

BIBLE MONITOR

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APRIL, 2021

NO. 4

“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.

SING WITH ALL THE SONS OF GLORY

Sing with all the sons of glory, Sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story, To the former days belong:
All around the clouds are breaking, Soon the storms of time shall cease,
In God's likeness, man awaking, Knows the everlasting peace.

O what glory, far exceeding All that eye has yet perceived!
Holiest hearts for ages pleading, Never that full joy conceived.
God has promised, Christ prepares it, There on high our welcome waits;
Every humble spirit shares it, Christ has passed th' eternal gates.

Life eternal! Heav'n rejoices: Jesus lives who once was dead;
Join, O man, the deathless voices, Child of God, lift up thy head!
Patriarchs from the distant ages, Saints all longing for their heaven,
Prophets, psalmists, seers, and sages, All await the glory given.

Life eternal! O what wonders Crowd on faith; what joy unknown,
When, amidst earth's closing thunders, Saints shall stand before the throne!
Oh, to enter that bright portal, See that glowing firmament,
Know, with Thee, O God immortal, “Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent!”

— *William J. Irons*

THREE DAYS

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, three consecutive days, that we consider to be a weekend. Weekends connote a time of fun and relaxation. We view this time as restorative of our health and spirit after a week of work. While the activities may be more demanding and rigorous than our work, we look forward to the respite from our toil. While Friday is a workday, it often is shorter or less demanding than other days because of the anticipated days off.

Many years ago, those same three days were the most dramatic days in all of history. The events of those three days were more important than any days since the creation and they will continue to be the most important days until the day of Christ's return. The history of man centers in

those days. Everything prior was preparation. Everything since looks back to those days. The events of those days are the basis of our relationship with God and will determine not only our natural lives but also our eternal destiny.

What could be so important? What could be so lifechanging? How could those days be the fulcrum that our lives would pivot upon between mortality and immortality?

Those three days witnessed the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Events had been pointing to those days since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. God passed judgment not only on Adam and Eve but also on Satan. Satan would be able to bring suffering upon God's Son, ultimately, he

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would be crushed, chained, and bound in the bottomless pit of Hell. He would be allowed to pester, deceive, and torment people, but Satan would not have the final victory. That victory would belong to Jesus Christ.

On Friday, the three crosses near the city of Jerusalem would demonstrate the zenith of Satan's power. His power motivated evil men to nail Jesus to the middle cross. It was a day of ghastly physical suffering for Jesus. His worst suffering was not the physical pain and discomfort, it was the bearing of the sins of all mankind. The pure, perfect, Son of God had never known sin. He was the Lamb without spot or blemish. The crushing weight of sin laid upon Him caused the Father to forsake His Son. Sin had brought a disconnect between the Father and the Son.

His physical agony brought death to His body. The distance between God and Him crushed His soul. His body would be removed from the cross, hastily prepared for burial, and laid in Joseph's tomb. The burial happened quickly because the Sabbath would begin at sunset.

That Saturday, the Sabbath, supposedly a day of rest, would be the day that captivity was led captive. There were activities in Hell

that would change the world. Little is written about what happened that day as Jesus made havoc of Satan's kingdom. The whole course of worship and allegiance was changed. By the end of Jesus' time in raiding and overwhelming Satan's realm, Satan would know that despite what looked like a great victory at Calvary, he would ultimately be overpowered and destroyed by God. The power of Satan was in sin, but sin was overpowered by our Savior. He defeated all that Satan brought against Him and had become the victor over death, hell, and the grave.

On Sunday morning that victory would be witnessed by men. Those who had slunk away during His arrest and trial, now would see Him. His resurrection brought victory into their lives. He bore the burdens of man's sins, so they through faith could be released from the power of Satan over their lives. Sin could now be dealt with through His victory, they no longer cringed under Satan's power. Being freed, they could live productively as God's adopted children in this world and have eternal life in Heaven.

Men have accomplished many wonderful things, but none could die for another's sins. None could deliver themselves or others from

the power of Satan. None could promise eternal life.

These three days brought eternal spiritual life and marks the greatest event in history. History recounts the deeds and power of men, but only Jesus could deal with men's spiritual needs.

Three days, a weekend, but certainly different than the weekends that we desire so much.

Those three days were not involved with fun, frivolity, fantasy, or physical activities. Those three days dealt with the greatest need of the human family. Their salvation and eternal life were secured by Jesus.

Have you accepted the work of Jesus during those three days in your heart and life?

M. C. Cook

WHO AM I? OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Who am I? What purpose do I have? What does God want from me? What does God see in me? We have all asked questions like this before. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The old gospel song says, "I'm here to say I'm nothing but a sinner saved by grace." While those statements are true, I hope we do not think that is the best we can be.

Paul in his writings to the churches often addresses his letters to the saints that are at _____. By this salutation, we get the thought that we are not to stay sinners but to be saints. If we are to be saints, we should probably act like it and have the mindset of being one. If we have the mindset of being nothing more than a sinner, we have already lost the sin battle in

our minds. Temptation comes along and instead of saying no because we are saints, we yield because we are sinners, and sinners, sin. We walk around defeated before we even start. We are not expecting victory because our mindset has left us in defeat. We have defined ourselves as sinners and we expect nothing more of ourselves than that. I would suggest that even though we may be saved, and our sins are covered by the blood, we are not living the fulfilled life God intended.

Let us look at the Bible to see how God defines us, how He views us and what value He puts on us. Our identity does not come from our brokenness, but by who God says we are. Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." If we are made by God, in His image, and by

His design, we are not a mistake! We have value because God does not make junk! Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Not only made by God, but made to do good works, given purpose.

Romans 5:8, "But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Have you ever wondered who sets the value of something? The seller can ask any amount he wants but when the deal is done, the one that sets the value is the buyer. Something is only worth what a person is willing to give for it. God valued you and me so much that He was willing to "buy" us with His only Son. He placed us and our redemption as being so valuable that He would have sent His Son for just one of us. Jesus took our place, our suffering, our death, so that we may live. Since He is the buyer, He gets to determine the value. In His eyes, we are priceless! Galatians 3:13 tells us we are redeemed and verse 26 says we are His children, by faith. Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." We have been bought with a high price! Take yourself off the discount rack

because you have been bought with the priceless blood of Jesus.

We are chosen, we are wanted, and we have a calling. I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." II Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." An ambassador is one who acts as a representative or promoter of a specified activity, an official representative. We are to promote Christ and His kingdom. We are to spread the gospel and in doing so, bring others to Christ. If we were so valueless, so worthless and no good, would God have left the most valuable message ever in our care?

We are loved of God. Romans 1:7, "...beloved of God, called to be saints." If we love someone, we truly want what is best for them. God is no different. He loves us and wants us to succeed. Our true success may not be what we think it looks like, but by testing us and exercising our faith and trust in the Lord we can be strengthened to fulfill His will for our lives – this is true success.

God has created us to be overcomers. Revelation 12:10-

11, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Overcomers have a place in the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." And Revelation 22:14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

As overcomers, we have the responsibility to follow God's commands. Not to earn our salvation, but as a proof that we are under the new ownership. We are God's. We are redeemed. Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

We are victors. I John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I Corinthians 15:53-57, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this

mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Remember Christ has already won the victory; therefore, we fight from victory, not for victory!!! If we already have the victory, we are empowered through Christ to walk victorious.

We are adopted (sons and daughters). Galatians 4:5-7, "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." As adopted children we are taken from the place of a slave and placed in the same position as "blood children", adult sons and heirs with Jesus Christ!

Galatians 3:29, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The covenant that God

made with Abraham is ours to claim. God no longer sees us as slaves and property, but as children, heirs, and joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Colossians 3:23-24, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

I say all this not to make us proud, but to empower us to live as Christ intended. Sometimes I think as Christians, we confuse humility with being of no value. That is not the correct view for us to have. God places value on us and for us to equate humility to no value, would indicate God is wrong. Humble means, "modest; without an excess of pride." A person who brags about being humble may have too much pride in being humble to actually be humble. In a religious context humility can mean a recognition of self in relation to a deity (i.e., God) or deities, and subsequent submission to said deity as a member of that religion (definitions from Google). Make no mistake, God views pride as a sin and will not stand for it. He never made us to walk around defeated and thinking ourselves worthless.

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified

with Christ: nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This verse explains that we have died to the flesh, God has taken out (insert your name)'s will and desires and replace it with His spirit. I John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." The Holy Spirit comes into our body and now lives in us.

Anything that is of value is from Him and through Him. We on our own bring nothing to the table, however when God looks at us, He sees us as sons, adopted into His family through Jesus. Ephesians 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

This is a quote from the movie "Overcomer". It was the conclusion of a study of Ephesians 1-2.

“I am created by God. He designed me, so I am not a mistake. His Son died for me, just so I could be forgiven. He picked me to be His own, so I am chosen. He redeemed me, so I am wanted. He showed me grace, just so I could be saved. He has a future for me because He loves me. So, I do not wonder anymore, Coach Harrison. I am a child of God.”

If we truly see ourselves as

God’s children, we will realize we have value. God says we do. Read Ephesians 1 and 2 and let the words wash over you and understand that God has placed great value on you. Instead of using ‘I am human’ as an excuse to walk in the flesh, try using ‘I am saved’ to walk in the Spirit.

Brother Joe Cover
Dallas Center, IA

THE BATTLE FOR OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

Part 2

There is a battle going on and our hearts and minds are the objects seeking to be won. Our loyalty and affections are being fought for. This battle has always been going on and will continue till Christ returns. However, the events of this past year have brought the nature of this battle into clearer focus. The COVID-19 pandemic and the presidential election have provided the backdrop that brings this battle into sharper relief. It should come as no surprise to us that this battle is spiritual in nature. What is surprising is how easily we can be seduced. For as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan so we are being tempted. Whom we worship is the prize being sought and fought for. (Luke 4:5-8)

The attraction that Satan offers is power. Our hearts are magnets attracted to power. Elections are opportunities to gain and wield power. Therefore, if enough good people band together all kinds of good things can be done with that power. Growing economies provide greater financial stability. Feeding, educating, and providing healthcare improves the quality of life allowing people to live happier, healthier, and more purposeful lives. When justice is promoted more people are free from tyranny and oppression.

However, the underside of all this good that needs doing means developing connections with others who have ambitions and agendas of their own. They must be appeased

to maintain the power wielded by the majority. Some ideals must be compromised if agendas are to be realized. The lesser of two evils are often the only options left. The politics of saying what others want to hear to maintain or grow the base of support takes precedence. Standing for the truth, regardless of the cost, is replaced with carefully crafted perceptions that are meant to guarantee victory. This is the price of wielding power.

None of what is described above is in anyway new information to those who have any interest in politics. What is not often perceived is how dangerously close our exaltation of those who hold political office is worshipful in nature. The bonds of affection that develop minimize defects in character and moral behavior. Loyalty takes precedence over fidelity to the highest ideals. Truth is lost in the lust for more power. Blind faith closes our eyes to the lack of any substantive accomplishments. Blaming others becomes the substitute for accountability. When added together our hearts have become a fertile ground for the worship of men. What is taking place is nothing less than idolatry.

Why is politics idolatrous? It matters not what our personal preferences for political parties or

the issues favored by each one. I remember well a conservative brother in a different denomination once remark that, "While we do not vote we pray republican." Politics has a way of seeping into our hearts because we are attracted to power. Jesus rejected Satan's offer because Satan wants our worship. Jesus replied to Satan, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." There is only room for one Lord in our hearts and what we serve we worship.

One of the blinding influences of this idolatry has been the way we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hearts have been hardened by listening to the contentious voices of rebellion so popular in our culture. We have been cavalier in our outlook toward this pandemic. We have denied it, ignored it, and pretended that it is not serious. We have scoffed at the damage done as though it was some fictionalized reality that does not exist. We have eaten at the trough of those who create conspiracy theories. We have disparaged medical experts who are trying desperately to find answers that will decisively overcome a disease that never existed before. We have minimized personal responsibility

that is necessary to help stop the spread of this disease. Finally, we have claimed that following the changes in behavior advocated by public health officials infringes upon our rights as citizens. The result has been the United States leading the world in the number of infections and deaths.

Phil. 2:4-8, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Our God, who created the universe, entered human history just like every other child born of a woman. His first bed was a manger in a barn. Before He turned two, he had a "price on his head" and His parents were refugees in Egypt. At the end of His life, He was tortured and executed as a criminal in the cruelest fashion. Yet, He diminished God not at all by considering Himself equal to God. If anyone who has ever lived deserved whatever He desired, it

was Jesus, the incarnate God. As King of kings and Lord of lords He deserves all that we have and all that we can give Him. It still is not all that He deserves and has a right to possess. Rather than demanding what He rightly deserved Jesus chose the opposite path. He rejected the political/military model of Messiah that would restore Israel as an international power in the world. He did not demand servitude but instead sought to serve others. He lived in faithful obedience to His Father even to the point of a humiliating death on the cross. He gave up all His rights, including the right to live, and died a shameful death. Through all aspects of His earthly ministry, He invited others to join Him and walk in the same obedience of faith to His Father God. He surrendered His rights out of love for you and me.

Why did He choose to do that? While still in the Garden we got sucker punched into believing that we can decide what is good or evil for ourselves. We declared our autonomy from God. We exercised our right to make our own choices without His help. Ever since we have been paying the price for our little rebellious episode. In truth we keep making the same selfish choices over again and keep getting the same results.

We are more interested in doing what's right in our own eyes than discovering selfless ways to glorify God.

We know the whole story. Jesus sacrificed His life to atone for our selfish, sinful choices that got us booted out of the Garden and plagues us to this day. God has highly exalted Him. Knees shall bow and tongues will confess. He is Lord of all. Whatever rights he surrendered were momentary. All those rights and more have been restored eternally.

Philippians 2:4-5 says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." So, what is the essential character of Christ in His humanity? That Jesus is always looking out for what is in our best interest eternally. He serves us for the purpose of developing His character in us. To this end He sacrificed His own life so that we could have life and life more abundantly. How are we to display the mind of Christ in our lives? By looking out for the things of others even to the point of sacrificing our own self-interest. Being selfless means surrendering whatever rights we think we have to benefit others. What we experience in return is the love of God for one

another triumphing over our own selfish, rights demanding, self-interest.

How then should we respond to this pandemic that has killed over four hundred thousand people in the United States in less than a year's time? What is something we can do as biblical Christians who want to honor and serve our Lord with a selfless spirit that helps protect ourselves and others from COVID-19? The simple answer is wearing a mask in public places and at times when we are socializing with others who are not members of our own immediate household. Wearing masks has been demonstrated numerous times to be an effective means of minimizing the transmission of COVID-19.

What keeps us from wearing masks? Probably more than anything else is the irritableness they create within us. They can be uncomfortable to wear. We can feel more acutely our need for air as we breathe a little harder. Our glasses fog up when we exhale. Depending on the company we are keeping we may feel self-conscious and out of place. We want some reassurance that we are not acting in weakness. We try to quell the rebel yell from within when we are required to wear a mask. All of us experience,

at least to some degree, these and other frustrations associated with wearing a mask.

Compared to hanging on the cross our discomfort is more a condition of our inner nature than any real physical distress. We focus on our wounds rather than counting the cost inherent in any battle. We must not forget that the outcome of this spiritual battle was decisively won on the cross of calvary. The battles we fight are the skirmishes and rear-guard actions against an enemy that has already

been defeated and is in retreat. Therefore, we can be assured that the battle we fight in our minds is for an eternal purpose. We learn to rely upon the love of God to instruct us in our distress. The battle within our hearts keeps our love for others in the forefront of our choices and actions. We fight on so that we might reveal the character of Christ Jesus to those around each one of us.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

THE VALLEY OF LIFE

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” Psalm 84:5-7

Many of the Psalms talk about the blessedness of the Temple of God and how wonderful it is to dwell there. The first four verses of Psalm 84 do this, and the next three verses, found above, speak of the blessedness of those traveling to the Temple: the pilgrim if you please. The valley of Baca is to

the north of Jerusalem, in what is today the Country of Lebanon. It is a mountainous region and in olden days travelers avoided valleys because of bandits and other troubles. They tried to stay to the high ground. But in this area, the only water to be found was in the valley. Underneath it was an underground river and all a person had to do was dig a few shovelfuls of dirt and water would come forth. What a blessing, even though it put the pilgrim in a dangerous position. All he had to do was trust in God, and his need would be supplied.

The word Baca means “weeping”, and water anywhere

in the Bible means life. How do we attain the water of life? Ask any mother and she will tell you of how she wept for her child, even before it was born. Great blessing comes from a contrite, humble, weeping heart. Pass through this valley, seek God, and the water of life will come forth. Not just a little water, but pools of water, more than enough. The blessing comes, therefore, from going through the valley.

In John, chapter 4, Jesus teaches the Samaritan woman about living water: where it comes from and how to get it. In Revelation 22 John speaks of a pure river of life and in verse 17 it says, "And let him take the water of life freely." This refers not just to life, but everlasting life. Read Ezekiel chapter 47. It speaks of waters which issued from the temple which climbed higher and higher and went deeper and deeper.

Henry Baker wrote in 1868:

The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And O what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth.

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house forever.

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

When God asked Ananias to go and speak to a man by the name of Saul, he had some legitimate reservations. What he had heard about Saul was not very complimentary.

I am not sure what I would have done in Ananias's sandals, but there was something within him that rose in obedience to the voice of God. He recognized that voice, and even though it was a tough assignment, he followed through.

Years after the fact, I often wonder what Ananias thought about that man Saul, who later became the apostle Paul. No way could he have ever known that this man that was so hateful towards Christians was going to be used by God in such a remarkable way. I am sure in afterthought Ananias was glad he obeyed the voice of the Lord.

I often think of this in my own life. Can I really hear God? And am I willing to obey any command that he sends my way?

As a Christian, I do not chart my own course. My course is charted through obeying the voice of God daily.

The problem today's Christianity faces is the influx of

the culture into the church. The church is more and more looking like the world.

What is the problem?

I believe the problem boils down to the fact that we no longer are listening to the voice of God. We are more influenced by the voice of culture and society.

The reason for this is quite simple.

Following God is humanly impossible. The challenges that are before us as a Christian can never be met through human ingenuity or even experience. The only solution is God and hearing the voice of God and obeying that voice.

I remember many years ago, someone telling me that ministry was very dirty work. I smiled at the time and did not really understand what he was talking about. I thought that might have been true for him, but certainly, it is not true for me.

Years later, looking back, I understand completely what he meant.

God always calls us to that which is humanly impossible. He does not call the qualified, but he does qualify the called. When I understand this, I begin

to see what ministry is about.

Many have fallen into the swamp of believing that ministry is like a business. We have business aspects in the ministry today that is doing nothing but harm to the true work of God.

The focus of a business is always the "bottom line." Whatever gets me to that bottom line is what I need to commit myself to. Defining that bottom line is a very disparaging thing.

For business, the bottom line is making a profit. And from a business point of view, that is true.

But from a ministry point of view, there is no profit to be made. It is difficult and costly to do the work of the ministry. Although salvation is absolutely free, ministry carries with it a heavy cost factor. Unfortunately, many are unwilling to bear that cost.

George Mueller was a great man of prayer, and I believe his ministry reflected that.

In the beginning of building his orphanage, they spent a lot of time praying for the building and for workers and for supplies and it was a tough journey. When they finally finished the building and opened it up, they noticed one thing. They had no children.

All this time, they were praying for building, supplies, and helpers, but George Mueller had forgotten to pray for children. It was a great lesson for him that ministry is not putting together something, but rather it is trusting God to bring things together.

Do we still believe in the impossible? George Mueller did. What he did was absolutely, positively, humanly impossible. Actually, he did not do it, but God did it through him. He heard the voice of God and responded to that voice, and God opened a ministry to him for the glory of God.

Ananias did not know the future of this man by the name of Saul. Nobody would have criticized him for backing down and refusing to go talk to this one who was arresting so many Christians. Had he relied upon human ability and understanding, he probably never would have gone.

Ananias heard the voice of God. Ananias obeyed that voice regardless of the danger he had to face.

The thing that I want to do in my own personal experience is to make sure I am in that place, not only just to hear the voice of God, but to be in a place where

God can speak to me. And I have such a persuasion that God trusts me enough to speak to me and ask me to do something humanly impossible?

What God calls a person to do reveals a whole lot about God's confidence in that person.

I want to be able to look back on my life in wonder and astonishment and say, "What hath God done in my life?"

James L. Snyder
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PHIL'S PONDERINGS

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

April 2021 Study Questions

April 4 – Luke 24:1-35

As you headed for the tomb to anoint Jesus' body what are some thoughts that may have entered your mind?

How do you respond when gently perplexed and suddenly afraid?

What dynamic is at work as the extremely excited women relate their story to the apostles?

What is the first thing Jesus does as He draws near to Cleopas and his companion?

What did Jesus learn from them?

Have your eyes been opened?

Commentary: Most of us have the gift of 20/20 hindsight. What we see clearly in the rearview mirror of our experience made little or no sense when it stared us in the face. Such is the circumstance of Cleopas and his fellow companion. The circumstances of the last week are chaotic. Contradictions abound between reality and expectations. Before they left on their journey new and unbelievable reports had come from the women who had gone to the tomb. Hopes had been dashed on Friday, permanently. They could not allow their hopes to be lifted again only to falter once more. Their hearts were numb from the grief they felt. Then along

comes a stranger who asks them why they are so sad. A torrent of hopes and dreams mixed with the finality of the cross comes flooding from their souls. Then this stranger begins connecting all the events with the prophetic words of Scripture. The dying embers of faith within their hearts are being fanned back to life. Then, in the simple, common act of breaking bread their eyes see with understanding that Jesus is Risen!! There are times when God removes the blinders from our eyes so that we can catch a glimpse of His glory. In those Spirit filled moments we can see past the pains of death and recognize the birth pangs that promise us the entry into eternal life.

April 11 – Ephesians 2:19-3:13

How many ways does Paul refer to “the building” in verse 19-22?

What are Paul's circumstances as he writes this epistle?

Does the mystery of Christ mean it is difficult to comprehend or that it was hidden from view?

What is the mystery that he refers to?

How do Paul's tribulations bring glory to the Ephesians as well as you and me?

Commentary: Paul's most frequent companion during his years of ministry was tribulation. 2nd Corinthians 11 is like a highlight reel of Paul's tribulations. Yet, Paul would never describe himself as a victim. Rather, he saw his sufferings as a benefit (glory) to the church of which we are a part. (Colossians 1:24) How is this possible? By welcoming tribulations. (Romans 5:3) Why should we do that? It is the pathway of conquerors. (Romans 8:35-37) It is the demonstration of God's all-powerful love that sweeps aside every obstacle to the knowledge of God. (Romans 8:38-39) But this is not how we usually react to tribulation. We see it as threat, pain, death inducing, loss of freedom, and other negative consequences that interrupts the desires of life. But through the eyes of faith, faith in God, we become free to see His will working through us for purposes seldom considered before. Ephesians was written while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. Many of his other letters were written during similar circumstances. Tribulation brought fruitful opportunities. The eloquence of his

words is, in part, due to the development of his faith during tribulations he experienced. Therefore, we should not fear tribulation but welcome it as God's glorious means of sanctifying our spiritual growth. (Ephesians 2:13)

April 18 – Ephesians 3:14-4:6

What is Paul referring to with the phrase for this cause?

In verse 16 how does the phrase, according to the riches of His glory, impact the entire verse?

What are some synonyms for “dwell”?

How does Paul's prayer impact you?

How would you rearrange the various thoughts in 4:1-6 so that your greatest weakness is first and your greatest strength is last?

Commentary: It seems folly to try and comment on the verses we are studying for this lesson. In my mind the word “superlative” keeps coming to the forefront as the attempt is made to understand all that Paul is communicating. While each thought can be applied to our own circumstances it is the depth of each word or phrase that seems nearly inexhaustible in its content. There is always more to gain, to relish, to want above and beyond what I can perceive. Now if this is true for you and I then I suspect that Paul found himself surprised and overwhelmed by the greatness of God and the unimaginable resources always available to and from God. The result is that along with Paul we are humbled by His magnificence.

April 25 – Ephesians 4:7-24

How much grace have you been given?

What has God equipped you to do?

Is the Dead Sea or Death Valley examples of the lower parts of the earth?

What does Paul mean by “a perfect man” in verse 13?

What is the reason for the opposite condition in verse 14?

In verses 12-16 how would you rank each phrase or thought on a

1-5 basis, 1 being least effective and 5 most effective, as an integral part of your congregational experience?

What has been most effective for you to make sure you put on the new man each day?

Commentary: In the comic strip, Family Circus, a familiar pattern occurred from time to time. One of the children was sent on a short errand to retrieve or borrow something from the next-door neighbor. The route was never short. There were always multiple points of interest or distraction along the way. In our own walk with the Lord there seem to be multiple times where we divert from His path because something has captured our attention. Our spiritual senses become dulled by hobbies, entertainment, financial stresses, long hours of work, and multiple demands upon our time. Our spiritual vision becomes blurred. So, it sometimes takes great effort to listen and hear afresh the calling upon all our lives. As we read about our life in Christ and our participation in His body Paul is sharing his passion as fully as he knows how. He does not want us to miss out on the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Eph. 3:8) Christ's life in us continually draws us closer to each other as we grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ while at the same time reaching out to others to join us in our pilgrimage through this age into the age to come. If we can limit our steps to the path that Christ leads us on, we will always have the grace we need to journey on and are always being prepared for what lies ahead.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

OBITUARIES

DANIEL WAGNER

Daniel Solomon Wagner was born February 16, 1930 to Clay and Orpha (Price) Wagner. He peacefully passed to his eternal reward the afternoon of January 31, 2021, at the age of 90 years, 11 months, 15 days. Most of that time was spent building his treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Alvin, and

Eugene; and his loving wife, Thelma Jean.

He is survived by six children, Anna Marie (Arlan) Wray (Pomona, Kansas), Daniel (Donna) Wagner (Dallas Center, Iowa), Martha Wagner (Gettysburg, Ohio), Linda Blocher (Greenville, Ohio), David Wagner (New Era, Michigan), Mary (Greg) Givens (Eaton, Ohio); eighteen grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; one brother, Joseph (Letha) Wagner (Modesto, California); nieces, nephews, and many loving friends.

Baptized at about nineteen years of age, he remained faithful to his Lord until death. He married Thelma Jean Garber, November 2, 1963. They spent their fifty-two years of married life in Miami and Darke counties in Ohio. In his spare time, he loved to travel with his family and enjoy the beautiful creation that God made. His door was always open, and he always had time to extend hospitality to all. The Family would like to extend a "thank you" to everyone for all your support and love towards Daniel during his final days. If you have been blessed by Daniel's influence, please pay it forward to souls who need to accept a portion of the same treasure that Daniel is now enjoying.

Funeral services were held February 7, 2021 at the Old Brethren Church, Bradford, Ohio. Interment was at the Oakland Cemetery, Bradford, Ohio.

NORMAN KEENEY

Norman Samuel Keeney, 89, of North Hopewell Township, York County, Pennsylvania, died February 11, 2021 at his home. He was the beloved husband of Norma Jean (Floyd) Keeney. The couple celebrated their 70th anniversary on December 23, 2020.

Norman was born in North Hopewell Township, York County, Pennsylvania, on October 17, 1931 and was the son of the late Norman and Elsie (Godfrey) Keeney.

Norman was a self-employed contractor and was the owner of Norman Keeney and Sons Remodeling for years. He was also a lifelong farmer. He was a member of the Conservative Brethren Church at Millbach. He enjoyed hunting and spending time in the mountains.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his five children, Eugene Keeney and his wife Florence, of Felton, Pennsylvania, Michael Keeney and his wife Darlene, of Red Lion, Pennsylvania, James Keeney and his wife Pandy, of Perry County, Pennsylvania, Darlene Noecker and her hus-

band Samuel, of Red Lion, Pennsylvania, and Sueann Stump and her husband Jeffrey, of Felton, Pennsylvania. He is also survived by twelve grandchildren; twenty-five great-grandchildren; and his sister, Dorothy Marks of Hart, Michigan. He was preceded in death by two brothers and two sisters.

A private service was held February 16, 2021 at the Austin H. Eberly Funeral Home.

BETTY SHELLY

Betty Jane Shelly, 87, of Littlestown, Pennsylvania, died February 14, 2021 at her home. She was the wife of the late Emmert O. Shelly, Jr. who died June 30, 2009. Born May 12, 1933 in Taneytown, Pennsylvania, Betty was the daughter of the late Jesse Albert and Emma Jane (Bowers) Sauerwein. She was a seamstress at Sylvia Garments, Littlestown, Pennsylvania and a homemaker. She supported her husband who was in the ministry. Betty was a devoted wife, mother, and caregiver for family members.

Surviving are her children: Marilyn Faye Shelly of Maysville, West Virginia; Dorcas Ann Shelly of Littlestown, Pennsylvania and Galen Scott Shelly of Littlestown, Pennsylvania; her two grandchildren who were greatly anticipated and brought joy into her life, Gage Oliver and Grayden James Shelly, and her nephews and a niece. Betty was predeceased by her sisters, Dottie V. Pifer and Ruthanna Grace Sauerwein and her brother, Jesse James Sauerwein. She was a member of Upper Conewago Brethren Church of Abbottstown, Pennsylvania where she taught Sunday School. She participated and thrived in Wellbrook Adult Day Services Program at Cross Keys Village at the Brethren Home Community, New Oxford, Pennsylvania.

Funeral Services were held February 19, 2021 at Upper Conewago Brethren Church with ministers, John Shelly and Daniel Miller officiating. Interment was in Mummerts Cemetery, Abbottstown, Pennsylvania.

GLEN FRICK

Glen Orville Frick, son of the late George Otis and Charlotte Emma (Weaver) Frick was born on July 21, 1951 at New Madison, Ohio. As a boy, he enjoyed life to the fullest helping with the farmers of the area in their fields and farming efforts and was an employee at Geetings Elevator, Savona, Ohio, for several years. He spent many hours making his

own toys from an assortment of parts that he would find around. Later he would use those same talents to make his own machines of sorts. He tinkered with his father on all sorts of machinery. He respected his parents, and always tried to do his best in all aspects of his life. He was a “people person” and always enjoyed it when there was someone to talk to.

Glen’s father allowed him to build his own shop at the home place and started “junking” and salvaging parts, which began his career in 1970.

Glen joined his heart and hands to God, requesting baptism at the age of nineteen years, and was a member of the Conservative German Baptist Brethren Church. In March 1974, Glen joined the Englewood Dunkard Brethren Church and used his talents to continue in God’s service. He believed that Sunday was a day of rest and that we should all find ourselves in the House of the Lord. At his passing he clung to the Brethren Faith.

On July 27, 1974, Glen married his sweetheart, Shirley Louise Stump at the bride’s home. They were married by Shirley’s Uncle, Paul A. Hartz, who at the time was holding a two-week Revival Meeting at Englewood Dunkard Brethren Church. To this union were born seven children: Sharon, Daniel, Naomi, Rhoda, Marla, Marlan, and Rachel. The family moved around within the state of Ohio, several times except for moving to Pennsylvania for eight years before returning to Ohio to stay in 2007.

Glen was the owner of Frick Sales for forty-four years, starting his Small Engine Business in 1976. During that time, he accumulated an eclectic collection of rare and unusual tools and machinery that he took great joy in sharing with others. He was an asset to the Darke County community and was loved by many.

Glen encountered many challenges through life. On August 27, 2014 he was assaulted while working in his shop and spent about a week in the hospital. On September 23, 2020, he was diagnosed with Glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. He chose to enjoy his final days with his family and customers. Glen’s question to many was, “Why would people spend thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to stay out of Heaven?” Glen’s thoughts were “I choose to enjoy my family and friends until the Lord calls me home. I’m not afraid to die, I just want to make sure I’m ready to go when the Lord calls me home.”

Glen Orville Frick arose and met his Blessed Master on February 14, 2021, at his home, surrounded by his family, making his pilgrimage here of 69 years, 6 months, and 24 days.

Glen will be missed greatly. He enjoyed every one of his grandchildren and would many times say, "Let the children play, the noise doesn't bother me." They loved to sit on his lap and Glen enjoyed doing things with his grandchildren and being interested in what they had to say. Many would be the times when Glen would give the grandchildren rides on whatever he had around the property on Family Day. Wonderful memories for us all!

He is survived by his companion, Shirley of 46 years of Greenville, Ohio; his children and their spouses: Sharon and Glenn Wells of Palestine, Ohio, Daniel and Cindy Frick of Bradford, Ohio, Naomi Frick of Greenville, Ohio, Rhoda and Stephen Kindred of Parker City, Indiana, Marla and Levi McKim of Crocker, Missouri, Marlan and Regina Frick of Dayton, Ohio, and Rachel and Jake Angle of Palestine Ohio. Seventeen grandchildren: Elaine, Edward, James, and Marie Wells; Faith, Wyatt, and Adilayia Kindred; Winston and Oliva McKim; Landon, Nikki, Trenton, Daisy, Jesslyn, and Casen Frick; Tatyana and Tiara Angle. Brothers and Sisters: Daryl Frick of Thomasville, Pennsylvania, Gloria (Mervin) Hilty of Palestine, Ohio, Linda Frick of Gettysburg, Ohio, Retha (Robert) Musser of Mohnton, Pennsylvania and multiple nieces and nephews. He leaves to mourn his best friend Randy Miller of Lewisburg, Ohio, and hundreds of customers, whom he considered his friends.

The family wishes to thank and express appreciation for all those who have been a servant in some small way in sending cards and just talking with Glen on the phone in his final days here on this earth. A special thank you to all of Glen's customers who called or just came in and sat with him to help pass his days.

Funeral services were held February 18, 2021 at the Bradford Old Brethren Church. Brother John Winand had the opening thoughts of living according to God's sacred order of time, that our entire life should be always moving away from the darkness and going to the Light! Brother Jason Reed had the sermon, preaching "Jesus to a lost and complicated world." and bringing us to an accountability within ourselves to cling to the cross and yield to Jesus! There was singing during the final viewing.

Brother Dean Jones had the committal service at the grave, giving the family lasting memories of our dear husband, Grandpa, Uncle, and Great Uncle. The pallbearers were: Obadiah Rhoades, Simeon Musser, Jeffrey Hilty, Allen Hilty, Ian Savage and Mark Keeny. There was singing as the casket was lowered into the ground and the family filled the grave.

While Glen's life has ended here below and our family circle has been broken, his life with Jesus has only begun! May we look forward to being together in heaven, some sweet day!

Saved By Grace

Someday the silver cord will break, And I no more as now shall sing;
But oh, the joy when I shall wake, Within the palace of the King!

Some day my earthly house will fall, I cannot tell how soon 'twill be;
But this I know my All in All, Has now a place in heaven for me.

Some day when fades the golden sun, Beneath the rosy tinted west;
My blessed Lord will say, "Well done!" And I shall enter into rest.

Some day till then I'll watch and wait; My lamp all trimmed and burning bright;
That when my Saviour opes the gate, My soul to him may take its flight.

Chorus:

And I shall see Him face to face; And tell the story-Saved by Grace
And I shall see Him face to face; And tell the story-Saved by Grace!

This was Glen's favorite song that we sang often, in the evening hours and then later around his bedside, at his passing.

The Family

NEWS ITEMS

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021

General Conference will be held at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, June 5-9, 2021.

Address: Baker University
618 8th Street
Baldwin City, KS 66006

Additional Information:

All rooms have two extra-long twin beds (39x80). Two beds may be placed side by side to make a king size bed.

Two rooms will share one bathroom (total of four beds).

Pack and play and/or air mattresses are permitted if needed.

Bring your own linens and towels. They will not have any available.

Washer and dryer available at no cost. Laundry soap not provided.

Gymnasium is available for our use. Athletic shoes are required. Encouraged to bring volleyballs and basketballs.

The college has no hookups for RV's. There is a place for RV's called 'The Lodge' located less than a mile from the college. They have full hookups. The website is baldwinlodge.com for information and reservations. They have 5 hookups available.

Reservations: (by request of Baker University) must be in by May 20.

E-mail: dbconf2021@yahoo.com

Mail: Lee & Sandy Meyers

25009 S. Cowger Rd.

Peculiar, MO 64078

Phone: Lee Meyers home 816-758-4639

Sandy Cell phone 816-519-2831

Please include the following:

Date/time of arrival and departure.

List of names attending and ages of children.

If you have a preference, name(s) of person(s) you would like to share room(s) with.

Handicap accessible needs.

Registration check-in will begin Friday afternoon. Supper will be served Friday.

Directions:

FROM NORTH OR EAST

*I-35 South to exit 205 onto Homestead Lane

*Keep right at the fork, follow signs for Edgerton/191st Street (0.1 miles)

*Merge onto Homestead Lane (0.4 miles)

*Turn left onto W 199th Street (2.1 miles)

*Turn left onto US-56W (W 199th Street)

*Continue on US-56W for (10.2 miles)

*Pass the Sonic Drive-In, then turn left onto 9th Street to Baker University (0.2 miles)

FROM SOUTH

*I-35 North to exit 188, US-59N toward Lawrence (12 miles)

*Take US-56 exit toward Olathe/Council Grove (0.3 miles)

*Turn right onto US-56E (N 300 Road) (4.2 miles)

*Turn right onto 9th Street to Baker University (0.2 miles)

FROM WEST

- *I-70 East to exit 197 toward Lawrence (0.4 miles)
- *Keep right at the fork, follow signs for Lawrence (250 feet)
- *Merge onto KS-10E (S Lawrence Trafficway) (8 miles)
- *Use right lane to take the ramp to US-59S (0.3 miles)
- *Turn left onto US-56E (N 300 Road) (4.2 miles)
- *Turn right onto 9th Street to Baker University (0.2 miles)

Thank you,
Lodging Committee,

Lee and Sandy Meyers
Davy and Donna Myers
Kevin and Lynette Guisinger

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
LITITZ, PENNSYLVANIA

The Lititz, Pennsylvania Congregation plans a spring revival meeting March 28 through April 4, 2021 with Bro. Caleb Heckman as the speaker. Services are scheduled for 9:30 A.M. Sunday mornings, 7:00 P.M. March 28 and 7:30 P.M. through the week. The meeting will close with Sunday morning service April 4. Please support us with your prayers and attendance.

Sister Arlene Birt, Cor.

DALLAS CENTER, IOWA

Lord willing, we at Dallas Center plan to have our spring revival meeting, March 28 to April 4, with Bro. Rodney Kimmel as our evangelist. We will have a Lovefeast service the evening of April 3.

All are invited to come and worship with us as Bro. Rodney shares God's messages. Please pray for these meetings.

Sister Brenda Meyers, Cor.

BEREAN, INDIANA

The Berean Congregation is looking forward to our Spring Revival Meetings beginning March 31, 2021 through April 4, 2021. Bro. Bob Lehigh from the Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania Congregation will be our evangelist. Evening services will begin at 7:30 P.M. and Sunday morning at 10:00 A.M. The conclusion of our meeting will be at 2:00 P.M. service on Sunday. We invite all to attend at our worship location of 84 West Second Street, Peru, Indiana. Please keep Brother Bob and Sister Sharon in your prayers as they come to minister among us.

Sister Donna Wray, Cor.

THANK YOU

We would like to Thank everyone for the 50th Wedding Anniversary cards and wishes that we received. May God Richly Bless all of you.

Brother Eldon and Sister Angeline Mallow

CONNECTIONS

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.

You have probably heard the saying, "Many hands make for light work". If you have been a part of very many work projects, you have likely experienced the truth of this saying. You may have seen projects that were disorganized and difficult as well as projects that went smoothly because

the leader had a clear vision for the finished product. Good leadership not only requires a clear vision but also requires an ability and willingness to direct the crew in ways that promote efficiency and camaraderie. A good leader will observe the crew to watch for talents in individuals that might be put to good use in various parts of the project and will then organize the crew in ways that not only uses special talents but grows and develops individuals and the whole group. If you have worked under a good leader, you likely enjoyed the work experience, grew in your knowledge and abilities, strengthened relationships, and maybe even gained some friends.

I believe this is remarkably like what we see as the Master Builder assembles and enables His church. As we continue our study in Ephesians in April, we see the Lord leading and bringing together His church in spiritual ways that might remind us of experiences we have as we serve under good leadership of a work project. With Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone, the Lord fits His church together upon this foundation. We are being built together for a habitation of God. (Eph. 2:20-22) And much like our vision of the final project becomes clearer as we continue working, the church's vision grows as the Lord assembles and enables the church. Our Lord, we might say our "spiritual foreman", blesses us with talents and as we yield, grows them in us "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:12)

We have probably all felt the satisfaction of a job well done. The work that we have in Christ will ultimately be far more satisfying than any earthly project. Therefore, may we work well in unity as the Lord fits us together. May we not be selfish but as the scripture tells us, that in speaking the truth in love, grow up into Him in all things. Oh, that someday we might all hear the Lord say "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34)

The Bible Study Board

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR MAY 2021

May 2 – Put Off, Grieve Not, and Be Imitator of God – Eph. 4:25-5:7

1. How do you forgive someone when you are angry?
-
-

2. How many opportunities has Paul listed in these verses to imitate God?

3. What examples help illustrate being deceived by vain and empty words?

May 9 – MOTHER’S DAY – II Tim. 1:1-18

1. How have any women influenced your spiritual growth in Christ?

2. What are some examples or experiences that illustrate verse 7?

3. What are the benefits of sharing in the sufferings for the gospel?

May 16 – Walking in the Light, Filled with the Spirit – Eph. 5:8-24

1. How do we prove or discover what is acceptable to the Lord?

2. What does “redeeming the time” mean to you?

3. Why does Paul link “submitting to one another” and “the fear of God”?

May 23 – Loving, Respecting and Obeying: The Basis for Enduring Relationships – Eph. 5:25-6:9

1. How do you describe submission?

2. Why are husbands to love and wives to respect?

3. What is the difference between nurture and admonition and why are both necessary?

May 30 – You Can’t Stand Fast Only Half Clothed – Eph. 6:10-24

1. Whose might has the power?

2. Paul uses the word “stand” or “withstand” four different times. Why is it so important?

3. What part of the armor do you ignore or use the least?

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