIMATE

Psalm 147:17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

James 1:11 For the sun is no sooner risen with burning heat, but it withereth the grass...

Ezekiel 3:14 I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit...

Our own spirit, like God's Spirit, can be either frosty cold or fervent hot in relationship toward a person or thing. We too, like God, can create climate by that which our spirit casts forth which is either favorable or unfavorable in its affect upon that, or those, around us. We can so climatize the atmosphere in our immediate presence spiritually that certain things or persons cannot stand before our coldness. On the other hand, the heat of our spirit can so quickly wither various spiritual life-forms around us that they must be removed or soon die.

Spiritual climatizing can be a very good thing, for God Himself creates a climate about Him—one which is hostile to sin and favorable to holiness. So cold is the Creator toward sin that "God cannot be tempted with evil." James 1:13 So hot is His hatred of wickedness that He "scattereth away all evil with His eyes." Prov 20:8 We too should create such an holy climate about ourselves. When the lust of the flesh is burning hot around us with every filthy, fervent enticement imaginable, we must have a climate of holy coldness toward it. We must cast forth such an icy environment toward our tempters that they are made to proclaim: "Who can stand before his cold!" Those who are frosty toward evil enticements cannot be tempted long by that which cannot live in their environment. Likewise, "the heat of my spirit" should produce a spiritual atmosphere that is too hot for sin to flourish comfortably in my presence. In a word, the climate we cast forth by our spirit should be unfavorable for the existence and growth of every form of evil.

Conversely, spiritual climatizing can be a bad thing when it is not prompted and controlled by the Holy Spirit, but rather emanates from the human spirit alone. Ezekiel went in the heat of his spirit, but the Lord's hand was upon him to properly control the temperature of his spirit and thus create the right climate around him. Unfortunately, many of the Lord's servants fail to let the Lord's hand control their thermostat. In the human, they create the wrong climate in the wrong place toward the wrong thing and at the wrong time. Sometimes they mean well, and think that they are doing God a service, when in reality their climatizing produces a very adverse effect. Let me illustrate from the natural realm:

During the severe cold of a subzero winter season a king is walking through his greenhouse beholding with delight the beautiful plants and blooming flowers. When he approaches some bins where various types of seed are stored, he notices that some of the packages have been gnawed open and that apparently a colony of mice or rats has moved into the greenhouse and the rodents are

feeding on the seed. Angry with the infestation of these pests, the king finds one of his greenhouse workers and instructs him to do whatever is necessary to eradicate them. The man is a novice, newly hired, and quite flattered that the king has authorized him to eradicate those rodents. He assures the king to just leave it to him and he will get rid of every one of them, and soon! Then, that night, after all of the older, experienced gardeners have departed leaving him to himself in the greenhouse, the man turns the heat entirely off, intending to freeze those rats out of the king's greenhouse for good! He will create a climate that will drive them out, and that right quickly. The next morning, however, when the king returns to his greenhouse he beholds with utter dismay the destructive results of this climatizing by the one who thought he was doing him service. Every plant is either killed or hideously blasted by the subzero temperature, while the rats, warmly ensconced in their nests and filled with precious seed, sleep peacefully within the greenhouse, totally unharmed. Is it any wonder that the king fired the novice!

We are going to be held responsible for the results of the climate which we have created spiritually. We can, and do, kill or drive away certain spiritual life-forms by the climatizing of our spirit. We do create an environment which drives certain people from us and attracts others to us. It may be true that we have not physically forced some people to abandon us and others to come into our presence. Nevertheless, we must receive either the blame or blessing for so doing, just the same, for we created the climate around ourselves which produced those results.

Preachers, churches, and entire denominations create climates of their own, and for which they must give an account. We cannot drive people away by the very atmosphere of hostility toward them which necessitates their departure and then "beg off" from our responsibility therein by saying, "No one made them leave." What hypocrisy such an excuse can be, especially when we intentionally created that hostile climate with the very result in mind which it accomplished! The truly guilty party in a divorce is not always the one who leaves. Often it is the one who stays, but who created the hostile climate in the home that made it virtually impossible for the other to live there any longer. We all know where and when we are not wanted. Jesus Himself will take His departure from whence He is no longer welcome. One need not "shove Him out the door." Just create a climate which is cold toward Him and He will, with grief, leave our house unto us desolate. He knows who wants Him and who doesn't, and we do too.

The Apostle Paul knew about spiritual climatizing when he wrote to the Galatians: "They zealously affect you, but not well...But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Gal 4:17-18 The Galatians had allowed themselves to be climatized by false teachers whose spiritual heat was hostile to Paul so as to drive him away and exclude him from the Galatian church. In like manner, on one of Paul's missionary journeys, "the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren." They created a climate which brought about a split: "the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles." Acts 14:2, 4

"In a good thing," it is right to create a climate which is hostile to evil and favorable to God and His holiness. However, it is "not well" to hastily, and humanly, create spiritual climates which are not authored and controlled by God's Spirit. Such climates are frequently abrasive, divisive, and destructive in their affect upon God's kingdom. After we have caused such climates to emanate from

our spirits, we must give an account for the irreparable damage that they cause to God's tender plants, who could not survive our cold. Again, we shall not be blameless if the ill-affecting heat of our spirit has needlessly withered some of our fellow-workers, forcing them to walk away from our midst into the more moderate climate of middle-of-the-road holiness elsewhere. The climate of true holiness makes it impossible for sin of any kind to survive, but still possible for sanctified men of every kind, with various notions, to live and work and grow in the same spiritual greenhouse. Let this be our type of climatizing, and let us leave the extermination of the pests with God, for He alone knows how to drive out and destroy the rats without killing the flowers.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 24

WHAT IS MAN?

Psa 8:3-6 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

Heb 2:3, 5-6 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him...For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

WHAT IS MAN MATERIALLY?

According to Psa 103:14, the Creator "knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." When we consider the huge, immeasurable mass of the material heavens, the tiny puff of dust composing our frame seems too small in comparison to really matter. Sized up materially, we do not amount to much.

WHAT IS MAN SIGNIFICANTLY?

Although materially we amount to very little, nonetheless, God values us more highly than the entire material universe, for we are more than matter. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made," a higher and greater type of creation than matter, plants, or animals. Our importance stems not from our size or strength but rather from our significance. We were created in the image of God Himself, and this honor and glory with which we were "crowned" was not bestowed upon any others of His creation, the animals, the universe, or even the angels.

WHAT IS MAN MENTALLY?

We are given the capacity to consider and reflect upon things. Materially, "Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature. But he is a reed that thinks. Were the universe to crush man, man is yet nobler than the universe, for he knows that he dies, and the universe, even in prevailing against him, knows not its power." (Pascal) Even with a few cogs missing, our cogitating powers are far superior to those of the highest primates, while yet a little lower than the angels.

WHAT IS MAN MORALLY?

We are accountable. "Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose." Job 34:33 Should it be that we, as mere creatures, must individually make choices which determine our eternal reward and destiny? Yes, it should be because we have been given a mind capable of discerning good from evil and a moral freedom to choose whichever we will. Others may not decide for us, and God will not. The Divine pronouncement as to the eternal reward of every morally accountable individual will be after this fashion: "So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it." 1 Ki 20:40

WHAT IS MAN DESIGNEDLY?

Why did God create us? What was His design, or purpose, for man when He made us? Beyond the pleasure of seeing His likeness in us, God intended that we hold communion with Him, and that we have dominion under Him over the works of His hands. In our reflection, we were to share and show forth His likeness. In our communion, we were to share His love. In our dominion, we were to share His lordship. In this world, God made man to have dominion over the works of His hands. All things were to be put "under his feet," including all earthly matter, plants, and animals. However, "now we see not yet all things put under him" which God intends to put under redeemed man. Heb 2:8

In the world to come, beneath the Triune God, redeemed man will have a dominion that is greater than any earthly kingdom now imaginable. Eternally, under Christ, the elevation of that dominion will be above the angels: "Thou madest him a little lower than (a little while inferior to—margin) the angels.." Heb 2:7 "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." Heb 2:5 The dominion of "just men made perfect" will be over the angels: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" 1 Cor 6:3 What God intends for us beyond the veil is presently hidden from our view, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." 1 John 3:2 Then, that more perfect reflection of His likeness, that closer communion of His love, that higher dominion under His Lordship, will be all for the eternal magnification of the Triune God.

WHAT IS MAN SINFULLY?

He is like a fallen temple "whose ruins...arouse our interest and..make us wonder what the perfect temple must have been. Although the roof, the walls, the pillars are fallen, the stones covered with rubbish and earth, yet one can trace the outlines of the temple and see where the walls went up and where the mighty columns, so exquisitely carved, cast the long shadows." (Macartney) We can see in fallen man both the traces of his former standing before God and the tragedy of his fallen separation from God. We can see, not only what he is in comparison to what he was, but what he is in comparison with what he still should be, and may yet become through God's grace.

Sinfully, man is also like a marred image. Spurgeon once visited Trinity College and viewed a bust of Byron in the library. Seeing the figure from one perspective, he remarked: "What an intellectual countenance! What a grand genius!" Then, the librarian invited him to look at the figure

from a different side, and Spurgeon exclaimed: "What a demon! There stands a man who could defy the Deity!" When Spurgeon asked if this double image was sculpted into the figure by the design of its creator, the librarian replied: "Yes, he wished to picture the two characters..the great..genius that he (Byron) possessed; and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul." Unlike the sculptor of this figure, God did not create two opposite images in man, but when man fell he began to reflect, in addition to the likeness of God, the ugly, warped image of satan, the author of sin.

Sinful man is also like a defeated, dethroned, and imprisoned king: "How shall we escape...What is man?" Heb 2:3, 6 He is the prisoner of satan and sin as long as he neglects the salvation of Christ, his only escape therefrom. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me..?" Rom 7:24 Only Christ can deliver us from the snare of the devil and elevate us once again to our dominion over sin.

What is man sinfully? He is like a dead trespasser, shot in the act entering where he was forbidden—"dead in trespasses and sins." Eph 2:1

Once in medieval Rome there stood in one of the squares an image with an outstretched hand. The forefinger of the image pointed to a certain spot and these words were inscribed: "Strike Here". According to the legend, a learned clerk who often passed by finally discerned the directions and one night dug down beneath the spot where the shadow of the finger fell. He discovered a descending stairway leading into a spacious hall containing rich treasures. He saw also the figure of an archer ready to shoot an arrow and the inscription: "That which I am I am. My fatal aim none can escape." When the clerk began to gather the treasure for himself, the archer "came to life" and shot his arrow. The clerk was mortally wounded and fell dead in the darkened hall. (from Macartney) Such is the fate of those who foolishly follow satan's directions to "Strike here, dig down and help yourself" when God says: "Stay Out".

WHAT IS MAN MINDFULLY?

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Man is more than the forgotten project of God's past creation or the present reject of God's wrath. We are the subject of His continuing thoughts and the object of His compassionate love. He is mindful of us, loves us dearly, and therefore He "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16 Those who repent of sin and obey Him discover He will "raise up the tabernacle. . .that is fallen down," release the captives of sin, revive the spiritually dead, and totally remove the ugly image of satan from their heart. Finally, because He has been so thoroughly mindful of us, the obedient shall be "raised up together" and even now we "sit together in heavenly places Christ Jesus." Eph 2:6 "What shall we then say to these things?" Consider the following scriptures in answer to that question: "The Lord hath been mindful of us...be ye mindful always of His covenant..Give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard..For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." Psa 115:12; 1 Chr 16:15; Heb 2:1

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 25

SERVICE THAT IS DISSERVICE

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Much that is done in the name of Jesus is in reality not a service to God at all, but is rather a disservice to Him. It is a dishonor to His Name, destructive to His Church, discouraging to His saints, and deceptive to its doer. For, while many suppose that they are commending themselves to God by their deeds and earning an increasingly greater heavenly reward, they are, in fact, committing grievous acts which sadden His heart continually and add to the weight of their coming condemnation at the Judgment. Let us notice the following facts about service that is disservice:

IT IS ERRONEOUS SERVICE

It is performed by those who actually think they are serving God by their deeds of disservice to Him. Such was the service of those who "killed the Prince of life" at Calvary. Acts 3:15 Erroneously, they actually thought they were doing God a service: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it.." Acts 3:17 "None of the princes of this world," by Divine wisdom, "knew" how grievously they were in error, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." 1 Cor 2:8

Such was the initial service of Saul of Tarsus, who later testified after his eyes had been Divinely opened: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison...and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities!" Acts 26:9-11

IT IS ENRAGED SERVICE

"The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." James 1:20 Yet many, whose blind rage burns vehemently against those who are truly serving God, think that it is they who are doing God service. Saul of Tarsus, like many today, became "exceedingly mad" during his supposed eradication of error when all the while it was he, and not the objects of his wrath, who was mistaken. Such a service also was that proposed by the enraged James and John when Christ had been shunned by a village of the Samaritans: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them," (like He must many today) "and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of!" Luke 9:54-55

IT IS ELDER BROTHER SERVICE

Luke 15:29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Obviously, the elder brother did not consider his younger brother as even one of his "friends". It may have been his envious, hateful attitude toward his younger brother which, in part, prompted the prodigal to leave. The elder brother's service, because of his carnal attitude, was in reality a disservice to his father. It tended to drive away, instead of draw, others to his father. He boasted that he had never "transgressed...at any time," but while he professed holiness, his heart was overflowing with the hatred of hell, making him more like a poisonous serpent than like a praiseworthy servant of his father. It is such disservice to God even today that often drives away many prodigals from the pews of our holiness churches instead of drawing them to the Heavenly Father.

IT IS EZEKIEL 13:22 SERVICE

Ezek 13:22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

A service that is disservice often carnally browbeats the sweetly sanctified saints of God, causing them to wilt in sadness under the unjust scourge of the one who is determined to set them straight. Sometimes this disservice is done to them by a tyrannical preacher, whose love has leaked out and whose lashing sermons are harder to bear than the whip of Pharaoh's taskmasters. Other times it may be the church boss loudly exploding in the board meeting which saddens the heart of a Lamb-like pastor who is being sheared and nearly slaughtered by that man's horrible spirit. Then again, it may be Mr. Legalist who is bent on lacing down and lining up the joyful new convert directly after that one arises from the altar. Or, it could be Mr. Liberal who coddles seekers in such a way that, in effect, he has "strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." Be it either too harsh or too lenient, the hearts of the truly sanctified are saddened by much that is thought to be service, but is actually disservice to God.

IT IS ELI SERVICE

On the one hand, Eli was slow to judge and permissive toward his family, but on the other hand, he was quick to judge and harsh toward others, like Hannah. Eli's outburst toward Hannah was indicative of the partiality he constantly exercised. Hannah, no doubt, was but one of the many that Eli quickly, harshly, and mistakenly judged while he withheld the execution of judgment against his own favored, but vile, sons. Nepotists seldom focus on what a disservice their permissiveness toward, and promotion of, their family is to God. They know that they shouldn't use their office to promote their family, particularly those who are vile, and yet they do so while misjudging others with a blind, prejudiced severity. Eli's disservice went too far, and God told Samuel: "I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth!" 1 Sam 3:13

IT IS EXCLUSIVIST SERVICE

"They would exclude you, that ye might affect them." Gal 4:17 Exclusivists think that they are doing God a service by shutting out all who will not, or do not, "ride on their bandwagon." They will "exclude you,"—that is, they will get you separated from other brethren, "that you might affect them"—that is, that you might further only their exclusive group. They will not tolerate your having fellowship with those outside their circle, lest you decrease their clique and add to the clout of those they oppose. To belong to their circle is to be their servant, and such an embondaged service to men is not service to God. It is disservice to Him. God's Word declares:

1 Cor 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters.

Mat 4:10 Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

When through fear of other sanctified, influential men, one allows himself to begin to be manipulated by them, then there is a danger that one's service to God will be corrupted. It is not alone the "badness" of what men require us to do, but also the "bondage" of what they require that we should studiously avoid. Exclusivists may not direct us to do anything that is apparently wrong. Nevertheless, when we allow them to do the directing, instead of God, then we have, in effect, become the servants of men, and our service becomes a disservice to God.

Christ was not, is not, an Exclusivist as above described. He would not allow Himself to be forced into the religious cliques of His day—such as that of the Sadducees, that of Pharisees, or that of the Herodians. Neither did He form a clique which excluded others: "John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." John 9:49-50

John's pre-Pentecostal exclusivism remains yet today, and reminds us of the same attitude which Joshua once had: "And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua...said, My lord Moses, forbid them." Moses' reaction was like that of Christ: "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" Num 11:27-29 Such must be our attitude toward all those who follow Christ, but not "with us," lest our labor for the Lord be in reality "service that is disservice."

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 26

THE MAN WHO IS OUR HIDING PLACE

Isa 32:2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

THE HUMANITY OF OUR HIDING PLACE HAS BEEN RECORDED

He Who is our spiritual and eternal Hiding Place is the Man, Christ Jesus. Some have erroneously taught that Jesus was something other than a real man. The fact is, when Christ came among men, He came not simply in the form of a man, but as an actual, flesh and blood human being. Prophecy foresaw that He would come thus: as a child—"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"-Isaiah 9:6; as a man—"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD."-Zec 6:12; "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Zec 13:7

The gospels are replete with references to Jesus as a real man. The apostle John wrote concerning John the Baptist and Jesus: "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."-John 10:4 Pilate spoke of him in words which seem to echo part of Zechariah 6:12 above when he said: "Behold the man!"-John 19:5 Those around Christ during His earthly ministry recognized that He was an actual, flesh and blood, human being. He was not just a visage.

Still, many of Jesus' earthly contemporaries wondered about what type of man he was. Pilate saw that He was a faultless man: "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."-Luke 23:4 The disciples were amazed that He could command the wind and the waves: "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"-Matt. 8:27 Others were awed by His speaking: "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."-John 7:46 Still others wondered where He obtained His knowledge of God's Word: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"-John 7:15 Multitudes marvelled at His power to work miracles: "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?"-Mat 13:54 "And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"-John 7:31 "And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" John 11:37

THE DIVINITY OF OUR HIDING PLACE HAS BEEN QUESTIONED

Some recognized that Jesus, the man, had a close affinity with God. After He restored sight to the man who had been born blind, the healed man said: "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."-John 9:33 Others saw the actual Divinity of Jesus. The awestruck centurion at the cross said: "Truly this man was the Son of God." Mark 15:39 Only God can forgive sin, and thus Acts 13:38 verifies Jesus' Deity: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." As God, Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, and as the God-Man He sits at the right Hand of the Father as our Mediator, our High Priest: "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood...But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Heb 7:24; 10:12

Yes, Jesus, the God-Man is our Mediator, our Hiding Place from the storms of life and the wrath to come. The tragedy is, that so many in Jesus' earthly day, and still today, fail to see that this Man was also God. When He exercised His Divine prerogative and forgave sins, some said: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?"-Mark 2:7 A proud Pharisee doubted that Jesus was even a real prophet: "He spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."-Luke 7:39 Some of the Jews were ready to stone Him because He equated Himself with God: "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John 10:33

While various Jews questioned their appraisal, one group of Pharisees steadfastly labeled Christ as a man who was a sinful, Sabbath breaker: "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."-John 9:16 More than once, Jesus was called a sinner: "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." John 9:24

Often the accusations and negative remarks about Jesus were accompanied with the thought that He was a man: "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."-Luke 15:2 "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"- John 6:52 "Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."-John 7:27 "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar" John 19:12

Jesus was no doubt pained by the many blind and jealous assertions that He was nothing more than a mere man. In one of His parables, He pictured the disdainful, repugnant attitude of those who should have owned Him as their Divine King: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."-Luke 19:14 Even the call for Jesus' crucifixion seems to have in it a denial of His deity: "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."-John 18:40 However, perhaps the most painful denial of His Divinity was that which came from the lips of Peter: "And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man...Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man." Mat 26:72,

74 Oh, how that must have hurt our Savior! He was no doubt quite accustomed to hearing His Divinity questioned by others, but from the lips of one of His chosen apostles, that must have cut deep. Yes, He had prophesied to Peter that it would happen, but did that make it any easier to bear? I doubt that it did.

THE SECURITY OF OUR HIDING PLACE HAS BEEN FOUND

I'm glad that Jesus forgave Peter, and restored him to his Hiding Place, and I'm glad that He has forgiven me also, and countless others across the centuries. What a wonderful refuge we have in Christ! He is indeed, "as an Hiding Place...as the shadow of a Great Rock in a weary land" to those of us who know Him. One song writer expressed it this way:

I have found a Hiding Place when sore distressed,
Jesus, Rock of Ages, kind and true...
Jesus, Rock of Ages, Let me hide in Thee.
Jesus, Rose of Sharon, sweet Thou art to me—
Lilly of the valley, Bright and morning Star,
Fairest of ten thousand to my soul!

In 1973 I received a church publication from Rev. Lowell Foster containing a story that made a lasting impression on me. Now, more than 20 years later, I still have that story. It is entitled: "Hiding Place For A Spy," and it tells of how one who "felt secure" outside of Christ, until suddenly he faced his eternal jeopardy. Then, after feeling "the arrows of distress," he found real security in "Jesus as a Hiding Place." This remarkable account is quoted below:

The H.M.S. Vulture crept up the Hudson River, early in the Fall of 1780, to an anchorage above Stony Point. In the Dusk a young army officer clambered down into a small boat, and was rowed to the shore. There the Britisher was met by Benedict Arnold, commander of West Point. General Arnold was prepared to sell out to the enemy. During the night plans were laid and a bargain was struck to put West Point into the hands of the British.

The British officer returned to Governor Clinton's headquarters in New York by horseback. Near the end of his journey he was waylaid by three American soldiers. They searched him, and the plot was discovered. The captured officer was brought to trial and sentenced to death as a spy. The spy's name was Major John Andre', of the British Army. Meanwhile, Benedict Arnold escaped to the British lines.

While Major Andre' was awaiting his execution, he seems to have given serious thought to eternal matters. Doubtless he recalled his early training given him by his Huguenot parents who had found spiritual refuge in England.

Until he faced death, Andre' had lived the usual social life of an army officer—one continuous whirl of gay functions, but his capture and trial changed all of that. Death for him was but a matter of days. In repentance and faith, he turned to that blessed One who had long before said, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."—John 6:37

Major Andre' found there was amazing grace even for him, and he tasted the fruits of conversion—joy and peace in believing after full repentance. This is set forth wonderfully in his own words in a poem, "My Hiding Place," found in his pocket after he was hanged at Tappan, New York, October 2, 1780. Here is the poem.

Hail, sovereign love, which first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man!
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
Which gave my soul a Hiding Place!

Against the God who built the sky
I fought with hands uplifted high—
Despised the mention of His grace,
Too proud to seek a Hiding Place.

Enwrapt in thick Egyptian night,
And fond of darkness more than light,
Madly I ran the sinful race,
Secure—without a Hiding Place!

But thus the eternal counsel ran:
Almighty love, arrest that man!
I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no Hiding Place.

Indignant Justice stood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;
But Justice cried with frowning face,
This mountain is no Hiding Place!

Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,
And mercy's angel soon appeared:
He led me, with a beaming face,
To JESUS as a Hiding Place.

On Him almighty vengeance fell,
Which must have sunk a world to hell!
He bore it for a sinful race,
And thus became our Hiding Place.

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll,
And shake this globe from pole to pole,
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,
For Jesus is my Hiding Place.

A few more setting suns at most
Shall land me on that glorious coast,
Where I shall sing the song of grace,
And see my glorious Hiding Place!

God's Word tells us in Isaiah 28:17—"Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." Like Major John Andre', many, who have sought to find refuge outside of Christ, have painfully discovered that they had no real Hiding Place. God's providential judgment will often "sweep away the refuge of lies," and "overflow the (false) hiding place," which is actually no real shelter from the wrath to come. After such revealing distress has come, many of us have also happily discovered Jesus, as our Hiding Place. You, dear reader, can also find in Christ your "glorious Hiding Place," if you have not done so already, and if you seek Him while you may. All who have found real security in Christ can testify as the psalmist did in the verses below:

Psa 119:114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word

Psa 32:7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 27

SEVEN TIMES THAT JESUS SAID: "FEAR NOT"

Seven times in the New Testament, Jesus is recorded as saying: "fear not". Let us consider these seven "fear nots" and a truth that is involved with each of them:

THE FIRST INVOLVES FOREWARNING

Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 12:4-5 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Isa 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

Those who can kill only the body are created—ferocious beasts, murderous men, or fallen angels. He Who can destroy both the body and the soul is our Creator. Therefore, we should set the Lord apart in our hearts as the One Whom we shall supremely fear. The Lord did not say that we should never beware of other creatures that pose a threat to our lives. He did forewarn us that we must not fear creatures, in such a way as to be intimidated from obeying God. The consequences of facing the ferocity of a creature can indeed be extremely painful and fatal, but such suffering has an end. The consequences of fearing the creature more than the Creator shall bring eternal suffering in the lake of fire. It should take little reflection to see that fearing God supremely is not only the right choice—it is also the wise choice, and it is a choice which sometimes we are forced to make.

Daniel had to choose between fearing God and fearing hungry lions. He chose to fear God, and the lions devoured Daniel's enemies instead of Daniel. Numbers of Christian martyrs in the Roman coliseum were also forced to choose between fearing God and fearing wild beasts. They too chose to fear God. Probably in most cases the wild beasts did kill their bodies, but none of those fierce creatures could touch their souls.

Mordecai had to choose between fearing God and fearing the murderous Haman. He chose to fear God. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built to execute Mordecai, and the God-fearing Mordecai inherited the honor and position which Haman had coveted. Numbers of Christians have also been forced to choose between fearing God and fearing murderous men. In many cases that choice resulted in the destruction of their bodies, but none of their murderers were able to touch their souls. Consider the following scriptures regarding the peril of fearing man verses the eternal peace and safety which comes from fearing and trusting the Lord:

Psa 118:6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Prov 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Satan loves to "come in like a flood" and frighten whom he can into drawing back from the following the Lord. We must choose between fearing him and fearing the Lord. If we resist him in godly fear, then "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isa 59:19 Hear Jesus' counsel: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev 2:10 While satan was not permitted to kill Job, apparently power to bring about "the destruction of the flesh" is sometimes given to him. 1 Cor 5:5 Still, no matter how many individuals satan and his fallen angels may have killed physically, they have no power to cast the soul into hell.

Just last night I read an interpretation of part of Mat 10:28 which I view as erroneous. It was an interpretation by a well-known Christian writer who has passed on. She wrote: "Fear him [the Devil] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." However, a comparison of Matthew 10:28 with Luke 12:4-5 should make it clear to us that it is not the devil who has power to kill the soul. No! God only has that power. Further, if we expect to be victorious and make it into heaven, then we must ignore the loud roaring of satan and mind God anyway. He alone is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Therefore, if we hope to escape being cast into hell by the Lord, we must fear Him supremely and obey him totally, even if that results in the destruction of our body by some other murderous creature.

THE SECOND INVOLVES FISHERS OF MEN

Luke 5:4-11 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

It would appear that part of what we should see in the above passage is that in order to be successful fishers of men we must follow Christ's supernatural direction, and not always follow what we have learned by experience. Consider the following outline of the above story:

FAILURE—"We have toiled all night, and have taken nothing"

FOLLOWING CHRIST'S DIRECTION—"nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net"

FULLNESS—"they enclosed a great multitude of fishes"

FEARING NOT—Peter suddenly saw his sinful unbelief against the backdrop of Christ's holy power. He felt unqualified to stay in the same boat with Christ. Jesus told Peter to "fear not" because Christ had for Peter, forgiveness and cleansing from his unbelief, and future usefulness as a fisher of men.

FORSAKING ALL—"they forsook all, and followed Him"

One should not fear to confess his sin to Christ. He does not desire to depart from those who see their need. Christ's desire is, rather to forgive and cleanse men from all unrighteousness, so that they can become His fishers of men. Those who "fear not," but who follow Jesus, courageously forsaking all sin, all past failures, all negative, natural wisdom, and all earthly encumbrances—these can "catch men" for, and with, Christ.

THE THIRD INVOLVES FAITH *only*

Luke 8:41-42; 49-56 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him...49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Strong's Dictionary defines the Greek word for "only" which is used in the above passage as follows:

3440. *monon*, mon'-on; neut. of G3441 as adv.; merely:—alone, but, only.

The Greek word "*monos*," of which "*monon*" is a neuter form, is defined as follows:

3441. *monos*, mon'-os; prob. from G3306; remaining, i.e. sole or single; by impl. mere:—alone, only, by themselves.

To "believe only" does not mean that faith without obedience brings Christ's miracle. Rather, it means that to obey Christ we must exercise faith alone, not faith mixed with doubt. In the above account, the clamoring crowd of mourners was cluttering the atmosphere with their scornful

unbelief. Allowing only Peter, James, John, and the dead maiden's parents to enter with Himself, Jesus put out all others, and then He raised the maiden from the dead. It would appear that "only those" who would "believe only" were permitted in the room where Christ performed that miracle. The disbelieving mourners, and even the rest of the disciples, were excluded.

How many others of Christ's disciples, might we imagine, have been excluded from seeing the miraculous work of Christ performed because they have failed to "believe only"? Jesus said: "Fear not: believe only." Apparently, when we as Christians allow our faith to be diluted with any degree of unbelief, then we are not believing "only," and often the result is that we are shut out from fully working with Christ so as to see His mighty work done in our midst.

THE FOURTH INVOLVES FORGETTING

Luke 12:6-7 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

We should not fear that God will forget us, just because we sometimes feel like we are of little or no value to Him. He does not remember us because of the amount of our worth to Him so much as because of the amount of His love for us. Nevertheless, it is true that each of us is more valuable to God than satan would have us believe.

The devil loves to cheapen human life in the minds of fallen men. Satan would have us believe that we are nothing more than the product of evolutionary chance and related to the chimpanzees. Those who swallow his lies are often led to believe that they are only a minute speck of matter in the material universe with no real value and no real purpose in being. The value men place on human life is dramatically on the decrease. No wonder suicide is on the increase!

In warm and wonderful contrast to satan's false devaluation of human life, Christ teaches us that even the sparrows have value in God's sight, and we have much more value to God than they. He teaches us there is a God-given purpose and reason for the existence of each of us, and that God is so momentarily interested in us that He keeps track of every hair on the head of everyone. No, we should not fear that God will forget us. He says in His Word: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa 49:15

THE FIFTH INVOLVES FOOD, FINANCE, AND FORTUNE

Luke 12:29-34 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The Shepherd of God's flock will see to it that we have all that we need if we pay attention to the business of being His sheep and seeking first the kingdom of God. The fear of not having enough of what we need can lead into the greed of desiring more than we ought to have. The following admonition of the apostle Paul in first Timothy corresponds with Jesus' teaching in the passage above:

1 Tim 6:6-10 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

THE SIXTH INVOLVES FOREKNOWLEDGE

Acts 27:23-25 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Before Paul ever embarked on that danger fraught trip to Rome, Christ had ordained that Paul reach Rome. Wrong judgment was made about the hazards of sailing; the winds were furious; the sea was tempestuous; the ship was broken; and Paul was bitten by a "venomous beast," but when Paul was Divinely assured that he "must" be brought before Caesar, then he knew with certainty that God would get him there. The Lord gave him that foreknowledge.

Much of the time, God's people are not certain what shall befall them and how their present crisis will turn out. Sometimes, for all they know, death may be their next appointment, or their present trouble may plunge them into an even deeper trauma. There are other occasions when Jesus draws near, and lets us know that we are going to make it through the present crisis. When we tell others who are "in the same boat with us," so to speak, they may be incredulous. If it is a financial crisis, our banker may shake his head in total disbelief that we can pay him by the set time. If it is a medical crisis, the doctor may advise us to make sure that our will is written and up to date. Nevertheless, whatever the nature of our peril, when Jesus gives us the foreknowledge that we're going through, then not even the President himself could convince us otherwise. Hallelujah!

THE SEVENTH INVOLVES Facing Christ

Rev 1:12-18 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as

dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Throughout the centuries many an individual has turned his, or her, back on God:

1 Ki 14:9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

Ezek 23:35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

Anxious to save those who have turned their backs on Him and have started marching blindly toward eternal death, the Lord has faithfully pled with such:

Ezek 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Still, most have ignored that loving plea, but the day is coming when all will be forced to turn and face Him. On the Day of the Lord, when Christ appears, men who are not prepared to face him will say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev 6:16-17 Their fearful efforts to evade facing Christ will be all in vain, for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb 9:27 There, we shall all face Him, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor 5:10 What a fearful "facing up" to Christ, and "facing up" to the consequences to turning their back on Christ, that Judgment scene will be to the wicked! After the Judgment, the wicked shall never again look upon Jesus' face, but it seems very possible that the blazing visage of Sovereign indignation which the wicked shall behold on Christ's face at the Judgment will be forever etched in their memory as they suffer the pangs of the damned in the lake of fire.

In bright contrast, what a joyful experience it will be for those of us who are redeemed when we see Jesus. Now we see Him but "through a glass darkly, but then face to face." 1 Cor 13:12 The righteous shall "fear not" to face Him. The Bible tells us that "the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Exo 33:11 Looking upon the face of Christ when He appears will, for the righteous, be delightful beyond the power of mortal words to describe! No other friend is nearer and dearer than He. Spiritually, even in this sin darkened world, "When Jesus shows His smiling face, there is sunshine in our souls." Who then can even imagine the degree of joy and

praise which shall flood and overflow from our hearts when we see Him face to face forever in that bright world to come!

Face to face with Christ my Savior! Face to face—What will it be
When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ, Who died for me?

Face to face shall I behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky.

Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!

—Carrie E. Breck--

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 28

PIVOTAL SPIRITUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Luke 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

In the spiritual realm there are certain accomplishments which inevitably turn the soul toward heaven or hell, depending upon our individual choice in regard to these accomplishments. Let us here consider what some of these eternally important pivotal spiritual accomplishments are:

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR SALVATION BY CHRIST

Luke 9:30-31 There talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

The eternal destiny of every soul hung on the success or failure of that accomplishment. Jesus realized that His sacrificial death in behalf of lost mankind was an absolute necessity, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."-Heb 10:4 Because only the Lamb of God could "take away the sin of the world," Jesus declared: "I say unto you, that this that is written must be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors.."-John 1:29; Luke 22:37 Furthermore, Christ eagerly yearned for the accomplishment of His sacrifice as the means whereby "His Divine power" would give "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" to all obedient souls in every place and in every generation: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke 12:50

Prov 13:19 "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul," and Jesus looked forward beyond the bitterness of the cross to the sweet enjoyment of seeing us saved and sanctified: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.."-Heb 12:2 In spite of repeated efforts by satan to kill Him short of the cross, Christ was confident that God the Father would fulfill the prophecies concerning His death in our behalf: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."-Luke 18:31 Finally, as He died on the cross, "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith...It is finished.." John 19:28, 30

I say Hallelujah! The means of our eternal salvation is accomplished! So greatly pivotal is the death of Christ in our behalf, that He is able to save them that come unto God by Him from the guttermost to the uttermost, but those who have spurned His salvation will be turned into hell no matter how high their morals or position in this life.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S WORD

Isa 55:11 So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Through the prophet Jeremiah the Lord said: "I will hasten (or watch over) my Word to perform it." Jer 1:12 Jeremiah prophesied that Judah would be carried away captive into Babylon for seventy years. They were carried away, and at the end of seventy years, "in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to send the Jews back to their homeland. 2 Chr 36:22 Biblical and secular history both repeatedly prove that God's Word always accomplishes that for which it has been sent forth, and its purpose is pivotal: To those who disobey and corrupt His Word, it is made "the savour of death unto death," but to those who obey and receive it, "as it is in truth, the Word of God," it is made "the savour of life unto life." 2 Cor 2:15-17; 1 Th 2:13

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SCATTERING HOLY POWER

Dan 12:7, 8, 10 And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not ...none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Deu 32:29-30 O that they were wise, that they understood this...How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight..

How pivotal concerning spiritual power or weakness is the matter of what we allow to be accomplished in our fellowship with the holy people. The wicked in the world and in the worldly church do not understand the necessity of God's people uniting together in fervent Christian love and frequent assembly. But the wise both hear the admonition of the Spirit to do so and understand the necessity of their mutual charity, unity, and assembly.

When satan is allowed to accomplish his design to separate and isolate us from other holy people, then our power to protect our souls and to propagate the gospel is drastically diminished. But when the Spirit is allowed to accomplish His design to unite and assemble us with other holy people, then our power to protect our souls and to propagate the gospel is dramatically increased, even ten-fold. May God help us to wisely hear, understand and stand together as in these last days perilous times have come upon us all. The day when all earthly things shall be finished is drawing nigh. "Thomas, one of the twelve...was not with them when Jesus came." John 20:24 When Jesus comes again, may He find us all united together in love, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as (we) see the day approaching." Heb 10:25 Sickness, and situations beyond our control, may make it necessary to be absent from public gatherings. Even then, however, we can unite our spiritual power with others in prayer, and perhaps in giving, to see Christ's kingdom come.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S INDIGNATION

Dan 11:36 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, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

While God loves man, He hates sin and has purposed to pour out His indignation upon sin in this world. The pride, prosperity, and profusion of wickedness emanating from the depraved hearts of fallen men is rapidly increasing and will reach its ugly perfection in the man of sin, the anti-Christ. Then, the indignation that is determined shall be poured out upon him and his followers. Just before this occurs, the Lord will call to His people, saying, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Isa 26:20

As it was in the day of Lot's exit from Sodom, the deliverance of the righteous from among the wicked will trigger the deluge of God's judgments upon the ungodly. This pivotal accomplishment of God's indignation upon a wicked world, like the waters of Noah's flood, will both lift the righteous heavenward in their Ark of Salvation and sink the sinful into the depths of eternal damnation. Which of these two consequences shall accompany the accomplishment of God's indignation upon the wickedness of this world will depend upon the earlier choice of each individual. The willing, who have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God unto salvation, will be lifted in rapture, but the willful, who have exalted themselves unto destruction will be sunk under Divine wrath.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR WARFARE

Isa 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished..

Someday, there shall come for each of us "an end of all strife," either against the devil or against God. The final accomplishment of our warfare is eternally pivotal. If we have made peace with the devil and have fought against God, then the end of that strife will bring everlasting judgment upon us in the lake of fire. But, if we have made peace with God and have fought against the devil until the final battle of our warfare is accomplished, then the end of that strife will bring everlasting joy to us in the New Jerusalem. I'm glad I've made peace with God, and I purpose to fight the good fight of faith until my warfare is finally accomplished. How about you? Throughout eternity, the victorious saints of God shall be joyously aware that "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul." Hallelujah!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 29

THE 4 WHYS OF JEREMIAH 8

Jer 8:4-11 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? 5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. 6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. 7 Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD. 8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. 9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? 10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. 11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

Jer 8:14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

Jer 8:19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?

Jer 8:22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

WHY PEOPLE STAY BACKSLIDDEN

Jer 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?

The word "perpetual" here is "*netsach*," which may be translated "continually, that is, to the most distant point of view." (Strong's Dictionary) The question which the Lord here asks, then, not simply "Why do they repeatedly backslide?," but rather "Why do they backslide to the farthest distance and then continually remain in that place?" This meaning of Jeremiah 8:5 is supported by the questions which the Lord asks in 8:4, the verse immediately preceding. With the above stated definition of "perpetual" in mind, now consider Jeremiah 8:4 and 8:5 together: "Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he (the backslider) turn away, and not return? Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?" The answer to why the people of Jerusalem stayed away from the

Lord in their distant, backslidden condition is answered, at least in part, in the quotations which follow:

Jer 8:5b "they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return."

Many remain backslidden by refusing to let go of their empty profession which has long been void of the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. They hold fast this profession, which keeps them from humble returning and Divine refilling.

Jer 8:6 "no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?"

Others stay backslidden by refusing to admit that what they have done is indeed "wickedness" which has separated them from God. They say "it is no sin," and therefore they are still saved, even though God's Word and His Spirit declare plainly that such an act separates the soul from real salvation.

Jer 8:6b "every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle."

Stubborn souls are often quick to turn to their self-determined course, but in no rush to return from their backsliding. They run loose on the range of their own waywardness and are as hard to "roundup" as a wild bronco. Someday, unless they cease their proud prancing, they will be Divinely shot outside the City and fed as dogfood to the hounds of hell.

Jer 8:7 "the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord."

Judgment is coming, but many stay backslidden with less discernment than the birds, who instinctively know when it is time to migrate out of the cold and come home. The wise fowls return, escaping death in the coming cold, while unwise backsliders remain in their sins, facing eternal death at the coming Judgment.

Jer 8:8, 9 "How do ye say, We are wise...they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"

Many backslide into false doctrines which in reality reject the true Word of God. They have departed from God, are dead wrong and headed for damnation, and yet they are like one who "is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason."-Prov 26:16 "Professing themselves to be wise, they (have become) fools," and often there is little use in trying to reason with them, and very little hope that they will ever escape their "strong delusion" and return from their backslidden condition. No wonder Paul wrote: "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Titus 3:10-11

Jer 8:11 "they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."

Numbers of people remain backslidden because their supposed return to God was nothing more than a shallow, emotional trip to an altar. They shed a few tears but did not shed their sins. They felt "slightly" better, but the one who falsely assured them of peace did not even deal with the hidden spiritual hurt causing their trouble, let alone heal it. Sadly, while many such have returned to church and returned to an altar, they have never returned to God.

WHY THE CHURCH SITS STILL

Jer. 8:14 "Why do we sit still?"

The answer is seen at the end of the verse. Just as in the case of Achan, "because we have sinned against the Lord." Sin in the camp will always cause the church to stand still, and eventually sit still. Praises stop as well as progress: "let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there."-Jer 8:14 Expectations are disappointed: "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!"-Jer 8:15 The enemy invades and parades his power: "The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land.."-Jer 8:16 Brother bites brother as wrong spirits enter in: "For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you.."-Jer 8:17 Sorrow replaces strength "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me."-Jer 8:18 Souls are taken captive into the "far country" of sin and the presence of God disappears: "Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of My people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her king in her?"-Jer 8:19 All these things take place, and more, when sin in the camp causes the church to sit still.

WHY PEOPLE PROVOKE THE LORD

Jer. 8:19 "Why have they provoked Me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?"

I Corinthians 10:21 may help answer that question: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils...Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" Like many today, Judah tried to love the Lord and at the same time love their "graven images and strange vanities." cf. Jer 8:1-3, 19 The Lord was greatly provoked to anger by this and declared that He would drive the residue of Judah to the place where "death shall be chosen rather than life." When people provoke the Lord by loving strange vanities, they will hate the consequences of their devious devotion. Others provoke the Lord by their strong determination to have their own way, but Paul asks, "are we stronger than He?" At the Judgment all will discover that "The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him." Psa 81:15 For then, by His irresistible omnipotence, He will cast every impenitent rebel into everlasting punishment never to rise again in puny rebellion and provocation against His Almighty will.

WHY PEOPLE DIE IN SIN

Jeremiah 8:22 "Why then is not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?"

Through the salvation of Christ, all who will "may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil" and out of the second, eternal death of sin. Why, then, do most people die in sin, "unrecovered"?

Delayed repentance is one reason:

Hosea 6:11 "O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee.." But Judah's testimony was like that of many who die in sin: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." -Hosea 8:20 It is too late because they have delayed too long to repent and get right with God.

I read a little story some time ago that was close to the following: A man who happened to be at the train depot saw a little boy running to catch a train which was starting to pull out. The little boy almost made it in time to board the train, but not quite. The interested man said to the boy: "You didn't run fast enough. You should have run faster." The lad replied: "No, that's not it. I ran as fast as I could. I just didn't start soon enough!"

Beloved, when Jesus returns, some folks will no doubt be in a great hurry to repent and get right, but they won't be able to "catch the train" of salvation then. It will have already "left the station," and they will forever miss it because they delayed too long to start getting right with God!

Denial of the truth is another reason:

As Judah's intercessor, Jeremiah felt the burden of their guilt upon himself and confessed for them what most of them never admitted: "I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me." Even after Holy Ghost conviction has astonished and gripped some, they still refuse to confess the blackness of their sinful hearts and lives and they die in deceitful darkness.

Diagnosis and Doctoring by false, spiritual physicians:

Quack, spiritual doctors abound today, but as "forgers of lies, (they) are all physicians of no value." Job 13:4 They deceive greatly and heal slightly when radical surgery is desperately needed. "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" -Jer 8:22 Yes, thank God, there is. His prescription is radical repentance to tear away sin. His medication is the healing balm of His blood: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." Hosea 6:1-2

Hallelujah! Those who submit to the painful surgery of radical repentance may find it grievous for a few days while it hurts, but when The Great Physician applies the balm of His salvation they are soon revived, raised up, and totally recovered so as to "live in His sight" for time and eternity!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 30

PAUL'S OPPOSITE MEMBER, JAMES

Acts 21:17-18 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

Ecc1 7:14 God also hath set the one over against the other...

1 Cor 12:18-20 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

God sets the members in the Body of Christ as it pleases Him, not as duplicates of each other, but often as direct opposites such as one's right and left limbs. This creates a balance in the Body which would be lacking if as duplicates we were "all one member." 1 Cor. 12:18-19 As members of the Body of Christ, Paul and James were certainly not duplicates, and it would appear that concerning certain issues they took opposite positions. Perhaps God "set the one over against the other" to help create a doctrinal balance in Christ's Body which might otherwise have been lacking. Indeed much of the teaching in James' epistle seems to be the antithesis of some of Paul's teaching in Romans and Galatians. Paul declares in Romans 3:28 that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," and James declares in James 2:24 that "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

This is not to say that Paul and James had no fundamental unity of agreement in their mutual attachment to Christ, but rather to say that, like a right and left arm, they tended to lean in opposite directions on certain issues and they tended to emphasize opposite aspects of some truths.

James, the Lord's half-brother, and Paul both rose to positions of prominence and leadership in the church apparently at about the same time—following Pentecost, and following the initial prominence of Peter. This James is first mentioned in Matt.13:55: "Is not this (Jesus) the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, an Simon, and Judas?" Being listed first among Jesus' brethren, we might take it that James was the eldest of those brothers—Joseph's first son by Mary, following the virgin birth of Jesus.

James and Jesus' other brothers did not at first believe in Him. Still, the Bible does record their presence among the 120 in the upper room:

John 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Thus, James was baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. Prior to that, Jesus singularly manifested Himself to James following His resurrection:

1 Cor 15:7 After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

Who knows? Perhaps Jesus especially appeared to James to ordain him as the leader of the church at Jerusalem. In Acts 12, following Peter's miraculous deliverance from Herod's prison, we see that James, the Lord's brother, has emerged as one of the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. Peter told those who were astonished at his deliverance to report of it to James:

Acts 12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

In Galatians, Paul speaks of James as an apostle:

Gal 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Though this James was not one of the original apostles chosen by Christ, he had come to be recognized as an apostle by the time Paul met with him. At the time Paul and Barnabas were given the right hands of fellowship among the apostles, James is listed even before Peter and John:

Gal 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Apparently, by the time Paul and Barnabas were thus "inducted" into the apostleship, James had become the most prominent leader in the Jerusalem church. He delineated the sphere of Paul's apostleship as "unto the heathen," and the sphere of his own apostleship as "unto the circumcision". At the Jerusalem Counsel, conducted to determine just what would be required of the Gentile converts, it was James, not Paul, Peter, or Barnabas, who had the last word:

Acts 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

It would seem, from Paul's remarks in Galatians 2, that Paul may have felt that James was not only somewhat too prominent but also somewhat too dominant in the affairs of the church. Perhaps he suspected that James had used his family relationship with Christ to establish himself as a "pillar in the church." If others felt that James' opinions carried added weight because he was Christ's half-brother in the flesh, Paul did not. Alluding in part to James, Paul wrote:

Gal 2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

No previous human relationship with Christ added one ounce of importance to that man's person as Paul viewed him. He declared:

2 Cor 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

From the scriptural accounts involving the relationship of Paul and James, one can seemingly detect a degree of mutual misunderstanding and distrust of one another's opposite positions. Paul may have feared that James' ecclesiastical and doctrinal position would lead the church into a legalistic bondage to men and to the ceremonial law. While James, on the other hand, may have feared that Paul's doctrinal assertions would lead the church into that which goes beyond true liberty and becomes license to violate the moral law. The most striking differences between Paul and James are seen in Galatians, chapter 2 and in Acts, chapter 21.

In Galatians 2:12 Paul points the finger at James as the source of the Judaistic influence which had been sent forth to Antioch and which had swayed both Peter and Barnabas to dissimulate and abandon their eating with the Gentile converts:

Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Paul stoutly withstood this influence sent forth from James. He was determined that those under the influence of his apostleship should not, would not, be brought into bondage to either men or to the ceremonial law. He rebuked Peter for vacillating between "the truth of the gospel" (that there is to be no separation in the Church between Jew and Gentile) and James' Judaistic influence, which continued to make ceremonial and social distinctions between Jewish and Gentile believers in the Church.

James and his followers continued to espouse the necessity that Jewish believers follow certain "customs" and parts of the ceremonial law as well as the rite of circumcision. In Romans, Galatians, and Colossians Paul refuted this concept, and in Philippians he painted, as it were, a big, red, warning sign which read:

Phil 3:2-3 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

To sum it all up, Paul seems to have felt that:

James had too much confidence in the flesh;

James was too tied to the ceremonial law;

James was advocating teachings within the Church which brought Christians into bondage both to James himself and to that part of the law which had been done away in Christ.

On the other hand, in Acts 21 we see James expressing his fears concerning the influence of Paul's teaching:

Acts 21:20-21 Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

James did not want believers to "throw out the baby with the bath," so to speak. He apparently felt that in the process of forsaking Moses' ceremonial law some would forsake also the moral law. After all, the Christ, James' Brother, had plainly taught:

Mat 5:17-18 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

James insisted that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10 He did not want to be guilty of teaching men to "break one of the least commandments" and thus bring upon themselves God's total condemnation. Mat 5:19 Let the Gentiles be free from what had never been Divinely imposed upon them, he felt, but he did not perceive the Jews as free to abandon the rite of circumcision and certain other customs, even though they had trusted in Christ as their Sacrificial Lamb once and for all time. James feared abandoning too much. He did not want liberty to become license to sin.

Indeed, it appears that some may have thus interpreted Paul's message of liberty from "the curse of the law":

2 Pet 3:15-16 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Jude, James' brother, may have echoed their common concern about those who construed Paul's declaration of liberty from the law to mean license to violate the moral law and thus become guilty of "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.." Jude 4

Of course, what Paul really taught was that while believers are freed from performing the ceremonial "deeds of the law" through Christ, they possess an even greater obligation to perform the deeds of the moral law, because that inviolable law is written on the fleshly tables of every true believer's heart by the Holy Ghost.

In regard to the keeping of the law, an honest assessment of the opposite positions of these two men compels us to admit that Paul was more correct in his doctrinal position than was James. Yet,

perhaps Christ intended James to be Paul's brotherly antagonist on this issue. Maybe they stood opposite one another doctrinally in such a way as to create a center of the road position by the church between the two extremes of legalism and license.

Like many of us today, they certainly had their differences, and those areas in which they were not alike went beyond their personalities. Their ministries were also different and their private lives were different:

Paul was single, but James was married:—1 Cor 9:5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Paul's ministry was "out of Jerusalem" and to the Gentiles: Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Acts 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee..

James' ministry was in Jerusalem and "to the twelve tribes": James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

However, unlike many of us today, there is no record that Paul and James allowed their striking differences to sever their brotherly relationship in the Body of Christ. Was not their mutual compassion stronger than their continual tension? Thus, while the right arm took his proper position and the left arm took the opposite position, there is no real evidence that either of them attempted to cut the other off from the Body of Christ. Paul wrote:

1 Cor 9:19-20 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

Thus, when Paul got on James' "Home Turf," Jerusalem, instead of adamantly refusing to acquiesce to James' request that he publicly act the part of a practicing Jew, Paul wisely complied:

Acts 21:20-26 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into

the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

For the sake of love, peace, and unity within the Church, Paul leaned as far as he could toward James while he was within the sphere of James' ministry. He strongly believed that Christians should be free from the ceremonial encumbrances of the law, the needless forbidding of certain meats included, but rather than wreck the Church over the matter Paul made some wise compromise with James, and he taught others to follow that example:

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Rom 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Paul may have considered James "weak in the faith," but he had no desire to see him "wounded in the faith". His attitude toward James concerning their differences may be reflected in the following passage. Paul wrote:

Rom 14:1-6 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Paul also lovingly followed the truth found in 1 Peter 2:16. He did not use his freedom in Christ as a cloak of maliciousness toward James:

1 Pet 2:16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

James, Paul's brotherly opposite, was also magnanimous in the expression of his love for Paul in spite of their differences. At the Jerusalem Counsel, James spoke of Barnabas and Paul as "our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 15:25-26

Paul and James were divided in some of their views, but remained united in their mutual love for Christ and for one another. Thus it always is between my opposite brother and I while we both remain truly sanctified: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," no matter how opposite they may be as members of the Body of Christ. Heb 2:11

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 31

NECESSITIES ILLUSTRATED BY FOOTWASHING

John 13:4-17 Jesus...riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Job 28:4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

THE MEANING in CHRIST'S ACT

For the most part, footwashing is a forgotten practice, "dried up" and "gone away from men" who are followers of Christ. However, after Jesus had washed the disciple's feet, He did say: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:15 In so saying, did He intend that the actual practice of footwashing be continued, or was it only His "example" that He wanted continued? When our Master washed the disciples feet, there was a meaning in what He did, for Jesus asked: "Know ye what I have done to you?" Beyond the act of what Jesus did was the more important example which He set before us.

Therefore, while Jesus perhaps never intended that the actual practice of footwashing be perpetuated in the Church, He did purpose to point out to all generations of His followers certain vital necessities in our service to Him. While He may be little concerned about whether or not we go through the motions of a footwashing ceremony, He is definitely concerned that we incorporate into our living the spiritual necessities which He illustrated. He is grieved when these things are forgotten, dried up, and gone away from men who name His name, and He would have them break out like a flood from the inhabitants of His Church. What were some of the spiritual necessities which Christ exemplified when He washed His disciples feet? Let us consider four of them:

THE NECESSITY OF PURITY IN OUR SERVICE

John 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Song 5:3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

When Christ washed the disciples feet it symbolized the need of every would be servant of God to be washed from the defilement of sin by the blood of Jesus. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord," but all have sinned by stepping out of the pure path into the filth of transgression. Thus, if Jesus has not washed us we have no part in Him.

Exo 40:30-32 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: 32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Both this Old Testament type and the New Testament, symbolic act of footwashing teach us that we must be separated and washed from sin if we truly serve God here below and set foot in the holy city above. But, Christ alone is our laver of washing from the defilement of sin. "He which is filthy" and attempts to be washed in any other way is "filthy still". Rev 22:11 But the defiled who penitently leave the mudhole of sin and let Jesus wash them are made whiter than snow. Then, if they "follow peace with all men and holiness" to the end of life's way, they shall forever sing in a holy heaven the praises of "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Rev 1:5 Hallelujah!

THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN OUR SERVICE

1 Sam 25:41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

What condescension we see here! The High and Holy One became the meek and lowly one. The King of kings and Lord of lords became the servant of all. Abigail's statement to David in 1 Sam 25:41 above shows us that footwashing was a job for an humble servant, not for the master of the house. When Jesus laid aside His garments and girded himself with a towel like a servant, He was demonstrating more than an act that He wanted us to repeat. He was illustrating an attitude which we must continually have if we are to please Him—the attitude of true humility which minds not high things but condescends to men of low estate and is willing to be the servant of all. He said: "I have given you an example.."

Perhaps Peter was remembering this wonderful display of the humility of Christ when years late wrote: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by

constraint...Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2-3 A pastor is to humbly exemplify service for Christ, rather than to harshly drive others to it as their lord. The point is: If the Lord humbly acted like a servant to His flock, then the servant must not haughtily act like a lord over His flock. A pastor's oversight must not be exercised with carnal constraint, but rather with genuine concern and gentle compassion in all humility. Too often this is violated. It might not hurt some pastors to occasionally do some menial task for one of their flock, as a reminder that the servant is not greater than his Lord.

THE NECESSITY OF CHARITY IN OUR SERVICE

Psa 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

John 13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?..18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

What an unusual example of charity Jesus left us! He lovingly washed the heel of Judas who was about to betray him. Jesus knew what satan had put into Judas' treacherous heart to do. Yet, so magnanimous was Jesus' heart, so filled with perfect love, that he washed the feet of the one who would soon lead forth His enemies to arrest Him. Joseph, who so beautifully typifies Christ, left us a similar example. Joseph's servant brought his treacherous, deceitful brothers "into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet." Gen 43:24 His brothers had cast him "into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it," but in return he gave them water to wash their feet. It was Joseph, "whose feet they hurt with fetters," that showed this kindness to his cruel and unworthy brothers. Psa 105:18

How like the example of Jesus this was, and yet how different from the uncharitable and vengeful spirit which is often manifested today by some who name the Name of Jesus. Perfect love not only casteth out fear, but it also casts out carnal hatred, revenge, and bitterness from our hearts as well. Hallelujah! If the perfect love in Christ could tenderly wash the feet of the one who would cause His feet to be nailed to the cross, then surely God's perfect love in us should at least enable us to love the brethren who disagree with our notions! It will, if we really have the second work of grace which we profess. None of our outward standards "availeth anything" unless we possess Holy Ghost "faith which worketh by love"—for friend and foe alike. Gal 5:6

THE NECESSITY OF REALITY IN OUR SERVICE

1 Tim 5:9-10 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Paul was not insisting here that a widow must have "washed the saints' feet" in some religious ceremony. The very context of his statement proves that this qualifying act of "footwashing" was to have been part of a life of real, practical service to Christ and to other saints. When tired, footsore and footweary saints of God came her way, did she demonstrate the sincerity of her love by actually washing their weary feet? Had she endeavored to provide for the lodging and necessities of other Christians when the occasion called for such? That was the question, and it was not a question of whether or not she had taken part in footwashing ceremonies. Repeatedly in the scripture, the washing of other's feet, or the providing of water for them to wash their own feet, was the manifestation of a common, practical courtesy:

Gen 18:4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

Gen 19:2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

Gen 24:32 And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

Judg 19:21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

After washing the disciple's feet, Jesus asked: "Know ye what I have done to you?" Then later, He said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:12,17 Surely He was not emphasizing the need for a religious ceremony so much as the need for a practical service to others. The reality of our love must be demonstrated by our doing of practical tasks and not just by our saying of meaningful truths. Of course, there are times when, because of illness or other obligations, that we cannot do some things. Still, the principle of serving others must be instilled within our hearts and should be worked out in our lives when it is possible and when our duty to Christ calls for such. When we know that we should serve Christ and others in purity, humility, charity, and reality, then happy are we if we do so.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 32

COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS

1 Cor 2:12-14 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

In the phrase "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," the Greek word for "comparing" is from "*sunkrinontes*" and the phrase has been variously translated:

"explaining spiritual things to spiritual men"—Adam Clarke

"by spiritual means spiritual things communicating"—George Berry

"expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."—NIV

However, without entering into a detailed discussion here of just what is the precise meaning of the Greek word *sunkrinontes*, we may safely observe that one of the ways in which "the natural man" misinterprets the scripture is by wrongly comparing spiritual things with natural things. For the sake of illustrating certain Divine truths, some comparisons are legitimate and wise, such as:

Lam 4:2 The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

Mark 4:30-31 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

However, the matter of comparing spiritual things with natural things is fraught with certain dangers which must be avoided, for spiritual things cannot be compared in every detail with natural things. Untaught by the Holy Ghost, the natural man, supposing himself to be a wise spiritual teacher, is apt in this way to greatly err from the truth. "The word's which man's wisdom teacheth," (his comparisons and resulting conclusions) may seem profound and yet be as false as store-bought teeth.

The real truth, as communicated to spiritual, sanctified saints by the Holy Ghost seems like "foolishness unto him." Conversely, the fanciful but false interpretations of the natural man, which he has arrived at by erroneously comparing spiritual things with natural things, seem to him like "the deep things of God" which are only grasped by others as wise as he in the matter.

Consider the matter of the new birth. Right here, many today who consider themselves as "masters of Israel" are as ignorant of the real truths about being born again as was Nicodemus of old:

John 3:7-10 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Like Nicodemus, many would-be expounders of the facts concerning the new birth make wrong comparisons and draw wrong conclusions because, even though they may have a doctorate in theology, they have never been really born again themselves. When Nicodemus compared spiritual birth with natural birth, it seemed impossible to him that a man could be born when he was old:

John 3:4, 9 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Nicodemus wrongly compared spiritual birth with natural birth. In like manner today, by wrongly comparing spiritual birth with natural birth, some unregenerate theologians think it impossible for one who has been born again to ever become "unborn" or cease to be a child of God. Like Nicodemus they question: "How could this ever be? A man who is born into this world is always born naturally, and therefore when a man is born again, is he not always born again no matter what he does?"

The answer to such fallacious reasoning "which man's wisdom teacheth" is an emphatic NO! Jesus instructed Nicodemus that spiritual birth is distinctly different from natural birth. Nicodemus could "not tell" what spiritual birth was like by comparing it to natural birth. Therefore, he was not to wrongly compare the two different types of birth and conclude that being born again is impossible:

John 3:6-8 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Likewise, the over-wise, unregenerate, spiritual instructors of today should not marvel about how one can become unborn after having been born again. Whether they believe it or not, it is not only possible for one to forfeit spiritual birth, but probable if a person is foolish enough to think that he can never lose his sonship. It matters whether a man thinks he cannot fall when he steps off of a precipice. The law of gravity will tragically prove the folly of his false assumption. Spiritual birth is governed by spiritual laws, and God has written into those laws the possibility of forfeiting our new birth and falling from grace. One would not move to a different country and assume that the laws were identical in both places. Rather, if he were wise, he would try to learn how the laws of his new country differed from those where he had previously lived, lest by ignorance he become a lawbreaker and suffer the consequences.

An honest examination of the Biblical laws of God which govern spiritual birth reveals striking differences from those which govern natural birth:

The natural birth came to us without our consent. The new birth can only come to us with our consent to the will of God: "But many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.." John 1:12-13

The natural birth separates us from our parent, and our life is not always dependant upon our mother and father. The new birth unites us with God Father and continues only as we cling to Him in faith and obey Him in our will and walk.

As long as God's Word or "seed remaineth in him" through his continued obedience, the child of God "cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9 But we must "Let the word of Christ dwell in (us)" by continued faith and obedience, or through our sin we will force the Word, God's Seed, from our heart and thereby cease to be "born of God". Col 3:16

"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" I hope Nicodemus stopped making comparisons of the spiritual with the natural in wrong ways and began "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" through being truly "born again" and baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. The vital differences between the natural birth and the new birth are not "foolishness" to those are really saved and sanctified wholly, "because they are spiritually discerned." "With what comparison shall we compare" spiritual things? Shall we compare spiritual things with natural things? No, not always, for that can lead one into great error and possibly into damnation. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" under the illumination of the Holy Spirit is required if we are to rightly perceive the experiences of God's grace and avoid the perils of false doctrine.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 33

WHY REPENTANCE IS IMPERATIVE

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus said that "just persons...need no repentance," but that He came to call "sinners to repentance." He made it very clear that it was absolutely imperative for sinners to repent of all sin in order to be saved. This requirement includes all sinners, from the greatest to the least.

Luke 13:2-5 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Jesus declared here that to suppose or to think that it is the degree or amount of one's sinning which determines his salvation or damnation is false and eternally fatal. Repentance from all sin in order to be saved is God's unchanging requirement:

Ezek 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Why is total repentance imperative before one can be saved?

BECAUSE REPENTANCE MAKES SAVING FAITH POSSIBLE

"With the heart (not with the head) man believeth unto righteousness.." Rom 10:10 It is utterly impossible for an "impenitent heart" to really believe unto salvation. Rom. 2:5 Impenitence paralyzes true saving faith. As with multitudes of pseudo-believers, one can mentally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ while continuing to sin, but it is a false faith that does not bring real salvation. Total repentance from sin allows faith to be exercised from its true source, the heart, so that one can receive the end of that faith, even the genuine salvation of his soul. 1 Pet 1:9

Jesus Himself said of some: "ye..repented not..that ye might believe.." Mat 21:32 His message is first "repent ye," and then "believe the gospel." Mark 1:15 "Repentance toward God" always precedes genuine "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21 The hardness of impenitence

imprisons faith in the heart like the hardness of ice in a glacier imprisons moisture. It is impossible for such moisture to be released until heat brings that ice to the melting point.

Even so, it is not possible for saving faith to be released and exercised until the heat of Holy Ghost conviction melts the heart from a hard, impenitent state into the submissive softness of genuine repentance. When godly sorrow has worked a repentance not to be repented of forever, and one's "heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water," willing to completely obey and be turned "withersoever He will," then saving faith can be exercised. Prov 21:1 Hallelujah! No wonder God wills that all should come to the melting point of repentance. Let Him shine upon the frozen darkness of your heart with the warming sunlight of His truth long enough and He will bring you there so that you can then truly believe unto the saving of your soul. 2 Pet 3:9; Heb 10:39

BECAUSE SACRIFICE WITH A WICKED MIND IS AN ABOMINATION

Prov 21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

Under the Old Covenant, if a man who was actively wicked (with no "mind" to repent) would have brought a sacrifice to atone for his sins, then that sacrifice would not have been acceptable in his behalf. No matter how perfect his sacrifice may have been, insofar as that sacrifice was offered for him while he remained impenitent, God considered it an abomination. It could not atone for his guilt.

Even so, while "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," God demands that through repentance we "purge out the old leaven" of sin from our lives before that perfect offering is acceptable in our behalf. 1 Cor 5:7 Indeed, it is an abomination in God's sight for one with a wicked, impenitent mind to present Christ as his atoning sacrifice! The death of Christ does not avail for those who continue sinning: "For if we sin wilfully...there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Heb 10:26 Many impenitent professors of salvation who suppose that Jesus' sacrifice is the atonement for all of their past, present, and future sins, will discover at the Judgment what an horrible abomination their satanic, pseudo-sacrifice is in His eyes! Jesus Himself, their supposed sacrifice, will say to them: "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!" Mat 7:23

BECAUSE REPENTANCE TURNS US FROM ETERNAL RUIN

Ezek 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezek 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

One cannot be saved from physical death who persists in marching toward and over the precipice of a 2000 foot deep canyon with nothing to prevent his fall. Neither can one be saved while still persisting to take the wrong direction spiritually so as to drop him over the precipice of time into the

eternal lake of fire. "Such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses" is not saved, for he is headed in the wrong direction, religious though he may be. Psa 68:21 Heaven is 180 degrees in the opposite direction from the way that the world, the flesh, and the devil are headed, and it will take a repentance that turns one totally toward God to "save a soul from death."

BECAUSE REPENTANCE TURNS US UNTO LIFE

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Jesus is "the Life" of God. Repentance is the trip we must take "unto life". Many have the testimony who have never taken the trip. They think they have eternal life, but they have never turned from sin and taken the route of repentance which leads to life.

John 5:39-40 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

One can only come to Christ, the Author and Giver of Life, over the rugged road of radical repentance. This includes honest confession, restitution, and rectifying all wrongs as much as possible with those we have sinned against. No wonder then that most people "will not come" to Christ, God's Life, and be quickened from their spiritual death in trespasses and sins. But, Hallelujah!, the route of repentance is "granted" unto us. We can take it if we will. No thing, nobody, no devil can keep us from it. Sinner friend, like the straying Prodigal son who was dead in sin, come to yourself, then come "unto Life" over the total, humble route of repentance. At the end of that journey you'll feel the Father's warm embrace and the echo of Heaven's announcement will vibrate with all of His quickening power throughout your soul: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!" Luke 15:24

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 34

"HE THAT DOETH RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Psa 106:3 Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

He that doeth righteousness is AWAKE spiritually

1 Cor 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Many today are asleep to the truth concerning "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.." Rom 3:22 They believe the erroneous teachings of those who "justify the wicked...and take away the righteousness the righteous from him!" Isa 5:23 In regard to his prayer for forgiveness and justification, the sinner must always plead only the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the sinless One slain in his stead: "I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of thine only." Psa 71:16 This is necessary because while an individual's evil works always alienate the soul from God, the sinner's good works can never blot out his evil works and make him pure in God's sight. Regardless of our good works, while living in sin "we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.." Isa 64:6

The righteousness of God becomes ours only by penitently pleading the merits of Jesus' righteousness and His shed blood in our behalf. Still, in regard to our practice after we have become forgiven and made righteous through Jesus' blood, "let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous."—not he that claims Jesus as his Savior and continues to do evil, for "he that committeth sin is of the devil.." 1 John 3:7 Repentance of evil doing must accompany our faith in Jesus' righteousness in our behalf or we will not be made righteous. We must not only "depart from evil," but we must also "do good" if we "dwell forevermore" with God, and that doing of righteousness must continue throughout the remainder of our life if we remain in a right standing with God. "He that doeth righteousness at all times" is righteous, not he that began to do right and quit at some time after his repentance.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God spoke of the house of Jacob's false righteousness. They had left off doing righteousness and were committing sin:

Isa 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

In other words, they claimed to be righteous without doing righteousness, and they pawned themselves off as being the people of God without doing God's commandments. We must take heed lest we fall into the like condition and deception: "Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth," seek him Who justifies the wicked only after they repent of all evil doing, and Him Who declares as righteous only he that doeth righteousness. see Amos 5:7-8

He that doeth righteousness is ALIVE spiritually

Rom 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

1 Pet 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

When one dies to sin, he is given spiritual life because of the righteousness of Christ presented to God in his behalf, but that gift of life causes him to live unto righteousness and no longer live in sin. cf. Rom 6:1-4 Furthermore, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he loses his spiritual life and will suffer the second death unless he repents:

Ezek 18:26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

In harmony with the New Testament, Ezekiel declares both sides of the issue:

Ezek 18:27-28 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

"Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God." 1 John 2:29 They have spiritual life, but only those who keep that life by living the life of the righteous will "die the death of the righteous" and at their "last end" inherit eternal life in heaven.

He that doeth righteousness is APART spiritually

2 Cor 6:14, 17 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2 Tim 2:20-21 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

All are "as an unclean thing" when living in either riotous sin, or religious sin. Isa 64:6 He that doeth righteousness must not only be separate from riotous sinners, but he must also be separate from many religious sinners. In the Great House of the professed Church there are both genuine Christians "to honour," and sinning, false professors "to dishonour". We must purge ourselves of fellowship with the sinning religionists so that we can be vessels "unto honour". The Master cannot keep us righteous and use us in His work unless we are sanctified, purged from evil, both in our hearts and in our outward lives.

He that doeth righteousness is ABOVE spiritually

Psa 89:16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

Psa 71:19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

Psa 36:6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

The grace of God lifts us up above the quagmire and filth of sin so that we "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Hallelujah! "From depths of sin and sadness to the heights of joy and gladness," Christ exalts those who come unto God by Him. God's "righteousness is like the great mountains," exalted very high above the earth, but in contrast, His "judgments are a great deep."

Like pilots bound for a fatal crash, those who live below the high level of God's righteousness will eventually collide with the pinnacles of purity, and plummet down those mountainsides into the eternal depths of everlasting judgment and destruction. With great speed, and totally unaware of their impending impact, many earthly fliers have thus met their fate, and countless more will thus crash spiritually and fall into "great deep" of God's wrath because they believed and behaved below the true level of God's required righteousness.

Conversely, however, it is wonderfully true that no matter how far into the depths of sin one has fallen in this world, the grace of God reaches "deeper than the stain has gone"! Praise His Name! Jesus will lift penitent sinners from the lowest depths of sin up to the high mountains of holiness and heaven, and "In (His) name shall they rejoice all the day: and in (His) righteousness shall they be exalted" throughout eternity. Psa 89:16 No wonder the Word of God says: "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 35

THREE THINGS ABOUT BALAAM

Num 23:10 Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

2 Pet 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Jude 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

The story of Balaam, the son of Beor, is recorded in the Book of Numbers, chapters 22-24 and chapter 31:8, 16. However, the impact and importance of his tragic influence upon Israel is reflected in the fact that he is referred to 10 more times in 7 books of the Bible: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Nehemiah, Micah, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation! There must be some things about this man which it would be wise to consider. Let us notice here 3 Things About Balaam:

FIRST, Balaam's WISH was RIGHT

He wanted to "die the death of the righteous" and he wanted his "last end" to be "like" that of a righteous man. The "death of the righteous" is certainly the right way to die: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," and "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Psa 115:16; Rev 14:13 Who wouldn't want to enter eternity with the "last end" of the righteous?: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." At "the end everlasting life" and eternal bliss awaits the blood-washed. Psa 7:37; Rom 8:22

Balaam certainly wished right when he wished for such an end, especially when one considers the end of the wicked: "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"-1 Pet 4:17 The Psalmist said: "I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction."-Psa 73:17-18 Concerning the things which are sinful and shameful, Paul wrote: "the end of those things is death!"-Rom 6:21 Those individuals whose lives bear spiritual "thorns and briers" are "rejected" of God and "nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned!"-Heb 6:8 Yes, while the "last end" of the righteous will be eternal blessedness and peace, the final estate of the wicked will be eternal cursing and burning in the lake of fire, which is the second death! Don't you agree with me? Balaam's wish was right when he said: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

SECOND, Balaam's WAY was WRONG

Those individuals "which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Baalam" will not "die the death of the righteous" nor come to a blessed "last end" unless they repent and return to "the right way"! Balaam's right wish was empty when he forsook the right way! Those who "die the death of the righteous" are only those who are living the life of the righteous when they die! You know the story, don't you? 2 Pet 2:15.. "Balaam the son of Bosor (O.T.=Beor), who loved the wages of unrighteousness" had said: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond, the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." But he did "go beyond" God's word to him! He did yield to the temptation, and like Samuel's unworthy sons, he "turned aside after lucre." 1 Sam 8:3 He went beyond every check of God and every chance to turn back from his greedy, headstrong way! Finally, after God repeatedly withheld him from earning "the wages of unrighteousness" by cursing Israel, "Balaam..taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication!" Rev 2:14; Num 25:1-3

This unholy "doctrine of Balaam" was like that of those "whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake!" Titus 1:11 The day soon came when God did stop Balaam's mouth. Like every preacher who sells his soul for the silver dollar, his doctrine became as deadly and degenerate as his backslidden heart. His preaching was wrong because his practice was wrong, and he died the death of a man judged by God! When Israel "warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses;..they slew all the males," and "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword!" Num 31:8 Again, the solemn epitaph of the man who wanted to die the death of the righteous, but who did not because he forsook the right way, is repeated in Joshua 13:22: "Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them."

THIRD, Balaam's WOE was AVOIDABLE

He did not need to die the death of the wicked! If he had listened to the checks, if he had taken the chances which God gave him to turn back to the right way, he need not have died the death that he did, nor come to the sad end to which he came!: "As I live, saith Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek 33:11 Even though Balaam no doubt kept wishing to die the death of the righteous, he took his own way, beyond every check, and inherited awful woe at the end of his life: "Woe unto them (who take his way)! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward!" However, the final reward of Balaam will no doubt be "the wages of sin" which "is death," even the second death in the lake of fire, forever!

The woe of Balaam's Divine judgment and the "last end" of his eternal destiny is already determined. The question is: "to what end is it for you?" Amos 5:18 To what end is it for each of us travelling down the corridors of time? We can avoid the woe of eternal death in the burning lake of fire if we take the right way. We must choose our way carefully, for "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov 14:12;16:25 Jesus said: "I am the

Way, the Truth, and the Life." Even though you may have strayed from the right way, you can turn back. You can be made righteous again, for on the cross of Calvary God made Christ "to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!" 2 Cor 5:21 Isn't that wonderful!? Concerning Jerusalem, Jeremiah lamented: "she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down...she had no comforter." Lam 1:9

Dear soul, look ahead to the end of your way. Don't allow satan to get you to "come down" with him into his place of eternal torment where there will be "no Comforter" forever! Instead, "come down" now to the foot of the Cross in humble confession and forsaking of your sins. Begin to take "the way everlasting." "The righteous also shall hold on his way." Job 17:9 Keep on going right down that Narrow Way clear through to the end of life's journey, and the final wish of your life will come true: You will die the death of the righteous, and your last end will be like his.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 36

MAKING OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

2 Pet 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Too many professors of salvation and entire sanctification have never made sure that they possess what they profess. There is no certainty about this all-important matter—no definite time to which they can positively point, when they know for sure that the work was done. This experiential vagueness is not only shameful but also short of the Divine command to "make your calling and election sure." Consider the following four ways by which people should make their calling and election sure:

BY GIVING DILIGENCE

In Jesus' parable of Matthew 22:1-14, those who made light of the king's invitation inherited the king's wrath and "he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." This was a parabolic prophesy by Christ of what was soon to befall the Jews who made light of their invitation to salvation in God's Kingdom through His Son. The Greek word for "made light of" here is the same word which is translated "neglect" in Hebrews 2:3—"How shall we escape if we (make light of, so as to) neglect so great salvation?" In other words, the opposite of being diligent to make one's calling an election sure is being negligent about the matter with a heart attitude that "makes light of" its grave and eternal importance.

This was the grievous error which the Jews of Jesus' day made, and they suffered its awful consequences when, in 70 A.D., Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies under Titus—fulfilling Jesus' parabolic prophesy. However, this prophetic parable speaks of the very same attitude being displayed by one of the Gentiles who responded to the King's invitation. He outwardly answered the king's call to come to the marriage, but "made light of" and spurned putting on the provided and required wedding garment. Did he suppose that, since many had scoffed at the invitation, the king was so "hard-up" for guests that he would relax his restrictions—and make it a "come as you are" affair?

Many today have that attitude. Beholding how few people populate the pews of the church, they think they are doing God a favor to be there. They never give diligence to make sure of their salvation or sanctification. After all, they have "helped the Lord out in a pinch" by coming to church, so surely, in appreciation for that, He will wink at some of their little sins and welcome them into heaven. Surely, He won't require them to pay the price, and pray through, until they really know that they have on the wedding garment of full salvation. This attitude is the very opposite of "giving diligence" to make one's calling and election sure. Like the spurning, speechless man of Jesus' parable, who "had not on a wedding garment," that attitude will land every neglecting Gentile, as

well as Jew, into the horrors of eternal punishment in outer darkness. While many are called, few are diligent enough to "make their calling and election sure" and thus be chosen to enjoy the eternal feast and fellowship of Heaven.

BY RECEIVING EVIDENCE

The spurner of Jesus' parable knew that he had not on a wedding garment, for all of the physical evidence proved that both to him, and to everyone else that saw him. In contrast, when the Bride of Christ was granted the privilege of putting on her wedding garment, she diligently "made herself ready" by putting it on! Rev 19:7-8 Since one cannot put on a garment without knowing so, she knew that she had the wedding garment on and was prepared for the wedding. Thus it is with the full salvation which God the Father has provided for whosoever will. When you put it on, you know it by the spiritual evidence and witness of the Holy Ghost. If you have never received the knowledge, then you have never really put on the wedding garment, and you must not assume that you have put it on.

Dear heart, though the evidence comes not through the avenue of your physical senses, but through the avenue of faith, make no mistake about it, you will know when you are cleansed and clothed in full salvation by the Holy Ghost. Don't settle for anything else. Make your calling and election sure by receiving the evidence that the work is done. Lacking that, may not only leave you in darkness now, it may land you in outer darkness later, forever!

BY USING PROVIDENCE

Following the exhortation to make your calling and election sure, Peter went on to describe events at the Transfiguration scene. Referring to the Father's voice witnessing to Jesus' Sonship, Peter said: "This Voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the Holy mount." 2 Pet 1:18 Here was a once in a lifetime opportunity to hear from Heaven after this manner—a providential conjunction of time, circumstance, men and God that made hearing from heaven possible. Had they failed to follow the timely leadership of Christ into this mount of Transfiguration and Revelation when He bid them, they might never again have had the opportunity to hear from Heaven in this manner.

Likewise, there is a time to make one's calling and election sure. Human diligence must combine with Divine providence if real evidence is ever received from Heaven concerning one's salvation or sanctification. Failure to use the moment that has been providentially arranged by God, may mean missing the Marriage Supper. There is a time to every purpose under the heaven. We must seek the Lord while He may be found as the Great Supplier of our spiritual needs.

BY HAVING CONFIDENCE

The man who became speechless under the angry gaze of the offended king at the marriage had earlier been clothed with false confidence, no doubt. When the offended king's piercing, perceptive eyes fell fixedly upon this presumptuous intruder, suddenly his false confidence was stripped from him. Lacking the required wedding garment, he became clothed with fear and shame. After it was

too late to do so, would he not have gladly have retraced his steps to the place where he had shunned the required garment? Would he not then have properly clothed himself in order to escape the king's wrath? First, he would not put on the wedding garment. Then, he could not do so! He had, by his own choice, come into the king's presence without the required garment, and now, against his choice, he must go out into the horrors of eternal punishment in outer darkness!

Conversely, those who make their calling and election sure will "have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him (The King of kings) at His coming." 1 John 2:28 Since they gave diligence, used providence, and received evidence, making their calling and election sure, they will have confidence at the Judgment and be among the eternally blessed at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! Hallelujah!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 37

THE GATES SHALL NOT

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

What a contrast between the gates of hell and the gates of New Jerusalem! As far as the east is from the west, and even eternally farther apart, hath God removed the two one from another in distance and distinction. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may...enter in through the gate into the (holy) city," but cursed are they that do not His commandments, for they must enter in through the gates of Hell into eternal damnation. The gates of New Jerusalem shall not fail, but, in great contrast, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

"He that exalteth his gate," like Lucifer did, "seeketh destruction," says God's Word.-Prov.17:19 Satan sought the exaltation and construction of his gates above the Throne of God, but in so doing he inherited eternal abasement inside the gates of hell. Strive in fiendish wrath as he may, his gates shall not prevail against the holy gates of The New Jerusalem, God's Church. Jesus' positive statement that Hell's gates would not prevail sprang not only from the power of God, but also from His promise to Abraham of old: "Thy Seed (meaning Christ) shall possess the gate of His enemies; and in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.." Gen 22:17-18 Satan sought the exaltation of his gate, but inherited the destruction of his entire hellish kingdom. No matter how bleak the outlook may be at times for the Church of the Living God, it is not satan but Christ Who shall prevail and possess the gate of His enemies—to their total defeat and eternal destruction. Hallelujah!

The gates of New Jerusalem "shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." In sad eternal contrast, the gates of hell shall not be opened, for there shall be no light there, nor any glimmer of hope that anyone may ever escape that dungeon of the damned. The One Who shall prevail is the One "Who shutteth and no man (or devil) openeth" for eternity. The New Jerusalem gates shall never be shut nor locked, while Hell's gates shall never be opened nor unlocked. Those gates of the damned shall be forever shut and sealed with God's unbreakable lock, and the keys, will be forever out of reach to any of the inhabitants of hell—"I am He that liveth, and, was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; (says the Savior) and have the keys of hell and death." Rev. 1:18 Praise God! Satan's arms will be too short and his strength too small to ever get those keys from Jesus. Christ possesses the gates of his enemy and the keys to those gates of hell, and once He shutteth them, the gates of hell shall never be re-opened.

I read recently about a raging inferno in a business tower. One of the maintenance crew took an elevator up to the level where the fire was burning and he became trapped in that elevator when the

electric circuits failed. The elevator turned into an oven for that poor man. The intercom still worked though, and he called for help, but no one reached him in time. His pitiful shrieks of horror could be heard over the intercom as he wailed in agony. Finally, the tortured cries of that man, who was locked in that merciless holocaust chamber, lessened and ceased.

The horror of that scene continues to linger in my imagination as I think of it from time to time since reading about it. One shudders at the very thought of such intense suffering—for even a few minutes! We "shoo away" the imagination of such horror as an unwelcome intruder in our mind and force ourselves not to dwell upon it at length. Yet, such a fate, would be immeasurably more preferable than that of being locked in hell with the flames of the lake of fire encompassing its chambers. The shrieks of those who are trapped in hell will never diminish nor cease. The sound of their cries and the thought of their plight will be eternally shut out from the consciousness of those in the Holy City: "and they were forgotten in the city." Eccl 8:10 It will be "better to enter into Life" in the New Jerusalem, though it be through the most horrible earthly pain imaginable, than having had no earthly pain to be locked in the holocaust of hell forever!

Even if the gates of hell were not locked or shut, still, no one could escape, for the gates of hell shall not be seen. God told Moses that He would bring a darkness over Egypt, "even a darkness which may be felt!" Exo 9:21 So thick was this blackness that the Egyptians "saw not one another...for three days" while "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Exo 9:22-23 The God Who created such a pitch darkness as that which He cast over Egypt for three days, will enshroud the prisoners of hell with an even greater, eternal blackness and night. Its gloomy pall will be "felt" forever while it hovers over the damned like an executioner's hood and hides the gates of their inescapable prison. Like the smitten and blinded sodomites who surrounded Lot's house, those who grope in hell's darkness will forever "weary themselves to find the door"—but never succeed in finding it! No wonder the Bible says "Blessed" are those who "enter in through the gates" of New Jerusalem which shall not be shut and where there shall be no night! I plan to be among that obedient, blood-washed throng. Don't you?

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 38

BROTHERLY LOVE

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

Amos 1:9 ..they...remembered not the brotherly covenant...

THE CONTENTMENT OF BROTHERLY LOVE

The contentment of brotherly love is mutual:

Psa 133:1-3 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; 3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion..

There is such sweet, mutual contentment in brotherly love! It unifies. It satisfies the soul like a sweet- smelling savour pleasantly saturates the atmosphere of a room and mutually delights every occupant. It anoints us with the heavenly, holy fragrance of the Spirit, and descends upon the entire Body of Christ from Head to foot with an alluring spiritual aroma which attracts others to become a part of the Bride of Christ.

This sweet contentment of brotherly love is not only mutual, but it is also visible: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is..!" It sparkles in the sunlight of God's truth "as the dew of Hermon..upon the mountains of Zion," and when unsaved men see it manifested, they "know we are Christians by our love:" "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35 Furthermore, we ourselves "know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." We realize how important it is, therefore, that we not forget "the brotherly covenant" since "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 John 3:14 The contentions of carnal hatred bring not only division, but death, while the contentment of brotherly love brings life and peace: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" Romans 8:6

THE CONTINGENCY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

The contingency of brotherly love is vital! We must have it, for our relationship with God is contingent upon it: "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 1 John 3:10 Here again we see clearly that loving the brethren is equally imperative with righteousness. In fact, loving the brethren is a part of doing righteousness, and we are commanded to do so: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34 When we were born of the Spirit, this commandment was written on the fleshly tables of our

hearts: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." 1 Th 4:9

"The brotherly covenant" is more than a fact that can be forgotten; it is a force which can be forfeited! It is more than that which holds us together; it is that which holds us to God, and our Father-son relationship with Him is hinged upon it. When that all important hinge begins to rust, loosen, and squeak, we should remove the rust, tighten our grip on God and our brethren, and be lubricated afresh with the oil of the Holy Ghost! For, if I "come unglued" in my attitude toward my brother, I will discover that I have "come un-hinged" in my relationship with my Father in Heaven!

THE CONTINUANCE OF BROTHERLY LOVE

The continuance of brotherly love is optional: "Let brotherly love continue." By our individual, or mutual, choice we either continue or kill it! God created it, but we can destroy this lovely "living creature:"

The story is told of how some pupils of an old sage took to him a live bird, hidden in the hand of one of them. They planned to ask him if that hidden bird was alive, or dead. If he said that it was alive, then the one holding the bird in his hand would crush the bird and open his hand, revealing that the bird was dead. Or, if he said that the bird was dead, then the pupil holding the bird would simply open his hand and let the bird fly away revealing that it was alive. When the question was put to the old sage, he pondered it for a little, then wisely replied: "The bird is...whatever you want it to be!"

Brethren, this is the case concerning our love for one another. The "living bird" of our brotherly love was created by the death and resurrection of our loving Saviour. Its wings are dipped in the precious blood of Christ. The Lord says: "Let the living bird loose into the open field!" Lev 14:7 We should let the living bird of brotherly love live and continue to fly over the field of our fellowship, alighting upon each of us as the Dove of peace! We should not crush and kill it, for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.." Rom 5:5 God's Spirit is pleased when we let brotherly love continue, but He is grieved when that love is slain, and He is often quenched within the hearts of those who are responsible for doing so.

Let contention cease, but let love continue, for if the Dove of peace is allowed to live He can "arise" out of the hand of every human misunderstanding "with healing in His wings!" Mal 4:2 Those wings are dipped in Jesus' blood. He suffered, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," and He can bring us together as well, for there is Heavenly "closeness" and "cleansing" through the blood! "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," but what man has mistakenly put asunder, let God join together! He can do it, and He will, if we "Let brotherly love continue."

THE CONTACT OF BROTHERLY LOVE

The contact of brotherly love is essential: "He saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is." Then Jehu said: "If it be, give me

thine hand. And he gave him his hand.." 2 Ki 10:15 "Give me thine hand," says the brother whom I profess to love. "Show me, by this contact, the continuance of your Christian affection for me." It is a fair test of our fellowship. Paul said: "And when James, Cephas (Peter) , and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.." Gal 2:9

The apostle Peter was indeed a Pillar, but not a stony, cold, and heartless one. He perceived the dramatic change that the grace of Christ had wrought in Saul of Tarsus, transforming him who had persecuted the church into "our beloved brother Paul." 2 Pet 3:15 Peter did not always quickly grasp "some things hard to be understood" of Paul, but he did not base his fellowship on figuring out Paul. He loved him just as Christ had made him, a beloved brother, and like the loving warmhearted Pillar that he was, Peter bridged the differences between himself and Paul with his right hand of fellowship. He made contact, and even let his love for Paul continue after Paul took him to task publicly at Antioch! Gal 2:11-14 This would have been more difficult for Peter than walking on water before he was sanctified. It was Peter, you remember, who "smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear" before Pentecost when the pressure was on. John 18:10

Now, however, when Paul who might have seemed like a "Johnny come lately" to some rebuked him, Peter didn't even cut off Paul's fellowship, not to mention his right ear! What a marvellous transformation in Peter, and what a magnanimous, magnificent display of both the contact and continuance of brotherly love! Peter, what is your message for us today as we are tempted and tried by so many things which tend to divide us? Listen to his reply: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently!" 1 Pet 1:22 May the contact, continuance, and contentment of brotherly love ever remain in our midst, for our relationship with God Himself and our eternal destiny is contingent upon

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 39

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE

Ecc 10:4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE APPOINTED BY GOD

Among idolaters, men place their god where they want him: "They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place.." -Isa 46:7 Among true worshippers, however, the matter is reversed and God places men where He wants them: "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth?" -Job 20:4 "I will appoint a place for my people Israel.." -2 Sam 7:10 For every man, God "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of (his) habitation." -Acts 17:26 God places each of us in a particular time frame for our earthly life, and He has determined a specific place where we should be geographically, spiritually, and momentarily within the bounds of His will. He is pleased, therefore, when an individual is and stays where he should be.

On the other hand, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest" to fly and feed among birds of a different feather, "so is a man that wandereth from his place." Prov 27:8 He is not where he ought to be. He does not fit, finds no real happiness, and God is displeased. Furthermore, like a fish out of the water, he will die spiritually and eternally unless he gets back to where he belongs.

The Spirit of God, the Ruler of all men, often rises up against one who like Jonah, begins to go "AWOL" (absent without leave) from his Divinely appointed place. While yielding and returning, like Jonah did, frequently "pacifieth great offences" and gives the prodigal a second chance, it is possible to so willfully and presumptuously abandon our proper place that God will forever cut us off from returning to it. Balaam left not only his proper geographical place in response to Balak's invitation, but he also left his proper spiritual place. For a paltry reward, he overrode the resistance of the angel with the drawn sword.

The frustrated Balak finally told Balaam: "flee thou to thy place; I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." Num 24:11 Had Balaam then returned, he might have gotten back to where he belonged both geographically and spiritually, but instead, being greedy for reward, he counseled Balak how to bring a curse on Israel through "whoredom with the daughters of Moab." Balaam returned to his place geographically, but he forever forfeited his spiritual place with God. No doubt the place of his eternal reward will be like that of "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.."—in the chambers of the damned.

"Leave not thy place" is not simply God's command. It is also God's counsel to every individual who hopes to inhabit his proper eternal place in heaven. Being where we should be while we are here on earth is the necessary prerequisite to being where we should be throughout eternity.

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE OF SALVATION

The spirit of the ruler, king Solomon, rose up against Shimei who had cursed and cast stones at David. Solomon told Shimei: "Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day: thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt surely die.." 1 Ki 2:36-37 Justice might have called for his immediate execution, but salvation from that execution was extended to him as long as he remained in his place within the city of Jerusalem. You know the outcome of this story though. Two of Shimei's servants escaped from him and fled to Gath. He knew the peril and punishment of leaving his place, but he decided to chance it and "went, and brought his servants from Gath." 1 Ki 2:40

For three years Shimei had stayed put in Jerusalem, but the day he left his place of salvation he was observed in the act and Solomon had him executed. His previous obedience counted for naught. He willfully violated the terms of his salvation and forfeited his life. Even so, one can spiritually leave the place of his salvation under the King of kings, depart in disobedience, and forfeit his soul. Past obedience will count for nothing if the backslider crosses over the last border of salvation into eternal punishment. Many, like Shimei, think that they can leave their spiritual place of salvation and then come back quickly unnoticed and unpunished, when in fact their departure is seen by the Lord and sometimes that departure becomes for them eternally fatal and final.

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE OF SERVICE TO GOD

Clement, one of Ante-Nicene church fathers, wrote in his epistle to the Corinthians: "It is right therefore, that we should not leave the post which His will has assigned us." This sentiment is certainly in harmony with the commands and admonitions of the Scripture. Under one of the most trying circumstances (the sudden death of two of his sons) Aaron was commanded: "Ye shall not go out from the door of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you." Lev 10:7 Furthermore, none of those who succeeded Aaron were to abandon their post of service and duty for any reason as long as "the crown of the anointing oil" was upon them. Lev 21:12 The reason was: "lest ye die". Translated into the contemporary, we can see how that when the anointing of the Holy Ghost is upon a preacher to minister the gospel to people in a certain place, then he dare not leave that place as long as his anointing for those people abides upon him, lest he die spiritually.

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE OF FRUIT-BEARING

There is no real promotion from the place of spiritual productivity in the center of God's will: "Should I leave my fatness...and go to be promoted over the trees?" said the olive tree. "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" said the fig tree. "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" said the vine. However, "the bramble" in Jotham's parable, ignoble as it was, accepted the promotion. Judg 9:9-15 Alas, however, no matter how high the position into which a bramble may be placed,

it does not, cannot, bear fruit but rather bears thorns and briers "and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Heb 6:7-8 Jesus said: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." John 15:4

Those who leave the place where Christ has attached them and ramble become a bramble, for it is not possible to willfully, or ambitiously, remove ourselves from our proper place in the Vine and still retain the fruit of the Spirit. Those who thus leave their place inevitably lose the fatness, sweetness, good fruit, and witness of God's Spirit, and bereft of these they become a cursing instead of a blessing in the Church— no matter how high the position to which they may have ascended.

LEAVE NOT THY PLACE OF ETERNAL HABITATION

"I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more.." 2 Sam 7:10 "God hath not appointed" any of "us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Th 5:9 Each of us can have a place of our own in the Father's house from whence we shall move no more. It will be our eternal address where we shall never be afflicted again by the devil or any of his children.

Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you," (and that means you) "and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2-3 However, the guarantee that you and I will eternally occupy our heavenly place is secured to us only "If (we) continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" here in this life. Col 1:23 Sadly, "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place," the place to which all must go who depart from Christ and take their own way. Acts 1:25 Nevertheless, while it is possible to forfeit our eternal place by giving "place to the devil," it is just as possible to keep it, for "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 40

HE HIDETH HIS FACE

Job 34:29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

WHEN JESUS SPIRITUALLY SHOWS HIS FACE

"When Jesus shows His smiling face" to us spiritually "there is sunshine in our souls!" "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face Jesus Christ" shines in our hearts, making us conscious that we are forgiven of every sin and born of the Spirit of God. 2 Cor 4:6 We find ourselves among the "blessed people" who "know the joyful sound" of praising the Lord as we "walk in the light of (His) countenance." Psalms 89:15 If we continue to walk in that light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image..by the Spirit of the Lord" as He sanctifies us wholly. 2 Cor 3:18 Others see Christ reflected in and from us, perhaps after sweet communion like Moses whose "face shone," or during times of bitter persecution like Stephen whose face appeared "as it had been the face of an angel" and whose loving spirit prayed for those who stoned him: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Exodus 34:29-30; Acts 6:15; 7:60

Yes, "when Jesus shows His smiling face" to us we know it, others know it, and whether this brings us an ingathering of souls or an outpouring of satanic persecution our eternal prospect is bright. Now we see His face "through a glass...but then," at the rapture, "face to face" with no mortal barrier between. Thereafter, throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face.." Praise His Wonderful Name! 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:3-4

WHEN JESUS HIDES HIS FACE

But, when the Lord hideth His face, how sad it is, for "who then can behold Him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is gone. The knowledge of the absence of that glory takes its place, and darkness is upon the face of the deep need of that person or that people. Spiritual joy and peace disappear and trouble comes back to the heart: "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." Psalm 30:7 This trouble results in the removal of one's spiritual Breath, the Holy Spirit, and death from the life of God. Then, more rapidly than some may imagine, the outward form of one's worship decays as a person who was once illuminated from heaven returns to the dust of earthly, carnal living: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." Psalm 104:29 The assurance of full salvation and future bliss is replaced by "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.." "Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit." The favor of Jesus' smile is hidden and the fear of His wrath

haunts the soul: "Hide not Thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger.." Heb 10:27, Psa 143:7; Psa 27:9

Yes, "when He hideth His face" it is tragically sad for any man or nation, for then no man can behold Him. Both the reception and the reflection of the gracious beams of God's grace from the face of Jesus Christ are hidden from human view and hell rejoices.

"When He hideth His face" who is to blame? Certainly God is not to blame: "Lord, ..why hidest Thou Thy face from me?"-Psa 88:14 "Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?"-Psa 44:24 "Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?"-Job 13:24 Men are so prone to blame God for not revealing Himself in the midst of their difficulties, but the tragedy of God's hidden face toward man is always traceable to some human failure to mind God.

It may be out and out sin that has caused the Lord to hide His face: "your sins have hid His face from you.." Isa 59:2 God wants a watching world to know that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" approvingly among professed Christians: " And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them.." Ezek 39:23 One cannot hold Jesus' hand and behold His face while committing sin, no matter what he may profess.

Uncleanness in Bethel is even worse than uncleanness in the Brothel: "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them." Ezek 39:24

Any evil behavior will cause Him to hide His face: "He will even hide His face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings" Micah 3:4

Unconcern can cause Him to hide His face: "There is none...that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee: for Thou has hid Thy face from us.." Isa 64:7

Forgetting God and the old paths can cause Him to hide His face: "Because my people hath forgotten Me..burned incense to vanity...caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths...I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity." Jer 18:15, 17

Failure to love the brethren will hide His face: "Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." Gen 43:3, 5 Joseph, who beautifully typifies Christ, gave this commandment, and is it not repeated by our Lord to us in a greater, spiritual sense? "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." John 13:34 We cannot see Jesus' face, either spiritually or eternally, if we do not love our brother and do all that we must to be united with him in the bond of peace. Cain disowned any responsibility as his brother's keeper and had instead become his brother's killer. In response to the curse of God which fell upon him he declared: "from Thy face shall I be hid.." Gen 4:14 How often has hatred hidden God's face which, unrepented of, will some day hide God's face from that soul forever!

THE VIEW OF JESUS' FACE CAN BE RESTORED

"How long wilt Thou forget me O lord? for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" Psa 13:1 No, it need not be forever if a person or a people from whom God's face is hidden will repent while it is possible: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chr 7:14 He longs to unveil His face and send forth the sunbeams of His grace, and He will do so when the barriers are removed by human obedience. Listen to His loving promise: "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord Thy Redeemer." Isa 54:8

Just before he commenced work on his painting, the "Last Supper," Leonardo da Vinci had a violent quarrel with a fellow painter. So enraged and bitter was he that he determined to paint the face of his enemy, the other artist, into the face of Judas, and thus take revenge. The face of Judas was one of the first that he finished, and everyone could easily recognize it as the face of the painter with whom he had quarreled. But when he came to paint the face of Christ he could make no progress. Something seemed to be baffling him, holding him back, frustrating his best efforts. At length he came to the conclusion that the thing which was checking and frustrating him was the fact that he had painted his enemy into the face of Judas. He therefore painted out the face of Judas and commenced anew on the face of Jesus, and this time with the success which the ages have acclaimed. (Clarence Macartney)

When that which frustrates and hinders one from seeing the Saviour's face is removed, then it is possible to behold Him and to successfully reflect the light of His countenance to those who sit in darkness. Christ can, through human obedience, restore the lost view of His face and cause it to remain with us forever:

Ezek. 39:29 Neither will I hide My face any more from them: for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

Praise His Wonderful Name! David's testimony in Psalm 27:8 should be the testimony of every one who desires to see Jesus' face spiritually now and eternally in the Holy City:

Psa 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 41

THE RIGHT OF A MAN

Lam 3:35-36 To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, (or a superior-margin) 36 To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.

Isa 10:1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed.

Every man is indeed endowed by His Creator with "certain inalienable rights": "God is mighty...He..giveth right to the poor." Job 36:5-6 There is equality in the universal rights which He measures to each of us, contrary to the argument of some: "we have more right in David than ye.." There is great wisdom in the special rights which He grants to any individual: "the right of the firstborn is his.." "until he come whose right it is; and I will give him." Deu 21:17; Ezek 21:27

Since "the right of a man" comes directly from God, we should be sure that the denial of a right to any man is based upon the Divine authority of God's Word: "ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." Neh 2:20 "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat.." Heb 13:10

No matter what the pressure from men or devils, a man should not himself deny his God-given right: "Should I lie against my right?" Job 34:6 God defends the right of a man: "For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause; Thou satest in the throne judging right." Psalms 9:4 "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor."

I remember as a lad away from the Lord of listening to a radio program entitled: "Mr. District Attorney." The District Attorney would say: "And it shall be my duty as District Attorney, not only to prosecute to the limits of the law, (the criminals in the district) but also to uphold with equal fervor the rights and privileges of all its citizens."

God not only prosecutes evil doers, but He also defends with equal fervor the right of every man. Therefore, we must acknowledge what "the right of a man" is: "But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his." Deu 21:17 "To turn aside the right of a man...to subvert a man" as his superior, but unjust judge, "the Lord approveth not." Listen to the Divine condemnation of such injustice: "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!" Isa 10:1-2 "Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor...I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." Amos 5:11-12

"I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against..those that..turn aside the stranger from his right.." Mal 3:5 To prescribe the exclusion of a man from his Divinely granted right is a mighty sin which God will judge. How important it is then that we do not sidetrack "the right of a man" in the secret counsels of the Church as well as in the supreme court of the land. Often a seemingly expedient, overriding necessity is used as the reason for denying the right of an individual. The fact is, however, if a person has been given a right from God, then there is no human authority or law which can properly turn aside that right. Any prescription by men, social or religious, which subverts the basic, inalienable rights of a individual turns out to be bad medicine for the doctors who dosed it out to their innocent victims.

2 Sam 19:28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

What God-given rights do all individuals have which each other individual must honor? This is a good question to ask. Without attempting to enumerate all of the many social and spiritual rights which each of us has from our Creator, let us consider a few:

THE RIGHT TO BE BORN

Countless thousands are having this right taken away by godless abortionists through whatever false expediency is named. It is God alone who should make the decision about whether one comes into this world. Does God actually consider a fetus as a human being? Consider what the Psalmist wrote:

Psa 139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Think of that! Before any of our members began to be formed in the womb, God had written them all down. Before conception God sees us in our physically perfected state! Should we not see from the above verse that in God's sight, we are human beings even before conception. Look out! Those who dare to murder an unborn child are guilty of an even greater crime than are those who murder little children after they are born. A young child has at least some chance to escape and avoid harm, but the unborn child is absolutely helpless, with no chance whatever to elude an abortionist murderer. What an awful accounting this generation shall give at the Judgment for their heartless atrocities to the unborn! Thousands who have usurped from God the authority to decide whether one shall, or shall not, be born, will find at the Judgment that in so doing they have stripped themselves of all right to the tree of life. God will abort them out of His presence into the second death in the lake of fire!

THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN PEACE

It is in God that we "live and move, have our being." Acts 17:28 God Himself denies the right to live to those who by murder deny that right to others. No man is Divinely authorized to deny another the right and freedom to "live and move" about peaceably in this world, unless that one has himself

violated the right of someone else. Under heartless dictatorships, millions have been denied their right to live and move and have their being in peace. Many devil inspired dictators will be called to answer for their robbery of others rights at the Judgment, and will then be forever bound and tormented in the dungeons of the damned in outer darkness.

THE RIGHT TO EARN AN HONEST LIVING

Many in this greedy age are "treading upon the poor" and robbing them of the rightful reward of their labors. Yet such mercenary men "prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge." Jer 5:28 The Lord goes on to say: "Shall I not visit for these things?" Jer 5:29 God takes a dim view of the greedy who rob the needy of their rightful increase from their labor. Taxation without representation is still tyranny, no matter what the supposed expediency.

THE RIGHT TO OBEY GOD

"Let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.. But Peter and John answered...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye...For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:17-20 Of all of the various forms of tyranny which have turned aside the right of men, perhaps religious tyranny has been the worst. It was this type of tyranny which nailed Christ to the cross. Before the faces of both the civil and ecclesiastical superiors of the land, the rights of the Man, Christ Jesus were unjustly denied.

A RIGHT WHICH WAS NOT TAKEN FROM JESUS

One right, however, God did not allow them to take away from Jesus...the right of redemption. Hallelujah! The eternal counsel of the God-head concerning the purchase of man's lost estate was: "The right of redemption is Thine...the right of inheritance is Thine, and the redemption is Thine; buy it for Thyself." Jer 32:7-8 Eternal thanks and praise be to His Wonderful Name! Jesus did buy our redemption with His own blood!

THE CONCLUSION

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom 8:28 Still, to turn aside the right of such, to forbid them do the work to which God has called them, "the Lord approveth not." "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees" which subvert God's plan for anyone in His kingdom. To frustrate the purpose of God for a person within any part of the Church is to frustrate the movings of the Holy Ghost Himself. The exercise of such superiority is inferior to the name of the Good Shepherd and falls under His frown. Conversely, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, they may have right to the tree of life.." Rev 22:14

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 42

HOW JESUS MUST REIGN

1 Cor 15:25 For He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Jesus must reign PRESENTLY

Psa 93:1 "The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty.." When 1 Cor 15:25 tells us that "He must reign," it does not speak of a reign which has yet to begin. The reign of Christ began when God the Father "raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.." -Eph 1:20-22 Psalm 110:1 and Hebrews 10:12-13 both correspond with 1 Cor 15:25, and we can see, by the comparison of these scriptures, that the reign of Jesus Christ began when He sat down at the Father's right hand: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."—"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

Hallelujah! The scripture does not say "The Lord shall reign," but rather, "The Lord reigneth!" With our spiritual sight, right now "We see Jesus...crowned with glory and honour" reigning at the Father's right hand.-Heb 2:9 "Jesus Christ...is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him" as He reigns this very moment. 1 Pet 3:21-22

We should preach this: "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth!"-Psa 96:10 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings...that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isa 52:7

We should tremble at this: "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble:"- Psa 99:1 "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Who reigneth upon His throne.-Heb 10:31 Those who do not serve the Lord in reverential fear now will tremble at His awesome revelation, and say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev 6:16-17

His servants should rest in this during life's storms: "The Lord reigneth. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.." -1 Chr 16:31-32 Often, instead of rebuking our storm, Jesus rebukes our fear of the storm saying to us in effect: "Let the sea roar, and trust Me. I'll not deliver you from the storm, but I will deliver you in it!" "He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust."-Rom 15:12 "The Lord reigneth, He is..clothed with strength...The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. (but in the following we should rest) The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves

of the sea!"-Psa 93:1, 3-4 "Therefore will not we fear...though the waters thereof roar and be troubled.." -Psa 46:2-3

We should rejoice in this: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." -Psa 97:1 "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth!" 1 Chr 16:31

Jesus must reign PERMITTEDLY

Sovereignly, Jesus reigns over all, but savingly, He reigns only over those who permit Him to be their Lord. Sadly, most people refuse His Lordship over their lives, and thus are not saved: "A certain Nobleman (Jesus Himself) went into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom, and to return...But His citizens (sinful, rebellious humanity) hated Him, and sent a message after Him saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us!"-Luke 19:12-14 The "conditions of peace" with Christ the King are total and immediate surrender.-Luke 14:31-33 We are free to choose or refuse His Lordship over us, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our decision. Those who permit Him to reign over their lives will be saved, but those who impenitently refuse that Lordship will be destroyed under His feet forever in the lake of fire!

Jesus must reign PURIFYINGLY

He Who reigns on high is holy: "I saw.. the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and...the seraphims...cried...Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord...Then said I mine eyes have seen the King.." -Isa 6:1, 3, 5 Therefore, because He is holy, He must reign in righteousness: "Behold, A King shall reign in righteousness." -Isa 32:1 To our eternal benefit however, Jesus not only reigns in righteousness as our King, but also as our merciful, purifying "Priest upon His throne." -Zec 6:13 While "The Lord reigneth, He sitteth between the cherubims" where His cleansing blood has been sprinkled in our behalf! Psa 99:1 Hallelujah! Thus, following Isaiah's vision of the Lord's holiness and following his confession of his own uncleanness, the One reigning on the Throne sent purging fire upon him and then witnessed clearly to his soul, saying, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged." -Isa 6:5-7 He reigns to "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them" with His own blood. The vilest of sinners that surrender to His Lordship, He will cleanse so that their lives may be "an offering to the Lord in righteousness" from thenceforth.-Mal 3:3 With one breath Paul told the Corinthians that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God," but with the next breath he could say: "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified...in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!" -1 Cor. 6:9-11 Jesus reigns purifyingly. Aren't you glad that you have experienced that to be so!

Jesus must reign PERFECTLY

All of His enemies shall be destroyed under His feet! The list of those enemies includes all of these:

The devil and his angels—Mat 25:41: Rev 20:10

This present, evil world—Rev 19:2, 6 "He hath judged (Babylon the great) which did corrupt the earth...Allelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

Those rebellious individuals who impenitently refused His Lordship: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them (with the second death) before Me!" Luke 19:27

Physical death—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor 15:28

Jesus Must Reign PERSONALLY

Jesus shall reign where ere the sun
Doth his successive journeys run—
His Kingdom spread from shore to shore
Til moons shall wax and wane no more!
—Isaac Watts

Still, dear reader, no matter how distant the reign of Jesus reaches in time and in eternity, it will never include the realm of your heart—unless you personally surrender to the demands of His Lordship over your life. If you haven't already done that, will you thus surrender to Him—right now? Say it, and mean it:

King of my life I crown Thee now;
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.
—J. E. Hussey

You'll never regret it, if you now let Jesus reign supreme in your life. You too can be among the blood-washed as we greet our Triumphant, Returned King with these words: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty...because Thou hast taken unto Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned!"—Rev 11:17

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 43

"BE ADMONISHED"

Eccl 12:11-12 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished...

As Christians, and even as pastors and leaders, we should never reach the place where we no longer receive admonition: "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished." Eccl 4:13 We should receive the admonition of the Lord, not only at every age but through every channel which God uses to bring it to us. Eph 6:4 Before a child is able to read, God will use Christian parents to bring His admonition to that child: "And, ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Then, when we become able to read His Word, God will admonish us personally through the scriptures: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor 10:11

From our childhood to the day of our decease, God will use faithful pastors to admonish us: "And we beseech brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1 Th 5:12-13 Further, God will often use each of us in our sanctified fellowship and worship to admonish one another: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Rom 15:14 Sometimes this mutual admonition comes to us through testimony, sometimes through teaching, and sometimes through song: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col 3:16 Whatever our age, and whatever the channel may be, God wants us to know certainly that He has been faithful to admonish us:

Jer 42:19 The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.

The truth is: God is faithful to admonish us from the cradle to the grave.

The trouble is: Many fail to receive His admonition.

The tragedy is: This refusal to receive admonition leads the headstrong individual into sin, and sometimes into a state of being reprobate and rejected by the Lord:

Titus 3:10-11 A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

How eternally important it is that we receive admonition at every age of our life and through every channel God uses to bring His admonition to us. Bearing this in mind, let us examine in scriptural context some of the apparent reasons why many refuse to receive admonition:

FAILURE TO RESPECT THE COUNSEL OF GODLY PARENTS:

Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

FAILURE TO READ AND HEED THE WORD:

1 Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Eccl 12:11-12 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. 12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

FAILURE TO HEAR GOD THROUGH HIS ANOINTED PREACHER:

1 Th 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

FAILURE TO LISTEN FOR GOD'S VOICE IN WORSHIP:

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

FAILURE TO COUNT THOSE WHO ADMONISH US AS BROTHERS:

2 Th 3:15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Too often, even when a concerned Christian lovingly admonishes his brother, that admonition is taken as coming from an enemy instead of from a brother through whom the Father is speaking a timely caution or counsel.

FAILURE TO BELIEVE HOLY GHOST WARNING INSTEAD OF HUMAN WISDOM:

Acts 27:9-12 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. 11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. 12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter;

which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. Acts 27:21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

Yes, they should have been admonished through Paul, not because he "knew the ropes" of sailing better than the master of that ship, but because God was speaking through him, and God not only "knew the ropes," He also knew of the fierce storm they would needlessly encounter by setting sail when they did. The lesson here is that we should not lean unto our own, or someone's else, human understanding in contradiction to the admonition of God's Spirit.

FAILURE TO KEEP A TEACHABLE SPIRIT:

Ecc 4:13 Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.

The inference here is that there was a time when this king was teachable, when he would be admonished, but that somewhere, somehow, along the line he lost that teachable spirit. "There is no fool like an old fool" it is said, but whatever our age, and for whatever the reason, we have become perilously foolish when we will no more be admonished.

Because He loves us so much and guards our hearts with jealous care, God is ever faithful to speak to us "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" by failure to receive admonition in every age of his life and through whatever channel that God may choose to use. 1 Cor 10:11-12

Like painful goads, God's words sometimes hurt us in order to keep us moving in the right direction. Like nails, they will crucify us with Christ by fastening us to the cross of death to self. They are, however, "given from the One Shepherd" who will never lead us astray as we obediently "follow His steps" toward heaven. As our loving, Heavenly Father speaks to us His words of counsel saying, "By these, My son, be admonished," may we ever be among those who thus reply, "I thank Thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth, for your all-wise counsel, and I will be admonished by your words.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 44

THE UNCONSCIOUS LOSS OF POWER

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Deu 32:36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.

Judg 16:17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

Judg 16:19-20 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. 20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

1 Cor 15:56 ...the strength of sin...

Acts 8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Sadly, while it is impossible not to know it when we receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon us, it is possible to lose that power and be unconscious of the loss. When the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, he, and everyone around him, was very much aware of the Divine power with which he was endued. However, when Samson lost that power "he wist not" that he was shorn of his supernatural strength and weak like any other man. In like manner strangers devoured Ephraim's strength and he knew it not. Throughout the history of the church many, who consciously "out of weakness were made strong" by the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, have unconsciously been made weak by the departure of God's Spirit from them. They knew clearly when they received the power of the Holy Ghost, but they did not discern the departure of that Divine strength. How could such a well-known reception of the power of the Holy Ghost be followed by an unknown loss of that power? Listen to the admonition of the scripture:

1 Cor 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

FLIRTATION WITH SIN

Delilah made Samson sleep upon her knees. Then she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head, and his strength went from him and he wist not. Sin is deceitful like Delilah. Often those who are spiritually strong get too close to it, thinking that they are well able to withstand its influences. Presumption of immunity precedes their flirtation with iniquity. Like Samson, after several close encounters with its seductive spell, they seem to come away both unbound and unharmed. Then, in their imagined immunity, they begin to think that the power of the Holy Ghost will preserve them during even closer encounters. They flirt one too many times. They go beyond the point of preservation. They go to sleep spiritually, and are shorn of their consecrated connection with God's power over sin.

Finally awakening, they flex their spiritual muscles, only to discover that once again they are under the dominion of "the strength of sin." Unconscious of the precise moment when saving, sanctifying strength left them, they find themselves unable to escape "the bond of iniquity" as at other times before. Beckoned by the Delilah of their disobedience, Old Man carnality has returned, cut off their power, and resumed his reign and residence in the heart which was vacated by the grieved Spirit of God. As a victim instead of a victor, Samson lost his sight. Others following his example have lost their soul.

COMMUNION WITH DARKNESS

2 Cor 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Hosea 7:8-9 Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. 9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

2 Tim 2:17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

Referring to the tribe of Ephraim as one man, the prophet Hosea said that Ephraim had mixed himself among the ungodly. Thus, those who had the light of God held communion with darkness. The result was that those ungodly people devoured Ephraim's strength, and he knew it not. The only way a sanctified individual can hold communion with the world is to let go of his God-given convictions and sacrifice them to the false persuasions of those whose word will eat like a canker. Our strength, as those who are sanctified and separated from the world, lies within our personal convictions, given us by the Holy Ghost. When we allow the word of strangers, who are hostile to holiness, to "eat up" these persuasions, they have in fact "devoured our strength," whether we know it or not!

Often, those who foolishly mix themselves among people who hate true holiness get mixed up themselves about the real essentials for present and eternal salvation, and feed their holy convictions to the defiled dogs of worldly, carnal concepts of Christian living and experience. Those strangers, whose word eats at the vitals of their salvation, often don't seem like strangers at all. In fact, such

strangers may be one's family, close friends, or even church people who are not truly born again or sanctified wholly.

Herein lies a grave danger, for the stranger who devours your spiritual strength could be very close to you and yet very far from God. We dare not give in to unsanctified humanity and thus give up our holy convictions, no matter how close to us such ones may be. For, though we may be unconscious of it at the time, our vital spiritual strength will be devoured and our soul may be damned! The true testimony of many who still profess holiness but whose feet have strayed far from the narrow way is: "My strength faileth because of mine iniquity." Psa 31:10 Our strength also, will fail if we become a partaker in their sinful ways and carnal concepts of holiness.

DIVISION FROM THE BRETHREN

1 Cor 11:6, 10, 15 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered...10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angel...15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

1 Cor 11:18, 30 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it...30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

In first Corinthians 1:1-16 Paul deals with the hair-length question. He declares that a woman ought not to cut her hair, saying in part: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head.." Like the Nazarite Samson, if she disobediently allows her hair to be cut, it will cost her the power of the Holy Ghost. Then, in first Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul deals with division in the church, and the selfish, divisive way in which the Corinthians were trying to observe the Lord's Supper. "For this cause," says Paul, that is, because of this selfish divisiveness, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Whether we are wise enough to know it or not, nothing will sap our strength, sicken our souls, and shut our eyes in spiritual sleep any quicker than giving place to a selfish, divisive spirit! It "scatters the power of the holy people," so that whereas once two unitedly were chasing ten thousand, now one alone is chasing, or being chased by, a thousand! "O that they were wise, that they understood this...How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight...For the Lord shall judge His people...when He seeth that their power is gone." Deu 32:29-30, 36

Flirtation with sin, communion with darkness, and division from the brethren are three channels of disobedience which must be closed fast and forever or they will drain the soul dry of every drop of saving, sanctifying strength. Therefore, when God sees that His people are being shorn of their power in any of these ways, He will judge us if we judge not ourselves: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." 1 Cor 11:30-32

The prayer of a weakened church, wakened to its need, should be like that of both Samson and the Psalmist: "O Lord God...strengthen me...this once!" "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Judg 16:28; Psa 39:13 A church, or individual, who has no more the power of God will be no more the channel of His salvation, whether it is realized or not. Often, lost spiritual strength can be recovered, for that is just why Jesus makes the need for such a recovery known. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" in obedience to Him.

The admonition of the Savior to a church, or to an individual, that is even now being unconsciously weakened through carelessness in these matters is: "Be watchful, strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Rev 3:2-3 The Philistines came upon Samson when he was weakened and sleeping instead of being watchful. Does not the Lord warn us that He Himself will come upon those who do not guard their spiritual treasures and rob them of those riches forever!? May God help us to watch in all things so that we are not weakened and then wakened to our loss after it is eternally too late!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 45

HOW AHAB CROSSED THE DEADLINE

1 Ki 22:34-35 And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. 35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

Prov 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The history of Ahab, king of Israel, is recorded in 1 Kings chapters 16:28—22:40, and portrays the sad example of how one who, having been often reprov'd, was suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. Many times during his 22 year reign, there was a remedy readily available for Ahab's soul, but he went past every opportunity to be spiritually healed, hardened himself, crossed the deadline, and was quickly called into eternity beyond all further possibility of salvation. Since this man so vividly pictures how many others have met a similar fate, let us behold and beware of the ways that Ahab crossed the deadline:

By going past GOD'S TOKENS

If a man's ways displease the Lord, God is faithful to let him know that. Ahab began his reign by doing "evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him," and God sent him 3 years of drought as the token of His displeasure. 1 Ki 16:30-17:1 Ahab with Jezebel initiated the worship of Baal, and the token of God's deity was sent to Ahab on Mt. Carmel. After Baal had not answered by fire, Elijah prayed: "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God." That prayer was answered by supernatural fire in the sight of Ahab and all who were there. Then, immediately following, God gave Ahab the token of His desire to bless by sending upon him showers of blessing. 1 Ki 18:1-46 Even after Ahab passed these Divine tokens without repentance, God sent him twice the token of His merciful deliverance. God spared Ahab by miraculously saving him twice from destruction at the hands of the Syrian army which vastly outnumbered his own army. 1 Ki 20:1-30 Assuring Ahab beforehand, God said: "I will deliver...and thou shalt know that I am the Lord," and again, "therefore will I deliver...and ye shall know that I am the Lord." 1 Ki 20:13, 28 Yet, in spite of every Divine token, Ahab persisted in his evil until he was suddenly destroyed at the hand of the very enemy from whom God had miraculously spared him.

By going past GOD'S TIME

Ahab crossed the deadline. He went past God's time for decision about the deity of Jehovah at Mt. Carmel. He went past God's time for duty concerning the demands of Jehovah. He should have

continued the elimination of Baal worship begun by Elijah at Mt. Carmel by insisting that his wife, Jezebel, abandon Baal worship and honor the true God. Instead, he let her rule the roost, drive Elijah away, and restore her wounded worship of Baal. Further, Ahab went past God's time for destroying his enemy by sparing, instead of slaying, the conquered king of Syria: "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life.." 1 Ki 20:42 Finally, Ahab went past God's last time to deliver his soul. When Ahab had humbled himself, God extended His mercy to him for 3 more years: "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me?...And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel" 1 Ki 21:29-22:1 Ahab exhausted even that merciful extension of time to repent. The clock of God's longsuffering stopped, and he was suddenly cut off. At the Judgment, Ahab will suffer the just consequences of the fact that God gave him space to repent, and he repented not.

By going past GOD'S TRUE PROPHETS

In the effort to persuade Ahab of the truth, God sent more than one true prophet across his pathway: Elijah, 3 unnamed prophets—1 Ki 20:13, 22, 28, and finally Micaiah—1 Ki 22:8. Elijah had demonstrated God's power to lock and unlock heaven and witness by fire. Also, he faithfully reproved Ahab for troubling Israel, and for slaying Naboth under-handedly.—1 Ki 18:18; 21:20a The unnamed prophets gave gracious instruction to Ahab from the Lord whereby God spared him. Ahab might have been spared one more time had he listened to the fearless, faithful Micaiah, whom God placed between him, and his fatal attack on Ramoth-gilead. Instead of receiving the unvarnished truth from the mouth of this anointed prophet, Ahab hated Micaiah, disdained his message, believed the lie of the many false prophets around him, and went to his doom. 1 Ki 22:7-29

Ahab was a man who listened to, and loved, the truth spoken to him only when it was to his liking, and because of this he passed by his final warning from God's true prophet. Multitudes cross the deadline in like manner! When God's messenger, like the 3 unnamed prophets, has a message for them which is easy and enjoyable to swallow, then they readily receive it. However, when one of God's true preachers of the gospel begins to bear down on them with vital but distasteful truth that crosses their carnal self-will, they spew it out in his face, drink in the deception of hell, and drive away to their destruction and damnation.

By going past GOD'S TENDERNESS

Psa 79:8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

When a man is brought low, into the tenderness of humble repentance, then often God's tender mercies speedily prevent that man's destruction. On the other hand, when a man refuses God-sent reproof with highminded haughtiness and hardness of heart, then look out, for that man is speedily heading for damnation: "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Such was the case with Ahab. We have no record that he himself mistreated Elijah. He even humbled himself after hearing Elijah's last message to him. 1 Ki 21:27-29 Nevertheless, being often reproved, Ahab gradually became harder and harder, and, just before the arrow of his destruction hit him, his carnal heart became hardened beyond all possibility

of repentance. Treading down the tenderness which still survived within him up to that moment, Ahab cruelly mistreated the final messenger of God's mercy and marched out to meet the arrow of God's wrath: "Put this fellow (Micaiah) in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and the water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he (Micaiah) said, Hearken, O people, every one of you." 1 Ki 22:27-28

Everyone who would avoid a similar fate should hearken to God's reproof, lest like Ahab, he or she go past God's tokens, past God's time, past God's true preacher of the gospel, and past God's tenderness. For, those who do so cross the deadline of God's salvation and plunge headstrong into the everlasting destruction of hell. Their hope of any escape from the lake of fire will be shattered without remedy!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 46

JESUS OF NAZARETH, GOD'S CHOSEN ROD

Num 17:5 And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

Micah 6:9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT

The Divine appointment of one who is chosen of God has often been called in question by those who jealously resent and resist his authority. Such was the case with Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On, among 250 "princes of the assembly" during the time of Moses. "They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy...wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Num 16:3 Feeling that they were all just as sanctified as Moses and Aaron, they accused them of usurping and exercising an authority that did not come from God. Apparently, the Levites following Korah were discontent with their appointed tasks and position and thought that they too should have a share in the priesthood along with Aaron and his household: "Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you..to do the service of the tabernacle...seek ye the priesthood also?" Num 16:9-10 Those familiar with the Word know that these carnally ambitious place seekers descended quickly into the pit instead of ascending quickly into the position that they coveted.

THE DECREED APPROACH

The decreed approach to God had also been violated by Korah and his followers. Earlier, Nadab and Abihu, who were the sons of Aaron, had been devoured with judgmental fire. Their appointment was right, but their approach to God was with strange fire. After their destruction, "Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.." Lev 10:3 Korah and those Levites with him claimed to be holy, but it was only a human claim, not a Divine cleansing. They questioned others greatly, but were not at all qualified themselves to approach unto God. Their proud affront to the Divinely appointed high priest and leader of Israel betrayed not only their lack of purity, but also their lack of humility. Humility, not ability, is one of the cardinal prerequisites for being chosen of the Lord for any position: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit...I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that

is of a contrite and humble spirit." Isa 57:15; 66:2 He whom the Lord chooses for a position is satisfied with the goodness of God's mercy to his soul and is willing to be a doorkeeper in God's house if the Lord so wills: "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even Thy holy temple." Psa 65:4

THE DESIGNATED APPROVAL

The designated approval of Aaron as God's man for the high priesthood was seen following the questioning and controversy of Korah. One rod representing each tribe was to be brought and laid up in the tabernacle along with Aaron's rod, and the Lord designated that "the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel.." That designation, that sign, was to clearly point out to all, the man who was Divinely chosen to be Israel's high priest. You know the story. In contrast to the barren rods of the others, Aaron's rod not only budded and blossomed, but yielded almonds as well. Once again, Aaron's rod was used by the Lord to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

In a contest with Pharaoh's magicians, "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." Now, in a test to reveal who was truly chosen to the priesthood, Aaron's rod revealed the barrenness of every other claimant to that office by a marked and miraculous bringing forth of flowers and fruit. God's singular approval of Aaron and his family alone, as His chosen priests, could not have been more clearly pointed out with even His very finger! In properly taking a position in God's work, particularly a position of the highest responsibility, "no man taketh this honour upon himself, (as Korah would have) but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Heb 5:4 "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor 10:18

When the Lord designates His man, it is our direction to hear and heed, not simply the man himself, but to hear and heed God Himself through that individual: "Hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it...He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.." Micah 6:9; Luke 10:16 Many have turned a deaf ear and have despised God's "little" messenger, and in so doing have shown despite to the Great God Himself.

How can one tell which rod is indeed the rod of God? Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Mat 7:20 Further, He asked: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles?" Mat 7:16 God's rod bears good fruit. It is not "many wonderful works" which identify God's man, but rather it is good fruits. Mat 7:20, 22 He is neither barren, nor briery. His labors may not be sensational. His judgment may not be perfect. His appearance may not be striking, nor his personality charismatic, but he has, and manifests, the genuine fruits of the Spirit.

THE DERIDED, APPARENT FAILURE

The derided, apparent failure of God's Chosen Rod is seen in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Centuries before, Isaiah had prophesied: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.." This Divinely Chosen Rod, or Ruler-Messiah, was to so miraculously blossom with supernatural blessing that His coming would usher in a peace never before known to the people of God: "The

wolf also shall dwell with the lamb...the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp.." No enemy would molest Israel and nothing would "hurt nor destroy in all (the) holy mountain" of Zion. At His coming, Israel expected Him to "smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips (to) slay the wicked," such as the heathen Romans who were "lording it over" them at the time of Jesus' ministry. (see Isaiah 11:1-9) They expected God's Chosen Rod to miraculously manifest this fruit, and perhaps like Aaron's rod to do so quite suddenly, overnight as it were: "The Lord, Whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple.." Mal 3:1

With eyes that were shut to Jesus' blessings, they shed His blood: "And rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God." Luke 23:35 They looked for an earthly blossom and failed to see the Heavenly Flower that Christ is. They looked for the material and missed the spiritual. They foresaw no salvation from Rome through Jesus of Nazareth, and forfeited His salvation from sin. The blood of bulls and goats they deemed to be sufficient, and the blessing of that which is outward and temporal, they desired above that which is inward and eternal. To them, it looked like the lowly One from Galilee could not possibly be the Chosen Rod of God, for He brought forth none of the fiery fruit of forceful deliverance from Rome that they expected from the "Rod out of the stem of Jesse."

THE DOUBLE APPEARANCE

The Jews of Jesus' day did not discern that God's Chosen Rod would come to the earth twice. In Matthew 23:26 we read "Cleanse first that which is within... that the outside may be clean also." The first time God's Chosen Rod came to earth it was to cleanse that which is within—the hearts of men. However, when He shall come the second time it will be to clean up the outside—man's habitation. Hallelujah! Those whose hearts have been cleansed through His first coming will have their habitation cleansed at His second coming! With God's Omnipotent Rod of Judgment, Jesus will drive all evil out heaven and earth. In the New Heaven and New Earth, nothing that defileth will be allowed to enter. Within the walls of the Holy City, God's "people also shall be all righteous," and God's place for them shall be forever pure. Isa 60:21 Won't that be wonderful!?

THE ETERNAL VINDICATION OF CHRIST, GOD'S CHOSEN ROD

At His second coming on the Day of the Lord, every eye will see Christ, and all will know by the visible blossoms of His Omnipotence that it is He, and none other, Who is God's Chosen Rod. Suddenly, Jesus will be vindicated of every slander against His Person and against His right to hold His Divinely appointed position. Suddenly also, like Korah and His followers, the wicked will descend into hell—the only place fit for all who have impenitently defied the Sovereign authority of Christ.

Jesus of Nazareth is indeed God's Chosen Rod, and far greater than Aaron. It is a mistake to judge Him and His family of spiritual priests by blossoms which are merely visible, tangible, and temporal. Spiritual blossoms have been springing forth from Christ and bringing forth fruit around the globe and across the centuries. Let us be faithful as those who rejoice in that spiritual fruition and as those who reject every slander against Jesus, our wonderful Christ. Then, when God's Chosen Rod visibly

blossoms in all of His Heavenly beauty, we can not only see His vindication, but also dwell in His presence forever!

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 47

THINGS THAT CAUSE PEOPLE TO SIN

Mat 18:7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Luke 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

The Greek word for "offences" in both of the above scriptures is "*skandalon*," and it is defined by Strong's as follows: 4625. *skandalon*, *skan'-dal-on* ("scandal"); prob. from a der. of G2578; a trap-stick (bent sapling), i.e. snare (fig. cause of displeasure or sin):—occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumbling-block.

The offences, then, spoken of in the verses above, are those things that cause people to sin and thereby inherit God's displeasure. In that light, let us look at these verses: "Woe unto the world because of (the things that cause people to sin)!" "For it must needs be that (the things that cause people to sin) come; but woe to that man by whom the (thing that causes people to sin) cometh!" Mat 18:7 "Then said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that (the things that cause people to sin) will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" Luke 17:1 Let us now consider 4 thoughts about these offences, these things that cause people to sin:

THEIR INEVITABLE COMING

"For it must needs be that offences come..." "It is impossible but that offences will come..." Jesus here said that the things that cause people to sin are bound to come, of necessity! He did not say that they were necessitated by the will of God, but He knew that because of certain factors they would and must spring forth into the world from their evil roots.

The things that cause people to sin "must needs" come as the result of sin in the human heart. When man fell and satan planted the root of sin in the heart of humanity, it immediately sprang forth and produced from Mother Eve an "offence" that caused Adam to sin! Sin in her heart brought forth the first instance where one human being enticed another so as to cause that one to sin. When Adam yielded, spiritual death and depravity "passed upon all men," and since that time, out of their carnal, wicked hearts, men have produced countless millions of things to cause others to sin!

"And now they sin more and more." Hosea 13:2 The tremendous proliferation of sinning in the world is not alone the result of inherited sin in each innocent babe, but it is also the result of manufactured evils which are already present in the world when children are born. Increasingly, wicked men have brought into the world "offences" which entice the eyes and ears and desires of others so as to cause them to sin. To a great extent, these things that cause people to sin are invented

and manufactured to bring profit to their originators. Big business in "Babylon the great" includes those that "sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall" through their evil inventions! Prov 4:16

Also, inevitably, those things which cause people to sin come into the world as the restraints of law are either not enforced or removed!: "Because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandment: and their lies caused them to err...I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem." Amos 2:4-5 Habakkuk wrote: "The law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Hab. 1:4 When the wicked compass about the righteous as the majority in our land and vote out God's law and good law, replacing them with slack statutes, they cause millions to sin against God by human permission and legislation!

God's Spirit will not always strive against the introduction of offences into the world, but "He Who now letteth (or, resists and withholdeth) will let until He be taken out of the way." 2 Th 2:7 The Holy Spirit resists as fallen man insists on producing and having things that cause people to sin. In His Divine wisdom, God prevents and protests the offences of men up to a certain point, and then He gives "them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." Rom 1:24 Then, sin-warped individuals receive "in themselves that recompence of their error which (is) meet." Rom 1:27 The AIDS epidemic is one example, among many, of what God allows to strike those who wallow in the filth of moral perversion and fornication. Now, as the hour for the appearance of the man of sin draws near, the Holy Ghost is more and more giving fallen men over unto the inevitable consequences of their stubborn continuance in vile iniquity.

THEIR INESCAPABLE CONSEQUENCE

"Woe unto the world because of offences" Mat 18:7 Let us examine the context of Jesus' statement here. Immediately preceding this statement He warned: "But whoso shall offend (cause to sin) one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Mat 18:6 Then in the verse following He said: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee (cause you to sin), cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." Mat 18:8 The inescapable consequence of offences is "woe unto the world!" Those who sin and cause others to do so must face the harvest of their deeds unless they repent...woe, both temporal and eternal! Jesus told us that it was better to be drowned than to be the means of causing another to sin! The woe of struggling for breath while drowning in an earthly sea lasts quite briefly, but the woe of struggling while drowning in the lake of fire will last eternally! This is the inescapable consequence awaiting the impenitent who blindly indulge themselves in sin and blatantly entice others to do so.

THEIR INEXCUSABLE CONDONING

"Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, (cause thee to sin) cut them off, and cast them from thee..!" Mat 18:8 The world often argues that certain wicked things which invariably cause

people to sin are a "necessary evil". God says, "cut them off, and cast them from thee!" Sadly however, condoning of offences is not only proliferating like an incurable moral cancer in the world, it is also widely prevalent in the professed church. In Matthew, Jesus said "Woe unto the world because of offences," but in Luke 17:1-3 He was speaking "unto the disciples," and warned them: "It is impossible but that offences will come...Take heed to yourselves!" In other words, "You, My disciples, be careful, lest you originate or condone that which will cause yourselves and others to sin!"

Christ advocated painful, radical surgery to remove and cast away that which causes people to sin. The church dare not be less radical! Whether a thing is essentially sinful in itself matters not. If it is the source of an offence, that which causes individuals in the church to sin, then it is inexcusable to condone it. There is nothing essentially sinful in a hand or foot, for "every sin that a man doeth is without the body." 1 Cor 6:18 Still, when that hand or foot becomes the channel through which an individual sins, Jesus says, "cut it off!"

If Christ would rather see that which He created cut off rather than have it be a channel for sinning, how much more should this principle be applied to that which man has invented! Movies, television, videos, and the whole raft of human inventions must not be condoned when, and if, they are channels of offence! Is that more radical than Jesus put it? If not, then we must take heed to ourselves in the church lest we place our approval upon that which Jesus sees will lead ourselves and others into sin!

THEIR INDIVIDUAL CONDEMNATION

"Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Mat 18:7 "Woe to him through whom they come!" Luke 17:1 "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit.." Prov 28:10 Like Eve, it is individuals who must bear the blame for introducing evil to others, and the pit of hell will be especially hot for those who purposely did so! So cautious and conscientious was Paul about his influence upon others, that he wrote: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." 1 Cor 8:13 He warned against a careless or callous allowance of that which might cause weak individuals to sin:

1 Cor 8:9-12 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Paul here plainly declares that it is a sin to allow or to indulge in that which you have reason to believe might cause a weaker soul to sin! He believed that this principle applied to anything: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Rom 14:21 Shamefully, some would rather split the church and lead weak Christians into temptation rather than sacrifice their liberties and allowances. Paul admonished that such individuals be marked and avoided: "Now I beseech you, brethren mark them which cause

divisions and offences (things that cause people to sin) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Rom 16:17

Unity in the church, and safety for the weak, rather than unconditional liberty for ourselves, must govern our lives if we are to avoid condemnation for that which we allow that causes people to sin. The command of "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" to "him that is of a contrite and humble spirit" is: "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of My people." Isa 57:14-15 May God help us to obey this command as it relates to each of us personally, so that at the Judgment we shall be able to honestly declare, like the apostle Paul: "I am pure from the blood of all men." Acts 20:26

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 48

IT IS THE LORD

1 Sam 3:18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

1 Sam 12:6 And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

John 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

There are times when a man becomes thoroughly convinced that "It is the Lord" Who is speaking to him or Who is doing a particular thing. He may be shocked; he may be saddened; he may be overjoyed, but whatever the case, he knows that Sovereign Deity is dealing with his humanity. Sometimes others around him are equally convinced of this fact and behold it with awe and wonder.

IT IS THE LORD WHEN ONE IS AWAKENED

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!" Gen 28:16, 17 Only the Lord can shock a man, and shake a man, until he is wide awake to the presence of Jesus and to the peril of judgment upon his wicked soul unless he quickly repents! Try as we may, preach as we may, until this happens the spiritually sleeping "Jacobs" and "Jonahs," who are running from their past and from God's call, will sleep on in their unconcerned, unconverted, backslidden condition.

When the Lord gets ahold of a man with mighty, Holy Ghost conviction he'll stop sleeping through the services and will be completely conscious of his desperate need. Like Felix who trembled, he may not move out of his sins to an altar of repentance, but as the Holy Ghost thunders home the truth of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," he will know of a certainty that "It is the Lord" Who is dealing with him and not man! Thus the Lord awakened Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, and happily, like him, many are gloriously converted at the time of their Divine awakening. So sudden, and so sound is the transformation that those who behold it can truly proclaim: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!" Mat 21:42

Hallelujah! "It is the Lord" Who shook my soul wide awake to my eternal peril and saved me when I fled to Him in Godly fear, repentance, and faith! "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved!" Who alone can awaken a man who is drowsily drifting toward an eternal drop-off into dark damnation? "IT IS THE LORD!"

IT IS THE LORD WHEN ONE IS ETERNALLY JUDGED

"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth...And he said, It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." 1 Sam 3:13, 18 Eli was guilty of known sin! He knowingly violated God's will by failing to restrain his vile sons. God hated what those boys were doing, defiling the very tabernacle of Jehovah, but Eli passively, protractedly permitted them to do so, and thereby became a "partaker of other men's sins." 1 Tim 5:22 God warned Eli of impending judgment, but apparently the sin continued even after that time, and suddenly God removed him and his sons by death from the priesthood forever!

The message is clear: As Christians, we "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," but if we knowingly sin against our light by permitting evil to enter ourselves, our sons, or our sanctuary, then "It is the Lord" Who will judge us forever, unless we repent! Indeed "the Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish," but He also warns us: "He, that being often reproved, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." 1 Pet 3:9; Prov 29:1 There are solemn occasions when "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth!" Psa 9:16 When judgment struck Eli, "he fell from off the seat backward...and his neck brake." 1 Sam 4:17 It is no accident when judgment strikes presumptuous priests and procrastinating sinners. "IT IS THE LORD!"

IT IS THE LORD WHEN ONE IS DIVINELY ADVANCED

"It is the Lord that advanced Moses.." from the obscurity of the backside of the desert to lead Israel out of Egypt. 1 Sam 12:6 Pharaoh's daughter could advance Moses in the secular, Egyptian world, but only the Lord could advance him in Israel. Thus it always is in the kingdom of God. True "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another." Psa 75:6, 7

David is another example of one who was Divinely advanced from obscurity to lead Israel. The Lord told Samuel: "Go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons." 1 Sam 16:1 So, Samuel knew when he went that God's chosen leader was one of Jesse's sons, but he didn't yet know which one. A repeated process of considering first this one, and then the next and the next took place, until all seven of Jesse's sons who were present were eliminated. The Divine election may have seemed deadlocked, and finally Samuel "said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." 1 Sam 16:11

You know the rest of the story. David, the one who was out of the running humanly was Divinely chosen and advanced to be Israel's king. When the Holy Ghost directs, as He did Samuel, then human preference yields to the counsel of God's Spirit, and "It is the Lord" Who chooses His leader and advances His man in the kingdom of God. Such Divine advancement may bring forth one who, like Moses, keenly realizes his own limitations, while being persuaded beyond question that he must accept the responsibility of leadership in order to mind God. He may doubt his human capacity, but he cannot deny his Divine call. "It is the Lord that advanced Moses," and therefore Israel was dramatically advanced out of Egypt toward Canaan under his leadership.

IT IS THE LORD WHEN ONE IS SUCCESSFUL

When a man of God is greatly successful in his work for God, it is the Lord Who made that so. The Gospel of John, chapter 21, relates how certain of the disciples went fishing "and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore.." He directed them: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." When they did so, their success was so great that "they were not able to draw" in the net "for the multitude of fishes" that they had caught! John knew immediately that their amazing success was not simply the result of human effort. He "saith unto Peter, It is the Lord!"

Who makes the difference when, after prolonged times of empty disappointment, suddenly the pews are full of visitors, the altars are full of seekers, and the aisles are full of happy finders singing and shouting the praises of God?! The preacher? No. The people? No. The singers? No!—A thousand times, No! We all know that it is the Lord! His wonderful presence makes the difference every time. "It is Jesus, Blessed Jesus," Who brings revival out of reverses and success out of failure over and over again for His people. In everything that is accomplished for God, It is the Lord Who should receive every bit of the praise and honour and glory, for without Him we can do nothing. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake!" Psa 115:1

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 49

LEAVING OUT PART OF JERUSALEM

Neh 3:8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.

The Hebrew word for "fortified" in the above verse is "*aw-zab*". It is used 214 times in 205 verses. Elsewhere in the Old Testament it is translated: "fail, forsake, leave, and refuse." In Genesis 2:24 this Hebrew word is used to say that a man must "leave" his father and mother and cleave to his wife. In Leviticus 19:10 the word "*aw-zab*" is used when Israel was instructed to "leave" some grapes on the vine for the poor. When Ruth declined to forsake Naomi, the word "*aw-zab*" is used: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16 Again, "*aw-zab*" is used to describe how Elisha abandoned the twelve yoke of oxen with which he was plowing and ran after Elijah: "And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah.." 1 Ki 19:20

In the KJV, the marginal alternative for "fortified" in Nehemiah 3:8 is "left": "they left Jerusalem unto the broad wall." However, when the word "*aw-zab*" is translated "leave," it apparently denotes not simply departing, but rather a leaving so as to permanently forsake or abandon a person, place, or thing. Thus, one version translates: "they abandoned [fortification of] Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall [omitting that part of the ancient city and reducing the area]." The Amplified Bible

Thus, it seems entirely possible that Nehemiah 3:8 does not tell of how Uzziel and Hananiah "fortified" a certain part of Jerusalem's wall, but rather how these two men "left out" part of the territory that had been previously enclosed within the walls of Jerusalem. In other words, Nehemiah 3:8 records how these individuals short-cut their construction of the wall between points A and C by not building from point A to point B and then to point C. Instead, they took the shortest distance between the two points, but in so doing they failed to enclose within the city all of the territory that their ancient forefathers had included within the enclosure of Jerusalem's walls.

Materially speaking, perhaps at that time the omission of part of the older Jerusalem was of little importance. However, let us consider Jerusalem as it relates to spiritual realities. Typically speaking, could it be that the walls of Jerusalem represent all that is enclosed, or included within the framework of our salvation?: "thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Isa 60:18; 26:1 If this is a legitimate comparison, then spiritually, to short-cut the walls of Zion is to fail to include within the framework of salvation all that God has therein enclosed. It is to exclude part of what is essential to make salvation genuine and perfect in one's soul. Multitudes want salvation, and even profess it, while walling out part of what the Bible demands in order to be truly saved. Such short-cutting is spiritually foolish, and can be eternally fatal. For, those who exclude part of God's plan of salvation, exclude themselves from a

part in the Lamb's Book of Life within the Holy City. Therefore, we should be sure then that we include all that we should within the spiritual perimeters of our salvation:

Psa 48:12-13 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

We are living in a generation that is prone to short-cut things which are vital to real salvation. Yet, if we expect to make it in to the New Jerusalem we must build the walls of our salvation exactly where God says they must be, and we must not "remove..the ancient landmark, which (our) fathers have set" in God's Word through Divine inspiration. Prov 22:28

Using various ways in which the Hebrew word "*aw-zab*" is translated, let us consider the following things which must not be left out of the Jerusalem enclosure of one's salvation if that salvation is to be genuine:

REPENTANCE MUST NOT BE LEFT OUT

We must not leave out repentance from within the walls of salvation, for God demands its inclusion. The psalmist said: "mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me..my strength faileth (*aw-zab*) me.." Psa 38:4, 10 The saving strength of salvation was "excluded" from him until he "included" repentance for his sin. Realizing this, he goes on to say, "I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." Psa 38:18 Many today claim to be enclosed safely within the walls of salvation while they exclude real repentance of sin. In reality, repentance is included within the walls of salvation and they are excluded.

Wise is the individual who does not short-cut the work of repentance when he or she is seeking to be enclosed by Christ within the safety of Zion. Honest confession, complete restitution, Godly sorrow, and total turning from sin and the world are all part of the hard work involved when one includes repentance within the walls of his salvation. Such works, which are "meet for repentance," can be quite difficult, but in doing them one includes part of that which makes his salvation real and strong. Jesus' saving strength will not fail those whose safety within Zion has come via real, rugged, gospel repentance.

REAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD MUST NOT BE LEFT OUT

We must not leave out the real knowledge of God from within the walls of our professed salvation, for we may, and must, know Him, Whom to know is life eternal: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father..if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake (*aw-zab*) Him, He will cast thee off forever." 1 Chr 28:9 We cannot wall out the knowledge of salvation and be saved. David knew God, and for a while Solomon knew God, but then he began to wall out that knowledge as the love for his wives and their idols entered in. Those who have gained and retained real salvation have met, come to know, and grown intimately acquainted with, Jesus. Unlike those who have failed to "retain God in their knowledge," they have followed on "to know the Lord" through daily communion and union with Him. Those who have truly come to know Christ by the transforming manifestation of His Spirit in their new birth, and who retain that knowledge,

will be walled in within the Eternal City, but those who forsake, or wall out that knowledge will be cast off forever!

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD MUST NOT BE LEFT OUT

"Therefore shall a man leave (*aw-zab*) his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31-32 It was necessary that Jesus leave heaven in order to be joined unto His Bride, the Church, and it is absolutely necessary that we leave the world in order to be spiritually united with Christ. This departure from the world takes place spiritually when one is saved. It will take place bodily at the rapture. One cannot wall out separation from the world and still include all that is required to be saved, for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:1. The walls of salvation always follow a line that severs us from life in, and love of, this present, evil world. Many don't want the walls of salvation to cut that far into their lives, but we had better include separation from the world in our lives if we plan to be included among those who "have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev 22:14

INSTRUCTION AND REPROOF MUST NOT BE LEFT OUT

We cannot exclude instruction and reproof from the Jerusalem enclosure of our professed salvation, for if we do, then dwell in error and not in true salvation: "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth (*aw-zab*) reproof erreth." Prov 10:17 Many claim to be within the walls of salvation who refuse reproof. They will not be preached to. They exclude instruction, but such an attitude belies their profession. Those who are safely within the walls of salvation are those who have received God-sent reproof unto repentance, and who continue to receive God-sent instruction in the way of righteousness and true holiness. They don't bounce the truth back to the preacher like a tennis ball off of a brick wall, but rather they "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save (their) souls." James 1:21 They hear it, heed it, and hold it as from God, though it be delivered through one of His humble, human instruments.

"He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction," and he is spiritually in the City of Salvation who has enclosed and included all that God's Word declares must be encompassed within its walls.

STRIKING THE SOURCE

By

Rev. Duane V. Maxey

Sermon 50

OUR GREAT PEACEMAKER

Job 25:2 Dominion and fear are with him, He maketh peace in his high places.

Psa 147:14 He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

Eph 2:14-15 For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace..

James 3:18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Job 34:29 When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

Mat 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Rom 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Our God is "the God of peace," and all of His true children are peacemakers by nature. They are blessed when through their effort to make peace, the troublemaker, satan, is bruised under their feet and God giveth a quietness which he cannot disturb. Rom 16:20 When trouble abounds, "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace," and in due season they reap as they faint not. James 3:18; Gal 6:9 So delicious is their harvest, so sweet to the spiritual taste, that all those around them who partake of it with them delight in its savour, for "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Isa 32:17

Satan loves to make trouble, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." James 3:16 These bitter fruits not only leave men who partake of them in a state of division, but also in a state of doubt and confusion as to their relationship with God. No wonder, for "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John 3:14 In blessed contrast, the sweet fruit of the peacemaker has the effect of bringing quietness, instead of strife, and assurance for ever instead of continual confusion.

While all of God's true children are peacemakers, Christ, the eternal Son of God is the greatest Peacemaker of them all. Let us now consider some of the characteristics of Our Great Peacemaker which we should reflect in our own lives:

HIS UNBIASED AFFECTION FOR BOTH JEW AND GENTILE ALIKE

"He is our peace, Who hath made both one...so making peace." The apostle Paul pictures in Ephesians 2:14-16 both the Jewish and Gentile sides of the Church Body. Before being united, these two very different groups of people were by nature at "enmity" and divided by a "middle wall of partition." Christ, our Great Peacemaker, with His perfect, impartial love reached out to the Jews on one side and to the Gentiles on the other and reconciled "both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph 2:16 He became the Great Channel through which God's love flowed out in opposite directions to men of differing backgrounds and temperaments so as to supernaturally melt and mould them both together in one Body, "so making peace!" I say Hallelujah! May God help each of us to go and do likewise.

HIS CENTRAL POSITION

"He is our peace...between us...so making peace." The cross of Christ stands in the middle, between Jewish and Gentile believers, and we are united by being drawn together at that central position spiritually. At the extreme left was the lawless Gentile bound in his licentiousness, and at the extreme right was the lifeless Jew bound in his dead works. Between them Christ died on the cross to write God's law upon the hearts of lawless Gentiles and to bring God's life into the souls of lifeless Jews. Peace with God and peace with one another was found by meeting together at the central cross between them, and so it is yet today.

The right position, the position that brings peace, is generally between the two extremes in any given issue. When humanity swerves, some toward the extreme left side of the road and some toward the extreme right, "shall they not both fall into the ditch?" Mat 15:14 At the cross in the center of the highway of holiness, we discover both "peace and safety." Psa 4:8; 1 Th 5:3

HIS LONELY ISOLATION

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me." Isa 63:3 Often it is not too difficult to polarize, for it is only a matter of choosing which crowd to be among, but when one takes the central position of a peacemaker he will often find very few, or none, with him. It was in this deserted, lonely, isolated place on the cross that Jesus became our Great Peacemaker. He was abandoned by both sides. He suffered the agony of isolation from both God and man to make peace between the two, and he suffered the agony of isolation from both Jew and Gentile to make peace between them in one Body by the cross.

Peacemakers are not polarized, and therefore they are not popular with those who pull toward either extreme, and that explains why their number is comparatively small. Still, all of God's true children must be willing to take "the way of peace" even if it means isolation and crucifixion in the center of the road. "East is east, and west is west," but we must take the way that's best, even if it seems we are doing so alone. Out of Jesus' isolation on that central cross He made great peace for the numberless congregation that has met Him there. Praise His Dear Name!

HIS IMPROPER DESIGNATION

"And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people!" Luke 23:5 The Great Peacemaker was branded as a troublemaker, and such is often the case with other peacemakers among God's children. When, to make real peace, they "cross" with those who are anxious for a fight, then often they themselves are blamed and branded as troublemakers, but God blesses them and says: "They shall be called the children of God." Making peace with God and peace with all of His children involves making war on the devil, and God's peacemakers must be willing to endure being branded as the exact opposite of what they really are: "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?!" Mat 10:25

HIS SUCCESSFUL EXERTION

"so making peace" Christ didn't just try to make peace. He succeeded in doing so. Troublemakers succeed in making trouble until God stops them, and peacemakers succeed in making peace because God helps them to get the job done. Hallelujah!

The story was written of a man who had a big dog named "Buck". He declared to others that Buck could "break out" a snow sled loaded with a thousand pounds which had its runners frozen tight to the ice and snow. Buck was harnessed to the sled, and his owner challenged him to break it loose with an effort equal to the dog's love for him: "As you love me, Buck. As you love me!" The big dog strained at the lines, then pulled with all his might to the right. The runners cracked. Then Buck pulled mightily to the left, and again the runners cracked. Finally, with things "broken loose" on both sides, he successfully pulled that heavy load down the center of the line!

Glory to God! That's just what peacemakers do. God helps them to break things loose on both sides by pulling them toward one another, and then the power of His peace pulls the burden on up the middle of the road. Troublemakers freeze up the progress of God's work, but peacemakers free it up so God's cause can go forward down the center of the road.

No wonder the Bible says: "blessed are the peacemakers!" God blesses them because of their loving effort to "break things loose" for His cause and because of their load-pulling effect down the center of the highway of holiness. Our Great Peacemaker did that for us. May we always be found among those who do the same thing for Him. Can you hear Him challenging you to do so, with an effort that is equal to your love for Him?: "As you love me, child of God! As you love me!"

THE CONCLUSION

Of course there are times when we must take a righteous stand, and there will be occasions when our obedience to Christ will bring a division between ourselves and others. Still, when we each stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, how happy we shall be if we have wisely and scripturally obeyed the admonition of Hebrews 12:14 to "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Then, if we have done this, as holy, peace-loving children of God we shall partake of the eternal serenity of the Son of God, our Great Peacemaker.