

BIBLE LESSONS, SECOND QUARTER, 2015

THEME FOR LESSONS

The Holy Spirit has inspired us to present a series of Bible Lessons that have to do with and portray the great plan of salvation that God has brought to pass through His Son Jesus Christ. We want to bring from the Holy Scriptures what God has done to provide deliverance from sin and death and to give mankind a blessed hope for the eternal future that we all are facing. Our first lesson, being on Easter Sunday, brings out the blessing that Christ's resurrection from the dead has brought to us, that will enable us to be resurrected from the dead state of sin, to a life of righteousness and victory. Then we will endeavor to cover other important subjects, such as how sin and going astray from God's holy way has affected mankind. We trust the Lord will bless these lessons to all who partake of their study.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

APRIL 5, 2015

QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. —Colossians 3:1, 2

CENTRAL THOUGHT: When God Almighty raised up His Son Jesus Christ from death and the tomb and set Him at His own right hand in Heaven, He provided, for all who will believe and be obedient to Him, a spiritual resurrection from sin and this evil world, a blessed hope and expectation of eternal happiness, and glory with Him in the eternal world to come.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 1:18, "*eyes of your understanding*": Spiritual perception and eyesight of the inner man. "*being enlightened*": Made to be able to see clearly the wonderful truth in Christ. "*hope of his calling*": The future glory Christ is inviting us to share with Him. "*his inheritance in the saints*": What Christ joyfully possesses in the heart and life of every one who truly believes and will follow Him faithfully.

Ver. 19, "*working of his mighty power*": What God can

I used to assume sunglasses were only worn to protect ones' eyes from bright sunlight; I assumed wrongly. Many times they are worn to 'protect' a person against having to expose the thoughts and feelings their eyes might convey, also giving them 'liberty' to look where they want without 'being seen.' The thing is, we cannot put on our sunglasses in order to avoid looking into the eyes of a Holy God or to protect ourselves from Him seeing into our eyes....our hearts.

A holy life and looking into God's eyes does not have to be frightening. Yes, I am human. Yes, I sometimes falter or might fail of the grace of God. But God loves me and will give me grace to live in a manner pleasing to Him. Although I have to take up my cross daily in order to live a holy life, that same holy life will shield and protect me from the disappointment, heartache, and sadness sin brings. On that final day when every eye shall see him and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him, *a holy life* will be my salvation and allow me to long to see His face. Oh blessed day!

—Sis. Julie Elwell

5. What kind of light can we shine before people that we daily meet?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Here is a song that has blessed and inspired my heart through the years:

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY

*Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word;
Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak;
Forgetting in nothing His blessings to seek.*

*Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide.
And run not before Him whatever betide;
In joy or in sorrow, still follow thy Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.*

*Take time to be holy; be calm in thy soul;
Each thought and each motive beneath His control;
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shall be fitted for service above.*

—W. D. Longstaff

REFLECTIONS

Holiness: It is true. When Isaiah saw the holiness of the Lord, he came face to face with his uncleanness and said, "Woe is me..." When Manoah looked upon the angel of the Lord ascending in the flame of the altar, he told his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." When Simon Peter came in contact with the Master, he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." When we come face to face with the Lord, *without* salvation, we too will see our uncleanness....our ungodliness.

accomplish by His great force and energy.

Ver. 20, "*wrought*": Accomplished and made available for us. "*set*": Positioned with glorious power and authority.

Ver. 21, "*above all principality*": Triumphant over all earthly power and dominion.

Ver. 22, "*under his feet*": Subject to His rule and control. "*head over all things*": Ruler, director, and controller over things in earth and heaven. "*to the church*": For the benefit of all who are gathered together unto Him.

Ver. 21, "*Which is his body*": The Church is joyfully all who love, worship, and are truly faithful and obedient to Him. They are His joyful possession even as a man's lawful and wedded wife is to him.

Ephesians 2:1, "*quickened*": Raised from death to life.

Ver. 2, "*prince of the power of the air*": Satan, the devil.

Ver. 3, "*conversation*": Ways, behavior, and conduct.

Ver. 6, "*sit together in heavenly places*": Have unity and fellowship with one another in spiritual life.

Ver. 7, "*in the ages to come*": For all eternity!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is from the epistle of the apostle Paul to the saints at Ephesus. He offered praise and joyful blessing to the Almighty God for all the wonderful spiritual blessings He has made available to us in Christ, to enable us to overcome this sinful world and be "holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:3, 4). He spoke of the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, the wonderful gathering of the holy saints unto Him and the joyful inheritance they possess. He spoke of his concern for them and what he was praying God to give unto them. We begin our lesson with Paul's description of the wonderful blessings they would inherit through Christ.

He prayed that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened. Oh, how needful this is for every human being! The lusts of the flesh that he mentions in chapter two of our lesson blind the inner man to the spiritual blessings we really need! Oh, how good it is to have the Holy Spirit make known to our hearts the enjoyable, eternal treasures! May the Lord inspire all of us to faithfully seek the Lord and apply our hearts in prayer to experience these wonderful revelations; and turn away from sin and ungodliness, so we can obtain a relationship with our Creator that is sweet, enjoyable and real.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things the eyes of our understanding need to see?
2. What are some of the blessings that God wrought in Christ?
3. Where did God set Christ after He raised Him from the dead?
4. What does God, through Christ, want to do in everyone's life?
5. What can we look forward to with Christ in the ages to come?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a wonderful blessing the soul of man can experience through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whereby the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, opens up to the eyes of our understanding the things that are mentioned in today's lesson! Another person can speak of these wonderful blessings, but they cannot communicate to our hearts and minds like the Holy Spirit can and will do.

Let us examine these things that are listed in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. The first one he mentions that we may know is "the hope of his calling," that blessed hope that God through Christ has made available for us! It truly is an anchor for our souls. (Hebrews 6:18-20).

The next thing Paul mentions are "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." What was Christ blessed to gain for His obedience to the death of the cross? He was resurrected to eternal life and glory, not just for Himself, but for all who will believe and faithfully follow Him all the way, who will also share and enjoy that glory.

And then—"the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Oh, ponder the wonderful depth and value of these glorious blessings! It is a hope that will be worth all we ever suffer or go through in this life!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

Verse 15, "conversation": Words and actions. "sojourning here: Your present earthly time.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When we ponder and think about the greatness and goodness of God that has been shown in His creation and the history of His great and marvelous working through the ages, our hearts are filled with admiration and wonder. Our lesson brings out how we need to bless and honor Him because of His blessings so rich and wonderful to us.

Now this praise and worship that we need to render to Him is not all of the debt that we owe. He is, as our text in 1 Peter 1:16 declares, holy. In the honor that we owe to Him, we need to be holy. We need to reverence His Word and give Him honor, faithful obedience, and praise for all He has made available to us. He is bringing within our reach the promise and assurance of eternal life.

This earthly life will soon be over. Daily, death comes and life goes. We not only want to love and honor Him for His blessings and goodness, but in an even greater manner, we need Him and all of His wondrous help. As Paul declared to the people in Athens, Greece, as recorded in Acts 17:28, in Him we live, and move, and have our being. "Be ye holy, for I am holy".

Be holy and without blame before Him in love. Obey His commands; live up to the standard of His Holy Word! Yes, we owe it to our holy Creator to live a holy and righteous life. May the Lord help us all to faithfully be as He would be pleased for us to be.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are our members that we need to yield as servants to holiness?
2. How should we feel in our hearts toward His holy Law?
3. What profit will we have and enjoy for living a holy life for Him?
4. What kind of society and world do we daily have all around us?

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

23a If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel,

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear:

MEMORY VERSE: Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To please God and be acceptable to Him in that great judgment day to come, we must give up all sin, worldliness, and fleshly lusts, and follow after and possess the true holiness that is acceptable to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 6:19, "*your members*": The principle parts of your body that you use in expressing what is in your heart: hands, feet, eyes, ears, and tongue. "*righteousness*": That which is good and acceptable to God. "*holiness*": Purity and sincere respect and reverence to God.

Ephesians 1:3, "*spiritual blessings in heavenly places*": Blessings of eternal value and benefit for the souls of men.

Verse 4, "*without blame*": No fault or failure.

Colossians 1:21, "*alienated*": foreign and not subject.

1 Peter 1:13, "*gird up the loins of your mind*": Bring all of your thoughts, attitudes in strict control. "*sober*": Very discreet and wise. "*at the revelation*": At the coming and appearing of Christ at the last day.

Verse 14, "*former lusts*": The desires that you had before you were saved.

REFLECTIONS

These verses in Ephesians are very encouraging because they reveal what has been made available to us through "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power"; namely, the spirit of wisdom, revelation and the eyes of our understanding being enlightened.

There is a tendency for us, as humans, to lean upon our own understanding. It seems so natural to follow and respond to life by what we see and feel. Proverbs 21:2 tells us, "Every way of man is right in his own eyes." Another verse states, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

In Psalms 73, Asaph's walk with God was slipping. He was backsliding over the conclusions he was coming to by what he was seeing with his natural eyes. Life can be so different in reality from what it appears to be. Sometimes we can feel so right and yet be so wrong. Verse 17 says, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God." His spiritual eyes were enlightened; he had a revelation. Verse 21: "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was a beast before thee." We need revelations from the Lord in raising our children, facing the battles of life, and detecting the snares of the enemy.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

APRIL 12, 2015

OBEDIENCE-LIFE, DISOBEDIENCE-DEATH

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Jeremiah 7:21a Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*.

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

from the door, and sat upon it." This shows the great defeat of death and victory over Satan. Acts 1:2-3 says, "Until the day in which He was taken up . . . He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The power of the endless life that filled Jesus' body shook the ground and brought Him forth. That victory over death, hell, and the grave gives us hope today.

—Bro. James Bell

JUNE 28, 2015

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

Romans 6:19b As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Colossians 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

many other activities and pursuits make up the list. All of these things that are so captivating will pass away. They are temporal; just for the present time. How much better to be persuaded of eternal values!

So many, sad to say, do not think about eternity and what it will be. Their time is taken up with the physical and earthly involvements. Thank the Lord, in His mercy and goodness He has opened up to our inward being the reality of Heavenly blessings and wealth. What a blessed hope we have that reaches far beyond this fleeting earthly realm! The Holy Bible portrays it so wonderfully. Oh, how we as human beings need to seek the Lord, feel after Him, and find Him! He will satisfy and bring happiness, contentment, and true joy for our inner most being, and He will also take care of our earthly and temporal needs.

May the Lord bless and help each one of us to diligently pursue and press toward the mark of holiness and faithfulness to God, for that bright and eternal prize of eternal life and happiness with God our Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessed meeting of the faithful of all ages in that blessed eternal world to come!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

"Attain unto the resurrection of the dead. . . ." Just think. We have a heavenly invitation given by God through His Son, Jesus Christ, to be a partaker of His resurrecting power!

The two great earthquakes within three days of each other had to be very disturbing to those who crucified Jesus. The first earthquake shook the ground so violently that many of the saints' graves were opened. In Matthew 27:51-53, it says that they came forth after Jesus' resurrection. That first earthquake tore the veil in the temple in two parts. The separation between the Jews and Gentiles was abolished. The privileges of the Jews were now extended to all mankind through the high priest Jesus Christ. All people then had access to the throne of God.

The second earthquake is described in Matthew 28:2. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

MEMORY VERSE: 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? —Hebrews 2:2, 3

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because Adam and Eve listened to the voice of Satan and disobeyed the command of God, sin came upon the human race; however, our Lord Jesus Christ broke the power of sin and transgression by faithfully obeying the will of His Heavenly Father and allowing Himself to be killed as an atonement for our sin and disobedience.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Hebrews 11:19, *"from whence also he received him in a figure"*: When Abraham built the altar and bound up his son Isaac in obedience to God's command, in his heart he was faithfully going to go all the way to offer him up as a burnt offering as God had commanded him to do. But God stopped him before he fully carried it out, and it was just as if Abraham had received Isaac again from the dead. (Genesis 22:1-18).

Philippians 2:6, *"being in the form of God"*: Existed with God from before the creation. *"thought it not robbery to be equal with God"*: Counted equality with God not to be held on to.

Ver. 7, *"But made himself of no reputation"*: But emptied himself. He became willing to give up His heights of eternal glory and to come down to human level.

Ver. 8, *"being found in fashion as a man"*: Experiencing the depths of mortal infirmity. *"he humbled himself"*: He went on farther down. *"became obedient unto death"*: Submitted to give up his life. *"even the death of the cross"*: Willing to suffer the most horrible way for a man to die.

Ver. 9, *"Wherefore"*: Because of His perfect submission to God's will.

Hebrews 5:7, *“was heard in that he feared”*: God heard Christ because of our Saviour’s godly reverence and fear before Him.

Ver. 8, *“learned he obedience”*: Experienced obedience in reality by going against His physical feelings.

Ver. 9, *“being made perfect”*: accomplished; fulfilled; completed; finished.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When God created man and woman in the beginning He set up a way for them to truly prove their love and submission to Him. God didn’t want to bless and have fellowship with His creation without their ardent respect, honor, and submission to His will. So, as it is expressed in Genesis 2:15-17, God put a special limit on what man could partake of in the lovely garden of Eden. He was given the privilege of eating freely of every other tree, but God made it clear to Adam of the one tree he must not partake of. In chapter three we have the account of the serpent tempting Eve and persuading her that there were benefits to be enjoyed if she would eat of the forbidden tree. Sad to say, Eve yielded to the temptation and got Adam to partake of it with her. Thus, sin entered into the picture, and it all was changed from what it could have been if they had been obedient.

All through history we have this point brought out. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah have God’s address to man about His desire for man to be obedient. Our text in Hebrews mentioned Noah and Abraham, two faithful men who were obedient to their Creator and His command to them. This thought is carried over into the New Testament about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who, by His faithful obedience to the will of God, was able to turn back the tide of sin and transgression and make it possible for us mortals to turn the pressures of temptation and disobedience into victory and overcoming success.

The message is clear and plain for us today. If we would be a partaker of the blessings of salvation and overcoming grace and special joy of peace and holiness, we must be diligent to faithfully obey all the commands in God’s Word. No one is going to force us to be obedient and submissive to God’s will, but it will be worth every endeavor to take heed, open our eyes

resurrection of life. He also entered the fellowship of Christ’s suffering and death, and the spiritual life obtained thereby. To live as the Lord Jesus had lived and to die as He had willingly died became the mark to attain to in seeking the Heavenly prize.

Let us bring it down to us today! To find true happiness and victory over sin and the present evil world, and be a partaker of that blessed hope and bright future in the realms of eternal glory, is what every person needs to experience. It can be obtained if we today will give up our ways and the love of this vain world, and surrender completely to Christ Jesus and the will of God Almighty. The New Testament writers have done well in presenting it to the ages of humanity. What better hope can there be than what is portrayed and declared in these wonderful writings! May the Lord help each one to be persuaded of the truth of this glorious gospel and say, as Paul did, *“forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* Let us make His eternal cause our noble citizenship and look forward to His soon coming and the change from the mortality of these vile bodies to that like the glorious body of our Lord Jesus!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Christ Jesus offer to our souls that is of eternal value?
2. What must we give up and turn away from to obtain it?
3. What all is included in the blessings of Jesus for us to have?
4. What are the vain earthly things so many are going after?
5. What does our heavenly citizenship offer for us to possess and enjoy?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We live in a world and among a society that is wrapped up in the pleasures and treasures of this earthly realm. Fleshly relationships and desires for forbidden things, the love of money, fine homes and expensive automobiles, the entertainment of sports events, television, and gambling;

fellowship. *“(know) the power of His resurrection”*: Experience the risen life of Christ in heart and soul. *“the fellowship of His sufferings”*: Suffer just as Christ suffered. *“being made conformable unto His death”*: To die willingly and submissively as Christ did.

Verse 11, *“attain unto the resurrection of the dead”*: Be qualified to be resurrected from death to live with Christ.

Verse 12, *“Not as though I had already attained”*: Not feeling that I have already reached it. *“follow after”*: Pursue and ardently strive for. *“apprehend”*: lay tight hold of; seize; grasp.

Verse 14, *“press toward the mark”*: Earnestly strive to fulfill all that God is requiring. *“high calling of God in Christ Jesus”*: The heavenly invitation that God has given to us in His Son Jesus Christ.

Verse 15, *“as be perfect”*: As are fully developed in Christ.

Verse 19, *“whose God is their belly”*: The fulfillment of fleshly appetites is the God that they serve.

Verse 20, *“our conversation is in heaven”*: Our citizenship is in the eternal world above.

Verse 21, *“vile body”*: Corruptible physical body of this mortal flesh.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul was warning the Philippians to be safe and wary of carnal minded people (dogs), of evil workers, and the concision (those who seek to cut other people off). He stated that he and others standing for the truth in Christ were the true spiritual circumcision, rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh or the earthly, carnal beliefs that others had. He stated he also could have had confidence in the flesh, and then spoke of the various parts of his former stand and beliefs in the Jewish Law system. He then declared—and I am sure with joy—that those former things that had seemed to be gain to him, he had given up as loss. He had found in Christ Jesus the true worship of God Almighty! He counted all of those former things as no value, but he had found excellency and true eternal value in what he had won in Jesus. It is the same today. All who give up the world and fleshly lusts and seek for and sweetly find the salvation and victory in Jesus, bear witness of the things Paul found in Christ. He had found the true righteousness which Abraham and others had borne witness of. The righteousness of faith became his joy and happiness. He sought to know and experience Christ and His

to the truth and sincerely be obedient to the teachings and holy standards of God’s precious Word!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we be if we would obtain the good blessings of God?
2. What will happen to all who refuse and rebel against God?
3. What did Noah do in obedience to God’s instructions?
4. In what ways did Abraham prove his faithfulness to God?
5. How was Jesus a faithful witness in His obedience to God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Being obedient and submissive to the commandments of God is one of the main requirements for God’s help and favor. This obedience to God must be attended with sincere worship, adoration, praise, honor, and reverence; if we try to have these things and fail to be obedient to His will expressed and revealed in His law, it will all be in vain. We have the example set forth of disobedience by Adam and Eve along with others in history. The first king of Israel, Saul, even though he was chosen of God, failed to obey the instructions God gave him. His reign as king was a sad tragedy. But we do have those who were faithfully obedient mentioned in our lesson who showed the blessings obtained thereby. May we be strong in purpose to diligently obey and follow the teachings of God’s word in every detail, like those recorded in Bible history. Let us especially follow the example set by our Lord Jesus Christ who obeyed His heavenly Father in giving His life as a ransom for our eternity-bound souls!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Have you ever been frustrated by “empty promises”? They are like cotton candy; sweet to the tongue, but of no lasting substance. Many people choose to live their spiritual lives in this same way. They love reading the Word of God. They enjoy good strong preaching, but when it comes to making a

difference in their lives it just boils down to empty promises. It looks good on paper and sounds good to the ear, but there is no real commitment to making any change in their lives.

Jesus gave a perfect illustration as to the result of obedience versus disobedience in His parable of the two houses: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

It is interesting to note that the material of the houses was the same. The tragedies that befell each house were the same. But the success and failure rate of each house was due to the foundation. The successful foundation was that of being a *doer* of the word and not a *hearer* only.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

APRIL 19, 2015

MAN GOES HIS OWN WAY

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

MEMORY VERSE: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 3:14

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To be accounted worthy of being with Christ in the resurrection of the dead, we must follow Paul's example of truly possessing Christ, having the true righteousness of faith, experiencing Christ and the power of His resurrection, and being willing to suffer death as He suffered.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Philippians 3:7, "*counted loss*": Gave up entirely.

Verse 8, "*dung*": Worthless. "*win Christ*": Truly and fully possess Christ.

Verse 9, "*be found in Him*": Be recognized by God to be truly in Christ.

Verse 10, "*know Him*": Understand and experience Christ's

lowered into the ground, and the sweet strains of "Beautiful" are floating up from the singing saints. I see Jesus, triumphantly leading a number that cannot be numbered, and Heaven's portals swinging open, to welcome the Lord of Glory and His Redeemed. These are they who have come through great tribulation. They are clothed in spotless white, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb. They come from all ages, nations, and places on the earth. Heaven's angels are praising the victory of the Lamb, Who gave Himself to save these from destruction. The holy throng is praising the Lamb, singing and shouting for the deliverance He has given. A voice resounds from the heavenly host: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!" Another voice questions: "Who is this King of Glory?" The whole of Heaven and the Redeemed host shout in answer, "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory. The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." What a triumphant march that will be! I want to be there, don't you?

--Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

JUNE 21, 2015

ATTAINING UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.

14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but *he that* is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

21:2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

28:6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but *he that is* perverse *in his* ways shall fall at once.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.

Isaiah 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

9 No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

MEMORY VERSE: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. —Isaiah 53:6

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Instead of being obedient to the commands of Almighty God, man has followed his own selfish ideas and thoughts, sinking into the deep pit of sin and transgression against God. Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior, paid the price to redeem us, by taking God's way and giving His life on the cross of Calvary. To partake of His salvation we must forsake our ways and be fully obedient to His Holy Word.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 53:6, "*laid on him the iniquity of us all*": God sent Jesus to pay the debt of sin by giving His life as a ransom for us.

Proverbs 14:2, "*perverse*": Turned aside and departed from what pleases God. "*despiseth*": Counts lightly and of no value.

Proverbs 21:2, "*pondereth*": Searches and weighs up.

Proverbs 28:18, "*fall at once*": Be cast down immediately.

Jeremiah 6:16, "*see*": earnestly search and carefully examine. "*old paths*": Ways tested and proved true by those of long ago. "*good way*": The way that God is pleased with. "*rest*": True contentment and peace.

Isaiah 35:8, "*the wayfaring men*": Those who seek to go the way of holiness. "*though fools*": Though accounted as fools by the ungodly. "*shall not err therein*": Shall not fail to go the right way.

Isaiah 35:9, "*No lion nor any ravenous beast*": No devouring and hateful person. "*the redeemed*": Those who are saved and delivered from sin.

Matthew 7:13, "*strait gate*": The narrow way of holiness and submission to the will of God. "*wide gate and broad way*": The life of living to the flesh and worldliness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have from the Holy Scriptures the great difference described between the true, holy and righteous way of life and the way of selfish pleasure and fleshly lust. All mankind is declared to have gone astray from the pure and holy way of pleasing our Creator and from what God originally designed for us to be and do. And, sad to say, so many have thus gone astray from what is good and beneficial and acceptable to God, and are not aware of their error and selfishness. But, as Isaiah prophesied in chapter thirty-five, God, through Christ, has made available the way of holiness

*He comes! He comes!
The earth shall melt, the mountains quake,
The sea shall roar, the heavens shake,
The trumpet sounds, the dead awake:
He comes! He comes!*

*His loved, His own all hear His voice;
Obey His call, in Him rejoice;
The way of life has been their choice:
He comes! He comes!
Now to those mansions fair and bright
They take their everlasting flight;
There they shall walk with Him in white:
He comes! He comes!*

*Behold, what wonder greets mine eye---
Ten thousand angels in the sky!
The end has come, destruction's nigh.
He comes! He comes!
Oh, fearful scene! Creation groans,
While loud above the trumpet tones;
What peals of joy! What piercing moans:
He comes! He comes!*

—by O. A. Pratt in *Evening Light Songs* # 355

This song has been a solemn, and yet joyful inspiration to my heart through the years. It ought to be sung more often than it is. Of late my heart has been greatly inspired and moved to earnest prayer with a deep sense and realization that the the Lord's coming is close at hand. Of course, we do not know for sure just how close it is, but we are earnestly praying for the Lord to help us be ready.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

A very sublime vision comes to my mind, as I compile these promises from the Scriptures of Jesus' coming. It comes to me sometimes at the cemetery service of a dear saint of God, when the wind is whipping the tent canopy, the tear-stained eyes of all are on the flower-covered casket that is being

our Saviour ascended up on high; but, He left us His promise to come again, and though it has been many, many generations ago, we must not lose our hope and expectation of the fulfillment of His promise. As 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

So let us renew our expectation and sincere hope of Christ's faithful and soon fulfillment of the promise of His coming. He is coming to reward the faithful and true saints who have loved and served Him in this life. And He will also, as the Scriptures declare, bring judgment and punishment to all who have taken their own selfish, lustful ways and have not been faithful to Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our Lord Jesus going to do at His second coming?
2. What must we do to be prepared for that awful day?
3. Why do so many people disregard His promised coming?
4. What will the ungodly and disobedient suffer in that day?
5. What will the faithful and true saints be blessed to enjoy?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

HE COMES

*He comes, he comes with trumpet sound,
To wake the slumb'ring nations round;
His pard'ning love no more is found---
He comes! He comes!
The dead in Christ shall then arise
To meet their Savior in the skies,
No more a bleeding sacrifice---
He comes! He comes!*

*He comes no more in priestly dress;
Each eye shall see, each tongue confess.
To judge the world in righteousness*

that will not be taken by the lustful and selfish person. Those who are partakers of Christ's redemption and plan of salvation will be able to find this blessed way of life and walk therein with great joy and gladness.

It is a very important matter to be influenced in our minds of what is God's way and how much better it is than our own selfish way. Young people and children all need the influence of the gospel of Christ and the counsel of godly parents and holy saints of the most High. The Bible has fully sufficient instruction and admonition to bring the light that is needed to the souls of men. But how sad that it happens as the text in Jeremiah declares: "But they said, We will not walk therein." God is not going to force any human being to go His way of truth and holiness, but each one of us will be held responsible for the choice we make. We pray the Lord to bless this lesson to every one who takes part in its study.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the way to destruction a wide gate and broad way?
2. What makes the way of holiness so strait and narrow?
3. Who is responsible to decide which way one will take?
4. Where does the wide gate and broad way lead us?
5. Why is going the strait and narrow way so greatly worthwhile?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). In this writing of Paul, we can see one of the reasons that people are more inclined to choose the wide gate and broad way that leads to destruction: *Things that are seen and felt by the body--satisfying the appetites, enjoying physical pleasures, and having fun--have a greater attraction to humanity than things that are not seen.*

Yes, there are things that a Christian can partake of and enjoy, to a certain extent, that are earthly, fleshly, and of material value. But if they take up our entire time, energy and

scope of life, we will be found coming short of eternal values. Earthly activities such as sports, racing, gaming, and movies; relationships based on physical attraction; the pursuit of wealth with its ease, prosperity, and security; the luxury and comfort of beautiful homes, cars and expensive, fashionable clothing all have a great attraction for the human mind and heart. But the fear and reverence we need to cultivate is that toward the realm of life that is unseen by the natural senses. Careful living, sober, godly speech and conduct, and sensitivity to godly things such as truth, peace, and wisdom need to have a great part in one's behavior and actions. Prayer, worship to God, mercy and love toward others, attention to the Holy Scriptures, spiritual themes and songs of worship should be sought after and cherished in our hearts, interwoven with the earthly joys of marriage and precious family times of love, laughter, wholesome fun and enjoyment of God's creation. Let us take heed to the counsel of Ecclesiastes 12 to remember our Creator in days of youth, and give our hearts wholly to God and the pursuit of His holy way!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Do we comprehend what it means to have "gone astray" as in our memory verse today? It simply means that when we take our own way, as opposed to God's, we go *astray*. It doesn't say, "we have turned every one to violence," or "we have turned every one to immorality"; it says "our own way." If you or I continually do things our own way, though we may even feel we are religious, moral, kind or fair, we are still on the road that leads to destruction.

Think what this means in marriage and home life. God's way is that I would, as a wife, be willing to lay down my way in submission to my husband. To do this with victory in my soul, I must do it as unto the Lord and in faith, that He will use my submission to win the heart of my husband. My way? It would be to protect my rights, insist upon my voice being heard, and fight for my side every time. My way would be to undermine, disregard, or belittle my husband's wishes.

God's way is that I would, as a husband, honor the desires

presentation of the eternal heaven and earth.

1 Corinthians 15:50, "*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*": The everlasting Kingdom of God is not given to humanity in an earthly, fleshly manner. Its fullness can only be enjoyed in the Spirit now and in its eternal phase after Jesus comes again. "*Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*": This mortal corruptible body cannot inhabit the eternal state. It will need to be changed to immortality and incorruption.

Verse 51, "*mystery*": A secret blessing unknown and not seen except by all who are accounted worthy. "*changed*": gloriously transformed.

Verse 52, "*in the twinkling of an eye*": In a sudden instant. "*at the last trump*": At the final coming of Christ and the resurrection of all the dead, incorruptible to never die.

Verse 53, "*this corruptible*": This mortal state of flesh and blood. "*incorruption, immortality*": The eternal body to inhabit everlasting glory.

Verse 54, "*swallowed up*": Completely destroyed and done away.

Colossians 3:3, "*ye are dead*": Through Christ and His power we are dead to sin and worldliness. "*your life is hid with Christ in God*": Hid from this ungodly world and society.

Verse 5, "*mortify*": Bring to death and sever one's self from the wickedness of this world. "*inordinate affection*": "Desires and appetites that are forbidden of God. "*evil concupiscence*": Ungodly and unholy desires. "*covetousness*": Love of money and earthly wealth. "*idolatry*": The awful form of the worship of other gods rather than the true God.

Verse 6, "*For which things' sake*": On account of such things.

Luke 14:13, "*maimed*": crippled. "*lame*": deprived of a foot.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After previous lessons and studies from the Holy Scriptures about the fall of mankind into sin and disobedience to the law of God, man going his own way, the need for loving obedience to our Creator, Christ's bearing of the cross, and the blessings of His grace and Holy Spirit leadership, we will now study about Christ's coming and what it will mean to be ready to meet Him and share His eternal glory.

The time is nearing for our Lord Jesus to burst through the realm of this present world and bring it to an end; bringing all mankind before Him for eternal judgment. Oh, it has been many long years and generations have come and gone since

incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

MEMORY VERSE: But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. —Luke 14:13, 14

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, after He had given His life on the cross for our salvation, rose up, alive again, triumphant from the grave, and ascended up to the right Hand of God. There He makes intercession for us and will soon come again to destroy this present evil world and bring eternal judgment to all humanity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 3:19, "*be converted*": Be changed from a life of sin and unbelief to a life of faith, holiness, and obedience to God. "*times of refreshing*": Holy Spirit anointing and inspiration.

Verse 21, "*heaven must receive*": Christ was worthy to be given the High Priest position at the right hand of God. "*times of restitution*": The destruction of this present world and the

and needs of my wife, and give myself for her as willingly as Christ laid down His life at the cross. To do this successfully and with victory in my soul, I must do it as He would, as in His place as Savior and Protector of my wife; and in faith, that my sacrifices for her would bring about her reverence and submission. My way? To be controlling and demanding; to manipulate her by my rank and position as "head of the wife."

What bitterness, chaos and destruction is brought by each of us going our own way! If we all could only know the God-given secrets that belong to the *peace* of our homes!

--Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

APRIL 26, 2015

GOD'S MESSAGE IN HIS CREATION

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 *There is* no speech nor language *where* their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Psalms 104:10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the

earth;

15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.

18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

MEMORY VERSE: O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. —Psalm 104:24

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The beautiful sun, moon, and stars, along with all the wonderful creatures, growing plants and trees of the earth, are the gracious creation of the wise, merciful, and loving God, Who also created us to enjoy His goodness and love and worship Him all the days of our lives.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 19:1, "*declare*": Speak forth clearly. "*firmament*": The great expanse of the skies above us.

Ver. 2, "*Day unto day*": Day after day. "*Night unto night*": Night after night. The glory and beauty of the heavens are daily showing the power and loving wisdom of our great Creator!

Ver. 4, "*Their line*": Their message to us here on earth. "*tabernacle*": A place to shine forth.

Ver. 5. "*a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*": A bright happy man coming forth to embrace his bride. "*rejoiceth*": shines forth so

same way, for it also is fearfully and wonderfully made. Christ is the head, and each are members in particular, but also fashioned to be fitly joined together. What a wonderful illustration for us to take hold of! The plan for the Church of God was not intended for individuals to be independent of one another but that each member would be perfected in the other members. The Church of God performs just as the Lord intended. Not by remote control or robotic engineering but by the Holy Spirit. We are to "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God *is* our God forever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death" (Psalms 48:12-14).

--Sis. LaDawna Adams

JUNE 14, 2015

HOPE OF RESURRECTION TO IMMORTALITY

John 5:28 [Jesus said] Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised

also need to seek for the infilling of the Holy Spirit by consecrating all our hearts and lives to the perfect will of God. We need to pray and seek the Lord until His Spirit fills our inner-most being with His power and love.

That is just the beginning. We must continue to seek the Lord daily in prayer. We should study the word, attend to the worship services of the Church, and keep heart and mind open for the Holy Spirit to guide us in all things.

It is a wonderful life to be led and inspired by the precious Spirit of Almighty God! It is a daily operation of the heart and mind toward God and to live faithfully and seek for His leading and guidance, and be faithful to obey Him in every detail. Do not ever let up in your earnest prayer and devotion to the Lord. It will be worth it all to be faithful and well prepared to live and be obedient to Him, and to be ready to leave this world and go to paradise with Him and His holy angels.

Life will so swiftly pass. It is so good and wise for men and women to seek the Lord and find Him real in their youth. Each person needs to do this with all of your heart. Be faithful and renew your faith and courage every day. The years will pass. If you will be faithful to the Lord, there will be a day when your work will be over and a crown of glory will be yours!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Think of the complexity and intricate detail the Lord created in man. The skeletal system, the cardiovascular system, the nervous system, the digestive system, the muscular system, et. al. Each and every system functions in its particular order to make up the completeness of the human body. All parts were created differently and have a specific duty to fulfill in order to make the body function correctly. What would a body be without the skeletal system? What would a body be if there were no muscular system? Each system works separately, but also together, to make a wonderful human being that can touch, smell, see, hear, walk, create, think and talk.

The Lord set forth the pattern of the Church of God in the

wonderfully.

Psalm 104:10, "*sendeth the springs*": Causes fountains of water to flow.

Ver. 14, "*herb for the service of man*": Fruits and vegetables for nourishing good food.

Ver. 15, "*wine*": Various juices from fruits. "*maketh glad the heart of man*": For man to richly enjoy drinking.

Ver. 18, "*conies*": Small rabbit-like creatures that live among the rocky areas of the mountains.

Ver. 24, "*manifold*": So great in number and various kinds.

Ver. 34, "*meditation*": Loving thoughts and consideration.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to present the wonderful message that is daily preached to us mortal beings of time. "The heavens declare the glory of God." This is a sermon and a message that is preached every day and night. It portrays and declares the goodness and power of Almighty God. How does all of this heavenly beauty come about and operate? Does it just happen to be? Oh, no! There is a gracious, wise, and loving Almighty God Who created it all.

Paul quotes from this 19th Psalm in Romans 10:18, speaking of the hearing of the gospel of Christ: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went unto all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." He is associating the hearing of the gospel of Christ to the message that is preached daily from the heavens! Are people today hearing and being affected by the message of the sun, moon, and stars? Sad to say, as a general rule, they do not hear. The heavens declare the glory of God!

Then we also consider from Psalm 104 the various works of wonder portrayed in the many blessings and marvels of the earthly realm. The wells and springs of water, the many different beasts and birds that go and come, the grasses, the trees, the many fruits and vegetables--they all portray and preach a message that man ought to hear, but many times man is void of any response or honor to God. Oh, how we need to honor and worship our God for all of His wonderful works!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the message that the heavens are speaking to us?
2. What response should be given to this wonderful message?
3. What various things of God's earthly realm are so marvelous?
4. What effect should all of these blessings have on the soul of man?
5. What ought we to say and feel in our hearts to our Creator?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:45, "Your Father which is in heaven maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Oh, let us open our eyes to the message that is daily preached on a good part of the world! That glorious sun! How bright and beautiful it is! Without its warmth and blessings we would all freeze to death in a little bit. It has a message so vital and important for us to ponder and study about. There is also a message given us by the many stars and constellations on high, although I realize that the abundance of man-made light seems to dim their glow and brilliance. And there is the moon in all its beauty! It all speaks a message from the Almighty God to us. What is that message? It is a message of His love, goodness, faithfulness and power toward us.

Let us then consider the many blessings of nature that He put into being. Think of the beautiful trees, bushes, grasses, flowers, and plants of food! They exist and are sustained in life, beauty, and blessings by the wisdom and power of Almighty God!

Think of the wonderful fruits that are brought forth: apples, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, grapefruits, lemons, limes, grapes, figs, dates, and oranges! Who designed and set them in production?

Then think of the various grains from the grasslands of the earth: corn, rice, wheat, rye, oats, and barley; all designed and brought forth by the precious LORD God Almighty!

Holy Spirit.

The book of Acts shows many wonderful scenes of the apostles and the Church going forth in the work of preaching the gospel to the world. We see the Holy Spirit inspiring and anointing the Church in ministry. In the writings of the apostle Paul are some very important counsels about the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 in which Christ was prophesied as ascending on high, leading captivity captive (setting men free from the power of Satan and sin), and receiving gifts for men. Paul quoted this text and applied it to the gifts being given to men; the various functions of those who are inspired and led of the Spirit in their work for God. He names the various offices and positions to be filled. All was to be carried out in fervent love, humility, brotherly kindness, and earnest devotion to God and the cause of His Son.

While this worked and was accomplished back in that day, it is still a work of the Holy Spirit to inspire, anoint, guide, and enable true and faithful men and women to the various offices and positions to be filled in His Church and the work of the gospel.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the various offices that were filled in the Church?
2. Who was the Director and Giver of these different gifts?
3. What was the true purpose accomplished in these positions?
4. What kind of spirit is required for a person to be thus employed?
5. What influences and powers are in the world contrary to this?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is a vital requirement in the heart and life of every person to seek the Lord with all the heart, feel after Him with all earnestness, and find Him precious and real to the inner man. Not only do we need to seek forgiveness of our sins, but we

Verse 4, “*one body*”: A united church.

Verse 8, “*Wherefore he saith*”: For this cause it is written in Psa. 68:18.

Verse 11, “*apostles*”: Those set apart and commissioned to preach the gospel in new fields. “*prophets*”: Those who foretell future things. “*evangelists*”: Preachers of the gospel of Christ. “*pastors*”: Those who shepherd and feed souls. “*teachers*”: Instructors.

1 Corinthians 12:4, “*diversities*”: Differences.

Verse 7, “*manifestation*”: Showing forth clearly. “*to profit withal*”: To be an advantage or benefit.

Verse 10, “*discerning of spirits*”: Detecting what kind of spirit is being manifested.

Verse 11, “*dividing severally*”: giving and bestowing individually.

Romans 12:5, “*members one of another*”: Closely related in love.

Verse 6, “*propotion*”: What God has inspired to be declared as truth.

Verse 7, “*let us wait on our ministering*”: Look earnestly to God for guidance and inspiration.

Verse 8, “*simplicity*”: Sincerity with no false pretense. “*diligence*”: Strong and earnest endeavor.`

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we learned of our Saviour foretelling and preparing His disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit after His death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God. He instructed them as recorded in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-8 to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is shown to be the vital and greatly important thing to be carried out and experienced.

In the first chapter of Acts we have the scene of a great number of people gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. The eleven apostles of Christ, along with women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus; and His brethren, along with others, the number being about 120; made up the throng that continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. The apostle Peter directed in choosing one of the brethren to replace Judas who had betrayed Christ. So we have the scene of this earnest throng seeking in prayer and supplication for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then, in chapter 2 of Acts, we have the wonderful scene portrayed of the glorious coming of the

Oh, how we need to wake up to the truth and be aware of the greatness and goodness of our wonderful Creator, our Heavenly Father! Oh, how we need to honor, reverence, worship, obey, and diligently serve Him in this short earthly life.

We are going to have to meet Him one day, stand before Him and give an account of how we have treated Him in our hearts and minds. We will have to answer for our selfish ignorance and rebellion against His truth, salvation, and great goodness. Let us be diligent to humble our hearts in love, thanksgiving, and sincere worship before Him daily and seek to please Him with our life and breath!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

The heavens declare the glory of God. Inspiration is ignited within me when I gaze heavenward on a star-filled night and try to comprehend the endless...space...the awe-inspiring magnificence and beauty of the heavens, to try to wrap my mind around the fact that God numbers the stars and calls them all by name. Technology has made incredible advances — we can not only see stars and planets with our eyes, but electromagnetic vibrations of some of the stars and planets have been recorded by NASA and are within the range of human hearing. To my mind’s ear, the combined music of the millions of stars in the heaven must surely create a song of all songs, a symphony of all symphonies.

Down here on earth, a movement to “save the planet” is big in our United States culture today—people recognize the beauty of God’s creation, although the spirit behind the movement has taken on a grossly deviated form. A prominent feature of the Hindu religion is worship of the Sun, much like the ancient Egyptians worshiped the “Sun-God.” Native American Indians had a deep reverence for nature and held many of its elements sacred. Religions down through the centuries of time have also worshipped various elements of nature, in their ignorance and/or blindness, worshipping the creation while not acknowledging the Creator Himself.

Although nature is harmonious and song-filled beyond my comprehension, although I may find a temporary peace in its

sanctuary, although I stand in awe of the intricacies of the world around me, it is God the Creator alone Who can satiate the thirsting of my soul. He only can pour the balm of peace over my troubled heart, and penetrate the darkness of my soul with the warmth of His love – He only knows my name and the number of hairs on my head. Nature is but a beautiful and wondrous declaration of the God who created it.

--Sis. Julie Elwell

MAY 3, 2015

THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS GIVEN BY GOD

Exodus 20:1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me:

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger, this is within thy gates:

11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

MEMORY VERSE: And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. —1 Cor. 12:28

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The true Church of God, that Jesus purchased with His own blood, is run and operated by the working and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He inspires and directs each member in the work and ministry of the gospel and the grace of the Lord Jesus, for salvation and victory to all human kind.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 4:1, "*walk worthy*": Conduct one's self properly. "*vocation*": What God has called you to be.

Verse 2, "*forbearing one another*": Putting up with each other.

Verse 3, "*endeavoring*": Earnestly seeking.

people their responsibility and you have revival.”

Truly the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. The Lord is still looking and calling for men and women to stand in the gap. There are many gaps that need to be filled. When there are gaps in the wall, it leaves an access for the enemy to come through and cause damage to souls. It is also important to remember that the Holy Spirit is not mistaken when He lays His hand on an individual.

Lord, help us to live surrendered lives, not hiding behind our excuses; hearing Your voice and filling the places of responsibility as You would lead us. Here am I, Lord, send me.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

JUNE 7, 2025

THE VARIOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Matthew 22: 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. —Mark 12:29b-31

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Supreme love, devotion, and worship to the Almighty God will enable us to live up to the standard of His holy commandments and laws, and sincere and earnest love for our fellow man will enable us to relate to him righteously and in a manner well pleasing to God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Exodus 20:4, *“graven image”*: A statue or figure carved out by man.

Ver. 5, *“bow down thyself”*: Humble one's heart in praise, honor, or worship. *“hate me”*: Refuse to love, worship, or obey God.

Ver. 7, *“take the name of the LORD thy God in vain”*: Profess or speak the name of God without true love, worship, and obedience from the heart. *“will not hold him guiltless”*: Will not forgive.

Ver. 8, *“Sabbath day”*: The seventh day of the week, a day to rest and cease from work.

Ver. 11, “*hallowed it*”: Made it a special holy day in which to worship and honor God.

Matthew 22:40, “*hang all the law and the prophets*”: All the basis and substance of God’s laws and commandments to man are contained therein.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was in the third month when the children of Israel, under the leadership and oversight of Moses, came to the wilderness of Sinai and were camped before the mountain there. God spoke to Moses out of the mountain, and told him to remind the Israelites of what they had seen God do to the Egyptians in delivering Israel from that land of bondage. He told Moses to tell the people of Israel that if they would obey His voice indeed, and keep His covenant, they would be a peculiar (special) treasure unto Him above all people. Moses obeyed the LORD and spoke those words to the people, and the people answered together that all that the LORD had spoken they would do. Then the LORD told Moses to instruct the people to prepare themselves to be ready, for in three days He was to come down in the sight of all the people on mount Sinai. On that day the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai and called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up. The people were instructed to stay down at the foot of the mountain, and we have in our lesson today the Word that God spoke to them, giving them His ten commandments.

These ten commandments were the great message of God to Israel, lining out His standards of worship to Him, as God, and their relations to their fellow man. The first four commandments have to do with the people’s relations with God and what pleases Him. Then the last six of the commandments covered their relationship with each other and all mankind. These ten commandments have been shown and labeled by our Lord and Saviour as being contained in two great commandments. Both Matthew and Mark make mention of this that Jesus spoke. We have made Matthew’s words as part of our lesson, while we have Mark’s words together as our memory verse. These ten commandments are very vital and important, a solemn key to our relationship with our Creator. In the lessons ahead we will see how important they are and what

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

John, chapter 4, has the account of Jesus meeting the woman of Samaria who had come to draw water at Jacob’s well. Jesus asked the woman to give Him a drink. The woman was surprised Jesus asked her that, for she did not think the Jews had any dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus stated if she knew the gift of God, and Who He was, she would ask of Him, and He would give her living water. When she questioned Him about this living water, Jesus answered, “But whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

When the woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet, she made mention of where her people worshipped, and where Jesus did. Jesus then spoke of the true worshippers worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. He stated: “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.”

What a great truth our Saviour spoke that day! It goes right with today’s lesson on the Holy Spirit and what a blessing it is to have Him in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is that living water Jesus declared He could give to that woman! Oh, what a blessing to the soul of man to drink of that living water and experience the sweet and powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in one’s heart and life! Our Saviour brought us this blessing through His death, resurrection and ascension!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

I am so thankful the Lord came to this earth in human form, taught us and gave us an example, willingly laid down His life for a sacrifice, arose, ascended, and sent the Comforter to fill the hearts and lives of His children. It is also a comfort to know that Christ is the Head of the church and that He sets the members in the body as it pleases Him. We need to concern ourselves with being intent on following the Holy Spirit’s lead and faithfully fulfilling our calling. I am reminded of a statement Bro. James Bell gave in a message years ago: “Teach people their rights and you start a riot; teach

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first part of our lesson from the gospel of John is part of the final session Jesus had with His disciples before He was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. In this discourse that He closed with the prayer recorded in chapter 17 of John, Jesus foretells the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew what He was going to meet up with and suffer that very night. He had been with these men for about three years, and was now facing the price He was to pay for the salvation of mankind; yes, His horrible death on the cross. These disciples went through deep waters of trouble the next few days, with their Master being crucified and buried in the tomb, but Jesus was pointing them to the bright future of His resurrection from the dead and the blessed coming of the Holy Spirit. Luke 24:49 quotes Christ as saying, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Jesus was pointing them to look beyond the present distress to the glorious future.

Thank the Lord, we today can look to Him in consecration and earnest prayer, and experience the great infilling of the Holy Spirit and the blessedness, as Paul brings out in our lesson from Romans 8. The Holy Spirit can come and fill our hearts with power and inspiration to guide us through life and open up the real truth to our hearts and minds.

We have Paul's wonderful words concerning the Holy Spirit in our text from Romans 8. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can triumph over the flesh and live victorious, spiritual lives in the perfect will of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What blessings did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would bring?
2. Where was Jesus going after His death and resurrection?
3. What guidance does the Holy Spirit give to us today?
4. What kind of mind does the Holy Spirit help us to have?
5. What does the Holy Spirit help us to do with this mortal flesh?

transgressing and disobeying them will do to our hearts and lives.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the first commandment God gave?
2. Why did God forbid making graven images?
3. How can we take God's name in vain today?
4. Why did God want Israel to keep the Sabbath day holy?
5. What did the remaining six commandments cover?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The book of Exodus relates, in great detail, the course that the LORD God took in dealing with the nation of Israel. In Genesis we have the account of the family of Jacob being transferred from their homes in Israel to live in Egypt in the time of the seven years of famine through the influence of Joseph with Pharaoh. And then, after Joseph died, we see them fruitful and increasing abundantly and filling the land of Egypt. We see the new ruler of Egypt taking measures against Israel.

We then have the account of Moses being raised in Pharaoh's household and being used by God to deal with the king of Egypt, bringing about the Israelites' escape from Egypt. We see Israel going away, escaping from slavery in Egypt, passing through the Red Sea by a miracle from God, and hopefully starting on their way to their promised homeland. God worked to bring them to the place where He dealt with them in order to show and set forth His holy and sacred commandments and laws. This manifestation of His holy law is one of the greatest portrayals of His power and holiness that we have in Bible history.

In our lesson today, we have the ten commandments that God set forth before Israel. This is a sacred and holy record that has influenced humanity ever since. Later, in the Old Testament account, we have God inscribing on tables of stone these commandments and giving them to Moses.

Then there is the sad and terrible scene of Moses coming down from the mount and seeing the people of Israel worshipping the golden calf. In his anger, Moses broke the

tables of stone. He later made some new tables of stone and inscribed the law on them himself; but, it was one scene of sorrow and frustration after another for Moses in his dealings with Israel.

The ten commandments that God gave carried on into further biblical history and are pictured in the New Testament along with the faith and victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over sin and transgression.

It is to be remembered how Adam and Eve disobeyed the command and instruction of God in partaking of the forbidden fruit. This act of disobedience plunged humanity in the depths of sin and woe. We see it manifested in various places in Bible history. We see the general tide of humanity plunging into deeper and deeper depths of sin and wickedness, until God sent the flood in Noah's time to destroy sinful humanity; then we see the various scenes of sin and transgression in other accounts. In our lesson today, we have portrayed the holy laws that God gave through Moses, and how they are still important for us to take heed to and obey in the will of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Recently, while driving thru Woodward, Oklahoma, I noticed that someone had erected a Ten Commandments display in town. All ten were recorded. It was very refreshing to see them in an era when there has been great effort to remove the ancient landmarks our forefathers have set, from public and government sectors.

Across the nation, lawsuits are being waged against those who have religious convictions against promoting or supporting ungodliness. Psalm 11:2 states, "For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart."

The ten commandments have been a moral compass and bedrock foundation for justice and equity in our nation and others. The verse comes to mind, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). We need to pray for and support those who are under attack.

—Bob Wilson

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus gave His disciples the promise that after He had gone back to Heaven, His Father would send the Holy Spirit to live in them and to comfort, guide, and strengthen them in the way of righteousness. Today, that same promise is for all who will seek Him and follow His teachings.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 14:16, "*Comforter*": This was the Holy Spirit Who Christ was promising would come to His disciples after He had gone to Heaven, and would give comfort, strength, guidance, and counsel to them.

17, "*dwelleth with you*": Is near and surrounding you. "*shall be in you*": Will come and live in your inner-most being.

16:12, "*ye cannot bear them now*": This means that His disciples were not able to understand and comprehend many things He desired to tell them. But when the Holy Spirit of truth was come, He would help them to understand.

Ver. 13, "*whatsoever he shall hear*": What the Heavenly Father will speak through the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 14, "*receive of mine*": Receive what Christ speaks and pass it on to them.

Romans 8:5, "*after the flesh*": living to the appetites and desires of this physical body.

Ver. 6, "*carnally minded*": ruled by fleshly desires. "*spiritually minded*": Instructed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 7, "*enmity*": Opposed to and not in harmony with.

Ver. 9, "*none of his*": Not under Holy Spirit guidance.

Ver. 10, "*the body is dead*": Not living to the desires of the flesh. "*the Spirit is life*": The Holy Spirit has full control. "*because of righteousness*": By reason of the righteous way the Holy Spirit helps one to live.

Ver. 11, "*quicken your mortal bodies*": Enable you to keep your bodily appetites in control of God's will.

Ver. 12, "*debtors, not to the flesh*": Do not have to let the flesh control.

Ver. 13, "*mortify the deeds of the body*": Put to death all lustful desires and bring all into subjection to God's will.

Ver. 15, "*adoption*": Being truly Sons of God. "*Abba*": Greek: "*Father*—also used as the term of tender endearment by a beloved child in an affectionate relationship with his father; *Daddy, Papa*"

Ver. 16, "*beareth witness*": Makes us to truly know.

Ver. 17, "*joint-heirs with Christ*": Sharing with Christ's blessings.

whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

Romans 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

MEMORY VERSE: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. —Romans 8: 13, 14

MAY 10, 2015

LOVING AND WILLING OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward.

12 Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalm 119:1 Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart.

3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

20 My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times.

27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

97 O how love I thy law! *It is* my meditation all the day.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

MEMORY VERSE: Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. —Psalm 119:104, 105

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As mortals in this earthly realm soon to pass away, we need to give diligent heed, loving submission, fervent zeal, and faithful obedience to the holy Word of God and all of His commandments and laws.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 19:7, "*law*": What is strictly required and vital. "*converting the soul*": Changing and turning one's heart and life from sin to righteousness. "*testimony*": Expressed witness or declaration. "*sure*": Faithful, firm, and fully trustworthy. "*making wise the simple*": Enlightening the foolish and silly.

Ver. 8, "*statutes*": Official orders and strict requirements. "*commandment*": What is appointed, ordered, and fully charged. "*enlightening the eyes*": Making one fully instructed and aware.

Ver. 9, "*judgments*": Unfailing verdicts, sentences, or decrees. "*altogether*": United and in solemn agreement.

Ver. 11, "*warned*": Enlightened to be cautious of.

Ver. 12, "*understand his errors*": Be truly aware of his mistake or failure. "*secret*": Hidden and unaware of.

Ver. 13, "*presumptuous sins*": Errors and faults committed in arrogant pride.

Ver. 14, "*meditation of my heart*": My attitudes and inward purposes.

Psalm 119:1, "*Blessed*": How happy!

Ver. 2, "*testimonies*": Solemn and unfailing witness.

Ver. 9, "*Wherewithal*": How completely?

Ver. 20, "*My soul breaketh*": My heart is melted in submission.

Ver. 165, "*nothing shall offend them*": Nothing will stir up their anger.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God's laws, commandments, statutes, judgments, precepts, and testimonies are good, beneficial, precious, and of great value to us mortals. God Almighty is our kind and gracious Heavenly Father, and the life He requires of us and expects us

REFLECTIONS

In Matthew 12:33 it says, "The tree is known by his fruit". A man that is living in the flesh and being controlled by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life brings forth corrupt fruit (either literally or morally). Roots of sin are manifest in how much time we spend on something and where our love and heart's desires are. Certainly, the individual who yields to the temptation of sin and has sinful pleasures abounding in his life will not produce fruits of righteousness. However, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

The fruits of righteousness bring life to a darkened and barren world. What a blessing to see a child of God bringing hope, cheer, and good news to the lost world round him! Proverbs 10:16 says, "The labor of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin." That is such a total difference. There is no way to compare the life of the godly with the ungodly. One brings life and hope and the other brings selfishness and death.

Let us remember the four laws of harvest which I believe are biblical: 1. You reap *what* you sow. 2. You reap *more than* you sow. 3. You reap *where* you sow. 4. You reap *later* than you sow, or in a different season. Let us sow good deeds for Jesus and have the rich peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives.

--Bro. James Bell

MAY 31, 2015

THE BLESSING OF HOLY SPIRIT LEADERSHIP

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but

before God and make that solemn decision to turn from the lusts of the flesh mentioned in our lesson and seek earnestly with all of our hearts to yield to the Holy Spirit and gain access to the eternal kingdom of God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the fleshly attractions before a person?
2. What are the attractions that God and Christ have shown?
3. What must a person do to really escape the ways of sin?
4. What will be the end of a life given to fleshly lusts and pleasure?
5. What will be the end of a life in which the Holy Spirit had control?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The appetites and desires of this mortal body are the main instruments that Satan uses to attract the hearts of men and women, boys and girls. One of the things that is used is the natural physical attraction between the genders. The desire of a young man to the beauty of a young woman is a great and powerful element to influence them both. It is heavenly wisdom to bring our feelings and desires into proper bounds, and seek the help and grace of the Almighty God to understand and have the courage to make the wise decision concerning this matter. Fornication and adultery are two of the results of the fleshly lusts that are so attractive to the mind and heart.

Oh, how vital it is for young people to consecrate their lives to God and commit their ways to His guidance and trust! I can remember the strong influence for lustful fulfillment in the society in which I grew up. I thank the Lord that He helped me to seek His guidance and obey the leadings of His Holy Spirit. I would earnestly plead with all young people to make that solemn decision for God and to do His perfect will. It will be worth it all to experience His blessings!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

to live is for our happiness and welfare. Yes, it crosses and conflicts in broad disagreement with our fleshly thoughts and desires. This is where the great trouble comes with humanity and is a reason for all the woeful and disgraceful conditions that throng the race of man. We know that the author and instigator of it all is Satan, the arch-enemy of God. We see its awful beginning in the case of Adam and Eve, and we can behold its awful impact upon mankind in history.

We see God working through the ages with mankind to defeat Satan and destroy his terrible work. Before God made witness of His law, He worked with establishing the principles of faith, confidence, and assurance. This was portrayed through Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, along with others recorded in Bible history. Four-hundred and thirty years later (Galatians 3:17), God gave His Law and Commandments through Moses. This was the wisdom of God in preparing our hearts to receive the grace and salvation that was to be brought through Jesus Christ. Not only does our Creator want us to have faith and confidence in Him and His love for us, but He wants us to be aware of the standard of His holiness and righteousness. Thus, He gave us His law. First, He established faith, and then He gave His law. If the law would have been given first, it would have been a hopeless case. But God established and showed the way of faith and assurance of His loving mercy first, and then He gave His law. In our own strength we could not overcome the flesh and temptations of evil, but with faith and confidence of God's love, we can love and follow and obey His holy laws successfully.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the benefits and blessings contained in the law?
2. What effect does the law have upon the sinful nature of man?
3. How must we feel and respond to the Law of God?
4. How can we overcome the influence and temptations of sin?
5. What is it about God's commandments that is so precious?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson today from the Psalms portrays the value and benefit of the Law of God. It shows how precious and dear God's law is and can be to the heart and soul of man. In other lessons to come, we will look more into the working and presence of sin and disobedience in the heart of man that will conflict and cause trouble. In our lesson today, however, we want to see how precious, beneficial, and important the laws, statutes, judgments, precepts, testimonies, and commandments are and can be to us.

In the first part of Psalm 19, it speaks of the message that daily and nightly is portrayed by the heavens; we had that as part of our April 26 lesson. Then, after speaking of the message of the beautiful heavens above us, the writer goes right into the blessings and joyful benefits of the law of God. Not forgetting the message portrayed so wonderfully in the heavens above us, let us take a good look and consider earnestly what is spoken about God's law and what it contains.

Let us notice the things that the Law of God can accomplish: *converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, enduring for ever, and being true and righteous altogether.* The writer goes on to declare that God's laws are *more to be desired than fine gold, and sweeter than honey.* By them, it is stated, we are warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

After elaborating about the benefits of the law, the writer speaks about our errors, secret faults, and also presumptuous sins. It is expressed in a prayer to God, to keep them back, and let them not have dominion over us. Then we shall be upright and innocent from the great transgression. The Psalmist closed with a prayer for God to help him, so that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart would be acceptable unto Him. These, along with the various expressions in Psalm 119, portray the love and earnest desire we should have for the law of God, and to have it, as the New Testament declares, written in our hearts.

So we see that the love and appreciation we should have for God's law is conflicted and opposed by the influence and temptations of sin and by yielding to the appetites and desires

Jealousy and ill-will. "*strife*": Contention and division. "*seditions*": Doctrines causing division and contention. "*heresies*": False doctrines contrary to the truth.

Ver. 21, "*envyings*": Ill will and jealousy. "*revellings*": Lowering and letting loose the standard of God's word.

Ver. 23, "*meekness*": Gentleness and humility. "*temperance*": Self-discipline and control.

Ver. 25, "*walk in the Spirit*": Behave and conduct one's self in accord with God's Spirit.

Galatians 6:7, "*God is not mocked*": You can't fool your Creator.

Ver. 8, "*soweth to the flesh*": Allows the flesh to have control. "*soweth to the Spirit*": Allows the Holy Spirit to fully guide and control.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the holy writings of the apostle Paul, we have a definite guideline of the two distinct powers and influences that we, as mortals in this time world, are faced with. It was that way in Paul's time and long before him. It was the solemn conflict that faced Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and that which has faced every mortal since then. History is very vivid in revealing both sides of this matter. It is a proven fact that to yield to the alluring powers of Satan in the lusts and passions of the flesh brings trouble, disappointment, and eternal damnation in the long run.

We all have to face this situation. I can recall times in my youthful years when the flesh and lustful attractions of the world allured my heart and mind, but I am thankful for a godly mother and the saints of God, along with the Holy Spirit, that helped to draw my soul to an un failing decision to let the Holy Spirit and the gospel of Christ have the pre-eminence in my life.

The attractions of the world and the lusts of the flesh are clearly defined in our lesson. Until a person is awakened to the solemnity of this matter, there is very little chance of attaining to the right way. The things that are mentioned in our lesson today, of the lustful current of this ungodly world, are still in great operation. But the Holy Scriptures are plain and the Holy Spirit is faithful to deal with the souls of humanity. He is working and will continue to work as long as time shall last.

May the Lord help each one of us to be sincere and honest

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. —Galatians 6: 7, 8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The conversation, ways, and habits of a person who is governed by godliness and submission to the Holy Spirit of God will manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit in that person's life; while being dominated and controlled by fleshly lusts and desires will produce all manner of sin and wrong.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Corinthians 6:9, "*fornicators*": People who have unlawful sexual relations and behavior. "*idolators*": People who worship other gods beside the true God. "*adulterers*": People who are not true to their husbands or wives. "*abusers of themselves with mankind*": Men who have sexual relations with men.

Ver. 10, "*covetous*": Lovers of money and material wealth. "*revilers and extortioners*": trouble-makers and those who stir up hatred and strife.

Ver. 11, "*washed*": Made clean through obeying the truth and being forgiven of sin. "*sanctified*": Made pure and holy. "*justified*": Made just and righteous before God.

Romans 8:12, "*debtors, not to the flesh*": Do not have to live after the fleshly lusts of this world.

Ver. 13, "*mortify*": Put to death and bring under strict control.

Galatians 5:16, "*Walk in the Spirit*": Conduct one's self to please God.

Ver. 17, "*lusteth against*": The flesh has desires contrary to the Spirit of God. "*cannot do the things that ye would*": Cannot follow inclinations of the flesh.

Ver. 19, "*uncleanness*": Impurity. "*lasciviousness*": Filthy conduct with no control.

Ver. 20, "*idolatry*": Worshipping other gods besides the true God. "*witchcraft*": The Greek word is "pharmacia", which means "medication". "*variance*": Wrangling and arguing. "*emulations*":

of the flesh.

It is a firm, definite decision that we all, as free moral agents, must make individually. By making a strong and unwavering decision for obedience to God and His law, we can overcome the ways of sin and disobedience and live holy and righteous lives before Him, by His help and grace.

--Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

As children, we are taught to follow our parents' corrections and commands. We start out hearing simple commands like: "No, no." "Pick up your toys." "Don't hit." As we grow older, the commands of obedience take on responsibility like: "Take out the trash." "Clean your room." "Share with others." As younger children, we obey simply to avoid punishment, and as we get older, we obey to please our parents; not necessarily to please ourselves. How perfect it is, however, when we follow instructions simply because we love doing those things that are helpful and well-pleasing to our parents. Obedience proves to be a blessing to all as it brings order, peace and safety to the home as well as the world around us.

David had a perfect attitude of heart in his regard to the commandments of the Lord. He found strength and guidance in the statutes of the Lord. The book of Psalms contains many verses of gratitude that David had for the laws, statutes and commandments of the Lord. He loved serving the Lord.

Consider, on the other hand, the attitude of the rich young ruler. "All these things have I kept from my youth up..." This a remarkable testimony for anyone. However, he served the Lord outwardly, and not because of an inward love for God's commandments. Many people today do the same thing. They desire to dot the i's and cross the t's, but inwardly they are incomplete, as they do not love the commandments of the Lord and follow after them with a strong and fervent heart.

As we each one mature spiritually, let us be challenged to follow the laws of the Lord with a heart like David. "Blessed are thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight

myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Psalms 119:12-16). It brings a bountiful harvest, a place of refuge as well as quietness and preservation.

--Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 17, 2015

THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND WHAT IT MEANS TO US

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

—Bishop Moule, as quoted in *Beyond Humiliation, The Way of the Cross*, by J. Gregory Mantle

—Selected by Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

MAY 24, 2115

ROOTS AND FRUIT

I Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Galatians 5:16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

We can understand why the world and society goes to such great effort and work, using medical application to heal and save lives; however, we as children of God know that, according to the Scriptures, Jesus bore His physical suffering, not only to save our souls, but also to administer healing to our bodies as well. So then, if we choose to refuse medical science and the procedures of earthly physicians and put our trust solely in God for our healing, we put ourselves in tune with Him, but at great variance with the world. The world doesn't understand our belief that if we try to save our lives we will lose our lives. But we believe that if we put ourselves earnestly and faithfully in God's hands and trust fully in Him, live or die, we will surely save our lives, not for this fleeting earthly world, but for eternal life and happiness with God, and His Son, and all the true and faithful of His precious saints and obedient men and women.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

" ' . . . let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me' (Luke 9:23).

"Daily; without intermission, without holiday; now, today, this hour; and then, tomorrow! And the daily 'cross'; a something which is to be the instrument of disgrace and execution to something else! And what will that something be? Just whatever gives occasion of ever deeper test to the self-surrender of which we have spoken; just whatever exposes to shame and death the old aims, and purposes, and plans, the old spirit of self and its life.

"Perhaps it is some small trifle of daily routine; a crossing of personal preference in very little things; accumulation of duties, unexpected interruption, unwelcome distraction. Yesterday these things merely fretted you and, internally at least, 'upset' you. Today, on the contrary, you *take them up*, and stretch your hands out upon them, and let them be the occasion of new disgrace and deeper death for that old self-spirit. You take them up in loving, worshipful acceptance. You carry them to their Calvary in thankful submission. And tomorrow you will do the same."

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

MEMORY VERSE: And he [Jesus] said to *them* all, if any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. —Luke 9:23

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our Lord Jesus Christ willingly allowed Himself to be crucified on the cross as an example for all who believe and follow Him, that they might be faithful and willing to suffer as He suffered.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Philippians 2:5, "*this mind*": This thought and purpose.

Verse 6, "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": Counted equality with God not to be held on to.

Verse 7, "*But made himself of no reputation*": But emptied himself. "*servant*": Slave.

Verse 8, "*found in fashion*": Showed himself to be no more than a mortal man. "*became obedient unto death*": Being perfectly willing to allow himself to be put to death. "*even the death of the cross*": Not just a natural death, but to allow Himself to die the most horrible and suffering death a person could suffer, and that was the death of being nailed to the cross and allowed to suffer and die thereon.

Verse 9, "*Wherefore*": For this reason.

Verse 10, "*every knee should bow*": Every mortal person ought to bow down in submission and gratitude.

Hebrews 12:1, "*compassed*": Surrounded. "*witnesses*": People whose faith in God spoke out bravely. "*lay aside every weight*": Refuse to allow anything to hinder. "*the sin which doth so easily beset us*": The ungodly ways of the sinful world around us that are so enticing and convenient.

Verse 2, "*despising the shame*": Counting lightly the hateful scorn of those who crucified Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in the four Gospels of the New Testament the vivid account of the hateful scorn of the leaders of the nation of Israel toward Jesus Christ and the horrible death that they sentenced Him to suffer and bear. Our text from Philippians 2:5-12 portrays what it was really all about. It declares that Christ was in the form of God; this means that Christ was with God from the beginning. He came from eternity down to this fleeting world of time. It also states that Christ did not count this equality with God to be held on to, but He emptied Himself and came down to the level of mortal humanity for the purpose of paying the debt of salvation for mankind.

This was a great condescension, but He did not stop there. No, He humbled Himself to be willing and obedient to the will of God by allowing the sinful men of the world to take Him and inflict upon Him the most painful and horrible death a mortal can die. He was nailed, in hands and feet, to a man-made cross of wood, to hang and suffer the excruciating painful death thereon. We do not know all about it, but there is a probability that He was hung naked. At any rate, it was the most horrible, agonizing, suffering, and shameful death a man could bear.

Now, our Saviour could have drawn back and avoided such a shameful experience. We have His words in Matthew 26:53 that He could have called for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from such a death. But He followed with the question in verse 54, "How shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Christ submitted Himself to be shamefully crucified in fulfillment to the foregoing prophecies for the atonement of the sins of mankind.

Along with these Scriptures, we have the sayings of Jesus concerning all who follow Him. There is a cross that we all must bear if we are to walk worthy of His grace and salvation. If we draw back from the shame of the Christian profession before this ungodly world, then we prove ourselves unworthy of His grace and eternal blessings. May the Lord help us all to be willing to go all the way with Him and be with Him in His eternal glory in that blessed world to come!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of mind did Jesus have that we must also have?
2. Why did Jesus not take actions to escape the death of the cross?
3. What is the cross that all who love and follow Him must bear?
4. What was the reward that God gave to Christ for His obedience?
5. What will be the result of all who draw back from the cross?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is a song that says, "*Oh, there's a cross for everyone to bear; but there's a heaven for each soul to share! There's a place in heaven waiting me; I have it through His death on Calvary!*" Our Lord Jesus fully knew what He was going to have to suffer as the Saviour of mankind. He spoke of it various times to His disciples. As our lesson bears out, this cross of suffering that Christ had to bear will be passed on to all who believe and follow Him. I have thought much about our Scripture in this lesson from Matthew 16:24-26. This saying of our Lord and Saviour fully reveals a truth that we all need to recognize and fully accept. If we want to partake of Christ's salvation, we must deny self and the worldly attractions and be willing to bear a cross that will be in accord with the cross that our Lord Jesus did bear. In other words, we must be willing to die and give our life as Christ did. To try to save our life will mean that we are going to lose it.

I believe there are other ways we can try to hold on to this life. Look at the medical system and the effort and work of earthly physicians. What are they working for? Is it not to save life and deliver people from the threat of death? It seems a noble thing, but consider this: since Christ suffered so willingly for us and did not seek to save His life, why should we go to such great extent, trusting in medicine and doctors, to preserve our lives? It is even as Jesus stated: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find (or save) it."