

BIBLE MONITOR

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JULY, 2020

NO. 07

“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.

ASPIRATIONS

Oh, for a thousand tongues to tell
To all people here on earth that dwell.
Of a loving Savior who died on the Cross
To save us all from being lost.

He brought me up out of a horrible pit
Some day at His pierced feet to sit,
When all shall be known as we are known
All eyes that see and tongues that tell,
Could never get us on earth again to dwell
Since the righteous with Jesus dwell.

Just stop a moment in our rush,
A spell to think what it would be
To spend eternity in that lake of fire
Let us dwell as brethren here on earth
None of us have far, from cradle to grave.

When life has passed us swiftly by
It is appointed unto man once to die,
Then before God's judgment bar we stand
With hope to be placed on His right hand.

—Howard R. Dickey

FREEDOM

July, in the United States, is associated with the Declaration of Independence, that stated the reasons to gain political freedom from Great Britain. The policies of King George III were at variance with the desires of those who lived in the British colonies. Their complaints were fueled by their perception of colonial inequality compared to the homeland. Their complaints were triggered by a system that only valued the colonies to enrich the King and others in Great Britain. Other complaints concerned short-sighted programs not suited to the American frontier. Other complaints concerned poorly crafted political decisions of the King's ministers or Parliament.

Some in the Colonies were seeking a freedom from any kind

of regulation. They desired total political and economic freedom that would allow them to conduct their affairs without regard for the rights or demands of other colonists. They wanted freedom for themselves to prosper and rule without interference. They were forgetful of the benefits they did receive as a part of the British Empire. The protection of the King's armies and navies were negated in their minds as they were compelled to support the resulting expenses. They did not want to conform to the economic system imposed by the Crown. Freedom for these people was for themselves and did not extend to the well-being of the Native Americans or the African slaves or to those who were not a part of local aristocracy.

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Political and economic freedom can be circumscribed to as small or as large a group as those in power desire. Freedom can be a nebulous term that includes total freedom for some but oppression for others. Economic freedom can be formulated in ways that favor some over others.

In the current situation dealing with an unfamiliar disease, restrictions have been placed by the authorities to hopefully encourage a better outcome. Those restrictions grate on those who wish to chart their own course. They are compelled to limit their activities and actions to control the virus. Their freedom is limited so they have demanded the end of restrictions. Some have enjoyed a partial allowance of former activities. Others have been met with a determination to not allow any deviation from the restrictions.

During these unusual conditions, Christians have been challenged in numerous ways concerning their reaction to these restrictions. The closing of worship services has been a hardship because of their desire for fellowship. Most have chosen to abide by the government's efforts to protect the health

of the community. God has ordained government to provide safety, protection, and comfort to all citizens, even though its programs may be misdirected or antagonistic.

Christians do not cease to be Christians because they cannot attend public services. Although they miss the close fellowship, the singing, the Bible studies, and observation of the ordinances, they can participate in private devotions. They can encourage others. They can contribute to various ministries. They can study the Bible. They can participate in fellowship through electronic means. Their Christian lives may be circumscribed but they do not cease to exist.

By using the means available to them, they can protect those who are vulnerable to the disease. They can use their Christian freedom to serve the needs of others.

Christian freedom was purchased by a great price: the Son of God, Jesus. Those who are willing to give up their own freedom, to accept the greater freedom given by God will be able to share that freedom with others. Too often freedom is considered to belong to the Christian for his own purposes and pleasures.

Instead Christian freedom is given to share with others so they may be blessed in a similar way. Christian freedom is given to us so we can worship God appropriately and serve those who are neighbor to us. We have escaped the great bondage of Satan so we can be spiritually productive.

The Good Samaritan was free to go by the wounded man, just like the priest and the Levite. Instead he made himself servant to that man. He bound

his wounds, took him to an inn, where he guaranteed his bill. He made a physical and economic contribution to that person's well-being.

Our Christian freedom is not for our pleasure. That freedom is to be used to honor God and help those with physical, material, and spiritual needs.

How are you using your freedom? To serve God? To help your neighbor?

M. C. Cook

A GOD WHO FORGIVES

"But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not." Nehemiah 9:16-17

Pardon – to release from punishment, to pass over without punishment or excuse. The act of forgiving.

The exemption of a convicted person from the penalties of an offense or crime by the power of the executioner of the laws.

The history of Israel shows us countless times that God is willing and able to pardon. God's love for His people has been demonstrated over and over. He has always been ready to forgive. It is God's very nature to be merciful. Isaiah 55:7 says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

God has given man the ability to approach Him by removing what it is that separates the two, which is sin. The sacrifice for sin, which is shown to us many times in the Old Testament, is blood, which has been shed ever since the animals were slain to clothe Adam and Eve after they sinned. (Genesis 3:21.) This was only a temporary fix which in no way changed a man's heart, so to make permanent God's grace, God sent His Son to, once and for all, intercede for man, not just for the Jews, but for all of us.

"For God so loved the world, (all of us – all residents of earth, John 3:16), that he gave, (the greatest act of love and mercy), his only begotten son (the greatest gift), that whosoever (and that includes you), believeth in him (put all your faith, hope, and promise in Him) shall not perish (shall live forever) but have everlasting life." (In the presence of God.)

During World War I a man in the trench, about to die, asked the man beside him how to get to heaven. "Don't know," he replied. But a man further down tossed his New Testament

toward him. Read John 3:16," he yelled, "that will tell him." As the verse was read to the dying man he said, breathing his last, "Thank God, free at last."

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner,
And more graces for the good;
There is mercy with the Savior;
There is healing in his blood.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.

—*Frederick W. Faber 1854*
Brethren Hymnal #19

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

LOVE CONQUERS DEATH

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the unique aspects of Christianity. No other religion comes close in this area of the resurrection from the dead.

Nobody has ever proven that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is false. More evidence exists to back up this one event than anything else in the history of man. The evidence is just overflowing. The only thing the unbeliever can do is ignore the evidence.

To say that we understand the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is to stretch it quite a bit. Yes, we believe it and embrace it and base our daily life upon it. However, how it came to be is beyond human comprehension and we accept it by faith.

Theology can present the truth, but it takes faith to really embrace that truth and bring it into personal experience. This is where the resurrection of Jesus Christ has its final authority and verification.

The life of every born-again Christian is a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Being born again is not some religious ritual that

we go through. Rather, being born again is encountering the resurrected Christ in a very intimate fashion.

Although death has been with us since the beginning of time and it is mysterious and far beyond human comprehension, man has never been able to conquer it. Nothing is sadder than attending a funeral, particularly someone you know was not born again, realizing that death had its final say to that person. Now that person has gone into eternity to face the judgment of God. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment."

Death stalks every one of us and can create quite a depressed feeling.

Visiting in the hospital you walk by people who have terminal conditions, meaning that there is no solution and they are facing death very soon. Death is no friend to humanity.

This is exactly why Jesus Christ became flesh and dwelt among us and faced for us this enemy we call death.

Jesus' death was real

and accomplished a great deal. It was His resurrection that sealed the deal for all eternity. And because of that resurrection our lives can be transformed in this life. Paul puts it this way, "Death, where is thy sting?"

Now when we come to the Christian life our motto is "He is alive!"

I cannot fully understand it or explain it, but I can accept it and bring it into my life and allow the resurrected Lord to be the passionate authority and power in my life. The early church would greet one another with, "He is risen," to be followed by, "He is risen, indeed."

And indeed, He is risen from the dead. Not just an act of history, but it was an act of love that is directed to those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Go back in history and read the lives of some of the martyrs for Christ. Those who stood for Christ and because of that were martyred. I cannot say what I would do in such circumstances, but I hope I would stand for Christ regardless of the consequences. That I would be

so influenced and transformed by this resurrected Christ that nothing could ever compromise my relationship with Him.

From the days of the early church many Christians have walked the martyr walk and I am quite sure were welcomed into heaven with rejoicing from all the angels. If we really know the love of God in our hearts the fear of death evaporates.

When I come to breathe my last it is not the end of me. Yes, it is the end of my life in this world, but it is the beginning of my life in that mysterious, eternal world to come. We have so much to look forward to. We have so much before us that we really do not understand, but when we see Him "face to face" we will understand it all.

Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a once a year occasion. It is something we celebrate every day of our life as we walk with God. Our strength does not come from what we know, rather our strength comes from who we know and that is the resurrected Lord and Savior, even Jesus Christ.

I often think of what it is

going to be like to actually see Jesus in the flesh. What is it going to be like to encounter Him in all the fullness of His glory? Day by day I walk with Him and fellowship with Him and nurture my soul on His grace and love. But there is coming the time when I shall see Him face-to-face and I can hardly imagine what that is going to be like.

Now, my life feasts upon this intimate fellowship I have with

this resurrected Lord and Savior.

Because Jesus Christ has already conquered this enemy, my life now has no fear of it. What is bigger and more dangerous and more deadly than death? Since this enemy has been defeated, I now can live a life rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior.

James L. Snyder
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PERFECT GIFTS FOR ALL YEAR LONG

Sometimes we need to show appreciation to someone or just let someone know that we are thinking of them. Could some of these be a "perfect gift" that you could give of yourself or bless others with?

Seek out a forgotten friend

Mend a quarrel

Write a long overdue love note

Be gentle and patient with an angry person

Release a grudge

Sit and listen quietly to others

Express appreciation

Hug your grandchildren

tightly and whisper, "I love you so much!"

Always keep a promise when asked

Make or bake something for someone else anonymously

Read the Bible to a shut-in

Speak kindly to a stranger

Enter into another's sorrow

Smile, laugh a little, and then laugh again

Take a walk with a friend

Kneel on those calloused knees a little longer at the throne of Grace

Sing a song while working for others

Apologize if you were wrong
Turn off all electronic devices
and just talk with others

Treat someone to an ice cream
cone

Do the dishes for the shut-in,
your neighbor, or friend

Pray for someone who helped
you when you hurt

Fix breakfast on Saturday
morning

Encourage an older person
along the way

Extend your help for a workday,
whether physical labor or helping
to make the meal

Give a soft answer to
someone in need

Offer to baby-sit for a weary
mother

Offer up thankfulness for the
ministering brethren as they
study

We should extend a “gift” of
ourselves to others, unselfishly
and without any obligation and
any reservation.

Let us remember, the
Greatest Gift ever given was
when God gave to us Himself
through Jesus Christ!

Humbly submitted,
Shirley Frick

PHIL'S PONDERINGS

As we “study to shew ourselves approved unto God...”

July 2020 Study Questions

July 5 – Luke 15:11-32

Who is the audience that Jesus is speaking to?

Who are the key characters in this story?

What is the connection between the characters in the story
and those in the audience?

What is the low point in this story?

What is most offensive in this story?

Where are you in this story?

Commentary: This is one of the most well-known parables in the New Testament. It is a story to which most people can easily relate. Various themes tie the fabric of this story together. Freedom that leads to sin, repentance that leads to confession, forgiveness that leads to restoration, and offense that leads to rejection/cynicism are themes we find in our lives. While forgiveness and restoration are the principal themes in this story it is also a warning that lack of mercy makes us prisoners of rejection and cynicism. Jesus is telling the sinners before Him that God has not rejected them. In fact, the Lord is watching eagerly for their return to Him. But Jesus is also pleading with the scribes and Pharisees to extend God's mercy and rejoice when their brothers (sinners) have been restored to their Father in heaven. What sour cynics we become when we withhold mercy from those to whom God has been merciful.

July 12 – Luke 16:1-31

What are some possible ways the steward had wasted his master's goods?

Who does the steward represent in the parable?

Why does the master commend the steward for being wise or shrewd?

How do we make friends with unrighteous mammon?

Commentary: While the parable of the prodigal son is one of the best-known stories Jesus tells, the parable of the unjust steward often leaves us wondering as to its meaning. The master commends the steward, who has been stealing from him, for his shrewdness. The debtors are glad to have their debts reduced and in return will help provide a living for the steward. Where do we begin to make sense of what Jesus is saying? Once again, we look to the audience that Jesus was speaking to in order to gain some clarity. It is the Pharisees who are upset with what Jesus has said because they are lovers of money. They are supposed to be the stewards of God's Law. But they have twisted

the Law in order to enrich themselves. When Jesus cleanses the temple, He refers to it as a den of thieves. The closing parable of this chapter illustrates how blind the love of money has made them in caring for those most needy. Only in the torment of Hades do they realize how lost they had become.

July 19 – Luke 17:1-19

How many times does someone offend you before you begin running out of faith?

Who is the hardest person for you to forgive and why?

Do you see your response to an offense as an area in your life where you need more faith?

Why does Jesus tie the power of mustard seed faith to being unprofitable servants?

Do you ever forget to give God the glory?

Why does Luke make sure that we know that the leper who returned was a Samaritan?

Commentary: When someone offends all are at risk. An offense can hurt deeply so much so that we sometimes wish the offender were thrown overboard with a millstone attached. Life is simpler when we rid ourselves of offenders. But who will be left to push the last person overboard? What makes responding to offenses and offenders so risky is that too often we have jumped overboard rather than confront the offender with their sin. And then forgiven them. Repeatedly. It is how God responds to our sinful behavior. Repeatedly. His grace and mercy are never in short supply. By faith we have access to this grace. Repeatedly. And when we begin to access this grace with faith no greater than a mustard seed in order to forgive repeatedly, we may be tempted to think quite highly of ourselves. But we are not the authors of His plan nor the source of power to implement it. We are merely His servants doing, by faith, what He commands us to do. He is to receive the glory just as the leper who returned

to glorify Jesus for healing him. For truly we are all Samaritans with an inferior spiritual lineage that provides no special favor from God that we can boast in. Except in this, that the sinful leprosy of our hearts had been healed by Jesus Christ.

July 26 – Luke 17:20-18:8

What spiritual reality does Jesus refer to in verse 21?

What answer were the Pharisees wanting to hear?

In verse 23 what safeguard is Jesus providing His followers?

How difficult will it be to recognize His coming?

How do you reconcile what Jesus told the Pharisees and what He told His disciples?

What is our greatest challenge as we anticipate the return of Christ?

Commentary: There are two natures to God's kingdom at work. One is quiet and only discernible by long observation. The other is sudden, total, and cataclysmic. As believers' in Christ, God's kingdom has already entered our hearts and continually works at transforming us in preparation for entry into eternity with Christ. In contrast the return of Christ puts an end to Satan's reign and transforms the entire universe. We live now in between His first and second advent. We live in hope of what we cannot yet see. But we live out our faith with perseverance despite the trials, tribulations, and pandemics in this life. (Romans 8:22-25). Such difficulties are meant to drive us closer to the Lord. We petition Him with our prayers with the same persistence as the widow in the parable at the end of our study. It is the savor of God's kingdom that we already taste that motivates our persistence to see it more fully expressed in our lives.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS

Rudy Cover

Matt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10

The desert is a place where there is very little to eat. In our country the desert is a course, rocky soil where cactus and plants that can grow without water are abundant. Cacti have thorns and stickers on them and if you touch them you wish you had not. The desert is usually hot and dry. I suppose the deserts in Palestine were very much like those in California. If it were near a lake or water, it would not be so bad.

Jesus was in a desert or wilderness near the Sea of Galilee. People followed wherever He went. They did not care where. They wanted to be with Jesus – to hear Him speak the wonderful words of life and to see Him heal the sick. Sometimes Jesus was so busy healing people that He did not have time to eat. Jesus may have been trying to go into the desert to get away from the people, so He and His disciples could eat and rest. They went for three days and still they followed. I suppose nearly everyone had taken some lunch along but after three days the food was gone, and the people were hungry. Walking in the desert takes a lot

of energy so the people were beginning to get weak. If they had to return for food, it would have taken three days more. Many would have fainted.

Jesus said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me three days and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.”

The disciples said, “Where could we get so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?” Jesus said, “How many loaves have you?” And they said, “Seven, and a few fishes.”

That does not sound like much food for four thousand people, does it? Jesus commanded the people to sit down on the ground. Then He took the seven loaves and fishes and gave thanks and broke the loaves and the fishes and gave to the disciples and the disciples to the multitude. Jesus just kept handing out bread and fish till all those people had all they could hold. The disciples gathered seven basketfuls that was left of the food, the people did not eat. Where did all that food come from? How did Jesus

do it? Some things we cannot understand, but one thing we should know and believe is that Jesus did feed all that multitude from seven loaves and a few little fishes.

Compared to heaven, we are living in a desert land. We are dependent upon Jesus for our very life. Jesus can do anything. He can feed you, clothe you and heal you. If you really and truly

believe in Him and choose Him for your Master – Jesus will make you a different person. He will feed you on the words of eternal life which is the Bible, and you will grow in the grace and knowledge of the truth. Living for Jesus is the greatest!

Selected from the
June 15, 1980
issue of the Bible Monitor

SOME OTHER WAY

Owen Mallow

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” John 10:1. The Holy Scriptures speak very often about this little word called way, for instance: the way, His way, my way, this way, that way, their way, by the way, in the way, out of the way, every way and finally God tells us in Isa. 53:6 that “we have turned every one to his own way.” But thanks be unto God the verse does not end there, the Word says, “And the Lord laid on Him (Who is the Way and the only Way) the iniquity of us all.” Christ Jesus bore all our sins on the Cross, shedding His precious blood, that a way could

be made for you and me to get back to God.

Vast multitudes in the world today are seeking some other way, other than the way of the Cross. The reason they are seeking and trying so many ways is because they do not want to submit themselves to the One who said, “I am the way.” Jesus said, “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matt. 7:14. The Holy scripture tells us that there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Jesus calls it the broad way, that leadeth to destruction. But thanks be unto God there is a right way and His

Word tells us just how to follow it. Isa. 35:8, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness...." The Holy Spirit will guide us on that way and even a fool need not err therein.

Many today, who profess to know the Lord, do not blush one bit to tell us that it is impossible to live a Holy life or God's way of living. Heb. 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Gal. 6:8, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Whom will we believe? The sad and tragic fact that is existing in the churches today is, that the Holy Spirit of God and Christ's teachings are not given their rightful place in their practices, even by those who profess to be followers of the living God. Many have stifled the voice and Holy teachings of Christ and are trying some other way. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Isa. 55:8. Unless we repent of this sham of hypocrisy and turn from our own ways, Jesus Christ is going to spew us out of His mouth. Rev. 13:14-17.

We surely are living in the Laodicean age or last days, 2 Tim. 3:1-17. 1 Peter 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." 2 Cor. 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you." Dear brethren and sisters to the Bar of God, let us be careful in this day and age how we build on the foundation of our Lord and Savior. 1 Cor. 3:11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." How careful are we that our lives compare with Christ's teachings? 1 Cor. 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Which way have you preferred to walk? There are only two ways to choose from. First is God's way and second is man's way. They do not correspond because man's ways follow the carnal nature. The door, Christ, and His examples are the only way to get into God's kingdom.

“He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep, (Christ’s way), to him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out” into green pastures. Yes, He calleth His own sheep by name, He leadeth them and they follow, for they know and love His voice. A stranger will they not follow for they know not the voice of strangers. Brethren and sisters, are we hearing His voice, from the pages of the New Testament, calling to us? “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Let us as followers of the meek and lowly Lamb of God seek for and stand in the way of the Cross, that leads to that eternal home.

Jer. 6:17, “I set watchmen over you saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.” Kind brethren, sisters, and friends, is this the condition of the church age today, is this keeping the covenant which we have made with our God? 1 Cor. 4:14-16, “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you

through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 4. John 8:31-32, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The truth is the way and plan of salvation, which Christ the Son of God has delivered unto us. John 14:21, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” 2 John 6, “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.” If all the commandments of Jesus are not to be kept by His followers. Why did He deliver them to us? Often the question is asked, Does God know me and am I certain that He will save me? 2 John 9, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” 1 John

5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If we are not now whole heartedly living according to His instructions, what are we waiting for?

Will you not come to the door of the sheepfold, which is God's way into the kingdom? Will you risk climbing up some other way, as a thief and a robber? Can two walk together except they be agreed? Do we know by the following of Christ's example, that we are walking the Jesus way or are we easily drifting

the broad way, which leadeth to destruction? The wages of sin is eternal death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Where will you spend eternity? Is your life complete with Christ your Lord? If not, seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Psa. 1:27, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Selected from the
July 15, 1960
issue of the Bible Monitor

NEARNESS TO JESUS

Reuben Shroyer

"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine." (John 21:12.)

We get near to one another when we eat together. The Lord's Supper is a fellowship meal. Question: What is implied in nearness to Jesus? Faith in Christ. To trust your salvation to Christ's hands is to get near Him. Repentance. No man can get near to Christ who does not forsake his sin. Repentance is ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

Nearness to Jesus is not mere bodily proximity. Judas was as near to Christ in body as

some of the others. But still how far away from Him he was.

It is not more knowledge of a person. We may know a great deal about a man and not get close to him. It is not mere acquaintance. How many of your acquaintances can you get close to?

Nearness includes friendship. Two friends get close to each other. Example: David and Jonathan, Paul and Luke, Damon and Pythias. Sympathy is suffering. Being persecuted

for Christ's sake. Sympathy with Christ's universal mission to the lost. They get close to Christ because of their sympathy with His work.

He who brings one to Christ is brought near to Jesus.

Secret prayer: talking to Jesus and letting Christ talk with you out of His word. In short, nearness to Jesus implies love to him. Love is the great unifying principle. Love makes husbands and wives one, children and parents one, Christians one. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." Love will enable you to realize your nearness to Christ. What are the means employed to bring us nearer to Christ? A feeling of need. The woman who felt her need of healing and thought if she could only get near enough to Christ to touch the hem of His garment she would be healed. I refer the reader to the ten lepers and blind Bartimaeus as examples. Other means we mention that will bring us nearer to Christ. Reading the Scriptures, prayer, and meditation, attending preaching services, and engaging in Christian work. There are extraordinary means used to bring us nearer to Christ. Great calamities. God can bring much

good, great sorrow, great loss will bring us nearer to Christ. Extraordinary means led Saul of Tarsus to Christ.

We should let the ordinary means of grace lead us nearer to Christ. Why should we be concerned about getting near to Jesus? Because of the dignity or the high honor of getting near to one so great, and good, and mighty. James and John wanted to get on each side of Christ on His throne because of the dignity of the position. People love places of honor. There can be no greater honor than getting near to Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It will make us more like Him for we shall see Him as He is. It will make us more useful. You catch His spirit of usefulness. Andrew did, so did Phillip, and many others. Reader get close to Christ and His work will not drag. It will fit us for Heaven. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. It will make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. May God help us all to get near to Jesus, in thought, in sympathy, in purpose, in usefulness and in love.

Selected from the
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issue of the Bible Monitor

IT IS A PERSONAL MATTER

Grant Mahan

Our religion is. Whether it is to do us any good at all depends entirely on ourselves. We can help each other in some ways, but no one can believe for me, no one can keep my heart for me; I must do it, or it will not be done. It is a strictly personal matter.

Our family can be a great help to us, but the final decision is with each of us; neither father or mother, however much they love us and would like to help us, can take our place. Their religion will not suffice for them and us also.

Not even our church can answer for us, though it may be a very great help to us in our efforts to do the Lord's will while we are here.

Aside from Jesus there can be no mediator, no intercessor before the Father, no one who can bear our weakness and our sins. Only the application of his blood will cleanse us from our sins.

And yet we so often seem not to realize that it is thus with us. We fail to obey the directions which he laid down for all who would follow him into life eternal. And we become so hardened in our course that it does not affect us to make us repent when we know we have gone wrong and must get back to

the right road to have peace.

We stand too far off; we feel too much our own righteousness, forgetting that it is but filthy rags in the sight of God. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

It is just here that we need to be most careful, for man is prone to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. As a rule, we deceive ourselves more easily than others deceive us. Had there not been this tendency in man, Paul would not have given the warning he did, nor would Jesus have said that he who exalts himself will be abased. We need not fear outside enemies, for we have a protector more powerful than any of them. But as soon as we begin to trust in ourselves instead of him to whom we profess to have committed ourselves, then we have opened the door for the worst enemy that mankind has to contend against.

We are not wise when we compare ourselves among ourselves and feel proud that we are not as other men. And when we are not wise, we are most

certainly foolish. And the foolish have no promise of anything that is desirable, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.

Though we cannot but know that the Lord has in his love for man given him wonderful powers, yet they are limited to the things of this world and are given only for a short and very uncertain length of time. We need to remember that all we have is given us, or lent to us, with the obligation of using it for the benefit of the one who gave or loaned it; and also we need to bear in mind that he will come in such a time as we think not of his coming and will demand settlement; he will want his own and the increase. To use for selfish purposes what has been entrusted to us for the use of the giver is not wise and will not be commended when the time of final

accounting comes round.

Our religion is a personal matter; and it is or should be the most important matter in our lives. It is easy, and common, for men to be deceived by others; it is easier and more common for men to be deceived themselves. We cannot too much emphasize the fact that we have only one reliable source of instruction as to the manner in which to use our time and talents; nor can we too often consider our actions, comparing what we have done with what we know we should have done, so as to make the necessary changes in our actions. Each day should be summed up; delay is not safe.

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DOCTRINAL STABILITY

Charles H. Ness

(Isaiah 33:5-6.) "The Lord is exalted for he dwelleth on high: he has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness and wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure."

Here in Pennsylvania we have long winter evenings and they afford us ample time to meditate

on things in God's word beneficial to the child of God. In the above text is implied the thought of God exalted, His supremacy and His providential ability in supplying the needed things to support Zion and to substantiate salvation and that the child of God might stabilize him or herself by the wisdom and knowledge of God who is able and

will supply the needed amount if really desired and asked for in faith believing and with a determined attitude to exercise accordingly.

The wise man says, "get wisdom, for wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. How much better to get wisdom than gold." James says, "Wisdom that is from above is first pure." The child of God needs pure wisdom then the activities to harmonize accordingly and become stabilized.

James also says, the characteristics of this pure wisdom from above are "peace, gentle, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and hypocrisy." The above statement gathered from God's word, is exemplified in Christ, who is the power and wisdom of God. And it is a settled matter, he that has not the mind of Christ is none of His. It was Christ that established the church, it was Christ that loved the church and gave Himself for it, to sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word of God that He might present it to Himself a glorious church without blemish, spot or wrinkle, therefore we need to look at ourselves and stabilize ourselves as individuals or in body that this glorious church be not marred and blurred with blemishes and spots and wrinkles, for the church loves Christ.

"Jesus Christ who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." "Be filled with the fruits of righteousness." In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.

Doctrinal stability is the supremacy of religion. Paul and Barnabas, speaking to religious folks, persuading them to continue in the grace of God, "hold fast the profession of our faith." Lose not what you have wrought (stability) through Jesus Christ and the gospel. God gives us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the children of God are by one spirit baptized into one body and have been made to drink in one spirit.

James says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." A two-fold condition does not go with the child of God, pretending to be a child of God and at the same time be a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God is a two-fold condition and it does not take with God, a change is required from the evil practice to a righteous practice, having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof is also a two-fold condition and a turning away from such is demanded, to refuse to exercise in God's word

is denying the power thereof, therefore the sister should be firm in the wearing of the prayer veil and the modest apparel; therefore the church be firm in keeping the salutation (the holy kiss) and all the ordinances of God's house. Christ taught not to pattern after hypocrisy, not to drift down with the current into a whirlpool of destruction.

It is important to have the real religion to be stabilized in our belief and activities as we find in the scriptures which is the whole volume of doctrinal principals essential unto salvation, doctrinal requirements, then doctrinal stability. The child of God will be perfected by the scriptures given by inspiration of God; the child of God has no time to be aping after the world in its fashion and folly and ways, think of the stability of the apostle Paul as he has expressed in Rom. 8:35, 38-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That really is stability!

Now what is the nature of present-day Christianity in conduct and conversation in the activities of life, on the road, in the home, in business, in the schools, in the churches, etc.? How much effort are we putting forth to stabilize ourselves in accordance with God's word and where lies the limit to which we will go and then stop and say it is as far as I will go regardless of what God's word says, (when confronted with chastisement.) Our activities determine whether our promises and vows with God and by witnesses of man have been stabilized.

Oh, child of God let us go to the limit that lies in God's word, then God will be pleased with us and accept us into His kingdom. Praise the Lord we are bound for heaven, precious thought to be with Jesus forever. I would not want to miss it, would you? Walking up the streets of gold with all the saints of old: by becoming careless and unconcerned while living we will be sure to miss it.

Careless soul what then, what then, careless soul what then, what then; after a life of sin and shame, oh careless soul what then?

Selected from the
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LEGALISM VERSUS SPIRITUALIZING

Charles M. Yearout

Legalism: "Close adherence or conformity to law; the observance of the strict letter of the law rather than its spirit."

– *Webster*

Spiritualization gives a spiritual meaning that often ignores the letter and teaching of God's word. There are three classes of people professing Christianity: (1) the legalist, who lives up to the strict letter of the law regardless of its deep spiritual meaning and application; (2) the spiritualizer, who spiritualizes everything regardless of the meaning and teaching of the law or word of God; (3) the believer, who accepts the law or word of God with its deep spiritual meaning and application to the life of the individual.

He loves God and accepts His plan of salvation and obeys from the heart that form of doctrine delivered therein. His deep reverence and respect for God as his Father, and Christ as his Savior, and the Holy Spirit as his comforter and guide prompts him to consecrate his life to God's divine service. He observes the commandments laid down in the New Testament, because he loves God and

submits his life to Him without reservation.

The legalist is not liable to get into trouble as a law breaker, though he may be void of the spiritual intent of the law. Of the three, the spiritualizer is the worse. He ignores the letter and meaning conveyed in the law or word of God. And if one contends for the observance of all things commanded by Christ, he cries out legalism, and goes so far as to claim God and Christ do not always mean what they say. It is very evident that disobedience to God's word is not pleasing in His sight. To disobey God is rebellion against His law.

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." (1 Sam. 15:22-24.)

The old Dunkard church has been charged with legalism, because she believed, taught, and obeyed all the commandments in the New Testament. She earnestly contended for the observance of all things commanded by Christ in her

periodicals, and from her pulpits until in recent years, and grievous departures have taken place in the church since this teaching to a large extent has ceased.

A person may do all the outward commands, such as baptism, feet washing, the Lord's Supper, etc., and receive no blessing from God for so doing, because the motive prompting the doing of these things was wrong. A person may do things that are essential and right in themselves but receive no reward from God because of the wrong motive. This is clearly proven in the sixth chapter of Matthew in regard to alms giving, prayer and fasting. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

A life dedicated to the service of God produces a fruitage to the glory and honor of God. The true Christian has no need to tell his neighbors that he is a Christian; that fact will demonstrate itself in the life he lives. His honesty and

uprightness, his truthfulness, his Godly walk, his separateness from the world, his humble submission to God in all things. This is the fruitage that obedience to God's will yields. He obeys God in all things because God designed that His children should obey Him.

The spiritualizer, that spiritualizes away the meaning and letter of God's revealed will, lives a life of disobedience so much that God has commanded His children to do. If we live in the Spirit, we will walk in the Spirit. And the Spirit will lead us unto all truth, and the truth (Word of God) will make us free and if the truth (Word of God) will make us free, then are we free indeed. Free from sin, free from the power and influence of the world, free from its vanities and sinful pleasures.

Selected from the
July 1, 1930
issue of the Bible Monitor

SNARES OF THE DEVIL

Howard J. Surbey

"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 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. 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. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Tim. 2:19-26.

As we meditate upon this Scripture, we receive much instruction, how we should walk in this life as followers of Christ. We are convinced that the Devil knows that he has ways of casting a powerful influence over man. He also knows that God is all powerful and that he cannot lawfully overcome God. Therefore, he rebels against God through men, who are God's servants, by deceiving them. A snare is something harmful or destructive, but which is so concealed as not to reveal its true nature.

God has promised us, "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. Note, He does not say that we will not be tempted, but that we will be able to escape or bear it. Through God's help we may recover ourselves out of the snares of the Devil. It depends upon man individually whether he recovers from Satan's temptations or not. We have many Scriptures similar to our text, which reveals unto us Satan's evil devices and the things which are not pleasing unto God.

We will usually wholly avoid the snares of the Devil, if we are busily engaged in serving God, as Christ and the apostles have taught us. Only as we use our talents in doubtful ways or look toward the pleasures of sin and the ease of the lusts of the flesh, that we encounter the snares of the Devil. His snares are well hid, behind things that attract the eye, things that please our carnal nature or things that affect our pride and standing in this life.

We might list numerous possible snares of the Devil, but no doubt the Holy Word will reveal the most serious of these to each of us such as: Youthful lusts which have

no definite future as their reward; foolish and unlearned questions of which we are not sincerely interested in their answer; that which brings strife and misunderstanding rather than bringing love, joy, peace and oneness with God; the Christian graces of humility, meekness and submission; departing from iniquity and living and explicit Gospel truths, rather than what we might think that the gospel aims to teach.

“Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” 1 Tim. 3:7. If this is essential for the Bishop, there certainly will be no harm if each of us carefully guard our impressions upon those outside of the church. As we grow in grace and learn of the wonderful blessings of wholly serving God, are we not impressed with the danger of the snares of the Devil

hiding our Gospel light, to those who are out in sin?

1 Tim. 6 and Eph. 5 are a few of several chapters which are so full of instructions, for the follower of Christ that we do not see the need to take space to comment upon these chapters here. The New Testament has so many essential things for the Christian to believe, live and teach to others, that we need not occupy our time and talents with contentions. God’s Word is the detection device to avoid the snares of the Devil with. Are we willing to work with and through the Gospel, to unitedly build one another up in the Most Holy Faith, so that we each may avoid the snares of the Devil?

Selected from the
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NEWS ITEMS

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

During a recent meeting by conference call, the members of Standing Committee regretfully decided to cancel General Conference for 2020. Both the management of the Roxbury Holiness Camp and the caterer expressed concern over the logistics of maintaining social distancing with our anticipated attendance. Suppliers are not willing to commit to providing items, and the cost for food is increasing. Franklin County, where the camp is located, is currently in Pennsylvania’s yellow phase, which limits gatherings to 25 persons. Moving to the green

phase will limit gatherings to 250 people. Out of respect for the management of the camp, the caterer, and those who rule over us, the Elders have reluctantly chosen to cancel this year's General Conference.

Previously, I hoped that by the end of August the COVID-19 virus would be long gone. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the Coronavirus pandemic is not going away anytime soon.

Plans are to continue the rotation of General Conference and have conference in the Third District in 2021. The exact dates will be announced later.

We certainly will miss all the encouragement, fellowship, hearing messages and lessons, visiting, working together, and most of all worshipping our Heavenly Father together. In our disappointment, let us be mindful to honor each other in our local congregations as we honor our friends from other districts. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Romans 12:10).

May God bless you and be with you.

In Christian Love,
Brother Bob Lehigh

CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

The Lord willing, the Chambersburg Dunkard Brethren Congregation is looking forward to Revival Meetings, July 19 through 26, 2020, closing with Lovefeast on Sunday July 26. Bro. Gordon Jamison, Quinter, Kansas has consented to bring the messages. Sunday morning Sunday school at 9:30 A.M., message at 10:30 A.M., Sunday evening at 7:00 P.M. Join us in prayer for these services, the Congregation, and Bro. Gordon that the Holy Spirit will lead each of us in these trying times. We extend a hearty invitation to come worship with us.

Sister Janet Shaffer, Cor.

DALLAS CENTER, IOWA

All are welcome to join us at Dallas Center for our summer Lovefeast weekend, August 7 to 9, 2020. Please pray for Bro. Jeremiah Johnson as he shares with us the messages God has laid on his heart.

Sister Brenda Meyers, Cor.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR AUGUST 2020**August 2 – Barriers and Bridges to Following Christ – Luke 18:9-34**

1. Why was the publican justified and the Pharisee not when the Pharisee had done everything “right” and the tax collector had not?

2. What does it mean to receive the Kingdom of God as a child to enter into the Kingdom?

3. There is an underlying tension between justification by faith and/or works throughout these parables. They all point to faith, but Jesus tells Peter that because he left his house, which is an action or work, that he will “receive manifold more” in his earthly life and will also receive “life everlasting.” Is there a connection between faith and works? What is that balance, if there is one?

4. The twelve did not understand Jesus when He explained His death and resurrection. Why not? Do we understand what His death and resurrection meant, what it means now and the implications for the future?

August 9 – A Blind Man and a Tax Collector Gain Their Sight –**Luke 18:35-19:10**

1. Did the blind man, Bartimaeus, already have “sight” before he could see? What was the true healing he received from his encounter with Jesus?

2. Why did the religious leaders and people complain about Jesus eating with a sinner when Jesus told Zacchaeus that He would be going to his house? Do we ever have those types of thoughts or feelings?

3. Jesus said that salvation came to Zacchaeus's house the day that He ate with them. Was Jesus simply talking about Himself or did Zacchaeus and his house come to salvation? Was it because Zacchaeus would repay all that he had taken wrongfully? Why or why not?

August 16 – Ten Minas and Jesus Enter Jerusalem – Luke 19:11-40

1. Jesus had told His disciples quiet recently that He would be killed. Why were they still looking for a physical kingdom to come as Jesus drew near to Jerusalem? How can we continue to look for His Kingdom all the while being active in kingdom work?

2. In the parable about the pounds, is it about money? If not, what are the meanings of it?

3. Why are the Pharisees so outraged that the people are quoting Ps. 118:26 and calling Jesus the King/Messiah?

August 23 – Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem; Then confronts its Powers – Luke 19:41-20:19

1. Is Jesus only weeping over Jerusalem for the near future sacking of the city in 70 A.D. or is there a spiritual application here as well?

2. How was Jesus being nonresistant when He was driving out the money changers from the Temple?

3. Jesus spoke the parable of the vineyard owner against the chief priests and scribes and they knew it. They sought to kill Him from then on, but was it because they understood the deeper meanings or that they were just offended? What are the analogies in this parable and why or why didn't the religious leaders understand?

August 30 – Jesus Silences His Enemies – Luke 20:20-47

1. The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees all tried to entrap Jesus with various questions throughout His ministry. Sometimes scripture says Jesus "knew" their thoughts and other times He "perceived their craftiness." As fully man, did He always know everything? As fully God, did He always know everything?

2. Jesus teaches to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. For today, what should we give to our government and what should be reserved for God?

3. Why does Jesus reference Moses speaking at the burning bush when teaching about God being a God of the living, not the dead? How can we reflect the same "aliveness" to the dying world around us?

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