

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

# OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 8

## THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

BY WAYNE FUSSELL

When I was a very young preacher, I heard Ervin Waters preach a sermon which he entitled, *The Stewardship of Earthly Possessions*. Ervin pointed out that everything belongs to the Lord. He used a number of scriptures that tell us that everything is God's by right of creation and by right of providence. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:8). “For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills” (Psalms 50: 10) The passage that stands out to me above all the others in regards to what belongs to God is Psalms 24:1: “The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Everything in this world belongs to God. Nothing belongs to me in the absolute sense. So, in the final analysis, we are just stewards in the possession of the goods of another. One of these days, Jesus is going to return and demand a reckoning of His stewards, “Give an account of your stewardship. ..” (Luke 16:2). What will our status be if we have appropriated to our own selfish interest that which belongs to Him, and given to Him only the leftovers?

Through the years, preachers have been reluctant to preach about giving for fear that folks will think they are “preaching for money”. But from my standpoint, knowing what I know from God's word, I would do them a disservice by refusing to preach on the subject. I have come to believe that I am doing them a favor by sharing what I know about the subject. That's why I am writing this article.

I believe that the true, wholehearted Christian is a liberal giver of himself/herself to the service of the Master, whether we are talking about time, talents, or money. The true Christian does not feel that he has anything to brag about when he has given a tithe (10% of his

earnings) to the church, because he has read in the Old Testament how those saints of God gave that amount as a bare minimum to the service of the Lord, but gave in addition “free will offerings” God once accused His people, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8). You see the distinction made between “tithes” and “offerings”; the tithe was absolutely required, while the free will offering was left to their free will, yet required. Folks often ask me, “How much should I give?” I tell them, “Ten percent is a good place to start”. We have so much more than the folks under the law. We have Jesus, His precious blood, a much simpler form of worship, a great plan of salvation, the remission of sins, and so much more. Our motivation to give should be stronger than theirs. I cannot imagine those Jews on Pentecost who were baptized saying afterwards, “Oh happy day! I don't have to give the tithe any longer.” The fact is, they were willing to give more, some even all they had, that the gospel might go forward to the world.

One reason I don't hesitate to preach on giving is because I know it doesn't cost anything to give. I do a person a favor if I can convince him to give liberally to the Lord. The Philippian brethren had given liberally to the work Paul was doing, and he commended them for it, but then he declared, “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Sometimes folks fail to give because they are afraid they might need it. Paul says, “God will supply your need”. The fact is, if you give freely and liberally to the Lord, He will make it possible for you to give even more. Listen to 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward

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**Editorial**

**WISDOM FROM ABOVE**

By *DON L. KING*

The subject of wisdom is one of vital importance to every Christian. Of one thing we may be certain: we all need it. In James chapter 1, and also chapter 3, James, the brother of our Lord writes of it. James wrote of two types of wisdom: wisdom of the earth and wisdom from above. It appears that he is speaking primarily to teachers in the church. However, his admonition is undoubtedly helpful for all members. Unfortunately, wisdom is too often lacking among the leadership of the church. Hasty actions, and thoughtless words devoid of wisdom may have long lasting consequences requiring years to undo, if ever. Doctor Phil once said something similar: "It may take a thousand 'Atta boy!' comments to a child to overcome one thoughtless and hurtful comment." Leaders in the church need to remember this. It is impossible to "-un-ring" a bell. Once we say something that is hurtful to our brother or sister, it is out there; and the damage remains despite our sincere apologies.

We must be careful that we don't mistake knowledge for wisdom. Many have knowledge but never seem to become wise. Knowledge is helpful in many ways. It may even help one earn an earthly living, but wisdom from above helps us develop a spiritual life for ourselves which has eternal benefits. If we want more than just physical benefits, such as making our living, then we certainly need wisdom from God. This brief article will not particularly deal with earthly wisdom, but we will notice some things inspiration has to tell us about the wisdom that comes from above.

James 3: 17,18: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (18) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

This description is very instructive. Notice the wonderful benefits that come from the wisdom given from our Heavenly Father. Nothing but positive blessings because He always wants the best for His children! When James speaks of it being "from above,"

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**THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT  
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST  
WHAT IS THE TRUE CHURCH?**

*BY DAVID GRIFFIN*

“What is the true church today?” This question evokes many different answers depending on one’s background. One common answer is this: “Jesus’ one true church is not a single organization. It is the spiritual body made up of all true believers in all churches regardless of denominational affiliation.” People often call this “the invisible church” because only God and not humans can know who is included in it. The following quotes from “gotquestions.org” further explain this concept by distinguishing between a “visible” and “invisible” church.

“The visible church is the expression of Christianity that people can see: the gathering and practices of the individuals in various [denominational] church buildings on Sundays.” “The visible church encompasses all local churches, everywhere [i.e., all denominations, dg]. The visible church is easily identified by its religious trappings: church buildings, ministers or clergy, calendars, ordinances, ceremonies, denominations, etc.”

On the other hand, “[t]he invisible church, is the true church, which only God can see: born again believers, past, present, and future. Because not everyone who attends church or performs religious deeds is saved, the visible church includes unbelievers.” [But] “the invisible church is comprised of the redeemed and sealed by God.” Finally, “[t]he visible things of this world, including church denominations, church buildings, hymnals, prayer books, and pews, will all pass away because they are temporary ( 1 Corinthians 7 :31 ). The invisible things of God will never pass away because they are as eternal as heaven (Luke 12:33).” (<https://www.gotquestions.org/visible-invisible-church.html>, accessed 6/9/2022).

These quotes maintain that the true church is invisible and is dispersed throughout all denominations, with all their diverse “religious trappings.” These “trappings” include the varied and often contradictory denominational doctrines, creeds, and practices that have their origin in some historical separation among professed believers. These quotes also assume

that this condition of modern Christianity is God-approved. This view then concludes that in the end all denominational trappings will be destroyed, and the one true invisible church, that currently exists among all the denominations, will exist eternally in heaven.

The purpose of this article is to challenge these assumptions and the whole idea founded on these assumptions.

The pervasive division of modern denominationalism is certainly condemned in many passages in the New Testament, but perhaps nowhere more clearly than in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. “ 10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (NKJV).

One could say that this passage describes denominationalism in its “embryonic form.” The term “embryo” is the biological term for a living organism in its earliest stages of development in the womb. In that state the organism is only partially developed and not yet born. First Corinthians chapter one therefore is indeed a case of “embryonic denominationalism.” It was not fully developed (they had not officially broken off into separate organizations); thus, the “embryo” had not grown beyond the congregation level. Yet even in this earliest developing stage, Paul still condemns it.

Verses 11-12 show that the Christians at Corinth were claiming special affinity with certain leaders of the church and forming themselves into groups distinct from one another. These distinctions were based, apparently, on whichever leader had baptized them or whichever leader they happened to favor for whatever reason. Paul condemns this kind of division and states that such things ought not to exist among the followers of Christ. Thus, Paul’s rhetorical questions of verse 13 logically demand a “no” answer. “Is Christ divided?” “No!” “Was Paul crucified for you?” “No!” “Were

you baptized in the name of Paul?" "No!" Thus, Paul condemns the state of affairs that existed in the Corinthian congregation.

But modern denominationalism is nothing more than that same state of affairs "gone to seed" (to use another metaphor). Indeed, when today's professed followers of Christ separate into antagonistic groups, call themselves after mere men, harbor allegiance for their favored leader and his group, defend and maintain the lines of division that grow therefrom, then "agree to disagree," they violate Paul's contention in 1 Corinthians 1. What's more, such divisions are often formed on the basis of something not even addressed in the Bible! This state of affairs is surely at odds with Scripture!

We therefore conclude that if Paul condemned division in the embryonic stage in 1 Corinthians, what would he say of the fully birthed, and now full-grown denominational "adult" of the modern age? Bible students well know that Paul called the Corinthians "babes in Christ," "carnal," and "immature" because of the warring factions among them. What would he say of the multitudes of seasoned leaders and followers in modern denominationalism who continue to maintain and defend sectarian divisions after all these long centuries? Has there not been enough time to "mature" and move beyond this "carnal" state of affairs? To identify the true church as "all genuine believers dispersed among all the denominations" effectively cancels Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 1. It is in fact quite telling that the article from gotquestions.org (quoted above) classes the denominations as "things of this world" that will "pass away." I think Paul would agree! Indeed, it is unthinkable that he would favor the common answer to the question, "What is the true church?"

To be continued ...

## **SPEAKING AGAINST A BROTHER, PART 2**

*BY HOWARD MEENTS*

*Editors Note: This is part 2 of an article by my dear friend and brother in Christ, Howard Meents of the Montreal, MO Congregation. Greg Gay*

There are some church members whom we are commanded to separate ourselves from. This is always a sad time, but it must be done for the sake of

the church. The Bible tells us who these people are. Clearly someone must report their status (yes, negative information being passed on) so that the command to separate ourselves can be obeyed.

In Titus 3: 10-11, the Apostle Paul says, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

Scripturally, a heretic is someone who promotes heresy, perversion, something different than what God has given us by his word.

Paul lets them and us know that those of this ilk after being admonished twice, if they continue in this, are subverted, in sin, and condemned of themselves. They chose this. He says they are to be rejected. The general tone of this is that they are beyond correction. In speaking of the same type of people in Romans 16:17-18 Paul says, "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Notice then, from the writing in Titus 3, these types of people are to be rejected and in Romans 16:17 they are to be avoided. These are people from which we are to separate ourselves.

In like manner, in the book of Jude, speaking of what we would call heretics, Jude gives several metaphors to show what and where these men were spiritually. In his description in the last of verse 12, he says, "trees whose fruit is withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked by the roots; Though this is a heartbreaking thought, being raised on a farm and knowing about trees that are plucked up, no longer attached to the ground - they are dead - dead. They are not coming back and are ready to be burned. These are very clear examples of those of whom negative information or reporting of their evil would have to be done.

Now let us give a couple of quick examples of apostles reporting error. In 2nd Timothy 4:7, the apostle Paul speaks of Demas forsaking him due to his loving of this present world and in 3rd John 9-10, where John speaks of Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence

and would not receive them. He also reported that Diotrephes spoke foolish and malicious words against them and would cast out any brother from the church who would receive them. Would you accuse these apostles of evil speaking?

As I mentioned, roughly 20 years ago, the change of meaning or at the very least, a huge misunderstanding of the term “evil speaking” seemed to come about. Highly esteemed preachers were spoken of very badly for reporting error at a congregation, after having met with, investigated, and failed in trying to pull them back to the truth. This was the equivalent of the house of Chloe reporting various errors at Corinth. Reporting truth of issues with Corinth was not evil speaking and neither was the reporting of truth about this erring congregation by these preachers. Scripturally, the Lord is the head of the church. We have no central, earthly leadership. Each congregation is autonomous, so we have no way of disfellowshipping another congregation or their preachers or their leadership. We have no way to get them to return to the truth if they refuse to hear the truth and are subverted. But we can, if it is reported, and if we know, educate and protect the members of our congregation from the error that is happening at another congregation. We can let them know that since they are in error we should not be attending services there. We can also warn them to avoid and be on watch for the same type of error slipping into our individual congregations.

The report of the preachers was true. We were all saddened. And though it was true, some family members and close friends (all of which were Christians) had a hard time understanding or in some cases accepting the reports. Some, regardless of evidence that continued to come in, just flat refused to accept it. Some then began attacking these preachers by saying really bad things about them, including accusing them of evil speaking. Some of this seemed to be meant to defame or slander them and to hurt their reputations. Sadly, this was something I personally heard and observed from various Christians. Eventually, if they were honest, even the most diehard doubters and accusers had to agree that these preachers had spoken truth.

We indeed need to know what the true meaning of evil speaking of one another is and we need to be cautious that we are not guilty of such.

If after reading this study and due to my failures, you are still struggling in quite getting what evil speaking is, we actually have the epitome, the perfect example of evil speaking in this study. It was not committed by the preachers, who simply, as the house of Chloe, truthfully reported error. Instead, evil speaking was committed by those who attacked, accused, and said terrible things about them. I suspect that many who did so, got innocently caught up in this sin. Hopefully, we all learned something from the terrible experience of that time and, where needed, repentance has been made.

I want to say that I applaud the preachers who report error and I admire their courage. It is not always popular as we see in our example. But there has been a lot of damage done to the brotherhood by erring congregations, and false teachers with their followers. But how much worse would it be if our preachers (who generally are more aware of what is happening across the brotherhood) were not reporting to us the error and evil that is affecting the church. May all our preachers today stand up for the truth and help our congregations be pure in God’s sight. - OPA Amen! DLK

### **CHRISTIANS & SOCIAL MEDIA**

*By ERIC BULLOCK*

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”  
(Colossians 3:14-17)

Social media is continually growing in popularity and is being used by more people now than ever. Followers of Christ are among those using social media to communicate and stay connected, but we must not forget that in all things we do we are wearing the name of Christ. Christians represent Christ at all times. We should be very careful about how we portray King Jesus and His kingdom to the world.

We all have our opinions about current issues of the

day, but is it wise for us to express that opinion in a public venue if that opinion divides or offends? The Apostle Paul expressed in his first letter to Timothy that we [Christians] should lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:2-4)

We need to be reminded of our purpose in this life. Our purpose is not to broadcast our political opinions, our personal social policies, or our disdain for something that has nothing to do with Jesus. What is our purpose? We are to glorify God the Father, striving every day to be like King Jesus, and be a shining light to a world of darkness by spreading and living the gospel in truth and love.

Is God glorified when we start arguments on Facebook? Are we striving to be like Christ by publicly expressing our political views? Are we shining brightly in a world of darkness when we put all of our time and effort into expressing a belief that has nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ? An honest heart knows the answer to these questions.

There is so much work to do for the kingdom that there is no time to worry about these things. The gospel is the most pressing matter in all of the world. The only hope people have is in the atoning blood of the eternal King we serve. Make your life about Jesus. In all things, represent your King. Instead of proving people wrong, introduce them to Jesus, and if they surrender to Him, that will take care of itself.

Before we speak or before we like, comment, or post something on social media, we need to ask ourselves if what we are about to say or support glorifies God. Will this appropriately represent King Jesus? Does this contribute to the growth of the kingdom? Let Christ truly be the most important thing in your life and you'll soon realize how small and insignificant the matters of this world are.

We also need to be careful not to misrepresent Jesus in what we choose to like and comment on through our social media platforms. That sends a message to the world. If we like, comment, or post something that is unscriptural or sinful, the world understands that we are

not serious about our allegiance to King Jesus, but we are committed to conformity with the world. The point is to be mindful of God's word before you say anything.

### ***IN GOD'S LIVING ROOM***

*by Aaron Battey*

Things are not always as they first appear. Children learn this when they become young adults and experience the labor and sweat that was required of their father to put food on the table when growing up. As a child this is taken for granted: reality has not set in yet. At varying junctures in the Holy Bible, God's people are allowed to see the realities of this world as they really are. There is more at stake, the enemy is deadlier, and the Father is more powerful and then the Christian may realize it at 6 AM when wiping sleep out of the eyes. Wipe away the sleep and wake up to the reality of what it means to be in God's presence: in His living room as it were. When we speak of God's living room, we use contemporary language to describe God's temple, His dwelling place, or His presence. Throughout scripture, to be in the presence of God is a special event. Wherever God appeared in history became known as God's dwelling place, and that place became sacred and revered. Consider the following examples: Jacob's vision at Bethel (Gen. 28: 10-22), Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3), God's descent on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19 & 33), and God's dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. 5-6). These events compose a short inventory of windows through which to gaze at the glory of God. While gazing through these windows of revelation, may God's holiness radiate, may first impressions disintegrate, and may your level of reverence in God's presence elevate. Fine attention to detail is stressed whenever man stands in the presence of God. Notice how Moses was told by God to remove his sandals while in the presence of God (Exodus 3:5). In ancient times and in the East still, this is a gesture of respect and humility. When preparing to approach God's glory on Mt. Sinai, the people were to wash their clothes of all impurities (Exodus 19: 10), abstain from intimacy with their spouses during the days leading up to the event (Exodus 19: 15), refrain from touching any part of the holy mountain (Exodus 19:12-13), and resist the urge to look at the brightness of God's radiating glory (Exodus 19:21). When God appeared to Isaiah in visionary form, Isaiah was shaken with fear (Isaiah 6:1-5) and it was necessary that he be purged of sin in order to stand in God's presence (v. 7). A similar picture is detailed in Revelation 7 as John

looks into the heavenly throne room of God and sees God's faithful standing in "white robes," (v. 9). John would later explain these white robes represented the "righteous acts of the saints," (19:8). Truly it is no trivial event to enter the living room of God.

The application from these revelations of scripture is abundant. For sake of space, answer this one application question, "How should man approach God's presence in worship?" The church is called, "the house of God," (1 Timothy 3:15) and, "the temple of God," (2 Cor. 6:16). In both Paul's address to Timothy and Corinth, Paul was addressing the church collectively, not individually. It would seem whenever the body of Christ, "comes together as a church," (1 Cor. 11:18) this is a special event. While as Christians are individually God's property (James 1: 1) and He is supposed to be the center of the Christian's life (Matthew 6:33), God is not present in an individual's life in the same sense as He is described to be present whenever the church collectively comes together at the temple of God to reverence the King of Kings. The bottom line of all this is simply put- whenever the church comes together to worship, it is not to be approached casually. The modus operandi of modern church culture is to present worship as casual. A preacher is measured fitting by whether or not he wears muscly t-shirts or stylish flannels. The masses are encouraged to come worship God on reclining couches, wearing only the most comfortable shorts and flip flops, all while getting a refreshing frappamacchiato at the coffee bar. Furthermore, it would seem God is only in His temple on Sunday morning, and He is somehow absent like Baal every other day of the week (see 1 Kings 18). Is this the blueprint in scripture for approaching God's presence in His dwelling place? Should Christians pay ready detail to relaxation or reverence when preparing for worship with the church? Should the Christian busy him/herself so much so that Sunday morning is the only block of time he might suffer to approach God in His holy temple?

This message is in no means meant to be read spitefully or with a spirit of derision. Answer the questions above honestly and examine yourself. May our response to God be that of Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips ... " (Isaiah 6:5). May God be revered to the uttermost by all men but especially by those who say, "You are my God!" To God be the glory.

**THE EARTH IS....** *continued from page one*

you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work". It's just a matter of sowing and reaping; you always reap more than you sow. Give bountifully, and the Lord rewards you bountifully. Be stingy with Him, and He will be stingy with you! Brother E. H. Miller used to say, "We have a shovel, and the Lord has a shovel. We shovel it out to Him, and He shovels it back to us, but the Lord's shovel is much bigger than our shovel!" You can't out-give God. He just keeps giving and giving and giving.

The apostle Peter once questioned the Lord about what he and the other apostles had left behind, and he wanted to know what they would receive in return. Look at Mark 10:28-30: Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time - houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions - and in the age to come, eternal life". I once preached this and said, "If you give liberally to the Lord, He will give it back 100%". A brother asked me after services, "Wayne, did I understand you to say that if you give to the Lord, He will give it back 100%?" I said, "Yessir". He said, "No, Wayne, a hundredfold is a hundred times!" What a promise! You can't out-give God! Jesus promised, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). Jesus' answer to worry about material things is, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (material things) shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Folks, we must realize that we brought nothing into this world, and we can carry nothing out. There are no pockets in a shroud. As someone has said, "All I can hold in my cold, dead hand is that which I have given away." Paul said that God "loves a cheerful giver", and a cheerful giver is a liberal giver.

Many years ago, I baptized a wealthy man in West Virginia. As we were about to go into the river to baptize him, his sister said, "John, you have your wallet in your pocket". He replied, "We will baptize that, too". And

we did. There are a lot of wallets that need baptizing. It often seems to be the last thing folks dedicate to the Lord.

Paul makes a point in 2 Corinthians 8: 14 that is very important in Christian giving. In effect, he says that every member should do his part in the matter of giving. He seals it with the statement, "there should be equality" - that is, every Christian should feel that it is his duty to give that the work of the Lord might go forward. No Christian is willing for others to pay all of the bills of the church. I read a statistic years ago that 98% of the expenses of the church are borne by 21% of its membership. I don't know if that is true or not, but if it is, God forgive us! I have often thought that if every member of the church would give as a bare minimum 10% of his earnings into the treasury of the church, what a work could be done! On this point, Paul draws a beautiful picture of the church working as a unit in Ephesians 4:15-16: "... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." In simple terms, Paul says that if every member supplies his place and does his part, the church will grow, and that includes giving freely into the Lord's service.

And so, my wonderful Christian friends, I close this article with an appeal that we all realize our responsibility to give to the Lord's work, and give liberally that the greatest work in the world can go forward. And know assuredly that the Lord will bless you both spiritually and financially. He will "open the windows of heaven" to you and give you the ability to give more than ever before. This I believe, and this I have seen happen in our wonderful brotherhood.

**WISDOM FROM ABOVE**  
*...continued from page two*

we don't believe he intends for us to assume that Christians today are directly inspired with such wisdom upon asking; but rather that God is the ultimate source, or beginning, from which His wisdom is received. In other words, God is the MEANS of our receiving it. A similar example might be that God answers prayer for the sick by providentially providing capable doctors who have expertise in such matters so that we recover

from the illness. We all agree that is an answer to prayers. Later, we thank the Lord for answering our prayers. When I board an airplane, I always ask God for safe travel. When I get off safely, I always thank Him for His watch and care. James doesn't explain this concept in James 3:17,18, but a little more information is given in James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and 'upbraideth' not; (this word means to defame, rail at, chide, taunt: cast in teeth, reproach, revile, upbraid." Strongs Greek Lexicon, pg. 52) and it shall be given him." It appears that "wisdom" mentioned in James 1:5; James 3: 17,18, involves our use of practical knowledge or understanding. It isn't miraculous at all. Wisdom does not just magically fall from the sky every time we ask for it. In other words, wisdom from above is not miraculously given upon demand, but rather we use our ability to learn from the scriptures what is best for us to do in spiritual matters. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to MAKE THEE WISE (emphasis mine DLK) unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," What did Paul say? He said the scriptures make us "wise" unto salvation. Certainly then, it must be understood and allowed that the inspired gospel writers are themselves the medium, or means, by which men receive all spiritual knowledge today. Peter wrote: "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3) According to Peter's inspired writing, everything we need to know has been given us already. Where might that be? Obviously, the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to know the mind of God in spiritual matters pertaining to our salvation and daily Christian living by passing it on to those men who wrote the Bible. We all understand that the Bible is Inspired or God breathed. This means we may depend upon it to lead us correctly today.

Notice the example below: The church in Corinth existed during miraculous times. Those brethren loved the gifts of the Spirit, some of which they had been given by the laying on of an apostle's hands. However, there were some who were not genuine; they were frauds, though they claimed to be inspired. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14: 37, 38: "If any



man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge (concur DLK) that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." Paul meant that what he had spoken earlier about tongue speaking, etc. was from the Lord, it was inspired; and any man who was a genuine prophet would thus recognize it as being true. Then he said, if any "prophet" didn't recognize it as being true; if he was ignorant of the truth, then he obviously wasn't actually recognized by God as a prophet. The whole point is: what Paul wrote was inspired and any real prophet would be able to verify that it was so. Again, we may depend upon our Bible as being inspired. The Word is perfect, but may not be perfect in applying the truth and wisdom which is given us. Unfortunately, we often are not. The very best-intentioned Christians sometimes make mistakes in spite of our desire to do what is right. We may be skilled in a particular trade, etc., but still make mistakes and then have to make corrections.

My wife and I recently hired a man to do some plumbing work upstairs in our home. We thought we had properly checked him out. He came recommended. He told us he knew just exactly how to do the work. However, we soon learned that he was not as skilled as he led us to believe. The proof for us came when we discovered water running through a downstairs light fixture all over the floor and an upholstered chair sitting under the fixture. Our new-found wisdom prompted us to hire a professional plumber to redo what the first man had worked nearly all day to do. We made a mistake, and even though this was not a spiritual matter, we learned better, we gained some wisdom. We will not make that same mistake again. So, it is with Christians. We make mistakes, of course, but we need to learn from our mistakes and not repeat the errors over and over.

Think on these things. DLK

***CHEAP GRACE***  
*by Aaron Boone*

God's plan for humankind has always been simple and laid out for us in His Word. Yet, the execution of this plan seems to be a problem for humans in every generation. God's plan for people to be saved through baptism and holy living has consistently been met with resistance from a world that continues to reject the Savior and to establish their own rules. In their rebellion, people have come up with a carnal view of Christianity:

by rejecting God's expectations of His creation, people have cheapened God's grace.

This concept of cheap grace should be worrisome to all. Dietrich Bonhoeffer helps us understand this term by defining cheap grace as "the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without Church discipline. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship ...." Bonhoeffer understands the world's emphasis: it stresses the benefits of Christianity without the cost involved. This cost is best seen in God's call for us to be "Disciples of Christ" (Matthew 28: 18-20). Now, the term disciple has often been oversimplified and overlooked, leading many to think they are disciples while they fail to conform to the biblical standard of discipleship. If failing to be a disciple violates the command of God, it becomes paramount to our Spiritual life to understand what it truly means to be a disciple.

By definition the Greek term μαθητές (mathetes) simply calls to mind "a learner." W.E. Vine appropriately adds to this definition, stating a disciple is "... not only a pupil, but an adherent." Discipleship requires more than knowing the facts: it speaks to total, life changing adherence to a teacher. Jesus draws this idea out further when He gives the example that a disciple will grow to be like his teacher (Luke 6:40). Discipleship calls us not just to be as knowledgeable as our teacher but "like" our teacher; that is, we are to conform even to the teacher's lifestyle and habits. John calls this concept "walking just as He walked" (1 John 2:6) and Paul commands even our thoughts to be like Christ's (Philippians 2:5). Complete and utter imitation is the goal of a disciple. Jesus further shows us the expectations of a disciple, stating that if the master were to be called Beelzebub, it is expected that his disciples are to be called the exact same thing (Matthew 10:24-25). The reason for this conclusion is that a disciple should be the representation of his teacher. Thus, the essence of discipleship is the art of imitation "because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4: 17) (see also 1 Peter 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:12-13; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Corinthians 4:15-16; and Philippians 2:5).

As we begin to scratch the surface in understanding discipleship, we begin to see the definite need to self-reflect. In self-reflecting, we reach a deeper understanding of what our relationship with Jesus should be. Since a disciple is one who becomes like his teacher in both the way he thinks and the way he acts, we must follow the example Jesus set for us and we

must adhere to the teaching of His word. Failing to live the life, then, clearly is a chief way of cheapening God's grace.

## Field Reports

Wayne Fussell, 6126 Land O' Trees, Shreveport, LA, Wfussell1@comcast.net July 6, 2022. It was my good pleasure to conduct a three day meeting for the church at BenDavis, MO. It brought back wonderful memories of meetings I conducted there many years ago when folks would come in great numbers to hear the gospel. The house would be full every service. And we had many baptisms in those days! Bobby Cunningham accompanied me in this meeting, and he is always a great help. I appreciated Todd Richardson, his family, and others attending the meeting. I have just held a three day meeting at Tulsa, OK. They asked me to preach on Deacons. It wasn't easy, but it was rewarding for me. This church has two fine men who are superb Elders, Rylan Nichols and Dwight Smith. They have an exceptionally talented Evangelist, Clint DeFrance, who is doing a great work. They expect to ordain Deacons soon. It was exciting to preach for this growing, glowing, loving church. My next meetings will be LaGrange, GA in October and Lubbock, TX in November. God bless the greatest brotherhood in the world. As brother Hollis in West Monroe used to say, "I'm so glad someone taught me the truth!" Count your blessings!

Roy. M. Siansobanda, July 15, 2022 We had a gospel meeting in the southern part of Zambia 300 miles away from Lusaka capital city. The meeting was hosted by Sianyang church of Christ in which about 450 people attended. At night we had big crowds from the nearby community who came to listen to the teachings that took place. The topics that we taught were the history of church, the promise of the holy spirit, command of water baptism, and leadership. On Sunday I taught the teaching in Matthew 17:1-5 that we need to hear Him who is our Lord Jesus Christ with the following passage of scriptures Luke 16:16, Hebrews 1:1-2, Deut 18:15, Acts 3:22-23, Acts 5:29. We had 3 people that were restored to the truth. Brother Moses Kandu waited on the table while brother Micheal Akushanga helped on the contribution part. Concerning the church the scriptures used were Matthew 16:13-18, John 14:26, John 16:12-13, Acts 1:3, Acts 1:12, Acts 2:1-4, Acts

2:37-47. I showed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles while the baptism of water is the commandment to all those who obey and believe that Jesus Christ is Son of God. The brethren were very happy as this was the first meeting since the outbreak of pandemic took place in this country since 2020. All the public gatherings were suspended. Only worship services on Sundays and not to go beyond 50 people and meeting for not more than an hour. I would like to thank the brethren in the USA for continuing support of this great work and hope everyone is taking good care of themselves Lord bless you all.

Darrell Crawford 210 E Baldwin Rd unit A Panama City, Fl.32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com Hope this finds everyone doing well, we are doing well, one sister is still in poor health. She has been declining the last couple of years. It's hard to believe we have been here in PC for 12 years already. We have had some baptisms over the years, several restorations, and 5 take their stand out of digression. We all were blessed richly during the hurricane 4 years ago. Some had property damage, the church building has been restored to better than it was pre-hurricane. We were blessed far beyond anything we could have imagined by the brethren around the brotherhood. We are continuing to try to have about two meetings a year when possible. We almost always have outside visitors from the community. We try to set up studies with them. Please keep the work here in your prayers, visit if you are in .the area. May the Lord bless His church everywhere.

*Note: This was not included last month. Our apologies. -DLK*

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Tri, Edmond, OK 73034, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787. July 6, 2022 Since last report brother Alan Bonifay and I have visited the work in Northern India. We were well received there by the group of 20-30 who are led by brother Manohar, who was baptized last November along with his wife Jyoti. Since then, Manohar has baptized 8 more from the Pentecostal group he has met with for several years. We were invited to the homes of members and non-members for visits and studies. Even in their poverty, all were generous to share and eager to study the scriptures. Three more were baptized while we were there, including a husband and wife who live in a village several hours away and meet with two different Pentecostal groups. The other young man who was baptized while we were there has since baptized his

father. The nation's laws about religion are enforced as each area sees fit. In the north, we were cautioned to not speak the word "convert" as it is forbidden to persuade anyone to change religions unless it is for them to be part of the Hindu faith. Lord willing, we will return early next year to encourage the growing work. We attended the Sulphur, OK July 4th meeting, this year supported by Galey, coordinated by Jonathan Edwards and Bradley Ballard. I appreciate being asked to preach to the good opening night crowd of at least 150. We then traveled to Springfield, MO on Friday and were there for the rest of the Mission Hills' meeting facilitated by Brad Shockley and Billy Dickinson. I preached at Bolivar on Sunday, my first time there, and at the meeting Sunday night. We were glad to see so many from all over the country who were able to attend but missed many who were not there this year. Since returning home I have resumed on line studies with northern India brethren. My schedule the rest of the year includes area preaching appointments plus meetings nearby at Norman, OK in July and Lee's Summit, MO in October. Lord willing, I will return to South Africa with Alan Bonifay in November. On the way there, I hope to stop for some days in Kenya to study with some of the 300 members of my Facebook group, God's Good News from Greg, who live there. The goal is to introduce them to faithful members of the church from Kenya for further study, coordinating with brother Keith Thomson from Australia, who has a good work in Kenya. Brother Alan Lynch of Arizona and I have been asked by the Grapevine, TX congregation to coordinate and facilitate the year end study this year. The dates of the study are December 23, 24, 26, and 27. We are in the process of contacting potential speakers and assigning topics. My work from home still includes posting recorded sermons on line for my Facebook group and posting Gospel Meeting flyers and listings of meetings from all over the country on the Facebook Page, Church of Christ Gospel Meetings. Please email, text, or message me with gospel meeting information. Our work continues with the Piedmont, OK congregation. We are looking forward to our meeting with Cullen Smith in a few weeks.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, July 14, old paths@juno.com- We returned from Weatherford, Texas last Monday. We enjoyed the meeting although sickness hindered some from attending. As a result, the last service was canceled which was probably wise. There were no visible results

but we pray fruit will come later. Our next is to be in New Salem, MS over the first two Sundays in August. We've been there a number of times and look forward to being with them again. Preachers, we always need your articles and reports. Lord bless the faithful.



Future "Keystone Quartet" and Lynwood Smith.  
From L to R: Wayne Fussell, Jimmy Shaw,  
Billy Orten, Tommy Shaw, Lynwood Smith.



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## WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

### REMEMBER THE LORD... AND FIGHT!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“And I looked, and arose, and said to the nobles, ‘Do not be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons and daughters, your wives, and your houses.’ And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me. So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing.” (Nehemiah 4: 14-18, 23)

“Remember the Alamo!” Those were the stirring words shouted by the Texans as they rode across the marshy plain in a surprise attack on the Mexican army under the leadership of Santa Anna. The Mexican army, including Santa Anna, was caught by complete surprise and fled in panic and disarray as Sam Houston and his soldiers overwhelmed the Mexican forces. Even Santa Anna fled and was subsequently captured, and as the price for Houston sparing his life gave Texas their independence from Mexico. I can imagine the fear and panic that struck through the hearts of the Mexican soldiers when they heard the words, “Remember the Alamo!” The Children of the East must have experienced the same dreadful panic when Gideon’s little army blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers and shouted, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”

Remembering what you are fighting for can dispel your fear and give you the courage to fight. Nehemiah had inspired the Jews to begin the difficult, and seemingly impossible task, of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They faced terrible obstacles. First there was all the rubbish - the burned stones and endless piles of dust still there after all the years. The Babylonians were experts at leveling cities and walls. They would tear down every stone and they ploughed up the foundation. Then they would plough up the ground again until even a great city like Jerusalem, including Solomon’s stupendous Temple, was nothing but rubbish. Nehemiah, however, convinced the people that God would bless them and they could succeed. The Bible says the people, “had a mind to work” and they began to build and sure enough the walls began to be rebuilt at an incredible pace.

Seeing the progress being made enemies soon made their presence known. At first they mocked and ridiculed the workers but to little avail. Then they made threats of violence and began to organize to attack the workers and stop the work. This caused fear and consternation among the people, but Nehemiah urged them to carry on the construction and to also be prepared to fight if necessary. His exhortation was, “Remember the Lord ... and fight!” God is great and dreadful he reminds them, and if you will do your duty and fight the victory is assured. What a great lesson and reminder for us today as builders and soldiers of Jesus Christ. We too are mocked and ridiculed, and if that does not stop us it may be that violent threats will be ours to endure. It has happened to our brethren in the past - and it may happen to us in the future. We must keep on fighting the good fight of faith (unlike in Nehemiah’s day ours is a spiritual warfare and we are building and fighting spiritually, not carnally) and at the same time keep building up the cause of the Captain of our salvation. “You therefore must endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” (2 Timothy 2:3,8) Notice Paul says that as good soldiers we should “Remember Jesus Christ!” Note other translations of this statement.

“Keep your attention on Jesus Christ as risen from the dead and descended from David.”

“Keep your mind of Jesus Christ!

“Meditate on Jesus, the Messiah!”

“Never forget that Jesus Christ has risen from among the dead.”

Paul is admonishing us, when we are faced with enemies and obstacles as soldiers of Christ, to keep our focus and attention on our Leader and Captain, who has been raised from the dead, which assures us the victory is sealed and secure. We must have our building trowel in one hand as we teach and build up the church, and our spiritual sword in the other hand ready to fight any and all enemies of our Savior and His kingdom. Remember Jesus! If we do that we will not quake or fear no matter the threat. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever.” (Isaiah 26:30) The words “perfect peace” are literally “Peace, Peace” in the Hebrew. Think about that. There is double peace if we keep our mind and attention on the Lord. Let us heed the call and challenge. “Remember the LORD ... And fight!”