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EDITORIAL

What Does the Bible Teach?

"Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for her"

How can anyone believe, teach and claim that the church is less important than Christ, after reading, as cited above from Ephesians 5:25? The Bible teaches so very clearly that Christ so much loved the church that He gave Himself for her. Would He do that if the church was not important to Him? Listen to another statement from Acts 20:28, where the elders in the church at Ephesus were given this exhortation: "Therefore take heed to yourselves: and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." Reader, the Bible teaches that Christ loved the church so much that He gave Himself for the church and that He shed His blood from the cross and purchased the church with His own blood.

Christ's church, therefore, is as important as Christ Himself. Christ is the Saviour of man. To save man from sin, Christ shed His blood, as the purchase price, He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). When He saves one from sin, He adds that one to His church, as we read from Acts 2:47. Church, therefore, is the body of the people who have been saved by the blood of Christ, and Christ Himself is the head of that blood-purchased body (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).

To be saved from the blood of Christ, to become a blood-purchased individual in the blood bought body of Christ, His

church, one must come in contact with His blood. Christ shed His blood in His death, He shed His blood when He died. How do we then come in contact with the blood of Christ which He shed in His death? Paul, the apostle, gives us the right answer in Romans 6:3&4, when he said: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." That is to say that when one believes in Christ and is baptized as he has commanded in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved...." One comes in contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ. The apostle said that one should know that when one is baptized into Christ, one is baptized into his death at the same time. This is how one comes in contact with the blood of Christ. There is no other way.

Most people think of the church as a material building. But the Bible teaches, as we have observed, that the church is the body of the people who have been saved by the blood of Christ, after they have believed in Christ and have been baptized into Him. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). In the Greek language, which Jesus spoke, the word *ekklesia* mean a body of people. Before His death, Christ had promised to build or establish His *ekklesia* (Matthew 16:18), in about 30 A.D. Much later, when the Bible was first translated into English language from the Greek language, John Waycliff, in the year 1380 A.D., translated *ekklesia* as church. The word church is of Latin origin, and does not carry the same meaning as the word *ekklesia*. The literal translation of the word *ekklesia* from the Greek into English would be "a called out body." Thus, when the apostle Peter spoke to the church in first century, A.D., he told them: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct, received by traditions from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Christ's church, therefore, is not something cheap or unimportant. To God and Christ the church is so precious and great in value that He gave Himself for His church and purchased the church with His own blood.

There Is Power In The Blood Of Christ

J.C. CHOATE

Blood may not be a pleasant thought for some people. It may suggest a cut, a wound, or even death. Some in the religious world have tried to eliminate that word from their vocabulary.

In Old Testament times God required animal sacrifices or blood offerings to atone for man's sin. Blood was very important because it represented life, that is, since life was in the blood. For this reason, the eating of blood was forbidden. We read, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood." (Leviticus 17 : 11,12).

Even the Old Covenant was dedicated with blood. The Hebrew writer said, "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9 : 19-22). The Hebrew writer also says that the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place once a year with blood "which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." (Hebrews 9 : 7). Then the Hebrew writer concludes, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10 : 4).

Although the animals offered were to be the best of the flock, and that without spot or blemish, still they were but animals. A perfect sacrifice was therefore needed. The blood of animals only typified the blood of that perfect sacrifice. But since animals could not take away sin, and since man himself was a sinner and could not save himself or others, then who could serve as that perfect sacrifice? There was but one and that was Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Christ lived without sin. Peter said that he did no sin. (1 Peter 2 : 22). Because he lived without sin, keeping

the law perfectly, and not yielding to temptation, then he was able to die upon the cross for the sins of the world.

We sing some songs that emphasize the blood of Christ. We sing one called, "There is power in the blood." We sing another one that says, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." How true those words are.

There are many things that cannot save. As already pointed out, the blood of animals could not save us. Neither could the law save. It only brought people to Christ. Paul said, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3 : 22-25). Not only can we not be saved by the works of the law, but we cannot be saved by our own good works. Paul also wrote concerning this, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3 : 3-7).

Peter tells us that we have not been redeemed or saved by such things as silver and gold. Hear him, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1 : 18,19). Man may buy or bribe his way through this life, but he cannot buy salvation and neither can he bribe the Lord to save him. We would therefore be wise not to put our trust in material things. Finally, the religions of men and obeying the doctrines and commandments of men will not take one to heaven. Christ said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15 : 9). John said that if we bid false teachers God's speed then we are partakers of their evil deeds. (2 John 11).

Again, Paul wrote that those who cause divisions serve not our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 16 : 17,18).

Being sinners, there is just one way for us to be saved and that is through the sacrifice of Christ and the shedding of his blood. There are many statements in the scriptures that emphasize the importance of Christ's blood. Paul said that we are reconciled to God, or we are able to become the friends of God, through the blood of Christ. He says, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Colossians 1 : 19,20). Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians that they were at one time far away from God but that they had been brought to God by the blood of Christ. He shows that both Jews and Gentiles were now one in Christ and that it was through his death that the middle wall of partition was broken down, that is, the Old Law was removed that separated them. (Ephesians 2 : 13-17).

Speaking of Christ and his blood, Paul wrote the Christians at Ephesus, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7). To the Colossian Christians, he said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14). Christ said, in instituting the Lord's Supper, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28). Those who are saved through the blood of Christ are added to the Lord's Church (Acts 2:47), and Paul said to the Elders of the church at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28). We are told in Ephesians 5 : 25 that Christ died for the body or the church, that is, he shed his blood for it or bought it with his blood. Another way of putting it, he paid the price that was necessary for the church to exist. Then as Christians, we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. John wrote, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7). And finally, as the Lord's people we assemble each first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ. (Acts 20:7). Paul

explained to the Christians at Corinth that Christ said that they should partake of the bread in remembrance of his body and "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

Much more could be said about the blood of Christ, and why it was shed, and the power that is within it, but let us sum up what we have already read from the scriptures:

1. Christ was the perfect sacrifice, dying on the cross, shedding his blood for the sins of man.

2. With the shedding of the blood of Christ, the old law was removed and the New Testament was sealed with his blood.

3. We are saved by the blood of Christ. We reach that blood through obedience. In other words, Christ stated that in order for man to be saved that he should believe in him, repent of his sins, confess him as the Son of God, and be baptized (buried in water), to be saved or to have the remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). When one does that then he comes into contact with the blood of Christ or through obedience to the Lord, which culminates in the waters of baptism, then one reaches the benefits of the Lord's death, and therefore Christ washes his sins away with his blood. We may read this in Romans 6. Also, when Saul was told to arise and be baptized, after he had become a believer, had repented of his sins, and had acknowledged the Lord, then he was assured that his sins would be washed away. We read these exact words, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22 : 16). Also, Christ said that his blood was shed that man might have the remission of his sins. (Matthew 26 : 28; Ephesians 1 : 7). Then in Acts 2 : 38 Peter told a large number of people who had become believers in Christ that they could have remission of their sins if they would now repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. They did so and the Lord saved them and added them to his church. (Acts 2 : 47). So if one wants to be saved then he must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized, and in so doing he comes into contact with the blood of Christ and his sins are forgiven.

4. The Lord's church was purchased or bought with the blood of Christ. Therefore, it is blood bought and very important.

We must then be members of it to belong to the Lord.

5. The blood of Christ continues to cleanse the Christian as he walks in the light of Christ or according to his will, that is, in being faithful to him.

6. As the Lord's people we are to partake of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, partaking of the bread in remembrance of the body of Christ and partaking of the cup or fruit of the vine in remembrance of the blood of Christ. This helps us to remember the sacrifice that Christ made that we might be saved.

My friends, Christ died for you. He shed his blood that you might have the forgiveness of your sins. Do you believe in him? Have you obeyed him? If you have not, we want to encourage you to do so. What a shame it would be to fail to accept the salvation that the Lord has made possible for man.

From Despair to Hope

T.R. DOHLING

Ephesians 2 is one of the greatest chapters in the Scriptures! In this chapter, the inspired apostle Paul describes the process of salvation. He begins by describing the tragedy and hopelessness of those who are lost in the darkness of sin. He then tells how those in that hopeless situation have been offered a way of escape. In the final verse, he describes the wonderful life that is lived by those who have turned from the darkness of sin to the light of righteousness. This section of inspired Scripture offers an amazing summary of what happens in conversion. Let us see how this summary is presented:

First, we see the despair of sin (Eph. 2:1-12). Paul begins this section by reminding the readers that even though they were in Christ and enjoyed the blessings of fellowship with God, they had not always been so blessed. Before their immersion into Christ, they had been —

- Dead because of the presence of sin (vs. 1, 5).
- Disobedient because they submitted to Satan's control (v. 2).
- Devoted to worldly lusts (v. 3).
- Damned, or condemned, because they were separated from God (vs. 11, 12).

The tragedy of living in the darkness of sin is shocking. Those living that kind of life are miserable. The Christian remembers this miserable existence and is thankful that God has offered salvation (2:8, 9). Those who hear and obey the plan of salvation become new creatures and escape the misery of spiritual death. The despair of sin causes the Christian to appreciate the enormity of God's salvation. Amazing blessings are offered to those who wish to leave the life of sin.

Second, we see the joy of reconciliation (2:13-18). The misery of sin's darkness is corrected by God's mercy. Those "in Christ Jesus" (v. 13) find themselves in a totally different situation. God sacrificed His only begotten Son in order to save all mankind (John 3:16). In that atoning death, Christ brought the prospect of reconciliation to a bitterly antagonistic world. There was enmity between mankind and God because sin had corrupted the blessed fellowship. There was enmity between people because sin had fueled arrogance. Christ came to earth and "preached peace" (v. 17) to a world that was in bitter conflict. Those who hear the gospel account discover the reconciliation that is possible; the war does not have to continue.

In this war, every Christian has been, at one time, an enemy of God. Some deny this truth, but at one time every person who is now a Christian was involved in supporting Satan's efforts to defeat God. When he or she became a Christian, the support formerly given to Satan was shifted to God. How marvellous it is to realize that God forgives us of our enmity and opposition! Christians are blessed because Christ has provided access to God's forgiveness.

Third, we see the consecration of belonging to God (2:19-22). Salvation not only replaces the despair of sin with renewal and reconciliation, but it also causes the Christian to become devoted to the Lord's cause. This term means that the Christian is saved by the blood of Christ, is reconciled to friendship with God, and is placed in a special relationship with God. The saved Christian becomes an integral part of the holy temple of God! As a part of this temple, the Christian is sanctified for God's service and joins all the saved. Now, s/he is neither God's enemy nor does s/he support opposition to God. S/he works in harmony with other Christians to further the cause of the Lord. What an amazing contrast we see at this point compared to the point when the person was "dead" (2:1)!

How To Study The Bible

EUGENE SMITH

The Bible is the Word of God. Properly studied it unfolds to us the best way of life for this world and the only way of entrance to a better world. It is the way of life and its words are the words of life. Knowing this the apostle Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (II Tim. 2:15). Therefore we should desire to know how to study this Book that its treasures may be unlocked to us.

A few general observations will help much in beginning this. First of all, study the Bible daily. Have a regular time each day, the same time every day, and let nothing interfere with this study. Morning, when the mind is fresh and clear, is the best time for this. Second, we must concentrate upon our subject. Clear the mind of all else and devote this time entirely to Bible study. Third, study the Bible independently. Commentaries may have a place but the Bible is God's revelation to you. He is speaking to you so you can understand Him if you will only listen.

God has promised His help in this and we should claim that help. No study should be undertaken without prayer. Prayer for His guidance; prayer for an open heart; prayer for strength and prayer for wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Few books are needed in the study of the Bible but for most people a few will prove most helpful. First of all a good Bible. This should be one with clear print, self pronouncing, to help you with the names, and reference to aid you in your subject study. With this a good English dictionary, a Bible dictionary, a complete Concordance and perhaps a Topical Textbook will complete the basic library.

In all Bible study certain fundamental rules are to be used in coming to a correct understanding of the language. Briefly stated they are as follows: 1) Who is Speaking, 2) To Whom is it Spoken, 3) What is the Purpose, and 4) Under What Period or Dispensation was it Spoken. A brief example will show the importance and the necessity of these rules.

In Job 2:4 we read, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." This would say that every man has his

price, a thing which is wholly untrue, yet we find it in the Bible. But examine it by our rules. 1) Who is speaking? The answer is Satan. 2) To Whom is it spoken? The answer is Jehovah. 3) What is the Purpose ? By the context, chapters one and two, we see that Satan is trying to disparage Job and say he only serves God for the pay that he receives.

Another example illustrates the use of the fourth rule. "Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest" (Deut. 23:20). This verse is surprising in more ways than one but the distinction made as to the foreigner is our point just here. The distinction to be made in this way is entirely contrary to Christ's teaching. However by rule No. 4), Under what period or dispensation was it spoken, we find the answer. This was in the Jewish age and was given to the Jews so is not applicable to the Christian age.

So of many things in the Old Testament and many statements in the Bible from evil men and sometimes from Satan himself. These are all recorded by inspiration but we must remember it is not God speaking and other times when God is speaking He is not speaking to us or to anyone in this age. Thus we can come to a happy understanding of the Word of God.

Of several methods of study which are good we shall consider but two. In these two we have practically all methods comprehended and to my mind these are the best and most practical.

First, the consecutive method. In this we begin with Genesis in the Old Testament and Matthew in the New Testament and go right through, chapter by chapter. Each student should first study the Bible by this method to gain an overall understanding and view of the entire volume.

In following this method don't hurry, take your time and in each chapter decide upon the following five things:

- 1) The principal subject of the chapter, 2) The leading lesson of the chapter, 3) The purpose of God in having this chapter written, 4) The key verse of the chapter, and this should be memorized, and 5) The relation of this chapter to Christ and His mission to redeem the world.

Once a general view of the Bible has been obtained by this method of study we should turn to the topical method. Prepare a list of subjects which you believe are touched upon in the Bible.

Make the list as comprehensive and complete as possible and remember the Bible deals with practically every phase of living. Having arranged such a list, begin and study each subject or topic in the order you have them listed.

In such a study be exact and thorough. Here your Concordance and Topical Textbook will be valuable. Find every reference to your subject and carefully examine every text thus indicated. Follow this by tracing out every reference suggested in that verse or those verses. Carefully examine the context of each verse read that you may always give exactly the meaning intended by the writer and not wrest the verse from its proper setting.

Write down each item of information gained on the subject as you follow this course of study. When you have finished a subject combine all of this and write a brief summary of what the Bible teaches upon this subject. Don't neglect this for it is in the last summation and the writing of it that you gain the most from your study for this puts the information gained in the form you can use it.

Finally, as knowledge is gained by either method of study, put the knowledge to work. Unused knowledge is quickly lost and becomes useless. Find someone to teach and impart to them a measure of the things you have learned. Become interested in some individual and teach and work for his or her ultimate salvation. This will deepen your desire for knowledge and prove an added incentive in the work of studying. Neither be deceived into believing that study is not work for it is and must be but the rewards of it are great and sweet. Study to know and exercise to grow in order to attain to eternal peace with God and to bring the same happiness to your friends.

The Thief on the Cross

MAC LAYTON

"And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation."—Heb. 5:9

During His lifetime Jesus forgave people of their sins in various ways in order to prove He was the Son of God. This truth is seen in the man sick of palsy, Zacchaeus, the penitent woman

who bathed his feet with her tears, the woman taken in adultery, and the rich young ruler. (Mk. 2:5-12; Lu. 19:9-10; 7:48-50; Jo. 8:3; Lu. 18:18-23.) But following His death upon the cross, Jesus issued the universal law of pardon for all men. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2.) Though the Lord laid down the general principles of salvation in his ministry on earth, the specific terms of pardon were not fully announced until He shed His blood. Therefore, no example of pardon before the Lord's death can be our example today. This is true of the thief on the cross as well. This penitent thief was told: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Lu. 23:42-43.)

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

This thief has been mistakenly used as an example for our salvation, and an argument against the necessity of obeying the Lord in baptism. There seems to be no question but that the thief was saved. But whether he was saved without being baptized no man on earth could state with certainty. The Bible says all of Judea went out to be baptized of John, and that Jesus through his disciples baptized more than John. (Matt. 3:5-6; Jo. 4:1-2). Only God would have the knowledge to declare the thief was not baptized! Furthermore, he displayed an amazing knowledge of Jesus. Where did he learn "this man hath done nothing amiss"? How did he know Jesus had power to do something for him after death as declared in the words "remember me" ? He also knew the Lord's Kingdom was yet in the future (something those who use him as an example have not learned to this day!) There is every reason to believe this thief was an erring child of God, and most likely a former disciple of John, or of Jesus!

WHEN THE THIEF DIED

Noting carefully the time of the thief's death shows undeniably he is no pattern for us today: (1) **He died in the personal ministry of Jesus**, which was limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the Jews. (Matt. 10:6; Jo. 1:31). (2) **The thief died while the Old Testament was still in force.** The law of Moses continued until Jesus' death. (Col. 2:14.) When Christ became our High Priest He fulfilled the Old Law (Matt. 5:17), and instituted His New Testament. (Heb. 7:12). Just as David with his bloody sacrifices, Noah and his ark building, and Abraham in the sacrifice of his son cannot be our pattern, neither can the thief on the cross because he lived in another period of time! To return to the Old

Testament law now is to be severed from Christ and to fall from grace. (Gal. 5:4). (3) The thief died before the church-kingdom had been established. The church began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:11-15). All spiritual blessings are in the church (Eph. 1:3; 5:26-27). Before it was established repentance and remission of sins in His name had not been preached. (Lu. 24:27). Now, with full forgiveness and all spiritual blessings given after the establishment of the church, why should anyone want to use this thief as an example, who knew none of these things? (4) The thief died before Jesus completed His offering for the sins of the world. The Gospel is the death, burial, and the resurrection of Christ. (I Cor. 15:1-3). Hence, the thief could not know the Gospel as do we, for it had not yet been given!

THE NEW WILL

Jesus died on the cross to put His New Testament Will into effect:

"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Heb. 9:16-17). Suppose someone were to write the internal revenue service: "Dear Sir: I am not going to pay income taxes, because my great-grandfather and my great-great-grandfather did not have to pay taxes, and they were loyal citizens. So neither do I!" You know what would happen! These men lived before the income tax law went into effect. We must pay taxes because we live under that law. The thief lived and died before the will of Christ went into effect, so was never subject to its conditions. A will goes into effect only after the death of its maker.

CONDITIONS OF CHRIST'S WILL

The will of Christ states clearly the terms of pardon: Hearing the Gospel (Rom. 1:16); Belief in Christ (Jo. 8:28); Repentance of sins (Acts 2:38); Confession of Christ (Acts 8:36-38); and Burial in water for forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16; I Pet. 3:21). Baptism is the last condition to be met by the alien sinner before pardon:

"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4).

Under the . will of Christ every person must meet the condition or be lost forever. He is the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:9).

WHY SEEK ANOTHER WAY?

Why should anyone seek to evade a command of God which brings the very blessing he so desperately needs? The thief could not be baptized for the remission of sins, be a member of the church or obey Christ's New Testament, for none of these things had been given in his lifetime; But this is not true for those of us living this side of the cross! The only reason the thief on the cross is used today is to evade God's command to be baptized. With the same logic it could be shown that one does not need to study his Bible, worship God faithfully, or observe the Lord's Supper because the thief did not!

One thing we know: The thief did all the Lord asked him to do! Will you do as much? The Lord commands you to be baptized (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:48).

Making A Difference

BYRON NICHOLS

Christians are different. Those of us who are in the church and belong to God, who have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), are different. We are not the same as people who do not have that relationship with God — we are *"His own special people"* (1 Peter 2:9); we are different. God and His Son both expect and intend for us to be different from the world.

Because we are different, we ought also to make a difference. If that is true, it becomes important that we know what kind of difference the Lord expects us to make. We must also somehow figure out how we can go about making this difference that is our responsibility to make.

We should make a difference in the quality of the world in which we live by the way that we live. Because of us, there should be more love displayed. 1 John 4:8 says that *"God is love."* As His children, we are to be like Him; thus, we also must exhibit love.

We must be serious about making a difference in the morality of the world. The Bible is the Christian's standard, our guide through

life. The standard of morality found in the Bible will make a tremendous difference in our world if it is ever practiced by a very significant part of the world. But for that to ever come about, Christians are going to have to first live by that standard, and then teach others to do the same. The church, as God's special people, can and must show that we are different because of our high standard of honesty and integrity. The world can be influenced by our being known for always being truthful and reliable in all our transactions and activities. We will make a difference for some if we will demonstrate to them that purity of life is not an impossibility, and that it most definitely has its rewards, even in this life.

You and I, as Christians, must set the example the world needs in showing compassion for our fellow man. Jesus taught us and showed us the need for and the blessings of compassion; now He expects us to do the same for the rest of mankind.

Then there is the matter of hope. Christians are the only people in the whole world who can reveal the one realistic hope for eternity. With that capability comes responsibility - the responsibility to make a difference in the world by proclaiming our hope, Jesus Christ, to the lost. Multitudes all around us are struggling along with hardly any hope in this life, and certainly with no reason for any hope beyond this life. You and I can make a difference by giving them reason to hope now, but more importantly, reason to hope in the prospect of eternity.

In order for us to really make a difference, we Christians must be people of conviction. We must be willing to study the Bible diligently in order to know and understand what the will of God is. After learning God's will through His Word, we then must commit ourselves to living according to those instructions and principles. Those who are outside the church, even when they disagree with us, should be made to respect us because of the kind of people we are and the fact that we stand for what is good and right, to the best of our knowledge.

As an individual Christian, I can make a difference, not only in the world, but I can do the same in the church. I can encourage my fellow Christians to live more faithfully and zealously for Christ. I can very specifically encourage them by my words of admonition and praise. I can also strengthen their commitment to the Lord by the way that I live. But I have to be consistent in how I live: they don't always let me know when they are watching me.

It is very true that we Christians do not all have the same

abilities. We cannot serve the Lord in exactly the same ways. But, if we are going to change the world or the church for the better, we will not succeed in doing it passively. We can and will make a difference only through actively serving the Lord with whatever abilities we have, and not through living the philosophy of "Live, and let live." We certainly cannot force people to change their way of life or their convictions, but that does not mean that we should not be active, even aggressive, and even militant at times. The church can make a difference by actively, aggressively, and militantly promoting what is right and opposing what is wrong. Please remember, though, that all of our words and actions must be motivated by love and compassion, and must be accompanied by the same.

If my life comes to a close without having influenced others for good, without having improved the world, and without having helped the church to be stronger, then I will not have made a difference. If I have not made a difference, my life will have been lived in vain.

May God help both you and me to truly **make a difference.**

The Heart, Soul, and Essence of Christianity

DAVID W. CHADWELL

In their evangelistic concern, Christians can easily assume too much. It is simple to assume that "everyone" knows right from wrong, distinguishes good from evil, and understands basic morality. Such dangerous assumptions quickly betray the Christian teacher.

Christians' answers to these two questions are predictable: (1) what is the central truth of Christianity? (2) What is the foundation of Christianity? Informed Christians respond, "The central truth of Christianity is this: Jesus was raised from the dead to be Christ and Lord (Acts 2:36). Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity" (1 Corinthians 3:11). No truths are as fundamental to Christianity as these.

From these answers, Christians can make dangerous assumptions. Many assume that anyone who acknowledges these facts understands the meaning and message of the facts. Many assume the mere acceptance of these facts is sufficient knowledge of Jesus.

Because of these assumptions, many Christians make three

critical mistakes as they seek to convert others. (1) They spend their energy and time trying to convert people to a religious system instead of converting them to the Savior. (2) They teach the unconverted more about the structure of the church than the content of Christianity. (3) They work hard to persuade a person to change religions, but do little to teach him about Jesus.

The whole of Christianity is based on a man named Jesus. He was no ordinary man. Before His birth as a human infant, He shared the full deity and divinity of God the Father (John 1:1-4, Philippians 2:1-11). Though this divine One was God's instrument of creation, He became completely human. He hungered, thirsted, suffered, and experienced every form of human trial and temptation (Hebrews 4:14-16). He humbly endured the worst Satan could do to Him: betrayal, denial, desertion, gross injustice, abuse, indignity, humiliation, and the most degrading and cruel death one could die.

In what appeared to be the absolute defeat of Jesus and the total victory of Satan, God sealed the doom of Satan and all evil. Through Jesus' innocent blood poured out in death, God made perfect atonement for every sin that has been or will be committed (Romans 3:21-26). Through the blood offering of the sinless Jesus, the just God paid for all sin. He thereby obtained the right to extend perfect, complete forgiveness to everyone who places his faith in Jesus. The death of the sinless Jesus freed God's grace—God could extend mercy to everyone who placed his faith in the crucified Jesus.

Through Jesus' death, sin was defeated. Through Jesus' resurrection, eternal life became reality. God's power, which resurrected

Jesus, is the enduring proof that He has the power to keep every promise. Resurrection power declares God can redeem, justify, and sanctify any person who enters Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived in the flesh, experienced physical life, and died — just as do we — so that He might destroy sin's slavery and Satan's power (Hebrews 2:14-18). By sharing our full human experience, He qualified Himself to be the Christian's perfect High Priest as He serves before God in heaven (Hebrews 8:1, 2). Having been a temptable human, He perfectly understands us. Having been and being divine, He perfectly understands God. With perfect understanding and insight, He represents us before the God of mercy. In our weakest moments, we can come with confidence to God's throne of grace, knowing that we will receive mercy. That confidence

is never founded in our merit; it is always founded in our perfect High Priest. In Jesus is the certain hope of the reserved, indestructible, eternal inheritance belonging to those who live in Him by faith under God's protective power (1 Peter 1:3-5). Jesus' resurrection makes that living hope a trustworthy reality.

Christianity is not built on the church, or an elaborate code of religious regulations, or a detailed system of theology. It is built on Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins and was raised from the dead. Only knowledge and understanding of Jesus give the church, commandments, and theology substance and significance.

Jesus built His church, but He is the Savior. The saved are placed by Him in His church, but the church cannot save. Jesus gave us many teachings to follow, but He is the Savior. In love and faith, the saved follow these teachings, but mere obedience cannot save. Through Jesus, God reveals theological truth, but Jesus is the Savior. The saved ceaselessly search for a clearer understanding of spiritual truth, but theological correctness cannot save.

One cannot be a Christian without understanding Jesus. A Christian must know Jesus, listen to Jesus, and be transformed by Jesus. Faith must begin with an understanding of Jesus' identity, teachings, death, and resurrection. Otherwise, it is not Christian faith, and it will not produce a Christian.

Napoleon's View of Christ

JOE MALONE

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) served as emperor of France as Napoleon I. His government was marked by such things as the proclamation of complete freedom of religious worship, the reconstruction of the school system, and by the famous group of laws known as the *Code Napoleon*.

Napoleon led the French forces in several wars, and usually won. On June 18, 1815, he attacked the British forces under Wellington at Waterloo, and the result was a total defeat for the French. Napoleon gave up his throne to his son and tried to escape from France, but failing, he surrendered. He was taken to the island of Saint Helena, where he was confined for the rest of his life.

Reportedly the following was said by Napoleon to General Bertrand on the island of Saint Helena as Napoleon had been

rebuking the general for entertaining doubts related to certain human thoughts on eternal things:

"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity.

Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truths which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things.

Can you conceive of Caesar as the eternal emperor of the Roman senate, and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? Such is the history of the invasion of the world by Christianity. Such is the power of the God of the Christians; and such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of faith and the government of His church. His arm has for eighteen hundred years defended the church against the storms that have threatened to engulf it.

Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force! Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him! What proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absolute, he has but one simple end, the spiritual melioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union of that which is true, the holiness of the soul."

How wonderful it would be if all the people in this world held that same view of Jesus Christ and His church!

Is There No Balm in Gilead?

DILLARD THURMAN

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:20-22).

The above words are some of the saddest and most poignant

to be found in Holy Writ. How utterly barren and dismal the view! And yet how graphic a description of our own times and the terrible plight of multitudes of lost souls. It makes us ask again, *"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Then why are my people not healed?"* The answer may be found in a paragraph penned earlier in this same chapter by the weeping prophet: *"From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace"* (Jer. 6:13-14).

It is an easy matter to gain a great following in a religious movement. All that is necessary is a spectacular claim to miraculous power, and an offer of a cut-rate, marked-down, compromised plan of salvation in terms that folk can meet with no sacrifice! That is exactly what was happening in the time of Jeremiah. And, today, the world will throng the tent of a false prophet who tells them what they want to hear. But they are not interested in sitting at the feet of the man of God who will earnestly plead with them to turn from sin and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many frankly admit that too much is demanded to become a child of God in this way.

THE PREACHING OF OBEDIENCE

The way of complete gospel obedience was not popular in the days of Christ and His apostles, and it is no more popular today. Jesus said, *"And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:23-24). On this same theme, the Lord also said, *"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14).

The word *"strive"* in the reading from Luke means to *"agonize"* to find and enter the way of life. The Savior foresaw multitudes in the wrong way, but few going the true way to heaven! For this reason He warned later, saying, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* (Matt. 7:21-23)

FALSE TEACHERS ABOUND IN THE LAND

A bane of false prophets blighted the land in the day of Jeremiah. And a bane of false teachers still blights our land, and many are the religious racketeers who are "making a pitch" for the souls of men, that thereby they may obtain greater monetary rewards. The sensational spellbinders and rabble rousers lay claim to great and notable powers, as they "modestly" admit that God has seen fit to deal directly with them, conferring upon them such favors as ordinary Christians can never receive! They parade a long line of "testifiers" as to the greatness of the wonders they have performed elsewhere! But one thing is lacking in all this specatacular meeting - never is one told of the remedy for sin that was set forth by the Great Physician.

As these false prophets ply their trade in making merchandise of souls (2 Pet. 2:3), it is a heart-rending picture to see multitudes turned away from God's great Physician and His remedy for sin, and thronging to these religious "quacks" and fake-healers who deal in lies and deceits. With God's prophets of old, we are moved to cry out: *"Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us"* (Isa. 30:8-11).

Oh, the myriads of folk today who desire the lulling and pacifying lyrics of deceits, rather than to be awakened by a painful truth which they have not obeyed! And so they demand false prophets and a soothing gospel, instead of the rigid demands of Christ that bring salvation. They want balm for their sin-sick soul — but they prefer the sugar-coated pills of deceit doled out by a religious quack, rather than the distasteful remedy of complete obedience prescribed by the Great Physician.

How appropriate are the words of Jer. 5:30-31, *"A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof."* Yes, even today the people are getting what they are looking for, and what they yearn for. They deride anyone who preaches the truth that is displeasing to their vanity! *"My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof."*

Where lies the answer to this baffling situation? But still, the true teacher of the word of God is not excused from his duty. As of old, God is saying, *"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgressions"* (Isa. 58:1). We are not exonerated in throwing up our hands in defeat or in refusing to *"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3).

JESUS IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" While Jesus was walking among men, He encountered the same difficulties which His disciples must face today. Because of the attitude of the "patient," the *"Great Physician"* could not effect a cure for sin within man. Don't blame the doctor for your continued illness, if the medicine remains unused on the shelf! If you don't trust him sufficiently to accept His diagnosis and take His prescription, then you have no reason to blame the Physician for your condition!

The world rushes by the door of the only Physician who can heal them—but it is not because He has not invited them to accept His salvation. The Lord still pleads with all sin-sick souls, *"Whosoever will, let him come"* (Rev. 22:17). Again He says, *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28). He is always in His office to tend your needs. He is able to save, for that was His mission to the world, *"For the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). And the vilest sinner, who will turn from his sins and come to Him, is not refused, for He said: *"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick"* (Matt. 9:12).

THE LORD'S REMEDY FOR SIN

God's remedy for sin was simply stated by the Great Physician: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). This is so plain that none can contend that he does not understand what to do to be saved. It is not a question of understanding, but rather a question of having faith in the *"Great Physician"* so as to accept His diagnosis and His prescription. You can't contend, "Oh, I have faith in the doctor, but I don't believe the medicine he prescribed is necessary." That is an open admission that you don't really trust the doctor!

When the *"Great Physician"* has spoken, a true believer will say, "That is the doctor's orders!" And he will readily obey. Therefore, it

must be known of all men that a complete cure for sin is based upon sufficient faith in the Christ, the Great Physician, to do everything He has prescribed for us.

Don't ever be guilty of turning from the Son of God, the gospel of your salvation, and the God of your hope, to the religious quacks and false prophets who offer a shoddy, watered-down, cut-rate religion which man has devised! Turn back to read your salvation clear in God's Holy Book by doing everything He has commanded. Only in this way can you be "cured" of your sins, forgiven by the blood of Him who died on the cross. You see, the "*Great Physician*" not only names the "cure" for sin, but offered that cure on the cross of Calvary: His own blood. Come to Him, in the way He prescribed, and accept His remedy for sin.

An Empty Life

JOHNNY RAMSEY

The abundant life for the Christian is a vivid contrast with the empty existence which worldly people face every day. How sad it would be to be without Christ and the daily chore of having nothing to hold onto in an age of carnality. Seeking to entertain ourselves, as those in the days of Amos, would result in "an empty life," a vain and meaningless society of our peers! The Scripture says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*" (1 John 2:15-17).

When there is no respectful awe of our Maker, we struggle to find purpose, depth and meaning in our daily existence. Jer. 10:12 pays homage to the Creator in these words: "*He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens.*" Deism is the false view of God that teaches that man was created by Jehovah and then left just alone to fend for himself the rest of the way in this old world. But the Bible clearly refutes such a view. The One who made us sustains a caring concern for us always. "*If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which*

floweth with milk and honey Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else" (Num. 14:8; Deut. 4:39). We are so blessed to have refuge in the wonderful presence of our sovereign God!

We can communicate with God in prayer that is steadfast (Luke 18:1) and fervent (James 5:16). Such petitions come before the powerful throne in heaven (Heb. 4:16) and become sweet smelling incense (Rev. 4). How empty life would be, if we were estranged from the One who created us! The great passage in Hab. 2:20 thrills our souls: *"The Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him."* Our life would truly be in vain if we were devoid of the Bible and its golden message to guide us in this world. It is a *"lamp unto our feet"* and sustenance to our spirits (Psa. 119:105). The precious Book Divine beautifully brings light and life through the powerful example of our Savior, as we study the four accounts of His life of perfection and splendor: *"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"* (John 1:4).

Parents would be bereft of a proper standard to rear their children, if heaven's instructions about the home had never been revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Timothy was a fine young man because his mother and grandmother had tutored him in the Sacred Text from his earliest days (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). When boys and girls are never taught the Word of God, there is little hope for future spirituality. How empty life is without the nurture of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). A short poem says:

*I saw tomorrow look at me
From little children's eyes,
And thought how carefully we would teach
If we were really wise.*

Life has deeper meaning and hope when we allow the Bible to instruct and motivate us day by day. If Christ had stayed in heaven, all of life would be without hope and cleansing. Heb. 2:9 and Heb. 12:2 tell us to keep our eyes permanently focused on Jesus, *"Who tasted death for every man."* He left the glory of heaven to come to a sin-cursed world in order that we, by His compassionate sacrifice, might leave this wicked world and go to a golden street and be with the redeemed forever. How utterly tragic it will be for billions who will spend eternity with the vile and despotic in hell!

We don't have to live empty lives. We can exchange our empty life for the abundant pleasures which God provides!