

Glad Tidings

February

FROM THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

2025

“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

WHAT ARE YOUR HIGH PLACES?

“And he (Jehoshaphat) walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.” (1 Kg. 22:43)

God's people are very susceptible to creating our own personal high places that we don't see as a problem in our lives, while it actually stands in direct opposition to God's word. These high places can take many forms in our lives and hearts, and your secret high place might look different than mine. Regardless of what form it takes, God's word upholds that any high places that detract from singular devotion and worship of God, anything that detracts from obedience to the greatest commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, is something that needs to be purged from our hearts and purged from our lives. We see examples in the Old Testament of incomplete obedience, a willingness to purge out some high places but to allow others to remain. We need to allow the Lord to search our hearts and give us clarity of any high places in our lives that are restricting us from singular devotion to Jesus Christ.

The high places in the Old Testament were for pagan worship and idolatry, open air shrines to pagan gods, primarily on the tops of mountains or hills. The high places were originally practiced by the Canaanites, the previous inhabitants of the promised land. The high places at their core were a place for personal idolatry. They might not exercise idolatry or pagan worship openly in the streets for everyone to see, but they would go alone up to the hills to exercise idolatry in a more secretive manner by themselves. I doubt any of us are carrying around a graven image in our pocket or have a graven idol as a centerpiece in our homes. However, we are susceptible to go up to our own personal high place and exercise our idolatry in secret. There are no doubt areas in all our lives that we have self-justified and hidden away as a high place for personal idolatry. It should also not be overlooked that Satan is characterized as working spiritual wickedness in “high places” (Eph. 6:12). These high places are institutions of the world and Satan, not of the Lord. Instead, we are called to press into the “high place of Zion”, unto the mountain in the tops of the mountains (Isaiah 2:2).

There is no one that is above falling in our faithfulness, as we are taught by Solomon's falling away into pagan idolatry (1 Kings 11). It's a sobering thought that the high places were originally created by Solomon because of his arrogance to disobey God's commandment to not marry foreign wives. He followed the exact slippery slope that the Lord warned against in making this commandment against intermarriage with pagans. Solomon compromised the command of God which led him ultimately towards personal idolatry in appeasing his 1,000 pagan wives to create a high place for each of their false, pagan gods. Despite Solomon's past amazing wisdom and devotion to God, he was the original offender in the creation of these high places to appease his wives. Let us be vigilant because we could also fall from steadfast devotion to create our own personal high places that can even corrupt many generations to come.

This sin of the high places escalated under the next king, Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Under his reign there were high places and images and groves “on every hill, and under every tree” (1 Kg. 14:23). This is unfortunately a common pattern as well, that the sins of the father often escalate in the son's generation, and we see that with the escalation of high places under Rehoboam to every hill and even under every tree in Judah. What the father establishes as acceptable is escalated even more egregiously by the children, as the sinful action becomes socially and morally acceptable. Let us never forget how our mistakes today can escalate and hinder the next generation so much more than we probably realize or grasp.

In the reign of Asa, maybe 40 years after Solomon set up the high places, now a whole generation had become used to these high places as just a way of life or part of their tradition or culture. Asa was a good king who did some good things. He took out the idols of his fathers (1 Kg. 15:12), took down altars to strange gods and some high places, and broke down images and cut down groves (2 Chr. 14:3). It says that he “took away the high places” (2 Chr. 14:3), but it also says the “high places were not removed from Israel” (2 Chr. 15:17, 1 Kg. 15:14). In spite of the high places not being fully removed, the Lord still reaffirms that Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days (1 Kg. 15:14).

Either Asa did not see the problems with the high places, or they had become so ingrained in tradition or culturally or socially acceptable, that he did not wish to

spend the political capital to do the right thing to tear the high places down fully. In like manner, it might be easy for us to be willing to put away what we perceive as the egregious sins, but yet self-justify in our own minds that our personal high places are acceptable, even though they are contrary to God's word.

Then, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, who was Asa's son, we see yet another good king with incomplete obedience regarding the high places. Jehoshaphat is said to have taken away the high places and groves (2 Chr. 17:6, 19:3). However, we also find that the "high places were not removed and the people still burned incense in the high places" (1 Kg. 22:43, 2 Chr. 20:23). There are many lessons here regarding parenting, leadership, and acceptance. For whatever reason, Asa was not willing to fully remove all the high places. But then, his son, Jehoshaphat, developed a mindset from his father that these high places were acceptable, and followed in his father's footsteps in incomplete obedience to God, rather than fully purging the high places from Judah.

It can be easy to view "someone else's" high place in their life as grossly sinful, but to have a blind spot towards "our own personal" high places that we have justified in our own minds, from either tradition, cultural acceptance, or just an unwillingness to repent. No high places are acceptable in our lives. No place of idolatry or exaltation of something other than God is acceptable in our lives. It might be easy to purge out some of the more socially egregious things – just like these kings did in removing sodomy, defilement of the temple, and other very public sins. However, at the same time, they self-justified their own personal high places were acceptable and left what they preferred. Therein lies the hypocrisy, and we do not want to be disobedient hypocrites like these kings who self-justified their own partial obedience. We need to sincerely ask ourselves and pray for God to show us what our personal high places are that we have self-justified or purposefully ignored, and purge them out in obedience to God

During the reign of Jehoram, he was influenced by the wicked ways of the kings of Israel, such as Ahab, because he married Ahab's daughter (2 Kg. 8:18, 2 Chr. 21:6,13). Jehoshaphat was a good king, but he made a foolish league with Ahab, Israel's wicked king who was married to Jezebel. Because the father was too friendly with a wicked man such as Ahab, Jehoshaphat's son (Jehoram) was married to Ahab's daughter (Athaliah) to secure the league between the two nations. Jehoram ultimately was influenced to set up worship for pagan gods because of his wicked wife (Athaliah) and in-laws (Ahab and Jezebel). This is yet another example of the peril of why God's commanded to not intermarry with pagans (unbelievers). Because of the father's mistake in having too close of fellowship with an ungodly family, and not stopping but even offering up the marriage of his son to secure a political

alliance, a good man ultimately contributed to the spiritual decline of his son and all of Judah because of his disobedience of God's word. (Keep in mind that Jeroboam set up golden calves and high places for idolatry in the northern kingdom of Israel that were never removed, and they only had wicked kings.) Therefore, because of these ungodly influences around him, Jehoram made high places in the mountains of Judah (2 Chr. 21:11).

During the reign of Joash, he was quite faithful during the lifetime of Jehoiada, his uncle. Joash, led by Jehoiada the priest, had all the people of Israel tear down the house of Baal and all the altars and images of Baal (2 Kg. 11:18-19, 2 Chr. 23:17). He commands the priests to repair the house of God to its former state and to restore the holy vessels (2 Kg. 12:4-16, 2 Chr. 24:4-14). Jehoiada orders the service of the priests, porters, etc. for the house of God (2 Chr. 23:18-20). Despite all these good societal reforms, the high places were not removed and the people still burned incense at the high places (2 Kg. 12:3). Yet another good king and good man (for most of his rule until Jehoiada died), who did good things and purged out a lot, but was blinded or complacent to remove the high places.

Then, we have another string of mostly good kings who also chose to ignore the high places. Amaziah did the same as his father, Joash, and worshipped the gods of the children of Seir (Edomites) and worshipped them as his gods and burnt incense to them (2 Chr. 25:14,20). The high places were not taken away as yet the people did sacrifice and burn incense in the high places (2 Kg. 14:4).

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

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Elder Jonathan Wise & Elder David Wise, Co-Editors

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



There are many precious things recorded in the word of God. There is the precious blood of Jesus by which we are redeemed. There is the precious ointment poured upon the head of Jesus. The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. Jesus is the precious cornerstone. The trial of faith is more precious than silver and gold. When it comes to the brethren in Christ Jesus, there is something that is equally indeed most precious. David tells us, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). Brethren are to dwell together in unity, as a unit and as one, marching along together to the same drumbeat and together as a unit. Brethren aren't to be doing their own thing at the expense of others.

The Bible says that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren but I am afraid that He may be ashamed the way some brethren in Christ behave themselves. They are at odds with one another and not dwelling together in unity. Paul beseeches the church at Ephesus to walk worthy of the vocation (calling) wherewith they are called in Eph. 4:1 and then goes on to tell these brethren and saints how this can be done. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:2). Paul goes on to tell them about this Biblical concept of oneness. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" (Eph. 4:4).

On the Day of Pentecost, the scripture tells us that they were all in one mind and in one accord. The Spirit came and filled the house as a rushing mighty wind. The Spirit is prevalent when brethren are abiding together in unity. If there is malice or ill will, it hinders God's presence just as a disjointed marriage hinders the prayers of husbands and wives. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." (I Peter 3:7). Brethren dwelling together in unity doesn't happen by accident; there must be concentrated effort to have and maintain this precious condition among the brethren. How? Peter explains a little more when he writes, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." (I Pet. 3:8).

Kindness and courtesy never hurt anyone but rather is a healer.

David writes further concerning this precious unity and to what it is compared. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;" (Psalm 133:2) This ointment covered his entire body just as the body of believers are to completely covered in the unity of the Spirit. The eye cannot say to the head that I have no need of thee in the natural body neither can the head say to the feet, I have no need of thee. (I Cor. 12:21). Every part of the body is necessary to the health and welfare of the whole. As it is in the natural body, so it is in the spiritual body of believers in the church.

What is the opposite of brethren dwelling together in unity? It is surely division and we know what the scripture says regarding how this comes about. The self righteous Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by the prince of Beelzebub. This could not be possible because Satan would be casting out himself and he would never do that; therefore, Jesus tells them, "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:" (Matt. 12:25).

The church at Corinth had division because some were following men rather than the Lord. Some were following Paul and some were following Apollos and Paul said that such was carnality. Paul instructs them emphatically who should always receive the glory of any success in the ministering of the word. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." (I Cor. 3:6). However, God will not bless where there is envy and strife and everyone is doing their own thing. We must be doing what the Lord requires of us as brethren in Christ.

If the church at Corinth or any church desires the Lord to be with them and bless them with peace and tranquility, Paul's farewell message instructs them in that lofty goal. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (II Cor. 13:11). Walk with the Lord and with one another and the Lord will be with us; walk contrary to Him and He will be against us so it might be time for all of us to do an inventory and examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. Our churches are small enough as it is; we surely do not need any conflict that might cause them to be even smaller. Look up; our redemption is drawing nigh. (From February 2019 Glad Tidings)

Colossians 3:14-15: "*And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*"

WHAT ARE YOUR HIGH PLACES?

(Continued from page 2)

Uzziah (Azariah) did good in the sight of God (2 Kg. 15:3), but the high places were not removed, and the people sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places (2 Kg. 15:4). Jotham did good in the sight of God like his father Uzziah (2 Kg. 15:34), but the high places were not removed and the people sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places (2 Kg. 15:35).

Under the reign of Ahaz, the pagan worship and sin escalated again. They worshipped in the false manner of the kings of Israel (2 Kg. 16:3), made molten images of Baalim (2 Chr. 28:2), sacrificed his children to Molech (2 Chr. 28:3), and did all the abominations of the Canaanites which God drove out of the land (2 Kg. 16:3). The people sacrificed and burnt incense in the high place, in the hills, and under every green tree (2 Kg. 16:4, 2 Chr. 28:4) and in every single city of Judah (2 Chr. 28:25).

King Hezekiah led a great revival in repairing the house of the Lord, reinstating the Passover, and commanding the Levites to begin to teach the law of God again (2 Chr. 30). Hezekiah finally fully tore down the high places and images and groves out of all the land (2 Kg. 18:4, 2 Chr. 31:1). By this time, the high places had been commonplace in Judah for over 200 years after being originally set up by Solomon. Think about that. In over 200 years something that was grossly sinful and rebellious to the commands of a holy God had become so culturally accepted that essentially no king – even very godly and devoted kings – saw it as bad enough to fully purge from the land. Oh how we can become blinded to our own pet peeves and high places that we can self-justify in our minds!

Then, when the son of Hezekiah took control, Manasseh reversed course yet again and built back the high places which Hezekiah had destroyed (2 Kg. 21:3). Manasseh repented later in his life as evidenced by his penitential prayer (2 Chr. 33:13-19) and did many great religious reforms. However, the people still sacrificed in the high places, but they sacrificed unto God only (2 Chr. 33:17). Yet another godly man (later in his life), who removed many of the wicked things out of the land but allowed the high places to remain. It does note that they did sacrifice only unto God in those high places. However, due to cultural stigma of the high places, it would have been better to fully remove the high places than to use them to worship Jehovah God.

Then, in the reign of Josiah, he purged out all the high places, groves, and molten images (2 Chr. 34:3-8). He burned all the vessels of Baal and the groves and the graven images that were in the temple (2 Kg. 23:4,6,14) and killed all the false priests in Judah (2 Kg. 23:5), and also in Israel. He tore down all the high places in Judah (2 Kg. 23:8,13), and he even tore

down the altar and high places and grove that were set up by Jeroboam (2 Kg. 23:15,19) in the northern kingdom – even though Israel was already in Assyrian captivity by this time (there must have still been some priests conducting the false worship, 2 Kg. 23:20). It had been over 60 years since the high places were re-instituted by Manasseh, when they were removed by Josiah.

It's great that Josiah finally fully purged the land of the high places, but he was the last godly king before the beginning of the first Babylonian exile in 605BC. God told Josiah he would tarry judgment for the remainder of his life and his son's brief reign, but only 5 years after Josiah died, the Jews had their first Babylonian exile. Therefore, the high places were commonplace all throughout the history of Judah for over 300 years, except for 2 brief purgings in the reign of Hezekiah and Josiah.

There are quite a few needful lessons I believe we can glean from this history of high places among God's people. First of all, if we ever compromise the word of God – like Solomon did in marrying foreign, pagan wives in disobedience to God's law – we can have catastrophic generational impacts for the following generations to view sin as acceptable through tradition that we established and allowed. For over 300 years, God's people viewed sin as acceptable with only 2 men seeing a real problem with it. Even many good kings and godly men who are commended as doing right in the sight of God still refused to fully purge out the high places. Instead, a few removed some high places, but not all of them. They left their own personal preferences high places, while purging out some of the more socially egregious sins and some of the high places. We are all so prone to see the problem with "someone else's high places", but then self-justify that our own "personal high places" are acceptable. Any place in our lives or heart that removes worship from God and places worship on something else, is a high place that needs to be purged out in our lives.

This might seem like an Old Testament lesson and problem that is not relevant to us today. However, in the concluding verse of 1st John, the very last thought and concluding concern of the Apostle John for his readers, was for them to be vigilant to keep themselves from idols. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." (1 John 5:21) The high places at their core were a place for personal idolatry. Like our predecessors, I'm sure none of us would exercise idolatry openly in the streets for everyone to see. I doubt any of us are carrying around a graven image in our pocket or have a graven idol as a centerpiece in our homes. However, we are susceptible to go up to our own personal, private high place and exercise our idolatry in secret. Let us let the word of God have its perfect work in us, and purge our hearts of any high places, both seen and unseen. (Elder David Wise)

What lessons are to be learned from the account in John chapter 13 of Jesus washing his disciples' feet?

By Elder Joe Nettles

Part 1. This is one of the most intimate, tender pictures of Jesus Christ to be found in the Bible. The last supper, or communion, being ended, "He riseth from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:4-5). Why was this such a striking scene? Understand that in Christ's day it was not unusual for a guest's feet to be washed in such a way. However, the glaring difference here is that it was usually done by a servant for his master. Yet, here was the Creator of all, the God-man, the Messiah, washing the dirty feet of his servants! It was the slave or servant, not the goodman of the house, who donned the towel and bowed to take the feet into the basin of water. Yet, in the epitome of humility, the Lord showed that he came not to be ministered to but to minister (Mark 10:45). In addition, though not pointed out specifically as a type in scripture, these happenings that night before Christ's crucifixion undeniably teach an eternal truth. Notice the glaring similarities between this scene of the washing of feet to Philippians 2:5-8. Take, for instance, Christ laying aside his garments compared with the truth that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, laid aside his glory for his advent - "...made himself of no reputation". Then, compare his donning the garb of a slave ("...and took upon him the form of a servant...") with the truth that God became manifest in the flesh as a lowly man. Then, we see the cleansing take place. Jesus washed the dirtiest visible part of these rugged men. Imagine how dirty their feet would become after a full day's walking on the dusty or muddy roads of Judea. My friends, Jesus cleansed his people from their sins by taking their sins upon himself on the cursed tree of Calvary - "...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Such a beautiful, living picture of salvation in the washing of feet!

Part 2. During this scene of humility, the washing of the disciples' feet by Christ himself, we find Peter being his very vocal, brash self. When the Lord Jesus approached Peter to wash his feet, Peter became bold and cried, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). The Lord replied promptly, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." What was Christ actually conveying to Peter? Some believe that Peter was not to be eternally saved unless he allowed the washing. I reject this as no where in scripture is foot-washing (or any act of man, for that matter) taught as a prerequisite for redemption. Some say that unless you wash feet you can not be part of the Lord's visible church. While it is true that foot-washing in the church ought to be

done (v.14) and is given as an example (v.15), it is generally held that it is separate from the ordinance of communion which is necessary for church fellowship. To this point, note that, even though the foot-washing occurred at the same supper, it is not included in New Testament references to the ordinance of the bread and wine (I Corinthians 11:17-34; I Cor. 10:16; Acts 20:7). What Christ was conveying with this statement was that Peter ought not bristle at the Lord washing his feet because what he was going to cleanse him from on the cross was much more filthy and unpleasant! As dirty and unattractive as those rugged disciples' feet were, they were nothing compared to Jesus' washing away of the filthy stench and rot of sin for countless throngs of the elect. The prophet Isaiah referred to sin as "...wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up..." (Isaiah 1:6). The Apostle Paul compared our sinful nature to a rotting corpse - "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:25). Again, Isaiah drew a comparison between the very best of our original nature to the soiled rag from a menstruating woman - "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.." (Isaiah 64:6). Does it not touch our souls to know that Jesus became all of this dreadful sin for our redemption!

Part 3. After Peter denied the Lord Jesus to wash his feet, Christ replied, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). In the last article, we examined how that the Lord was revealing to Peter that his soiled feet were nothing compared to his soiled soul and spirit which he would cleanse via the cross. Now Peter, realizing to a degree the import of the washing truly under consideration, requested of the Lord, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." In other words, Peter saw that the works of his hands and mind needed to be purged. Yet Christ, refocusing on the washing of the feet, declared, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean..." He's saying, "Peter, you've already been cleansed from your sin debt by the new birth. Now, all you need is to keep your feet in righteous paths and, as I've served you, be actively, humbly serving others." Yes, it's important where and how we tread in this life - "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way..." (Hebrews 12:13); "Enter ye in at the strait gate..." (Matthew 7:13); "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners..." (Psalm 1:1); "Flee fornication..." (I Corinthians 6:18); "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8); "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein..." (Jeremiah 6:16). Yes, we should not talk the talk if we aren't willing to walk the walk! Let's get busy living like Jesus and

having the mind of Christ - "...let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Part 4. In one of the previous articles in this series, I taught how that the example of foot-washing is typically seen as separate from the ordinance of communion, or the taking of the bread and the wine. Generally, the ordinance is that which is commanded to be observed by members of the Lord's church and is inseparable from church identity, while the example of foot-washing has typically not been a test of fellowship between churches. However, the Lord Jesus did tell us that we ought to do it - "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Examine with me that term "ought". How strong a term is it? Does it mean that just a suggestion has been made? No, it is stronger than that. Translated from the Greek word *ofileho*, it literally means "to owe, to be under obligation". We see this word translated "duty" in Luke 17:10 - "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." You see, Christ gave us a duty in foot-washing and what a joyous duty indeed! Now, look at other uses of *ofileho* translated as "ought" in the Bible - 1) "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone...(Acts 17:29). How strong is that "ought"? Is it ever acceptable to God for us to compare him to a graven image? Certainly not! 2) "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28). Is it alright for a man to just keep this command some of the time or to even leave it off altogether? Perish the thought! 3) "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Peter 3:11). Is it ever alright to God for us to leave off holy conversation and godliness? Crazy talk! The church of Christ ought to observe foot-washing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It's not just good enough to know it. The joy of the Holy Ghost is in the doing of it!

AN EVIL UNDER THE SUN

By Elder David Pyles

"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease." –Ecc. 6:1-3

Solomon complained here of people in the world who have failed to find happiness notwithstanding the fact they have been abundantly blessed in material

ways. He claimed such cases are numerous. There are likely even more of them in our own prosperous times than then.

The remainder of the book of Ecclesiastes will show that Solomon was himself such a person. He sought happiness in mirth, in accumulation, in enterprise and in education, but all these proved futile avenues in his quest. After learning from these hard experiences, and after long examination of himself and those about him, Solomon concluded that happiness is a direct gift from the hand of God. This is why the poorest of the poor can have it, while the richest of the rich can be in misery. Riches, knowledge, etc, are also gifts of God, but they of themselves do not convey happiness. Happiness is a separate gift unto itself. So the text above complains of those who have been blessed in a material way, but have not been blessed to enjoy their possessions (i.e. they have not been given the "power to eat thereof").

Yet God is not arbitrary in how He bestows the blessing of happiness. Solomon considered this subject in the preceding verse: "Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. – Eccl. 5:19-20

Key words here are "God answereth him in the joy of his heart." The meaning is that God responds to the man's prayer and obedience by giving him both possessions and a heart that is capable of rejoicing in what he has been given. The man is happy with his possessions, yet not on account of those possessions, but because of his obedience to God. The man does "not much remember the days of his life" in the sense that the inevitable hardships and losses of life do not burden or scar his mind. He is happy notwithstanding them.

Paul said, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned..." (1Tim 1:5). These things are the "end" of divine commandment in the sense that they are the ultimate purpose for which the commandment was given. All of these three objectives have to do with feelings. "Charity" is how we feel about others. "Good conscience" is how we feel about ourselves, and "faith" is how we feel about God. The key to feeling right is therefore in doing right. A man is happy not because of what he has, but because of what he does.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13: "[12] I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. [13] And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God."

CHURCH NEWS

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church, Ackerman, MS. Feb. 22-23, 2025. Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church in Ackerman, MS will host an open meeting the 4th weekend in February 2025 (Feb. 22-23). Services begin Saturday, Feb. 22, at 10:00am followed by lunch and afternoon services about 1:30pm with a fellowship at pastor's house in the evening. Sunday morning worship at 10:00am. Everyone invited to come and worship. Elder David Wise is Pastor of Macedonia.

Gulf Coast Fellowship Meeting at Palm Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, Crestview, FL. March 27-30, 2025. Schedule is as follows: Services:

Thursday: Worship beginning at 6:30pm

Friday: Worship beginning at 10:00am. Lunch at 12pm. Afternoon services at 1:30pm. Supper at 5:30pm and worship at 6:30pm

Saturday: Worship beginning at 10:00am. Lunch at 12pm. Afternoon services at 1:30pm.

Sunday: Worship beginning at 10:30am. Lunch at 12pm.

Church Address: Palm Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, 201 Cadle Drive, Crestview, FL 32539

Accommodations available at hotels in Crestview, FL (about 5-15 minutes away) and in Niceville, FL (about 25-30 minutes away)

Contact:

Pastor, Elder Todd Nunley, phone: 214.415.2810, email - jamestnunley@outlook.com

Deacon Brother David Cadle, phone: 850.865.1475, email - dec55@cox.net

Deacon Brother Gavin Purvis, phone: 850.902.0098, email - joannpurvis@gmail.com

Deacon Brother Peter Cannon, phone: 850.612.2486, email - elvis24682000@yahoo.com

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES (AND BAPTISM)



In the January 2025 Glad Tidings, I noted a few months ago my 6-year-old nephew, Charlie, excitedly ran out of the bathtub asking his Dad to join the church. In Dec. 2024, I had the privilege to baptize Charlie

Machiavello into Tyler Primitive Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas.

In leading up to his baptism, when asked why he wanted to join the church, Charlie told his parents that he wanted to "work for Jesus". We pray that we can all follow little Charlie's example and fervently work for Jesus every single day! (David Wise)

Matthew 18:3-5: "3) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5) And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

FEATURED DOCUSERIES

GOSPEL FREEDOM MOVIE: COMPLETE IN HIM



Several years ago I became acquainted with Elder Luke Hagler and Sister Margo Wieschhaus. Both of these dear saints shared their journey to finding and understanding the message of salvation by grace alone with me. I was both captivated and encouraged by their stories. They both lived out John 8:32 – they found the truth and it made them free.

I began to dream about putting their stories together and making it into a documentary film. Through the help of too many people to name we were able to film their stories as well as bible commentary from Elders Ben Winslett, Michael Gowens and Tim McCool.

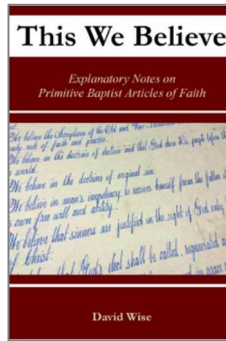
The docuseries will be released in four parts. Episodes 1 and 2 were released in January 2025 with Episode 3 & 4 set to be released Feb. 1, and Feb. 15, 2025. Anyone interested in this project can find links to our YouTube and social media accounts at GospelFreedomMovie.com

Please consider subscribing to the YouTube channel to receive updates as episodes are released.

I ask that you all pray that this film will be used for the glory of God and the furtherance of His truth.

God bless,
Elder Josh Coker, Pastor of Vestavia Primitive Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL

FEATURED BOOK

**This We Believe, By David Wise**

Excerpt: I compiled the content for these outline notes during studying through and then preaching through the Articles of Faith of Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church. Our church's Articles of Faith reflect the core tenets of the Primitive Baptists' beliefs – "the things which are most surely believed among us." My original intent in grouping the information in outline form was to provide robust scriptural evidences and quick reference for all of the major points of doctrine that are addressed in our Articles of Faith. When we are questioned by others about what we believe in the Primitive Baptist Church, they need to know that it's not our own opinions, but we believe these truths based on the consistent teaching and rightly dividing of the scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice. I hope this work can provide the reader with quick verse references to support each of these doctrinal points that we believe as we attempt to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints".

You may purchase this book at the link below:

<https://marchtozion.com/books/this-we-believe-explanatory-notes-on-primitive-baptist-articles-of-faith/>

A free PDF of this book can be downloaded here:

<https://macedonia-pbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/macedonia-articles-of-faith-verse-outline.pdf>

You may visit the websites below to find an extensive library of Primitive Baptist books:

<https://www.sovgrace.net/shop/>
<https://marchtozion.com/book-table/>
<https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/dm00769/>

Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

THEY THAT MOURN

Elder Ben Cordes
Lexington, Kentucky

(Part 2 of 8 in Series on The Beatitudes)

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (Matt. 5:4)

The Bible is a book of comfort for the children of God. It plainly speaks of the great troubles in the world, but also assures us of God's power over the world and all its grief. The Bible informs us of the hope that saves us from despair and reminds us of what God has done so that we may wipe away tears and rejoice (Rom. 8:24).

God knows this world is difficult, but He does not spare us from all sorrow. Instead, God assures us that He will walk with us and help us through the troubles of life. He has promised that he is with us always, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:20).

The second beatitude acknowledges the reality of sadness that exists in the world. Mourning is evidence of regret and pain. People mourn when they wish things weren't as they are. God's children have a spiritual yearning to be made free from the painful existence of sin.

The heart of one who cries out in regret of sin is doing so because God has given a new heart to them, and they are now aware of sin. Not just sin in general, but the sin within their own personal nature. The child of God may mourn and feel remorse and unworthiness, but God is ready to comfort the hearts of His children who are broken. The hope for mourners is that they shall be comforted by the only one who can condemn them but has chosen to forgive them instead.

Consider the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her hair: "37) *And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38) And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*" (Luke 7:37-38)

The weeping woman enters the house of a Pharisee, willing to suffer his prejudiced glares and condemning speech, in order to express love to the only person who can grant her forgiveness. Why is she mourning? Because she knows the truth about herself. It's not the Pharisee she believes, it's the law that God has written on her heart that is accusing her conscience.

"15) Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)" (Rom. 2:15)

She is mourning because God has opened her eyes to her own sins. However, sin is not the only thing God has revealed to her, but He has also revealed to her

the Forgiver of sins. God's grace has allowed for her to see Jesus as her only hope. After Jesus defended the woman's act of love and humility, the weeping woman departed in peace, having received word that her sins are forgiven.

"47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loveth little. 48) And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven... 50) And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke 7:47-50)

Some who lost their loved ones to death came to Jesus for help. The Lord raised their dead back to life, and they were comforted. Others were sick, and Jesus healed them. The lame were given strength to walk. The lepers were cleansed. The blind were given sight. Jesus gave these mourners comfort and peace through restoration.

Though the miracles of healing are wonderful, we are comforted with an even greater promise than a reinstatement of this natural body. And though we mourn, yet our Savior, Jesus Christ, has promised us an end to our mourning altogether. God has assured His children of eternity where every tear shall be wiped away.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4)

We mourn because of sin and the overwhelmingly destructive effect it has in this present world. We mourn because of sin around us, and we mourn because of sin within us, but sin has an end. When Jesus Christ returns, He will resurrect the dead in Christ and change their corrupted bodies and make them sinless and incorruptible (1 Cor 15:52). We shall be gathered, the entire host of God's elect family, with Jesus Christ, and we shall never mourn over sin and death ever again.

We mourn here for a little while, but hope is given to us in Christ so that we may carry on the way of our pilgrimage. The Holy Spirit abides with us, to console us, and to encourage us (John 14:16,26). If it weren't for the comforting grace and hope of the Lord Jesus, which is applied to us through the Spirit, we would all be too miserable to operate. Thanks be to God that our mourning is only for a little while. We may sow in tears, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will reap in joy (Ps. 126:5).

Psalm 30:4-5: *"[4] Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. [5] For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."*

PLURALITY OF ELDERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

By Elder Michael Ivey

Plurality of Elders in Scripture. When considering the matter of a plurality of Elders, it is important to note that not all Bible lessons are explicitly stated nor even expressly implied. Rather, the meanings and applications for some Bible teachings gain form as logical inferences. In this regard, I believe a principle of plurality of Elders in a local church is reasonably inferred to have been a common practice in the primitive church based on many scriptures in which the situation is mentioned.

Scripture supplies the general principle of preference for mutual aid and benefit which in light of multiple scriptural examples of plurality of Elders can infer a principle of shared ministerial responsibilities. Solomon, "the Preacher," expressed the general principle by asserting "two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-11). Similarly, Proverbs 27:17 supports a principle of mutual support to mutual benefit as shared improvement in areas such as wisdom, knowledge, ability and commitment. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The benefit of mutual support by collaborative decision making is stated in Proverbs 11:14. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Indeed, this passage promises failure to preachers who are inclined to operate in a vacuum of their own opinions.

In the New Testament we find that Jesus employed the principle of shared ministerial responsibility when assigning duties to his apostles and disciples. The first time the Savior sent out the twelve to preach repentance and to heal, he sent them in groups of two. "And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits... And they went out, and preached that men should repent" (Matthew 6:6,12). Likewise, he sent the seventy out "two and two." "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). It is noteworthy when Jesus sent out the seventy, He also observed an abundance of potential disciples and commanded them to pray, asking God to send more laborers (Luke 10:2). This narrative context suggests Elders have a greater responsibility to ask God for yolk-fellows with whom they may share the burdens of serving the Lord's children. Other NT examples of mutually shared labor include Paul and Barnabas;

Paul and Silas; Paul and Timothy; Paul and Titus; Barnabas and John Mark; Peter, James and John and Barsabas and Silas.

Evidence found in Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles likewise indicates that a plurality of Elders was both taught and commonly practiced in the primitive church. Congregations with multiple Elders include Churches at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Crete, and Philippi.

In Acts Chapter 14 Paul and Barnabas preach in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium; etc. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). Notice the language, "ordained them elders in every church." From this we understand multiple Elders were ordained in each church.

Jerusalem Church had plurality of elders. "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders" (Acts 15:2, Acts 21:18). Notice that one church is mentioned which has among her membership multiple Apostles and Elders.

The Church at Antioch had multiple ministers in her membership. "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (Acts 15:2). Paul and Barnabas were ordained Elders of Antioch Church and remained members while performing the duties as ministers of the gospel (Acts 31:2, Acts 14:1-3).

The Church at Ephesus had a plurality of preachers in her membership. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17). Paul also uses the plural pronoun, "yourselves" to address the "overseers" of the Church at Ephesus. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Likewise, in his letter to the Church at Thessalonica Paul's use of plural pronouns logically infers plurality of ministerial leaders in that church. "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:13-13).

Paul's salutation in the Philippian letter suggests the Church at Philippi also had more than one elder among its membership, bishop being another title for Elder. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..." (Philippians 1:1)

In the Colossian letter, mention of Tychicus, Onesimus, Epaphras and Archippus by Paul suggests

these all ministered to the Colossian church. (Colossians 1:7, 4:7-17)

Benefits/Blessings from Plurality of Elders.

Churches benefit in many ways from having more than one Elder. In simple terms having more than one preacher provides more capacity for visiting the sick and for individual counsel. The church also benefits from each preacher's unique gift. Different administrations of preaching gifts are apt to provide complimentary explanations that expand understanding of scripture, doctrines, and practices, and so increase spiritual growth among church members. The presence of Elders with differing administrations of gifts (teaching, exhortation, showing mercy, etc.) also provides opportunity for members to have their spiritual needs more quickly and/or better addressed (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, Ephesians 4:8-16).

A plurality of Elders also lessens the likelihood of a church becoming a "cult of personality" from the strong influence of a single preacher. In common language, having more than one preacher in a church reduces the risk of "preacher worship." The Apostle Peter addressed the issue of dictatorial pastors by admonishing elders to be willing servants "of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 3:2-3). Multiple preachers form a hedge against such dangers by distributing the ministerial load.

One last benefit is plurality of Elders reduces the likelihood of burnout by providing another pair of helping hands for day-to-day ministry and another mind for wise counsel. A fellow laborer experiencing some measure of the same challenge to preach and minister to the same congregation can be a sounding board, an encouraging voice, and a source of sound advice; all of which relieve the pressure and fatigue that accompanies serving a church, and which Satan exploits to discourage ministry.

* The capitalized "Elder" is used in this essay to denote that we are talking about the ordained NT church office of Elder and not simply an older person in the church.

"God asked no counsel of fallen man as to how salvation must be. The work of salvation from sin is not a partnership work, depending part upon the almighty strength of the omnipotent Jehovah and poor sinful worms of earth. Man left to himself would never seek after God. He has neither will nor power to hate sin and love righteousness. In sin he lives and in sin he must die unless the Spirit of God breathes upon his dead soul and quickens it into life."

-Elder George Bretz, Primitive Monitor, 1934

CORNELIUS

By Elder Rickey Taylor

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (Acts 10:1-2)

In these verses we are introduced to a man named Cornelius. He like many of the people in the scriptures, is a devoutly religious man, who loves God. What makes him unique is the fact that he is Italian, a Gentile. Cornelius is a Roman name and was a part of a band that was originally from Italy. He had been raised under the Italian religion of idolatry and superstition. Yet somewhere along the way he put aside his old religion and sought after the one true God. God having put this in his heart. So Cornelius worshipped with the Jews under the old law traditions. He gave alms to the Jews and was a man that made prayer an important part of his life. Keep in mind that God had not yet opened the door for the Gentiles to come as members of the gospel church. That was about to change. In verse 3 Cornelius is praying as according to Jewish law at 3 o'clock in the afternoon or the ninth hour of the Jewish day. In the midst of his devotion, he hears his name called by an angel of the Lord. Looking upon the angel, he is afraid, and in awe of this majestic creature. Perceiving that he is a messenger of God he asked of the angel what is it? To which the angel tells him that God has sent him to tell him that his many prayers and alms which he had done abundantly had come up to God as a memorial. The word memorial means record, or mindful. In other words, God remembers Cornelius's prayers and good deeds and was now sending this angel to expect a blessing soon with the Apostle Peter arriving at his home to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his crucified! What a blessing this would be to Cornelius. Now God was going to show him a better way to live closer to him by being the first Gentiles to enter the gospel church. Not that his soul needed saving, for Christ took care of that upon the cross. God felt a tender love to him, and desired that he would not have to live in ignorance of Jesus Christ and his accomplishment. The law was now done away, and he wanted Cornelius to know about the true gospel church. So he was sending Peter to preach the gospel to him. So the angel further instructs him to send men to Joppa to the house of Simon the tanner and ask for Peter to come and converse with Cornelius and his house. And this Cornelius does.

Why didn't God just let the angel preach the gospel to Cornelius? Looks like it would just save time and trouble to do that? For one, the angel was not a God called minister. The other reason is that the Lord has deemed that the God called minister must be a man of flesh and blood. The church is built upon the

foundation of Jesus being the Christ. This is revealed through the preaching of the gospel by a God called minister of flesh and blood. Ephesians 2:20 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” This shows the significance of the gospel church. The way that a child of God is going to come to an understanding about the true church, is through the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is done by a God called minister who is ordained in a gospel church. His preaching will bring some of God's children to know about what their Savior has done for them already. Now to receive rest here in this time world, one needs to follow their Lord in baptism by becoming a member of the gospel church. I believe that the gospel church is the Primitive Baptist Church. I believe that Cornelius found that rest not in the old law service, but in the truth of Jesus Christ! He followed his Lord in baptism (verses 5 through 44) and found the rest that is mentioned in Hebrews 4:1-11. This is the method that has been used for over two thousand years to bring the child of God to a wonderful blessing while here on earth.

HUMILITY

By Elder Michael Gowens

“Humility is the beginning of true intelligence.” John Calvin

In what way is this true?

1. Because the humble individual is ready to listen to others. He/she doesn't presume to know everything there is to know.
2. Because the humble soul is open to the word of God, which is the source of all true wisdom and understanding.
3. Because the humble person never assumes he/she knows it all. There is always more to learn.

Proverbs 15:33: “The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.”

James 4:6-10: “[6] *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you... [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*”

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