

BIBLE MONITOR

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MAY, 2018

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“For the faith once delivered unto the saints”

OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and Scriptural in practice.	OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all the world and preach the gospel.
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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

YOU ARE ALL-SUFFICIENT

Jesus, my Lord, You are all-sufficient.
You are holy, pure, righteous, omniscient;
You are my comfort, joy, and strength indeed
You are everything I will ever need.

When I need guidance You are the good shepherd.
When I need wisdom You are the living word.
If I need a hand to wipe my tears away,
You are right there without an instant's delay.

When I feel unloved You tell me I'm Your bride.
If I am ignored, You bring me to Your side.
Whenever I feel as though I am alone
You welcome me in and give me a home.

Jesus, You are my one, only, forever need.
It was for me that Your feet and hands did bleed.
You give forgiveness, my most urgent request;
Within Your tender care, I'm forever blest.

Chorus:

You are my Father, Savior, Redeemer Friend.
I am Your treasure, lamb, and son to the end.
You are thoroughly and unchangeably mine.
So I am completely entirely Thine.

—*Brother Ryan Priest*

REFRESHMENT, RECREATION, OR RETIREMENT

The human body has been fearfully and wonderfully created by God to serve us throughout life with its physical, mental and spiritual functions. Its physical function allows us to accumulate the resources to provide food, clothing and shelter for ourselves and others. Its mental power though largely unseen can produce thoughts, actions and expressions. Its spiritual function is available through the Holy Spirit's direction of worship, holiness and obedience in the body.

This finely tuned body is able to bear many hardships, suffer much and grow weary. In the midst of these troubles, disappointments, and pains it is necessary to withdraw from the daily struggles and

to seek refreshment. Jesus often separated himself from His disciples and the crowds to refresh himself.

Refreshment may require a few minutes, several hours or even days or weeks. It is a time to repair and recharge. When the body is weary and the spirit is lagging we grow dull in our service towards God and those for whom we are responsible. Our thoughts are dulled by the lack of energy and repetition of our actions, so we do not apply ourselves to our work, our family or our Spiritual responsibilities. The body not only needs to be refreshed, but also the mind and the Spirit. Refreshment will bring renewal.

When our lives have been dulled by overwork, stress and

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lack of spirituality, we may decide that the remedy that we need is to enjoy some recreation. Recreation, unlike refreshment, is mostly concerned with fun and entertainment. Recreation may involve either physical or passive activity. It may involve a hobby, sports or relaxation.

Recreation often demands the investment of time, talent and financial resources, but rarely involves spiritual refreshment. It celebrates athletic ability, acquiring the needed equipment and a total wearing down of the body to acquire a title or reward. Those who seek recreation as spectators will pay great prices and suffer inconvenience to attend these events. Those seeking renewal through recreation may produce more discomfort than they had at the beginning.

How many physical and financial resources expended in the pursuit of recreation might have been better spent in pursuing spiritual goals? Whatever physical or mental benefits that recreation might produce, can they be compared to the spiritual losses that may accompany that pursuit?

Others when they have faced discouragement,

tiredness, or disappointment have chosen, rather than to be refreshed, have instead chosen retirement. Retirement from work or commerce may be necessary when the time comes to enjoy less stressful activities. Physical retirement does not signify the need to retire from spiritual activities. Many spiritual activities can be continued without significant physical exertion. Reading the Bible or listening to it being read should be planned along with attending worship and fellowship services as long as physically possible. Serving as a prayer warrior is a needed activity. The encouragement and comfort of others is an important area of service still available.

Those who are able-bodied should not be seeking retirement from the opportunities of service that is available to them. Too many who could be active in serving their Lord have retired before they have even begun to serve. Many seemingly cannot find the time needed to invest in service, maybe because they are too busy seeking recreation. Jesus continued to do His Father's will while on the cross of Calvary. While on the

cross He sought care for His mother, Mary, He met the need of the repentant sinner on the neighboring cross and He sought forgiveness for those who had caused His pain and suffering. There He bore the burden of the world's sins, becoming the only effective sacrifice in dealing with those sins. He suffered not only physical agony but the separation from His Father. In difficult circumstances He served His Father and the sinners for whom He died.

Whatever our present

stage of Christian life we need to seek the refreshment that comes through service to God and others. We need to find our encouragement in God's spiritual blessings rather than in the recreation or retirement that Satan wants us to enjoy.

Are you refreshed so you can continue the journey that He has called you to follow? Recreation and retirement may look appealing but instead find refreshment in Him.

M. C. Cook

A SENSE OF BLESSING AND BELONGING

Membership in the Local Church Family

In the first article of this series, we looked at the wisdom of God in the design, birth and establishment of His Church. In the New Testament, we can read of the birth and launch of the Church as it was "endued with power" after ten days of prayerful preparation in the upper room there in Jerusalem. We also see the mission of the Church defined in Matt. 28:19-20. In brief, our call and assignment as believers, is to go into all the world and make disciples and to train and nurture them to a place of maturity in Jesus Christ. As

we read of the apostles in the early church, we see men like Paul not only busy in the work of evangelism, but as he traveled the known world of that day, in one city after another, he also established or planted churches. We cannot honestly read the New Testament without seeing that the plan and purposes of God is for every believer to be a part, a member of a church family, a community of faith. In this article, we want to look at some of the blessings we share as members of a local church family.

First, as a member of the Body, we are **blessed with a sense of belonging**. Paul wrote, "Love the *brotherhood*." I don't believe it is proper to have a spirit of pride as it relates to our membership in a given congregation or denomination, but, there should be a warm grateful feeling within us as we think about the "sense of belonging" we share as we are "accepted in the beloved." We belong – it is our fellowship, our community of faith, our brotherhood of believers...a sense of security – we belong! This church family is ours to bless and support and it is ours to receive protection and blessings from. As Scripture bears out, "*We are the body of Christ and members one of another!*" I Cor. 12:27

If we are faithful, surrendered members of the Body of Christ, we will see the value of laying "self" aside for the good of the body. Selfish pursuits always damage the harmony and unity of the body. Remember the shared strength of the sequoia trees? We are strong and blessed together as we contribute our individual gifts and grace for the good of the body. As members of this body,

we don't have to journey alone. We are part of a family, a team! We have a sense of belonging!

One part of this sense of belonging is that wonderful thing we call fellowship. Someone has defined "fellowship" as two fellows in the same ship. When we are with someone in the same ship, the reality is, their welfare is important to our welfare! If their ship goes down, our ship goes down! As members of a body, their welfare impacts our welfare! When we have true Christian fellowship, we share and we care for one another. We understand the feelings, joys, struggles, and longing felt and expressed by other members of the body. The Word says, "*When one member suffers, all of the members suffer with it.*" (I Cor. 12:26)

In the Body, we are blessed with the fellowship we share as we worship. Paul wrote, (Eph 5) "*Speaking to yourselves (communing together) in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" This speaks of sharing together in the hymns of the faith. I love to sing with the saints; brothers and sisters in the Family of God.

Another element of worship

that I find so powerful and uniting are those special times shared in prayer. What a privilege to come together and stand shoulder to shoulder in fervent prayer as we face times of trial or struggle. We are not alone in the battle; we are part of a family. Praise God for a church family! Yes, these are just some of the blessings we will not find anywhere else in the world... and these are blessings we will forfeit if we neglect to unite or gather with the Body.

A second blessing that comes as we join our lives with a church family relates to **accountability and the challenge of the life example of faithful brothers and sisters in the Lord**. I know there is an element of our humanity that chafes against being accountable to the Body. But, if we are honest, there is not a one of us that is not “better” because of accountability! Our nature likes independence! The trend of Christianity in our culture today seems to coalesce around words like “freedom” and attitudes of individualism. But the believer that chooses to avoid the accountability and nurture of the Body, places his spiritual life in a very vulnerable

state that is outside of a circle of precious blessings God has provided us within a community of faith. To know that our lives are being observed and critiqued by both man and God is a deterrent to sin and apathy, as well as a motivation and encouragement to keep our focus on the path of holy living.

The wise man writes, *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”* (Pro. 27:17) The word countenance here speaks of the light or radiance coming from our life. That “edge” of effective, faithful living is sharpened by the influence of other members of the body. Paul challenged Timothy, *“...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith and in purity.”* O, the challenge and influence of a godly life! Yes, in the Body of Christ, we have the opportunity to bless (and be blessed) by the spiritual dynamic of godly living seen in the lives of fellow believers in the local church family. A godly life can be used of Heaven to challenge us with nurturing encouragement as well as bring conviction to our lives when needed.

Next, we want to consider

the Church is a Body that works together. The Word tells us (Romans 12 & I Cor. 12) that God has ordained and provided in such a way that each member of the body has been equipped with spiritual gifts. These come together to bless the body and enable it collectively to fulfill Heaven's call to be a powerful influence in the world. But we must see and understand that the Body needs each member, and each member needs the Body! This spiritual truth is illustrated so keenly in the physical body. (I Cor. 12:14-23)

Some years ago, when we still did home butchering, the experience gave me a powerful example of God's design for the Body of Christ. The day started off with the selection of a steer that was to become the "beef" for our table. As I observed the animal that was chosen, I saw a large, alert, muscular, agile beast with head high and all limbs moving gracefully in harmonious unity. It was a **body**, complete, working together as designed.

Fast forward a few hours and I saw a carcass, hanging in halves, a head over here, feet over there, a pile of "innards" in front of me. Everything was still there, but it was no longer a

body. We no longer had a **body**, all we had were pieces.

As I took in that picture before me, it spoke volumes to me concerning the Church and the need and value of every member, every member united with the body. Those feet that were so valuable when they were attached to the body, now, separated from the body were of no use, no value, and had no life! All of those pieces that blessed and contributed to the health and welfare of the Body when united together, now, being separated, were of no help or blessing to each other.

The wisdom of our God is so beautifully illustrated in His design and plan for the Church. Scripture unfolds a beautiful picture of the interdependency of the members of the Body. Several verses to consider:

"14 For the body is not one member, but many. 20 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 21 And the eye cannot say unto hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 27 Now ye are

the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (1 Cor. 12:14, 20-22, 27)

We see in these verses that Christ has placed the needed gifts and callings in the Body “as it has pleased Him.” Thus, within the Body of Christ, we have the blessing, privilege, and opportunity to contribute to the good of the Body and the Kingdom as we exercise and mature in the spiritual gifts with which God has equipped us. And, really, what can be more fulfilling than pouring out life into the work of God’s eternal

Kingdom through the venue of the local church body?

Paul sums it up so beautifully in Eph. 4:16

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

His Body, Our Church, My Opportunity

To be continued
Brother Jim Meyers

PROPHECY

Prophecy happens any time someone speaks a message from God. Remember 1 Corinthians 11. Our dear sisters are to cover their heads when praying or prophesying. The prophets of the Old Testament spoke God’s message to His people as well as the heathen nations of the world. However we would like to discuss briefly prophecy in the sense of foretelling the future.

About thirty percent of our Bible is prophecy. Recorded history before it happens – sometimes thousands of years

before the prophesied event occurs! When speaking of future events, man really does not know what will happen apart from what God has chosen to reveal in the pages of Holy Scripture. Even those who know not God sometimes loosely remark, “Only God knows” when speaking what could happen in the future. Since this statement is true, then certainly this is one of the ways to prove that God inspired the Word we refer to as the Holy Bible. Fulfilled prophecy is absent from other religious books, such as

The Koran, Book of Mormon, the writings of Buddha and Confucius. One writer has said: Biblical prophecy's unblemished record of fulfillment validates the Holy Bible as the one and only inerrant Word of God.

Man can sometimes make predictions that seem to be fairly close to being accurate. There is a difference between prophecy and prediction, although the two words can be used interchangeably. The purpose of both is the same, to describe what will happen in the future. However the source of authority is different.

Predictions are imperfect man's attempts to determine future events by evaluating

data he has on hand at the time. For example, winners of government elections may be predicted based upon available polls and computer data can help predict weather patterns. We know that none of these are one hundred percent accurate. This speaks volumes!

True prophecy is never, never wrong because it reflects the truthfulness, holiness, and authority of God! Please read Deuteronomy 18:22. God is never wrong, never confuses the facts, and knows the end from the beginning. What He speaks is always one hundred percent accurate, or God didn't speak it!

Edward Trone

PHIL'S PONDERINGS

As we "study to shew ourselves approved unto God..."

May 2018 Study Questions

May 6 – Heb. 10:19-39

What qualities attract your attention described in verses 19-25?

What choices do you need to make so these qualities become a part of your character?

Do you consider the person described in verses 26-31 a Christian? Why or why not?

What deters you from acting willfully or willingly sinful?

Are there struggles you have endured that have strengthened your faith?

What reminds you of God's faithfulness in various times in your life?

What builds or diminishes your confidence in God?

Commentary: As Christians we are born to grow regardless of how long we have known Christ. There is always more to grow into since there is always more of Christ to know. But our growth is inconsistent. It is never automatic. Sin often beckons at the door of our hearts. Circumstances can beat us down and the Lord seems distant in our experience. The need is real and great to exhort and be exhorted. Otherwise our human tendency is to lose confidence in God and to long for the pleasures of sin. But God's Word invites, challenges, and warns us so that we might enter with boldness into the intimacies of union with Christ. Let us not draw back but believe to the saving of the soul.

May 13 – Ruth 1:1-22

If you were in Naomi's shoes how would you have reacted to the death of your husband and sons?

Where did Naomi expect Ruth and Orpha to find kindness and rest?

What implicit judgment of God does Naomi believe Ruth and Orpha share beside the loss of her sons?

Why did both sons have to die?

How do you account for Ruth's faith and desire to identify herself with Naomi's God in spite of Naomi's declaration that God's hand is against her?

How would you respond to Naomi's negative attitude?

Commentary: The harsh realities of life often peel back the veneer of our faith exposing our lack of trust and confidence in God. We may often feel as though God is against us, punishing us for our sense of unfaithfulness. Like Joseph we need to develop our spiritual vision to see past the heartbreak of the present and anticipate the good that God has in mind for us. God uses the Ruths in our lives to refocus our sight through the lens of faith. In so doing we are free to discover how God is for us using our experiences to ultimately reveal the glory of His Son in and through us.

May 20 – Heb. 11:1-16

What is the difference between wishful thinking and faith?

What do you hope for and what supports your hope?

What evidence do you have or need that will convict or convince you of things you cannot see?

Why do you believe in unseen things in order to make sense out of the things seen?

What raw materials did God use to create with?

How are you to please God?

What promise is God desirous of fulfilling in you?

Who has mentored your faith?

Who do you identify with the most in these verses?

Where have you come from and where are you going?

Commentary: While the progression of our faith may be understandable its origins may seem more mysterious. It is not that we can't pinpoint its beginning but how is it that faith began at all when so many choose to resist its call? Perhaps it is this mystery that ties us so tightly to those who have gone before and journey with us now. While some may have seeming advantages in their call their circumstances might easily overwhelm our own portion of faith. But comparing ourselves with others is not our task. Responding to God's gracious invitation and promises is the challenge every believer faces. Faith allows God's victorious power to work in us and accomplish the purposes for which He has created us.

May 27 – Heb. 11:17-40

What event(s) and person(s) would you include in chapter 11?

What biblical, historical, or contemporary event do you look to as foundational to your faith in God?

In what area of your life do you want to see your faith grow?

How does the faith of those who experienced great difficulties impact your faith and readiness for suffering?

In what area of your life do circumstances seem impossible for faith to overcome?

If your faith were to increase what do you fear might be the outcome?

Commentary: Is our faith big enough and deep enough that our names and corresponding experiences could be included in this chapter? More importantly, do those who know us well look to us for modeling a biblical faith that will not just survive but thrive in the midst of life's challenges, difficulties, sorrows, and tragedies? It is never a question of whether God is willing to provide the necessary resources of faith. It is more a question of whether we are humble enough to confess, "I believe; help my unbelief." Let us diligently seek Him that our faith may grow and bring to God the glory of which He alone is worthy.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

THOU HAST KEPT THE GOOD WINE 'TIL NOW

John 2:1-11

This is the first place in Scripture where the glory of Jesus Christ was publicly manifested. It was His first public miracle and it truly showed His dominance over the situation. In it we see the difference between the Old Testament Law and the New Testament grace which was to come. Moses' first miracle was turning water into blood. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine, and it was the best wine.

Jesus hallowed the wedding with His very presence, and in doing so gave the ordinance

of marriage added importance. He also showed us that earthly blessings were not always wrong and that God could bless His people with a happy life.

He also ministered to His friends by providing what they had forgotten, and this was the greatest blessing of all: the last wine was better than the first. Our blessings as children of God will be the same: the last will be better than the first. He has gone to prepare a place for us. (John 14:2)

There is so much more to see on our side trip to Cana.

Much is contained in these eleven verses. Jesus shows us our place in the plan of salvation. When Mary (known in this passage as “the mother of Jesus”) tells the servants, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,” they did it. They fill the waterpots with water, and then they draw the contents out for the governor. Somewhere during this operation Jesus changes the water into wine. To attain this miraculous result required obedience at the hands of the servants.

There are many places in scripture where this happens. When Lazarus is raised from the dead, someone other than Jesus rolled away the stone. Jesus Himself had to surrender His will by surrendering to the High Priest. When Paul was knocked off his horse on the Damascus Road it seems as though it brought forth an irresistible result, but Paul later said, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” (Acts 26:19) The prophet told Naaman to wash in the Jordan River to be healed of his leprosy. He did so with reluctance. In all these instances and in many more we as mere mortals are given something to do to test our obedience, and in carrying out God’s will we allow Him to work.

The very end of verse eleven shows the purpose of this miracle: “so that the disciples might believe.” It also shows Jesus’ dominance over nature. John chapter one tells us that He was present in the beginning with God. John Milton commented over 300 years ago: “The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed.”

Jesus is Lord. He does not need to prove it to anyone, yet He loves all mankind and shows His love by displaying His glory and by being God’s sacrifice to defeat death, hell, and the grave.

*O Christ, He is the fountain, the deep,
sweet well of love!*

*The streams on earth I’ve tasted, more
deep I’ll drink above.*

*There, to an ocean fullness, His mercy
doth expand,*

*And glory, glory dwelleth, in Immanuel’s
land.*

*O, I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved
is mine!*

*He brings a poor, vile sinner into His
“house of wine.”*

*I stand upon His merit, I know no other
stand,*

*Not e’en where glory dwelleth in
Immanuel’s land.*

-Annie R. Cousin 1857

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler’s Congregation

THE PROOF OF FAITH IS A THANKFUL SPIRIT

When I read about the ten lepers that were healed and only one returned to Jesus to thank Him, I often wonder what Jesus was thinking about as He watched the other nine walk away. How He must have grieved over their ingratitude. If only they had realized the source of blessing.

It seems to me that that is a typical average today. One out of ten people really are thankful for what God has done and is doing in their life. It does not seem fair, but then life is not fair. My question is: am I in the "one" category or the "nine" category?

The nine who walked away acted as if they deserved to be healed. The man who came back to thank Jesus for the healing realized that he received what he did not deserve and he was thanking God for this blessing in his life.

I think that a true and faithful spirit is someone who realizes that they have a blessing they do not really deserve. If they received what they deserved, they would only deserve hell and the fires of hell, as they say. Thankfulness appreciates a blessing underserved and recognizes where it comes from.

The problem is that most people think they deserve something from God. After all, they are perfect in their own thinking in their own mind and they take for granted that God should give them what they ask for.

As I think of that one leper that came back to thank Jesus for healing him I wonder whatever happened to him. What became of his life? What did he tell other people when they first noticed that he was at one time a leper and now he was clean? I can imagine the wonderful and delightful conversations that he had with all of his family and friends. What he once was he no longer was.

That is really the source of our thanksgiving. What we once were, the burdens that we once had, the problems that we once carried are now no longer with us. We have been set free. What joy comes in that moment of being set free.

As I begin to understand all of this, I begin to create within my own spirit a thankful spirit. I must confess that thanksgiving does not come naturally. Naturally, we are grumpy, grouchy and

complaining. That seems to be human nature.

Thankfulness recognizes what has been done and that we do not really deserve it. What has God done in my life lately and then I need to stop and say and think did I really deserve that?

A thankful spirit is a spiritual discipline that cannot come from the flesh. It does not come naturally. It is something I need to cultivate and discipline myself because human nature being what it is, is not very thankful most of the time.

I think the best evidence of a thankful spirit is when I reach out to help other people and give them what they really do not deserve. We like to think that we are giving people what they deserve but the truth of the matter is, when we give to people, we give what they really do not deserve.

The American spirit is that we deserve all that we can get our hands on and then some. That is not a perspective that comes from the Bible.

What you are thankful for and then how you express your thankfulness reveals the real you. It reveals who you really are, not who you think you are.

I am convinced that many people have never yet discovered themselves. At least they have never discovered their real self. They live in a self-imposed bubble believing that everything is all right with them. Then, when something goes wrong, they look around to try to find someone to blame for their problems. Usually, they find someone to whom they can vent their indignation. When we go through hard times, we do not want to accept the responsibility but look around for someone else to blame.

A really thankful spirit is someone who acknowledges how weak they really are. At my strongest point, I am not strong enough to stand against those infamous wiles of the enemy.

Just like David before Goliath, David was no match for Goliath. If he had come at Goliath like some of us with all our self-imposed confidence, he would have been destroyed at one stroke from Goliath. When David encountered Goliath, it was a test of who he really trusted. It is not who I am, rather it is who I am serving and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The thing I need to do is acknowledge how weak I

am and then I can begin to focus on how strong He is. God's grace is made perfect in my weakness. If I never acknowledge my weakness, I will never experience the amazing grace of God.

God's sovereignty says that He will allow me to do what I want to do and then comes payday.

James L. Snyder
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A DEAD MAN SITS UP AND TALKS

Rudy Cover
Luke 7:11-17

Have you ever been to a funeral and seen someone who was dead? People die every day. We don't like to think about it but somewhere, someone is dying every minute of the day. I have never seen a dead person come to life again but when Jesus was here it happened several times. Jesus has power to raise the dead!

There was a widow of the town of Nain who had just one son. Her husband had died and I'm sure the son was her only means of support. In that time people didn't have social security, old age pensions and the like. If they had no one to make a living for them about the only thing they could do was sit on a street corner and beg. I don't believe anyone likes to beg, but in Jesus' time there were many beggars.

There came a time in this

widow's life when her son, who was so necessary to her, died. I don't know whether he got sick or died of an accident, but die he did. Jesus came near unto this city of Nain with His disciples and the many others who followed Jesus. As they walked along they met a funeral procession. They were carrying the son of this widow on a bier, or a stretcher, to bury him. The widow was following her dead son to the cemetery where she expected to lay him away and never see him again in this world. She was weeping as most mothers would do when a child dies. I imagine this poor widow's heart was broken. She had lost a husband and now her only son was gone and she was left alone. What would she do now? How impossible life must have seemed to her.

As Jesus met the funeral procession He saw the widow weeping and had compassion on her and said, "Weep not." Then Jesus walked over to the dead son and touched the bier. Those who were carrying it stood still. Jesus spoke to the dead son and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." What do you think happened? If I would say to a dead person, "Sit up and speak," I don't think that person is going to do just that. And that is what the widow's son did. He sat up and began to talk. He wasn't dead anymore! He was alive! Then Jesus took the man, alive and well, to his mother.

Do you think the widow quit weeping? Maybe not, maybe she had tears of joy. Jesus had brought her only son back to life. Now, she had hope for the future. Best of all, she had seen Jesus. He came into her life and changed things completely.

Has Jesus ever done anything for you? You know He has. Every good thing comes from God. Jesus can take your sins away and He can make you come to life. If you are only willing, you will sit up and speak for Jesus all the rest of your life.

Selected from the
August 1, 1979
issue of the Bible Monitor

A MOTHER'S JOB AND TITLE

Maxine Surbey

She gives me **Advice** as I grow up.

She is a **Bible believer**.

She is a **Comfort** to me.

She is a strong **Disciplinarian**.

She is a wonderful **Educator**.

She is my best **Friend**.

She is a **Giver of gifts** and **Guides** the home.

She is a **Home keeper** for me.

She is an excellent **Instructor** in many things.

She is a **Judge** to me when Father is at work.

She is **Kind** to all.

She **Loves me** and **Loves** my Papa.

She is a **Manager** of our home.

She **Nurses** me back to health when I'm sick.
She **Obeys** the Bible truths, Bible commands and church guidelines.
She **Prays** for me and you.
She will **Quiet** my fears.
She is an avid **Reader**.
She **Stands Firm** on right decisions that are made.
She **Teaches the Truth**.
She **Understands** my needs.
She **Visits** the sick, lonely and elderly.
She **Worships** God daily.
She **Xpects** true obedience.
She **Yearns** for my best in everything.
She is **Zealous** for the Lord.

Selected by Shirley L. Frick

MY COMFORT

A comfort in my darkest place
A friend when I'm in need
The truth behind this saving grace
Was fully giv'n to me
My eyes were opened widely
By reading in His Word
And seeing all He had to share
Helped me feel fully heard
God's love abounds forever
The cross is proof of that
Our souls united together
Eternity to chat

Kevin Troyer

MY WARNING TO THE CHURCH

A. W. Tozer

“Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” Ezekiel 3:19

Before going further with this important subject, I need to put forth a personal word of warning. I want to set forth the condition of the church today as I see it and then suggest a recommendation I believe will set us going in the right direction.

God’s Work Depends on His People

Whenever God moves, He always starts with His people. This has been His course of action throughout the Scriptures and church history. God’s people are connected with God in such a way that He is able to do what He desires to do. The prophet of old said, “If my people... shall humble themselves...” (2 Chronicles 7:14). The focus of everything God does is His people.

This puts the responsibility on God’s people. We have desires, ambitions, and programs, and we try to push

them forward not knowing that God has a well-laid-out plan for us. Reading about revivals, beginning in the Old Testament to the present time, every revival brought people back to the place where they left God. This is where God always begins.

Our insistence on going forward without God’s blessing, or as I shall point out in this book, His anointing, means that we do it without the approval of God and therefore without the power of God. God’s self-imposed limitation and restriction is His people, which is the foundation on which God delights to work. Whenever God gets ahold of someone who is totally surrendered and one He can trust, God begins His work. The quality of the work is not so much in the individual as it is in the individual possessed by God.

God has chosen to work within the confines of His redeemed people. This being true, it is imperative that God’s people get in line with God and His will as revealed in His Word by the Holy Spirit.

A Warning

I want to begin with a dire warning.

To say the evangelical church of today has a great challenge before it is only to state the obvious to the discerning heart. What I hope to do is define that challenge and outline the direction in overcoming this difficulty before the church. Too many in the church are oblivious to this challenge. A great awakening needs to take place among evangelicals once again to bring the church back to that place of divine blessing that once marked her.

For the evangelical church to go forward in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, it needs to deal with all the baggage accumulated over the years. Many love their baggage, and it will prove difficult for some to rid themselves of it. Each generation believes they have the right perspective on spiritual things and are convinced they know better than their forefathers. This has never been the case, and all you have to do is read church history to understand this.

To go forward requires that we go backward to rediscover and reclaim our spiritual roots.

We have abandoned our roots and are wandering helplessly in a spiritual desert, which in my opinion is the problem today.

David understood this when he posed the question “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3). Indeed, what can the righteous do? My attempt in this book is to answer that question and to do so from the biblical perspective. It does not matter what we believe – if we cannot prove it and verify it in the Scriptures it is not worth believing.

The question “What can the righteous do?” needs to be asked today. First, we need to understand what the foundations of the righteous are. What has been destroyed or is in danger of being destroyed in the evangelical church today? Unless we know this and deal with it, we are facing some very dire times, which unfortunately, I believe have already begun.

A Prophecy

May I be allowed to prophesy? I know a man gets into deep trouble when he attempts this sort of thing. However, based on my study of the Scriptures, reading of

church history, and praying over the subject for many years while watching the trends go up and down, I have come to a certain conclusion, which is the basis of my prophecy. This results from a burning passion within me for God and my love for the church of Jesus Christ.

Whatever anybody can say of me, they must admit that with everything within me, I love the church of Jesus Christ. I desire to do everything within my power to identify with the church and to help that church go forward in a way that will honor Jesus Christ. It pains me deeply to see the evangelical church in such a state, knowing the remedy is only a prayer away.

The next generation or two of Christians will face a challenge that cannot be overcome in the natural. Throughout history, God has selected certain people to come out of the established church and start over again using biblical authority.

What is happening across the board cannot be salvaged from a spiritual standpoint, and the chances are pretty high that God may have to start all over again. My prayer is that it happens quickly.

Read church history; read

about the revivals and how God scrapped everything present at the time and started all over again. Perhaps this will happen again. I pray it will.

Unless there is a real surrender to the Holy Spirit, we are facing some serious problems. We have become a culture of Christians trying to do God's work apart from the endowment of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We acknowledge Him in our creeds but rarely in our work and in our lives.

Leanness in Our Souls

Just as in the Old Testament and the nation of Israel, many today believe they are what God wants. They believe, like Israel of old, that nothing bad can happen to them. And so they will continue to go forward as they always have.

One of the most alarming passages in the Old Testament seems appropriate for today. David wrote concerning Israel, "They soon forget his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:13-15).

Just because you have what you want does not mean what you have is what God wants you to have. I think the alarming phrase is *sent leanness into their soul*. Could that describe many evangelical churches across our country today? We have everything we want but there is that leanness in our soul that we cannot, or won't, deal with.

For the most part, many Christians are satisfied with the status quo and believe that what they have is what God has given them. It is this spirit of satisfaction that is the undoing of the evangelical church of our day. Our forefathers were never spiritually satisfied. They had a hunger for God that was all but insatiable. Their thirst for God drove them forward. They had a divinely inspired discontent that only God could satisfy.

The Problem With Being Content

We are being taught from evangelical pulpits today to be content. Whole series of sermons and multiple books focus on the subject of being content and happy where you are. As long as you are saved, you are on your way to heaven,

so just relax and enjoy the journey, they say.

Our forefathers did not teach this.

An old saint once mentioned that he feared we have made the church to be for *us* instead of for Christ. We can only come into the true church through the door that is Jesus Christ, and once inside that church, everything is for God. The transformation that takes place at our conversion prepares us to come into the presence of God. God is not so much interested in coming into our world as He is in bringing us into His.

I understand it may be too much to ask Christians today to read history, read about the church in the day of its glory and the men and women who led the church in a path to victory and honor. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we read and understand our past. If we do not understand our past, we will never fully comprehend our future. What God has done in the past is what He will do for us today. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). If I do not know what He has done, how can I have faith for what He will do for me today?

We need to know from where we have come, we need to know our heritage, and we need to know the message that has come down to us from the days of the apostles. That message has not changed.

I believe the job of a prophet is to rattle the spiritual cage and wake up sleepy Christians, calling them out to understand the danger that we face today. We have come to the point of contentment. We are content with where we are, we are content with what we have, and we have no real expectation of what the future holds. Henceforth, this generation of Christians and the next faces a grave and severe danger.

The Holy Spirit's Work Is Not About Numbers

Leanness of heart is seen everywhere. People are satisfied with what they have, and many preachers are satisfied with numbers. Our whole focus has become on how many people we have coming to our churches and how big the offering is. We have come to the point of worshiping numbers.

The Old Testament is filled with stories of how God worked contrary to numbers.

Gideon's three hundred men is an example of this (Judges 7:7-8). God does not work within the confines of our strength; God works according to His character and nature and power. If we only see God work within our structure, we will never see God work at all.

If we would do the work of John Wesley, Martin Luther, David Livingstone, and A. B. Simpson, we need to know *how* to do it. We do not do the work of these men by imitating what they did. Certainly we are living in different times, and the work that these men and others like them did was a work for their time. We do not imitate the work they did, but rather we need the Holy Spirit that motivated and led them to motivate and lead us.

I cannot start a Reformation like Martin Luther did. However, I can have within me the same Spirit that drove him in that direction. It is the Holy Spirit that we need in our midst today.

We have come to worship numbers, methods, and programs all to no avail. We may have large numbers, but where is the Holy Spirit in our midst? Where is the power of His anointing on our services today?

We have a generation of imitators, but they are imitating external things. We need a generation of imitators of the Holy Spirit. The way to do that is not through outward imitation but through an inward surrender to the Holy Spirit.

Get all the education you can afford to get. But when it comes right down to it, it is not your education that will accomplish anything for the cause of Christ. It will be the Holy Spirit working in you and through you. Whatever it takes for the Holy Spirit to use me unconditionally is what I am willing to do.

My challenge for this generation is to stop playing religious games and take this matter of being the church of Jesus Christ as serious as our forefathers did. Do not settle for anything less than an influx of the breath of God from on high, a mighty endowment of the Holy Spirit in our lives, driving us forward in His power, accomplishing His goals.

James reminds us in the New Testament that God is not about numbers. "The effectual fervent prayer," James writes, "of a religious man availeth much" (James 5:16). All we need

is God on our side and we will be victorious. It must be noted that God will never compromise His character or nature for anyone or any situation.

We Must Hunger for God

If we are to be the church God can bless and use in this generation, we need to be so saturated with the Holy Spirit that everything within us illuminates the Spirit of God to the world around us.

God will move again. I am confident of that. History declares this truth repeatedly. The problem is there are very few people prepared for a move of God in their lives. I believe God will ignore most of the evangelical churches standing today. They have what they want, they are satisfied with what they have, and there is no room in their program for the Holy Spirit to do His thing.

God will select a person here and a person there all over the world, but He will ignore those satisfied with what they have. I want to be among those dissatisfied with the status quo and having a hunger so deep for the things of God that nothing else can satisfy it.

I am not sure this can begin

in today's church, and I am absolutely sure it cannot begin in most denominations. It has to be that person who hungers and thirsts after God, cares not for the things of this world, but is "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Holy Spirit, count me among

those who desire Thee more than anything or anyone else. Amen.

Editor's note: *This is chapter 3 of A. W. Tozer's book, Alive in the Spirit, compiled and edited by James L. Snyder. Used by permission. Available where Bethany House books are sold.*

OBITUARY

ALMA RUTH FAHNESTOCK

Alma Ruth Fahnestock, age 100, formerly of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, went to be with the Lord on February 16, 2018, at the Richland Christian Home, Richland, Pennsylvania. It had always been her desire to reach 100 years.

She was born May 19, 1917 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania to the late Benjamin F. and Ruth V. (Buffington) Lebo and was the widow of Lloyd Minnich Fahnestock who passed away December 7, 1997. They had married October 25, 1936 and had been married sixty one years. In the early days of their marriage they were members of Mechanicsburg and Lititz Dunkard Brethren churches. Later they became members of Lower Cumberland Church of the Brethren.

She was a devoted wife and mother, who ran the family farm, did quilting and made braided rugs and clothing for the family. She excelled in other forms of needlework, including crocheting and tatting. She and her husband enjoyed traveling in their RV up and down the east coast, including Nova Scotia, and camping in Fort Myers, Florida. She raised ducks, and was always glad to see her favorite birds, cardinals, come to greet her.

She is survived by: sons, L. Roy Fahnestock (wife Rosella), Dale B. Fahnestock (wife Elsie), and Dean Fahnestock (wife Barbara; a daughter, Ruth N. Miller (husband Lynn); sixteen grandchildren; thirty-three great grandchildren, and one great, great grandchild; as well as a daughter-in-law, Mary Anne Fahnestock; and

sister-in-law Fern M. Ness. In addition to her parents and husband, Alma was preceded in death by: sons, Paul L. and John A Fahnestock; a granddaughter, Sheryl M. Fahnestock; a brother, Paul B. Lebo; and a brother-in-law, Jacob C. Ness.

Funeral services were held on February 23, 2018, at Hoffman Funeral Home, Carlisle, Pennsylvania with Brother Garnet Myers and Brother Robert Lehigh officiating. Burial was at the Mt. Zion Cemetery at Churchtown, Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania.

For Nanny Fahnestock

Some sweet day when life is o'er, we shall meet above,
We shall greet those gone before, in that home of love.
Trials here below we meet, sorrow, pain, and care,
In that happy home so sweet, joy and peace we'll share.

Bright the dawning of that morn, night be turned to day,
Parted friends no farewells know, tears be wiped away.

Some sweet day, some sweet day, Oh! that happy time
will be, Some sweet day.

S. H. Chord
Brethren Hymnal #602
With Love from the family

NEWS ITEMS

2018 GENERAL CONFERENCE

June 9-13, 2018

The 2018 General Conference will be held June 9 through June 13 at Camp Alexander Mack located at 1113 East Camp Mack Road, Milford, Indiana 46542 with additional lodging at nearby Quaker Haven Camp. Those traveling to Camp Mack should turn east on Waubee Road (1150 N) at the south edge of Milford, Indiana, proceed to Camp Mack Road turning right to the Camp entrance. All registration will be at Camp Mack.

There is plenty of room for those with campers, trailers, or RV's.

Please bring bedding, towels, and so forth. Laundry is available in nearby Milford.

When making reservations, please give:

- ♦Date and time of arrival
- ♦Number in party and their ages
- ♦Time of departure.

The grounds will be available for occupancy, Friday afternoon, June 8. The phone number for Camp Mack is: 574-658-4831.

Please send, e-mail or call reservations to:

Bro. Sam and Sis. Laura Dinius

Address: 19174 County Road M
West Unity, OH 43570

Phone: 419-924-2083

E-Mail: sandldinius@juno.com

Early registration will be greatly appreciated.

Lodging Committee

General Conference Schedule

On Saturday, June 9, 2018, the first service of General Conference will be Morning Worship before Breakfast. Standing Committee will assemble at 9:00 A.M. The first worship service will be at 2:00 P.M., that afternoon. All officials who intend to serve on Standing Committee or in the General Conference business meeting should bring a completed credential blank.

CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Lord willing, the Chambersburg Congregation is planning a Lovefeast, Sunday, May 6, 2018. Services will be at 9:30 A.M., 2:00 P.M. and Communion at 6:30 P.M.

Everyone is welcome to spend the day. Remember us in prayer.

Sister Janet Shaffer, Cor.

THANK YOU

THROUGH GATES OF SPLENDOR

The gates of splendor open wide,
Christ beckons me to come.
I grasp His hand and breathe my last,
My walk on earth is done.

I tilled the soil, sowed the seed,
And harvested the grain,
Watched the sun rise in the east,
And smelled the falling rain.

But none compares to glory here,
The beauty can't be told.
I gaze upon my Savior's face
And walk the streets of gold.

The arms of loved ones open wide,
Oh glad reunion day!
I'll wait for those I left behind,
So choose the heavenly way.

Sister Martha (Throne) Heer

We would like to thank everyone who sent cards, remembered us in prayer, and all who took time to visit Dad while he was in the nursing home. He really enjoyed the visits. He was very special to us and we will miss him but will be reunited in heaven. God bless each one.

The family of George Throne

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR JUNE 2018

June 3 – Consider Him, the Author and Finisher of our Faith – Heb. 12:1-11

1. Who were the witnesses?

2. What weight and what sin beset us?

June 10 – Walking the Path of Healing, Peace, and Holiness that Leads to Mt. Zion – Heb. 12:12-29

1. Can you have peace without holiness?

2. What is the root of bitterness?

June 17 – Father’s Day – Deut. 6:1-15

1. How can fathers today teach their children diligently?

2. How do we not forget the Lord in the day of plenty that we live in?

June 24 – Going Forth to Him is not all that Popular – Heb. 13:1-14

1. Who is our brother?

2. Who are angels unaware?

3. Who are they that have the rule?

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