

Glad Tidings

November

FROM THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

2024

“Buy the truth, and sell it not.” (Prov. 23:23)

Philippians 4:13

Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow

I Corinthians 15:19

THE POOR WISE MAN

We read in the book of Ecclesiastes 9:13-16: “This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.”

Those who study history have seen this principle played out over and over again. In warfare, smaller, weaker forces that are put into battle using a wise, well-planned strategy can defeat significantly larger, stronger armies. This poor wise man utilized his wisdom, we are not told how, to help the few men of this small city overcome long odds and win a great victory to maintain their freedom despite assaults and a siege by a powerful king and his soldiers.

It is notable that a man whose scriptural writings are in large part devoted to dispensing the wisdom of God saw the wisdom contained in this lesson as something that “seemed great.” This implies that as much as he understood the practical lessons to be gleaned from it, he also perceived that there was something being taught that was far greater.

Indeed, from our perspective as New Testament believers, we can see that the Lord Jesus Christ is prophetically foreshadowed in this passage. Grace is the unmerited favor of God, and one of my favorite illustrations of grace is found in 2 Cor. 8:9: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Jesus left the realms of heavenly glory to come to earth and bleed and die for us. His earthly life was that of a poor man. His resting place as a newborn was a manger. He was raised in a family of humble means in Galilee, the son of a carpenter; and there was nothing about him physically-speaking that would distinguish him from other Jewish men of his day: “..he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” (Isa. 53:2)

The small population of the city faced what seemed to be a hopeless situation, but we truly have no hope in anything we ourselves can do of being acceptable to God in the courtroom of his holy justice. Through Adam we are all transgressors of God's law and

deserving of his wrath. We have a great enemy that we need deliverance from-and that is death! The Apostle Paul tells us in writing about our hope of the resurrection that “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:26). Death is the simply result of sin, because the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). However, it was not simply death from this life that we were faced with. Without the grace of God we would all be subject to the second death, eternal separation of God (Rev. 20:12-15)

However, God in his infinite wisdom foresaw the fall of man and made provision to deliver a great multitude from sin and death, casting his love upon them and predestinating them to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29). These people were given to the Son to redeem through the laying down of his life on the cross (John 17:2), which he did successfully!

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa. 53:4-5) This suffering of Christ was the poverty referenced by Paul that would ultimately make us rich in unmerited mercy and grace.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2:14-15) The devil once had the ability to accuse God's elect of being sinners before God's holy law, but no longer! Not only that, but the Lord has given us the precious comfort of the gospel that proclaims the finished salvation accomplished by Christ. What a deliverance this poor wise man has given to wretched sinners!

However, that is only part of what seemed great to Solomon. After the relief and joy from this deliverance, the poor wise man who brought it about was gradually forgotten about and worse still, his wisdom was eventually despised. That should sound familiar, because that is exactly how many Christians treat the Savior. The Ladiocean spirit is abundant, where people who claim the name of Christ act like they “have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17), rather than

acknowledging their dependence on God and seeking his guidance. Of course, people are quick to turn to the Lord if things become difficult, only to treat him as an afterthought in their everyday lives again as soon as the crisis is over. Jesus is the omnipotent, omniscient creator of the universe, and he imparted to us his wisdom through the holy scriptures. However, biblical ignorance abounds today even among people who grew up in churches, a terrible indictment of the state of Christendom. Worse still, more and more churches despise God's word, labeling wicked behavior as acceptable and openly rejecting the historical reliability of the bible.

God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Ps. 119:105), but many of God's children are walking through this world blind because they either lazily neglect it or disobey it. Sadly but very importantly, they are often led by people who are blind (Matt 15:14). It is through study of God's word, and by seeing the amazing wisdom of it and the faithfulness of God's promises by applying it to our lives, that our faith deepens and grows. Let us remember it is our reasonable service to commit our entire lives as a living sacrifice to the one who delivered us. (Rom. 12:1) We do that through taking heed to the wisdom of the scriptures. Let us remember the poor wise man from Galilee! (Elder Jonathan Wise)

Proverbs 9:10: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."*

EDITORIAL OFFICE

If you want to receive the Glad Tidings newsletter by email or through postal mail, send subscription information to gladtidingspb@gmail.com or mail to **113 Yeates Ext, Starkville, MS 39759**. Please send all articles, announcements, change of address, and correspondence to the email address noted above. We reserve the right to reject or edit any material. **All published material must be received by the 6th of the month** to be included in the following month's issue. There is no subscription price for Glad Tidings. We do accept contributions as Glad Tidings is reader supported. **Make checks payable to "Glad Tidings Publications" and send to the above address.**

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Elder Jonathan Wise & Elder David Wise, Co-Editors

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK By Elder Larry Wise (1944-2024)



We don't deserve to be remembered by God or His Holy Son, Jesus Christ. However, our prayer is that He will remember us as recipients of His saving grace. One of the thieves on the cross desired to be remembered as the grace of God had dealt with him in his last hours of life. He was railing on Christ at one time but now he knows the fear of God and that he is justly condemned but Christ is innocent. This changed thief said to Jesus, "...Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." (Luke 23:42)

Sinners like us are prone to forget but the Lord remembers everything except the sins of His people which have been cast behind His back and never to be remembered any more. (Isa. 38:17; Heb. 8:12). This thief on the cross was one of God's beloved which He foreknew before the foundation of the world. Many things may befall us as children of God here in this life. We may have our faith overthrown in basic truth as happened to those who were led astray by Hymenaeus and Philetus on the resurrection. In spite of this tragedy, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his..." (II Tim. 2:19).

Every time we offer a prayer to God, we are asking the Lord to remember us as one of His redeemed family. Hannah was a barren woman. This caused her great distress, but she took her plight to the Lord in prayer. She didn't utter an audible word but spoke in her heart, but the Lord knows the desires of the heart. Her petition to the Lord was, "...remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (I Sam. 1:11) The Lord remembered her and opened her womb and she was given a man child who was named Samuel.

Samson was given great strength by the Lord but made many mistakes and squandered his strength, lost his eyesight, made sport of by the Philistines, made to grind at the mill like an ox. However, he is among those of faith in Hebrews 11 so we know he will be remembered by God. Samson was bound between two pillars that upheld a house with thousands of people in it. He prayed, "...remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God,

that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” (Judges 16:28)

The Lord remembered Samson and gave him such strength that he pulled the pillars down upholding the house and destroyed all the occupants. He slew more in his death than he did in his life. (Judg. 16:30) In spite of the mistakes Samson made, he still had God-given faith that is evidence of a child of God that will be remembered in the resurrection. He failed to persevere in faith and holiness as some claim must be done or they are not a child of God.

Nehemiah was instrumental in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and the house of God in the midst of great opposition. There were times it seemed the task would be fruitless, but he was blessed to perform the work. Nehemiah prays to be remembered. “Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.” (Neh. 13:14) It is not that Nehemiah feels the Lord owes him for his good deeds, but it is only by His grace that any good deed is performed. Nehemiah had a strong love to be involved in his labor. If no one on earth remembers your labor of love in His kingdom, don’t worry because the Lord does. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (Hebrews 6:10).

Women who bear children can sometimes forget them. They abort them or leave them in hospitals or on door steps which is a horrible practice. What about the Lord in comparison? Isaiah writes, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.” (Isa. 49:15-16). It is not that God needs to look in the palms of His hands to be able to remember, but this gives His children the assurance that He will always remember them.

When the Lord comes in all His glory he will separate His sheep from the goats. His sheep will be on His right hand and the goats on His left. He will say to those on His right hand, “....Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:” (Matt. 25:34) The thief on the cross, Hannah, Nehemiah, Samson and every elect child will be there on His right hand as sheep to inherit the kingdom because the Lord knows and remembers His own. (November 2022)

ENDURING OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION

By Elder Clayton Nowell

How do we view afflictions around us? How do we view our own personal struggles? For sure, afflictions

abound. For some afflictions, there is help. For others, there needs to be great and long forbearance to endure. But whatever the case, the Bible guides us into the proper attitude needed to effectively face and deal with all our afflictions daily.

The apostle Paul was moved to write in 2nd Corinthians 4:17-18, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” This does not ignore that our afflictions are not sometimes heavy and grievous to bear, but by “light affliction” he quickly explains it to mean “is but for a moment.” So, as compared to eternity, even a mortal lifetime of affliction is only temporary; albeit, it may be filled with agony and struggle with every breath.

So, in view of affliction in this world, what hope, what help, what soothing balm can there possibly be to get us through? After all, Jesus told us that “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33) to be expected as a normal course of life. And, Paul witnessed that even in all of his service to the Lord, he knew that “bonds and afflictions abide me” (Acts 20:23) as he preached the gospel where ever the Spirit led him. But in none of these cases are we left without hope. And, the key for all our trials, tribulations, and afflictions, is to keep our focus on what is eternal: God, His love for us shown by the gift of His Son for our sins, eternal redemption, grace to help in our times of need, and the glory that awaits every heir of grace when our time on earth is through.

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Faith enables us to see God, His works, His power, and His help. And, that should be where we keep looking. If we dwell upon our problems, if we think of how bad we have it, if we think others are far more blessed than we, then we need to take a trip to some hospitals, nursing homes, and clinics where so many are in severe trials in life. For most of us, that will quickly help our perspective on how heavy our burden really is.

Friends, Jesus didn’t suffer in our stead to save us from every time we stub our toe! He came to save us from our sins and from “eternal” misery! Therefore, we must be ever looking to our Lord and His eternal blessings! We must keep our eyes upon God’s mercy and His love in giving us such a glorious blessing of eternal life. Then, in looking beyond our trouble, we can see His loving face, and know “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (see Rom 8:18) And with such an attitude as this, we will receive the grace and strength needed for each day we face – until He comes to deliver us from all our troubles forever.

FORGIVENESS

By Elder Marty Smith

The Main Message: You can and should, for Jesus Christ's sake, forgive one who wrongs you – even if he never repents or apologizes, even if he is not nearby, even if he is dead, and no matter what he has done to you. You are not required, however, to let that person hurt you again, or to let him hurt someone else, or to intellectually forget that he hurt you.

Please consider the following scriptures:

Matt 6:14-15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matt 18:21-22, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Col 3:13, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

These verses seem to me to advocate a "unilateral" forgiveness – a forgiveness you can accomplish without any other human participation – conditioned not necessarily on the repentance of the offender, but on the Lord's forgiveness of us. In fact, His forgiveness of us is sometimes conditioned on our confession: 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." His forgiveness of us is sometimes conditioned on our forgiveness of others: Mark 11:26, "But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

We may see here that forgiveness is a blessing in addition to eternal justification. Eternal justification is conditioned only on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so – like His love – is unconditional to us. His eternal justification of us provides the basis for His forgiveness to us – giving Him the ability to forgive and still be just, giving us the ability to confess our sins, and giving us the ability to forgive others.

What Is Forgiveness? Here is my understanding of the Bible teaching on how to practice forgiveness:

1. Someone has hurt me; he has taken my property or health or happiness or good name or something else I could reasonably consider my own.

2. Because he has done this, he owes me – he is in my debt. I consciously acknowledge his wrong and his indebtedness. (This may seem a bit strong to some of you, but consider, the Lord does not try to excuse or deny our transgressions against Him even as he forgives us – in fact He convicts us of our sins. Also, in

His instructions, He teaches us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." How can we even have debtors if no one owes us?)

3. I make a mental choice, in obedience to the Lord, to not collect on this debt, to not seek vengeance, to not work for payback.

4. I continue to make this choice as often as the hurt arises (even daily or hourly) and enjoy the fellowship of trying to copy the Lord Jesus in this matter of forgiveness.

5. Eventually, my emotions may catch up with my decision, and I am free of the hurt. My emotions may not catch up, and then going home to the Lord will free me of the hurt.

Is the Repentance of Another Necessary? Now what about Luke 17:3? "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." That verse mentions the repentance of the offending brother. Someone else is involved in the forgiveness here, so the forgiveness is "bilateral" rather than "unilateral". The "if" conditional is important. Notice, however, the verse doesn't say "if and only if" – that is, the Lord does not forbid forgiveness if the offender does not come to you, but rather commands you to forgive him if he does. The additional aspect here in this "bilateral" case of forgiveness is that you are blessed to express that forgiveness to the offender, and so at least two people are blessed by love and grace. In the unilateral case, only one (the offended) is initially blessed. If the Lord should forbid forgiveness without repentance from the offender, then many times no one would receive the blessing, because the offender may die or move away or be an unregenerate incapable of repentance. I don't think the Lord would have His disciples held emotionally hostage to such circumstances.

Can We Forget? What about the "forget" aspect of "forgive and forget"? That is a common human expression. We cannot just go on as if nothing has happened and try to erase our memories. It is a mistake to deny the wrong or attempt to suppress its memory. There is no need to go into regression therapy to try to surface memories, either. The point is not to suppress the wrong or to surface the wrong, the point is to overcome the wrong.

When Paul said, "...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before..." it is clear that Paul did not intellectually forget his deeds of persecution to the early church - but he had emotionally forgotten them; that is, they did not hinder his service to God or enjoyment of life. Although God has separated us from our sins as far as the east is from the west, He still tells us we were in sin, and chastises us when we commit sins, so the "forgetting" cannot be a denial of the deed, but rather an overcoming of the evil with good.

Trusting the Offender: We should forgive one who wrongs us, and not seek retribution against him – but

we are under no obligation to trust him. I have a hard time finding scriptural support for trusting anyone other than the Lord himself. Furthermore, if the offender is likely to do continued harm, such as in the case of a kleptomaniac or child abuser, we may (and often should) take steps to stop him from doing that harm. Thus, when Paul warns Timothy of Alexander the coppersmith, he is endeavoring to minimize the harm Alexander can do to Timothy, and his spirit of forgiveness is actually evidenced by calling on the Lord to reward Alexander according to his works – it means that Paul does not intend to try to administer the reward himself.

II Timothy 4:14-15, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.” The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this. Alexander had done Paul wrong, and thus was in Paul’s debt. Paul was not going to try to get even – he was leaving that in God’s hands. But Paul was not going to trust Alexander, and Paul was not going to let Timothy encounter Alexander without a warning. Paul had it just right.

Between Church Members: There is a process that should be observed between church members. Notice in Matthew 18 that if a brother in the church offends you, you are to initiate actions for reconciliation and go to him alone. If this doesn’t “work”, take 1-2 witnesses. If this doesn’t work, bring it before the church. If that final action doesn’t work, let him be “unto you” as a heathen man and a publican. Notice it doesn’t say let him be “unto the church” as a heathen man and a publican. Matt. 18:15-17, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” At the point it comes before the church, the church may decide that your brother is in the wrong and labor with him and exclude him if he doesn’t repent. Or the church may decide that neither of you are acting rightly and ask you both to seek membership in other sister churches. Or the church may decide something else, but if you have tried all of the Lord’s instruction in the matter and the brother does not repent, you should certainly forgive him unilaterally. It is obvious, however, that your fellowship is broken, and you will be as circumspect of him as you would be with a non-believer, or with an unjust tax collector. As much as possible, you will not let him take any more from you, until such time as he may truly repent, or you yourself change.

What if You Don’t Forgive? The Lord Jesus Christ teaches a powerful lesson about not forgiving:

Matthew 18:23-35, “Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

The child of God risks terrible captivity and internal torment while living on earth if he does not forgive. Someone has said that resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies. A careful look into the lives of those who have grown bitter shows this – they harm themselves far more, and over a longer period of time, than any lengthy torture they would be able to administer to their offender.

Forgiveness is a commandment; not merely a suggestion from the Lord. “But what if I can’t forgive?” the poor, mistreated child of God objects. It may be true that you cannot stop hurting. It may be true that you cannot forget the terrible wrong done to you. It may be true that the other person has not changed, has not apologized, and has not repented. But you are not commanded to stop hurting, or forget, or change the other person – that is too much to ask. You are only bidden to forgive. Perhaps the enemy is keeping you from forgiving by making it complicated, when in fact it is a tough but straightforward series of deeds. Forgiveness is merely a conscious choice to acknowledge a wrong done to you, and then to keep acknowledging that you choose not to get even for that wrong. And perhaps you won’t forgive – but you can forgive, by the grace God has given you. I need forgiveness, and so hope to practice it. I have a perfect example to imitate while practicing – Jesus, the Lord.

**VISION OF THE LORD DURING
TIMES OF POLITICAL UPHEAVAL**

By Elder Mike Ivey

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Isaiah 6:1

Isaiah wrote these words to God's people at a time of great political uncertainty and approaching peril in Judah. King Uzziah ruled as Judah's king for 52 years and was the only ruler Isaiah and at least two generations of God's people in Judah had known. God blessed his reign because he "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD." (2 Chronicles 26:4) Uzziah's time as king of Judah was marked by internal peace, prosperity and security from enemies.

When Uzziah died Isaiah and likely all Judah feared the uncertainty that accompanied transfer of power to his son and subsequent kings. In the atmosphere of this uncertainty and fear, God by His grace, mercifully allowed Isaiah to glimpse the glory and power of His eternal reign as the King of Kings. He saw the LORD who is forever on His throne and reigns over all in all glory and power.

His vision of God, all-glorious and powerful, caused Isaiah to realize his own doubting testimony was a product of "unclean lips." However, once purged by the impact and significance of God's glory and power, Isaiah was prepared to accurately and honestly prophecy to the LORD's people.

Judah was afflicted with subsequent kings who were less noble than Uzziah, and because of these disobedient rulers and their own disobedience, Judah greatly suffered. Nevertheless, God blest Isaiah to assure God's children with the comforting message of His eternal love for them. The same holds true in whatever peril we face in our present lives: God still reigns and cares for His own!

As God's people today face peril and uncertainty from political divisions, social unrest and upheaval, may we each endeavor to keep "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3) with God and among ourselves. And may we all thereby be comforted together in the realization that the LORD still reigns "high and lifted up;" that, His glory still fills the house of his abode which is the church; that, His one true church is where the same message of the gospel of peace is faithfully preached by His grace:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." Isaiah 40:1-2

May we all seek assuring visions of God in which we see "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." (Sept. 26, 2024)

Excerpt from *The Screwtape Letters*, by C.S. Lewis, in which Screwtape (a senior demon) writes a series of letters to instruct Wormwood (a junior tempter, and his nephew), in how best to tempt his "patient", the Christian. This portion is an excerpt from Letter #7 written during World War II, from a Great Britain perspective by C.S. Lewis, a British native.

My Dear Wormwood,

I had not forgotten my promise to consider whether we should make the patient an extreme patriot or an extreme pacifist. All extremes, except extreme devotion to the Enemy [God], are to be encouraged. Not always, of course, but at this period. Some ages are lukewarm and complacent, and then it is our business to soothe them yet faster asleep. Other ages, of which the present is one, are unbalanced and prone to faction, and it is our business to inflame them. Any small coterie, bound together by some interest which other men dislike or ignore, tends to develop inside itself a hothouse of mutual admiration, and towards the outer world, a great deal of pride and hatred which is entertained without shame because the "Cause" is its sponsor and it is thought to be impersonal.

Even when the little group exists originally for the Enemy's own purposes, this remains true. We want the Church to be small not only that fewer men may know the Enemy but also that those who do may acquire the uneasy intensity and the defensive self-righteousness of a secret society or clique. The Church herself is, of course, heavily defended and we have never yet quite succeeded in giving her all the characteristics of a faction; but subordinate factions within her have often produced admirable results, from the parties of Paul and of Apollos at Corinth down to the High and Low parties in the Church of England.

Whichever he adopts, [patriotism or pacifism] your main task will be the same. Let him begin by treating the Patriotism or the Pacifism as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the "cause", in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it can produce in favour of the British war-effort or of Pacifism.

The attitude which you want to guard against is that in which temporal affairs are treated primarily as material for obedience. Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours-and the more "religious" (on those terms) the more securely ours. I could show you a pretty cageful down here.

Your affectionate uncle, Screwtape

CHURCH NEWS

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church, Ackerman, MS. Nov 9-10, 2024. Everyone is invited to the annual meeting of Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church near Ackerman, MS the 2nd weekend in November 2024 (Nov. 9-10). Services Saturday at 10:00am followed by lunch and afternoon services. Sunday services at 10:00am with Communion and then lunch. Elder Ben Cordes, Lexington, KY, and Elder John Morgan Owens, Gordo, AL are invited ministers. Elder David Wise is Pastor of Macedonia.

New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS. Nov 24, 2024. New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS will have a Thanksgiving service on Sunday night, November 24, 2024 beginning at 5:30pm with Elder Jeremy Wise bringing the message, followed by sandwich supper. Elder Rusty Wise is Pastor of New Prospect.

New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS. Dec 1, 2024. New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS will have a Christmas singing the 1st Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 1) beginning at 5:30pm with singing for about an hour, followed by food and fellowship. Elder Rusty Wise is Pastor of New Prospect.

Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, Ecu, MS. Dec 8, 2024. Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, 5 miles west of Ecu, MS will have its annual Christmas singing on 2nd Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 8) beginning at 5:30pm with refreshments served afterwards. Come and worship the Savior in song with all the saints.

Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS. Dec 15, 2024. Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS will have a Christmas singing 3rd Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 15) beginning at 5:30pm with supper afterwards. Elder Steve Weaver is Pastor of Laodicea.

Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church, Randolph, MS. Dec 29, 2024. Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church, Randolph, MS will host the 5th Sunday night fellowship meeting in December 2024 (Dec. 29). Supper at 5:30pm and worship at 6:30pm. This meeting rotates between New Prospect, Laodicea, Bethany, and Hopewell Primitive Baptist churches.

Matt. 9:37-38: “37) Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

BAPTISM PRAISE REPORT

Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS. Laodicea Church was blessed to receive Brother Danny Metts as a member by baptism on Sept. 22, 2024. Brother Danny is currently undergoing cancer treatments but felt burdened to follow the example of his Savior in water baptism. Please pray for Brother Danny in his cancer treatments and in his walk with Christ. Elder Steve Weaver is Pastor of Laodicea.

DEACON ORDINATION

Sulphur Springs Primitive Baptist Church, Caledonia, MS. Sulphur Springs Primitive Baptist Church in Caledonia, Mississippi, was verily blessed to host the Tombigbee Fellowship Meeting on September 13th and 14th, 2024. Sound, blessed messages were preached by Lic Braden Rogers and Elders Steve Woods, Kenneth Watts, Roger Miller, Josh King, Rick Jernigan, and Mike Sills. On Saturday afternoon a presbytery was formed, comprised of thirteen elders and twelve deacons, representing churches from Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas, for the work of ordaining Brothers Ron Nivens and Jim Waddle to the office of Deacon for Sulphur Springs. Please pray for these faithful servants and for the churches that comprise the Tombigbee Fellowship. For the sweet worship services, ordination service, and kind visitation we are truly thankful!

—Elder Joe Nettles, Pastor of Sulphur Springs Primitive Baptist Church

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

My four-year-old niece, Rosie, was recently visiting at our house and delaying going to bed by pretending to eat her last bite of chicken salad. After she continued “supposedly” still chewing her last bite for a solid 10 minutes to delay going to bed, her mother said “Rosie, you swallow that last bite right away or you will be in trouble.” To which, Rosie responded, while still “trying” to chew that last really tough bite, “Mommy, if I do, you will be in trouble because I’ll choke.” Have to be really careful to not choke on that last 10 minute saturated bite. –David Wise

CHURCH VS COLLEGE FOOTBALL?

If church was like a college football game...
The parking lot would be full 6 hours before it started...
There would be in-depth discussions about services hours before they began...
People would drive miles and miles, without complaint, just to attend...
No one would complain if services lasted 3 or 4 hours...
After it was over, people would discuss it for the next several days until they got the opportunity to attend again...
And, they would proudly proclaim which side they were on to anyone who would listen...

Note: Obviously, all of this is not practical. However, it should cause us to consider our attitude and work to make sure we emulate some of this zeal people have for a game in our service to the Lord, rather than getting perturbed if the preacher goes 5 minutes past noon. (Jonathan Wise)

THE EMPTY PEW

It is hard to imagine a time when churches did not have air conditioning, running water, cushioned chairs or pews. A church where there was a bucket of water in the corner with a dipper that everyone shared. The windows would be opened in the heat and people would crowd together for warmth in the winter. If you had to use the bathroom, you would have to make the long journey to the outhouse. Yet with all of these inconveniences, Sundays use to be a time when people gathered at the church house to hear God’s Word. Many churches didn’t have Sunday School or youth programs and everyone was in the sanctuary to worship, hear God’s Word, and be together. Pews were filled and I heard a lady this past weekend say she remembered when there was no more room in the church, people gathered outside by the windows and

doors to hear the preacher preach the Word. God was a priority. Family was a priority.

People will say, “It was a simpler time back then.” Was it? People worked hard from sun up to sun down, most families were fortunate to have one car, and most items were handmade. Yet with everything they had to do on any given day, they made time for God and church.

Unfortunately today, it seems God and church is no longer a priority in too many families. The empty pew is becoming more common in churches throughout our nation. I have heard it said the church needs to change with the times, the church needs to cater to the people, the church needs more programs, the church.....

Whatever happened to the thought of the church raising disciples and ministering to the community? Whatever happened to the church being a place where people came to greet one another to share the Word of God and to encourage one another in a life of holiness and righteousness? Whatever happened to people wanting to serve instead of being served?

The empty pew breaks my heart. Are people just too busy for God or do they just not care anymore? Either way, as more and more churches close their doors and people begin to remember when there use to be a place where God’s people would gather, maybe then people will once again rediscover their thirst to know who God is and to be with one another for worship and prayer. (Adapted from a social media post–DW)

JOY MIXED WITH PAIN

By Elder David Montgomery (12/26/2018)

It is sometimes the will of God that we should let ourselves be the object of kindness instead of the author of it. There are times when we need to let others bear our burdens and minister to us in our times of weakness. Let it happen so you can get to where you can minister and bear the burdens of others. When we see our aged parents who have toiled for us for so long, count it all joy to toil for them now for there will come a time when you will give anything to hear your mother’s voice one more time or to feel your father’s loving embrace again. But did you feel the love of cherished friends and family yesterday? Then be thankful. You may have spent yesterday at a hospital or a nursing home, but was there love amidst the pain? Then be thankful. Was there missing places at the dinner table? Then call to mind that those who have gone on had a better Christmas than any of us. Empty seats here below are occupied seats in Heaven. Soon we shall join them in the greatest gathering ever known. Unmingled joy is something we’ve never experienced but we will know it some wonderful day.

IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS

By Elder David Wise (2023)

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thess. 5:18)

It seems each year as we arrive in late November approaching the Thanksgiving holiday, I am convicted of how much I have taken for granted and not given appropriate thanksgiving for God’s blessings in my life. Rather than an annual, once a year remembrance of God’s blessings and thanksgiving, the Lord commands his people to give thanks “always” (Eph. 3:20). Furthermore, God’s will for us is to give thanks “in every thing.” (1 Thess. 5:18) We certainly do not give thanks “for” everything in our lives. We don’t thank God “for” sin, temptations, sickness, death, the devil, and the evil of this world. However, in spite of any circumstance we encounter in this life, we can still give thanks to God “in” the midst of any trial.

Even if we are going through trials of medical illness, loss of a loved one, unemployment, or any multitude of deep spiritual valleys we inevitably encounter in this world, we can still give thanks to God “in” the midst of that difficult season of life. Similar to joy, we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord “always”, and again I say rejoice (Phil. 4:4). We certainly do not rejoice “for” every trial in our lives, but we can rejoice “in” every circumstance. We can rejoice always in every thing, and it is God’s will for us to give thanks “in every thing” as well.

It is a common phrase that can be used in a trite way, but we should have an “attitude of gratitude” of thanksgiving for God’s blessings in our lives. It is very easy for us to get busy and not be purposeful in giving thanks to God. If we maintain a sense of entitlement and lack of gratitude for too long, it will inevitably breed sin and straying from the Lord. That is why being “unthankful” is actually a characteristic of the fallen, wicked world apart from God (Rom. 1:21). We have to be purposeful and thoughtful to give thanks unto the Lord.

What Do We Give Thanks For? How then can we give thanks “in the midst of every thing” when we are struggling through the many various challenges of this world? If we are not vigilant, we might fall into the trap of “conditional gratitude”. We might give thanks to God when things are going well; when all the “conditions” in our life are comfortable, easy, and exciting. However, we might be prone to not be thankful when hard times come, and fall back into murmuring, complaining, and maybe even blaming God during these challenging times. Our thankfulness is not primarily based on the current positive conditions of our lives, but based on steadfast, unchanging truths that we can always rejoice in and give thanks for, regardless of the severity of our trials. There are some resolute truths that do not change regardless of any

circumstance in our lives. Those absolute, unchanging truths should be the primary source of our thanksgiving to God “in every thing” in our life, no matter how difficult or severe the trial we are passing through.

First, we thank the Lord for just being God, for his good, merciful, and holy character. We give thanks: for God is good (Psalm 106:1); for God’s holiness (Psalm 97:12); for God’s mercy endures forever (1 Chron. 16:34).

We thank the Lord for the unchanging word of God. We give thanks: for God’s truth endures to all generations (Psalm 100:5); we should rise at midnight to praise God for his righteous judgments (Psalm 119:62); along with Jesus, we give thanks for God’s revelation to the babes in Christ (Matt. 11:25).

We thank the Lord for our eternal salvation given us through Jesus Christ. We give thanks: for the victory over death we have through Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor. 15:57); for the “unspeakable gift” of eternal salvation by God’s grace (2 Cor. 9:15).

We thank the Lord for the church, and for our dear friends in the kingdom of God. We give thanks: for God’s grace bestowed upon the church (1 Cor. 1:4); for our dear friends in the church and commit to praying for them (1 Thess. 1:2).

We thank the Lord for God’s daily provision of food in our lives. All food or drink that we consume, we ought to give thanks for our food and God’s answer of daily bread prayer and his daily provision of food in our lives (Rom. 14:6).

Obviously, we ought to give thanks to God for providential blessings as well – good health, deliverance from harm, and other timely blessings from the Lord. However, our thanksgiving to God cannot be totally dependent on positive circumstances in our lives. We cannot only give “conditional thanksgiving”. We are to give thanks to God even when our good health fails, when we are injured, when loved ones die, and when times are hard. The primary basis of our thanksgiving is not comfortable times and great things happening in our lives, but the primary basis of giving thanks should be the resolute, unchanging truths of God’s mercy, goodness, holiness, his word, his church, his daily provision, and his unspeakable gift of salvation.

How Do We Give Thanks? Since we are commanded to give thanks always, in what manner then do we give thanks? We are commanded to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), and also to pray with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6). Therefore, as we pray unto the Lord continually, one of the primary components of our perpetual prayer life should be thanksgiving unto God for these unchanging truths we have noted above and for his providential blessings in our lives (Col. 4:2).

We give thanks through the “fruit of our lips” (Heb. 13:15). We give thanks through the fruit of our lips in prayer, if we pray aloud. Also, we can offer

thanksgiving by the fruit of our lips through singing. We praise God with praise and thanksgiving by song (Psalm 69:30). What a blessing to sing unto God in praise and thanksgiving for his unspeakable gift of salvation, as well as all the rest of our blessings. We also offer the fruit of our lips in thanksgiving as we share God's blessings with others. We should have a testimony to others around us as we thank God to them of how the Lord has blessed in our lives.

We can certainly give thanks in our secret closet of prayer and singing by ourselves in thanksgiving to God. However, the primary place we ought to offer thanksgiving to God is in public worship in the house of God. We should give thanks in the midst of the great congregation (Psalm 35:18). We should enter into God's courts with thanksgiving and enter into his courts with praise (Psalm 100:5). The proper place to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to pay our vows is in the presence of all his people in the courts of the Lord's house (Psalm 116:17-19). We need to offer thanksgiving in public worship every single Lord's day, and other worship services throughout the week as well.

As we approach this annual Thanksgiving holiday, I hope are reinvigorated to be more purposeful to give thanks unto God always and in every thing. Our thanksgiving is not "conditional" on the ease of circumstances in our lives. We have no right to be unthankful, murmur, and complain when times get hard. Instead, despite any circumstance in our life we can always give thanks for the unchanging truths of God's mercy, goodness, holiness, his word, his church, his daily provision, his unspeakable gift of salvation, and certainly for his providential blessings in our lives as well.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION'?

By Elder Joshua Winslett

Philippians 2:12-13: *"12) Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13) For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

Before we look at this verse, it is good to remind the reader that Paul is writing to a church, not unregenerate individuals and has already defined these people as heaven bound. (Philippians 1:6) Paul never questioned their salvation.

With that said, let us move on to the verses. These verses can create confusion if not rightly divided. To fully understand verse 12, we have to see it in the context with verse 13. Notice what verse 13 states; "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to

do of his good pleasure." Ephesians 2:1 tells us that at one time we were dead in trespasses and sins. If we were dead, then we had no ability to work anything spiritual. It first takes God's work on and in us before we can work. That's why Paul states, "For it is God." He puts God's working as a prerequisite before we can work. God's inward working produces the want to do his work.

Anytime we apply works as a cause of salvation we add to the scriptures. Romans 11:6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Furthermore, Paul does not tell us to work for salvation. He tells us to work out our own salvation. Interestingly enough, Paul uses different words for "work out" in verse 12 and "worketh" in verse 13.

"Work out" comes from the Greek word *katargazomai*. *Katargazomai* means "to work fully". We can gather from that word that we are to fully cultivate our salvation. We are to completely and fully enjoy and fully occupy the blessings which God has given us in salvation. Just as we are to "work out" the muscles we already possess to strengthen them; we are to also work out our salvation, to strengthen our intimacy with Christ. "...work out your own salvation..."

"Worketh" comes from the Greek word *energeo*. *Energeo* is where we get our English word energy. Only from God can we have energy to serve him. Our Godly will (want) to do and the ability to serve God only comes from God. "...For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do..."

This passage has great significance for believers in Christ. Paul starts verse 12 telling them that they should continue to serve God in his, Paul's, absence. It seems hard to serve God when you feel to be alone and abandoned. Yet Paul gives them encouragement by reminding them that even when we perceive to be alone, God is always with us giving us energy to serve Him.

John 11:25-26: *"25) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26) And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"*

1 Corinthians 15:55-57: *"55) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56) The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57) But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."*

TO KNOW THE TRUTH

By Elder Rickey Taylor
Booneville, Mississippi

John 8:31-32, *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

It says in verse 31 of this same chapter, that many believed him. Jesus being both God and man knew who they were and turned to them and spoke these instructional and comforting words to them. These believers were Jewish and it was not the best of environment to be new believers among other Jews that did not believe like they did. So our Lord takes the opportunity to tell them something to meditate and pray about from that day forward. For the present they were unknown believers, not suffering any persecutions. However, the time was going to come when they would have to take a stand for what they believed about Jesus being the Christ. That stand would bring them all kinds of persecution from the Jewish authorities, as well as perhaps members of their own household. Life as they knew it was going to change drastically for them. It is one thing to believe that Jesus was the Christ inwardly in your mind and heart, but to take a stand for him is another thing entirely. Unfortunately, some of the children of God have the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, but they don't take that talent and invest it in their lives and grow closer to God (Matthew 25:25) Thus Jesus says to them "if ye continue in my word" which means that if you decide to put your faith in action. If you are willing to make sacrifices for what you believe about me, then you are a disciples indeed (truly). As Primitive Baptist we don't attempt to make children of God, we know that God alone does that. What we hope and pray to make is disciples. Disciples indeed. Not just a believer, but a disciple who wants to live the life of a disciple. This is a choice we can choose to do or not to do. Its left up to us. If you are one that is pondering your options as a child of God. I urge you to choose to follow the Lord. In choosing that way, you will be blessed abundantly.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. Remember that he is speaking to believing Jews. Jews that were raised up under the old law. Under the law they offered up the blood of bulls and goats which could only remind them of their sins, and not take away them away. This the priests offered up year after year, and when it was done he walked away with his head down, because it didn't take away their sins, it just brought remembrance of them (Please read the 10th chapter of Hebrews) This was a type of mental bondage that they were suffering. However, if they were willing to be a disciple of Christ, they would learn the truth of salvation by the grace of God. That this man Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God who came

as flesh and blood and the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), the promised Messiah. Lived a perfect life in the flesh, and at a place called Calvary, he would offer up on the cross his perfect life for everyone of the children of God, and he would take away their sins to be remembered no more! This is the truth that would make them free! No longer would they feel that they needed to offer up a lamb from their flocks for their sins. That lamb was only a shadow of the true lamb of God, Jesus Christ who by one offering took away their sins. This is the truth indeed!

To know the truth about God' s wonderful grace is such a blessing to a child of God. It change my life significantly when the Lord revealed it to me. Oh what a day that was! I wanted more of God's children to know about the truth that will set them free, here in this time world. I pray that God will send us people to our little churches that is looking to be set free by the truth of God's Son who has taken away their sins, and has reserved a place in glory for them. To know this truth is freedom that set us free! –R. L. Taylor

CLAIM THE SON

By Elder Tim McCool

Dust of the earth, Sands of the sea
Stars of the sky, Are we to Thee

But every speck, And Every grain
And Every glow, Christ knows by name

As flowers bloom, And lift their face
To see the sun, Behold its grace

The Lord designed, Each single one
To lift their head, And claim the sun

So each of us, May look to Him
And claim the Son, When light grows dim

I'll never leave, I'll ne'er forsake
Are His words, We must embrace

To boldly say, I will not fear
The Lord my help, Is always here

Tho stars and sand, And dust seem one
Each little flower, May claim the Son

Are you claiming the Son?

God be with you until, by God's grace, we meet
again in the next Glad Tidings or in heaven.