

BIBLE MONITOR

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“For the faith once delivered unto the saints”

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| 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.

DARE TO THINK

Dare to think, tho' bigots frown;
Dare in words your thoughts express
Dare to rise, though oft cast down;
Dare the wronged and scorned to bless.

Dare from custom to depart;
Dare the priceless pearl possess;
Dare to wear it next your heart;
Dare, when sinners curse, to bless.

Dare forsake what you deem wrong;
Dare to walk in wisdom's way;
Dare to give where gifts belong;
Dare God's precepts to obey.

Do what conscience says is right;
Do what reason says is best;
Do with willing mind and heart;
Do your duty and be blest.

– *Unknown*

READY FOR PERSECUTION

Christians living in the United States are totally unfamiliar with persecution. Outside of a few scattered incidents over the past four centuries there have been very few true cases of persecution of Christians in this country. Many may consider themselves to be persecuted when they face various inconveniences in their daily lives. These supposed persecutions pale in comparison to times of actual persecution throughout history.

The Children of Israel were under total bondage to Pharaoh. Both the Israelites and the Egyptians had forgotten the service of Joseph to Pharaoh and the promises made concerning the preservation of his kinsmen in Egypt. At first, the Israelites had been blessed by living in the most fertile part of Egypt. The Egyptians were loath to do the work

that the Israelites did well. Later, the Egyptians became jealous of the Israelite's prosperity, so their rulers began to impose more and more restrictions upon them. Eventually those restrictions became bondage. Eventually, God took notice of their bondage and commissioned Moses to lead them out of Egypt and to the Promised Land.

Early Christians were persecuted by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. Saul, later to be Paul, made himself famous and powerful by the severity of his persecution of the Christians. He consented to the stoning of Stephen. Perhaps Stephen's dying prayer of forgiveness was a step towards Saul's ultimate conversion on the Damascus Road.

Even more rigorous persecution of the Early Christians

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was carried out by the Roman Empire. While the intensity of the persecution waxed and waned from one Emperor to another, it was particularly intense in the reign of Nero. He entertained with ever more ghastly and bloody scenes involving the deaths of Christians.

With the supposed conversion of Constantine, the church was established as the favored religion of the Empire. She was sadly compromised so temporal riches and power became her mantle instead of meekness and service.

As the church became powerful, she persecuted those who differed from her authority. Those who differed were determined to follow the older, primitive ways of Christian living. Throughout several centuries, the official church suppressed Biblical truth.

The Protestant Reformation seemed to offer some hope of improvement in reestablishing Biblical principles within the church. However due to compromise and use of government force that did not happen. The state churches arising from the Reformation continued to persecute those who desired to practice Biblical doctrines. Except for some minor principalities there was a general persecution of those who wanted to follow the literal Biblical teachings.

The settlement of the North American continent opened a place of escape for those who were persecuted. While not all colonies were as welcoming as William Penn's colony, gradually other states did offer freedom of religion. Eventually, this freedom has been extended to other religious bodies.

This freedom allowed Christians to exercise their beliefs without governmental establishment. There was a general prosperity of Christianity throughout the land and it became the dominant form of belief. Unfortunately, as Biblical Christianity became less understood and practiced by the multitude, it became militant and politized. The church became a part of the political scene which mimicked Constantine's official church. It was no longer a non-resistant, non-lawing, non-politized body. As it moved into the political world, it also placed itself in the crosshairs of those who opposed what it stood for and advocated.

When the opposition has been in power, they tried to restrict and punish the Church. Most of these restrictions have been inconveniences not actual persecution. As fewer choose to identify with Biblical-based

Christianity, there may be further restrictions that could lead to actual persecution. Instead of being committed to political power, we may find that we should have been committed to God, His Word, and His Son. While we were trying to secure our political rights, we should have been humbling ourselves

before God, seeking the advocacy of Jesus Christ because of our sins and self-sufficiency,

Persecution may come. Are you willing to humble yourself before God and seek His strength to either live or die for Him?

M. C. Cook

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

This is another installment on the Biblical concept of love. As we continue our discussion, let's look at the scripture.

Every person was born with an innate desire to love and be loved, yet one could argue that people today feel more isolated and unloved than at any time in history! Yet, we sometimes struggle to come up with a clear definition of the term.

We often try to describe love by attaching adjectives to love to define it. For example, we speak of brotherly love (Hebrews 13:1); the unity between brethren and sisters walking together as we together as one body follow our Lord according to His Word (Philippians 1:27). Then there is romantic love – a man's affection toward his wife or sweetheart (Proverbs 30:18-19). Forbidden love describes the way one centers his or her heart

around things or persons which would be in violation of clear Biblical doctrine (1 John 2:15-17). Then there is unrequited love – that which is given and not returned. In the human heart this may cause feelings of rejection and heartbreak. One writer posed the question when he wrote is anything so tragic as unrequited love. The beloved person may not realize the other person's affection or may willfully reject it. Persons have even committed suicide because of it! Jesus knows all about unrequited love! The scripture says, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." (See John 1:10-13.)

As we endeavor to define and live out love, again we must always look at love as defined by God's word and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot separate love from truth. The apostle John makes that clear in his writings –

particularly in his three epistles. Please refer to these scriptures: I John 3:18, II John 1-4, III John 1-4. These are just a few. The concepts of love, truth, keeping God's commandments are interwoven together throughout his letters. To try to separate these concepts is to cause error. Consider this statement: "Love is love, no matter who you are." That sounds noble. However, it is a statement given by a lesbian woman attempting to justify her lifestyle that clearly violates scripture. Yet at the same time we must recognize her deep desire, however misled, to experience love and being loved. This need can be filled by the love of Christ shown to her by Christians around her and as she would accept Him into her heart.

The Bible gives accounts of those who loved without truth. Love without truth leads to perversion. Kindly turn in your Bibles to II

Samuel 13. In a nutshell the Word says Amnon "loved" Tamar and yet guided by the advice of a friend, Amnon raped her bringing ruin to Tamar's life and eventually his own as well. This is a recorded example of love separated from truth.

If love without truth leads to perverted ideas of love, truth without love is also error. We can speak the truth, yet possibly in such a way as to turn others away from hearing it. Paul writes in Ephesians about "speaking the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16.) Speaking the truth in love leads to edifying the body of Christ. Also, the world needs to hear the truth, but in their attempt to justify their rejection of it will refer to us as haters, bigots, or whatever else they might come up with. But perhaps sometimes those titles may be warranted if believers speak truth but lack God's love for them.

Edward Trone

THE BATTLE FOR OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

Part 1

It has been nearly a year since COVID-19 was introduced into our conscious awareness. With it has come many decisions by governmental authorities and public health agencies on how to

manage and survive this pandemic. Nearly every individual has had to adjust their life to this new reality. We have been barraged by a multitude of claims, some true and some false. Our lives have

been disrupted and disturbed by disease, by economic forces, and by school closures. The barrage includes the political rhetoric of politicians, pastors, neighbors, and friends. Many times, the word “rights” has been bandied about. Simmering feuds within our society have broken out at different times with loss of life and property. Rights have been denied or demanded creating intense situations. As state and local governments have grappled with the medical and economic impact of COVID-19 the restrictions and suggestions they have implemented have met much resistance. Many believe that somehow their “rights” are being compromised.

Christians have responded in many of the same ways as the general public. In a recent conversation with one of my sons he shared how local authorities had reached out to the many churches in their area. They suggested changes that churches could institute that would help slow the growth of the disease. The response of many of the churches was, “Don’t tell us what to do.” Local authorities were shocked by the response. They assumed that churches wanted to help people overcome the negative impact of the pandemic. For many Christians,

“safeguarding rights” has become the focus of the response to COVID-19.

One of the saddest aspects of this pandemic, not including the tragic loss of life, is the revealing of how accultured the American church has become. The church has become deeply politicized and mirrors the polarization seen in so many levels of our society. We are no longer strangers and sojourners in a foreign land. Nope, we are heavily invested in seeing our side win. We no longer stand as a counterculture to the larger culture all around us. We seldom are revealing an upper and better kingdom of which we are citizens and standing against the values of the present age. We seem to have forgotten that our battles are not against political parties or governing officials but against principalities and powers that desire our loyalty. Despite our position and relationship with Christ we are letting ourselves be swayed by voices far removed from the grace in which we have been called. There is contention in our midst on a scale few of us have ever experienced. A presidential election has occurred, but the transition has been tumultuous. To further unsettle our hearts and minds is the increasing scope of a pandemic

that continues to infect and kill.

Since COVID-19 first became a reality, more than one and a half million people in the world have died from this disease. The United States leads the world in the number of deaths with over three hundred thousand. While some may choose to debate these statistics there is one case that many of us are engaged through prayer in preventing from becoming another statistic. A much beloved brother and leader in our brotherhood is battling for his life because of COVID-19. It is highly likely that he will not be the last. As we value his life, so should we value each other. As we pray for his healing, let us also pray for ways to prevent others from needlessly becoming infected.

The world has gotten darker this year. The months ahead may be some of the darkest yet as this pandemic keeps growing in its ferocity to infect its human hosts. The daily tally of deaths in our country now exceeds some of the worst days in our history including Civil War battles, Pearl Harbor, and 9/11. While vaccines are just on the verge of beginning to be distributed it will still be months before we can begin to see significant changes.

So how are we responding as we stand at the edge of a precipice

completely unfamiliar to most of us? Are we seeing the reality around us through eyes of faith? Are we seeing the simple things we can do to help make ourselves and others safe amid this pandemic? Or do we spend our time wishing life could be normal again and demanding our "rights" to make it so?

In our longing for normalcy, it is easy to become reactive rather than proactive. The simplest reactive response is denial. We go about our business as usual and act like nothing is wrong. If it does not impact us in any direct way, it really does not exist. Part of staying in denial is choosing ignorance. We choose ignorance when we fail to learn how to safeguard ourselves from spreading this disease. Now add, according to our own taste, conspiracy theories, false or misleading information, or discrediting, as in the case of this pandemic, science in general and medical experts in particular. The next step in the cocoon of our own ignorance is paranoia. We conclude that there are nameless and faceless people in positions of power who cover up the truth. They have overplayed the seriousness of this disease to gain more power and exploit our weaknesses. They control events for their own personal gain. When churches must limit

their services or close their doors, we believe we are targeted for persecution. Unless we stand up and demand our “rights” we may be swept aside and powerless.

As followers of Christ our calling is to shine as lights amid the darkness. If we are to make a real difference in this world there must be things about us that are distinctly different besides the obvious outer appearances. The truth we proclaim must penetrate deeper than a mere recitation of political agendas and solutions that saturate much of what we hear and read. Our understanding of these unique times must have a biblical perspective that reflects our abiding trust in God. The thanksgiving and joy we experience is the result of who God is in our lives. We must not allow ourselves to be reduced to one more group demanding our “rights” during genuine physical suffering and economic upheaval and deprivation. The liberty we have in Christ allows us to love and serve others.

At the same time, we are not detached from the swirl of events that touches lives around the world. We may question the efficacy of certain choices that public health officials recommend to stop the spread of COVID-19. But neither are we immune from

the consequences of choices that ignore the danger to our own health and well being and that of our families, friends, and neighbors. We must work together within our congregations to discern the course of action that the Lord wants to lead us in. We must educate ourselves about the healthy choices we can make to avoid becoming victims of a disease that makes no distinction about whom it infects. We must develop new skills and reasonable alternatives that allow us to worship and fellowship together without compromising our health. We need to remind ourselves that some of the changes and choices we make are only for a season. Therefore, we need to encourage one another to endure with patience so that we do not falter or fall away out of discouragement.

As we respond in faith God can and will open doors of opportunity for us to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to the world around us. In the process we may find ourselves very self-conscious of wearing a mask that begins to incite our rebellious nature. We can be transparent and share our discomfort. But we can also share our motivation. It is meant to be a means to keeping others

safe from me and being a source of infection to others. It also helps keep me safe from others who may be infected. By extension it is a way to demonstrate the love of Christ who gave His life so that others could discover real life with

His Father in heaven. Our God is constantly in the business of taking what is bad and using it for good. So, let us be about our Father's business.

Brother Phil Franklin

A VISION FOR CHURCH PLANTING

I am fascinated by the life of the apostle Paul. Paul was blessed in many ways. Of all the notable qualities Paul exhibited, being sensitive to God's call through the Holy Spirit is at the top of my list. This sensitivity gave Paul the confidence and direction to embrace the calling of God in ministry opportunities. Paul was not successful in presenting the gospel because of his tremendous personal talents but because Paul's life mission was to pursue the calling and message of God. This meant that God's call was to be pursued whenever and wherever that call led him. God's call was energizing and fulfilling.

An example of this spiritual ministering to souls is found in Acts 16:1-10. Verse 5 tells us that Paul's second missionary trip was fruitful, and God was speaking powerfully to those Paul met. The Gospel was being preached. Lives were being changed. Churches

were being established. The Body of Christ was growing! The Glory and Love of God was on display.

When Paul and Silas wanted to go into Asia the Holy Spirit stopped them. They turned their attention to Bithynia and again the Holy Spirit halted their progress. They stayed in Troas and waited. What is particularly interesting to me is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Paul and Silas. How did they sense the Holy Spirit was stopping their progress? We have no reason to believe that the Holy Spirit worked any differently then, than He works now. Paul was a man of prayer and I have no doubt that he was asking the Lord to show him where to serve. How easy it would have been for a strong-willed man like Paul to ignore the Holy Spirit's influence. He could have passed off the pause in his spirit to be nothing more than the normal doubts anyone experiences in

the challenges of life that appear bigger than one's energy and time to accomplish them.

I do not consider stopping at Troas to be a coincidence. Paul was listening and seeking God's direction through the Holy Spirit. The direction from God to stop was not a surprise to Paul and Silas. What came next was not a surprise either. The message in a vision was to go to Macedonia and minister to those willing to hear the message of the Gospel. Paul did not question God and ask God to prove that the trip would be fruitful. Paul and Silas did not second guess the message but went immediately and God blessed them and those whom they met.

One of the most significant lasting results from Paul's life of service to others was the establishment of Churches, Church Planting. Establishing Churches was as fundamental to Paul as preaching the message of Salvation. I believe that Paul would have considered preaching, teaching, and Church Planting to all be of equal value and all were by God's design. Church Planting was God's way to allow new believers to grow spiritually and serve others actively where they were needed.

Paul was blessed to watch

God work in the lives of new believers. What an incredible privilege to watch new believers begin to be active in serving others. Paul's confidence in God's plan is apparent as we read his letters. How, when, and by what means God directed him in the ministry was without question going to happen. Paul did not doubt God. Paul followed God. Paul lived in the victorious wake of the Resurrection. Even in difficult times Paul knew the Victory over sin and death was already won.

The difficulty of any moment did not undermine his love and devotion to God. Those moments did not shape the effort needed to serve, or a trust in God's will for his life. A great example of this is found in II Corinthians, chapter 11. For each trial he lists a confidence he had that God was working. This absolute trust and confidence in God developed a vision for what could be despite what he saw day to day. His vision for the work God gave him was defined and shaped by the power and plan of God and not by man.

Paul was a visionary. Paul can be an intimidating spiritual example. I would remind you that the same power that energized Paul is available to us today. God is no less God. The Holy Spirit has

not lost His ability to communicate. When it comes to giving the power to live faithfully God has no rival.

It is perfectly appropriate to have the confidence that God wants to inspire and give us a vision of His work on earth today. It will be different in some ways than what He gave Paul. In the face of the Master of the universe we are small and weak. Even with this reality God calls us to follow Him each day. God is willing to inspire us to have a single-minded devotion to what He wants us to do and be. He is not surprised when we doubt or are unsure about the direction our lives take. He calls us to a Holy Spirit trust that is based on nothing more or less than His leading and promises that His leading will always be enough. God is always faithful to provide more than enough vision to inspire us. He is ready to assure us in the uncertainty of what lies ahead and invites us to live by faith. Vision. What more could we ask?

We should be consistently evaluating our effectiveness in listening to His call. This evaluation appears to me to be at its core attempting to answer the basic question of whether we are being directed by God or some other influence. The application of this basic question manifests itself in

many ways. It would be easy to assume that since our intentions are to listen and respond to God's will for us individually and as a Brotherhood, we would never need to question the direction of our choices.

This simplistic view of God's will is inadequate to guide us in life. Obeying is more than listening. Listening with consistency and living out God's call is the only way we can hope to know and be in His will. Are we listening to God? Are we obeying the influence of the Holy Spirit? Are we willing to be challenged to view God's calling to be limited only by His plan? Do we wish and pray to be a part of being light to a world that lives in spiritual darkness? The answer to all these questions is of course an emphatic yes!

Our intentions are important. They are the fertile soil that God chooses to show us what can and should be. Like any other part of our lives, if our obedience never rises above what could be, we will never be able to be part of what should be. Moving beyond inspiration to action is where God begins to teach us His vision and inspire us to be His Disciples. Challenging and convicting isn't it?

I am sure we all fall short at some point in comparing what

we want to do and be and seeing what we believe to be the reality of who we are. Such is evidence of our frailty. I have no doubt that Paul would tell us that he wanted to be more fruitful in ministry than he was. Paul would also tell us to never limit God by the measure of our frailty. God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Eph. 3:20. Where we cannot see God can. When we do not know how the challenges of life are to be negotiated, God does. The calling of God is never without His blessing.

I have been blessed over the years to get to know many of my Brothers and Sisters in our fellowship. I have been challenged by the vision and dreams that they have shared with me. I have been encouraged by their hunger to be light in a dark world. I have seen, on many occasions, their yearnings to serve their Brothers and Sisters more fully in their home congregations. I have sensed that many in our fellowship have a growing call from the Lord to serve both in their home congregations and beyond the boundaries of their everyday lives.

I have spent time thinking about the future and how God’s

calling to be light can be more fully realized in the Dunkard Brethren Church. I have seen areas where I believe we can better harness the energy that so many in our fellowship have for outreach like Church Planting. Have you ever considered Church Planting as a part of preaching the Gospel?

I have heard comments that we are too small a denomination to actively consider this. What would Paul say? What does God say? If Church Planting were so vital in Paul’s day, why wouldn’t it be important in our time? I believe that God has always called the Church to have the vision of spreading the gospel which includes Church Planting. For us this is a daunting challenge, but Church Planting is not daunting to God. Could Church Planting be God’s will for the Dunkard Brethren Church?

I believe that Paul would tell us that we should always be open to God’s call. I believe he would also tell us that we should never limit God’s will to only what we currently know. He will not call us where He will not care for us. May our faith in the call of God be grounded in His ability to accomplish His will in us.

Blessings as you serve Him,
Brother Mark Cordrey

SAFETY IN THE STORM

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” Matthew 7:24-25

Jesus Christ refers to His Words as “The Rock”. To build on these words is to build in safety. Anything built thereon will never fall. This is not safety from the storm, but safety in the storm. He provides a firm, strong foundation, not just a shelter. Storms add a strengthening aspect to our Christian walk. Just as wind causes a tree’s roots to go deeper and its branches to grow stronger resistance in any form adds strength which would not be there otherwise.

When Jesus walked in Palestine, He became a storm Himself. The scribes and Pharisees felt insecure in His presence. Everything they stood for was threatened by Jesus and after His resurrection they all fell apart. They did not build upon the foundation.

No amount of security will keep a house built on the sand

from falling, but Jesus alone can make any house secure if only it is built with Him as the foundation.

“For other foundation can no man lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 3:11.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

– *Edward Mote*

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler’s Congregation

COVERING OR WASHING?

It can be called by many names, Mt. Moriah, Temple Mount, Outside the wall of Jerusalem, to name a few. More important than what you might call it, are the happenings that took place there.

If you have been there, you can see most of the stones have been, cut and/or placed there to make steps, however if you look closely, you can see some of the natural stones that make up part of this stairway up the mountain. This mountain (and perhaps even these very rocks) is the one that Abraham climbed with Isaac on the day the Lord asked him to offer his only son. As we all know The Lord spared Isaac's life that day and provided "a ram caught in a thicket by his horns" to be offered as a substitute. The Lord never wanted Isaac to be literally sacrificed, but he wanted to test Abraham. He wanted to prove Abraham was willing to give up everything, including his ONLY promised son, in order to obey God. Little did Abraham realize that this place, and the ram offered as a substitute, were a foreshadow of things to come.

Years later, this mountain would become the building place of Jerusalem and the temple, where thousands of animals would be sacrificed as a substitute, a sacrifice

for the covering of the sin of Israel.

About two thousand years after Abraham and Isaac climbed down off this place, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world", would be condemned to die and be crucified on this very mountain. Christ was offered as a substitute in our place. Not just as a covering but His blood washes us white as snow. Our sins are not just covered but removed from us and remembered no more.

In turn we are then to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This is not done to earn salvation but as an act of love and thankfulness to God, the Creator, our Redeemer, our Friend, and our Guide, for loving us so much that He offered His ONLY Son, Jesus, (before we were even born, and before we ever even asked for forgiveness) as a substitute for us.

At least in my case, my "living sacrifice" keeps trying to climb off the altar. I am thankful that even with all my faults and failures, Jesus loved me so much that He stayed on the cross as a sacrifice for me. A loving substitute, one of which I am not worthy!!!

Brother Joe Cover
Dallas Center, Iowa

A FELLOWSHIP DIVIDED GETS THINGS DONE!

I believe we have the wrong idea about unity in our culture today. We all want to believe that everybody is equal, and yet we do not define what we mean by equal. One phrase that we do not understand today is our national motto, "E Pluribus Unum", out of many, one. Some people's idea of equal is everybody is the same, and yet that is not a reality.

We need to get a hold of the idea, particularly as Christians, that if our Fellowship is divided, we will be able to get God's work done. If we are all doing the same thing simultaneously, nothing is going to get done.

Take a factory of some sort. In every aspect of that factory, people are doing different things. At the end of the line, all those different things are put together to do one thing. It is the diversity in absolute harmony that creates anything of value.

Consider an army for example. All the soldiers are standing there, but there are different divisions, responsibilities, and warfare aspects. Together, this diversity creates a unity, enabling the Army's General to defeat the enemy.

This idea needs to be brought

into the church today. One problem we face is that every church wants to be the same. You have a church over here of one group of people and a church over here of another group of people and then down the street is a church of another group of people. We have separated God's people so much that little is getting done.

A church that does not know its diversity will never accomplish the job God wants it to do. A fellowship in sync is a fellowship with all the diversity of its members doing what God wants them to do, but in harmony with everybody to accomplish that single purpose of God, which is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps we get off balance when we begin to glorify one spiritual gift over another. If you look at all the spiritual gifts, they are remarkably diverse. By themselves alone, they really cannot accomplish God's purpose. The gifts of the Holy Spirit only are unified in the person of the Lord Jesus. When we exalt one gift over another, we compromise the work of God.

An illustration might be some of the huge mega-churches we have in our country today. Thousands of people gather to

watch a group of people who are paid to worship. To me, it seems somewhat contradictory.

New Testament worship comprises a wide variety of Christians, who come from different backgrounds, who have different spiritual gifts and talents, who together lift up the Lord Christ.

It is like four men getting around the table to lift it up. All four need to be in unity, but they need to be separate from one another. All four men could not lift it up by the same side. They must be diverse and get around the table and then together lift it up. Also, they need to lift it up at the same time. There is unity in diversity, but it is the diversity that magnifies the unity.

The challenge before us is to recognize the diversity in our Fellowship and celebrate it, but simultaneously bring that diversity to focus on one unity and that unity would be the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not all the same. We all do not have the same background and experiences. This is not a negative but a positive.

Along with this is the idea that some people are more important in God's view than others. For example, the preacher is much more important than the person

sitting in the pew. Where this comes from is not in the Scriptures. It comes from the world that tries to evaluate people.

Although we have a great deal of diversity, when we come before the Lord Jesus Christ, He treats us all the same. I do not know how He does it, but He does. We like to recognize people, whereas God likes the recognition to be focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I get into my car, start up the engine, and begin my travel, no one part of that automobile is more important than another. I have four wheels on that car, and not one of those wheels is more important than the other three unless one wheel is flat. Then I notice a difference. The diversity of my automobile creates for me a sense of unity. Still, when one aspect of my automobile is out of sync with the rest of the automobile, I recognize it immediately.

Earnest Hemingway was cautious about this in his writing. If he was reading a manuscript he was working on, and a sentence or phrase jumped out, he immediately pulled that phrase or sentence from the manuscript. He would say that a manuscript is not made up in one sentence, but of all coming together in harmony.

Not only is this true for the Fellowship, but it is also true for me personally. When everything is running smoothly, I do not take much notice of my body. But when something is wrong, I focus on that which is wrong. The doctor's job is to pull my body into complete harmony so that not one part of my body is

getting all the attention.

If we are going to get things done for the kingdom of God, we need to understand that our Fellowship is best when it is divided.

James L. Snyder
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PHIL'S PONDERINGS

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

March 2021 Study Questions

March 7 – Galatians 6:1-18

What is your first response to someone overtaken by sin?

When you overtake someone from what direction have you come?

What is the load referred to in verse 5?

What mindset needs developing to reap what we have sown?

What if any difference is there between the world being crucified to me and I being crucified to the world?

What marks is Paul referring to on his body?

Commentary: We live in a nation of laws. These laws govern our behavior. When we transgress those laws there are consequences. Many laws were broken in our nation's capital a week ago. The consequences are being meted out by law enforcement agencies and debated by members of congress. Many fingers are pointing toward a host of culprits and especially at the outgoing President. Against this backdrop Paul's words at the beginning of Chapter 6 sounds strange to our ears, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such

an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” No laws have ever been made by any man or nation that can create such a response to sin. Only a King who is also a Savior can govern a people to respond with the law of love. Only in a kingdom, governed by the King of Kings, can conviction and restoration occur simultaneously. Only in a kingdom, where the grace of Jesus Christ can reveal our lostness and lift us high above the trampling mobs, will we find the hope so easily lost in the kingdoms of men. We are citizens of an upper and better kingdom. Let us never lose sight of the price of our redemption, who we belong to, what He has called us to be and who rules over us by His Holy Spirit.

March 14 – Ephesians 1:1-14

What is your favorite spiritual blessing?

Did you choose to be chosen or were you chosen to choose?

Is your salvation something you have worked hard to gain or received it as a gift?

Why has God adopted us as His sons and daughters?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our redemption?

What is our trust in Christ based upon?

Commentary: Does talking about predestination, election, being chosen as opposed to choosing, and other similar terms make you uncomfortable? I fail to remember any real discourses on these subjects from the pulpit. So, it seems that I am not the only one uncomfortable with these subjects. Perhaps my uncomf-
ortableness stems primarily with those who use these kinds of words and phrases frequently. Their lives sometimes seem casual toward sin or presumptuous about God. They seem almost militant about their salvation and wonder why I seem less than absolutely certain about mine. Or is that just presumption on my part? Regardless, if my faith is going to be built on the foundation of Christ Jesus and His Word, I cannot ignore these words, phrases, and subjects. I

must be able to reconcile what I believe with what God's Word teaches. So, as we travel through this epistle let us be on our guard against avoiding their biblical use. Let us plunge more deeply into understanding their content and application to our lives. If we do not, we will have a hard time convincing others that we are indeed biblical Christians.

March 21 – Ephesians 1:15-2:3

Do you pray and give thanks for those whose faith is bearing fruit?

How many different areas of spiritual growth does Paul name in verses 17-22?

From that list what would be your highest priority?

In chapter 2:1-3 what is Paul's purpose(s) in reminding them of their past conduct?

How does the reminder of your past help you?

How aware are you of being quickened or made alive when you were dead...?

Commentary: Have you reached a plateau in your spiritual life that leaves you feeling stagnant? Has reading your Bible become a chore in which you have difficulty remembering what you read? Is worship a mere formality filled with empty words and little inspiration while prayer is mechanical and a collection of familiar phrases? I suspect many of us have experienced dry times in our soul. It becomes difficult to penetrate all the hopes Paul has for his Ephesian brethren and wonder why we are missing out. Consider Ephesians 1:17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Paul is not asking this just for a few special people but for all. That includes you and me. All of us have experienced in a variety of ways the end of our own wisdom. That is a good thing because Christ is the measure of all wisdom and His wisdom is infinite. To overcome our stagnation, we must depend on Christ and His wisdom. Try

memorizing verses 17-23. Meditate on these words and phrases as you memorize them. As you meditate, accept that this is what the Lord desires to do in you. Cry out to Jesus that He might be revealed as you seek Him, know Him, and respond to His direction in your life. He is the source of spiritual growth for all of us and knows how to excite our hearts beyond what we know or imagine.

March 28 – Ephesians 2:4-18

How has the riches of God's mercy been made known to you?

How has the grace of God saved you?

How often do you contemplate the events of your own salvation?

Do you see those events within the context of Paul's description?

In Paul's description what falls into past, present, and future experiences?

In verse 17 who is Paul likely describing as afar off and those who are nigh?

Commentary: For purposes of this commentary, I am including the first 3 verses of chapter 2. At the beginning of this chapter Paul says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." By way of reminder and comparison when Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus He said, "Lazarus come forth." (John 11:43.) The lesson to be learned is that dead people, physically or spiritually, do not become physically or spiritually alive by their own efforts. Rather, it takes the intervention of God to bring about new life. Our experience of spiritual life is the result of God calling us from the dead. This new life is not my reward for things I have done and choices I have made. It is simply the gift of God's grace that calls me into a new life, lived by faith, in obedience to the One who called me. So deep and so powerful is this new life that the old designations that separated us from others no longer applies. Jews and Gentiles, black and white, East and West, conservative and liberal, and all other barriers

have been torn down. We have the same spiritual DNA because we have the same Father, thus giving us the same access by the same Spirit. We have all been called from the tomb of death to a new life we never knew before. No one has a superior claim to the love of God.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

THE LOST SHEEP

Rudy Cover

Matthew 18:10-14

Jesus liked little children and I'm sure that children liked Jesus. Jesus said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Children are humble and they know they are dependent on their parents. Jesus wants us to be dependent upon Him. Children are wonderful, but they do grow up and then they are not children anymore.

We used to raise sheep. The mother sheep would care for her lambs. The lambs would follow their mothers wherever they went. But sometimes a lamb would get separated from its mother. Then it would cry out and would not stop until it had found her again. Its very life depended on the milk from its mother. Sometimes a mother sheep would die, and the lamb would be an orphan. This happened one time

and our daughter took the little lamb and fed it from a bottle. The lamb grew and grew and finally it was big enough to go with the other sheep and eat grass. When we turned the bottle-fed lamb in with the herd of sheep, what do you think it did? It just wandered off by itself. It didn't want to be with the others and one day a coyote killed it. The lamb was so tame that it wasn't afraid and when the other sheep ran away, it just stayed and lost its life. A mother sheep would have taught the lamb to stay with the others.

I believe there is a lesson here for us. Jesus talked about the ninety and nine and the one which went astray. A good shepherd will watch the sheep. If one goes off by itself, he will go after it and bring it back. Children need to have good parents who will teach them how to live. They will teach them about

Jesus and take them to Church and Sunday School. Children who have good teaching will make good Christians. They will know the dangers of doing only as they please. Many children today are like the little orphan lamb. Their parents do not think enough of them to teach them what is right, and they are left to themselves. They are often taught by others who have no real love for them. They may never know the love of God and get lost like the little lamb the coyote killed.

As Christian people we should be interested in those who are lost. "It is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish." We know today that there are many lost souls who are

wandering away from God. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

I hope we can be like Jesus and have a love for those who are lost – for the one who left the fold and wandered away. It is not easy to hunt a lost sheep in the dark and away in the mountains. Neither is it easy to bring back to the fold a lost soul, who is wandering out in the fields of sin. It takes an effort and one who won't quit until the lost are safe once more.

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

OBITUARIES

ROY E. GINGRICH

Roy E. Gingrich, 87, of Palmyra, Pennsylvania, passed away September 28, 2020, at his home. He was the husband of Lucille M. (Page) Gingrich. On April 17, 2020 they celebrated their sixty-sixth Wedding Anniversary.

Born in Hummelstown, Pennsylvania on April 3, 1933, he was the son of the late Roy H. and Esther M. (Engle) Gingrich. Roy retired from Hershey Chocolate, where he had worked for over forty years. For fifty-six years, he owned and operated Roy's Bicycle Shop in Palmyra, Pennsylvania. He attended the God's Missionary Church of Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He especially enjoyed traveling with his wife, in their motor home. Roy's favorite passage was "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, John S. Gingrich

of Palmyra, Pennsylvania, Gary L. and his wife Robin Gingrich of Enola, Pennsylvania, Iva L., wife of James Zeigler of Palmyra, Pennsylvania, Timothy C. husband of the late Paulette Gingrich of Palmyra, Pennsylvania, Esther M. wife of John Burcaw of Berlin Center, Ohio, Paul R. and his wife, Crystal Gingrich of Penns Creek, Pennsylvania and Bradley A. and his wife Alison Gingrich of Langhome, Pennsylvania; twenty-nine grandchildren; thirty-one great grandchildren; and six great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a grandson, Nathan Zeigler, and his sister MaryAnn Fisher.

Funeral services were held on October 3, 2020 at God's Missionary Church, Lebanon, Pennsylvania with Pastor Alan Walter and Elder David Sauder officiating. Songs sung were: How Great Thou Art, In the Garden, Look for Me at Jesus' Feet and Amazing Grace. At the concluding of the service the steeple bell tolled 87 times, in honor of the years of Roy's life. Interment was in Grand View Memorial Park, North Annville Township, Pennsylvania.

ELLEN W. KEENEY

Ellen W. Keeney, 92, of Lititz, Pennsylvania died peacefully of natural causes at her daughter's home on January 6, 2021 after a brief illness.

She was the wife of the late Laverne E. Keeney for forty-six years.

Born in Brecknock Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on September 28, 1928, Ellen was a daughter of the late Noah and Emma (Bollinger) Wise.

She was a member of the Conservative Brethren Church at Millbach.

Ellen is survived by two daughters: Joanne Longenecker (Dale) of Bethel, Pennsylvania, and Donna Weaver (Elden) of Lititz, Pennsylvania; and a daughter-in-law, Jean Keeney of Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Also surviving are nine grandchildren, twenty-three great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren; a brother, Arthur Wise, and a sister, Miriam Snyder.

She was preceded in death by her husband Laverne, a son, Lamar, an infant daughter, Brenda, a brother, Clayton and two sisters, Esther, and Sarah.

Funeral Services were held at the Lititz Dunkard Brethren Church on January 16, 2021 officiated by Elder Dean St. John, Elder Dean Kegereis, and Minister David Dennis.

LORETTA P. JOHNSON

Loretta P. Johnson, "Lory Williams", 73, died on January 17, 2021 at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas. She was born on July 22, 1947 at Las Animas, Colorado, the daughter of Lawrence and Etta (Wertz) Clayton.

Loretta graduated from McClave High School in McClave, Colorado. She had also attended the Kansas City School of Music and the Cliff Mann Accordion School in Kansas City. She was part of an Accordion Group that played for Eleanor Roosevelt. After graduating high school, she married Don Morlan. To this union was born two children, Lorie, and Barrett. She later married Roy L. Johnson on October 30, 1987 at Little Rock, Arkansas.

Known by her radio name, Lory Williams, she started her radio broadcasting career in Lamar, Colorado. She also worked in Boonville, Missouri; Oberlin, Kansas; Hays, Kansas; and Pueblo, Colorado. In 1986 she moved to Garden City, Kansas and was the Farm Director and Farm Broadcaster for KBUF and KKJQ.

She faithfully attended the Church of the Brethren in Garden City, Kansas. She received many honors and awards from the NAFB through the years. She loved and lived the rural life and was involved in rodeos, saddle club events, 4-H, and Beef Empire Days. She served as a Judge at the Kansas Rodeo Queen Pageant for many years. She was heavily involved in her favorite charity, Miles of Smiles, which is a therapeutic riding program located in Garden City, Kansas. In her earlier years she also ran 10K and 5K runs.

She is survived by her Husband, Roy Johnson, Daughter, Lorie Westbrook, Son, Barrett Morlan, both of Burkburnett, Texas; Mother, Etta Clayton of Hasty, Colorado; three Sisters, Cheryl (Lee) Baldwin of Quinter, Kansas, Vicki (Wayne) Burgess of Hasty, Colorado and Valerie (Tim) Noecker of McClave, Colorado; five Grandchildren and eleven Great-Grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her Father, Lawrence Clayton.

Funeral services were held January 21, 2021 at the Church of the Brethren in Garden City, Kansas with Rev. Bob Bates and Von Hunn officiating. Burial at the Mc Clave Cemetery, McClave, Colorado.

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER, HARLEY FLORY

Bro. Harley T. Flory, of Stryker, Ohio, passed peacefully from this life to his heavenly home on December 29, 2020, at the age of 92. He touched many lives serving his Lord and Savior for more than fifty years as minister and elder in the Dunkard Brethren Church. Harley was born to Henry P. and Abby (Rupp) Flory on July 23, 1928 in Defiance County, Ohio. He was united in marriage to Marjorie St. John in 1949. To this union were born three daughters and one son. Graveside service was conducted by Bro. Ken Brock on January 2, 2021 at Poplar Ridge Church of the Brethren Cemetery near Jewell, Ohio.

Harley loved to travel taking his family on numerous trips across the country usually combined with attendance at the annual church conference. Trips often included visiting places of historical significance. One trip the family will never forget was taken through several southern states in an old black hearse that he owned for a few years.

One of the highlights of his year was attending the annual church conference. He began attending in 1947 at Shipshewana and through 2015, missed only one, in 1949 at California. He attended his last one in 2018. Several different years when Conference was held in California, he organized a group train trip for those church members from the Eastern and Midwestern sections of the country. Train was his favorite mode of travel when long distance trips made driving a challenge.

Harley also served for over twenty-five years as a member of the Torreon Navajo Mission Board faithfully making the trip to New Mexico every December for the annual meeting. Frequently his children and later his grandchildren traveled with he and Marge to New Mexico for those meetings.

Harley will be remembered by many as the Dunkard Brethren historian. He could easily recall dates and details and if anyone needed information about a church decision, he could provide that information, usually without any research.

Sister Ruth Clark

NEWS ITEMS

2021 GENERAL CONFERENCE

After many situational changes over the last eight months, we felt we had to abandon the original location and quickly find a suitable replacement. We were blessed with two options which were available at our regular time of June 5-9. We believe we have chosen the most suitable one for our meetings.

General Conference (Lord willing) will be held at Baker University, 618 8th Street, Baldwin City, Kansas, 66006.

We will provide directions (for those who do not have GPS) in a later Bible Monitor and the church email. We will also have more details of the provisions available. We apologize for the date and location changes so close to the time of Conference, but it was a situation out of our control. Pray that conditions will improve so we will be able to enjoy another Conference.

God Bless,

The Conference Locating Committee

Note from Conference Officers: The facility hosting our General Conference will likely have COVID restrictions in place at the time of our meeting, and out of respect to God, our hosts, and each other, all attendees are expected to comply with them. We anticipate that some changes will take place between now and Conference, and so more details will be forthcoming as the time approaches.

NOTICE

All queries, reports, and any other business for the 2021 General Conference should be in the hands of the General Conference Writing Clerk by April 20, 2021. Thank you.

Brother Bob Lehigh
5137 Waltersdorff Drive
Spring Grove, PA 17362
717-225-4928
rlehighdb@gmail.com

PLEASANT RIDGE, OHIO

The Lord willing, the Pleasant Ridge Congregation will be holding their Spring Revival Meetings, March 21, 2021 to March 28, 2021. Brother John Eberly from the Chambersburg Congregation will be our evangelist. Evening services will begin at 7:30 P.M. We will be having a 2:00 P.M. Examination service on Saturday, March 28, followed by our Lovefeast at 7:00 P.M. The conclusion of our meetings will be on Sunday at 2:00 P.M. All are welcome to attend. Please pray for Brother John as he prepares for these meetings.

Sister Susan Nines, Cor.

BETHEL, PENNSYLVANIA

The Bethel Congregation will be holding their spring revivals starting March 21 through March 28 with Brother Juda Bauman from the Lititz Congregation as our Evangelist. May we remember Brother Judah as he prepares for these meetings.

Sunday, March 28 there will be a lunch provided in the basement for all. Final service will be at 2:00 in the afternoon. Sunday evening service starts at 6:00 P.M., throughout the week at 7:30 P.M. All are welcome.

Sister Darlene Longenecker, Cor.

THANK YOU

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the many brothers and sisters who were praying for me during the time I was critically ill with COVID-19. I believe it was only by the grace of God that I was able to pull through. I have returned home, and I am learning that full recovery could take several months. I thank each who sent cards, texts and emails expressing your encouragement and prayers. May God bless each of you.

Brother Dennis St. John

CONNECTIONS

March 2021

Contributed by the Bible Study Board in reference to this month's Sunday School Lessons. Our hope in writing a monthly article is that we all see afresh different points of connection that reveal the Word made flesh.

May blessing be to God. To truly understand our spiritual blessings, we must first give blessing and praise to God. We will understand the blessings better if we realize our relationship with the Giver. In love we have been chosen and planned to be adopted. It is a love relationship that brings pleasure to the heart of God. It is through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection. As we look at each of these spiritual blessings, we see that they are given in Christ. Not only do blessings come in Christ but it is in Christ we trust, and our faith is in Him. As we grow in our knowledge of Christ, we also realize the hope, the inheritance, and the power He gives.

We once were enslaved as children of disobedience and wrath with our behavior being governed by our sinful nature. We followed the ways of the world and the prince of the power of the air. BUT GOD in His great love and with more than enough mercy raised us from slavery. He empowers us who believe to life from the dead in heavenly places. It is not because of anything we have done but simply the gift of God.

In Christ Jesus and His blood, we are brought near and created for good works. Through Christ we have access to the Father. This all happened at the Cross. The hostility that was caused by the Law was abolished for all through Christ Jesus for He is our Peace.

On behalf of the Bible Study Board

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR APRIL

April 4 – The Resurrection – Luke 24:1-35

1. Those coming to the tomb had been told by Christ that he would rise the third day, yet they were confused to see the stone rolled away and his body gone. Why did they not remember what Christ had prophesied about the resurrection until the angels asked them if they remembered it?

2. Verse 12. What do you suppose motivated Peter to go to the tomb? What does his response after seeing the linen clothes laid by themselves suggest?

3. Verse 16 indicates that the two on the way to Emmaus did not recognize who Christ was. Most Bible commentaries suggest that this was likely not a supernatural blinding but rather that they simply did not understand. If this were so, why couldn't they understand?

April 11 – Joint Tenancy in God's Household – Eph. 2:19-3:13

1. Explain verse 22.

2. In verse 8, why would Paul say that he was the least of all saints?

3. Why do you suppose God has dispensed the mystery of Christ at intervals in history instead of revealing it all at once?

April 18 – Strengthening the Dwelling Place of Christ Enables Unity –Eph. 3:14-4:6

1. In Old Testament times, the priests had to offer sacrifices and burn incense before approaching God, dwelling on the mercy seat. Now that God dwells on earth in the hearts of his people, is the former practice of offerings and incense manifested today in our relationship with God?

2. Verse 1. What does Paul mean when he indicates that he is the prisoner of the Lord. Does this have application to us today?

3. Verse 2-6. These verses speak to unity and oneness within the faith. In recent years, many think that individualism in both the secular world and in the church has been on the rise. If you agree, what do you think are the reasons for this change? How harmful do you think this might be to the church?

**April 25 – Gifts Given for Equipping and Edifying in Order to Grow Up
Eph. 4:7-24**

1. In verses 11-13, it sounds like a project is being completed. Describe the final project.

2. Verse 15 mentions speaking the truth in love. Some seem good at speaking the truth and others seem good at speaking love. Do you find it difficult to always speak truth in love? If so, why do you suppose that is?

3. Verse 22-24. Describe from your own life, putting off the old man and putting on the new.

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