

# The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION      SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 48 September 2018 No. 9



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

***"I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the LORD."***

***Psalm 122:1***

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,  
who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger L. Decker, Pastor  
83 Decrow Ave.  
Newark, OH 43055

Email: [pastor@church-of-god-online.com](mailto:pastor@church-of-god-online.com)  
Phone: 740-344-2543  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the  
Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the  
world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal  
the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error,  
war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding  
traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13;  
1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS  
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28;  
Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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**CONTENTS**

Running From God. . . . .	3
The Terrible Danger of Drifting . . . .	8
Especially for Young People . . . . .	14
Don't Become Impatient . . . . .	15
Consider the Trees . . . . .	23
The Fate of Some Apostles. . . . .	26
Meeting Announcements . . . . .	27

Vol. 48 September 2018 No. 9

# Guest Editorial

*"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times  
some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits,  
and doctrines of devils."*

1 Timothy 4:1

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;  
for he is faithful that promised."*

Hebrews 10:23

## HOLD FAST TO CHRIST

We are living in times that are full of uncertainty and turmoil. Satan is diligently striving to disrupt and destroy as many souls as possible. Everywhere we look there is trouble, strife, and contention. He is sowing discord and tension on every side.

The picture surely looks dark and is becoming more frightening every day. However, we must remember that God is still in control of all that is taking place. It appears that things are out of hand, and sin and wickedness seem to be on the upsurge. Friend, you can be assured that nothing will go any further than God allows. Saints must not let their hearts fail because of fear. Believers are instructed to hold fast to Christ and never let go of His hand.

Too often people get their eyes fixed on surrounding circumstances instead of placing their trust in Christ; He never fails. The lack of faith in God has caused many to turn from the paths of righteousness. This world, as well as the church, is in a shaking time. It is time for the people of God to take a

tighter grip on God's unchanging hand. This is not the time to give up the battle or to become faint in the race.

Joel proclaimed, "The Lord will be the hope of his people" (Joel 3:16). What encouragement that ought to bring to your heart and mind! Many things in life are beyond your control. There are things that you may not be able to change physically, but God is still the Master of this universe. He is the only One who can change things. He holds the power to bring the church through with victory. You should never become overly concerned about things that are going on around you. To do so will only bring restlessness to your heart, rob you of peace, and mar the hope you have in Christ.

David said in Psalm 42:5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God." Now, as never before, we, as the people of God, need to hold fast to our profession of faith and refuse to be moved by the things that go on around us.

*[continued on page 7]*

*Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,*

*2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

*3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so*

*he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

*4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.*

*5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in*

*the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.*

*6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*

# Running From God



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **No One Can Hide From God**

If you read the remainder of the chapter, you will find that they cast Jonah forth into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging and the ship was delivered. There is not much history on Jonah, but Jesus brought up his name. The Book of Jonah tells us he was the son of Amittai. Second Kings 14:25 reads, "He re-

stored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher."

I want you to consider the Prophet Jonah. Now, there are some things that we do know about Jonah. He received a call to

proclaim the Word of God. There was a need in Nineveh, and God chose Jonah to fill that need. We also know that he was very patriotic. He did not despair of his country in its darkest days. However, the commission to go to Nineveh was not to Jonah's liking. He had no desire to see that great, heathen city brought to its knees. It is very evident that he had no use for the heathens.

Jonah was a prophet in the village of Gath-hepher, which was located approximately three miles north of Nazareth in the part of lower Galilee. Nineveh was a journey of about five hundred miles. To be called by God is a great honor. Why did God call Jonah? He called him because there was a need. There were approximately one hundred twenty thousand souls in Nineveh who were on the brink of destruction, but Jonah had something inside him that raised up and caused him to flee. He ran in the opposite direction, but no one can outrun God.

The Psalmist David said in Psalm 139:1-13: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."

What was the Psalmist David saying? It is very simple. You cannot hide from God. Where would you go to hide from Him?

To the sinner and to the one who is not clear in his soul, you can waste your life with alcohol or drugs, but God sees it all. You could wind up losing your job, your family, your house, and eventually your life. You may move away from the church and all your religious friends, but God will still be there.

### **Trying to Escape God's Call**

When God calls, the devil will fight you to keep you from obeying the Word of God. Someone may say, "I believe that God would move on me in a miraculous way." The power of God is the Gospel. God does not have any other means of moving people except through the Gospel. When God calls, something raises up inside. When I was called to be a pastor, something happened. I struggled in my mind, thinking: "I have a good job, and I will soon be able to retire," and the thoughts went on and on.

Jonah had some things rise up in him. First of all, Jonah had a real problem with the heathens. That is a proven fact. Even after Jonah went and preached to Nineveh, he still had a problem with them. He was patriotic. He was an Israelite, a Jew through and through. He felt that if he traveled away from Nineveh, God would call someone else to preach to them. Although Jonah thought God would take care of those Ninevites by calling someone else, we find that was not so in our Scripture text. Rather than obeying the God of mercy, Jonah hurried down to a seaport so that he might escape from his duty. It was five hundred miles to Nineveh from where Jonah was, but he chose to go twenty-five hundred miles in the opposite direction.

Jonah's reason for running was quite simply that he did not like the Assyrians. The Assyrians

were known to be an idolatrous people. They were proud and loose, and they were heading for world conquest. They had long been a threat and an enemy to Israel. Sin is always deceitful. People always have to pay heavily in tolls and fares when they take their own way instead of God's way. You must never reckon or esteem a sinful opportunity.

Jonah was trying to outrun the call of God, and he did it with full knowledge that he was wrong. How do we know that? Jonah 1:8-12 states: "Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

"Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

What was Jonah saying? "I know that it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." Jonah had become very content with his decision. As the storm raged, Jonah 1:5 says, "Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep."

Jonah was very content with

the decision that he had made. He thought surely he would get away with it. He thought God would change His mind and let it go and call someone else; then Jonah could go right back to his own life. However, Jonah was the one God called to go to Nineveh, and God was not about to change His mind. Jonah traveled as fast as he could to get away from the presence of God. I wonder, are you running away from God? If you are, you need to take a lesson from Jonah. Wherever you go, God will be there. When God calls, there is a need.

### Faithfulness

Speaking of Jesus in John 4:3-4, we read: "He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria." Why did Jesus need to go through Samaria? It was there at Jacob's well that He had a conversation with a woman of Samaria, and she received help. When the Apostle Paul was at Samaria, he said in Acts 17:1-3: "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

There was a need for Paul to be at Samaria, there was a need for Jesus to pass through Samaria, and there was a need for Jonah to go to Nineveh. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the sufferings and the resurrection of Christ, reasoned with them in the synagogue of the Jews. There was a need at Nineveh, and God gave the message of repentance to a patriotic Jew to deliver. Just as a sinner hides in his sin, trying to

drown out his conscience, Jonah ran away from God.

When I read that, I thought about my life before I was saved. I would get involved with things just to keep my mind occupied to make it easier to turn down the call of God. God dealt with me. Sometimes I would call my pastor, Brother Emerson Wilson, to the house to talk to him, but the prayer that I prayed was not sincere. It was very evident, because I did not go on and serve God. He mentioned doing the little things before God takes you on to greater things. When you get saved, God puts certain things within you. First, you have a desire to go to the house of God; second, you will read your Bible; third, you will pray; and fourth, you will be a witness to others.

When people go to an altar of prayer yet fail to go back to the next church service, it is doubtful that they really sold out to God. If they come and go for a few weeks and gradually fade out, they did not dig deep enough. Brother Wilson was speaking to me of being faithful. God's people should be the most faithful people on earth.

Exodus 18:13-15 reads: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? [In other words, he was the only judge over that great congregation of Israel. His father-in-law spoke up and said, 'Why are you doing that?'] And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God."

Verse 17 says, "And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not

good." Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Verses 25-26 continue: "And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves." Moses' father-in-law was saying: "Moses, do not take on all these cases. You need help or you are going to wear yourself out." Therefore, Moses gave heed to the words of his father-in-law, and Moses chose some people to help him.

### The Strength of the Flesh

What else do we see in Jonah? We see the strength of the flesh. Your flesh is a lot stronger than you think. It is opposed to anything that involves the work of God, and it is going to oppose you. It will tell you such things as: "You're not qualified; you cannot do it. You would make a mess of things." Oh, how that rang through my ears. However, God can qualify someone, and He can deliver.

You need to put your confidence in the Lord when God calls you. I am talking to the sinner too. When God calls you out of sin, you need to have confidence that God will deliver you. One of my big issues was smoking. I had smoked cigarettes since I was fourteen years of age. When I sat and listened to the preached Word, I felt so condemned. I had such a desire to go to the altar, but in the back of my mind, I wondered: "Can I live it? Can I really lay down the tobacco habit?" I had tried to quit smoking many times, but I was disappointed. I repeat, the flesh is stronger than you think.

Where was Jesus' problem? It was at the Cross. What raised

up? There was no sin in his life, but look at how the flesh worked on Jesus. Matthew 26:37-46 tells us: "And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: [In other words, he was saying: 'Let the thing go on by and choose someone else. Let it pass from Me.'] nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

"And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

The flesh will always justify its condition. Even after Jonah obeyed God, even after he had gone into Nineveh and preached and souls were delivered, he justified why he went to Nineveh. After God spared Nineveh, read the words of Jonah. Jonah 3:10 states, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

### **What Will You Do in the End?**

Jonah 4:1-2 reads: "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Jonah was justifying the reason for the action he took. He would have rather seen the heathen nation destroyed than to have his reputation imputed. No doubt, he was comfortable in his present condition.

Both sinners and Christians justify their position, or their reason for running. Jeremiah 5:31 says, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" This verse from the Amplified version reads, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests exercise rule at their own hands and by means of the prophets. And My people love to have it so! But what will you do when the end comes?"

What are you going to do when your life of sin starts winding down and you are on the decline? What are you going to do when your health, your family, your job, or your friends are gone? What are you going to do when you are alone and you cannot think straight in your thought life? God would have directed you away from that lifestyle, but you ran and hid and partied to drown out your sinful life.

Like Jonah, God has spoken to you. He has called to you repeatedly. He let you know that you ought to do something with your life before you get into such a condition that you cannot even

think straight, before your thought life is messed up, and before you fall under a strong delusion. Friend, do not be stubborn and hold out for your own way. One of the worst things that God can do for someone is to allow a person to have his own way. The Prophet Jeremiah was saying that an end is coming. Life is not just a highway of fun, laughter, good times, and pleasures. That is only part of the highway. There is another part of that highway that is not fun, where there is no pleasure and no laughter. It is all sadness, sorrow, and heartache.

As I prepare to close, I want to speak to the Christian for a moment. Are you truly as consecrated to the will of God as you say you are? You may say, "Not my will, but Thine be done," but you are going to be tried when you make that statement to God.

Jonah was a prophet and the son of a prophet, but that did not stop his flesh from challenging him. If you are a sinner, you cannot hide behind habits, wrong attitudes, or unforgiveness. God is not going to accept frivolous excuses at the Judgment. When I left to go home the night I was saved, I never touched another cigarette. I did not keep them around in case I failed. They went in the trash. I can truthfully say that I lost my desire for cigarettes when I got saved. In fact, it almost made me sick to be around cigarette smoke. God did a miraculous deliverance. Not everyone is delivered from tobacco that way, but God can still deliver.

If you are a Christian, maybe God is calling you to play a musical instrument, to sing specials, or to sing in the choir. If God is dealing with you, you should not run from Him. If you have a talent or a gift, you ought to use it for God. God can magnify the talent or the gift that you have. You should not come up with

excuses regarding why you cannot do this or that, but rather you ought to obey God. You need to be like Jesus and say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Remember, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Are you fleeing from God?

Only you know the answer to that question. Only you know what is going on in your thought life when it comes to serving God. If you answer the call of God, whatever that call might be, God will take care of you. He will groom you. He will make you

able, bless you, and use you. Whenever God calls you, it is for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. It will build up the Kingdom of God.

(Compact Disc TR-1993)

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## ***There is no place to hide sin without the conscience looking in!***

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

The secret to having victory lies in staying true to God, in living obedient to His Word, and in trusting in Him regardless of how things look. An old song tells us to "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand." Child of God, you need to keep your faith and confidence securely fixed in the Savior. He is the only One that can see you through these troublesome times. Men may fail, and nations may fall, but there is victory in the Lord! Psalm 91:7 tells us, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it will not come nigh thee." Why will it not come near you? Because you have firmly placed your hand in God's hand. You are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Being in Christ is the only safe haven for the soul of man. When you hold fast to Him, He will hold fast to you.

The Apostle Paul told us, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). What was he saying? We may be handicapped in many ways, but we are not beyond the point of getting help and relief. We may lack understanding on certain matters, or become puzzled

about things, but we are never driven to a place of despair or hopelessness. No matter how dark the picture may be or how great the burden, God is still on His throne, and He greatly cares for us.

In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul told Timothy that some would depart from the faith by giving heed to seducing spirits. These spirits work through ungodly men who are out to move the Christian away from his solid position in Christ. They attempt to introduce ideas or theories that are contrary to sound Bible principles. In many cases these seducers will speak evil of and even mock the righteous standards prescribed in the Gospel. If possible, they will try to convince the saints that holiness of heart and life is antiquated or unnecessary or out of date. God's Word has never changed; it is the same today as it has always been.

In Jude's letter to the church, he warned the saints to beware of individuals who would pervert the way of Christianity. They creep in unnoticed, appearing upright outwardly. However, their purpose is to defile and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Often they consider themselves to possess a higher intellect than others possess. With this advanced wisdom and insight

they believe God has given them greater light and understanding. They say this greater light allows them more liberty and freedom to do as they please. However, the evidence of this theory reveals that a yielding to a more worldly way of living has occurred. Beware saints, with greater light and understanding also come greater responsibility. Increased light is bestowed to draw the child of God closer to the Savior, never closer to the world.

Jude in his letter was also attempting to stir and challenge the people of God to earnestly contend for the faith they had once received. He was concerned with the falling away that was affecting many. Instead of succumbing to these apostate conditions, Jude encouraged them to fight the good fight of faith. In verse 21 he told them to build themselves up in the most holy faith and pray. We can win in this lukewarm and apostate age if we will hold fast to the precious things that God has entrusted us with. Who knows how much longer it will be before the Lord comes to lift His Bride up to Glory? Let us be faithful and hold fast!

Selected

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not

put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned

with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.

## The Terrible Danger of Drifting



Brother Tim Wilson

### "Give the More Earnest Heed"

Paul gave a warning in both of the Scripture readings about the danger of drifting. We are living in a day and time when many of God's people do not want to call it that, but if you will study the Word of God, you will find that we are in a time of drifting. Many people are just drifting along. Paul told Timothy that drifting has brought shipwreck to some and heartache and sorrow

to others. You may say that you are not drifting, but let us study the Word of God and find out how your experience compares to what the Word of God says it should be. That is what will judge you. Your judge is not what you or someone else thinks, but it is what the Word of God says. People need to get back to that.

The devil is never happy when a soul is rescued from a life of sin. He is out to try to get

every one of us to slip away, just a little. He wants to get you not to give the more earnest heed to the things which you have heard. He will do anything he can to cause you to drift slowly away from the place that you need to be. We are living in a day and time when more people are drifting away from God than drawing closer to Him.

Saint of God, you have a grave responsibility. As people look at your life, it determines



whether they are inspired to live for God or discouraged. It is God's will to save every soul that He possibly can. When a person truly gives his heart to God, He does a perfect work.

As I was meditating when I was studying, my mind went back to a story that I once read. A little boy in Sunday school was giving the teacher a hard time, and the teacher tried everything she could think of to get him to settle down. Finally, she became frustrated and said, "Look, you are just a rotten little kid."

That child paused and looked at her and said, "Teacher, you are wrong."

She asked, "Why?"

He replied, "Because God doesn't make any junk."

Everything God made was perfect and right. When God does a work, He does it right. When a soul is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things pass away. It is a wonderful experience! It is a wonderful time when a person is made free from the old life of sin. He is set free from the old life of guilt, and he has a clear conscience. He is able to live free from sin and to be what God wants him to be. The load of sin is gone, and that is a wonderful feeling to have in your life.

In a moment of time, God can take a lowdown sinner and make him a new creature. He takes the sin away and puts righteousness in him. That is a great work that only God can do. He takes out the desire for the things that are wrong and puts in that person a desire to do the things that are right. He puts in a desire to be what God would have him to be. When an individual really gets salvation, everything becomes thrilling. Salvation is thrilling! It is something that will change you.

Some people say when they get saved that even the landscape looks different, the world looks

different, and everything around them looks different. It is about falling in love with Christ. He gives you a thrill in your soul. When you get saved, you have a brand-new Friend. The Bible lets you know that He is a friend who will stick closer than a brother. He will be with you all the time. He will never leave you nor forsake you. If there is any leaving, you would have to leave Him. He will never leave you. What a wonderful companion He is!

### **Be Not Ignorant of Satan's Devices**

The devil knows that as long as you stay close to God and keep your life close to Him, the devil cannot harm you. The devil cannot defeat you as long as you stay close to that Friend. However, if the devil can lure you away from the presence of Christ or if he can cause your thoughts to get carried away, then he can draw you back to the life that God delivered you from. The fact that a person is saved is not a guarantee that he is going to be saved forever. Only if that person yields himself to God can he stay saved and stay in the center of God's will. That is the reason you must keep an up-to-date experience with God. You must keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. You must keep looking to Him, the author and the finisher of your faith. You must ever look to Him if you want to keep the victory.

Unless you are obedient to God and faithful to the vows that you make to God, you can lose the joy of your salvation. When you find Jesus Christ in a real experience, you find something very precious. If you are not careful, the enemy of your soul will get you to lose the preciousness of your experience, and Jesus will not mean what He used to mean to you. Your living holy will not mean what it used to mean. There is a terrible danger that

you could drift away from Jesus.

I tell God every day: "Father, I never want to lose this preciousness. I do not want to lose what I have from You. I just want it to increase." God becomes more precious the longer I serve Him, and He grows sweeter through that preciousness. There is nothing any more wonderful than that which Christ has brought. It is a wonderful experience to serve God, and it was a wonderful thing when He found me. The change that He brought to my life is wonderful.

You need to keep your guard up because the devil works in different ways, always trying to lure you away. He may not be able to get you to take the first step into the honky-tonks and the hellholes of this old world, but he will start with little things and gradually harden your heart until he has pulled you away from your relationship with God. The Bible says not to be ignorant of Satan's devices. You do not need to be ignorant as a child of God. You need to understand that he has something that he is using today. You need to know how the devil works.

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 40:1-3: "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." The psalmist was talking about every one of us who has been saved. We were in a horrible pit. We were bound by worldly things, and then Christ came to us and inclined to our cry. I realized one day that I needed help that I could not get anywhere else. I sent out a cry to God. When He got it, He heard me and reached down my way. The first thing He did was lift me

up out of the horrible pit, or the horrible condition that I was in; then He put me on the Rock.

You may ask, "What rock did He put you on?" He put me on the Rock Christ Jesus. Next, He established my goings and put a new song in my mouth. I used to go around singing the blues, but now I can sing praises to the Lord! Jesus saves, and I am satisfied. That is a wonderful experience to have that happen. Also, it is a wonderful thing to enjoy it.

When a person really meets Jesus, he is not the same person that he used to be. When people go to an altar of prayer and leave the same way they came, they did not meet the Man that I met. No, He makes a new creature out of you. He takes old things away and gives you new things. That is the reason a Christian who is really saved from sin never wants to go back. I have no desire to go back to what God delivered me from. Why? I was sick of sin when He took me out of it, and I am sicker of it now than I was then. He put something in me that desires better things than what I was enjoying. That is the reason that I never want to go back into that condition. A true child of God does not want to go back to what God saved him out of.

### A Gradual Slipping Away

I want you to see that the devil is working in a gradual way to cause people to slip back into things that God has called them out of. There is a gradual slipping back into the old paths of sin. It is not a rapid condition. If it was something that happened rapidly, you would realize it, but this is something the enemy does very gradually. Many times people do not stop to consider what the devil has done because he is so slow moving.

Gradually, you drift away from God, you drift away from

right living, and you drift away from the Rock. Before you know it, you become entangled again with the snares of the enemy. Once you realize that he has hold of you, your cry becomes as Paul's was in Romans, Chapter 7. You begin to say, "The good that I want to do, I cannot do anymore, but the evil that I do not want to do, that is what I do." Little by little, the enemy moves you so gradually that you go back into the bondage of sin that God saved you out of.

When God works, wonderful things are accomplished. The devil is going to work overtime to hinder every bit of forward progress you make. He is going to try to hinder everything God wants to do. Just as sure as God does something good, the enemy will try to work. His goal is to cause you to slip away from the good life of Christ and back into the old life of sin. He wants to take the victory that you enjoy and make you a loser. You do not want this to happen. I want you to be aware of the ways the devil is working.

In 2 Peter 2:20-22 Peter said: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Peter was speaking of those people who once had victory and had fallen away from God. In other words, Peter was saying: "If you leave the new life in Christ Jesus and go back to the old pit of

sin, or the old life of sin, you will be in a worse condition than you were before you were first saved." Peter lets you know that if you go back on God, the second state will be worse than the first. That is the reason it will be harder to get back to the place of salvation again.

### Being More Than a Conqueror

Once you have tasted the goodness of God and walk away from it, it is always harder to get back to God. When a person knows God and turns his back on God, he puts himself in the worst position that a person could get in. Have you ever been out by a creek or a stream that was so clear that you could see the fish swimming around? It is easy for the fish to swim with the current. Do you know where the struggle comes? When they decide to turn and go upstream and start going against the current.

When things are warring against your soul, sometimes you have to go against the current. There is a great current that is going to war against your soul. What is the devil doing? He is trying to catch you in the current and take you away. Even after you have decided to live for Christ and turned your back on the old life of sin, the devil will see to it that you have to fight battles along the way. He is going to see to it that you go through difficulties along the way. Just remember, you need some battles in this Christian life to strengthen you in your living for God.

Have you ever sung the old song entitled "Through It All"? The last verse and chorus reads:

*I thank God for the mountains,  
And I thank Him for the valleys,  
I thank Him for the storms He  
brought me through.  
For if I'd never had a problem,  
I wouldn't know God could solve  
them,*

*I'd never know what faith in God could do.*

*Through it all, through it all,  
I've learned to trust in Jesus,  
I've learned to trust in God.  
Through it all, through it all,  
I've learned to depend upon His  
Word.*

Through the battles, trials, and hardships, God is teaching you to become strong. He wants you to see that through Jesus Christ, you can claim victory every time the enemy comes your way. Every time he approaches you, you have the authority to claim victory.

God can save you, and He can help you, but if you are not careful, the enemy will cause you to drift away. I am glad that on the authority of God's Word, you do not have to be a drifter. You can be more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ.

When Christ came into your life, He gave you the ability to be able to go against the forces of evil, to go against the forces of the enemy, and to go against the forces of this old world. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. As a saint of God, you must realize that you are not on a playground. No, this is a battlefield. You are in a battle, and you have an enemy battling you as never before. He would like to see that you never make Heaven your home.

Every saint of God is out to win the battle. If you are going to win, you must guard yourself against drifting away from Christ. You may ask, "Why do I need to be on guard?" Because it is such a slow dying of the experience, and many times people do not recognize it until through a message, through a song, or through the Word, God speaks to them and awakens them. They drift so gradually, and before long they have drifted far away.

## **Have You Lost Your Fervency?**

In Revelation, Chapter 2, John told us that the people of Ephesus had left their first love. They lost the fervency of that first thrill that kept them where God wanted them. You may ask, "Is it possible for a person to keep that thrill throughout life?" Yes! All you have to do is stir it a little, and that thrill bubbles over when you remember what God has done for you and when you remember the condition you were once in. It will thrill your soul every time you think of how He found you and changed you.

As a saint of God, it is possible for you to start out for God and live your life with a thrill in your heart to be what God wants you to be. I do not know about you, but my experience gets better and sweeter as the days go by. I look for that day after day. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. When you have something that gets sweeter and sweeter, it will thrill you.

We are living in a time when some people have lost the jewel. They have lost the thrill of what God has done for them. As a child of God, you need to get away from the thought that you are just trying to keep your head above water, so to speak. Some people say, "I'm just trying to survive." They are not living on the lifeline that I am living on. Survival is not the problem. The problem is having enough capacity to take it all in. God pours out His blessings upon us, and we need God to increase our capacity so that we can take it all in. It is not a matter of needing to ask God to help you to survive. The experience that Christ has for you does not make you a survivor. It makes you much more than that.

You need to get away from the thought, "Well, I am going to try to make it." With that kind of thinking, the first one who comes along might talk you out of your

Christian experience. I did not start to run this race for only a spell. No, I started in this race to finish it. You must understand that God does not cause you to just hold your own. So if you hear someone say, "Well, I'm holding my own," that is not what God wants. God wants us all to be overcomers. He wants you to have enough spiritual strength so that you can give to others. He does not want you to have just enough to get by. When you see a brother or a sister in need, can you help them a little? You need to study the story of the loaves and fish. Jesus did not just make enough to feed the group. He fed them, and then the disciples picked up what was left. Why? He wanted extra so He could give it out everywhere He went. We are not here just to survive. No, we are to go all the way.

As you run this race, many hidden things will work on you to cause you to drift away from the place that God would have you to be. No true saint of God has a desire to drift away from the love of God. It is the love of God that makes you what you ought to be. It is the love of God that keeps you in the place where you need to be. He loved you so much that He came to you when you were unlovable and without hope.

Christ came to help you, and that is the reason you should not want to drift away from that love. You should not want to drift away from the spiritual desire that you have for the house of God. You should not want to drift away from the desire to be all that God wants you to be. You should not want to drift away from spending time in the Word of God. You should not want to drift away from the prayer closet where you draw the energy, the strength, and the stamina to carry on for God in this day and time. You should not want to drift

away from telling your brothers and sisters that you love them and from encouraging them to press on in the battle.

If you are not careful, the enemy will cause things to start drifting from you. He will make you so busy that you will not have time to pray. Some people merely go through a form of prayer, such as, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep." Then in the morning when they get up and face a heavy trial, they wonder why they do not have the spiritual strength to stand. They have lost their energy and their strength, spiritually speaking.

The devil will get you busy reading every other book or magazine there is except the Bible. You may say, "Well, it is a religious book." Let me tell you something: nothing is a substitute for reading and studying the Word of God. If you want to read other literature, that is your business, but first you need to read and study the Word. That is where you will find what you need, and it is where you will get your answers. The Bible is where your path is opened up to you. If you are not careful, these are the things that will start to slip. After these start to slip, you will start to get weaker, and then other things will begin to slip. Drifting will cause you to fall away from convictions that you once held dear to your soul. It will cause you to drift away from things that make you a part of the true Church of God. She is not just a church among churches. God bought her with a price. She is head and shoulders above the rest.

### **Unseen Dangers**

One of the first signs of drifting away from God is a letting down of the convictions that one once held very dearly. The enemy causes a person to

drift a little at a time. You ought to have a desire like the Bible says: you ought to want God to increase in your life and self to decrease. You should abound in spiritual things and decrease in worldly things. Drifting is such a slow process that the danger is often unseen.

Let me tell you about a little story that I read that illustrates how close danger can come to you, yet you do not see it. Some people were hiking in the Swiss Alps, and they were very high up in the mountains. There was still snow on the ground, and they had been there for a few days. Days before, they stopped to set up camp and were ready when nightfall came. One day the darkness came upon them before they were ready, and they kept pressing on and saying, "We will find a place to camp soon."

Finally, the darkness became so dense that they could not see, so they said, "We will just have to stop right here and camp." They set up camp there and camped that night. In the morning when the sun came up, they were able to view the area around them. If they had gone another twenty feet, they would have gone over a big cliff. What happened? They were just drifting along in darkness. Yes, they were searching for a place to camp, but if they had kept going, they would have fallen off the precipice.

This is what the enemy is doing to souls. He is getting them to drift a little, and he is causing them to move closer and closer to the edge. Do you know what will happen? One of these days in their drifting, they will step over to their own lost destination. I pray that God will help them. I want you to see that this slow, gradual drifting is not something that comes overnight. As the enemy moves you away from God, he is hiding the real danger of what is ahead of you. He will cause you to miss what you

should be seeing, and you will slowly drift away from Truth.

I have talked to some people who made up their minds that they were going to walk away from Truth, and no one could change their minds. Then I have seen others who had slowly started to drift, and through the help of God, they were warned and awakened to their condition, and they were spared. I want you to see that the enemy is trying to move you a little at a time, until he moves you away from the place where you need to be.

Today many people have drifted simply because they just quit struggling. Do you know what the enemy would like to cause you to do? The enemy would like you to get weary in the battle. He wants you to say, "I have struggled and put up with this long enough." He tries to get you to gradually let down. When he can get you to feel, "Oh, I'm not struggling with that anymore," he is moving you to the place he wants you to be.

Every true child of God calls on God for help when the devil works. The first thing you should do if you realize that you are slipping away from the experience that you once had is to call for help. You should not let it go on long enough that it overtakes you. If you were out somewhere and in trouble, you would not be afraid to call out, "Hey, I need help!" You would be hollering at the top of your voice, "Someone help me!" Often when the enemy comes in and works, he will try to convince you not to say anything about it. However, that is the time you need to be saying, "I need help!" If this condition has started to work on you, you need to call someone to pray for you.

Many people drift away from God because, as they drift, they do not struggle to keep themselves in a right relationship with God. Dear one, if you are going to stay in the battle, you have to

keep yourself where God wants you to be. As some people drift, they do not call out to anyone or call on God to help them. Why? The enemy of souls has taken them away so gradually.

### Stay Anchored in Jesus

Have you ever studied the eagle? I read about a place in Tennessee where there is an eagle reserve, and a man studies them there. He told how an eagle can get discouraged and will get down on the ground. The eagle is not made to walk on the ground. The eagle was made to fly in the air. He said on the ground its feet start to swell and become infected. It sits and sits, and there is nothing anyone can do. One can pick it up and put it in a tree, but it will fall back down. If another eagle sees that one hurting, it will find fresh meat and fly over and drop it down to that eagle. After it drops the meat, it will call to that eagle to encourage it. It does not take long until that eagle will start moving around, and soon it will be up flying again, just as it is supposed to.

A saint of God is the same way. Sometimes one will pass through trials and hardships and may feel down. Others ought to be right there dropping the blessings to that one, saying, "Come back where you need to be." Why? We all are in this thing together, so we need to lift one another up. The one who is discouraged or downcast needs to be encouraged to draw close to God and to be what God wants that one to be.

God has a way for every one of us to be victorious. How does He make you victorious in this day and time? You must be anchored in Jesus. You may ask, "What does it mean to be anchored in Jesus?" It means to stay true to Him. When you stay true to Him, you are anchored in Him. You anchor yourself in the power

of Jesus Christ, and He is able to help you. He is able to be all that you stand in need of. Do not anchor yourself in an organization. Do not anchor yourself in some odd place. You need to anchor yourself in Christ Jesus, and He will enable you to make it through.

Have you really anchored yourself in Christ? I am not a fisherman, but some brothers have asked to take me fishing. I think in the last twenty-three years, I have gone fishing two times. One time we went fishing from a boat, and the brother told me: "This is a good spot to fish. I'm going to drop the anchor, and we will sit right here and fish." I did not know much about it. I thought, "Well, he knows what he is doing." We were sitting there fishing and talking, and after awhile, I heard something go "Smack!" We had run into the bank. His anchor did not hold. He did not have something just right.

Spiritually speaking, this is happening to a lot of people. If you do not get the anchor right, you will drift, and before you realize it, you have moved from where you once were. You must stop and ask yourself if you are truly anchored in Jesus. Or maybe I should ask, Does your anchor hold?

I want you to see that you need to heed the warning signs. Drifting is dangerous because many obstacles are in the way. You can hit an obstacle and not even know it until it does much damage. The worst danger in drifting is that it happens so slowly that people are in danger before they ever realize it. They have drifted off from that place of safety before they ever realize it. I am glad for the old song that says He will send out a lifeboat. God will still rescue drifters if they will come to Him. One songwriter wrote a song entitled "Ship

Ahoy!" The third verse says:

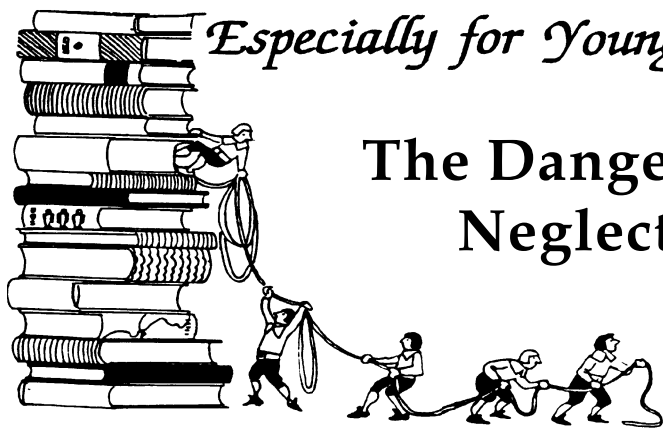
*The good captain commanded a  
boat to be low' red,  
And with tender compassion He  
took me on board;  
And I'm happy today, all my sins  
washed away  
In the blood of my Savior, and now  
I can say,  
Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!  
From my soul I can say: Bless the  
Lord!*

How did God do it? Someone yelled: "Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!" Dear one, you can be rescued. There is hope if you will come to Christ and let Him help you. Through the subtleness of everyday living, has the enemy of your soul caused you to drift? Are the things of God as important to you as they once were? Are the people of God still as precious to you as they once were? Does the Word of God still mean to you what it once did? If you are not careful, the enemy will cause you to drift away from those things, and all the while he is taking you away from the safety of God.

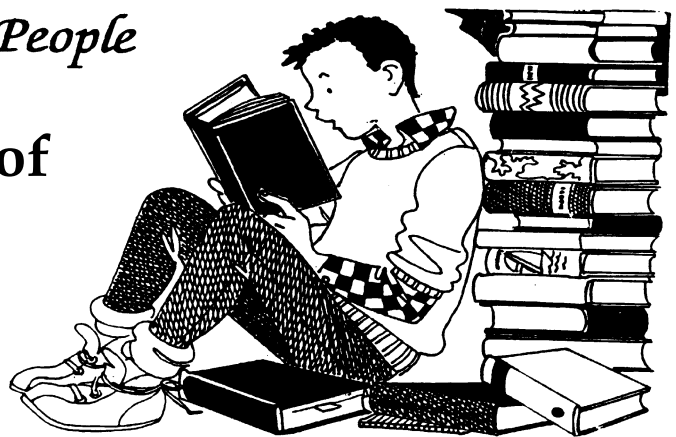
I pray that God will help you. All it takes is a little folding of the hands, and you can drift off and miss the greatest opportunity that any person can ever have. Are you where you need to be with God or has the enemy of your soul slowly caused you to drift? Even when your conscience would speak to you, the devil will say, "Oh, you are all right," yet he is leading you further away from safety. Dear one, if you are drifting, you need to plead with God to help you before it is too late and you miss the chance of having a home in Heaven.

*(Compact Disc TR-1466)*

*Especially for Young People*



## The Danger of Neglect



Hebrews 2:1-3 instructs: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip [the margin says that the word 'slip' as it is used here is to run out, as a leaking vessel]. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"

We now will mention a few important dangers in neglect. We know that if a business man is careless and neglectful to keep his stock of goods up and in good order and does not take interest in trying to please his customers, he soon will lose his business and go bankrupt. Also, we know that most calamities and accidents are caused by neglect. Many times people suffer hunger and cold because they neglect to prepare while they have the opportunity.

We read in the Word of God of a few cases of sad neglect. In the parable of the ten virgins, the five foolish virgins who had their lamps go out failed to prepare enough so that they had sufficient oil in their vessels. When the midnight cry came, they found that they were not ready all because they had neglected to prepare themselves with oil. You

can read about this in Matthew, Chapter 25.

In Acts, Chapter 25, you can read how King Agrippa, when he was convinced of his need of this great salvation, put it off through neglect. You cannot read of his ever having another opportunity. You can also read of Felix in Acts, Chapter 24, when he was brought right up to that all-important question regarding the salvation of his soul, trembled, but put it off and neglected to accept that wonderful opportunity, the salvation of the soul.

Have you put this question off from time to time like Felix, thinking you would find a more convenient time? If so, let me warn you. Whether young or old, time waits for no man. The Word of God informs you that now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation. Oh, do not procrastinate and put it off, young person. Procrastination is the thief of time. Opportunity soon passes. The Word of God tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Your soul's salvation should be first, for we read in Jeremiah 8:20, "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Oh, what a sad picture to see people live carelessly, neglecting the salvation of their souls until the evening sun is sinking in their lives, and still they put off the salvation of their souls! All

the time they, like Felix, look for a more convenient time. Young person, do not neglect your soul's salvation.

If you have sought and obtained this wonderful salvation through Jesus, you should not neglect to do all you can to help those who are lost to find this great salvation. If you neglect to do what you can to help those who are lost through your neglect, you will not be found faultless at His coming.

A few years ago after I had spoken on this subject, a lady came to me weeping and told me how she had been impressed to visit a neighbor who was not a Christian and tell him of this wonderful Christ who died to save the lost. She, like many others, put it off for a more convenient time. Soon she heard of the instant and sad death of her friend. Then she had, through procrastination and neglect, lost her opportunity.

In Matthew 24:44 Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Young person, with these few words, out of the sincerity of my heart, I beg you in Jesus' name, please do not put off this great question, and through neglect, at last lose your soul.

Selected

Genesis 8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;

2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:

7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters

were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her unto him into the ark.

10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;

11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

12 And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed

abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:

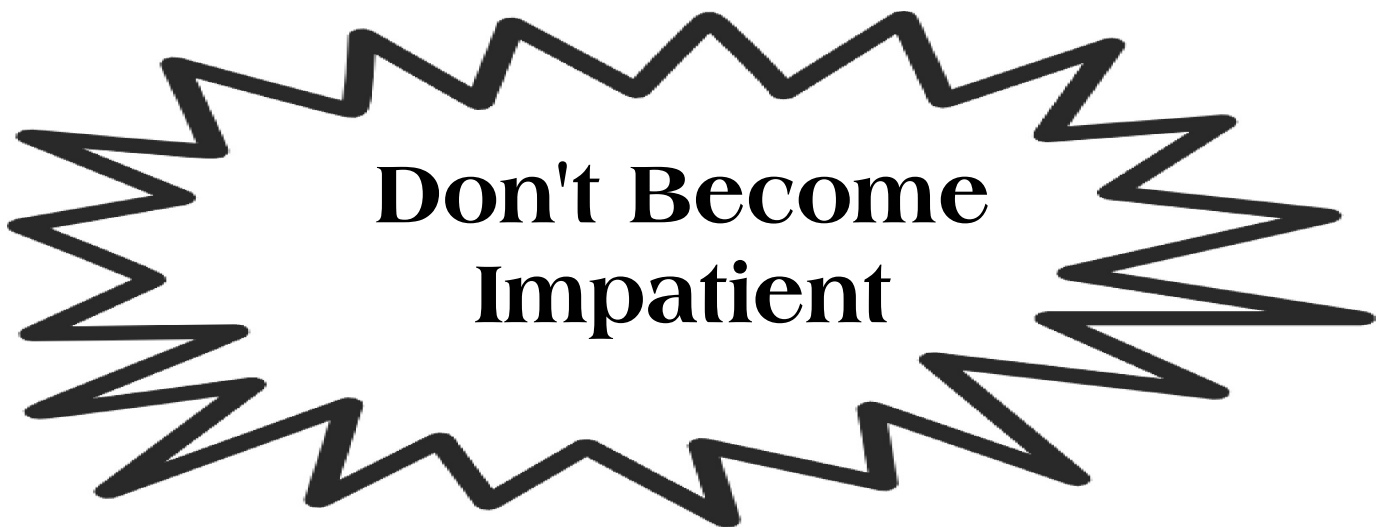
19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

1 Peter 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited [the Amplified Bible says, 'When God's patience waited'] in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.



## Don't Become Impatient

Brother Reggie Stegmeier

## A Universal Need

As I read this passage of Scripture, I saw allusions and references made to time. We see in verse 3 a reference to one hundred fifty days. Verse 4 mentions the seventh month, verse 5 mentions the tenth month, verse 6 mentions forty days, verse 10 mentions seven days, and verse 12 mentions another seven days. Verse 13 speaks of the six hundredth and first year, and verse 14 speaks of the second month. As I read this, I thought of the patience of Noah as he was in the ark and of how he followed God's process and God's commands. When God told Noah to wait, he waited, whether it was seven more days or another couple of months. I believe we have before us a beautiful lesson on patience. I want to deal with the thought of patience, not only during difficult times of suffering but also when things are moving slowly.

The word *impatient* means "having or showing a tendency to be quickly irritated or provoked; restlessly eager; irritation with anything that causes delay; a restless desire for change and excitement." Being impatient is to feel and show hostility toward or at least about things that obstruct, frustrate, or delay one's goals. Impatient people resent being held up, whether intentionally or accidentally. They want things to happen the way they want them to happen, but in serving God often things do not work this way. Even when you are out in the world, people can act in an impatient manner, but many times they ruin their lives and make a mess of things. Had Noah become impatient and ripped a hole in the side of the ark to try to get out sooner, he and everyone else aboard the ark would have perished, but Noah refused to become impatient; that is a message to us all.

We work with precious young people often and tell them not to become impatient, because God has a plan for each of their lives. As I look back at my own life, I can recall that many voices said: "Do this" or "Why don't you do that? Things are not happening quickly enough." I feel that I am where God would have me to be, and God has blessed me with an awesome family and job. God has blessed me far beyond what I could have ever imagined.

It is important that, as saints of God, we do not lose sight of these fundamental truths. I cannot think of anything that ruins lives and spoils God's plans more frequently and more horrifically than impatience. Hebrews 10:35-39 reads: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward [the Bible lets you know that you cast it away by becoming impatient]. For ye have need of patience [this is a universal need], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

### Exercising Patience

Have you ever felt that your patience has run out? How about as a parent? Do you need more patience to raise your children? Parents need patience to raise children. What a great responsibility! You need to think about how the mind of a child works and how he is learning. Some parents may think: "Oh, he ought to know this. He ought to understand. I told him once." How many times has God had to tell you more than once? This is only one avenue of life where we need

patience.

When you exercise patience, God is able to work the way He wants to work and supply your need the way He sees fit. If you relax and let God take control and exercise patience, God can move just the way He wants to move. Some people rush to new jobs. Sometimes young people rush into a marriage or some other situations to fulfill some transient, earthly, fleshly, or short-lived desires, and then what do they have? Possibly a scarred name or a lost reputation. They may see a desire fulfilled momentarily, and then they suffer days, months, years, or even a lifetime of heartaches. Many reap eternally because they do not take heed to messages such as this.

Many people fail to receive all that God has in store for them because they become impatient. Many people never see what God has promised them because their patience has run out. Saint, do not become impatient. Romans 15:4 states, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime [referring to the Old Testament] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

I want you to look at an Old Testament passage of Scripture. It ought to really inspire your faith and trust in God. Looking back to our Scripture reading in Genesis, consider the order of events aboard the ark and the process from the time Noah boarded the ark until he left it. Let us look at the patience Noah manifested.

Can you imagine the anxiety, the fears, and the questions Noah must have had as they boarded the ark? How about the questions he might have had to field from his children, his daughters-in-law, and his wife? Perhaps one of them said: "Noah, we have never seen rain like this. Do you mean



it is going to rain and flood the whole earth? How long will we have to travel in the ark?" Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Preachers have to field lots of questions such as those. Noah was a prophet and a preacher of righteousness. Perhaps Noah himself had some questions.

Verse 3 lets us know that after one hundred fifty days aboard the ark, it stopped raining. In these verses we see a little hope brought to Noah. Verse 4 lets us know that five months from the time the flood began, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Verse 5 lets us know that two and a half months later, as the waters continued to subside, other mountain peaks began to appear. Then verse 6 states that forty days later Noah opened the window of the ark.

I want you to notice that Noah did not peek out to see if the rain had ceased or to see if there was any dry ground on which to take the animals and his family, but rather Noah sent forth a raven until the waters had dried up off the earth. Noah probably could have tried to climb up and look out, but he did not do that. He followed God's process for deliverance, which took great faith and patience.

### **Following God's Plan**

God has a plan for each of us that we must follow. Noah had great faith in God, and it was that faith that motivated and governed his actions. Genesis 8:8 tells us, "Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground." Then Noah sent forth a dove to see if there was dry ground. Verse 9 says the dove that Noah sent out found no dry ground on which to rest, so she returned to the ark. Still, Noah and his family waited patiently inside the ark, or with the Lord. Certainly, this is a type

of New Testament salvation.

Young person, you should not get impatient and run out on your own to see needs fulfilled. God has everything you need right in the house of God. It is my opinion that these dating sites are not good. If you found your companion that way and you are blessed in having a good marriage, that is God's mercy; that is not His plan. In the church is where you should look to find friendship and companionship. This is where we find the Lord.

We encourage our young people to attend every youth function that they can attend. They should get involved in the things of God, and God will bless. Certainly, God can bring ones in and get them saved, but let them get saved first, and then let them get established and show fruits of repentance before you even consider dating that person.

Have you ever put forth great effort to travel? You packed your car and started out, and it seemed kind of exciting until an hour or two passed, and then you got really anxious, thinking: "Wow! I cannot wait to get there." What is the first thing you want to do once you arrive? You want to get out of the vehicle. We do not find that with this account of Noah. They got there and had to wait some more. God was teaching some lessons there. Look at all the effort put into this journey and how slow the process was, yet Noah and his family remained patient through it all. Consider how remarkable this account is and what a lesson it is for us.

Verse 10 says that Noah waited seven more days, and then he sent forth a dove. In verse 11 we read that the dove returned this time with an olive leaf in her mouth, so Noah knew the waters had decreased and there was dry ground. What hope that must have brought to

Noah and his family! Verse 12 tells us that still another week passed, and Noah sent forth the dove again, but this time she did not return. Bear in mind that during this time Noah could have peeked out, but we do not read of that.

Noah refused to become impatient with God. Oh, how we need more of this kind of devotion and courage in our experiences. He refused to become impatient with God. Many people try to put God on a timetable. They think, "God, if You move in such-and-such time, I will trust You; but if not, I will trust in man." That is dangerous. God does not work on a timetable necessarily. He created time, and He can stop time if He needs to. He is in control of time, and He moves as He sees fit. That is the reason we must trust Him.

### **Tribulation Works Patience**

Finally, when Noah was six hundred one years of age, ten and a half months after the flood began, Noah was commanded to remove the cover of the ark and survey the world around him. However, Noah still was not commanded to get out of the ark. What a lesson on patience!

Verse 14 tells us that two more months passed before the entire ground was finally dry enough to get out of the ark. In verse 15, after more than twelve months aboard the ark, God spoke what must have been welcome and much desired words. We read in verse 16 of our Scripture text that God told Noah, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee."

What was the first thing Noah did after he obeyed the Lord and saw God move on his behalf? Verse 20 states, "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD." In other words, he worshiped God. The Bible lets us

know that God accepted his sacrifice. Why? Noah had been patient. Had Noah refused God or rushed God in the divine order of events that He planned for Noah's life, he would not have received the promise.

The patience that Noah manifested was not something learned overnight, nor was it something that Noah was born with. Patience is not an intrinsic quality of our beings or our lives. It is something that is learned through experience. What kinds of experiences? It is not just any kind of experiences, but through trials and difficult experiences. Patience is something that must be learned. It was not something that Noah read about in a book. It was not something he was told by others. The patience Noah exuded in the events surrounding the Flood were learned by experience.

Romans 5:1-4 reads: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [Tribulation will make us more influential in the Kingdom of God. It will provide more comfort to others as we go through tribulation with patience. Job lost it all, but he refused to do as his wife said, 'Curse God, and die.' Job refused to become impatient.] And patience, experience; and experience, hope."

Trials and suffering teach us many things, including patience. Job said in Job 32:7, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." In other words, as we travel this course of life, we should learn by the things we suffer. Many people make foolish decisions and continue to make foolish decisions. If

you are a seasoned saint, you should be wiser than the younger ones, and you should have some experience and wise words to share with those who are younger in the things of God.

When you pray for patience, what inevitably happens? Patience comes through trials; it does not travel any other way. If you pray for patience, and you should because we all need it, do not be alarmed when trials come. Hebrews 5:8, speaking of Christ, our supreme example, states, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." To remain obedient to God, you must be patient.

Following the Lord takes patience. You may look on and say, "But, Lord, why not go this way?" He may say: "No, just follow Me. I know which way to go. I see all things, and I see your end." The Bible tells us that Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered.

Let us consider the patience of Job. James 5:11 reads, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." How about the patience of Noah? Noah learned much in obedience and patience.

### **God's Abundant Grace**

Child of God, do not be alarmed as you get into your twilight years. You have deeper roots, and God knows what you can take. Noah was five hundred years of age when he began his ministry, and he was more than six hundred years of age when he entered the ark. He was no longer young, but no doubt, that was how he could handle such tremendous difficulties and trials. I like the song entitled "He Giveth More Grace." The first verse reads:

*He giveth more grace when  
the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when  
the labors increase;  
To added afflictions He addeth  
His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied  
peace.*

Have you ever considered how the songs that we sing were born out of great adversity? I have. I have written many songs, and many of my songs came by difficult experiences or by witnessing others going through difficult experiences. Annie Johnson Flint, who penned this song, lost both of her parents before she was six years of age. Next, she became afflicted with arthritis as a teen. Soon thereafter she was unable to walk. She wanted to be a composer and to play the piano, but her illness and her affliction did not allow her to do that, so she began to write poetry. Later in life, she was unable to open her hands, but she wrote many poems on a typewriter using her knuckles. She penned that song, and it has touched thousands of hearts. The song continues:

*When we have exhausted our store  
of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere  
the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of  
our hoarded resources  
Our Father's full giving is  
only begun.*

*Fear not that thy need shall exceed  
His provision,  
Our God ever yearns His resources  
to share;  
Lean hard on the arm everlasting,  
availing;  
The Father both thee and thy load  
will upbear.*

*His love has no limits, His grace  
has no measure,  
His power no boundary known  
unto men;*

*For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth  
again.*

There is grace and strength from God that is not given in the everyday routine of life. It is only seen in the most difficult trials. That is where you really feel the grace. Often you do not really see God's grace in everyday life because there is no reason for it. Some days life is easy. You merely go about your daily routine. However, it is when you get in the tough spots that you need His grace. God has abundant grace for you when troubles and trials come upon you. May you know His added grace, His increased strength, and His multiplied peace.

Many years ago, a missionary suffered a great deal and was somewhat discouraged about the time this song came out. Someone sent this missionary a recording of the song, and as the individual sat down and began to listen, it got to the part that says, "He giveth, and giveth, and giveth," and the needle got stuck. It said, "He giveth, and giveth, and giveth, and giveth, and giveth, and giveth, and giveth again." The missionary talked about how it blessed his soul and provided him with comfort in that dark hour.

### **Noah Did All That God Commanded Him**

You should not become impatient. God has been good. Noah had great patience, and no doubt he learned it through trials. Let us look at some events that led up to the building of the ark. Where did this patience come from? As I said, it came through the trials and the difficult places that Noah experienced.

Genesis 7:1-5 tells us: "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the

ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."

The reason humanity, outside of Noah's family, did not enter the ark was twofold. First, there was something in and about the present world that the people were not willing to give up. They just were not willing to part ways and get onboard the ark with Noah. Second, they did not believe the message Noah was heralding. These things affect the world yet today. People do not want to remain patient. They do not want to follow the counsel of God because something in this world has their attention or their eyes, or they just do not believe what the minister is laying out before them.

The Bible is the most concise record of history. As you read it, you need to allow God to talk to you. Noah had to deal with his own immediate family, but the responsibilities around him were tremendous. Oh, how we need to allow difficult places to teach us.

Can you imagine the mockery that Noah and his family must have endured when they went into the ark with the animals and nothing happened for seven days? They probably had many jobs to attend to, but there they were aboard the ark seven more days. This is a type of the Gospel dispensation. There they were, yet no rain. Oh, how they remained patient! Genesis 7:23

says, "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

Imagine laboring hard for God and only seeing your family make it. Only his immediate family — eight souls — entered the ark. That in no way minimizes the importance of seeing your family make it to Heaven. Our families are most certainly our greatest mission field.

### **Staying Aboard the Ark**

I want you to notice and bear in mind that all of Noah's family stayed aboard the ark for the entire journey. Not one of them exited the ark until Noah heard from God that it was time to get off. Those children realized that the ark was their only hope of survival. So it is today. Salvation is our only hope of eternal survival. Fellowship with the saints and direction from a godly pastor is the only way to keep and maintain salvation. That is the reason it is so important to get to church every service you possibly can to hear from God and not miss the services because that service may have the direction you need for the problem you are facing.

If you have even one child, you have a great responsibility, let alone six or eight or twelve. Although children are a real blessing, they are a tremendous responsibility. You need to heed the words of your pastor, which he gets from God. We all need that for the difficult places in life. We face them every day. Oh, how we need God! There is too much getting on and off the boat, so to speak. Again, Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives got aboard the ark and stayed

there. They realized that taking one step off meant their desolation and eternal damnation — just jumping off once.

So it is with many people today. They leave a thriving congregation and never return. Oh, physically they may come back, but spiritually, often they never return. There is too much traveling when all is well, and then they quit when faced with an adverse situation. When you truly get salvation, you will do all you can to retain that experience. First Peter 5:10 reads, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect [the Amplified Bible says 'complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you'], stablish, strengthen, settle you." This is what God wants to do for you through the difficult places.

Genesis 6:8 says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Noah found God's grace, and His grace strengthened and settled Noah. Noah's children did not just have the ark and God. They had Noah, God's man, providing them with constant leadership and direction. We need pastors and ministers to provide people with direction. Noah got his direction from God, and Noah's children got their direction from Noah. Certainly they could talk to God as well, but Noah was the head of that operation, the head of that experience, and they talked to Noah.

The Bible lets us know that Noah had control of his home, and his children were obedient and patient under his leadership. We do not read that they fought him aboard the boat: "What? I have to go feed the lions?" They were patient, and they obeyed Noah. We do not read about the animals dying or having any sicknesses aboard the boat. God

provided, while all around them were tempests and adverse situations.

Often I think about our country, and people paint such a dark picture. I realize there is much wickedness out there, but I would not want to live anywhere else. I thank God for America. I appreciate our country. We need to pray for our country. People talk about the dark time that we live in. Would you have wanted to live when Jesus lived, when King Herod reigned and commanded that all babies two years of age and younger be killed? How would you have liked to have raised your children in that day? We are blessed far more than we realize. God has been so good to us!

God provided for Noah and his family aboard the ark. They came off the boat because God watched over them, protected them, and He provided for them. God wants to do that for us.

Noah's sons and daughters-in-law were normal children. They had questions, concerns, and worries just as we have. We do not have any reason to believe otherwise. No doubt, they came to Noah with questions about their faith and God's leading in their lives. They probably questioned where they were going to land. We are made to believe that Noah and his companion counseled their children in the ways of God and led them in the law of the Lord, because they all got on the ark and stayed there for the whole journey.

### **Do Not Grow Weary in Well Doing**

In 2 Peter 2:5 we found that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. We also found that after the Flood, when God addressed Noah and his sons in Genesis, Chapter 9, God's blessing fell upon Noah and his sons. This lets us know that Noah's

children followed his counsel and instructions; consequently, they were also obedient to the Lord.

God further developed, refined, and perfected Noah's patience by placing him in charge of the many animals that would be called aboard the ark. What a responsibility that must have been for Noah and his family! Noah had to care for and watch out for not only the animals but also his wife, his sons, and their wives and their essential survival needs. They were human, just as we are. They had basic needs just as we have, and those needs had to be supplied. They had to eat and sleep, and they had all the other basic needs that we all have.

Who provided for all these needs? They had sanitation and hygiene needs that had to be tended to. We do not know how all of this came about, but God does. The secret things belong to the Lord.

Can you imagine the list of chores Noah's sons must have had, tending to all the animals? It must have been tremendous. Imagine the amount of patience it must have taken to oversee that tremendous responsibility. Did God take care of all their needs? He most certainly did. Through it all, as far as the Scripture bears record of it, Noah remained patient.

There was only one way out of the impending destruction, and that was by getting aboard the ark. So it is today. There is but one way to obtain what we are after, one way to get our needs met and to see our desires fulfilled: get into the ark and stay aboard; do not get off. God will give you everything you desire and everything you need when you get into the ark, and you will flourish. You should not have any bad attitudes, but you need to get into the ark and flourish in the things of God. You need to get active and have a good atti-

tude, and God will supply your needs.

Sometimes we look back and think, "How did we ever make it through those hard times?" We know it was because of God. There have been many wonderful times as well. We have also experienced some difficult learning experiences. Some have made decisions that have changed their lives forever.

I want to encourage you not to become impatient. The Bible says not to grow weary in well doing, for in due season you will reap if you faint not. In another place in the Word of God, it says that God will move at just the right time. Obtaining things in life takes time. The sooner you realize this, the better off you will be. Nothing of great value is obtained without a great price. That price is often paid by giving your time, your energy, your finances, and your interest in what you are seeking. Young person, while you might have many desires in life, do not get impatient with seeing those desires met and your needs supplied. The more important that desire is, the more time it is going to take to see that need met, and the more crucial it is that you remain patient.

In life patience is absolutely required. Patience is required to obtain a college degree. Do not rush in life. Everything of value takes time. Patience is necessary in buying a car or in buying a house. Patience is necessary in obtaining a lifelong companion. Young person, I cannot emphasize this point enough: do not become impatient. God is working with us, and He is not finished with us. In the end if we will remain patient, it will be a beautiful picture. It is so important not to become impatient.

You may say, "But, Lord, I do not see anyone, and I am twenty-four years old." Again, do not be impatient. God sees, and He cares. An adage says, "A job

worth doing is worth doing well." I could say, "A goal worth reaching is worth taking your time to reach."

How about the gestation period of different mammals? We see patience in nature all around us. Elephants take about two years before they bear their young. A full-term human baby takes about nine months, and doctors will tell you there can be severe consequences if you rush the process. When man gets involved in human pregnancy, many times they do great damage. If only they would let God work.

So it is in your individual Christian experience. God sees the end, and He is looking at a much different picture than we are. He is looking at life in its whole perspective. You are only looking at a little snapshot. Romans 8:28 tells us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." The Word of God does not say that everything will look wonderful; He said all things work together for good. That is a part of a much larger picture of refining, making you brighter and making you more like Jesus. How does He do this? It is through difficulties and trials. God wants us to have patience.

### **The Butterfly Story**

There is a story told of a butterfly. A little boy who was playing outdoors found a fascinating caterpillar, and he carefully picked it up to take it home to show his mother. He asked his mother if he could keep it. Well, she looked at it and thought it might teach the child some lessons on taking care of insects, animals, and so forth. She decided to let the little boy keep the caterpillar. He got a large jar from his mother and put in plants for it to eat and a stick for

it to climb on. Every day he watched the caterpillar and brought it fresh plants to eat.

One day the caterpillar began to climb up the stick and started to act strangely. The boy worriedly called his mother. When she watched it, she understood that the caterpillar was creating a cocoon. The mother explained to the boy how the caterpillar was going to go through metamorphosis, or a change, to become a butterfly. The little boy was thrilled to hear about the changes this caterpillar would go through, so he watched anxiously every day, waiting for the butterfly to emerge at any moment. One day it happened. A small hole appeared in the cocoon and the butterfly started to struggle to come out.

At first, the boy was excited, but soon he became concerned. The butterfly was struggling so hard to get out. He thought surely he ought to reach in and help. Although it looked as if it could break free at any time, it looked desperate. Sometimes it looked as if it was making no progress at all. (Have you ever felt that way?) The boy was so concerned that he decided to help it. He ran and got some scissors, but he walked back because he knew his mother had told him not to run through the house with scissors. So he walked back to the container and snipped the cocoon to make the hole larger, and the butterfly emerged quickly.

As the butterfly came out, the boy was surprised. It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. He continued to watch the butterfly, expecting that the wings would dry out at any moment and enlarge and expand and support the swollen body. He was sure that in time the body would shrink and the butterfly's wings would expand, but neither happened. The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with its swollen

body and shriveled wings. It never did fly.

As the boy tried to figure out what had gone wrong, his mother took him to see a scientist from a local college, and he learned that the butterfly was supposed to struggle. He learned that the butterfly's struggle to push its way through the tiny opening in the cocoon was to push the fluids out of its body and into its wings. Without that struggle the butterfly would never fly. You see, the boy's good intentions actually hurt the butterfly.

Often we want to rush and help as our children struggle. As one beautiful song expresses, God picks a valley, or a trial. God knows that this one needs more long-suffering in his life so that Jesus might shine brighter. Maybe he needs to understand God's works in a greater way, or God's timetable, or perhaps he needs more patience.

Things that happen to a saint of God do not just arbitrarily happen. God has a design and a plan. It is silly even to think that, when God created this universe and created you and me, He would arbitrarily allow things to happen. No, God has something beautiful in mind for you. He has a bright future for every one of you. He loves to see you prosper in the things of God, but there is something that you must remember. When something stands in your way, often it is when you become too busy or too anxious, and you begin to move when God says not to move. Perhaps you become impatient.

### **Patiently Enduring Situations**

Our Scripture reading tells us in verse 1, "And God remembered Noah." If you are in a battle, or a struggle, God will remember you, because He loves and cares about you. It is actually His love for you that sent the struggle your way. I am going to

leave a question with you: Have you need of more patience?

Hebrews 10:36 lets us know that we all have need of patience. As I said earlier in the message, it is a universal need, so when I ask if you have need of patience, it is a rhetorical question, because the response from all of us should be, "Yes, I could bear this trial with more patience and more kindness." Some people become mean and bitter when they go through difficult places. When patience runs out, bitterness and resentment often set in. They begin to hate the things they once loved. Sometimes people make statements such as, "I am waiting on God to answer my prayer" or "I am waiting on God to move." Perhaps God is waiting on you. He may be waiting on you to trust Him or to put your full trust in Him. He may be waiting on you to put your hope in Him. He may be waiting on you to calm down a bit.

Is patience operating as it ought to in your life? As others look on, do they see you patiently enduring difficult situations? Do they see you laughed at from time to time for the Gospel's sake, yet patiently enduring it? How about your children, parents? That is the true test. You may go to church and look pious and saintly, but how is it in your home? What does your salvation amount to in your home? Salvation is not a garment that you put on only when you leave home. It

is something that you must possess all day long.

As a mother, do you have all the patience you need to work with your children? Patience extends to all of us. It takes patience to work with children, and it takes patience to work with each of us. The Bible lets us know that in Noah's day, God exuded patience. He let the world go on for some two thousand years in that wickedness. He had great patience.

How about in praying for a lost loved one? You may need patience and long-suffering to see that need supplied. Are you finding rest amidst the storms of life? Are you finding rest right now in your experience with Jesus? Are you honest enough to admit that you need patience? Jesus said in John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

If you have need of patience, God wants you to be honest with Him and to be honest with your companion and your children: "Yes, I could exude more patience in my life." If you will be honest, God will give you the patience that you stand in need of. I realize that one prayer will not give you all the patience you need, but it is a starting point, and you have to start the right way. You need to humble yourself before God so that He may exalt you in due time.

*(Compact Disc TR-1472)*

**Reckon him a Christian indeed who is not ashamed of the Gospel nor a shame to it.**

*Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.*

*Colossians 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught,*

*abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

# Consider the Trees



*Brother Leamon Whitehead*

## **The Importance of Being Rooted and Grounded**

Many Scriptures declare that if you are going to be faithful in the things of God, run the race with patience, and make Heaven your home, you must have a good anchor. Sometimes you need to ask yourself if your anchor is holding. If your anchor is not holding, you are not going to make it. Jesus invited the people in Matthew 6:28 to "Consider the lilies." He went on to tell them a beautiful story about the lilies. A beautiful song was written about that. I would like to ask you to consider the trees. I want to talk to you about being rooted and grounded. I believe that is a picture that is easily understood.

In this message we will not consider all the trees, but one in particular. I like to think about the giant redwood trees. Trees are not merely a piece of wood,

but they are alive. When God created the world and the things in it, He made many different forms of life. As I began to think on this message and study for it, I thought about how we humans have some things in common with all the other forms of life that God made. Every form of life is encased in something that gives it protection from the elements, disease, and infection. Our form of protection is the skin. From head to toe, we have skin, and we would certainly be at a great disadvantage if we did not have it.

The giant redwood tree reaches heights of more than three hundred feet. I read about one that was more than three hundred seventy-nine feet tall. My message is concerning being rooted and grounded. The only thing that holds that giant tree upright is the root system. Now, God created man upright. We

stand on two feet, but I want to compare this with the spiritual things of God. In order to be what God would have us to be, we must be rooted and grounded in the Truth.

In Matthew's Gospel, concerning the seed sower, Jesus talked about the seed falling on stony ground, and He said it sprang up quickly. However, as soon as the heat arose, it wilted away because it did not have any roots. A tree would have no way to stand without a root system. Likewise, we do not have any way to stand unless we are rooted and grounded in the things of God. The Word has to be entwined in our lives. We have to be rooted in faith, in love, in Truth, and in the doctrine of God to where we can stand and withstand the storms of life.

The Apostle Paul said nothing can separate you from the love of God. We are more than

conquerors through Him that loved us, but we must have a strong anchor. Friend, you must not be moved about by every wind of doctrine, or every little test and trial that comes your way.

Think of the redwood tree standing three hundred feet tall, and the only thing holding it upright is the root system. Friend, if you get rooted and grounded in the Truth, nothing can move you away from hope, and nothing can move you away from the Truth of God's Eternal Word. Many Scriptures throughout the Bible let you know how important it is to walk close to God and to keep that love burning in your heart. You must stay close to Him in the Truth, being all that He would have you to be.

### **God's Protective Covering**

As I began to think about the redwood tree, I found some more similarities to human life. Both are subject to disease and injuries, and both can bleed to death. Our life is in the blood, but the tree's life is in the sap. Have you ever trimmed grapevines or cut the limbs off a tree at a certain time? They will bleed and bleed. Now, man is the apex of God's creation. The other forms of life are considered to be lower. As I mentioned earlier, God made several forms of life, but all of them have a covering for protection against the elements, against disease, and so on. Therefore, we have certain things in common.

I want to give you some things to think about. Man takes in oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide; the tree takes in carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. The more you learn about nature, the more you can see the divine hand of God in Creation. God knew what He was doing, and it all works beautifully. He has never had to go back and rework anything and say, "I messed up a

little there." Consider how certain things replenish themselves. Everything that God made in the thought of life is able to reproduce itself. In the beginning God set it all in motion, and it has been working fine since He created it.

The human body is covered with skin. The tree is completely sealed in bark; that is its covering. I have been told that if you were to cut through the bark completely all the way around the tree, it would die because that would cut off its life supply. The human body is able to send an army of white blood cells to an infected area. Is that not wonderful? Praise God! God set all of that in motion. When the body detects something wrong, or something is trying to infect it, the body reacts by sending out that army.

The tree, because it is alive, has some healing abilities. When the body gets a cut or an abrasion, it will scab over and heal. A tree reacts in much the same way, but it will not do it immediately. If you were to cut off a limb next to the trunk, that would leave a portion of the tree vulnerable. Depending on how large the limb was, the tree could start to decay. However, that tree has the ability to grow bark over that. Have you ever seen that? It takes a while, but it will cover that area. I am sharing these things with you to show some similarities. If that tree does not heal, it will soon start to decay and rot will set in. You see, you could not go without your skin. It is a protection from being vulnerable to so many things.

The main point of this message is that you need to be rooted and grounded in Christ so that you can stand the storms that come your way. You do not have to give up. You do not have to fall. You do not have to faint by the way. God is and will give you everything you need to be

successful in your Christian experience. He would not let a storm come your way that you could not withstand. You should never say, "This storm is too great, so I have to give up." No, God will not send one your way that is too great, but He will give you strength to go on and to go through that trial successfully.

### **Being Rooted and Grounded in Truth**

I want you to consider the giant redwood tree in the thought of being rooted and grounded so that you might get a better understanding of being rooted and grounded in the things of God. Oh, the wisdom of God! Sometimes it is overwhelming when I think of how wonderfully God has designed all the things He has set in motion. Many times we do not consider them or we take them for granted. God gave the giant redwood tree something that would hold it steadfastly. He did that for a tree, and He does the same for you so that you do not have to be blown about. You can stand every test. You do not have to be in and out in your Christian experience. You can last from one year to the next and still walk with God. Why? Because you are rooted and grounded, and that holds you steadfast.

The redwood tree is a simple but powerful example in our Scripture lesson on the importance of being rooted and grounded. Can you imagine the amount of leverage that would be exerted on the root system of a tree that is three hundred feet tall tree in a windstorm? Do you understand leverage? Let me explain it this way: You cannot pick up an automobile. There is no use to strain yourself and get a hernia trying. However, you can take concrete blocks, put them down beside that car, and get a long enough pole and use it for leverage to raise it.



I want you to try to picture what it would take in the root system to hold that tree steady in a strong windstorm. Man would have to tie it down somehow, but God put something within that root system to anchor it. Being rooted and grounded in the Truth involves not only believing the Truth but also living and accepting the Truth. I am a firm believer that it gets better up the road, and the best is yet to come. I have learned that from experience. It does not matter how much the devil comes against you as an individual, how much or how hard the wind blows, or what the devil sends your way, if you have a good root system, or if you are anchored in the Lord, you will be able to withstand the wind.

The redwood tree's root system can extend as far out as one hundred feet from the tree trunk. The answer for the Christian is to get a good hold on God and do not let go. That is what the root system does. Have you ever tried to pull up a tomato plant in the fall, one that had a really good hold? Sometimes you wonder what is holding that plant down in there.

Paul mentioned being rooted and grounded in the Truth. It will produce joy in your soul and keep you going forward for God. Oh, what a journey living for God has been! I love it! A true child of God can say it is not just a part of his life, but it *is* his life.

### **Sustaining Power**

An important truth is, the redwood tree has everything it needs to stand alone. That is something to think about. As a Christian, sometimes it is easy to take courage in a crowd. Now, we do need fellowship; that is God's way. However, God gives you the ability to be strong enough to stand, even if you have to stand alone. The redwood tree

can stand by itself, or it can stand in a thick grove. Either way, it is standing.

Now, I do not have any proof of the statement that I am going to make, other than what I have already mentioned concerning a tree's ability, but I believe the tree's root system has the ability to make adjustments should the tree get out of balance. For example, sometimes the power company will come down the street and cut off half a tree's top. Previously, the tree's branches were balanced, but the top half is no longer balanced after they cut it back severely. I believe that root system has the ability to strengthen the side where the limbs have been cut off. I do not have any proof of that except for what I have learned about some other things that I have shared with you about the tree.

If the tree could speak, I do not believe for a moment that the tree would say, "Well, it has been nice, but it looks like I am going to have to lie down." I believe that it would strengthen that root system. Remember, it is only by the root system that it is standing. All of its ability to stand comes through the root system. In time of drought, the tree would not say, "Well, it was good while it lasted, but I guess it is over." No, it would go on. That root system would probably go on down deeper to hunt for water.

Do you know what Job said? There is hope for a tree if it is cut down. Through the scent of water, it will sprout again. It almost sounds like it is trying to tell the tree how to smell. Through the scent of water, those roots are looking for water. The tree has the ability to help sustain itself because it is alive, and it can detect water.

I hope you will think on these things. Oh, what a thought of the importance of being rooted and grounded in the things of God! When it comes to serving God,

there is no exception. It is not an option to be rooted and grounded in the things of God. If you are going to make it, you have to be rooted and grounded. You will have to dig deep and put your roots down.

I thought about how sometimes you can tell when someone moves in from another state or from another part of town. If they leave their belongings in boxes and do not unpack anything, you would figure they will be gone after a while. On the other hand, when people are going to stay, what do they do? They start putting their roots down. No doubt, there are more similarities, but I wanted to share a few of them with you. God is good.

An open wound on a human is not good. It opens the body to infection, and that infection can kill you physically. The spiritual man has to be protected; therefore, you must stay close to God and maintain close fellowship with the saints. It is wonderful! Your salvation is not tied to me, and mine is not tied to you, but we do need fellowship. I certainly would not want anyone to think they can just be different and not listen to anyone. That is not what I am saying. You cannot make it on someone else's faith. You must have strength to stand.

Have you ever had times in your life when you felt all alone? That is no time to throw your hands up and quit, because one man and God is a majority. You have the ability to stand in rough places.

I thank God for the prayers of the saints, for fellowship, and for brothers and sisters who love us, care about us, pray for us, and try to encourage us. That is wonderful! We all need that. God can give you strength to stand and to be able to encourage others while you are doing that. May the Lord bless you.

*(Compact Disc TR-1998)*

# The Fate of Some Apostles

## *Andrew, the Adventurer*

This fourth Apostle who has the distinction to have led Simon Peter to Jesus, is said to have gone north into Scythia, beyond the Black Sea (now a part of southern Russia). He labored in Thrace (Bulgaria). Also, his sincere voice rang out in Asia Minor (Turkey). Then across the Aegean Sea westward into Achaia (southern Greece). It was in this latter country, not among the fierce barbarians of Scythia, that he won a martyr's crown.

After having led many to the faith, the governor, Aegaeas, hearing of Andrew's mighty influence in overthrowing the worship of false gods, had him arrested and brought into his presence. He demanded of Andrew that he should cease preaching; otherwise, he would be fastened to a cross with all speed.

The Apostle Andrew replied, "I would not have preached the honor and glory of the Cross if I had feared the death of the cross." At once, he was hastened to the place of execution. The cross upon which he was to hang was visible for some distance. When he saw it, an ecstasy of joy burst like a song from his lips: "O cross, most welcome and longed for! With a willing mind, joyfully

and desirously, I come to thee, being the scholar of him which did hang on thee: because I have always been thy lover, and have coveted to embrace thee."

## *Philip, the First Follower*

This man probably was the first disciple of Jesus. It was he who said to Nathaniel, "Come and see." In other words, he was saying, "Come and see the One whom I am convinced is the Messiah." This man, though slow to comprehend the meanings of his new faith, nevertheless was unswerving as the North Star in the heavens.

Philip became a missionary to the barbarous peoples of Phrygia, an undefined country on the western Asia peninsula. At Herapolis, a city not far from Lystra where Paul was stoned, he met the same fate, having first been fastened to a cross and then pelted with stones.

## *Bartholomew, Also Known as Nathaniel*

Bartholomew, who had first heard of Jesus while sitting under a fig tree, was at once skeptical. You can read in John 1:46 that he questioned, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" However, when curiosity had over-

come caution, he came to Jesus to investigate. He was immediately convinced that before him stood the long expected Messiah, and there made a firm allegiance to the Master, which made him steadfast unto death.

His work carried him to far places of the earth, where he proclaimed with his characteristic sincerity, the One in whom he believed and to whom he belonged. In distant India, he preached and translated the Gospel of Matthew into their native tongue.

At last in Albinapolis, a city of Armenia, he met what was probably the most horrible death of the twelve. Many severe persecutions were climaxed by his being beaten down with clubs, then crucified, after which the skin was torn from his body, and in a final fling of rage, he was beheaded. One is made to wonder, if during those severe sufferings, he was not sustained by the vision of Jesus, who had promised on the day of his conversion: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51).

God has two dwellings: one in Heaven and the other in a meek and thankful heart.

Selected

# Meeting Announcements

## **MINERVA, OH**

September 5-9

**Revival:** Mt. Zion Church of God, 13353 Lincoln St. SE, Minerva, Ohio 44657

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

Service times: Wednesday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., & Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.  
(No Sunday school during the revival.)

For further information contact: Pastor Leamon Whitehead. Telephone: 330-868-1016

## **KALAMAZOO, MI**

September 10-15

**Revival:** Comstock Church of God, 555 Alger St., Kalamazoo, MI 49041

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m. & Saturday 10:00 a.m. After the Saturday morning service, a meal will be provided by the local congregation.

For further information contact: Pastor Jerry Miller. Telephone: 269-998-3194

## **CHICAGO, IL**

September 16-21

**Revival:** Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W. 14<sup>th</sup> St., Chicago, IL 60623

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

For further information contact: Pastor Aurelius Reedy Raines

Telephone: 708-7511534

## **SUMMERSVILLE, WV**

September 16-23

**Revelation Meeting:** Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651

Preaching from the Book of Revelation each service. The series begins Sunday evening.

Service times: Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m., & Saturday 6:00 p.m.

Website: [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)

For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047

## **CHICAGO, IL**

September 23

**Special Services:** Church of God, 3011 West Flounoy, Chicago, IL 60612

Evangelist: Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

For further information contact: Pastor Robbie Young. Telephone: 312-509-3947

## **MT. PLEASANT, PA**

September 24-30

**Revival:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

Evangelist: Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

For further information contact: Pastor Paul Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151

## **SUMMERSVILLE, WV**

October 22-28

**Revival:** Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651

Evangelist: Brother Irwin Seshier, Heath, Ohio

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047

## **CANBY, OR**

November 20-25

**Annual Thanksgiving & Fellowship Meeting:** Church of God, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR

Services times: Tuesday-Wednesday 7:00 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;  
and Sunday 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 552 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013  
Telephone: 503-266-9297

## **2019 Camp Meeting Dates**

**June 16-23**

**August 4-11**

**December 26-29**

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