

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

Anxiety and the Christian's Cure Published Throughout the City

By Doug Newell IV
of Hortense, Georgia

"The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:5-7).

According to a Harvard Medical School article written in 2008, there are 57 million adults who are diagnosed with anxiety disorders;



nearly two-thirds of that number are women. "Anxiety has now been implicated in several chronic physical illnesses, including heart disease, chronic respiratory disorders [asthma], and gastrointestinal conditions."

Anxiety has a tremendous impact on the body. God has given people emotions that are for our good when they are functioning
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By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto



thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (Luke

8:37-39).

This passage, that we have just read brings to a close the first dealings that Jesus Christ had with the man who is known as the "Maniac of Gadara." This was
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The Pragmatic Adam

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

"I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his



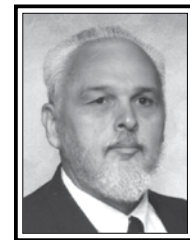
hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Dan. 4:34-35)?

Pragmatism is one of the worst evils of humanity. Simply defined, pragmatism is the idea that the end justifies the means. One might do something horribly wicked, but if some good comes
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Doing the Impossible - Leading A Soul to Christ

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Whenever this preacher hears someone say that he or she led someone to Christ – or that they were led to Christ by someone – he is immediately overwhelmed with suspicion and fear. My suspicion is aroused because there is no such thing in the Bible as a person leading a sinner to Christ. This idea of "leading sinners to



Christ" is a false one with modern easy-believe-ism roots. My fears rise up because anyone whose only experience is that of having been led to Christ by another human being has not come to Christ. How dare this preacher write that? Because the Bible is quite clear on the matter.
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Faults are thick where love is thin.

Love, when fervent, admires the very thing which is greatly denounced when love has grown cold. Of course I have many faults when you have little love.

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:26).

"These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17).

June 5, 2014
Volume XXXIV, Number 6
Whole Number 419

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THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER (UPS 546470) is published monthly for \$6.00 per year by the authority of the Berea Baptist Church, 3881 Highway 363, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855. Periodical Publication postage paid at Mantachie, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER, P. O. Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855-0039.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts are to be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of BBB and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY with paid circulation in most states in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

One year.....\$6.00
 Two years.....\$10.00
 Five years.....\$24.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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BUNDLES TO ONE ADDRESS: These are sent for \$4 per paper for a year. An example: 10 papers for one year at \$40 or 20 papers for one year at \$80.00.

LOCATION OF PUBLISHING CHURCH: Our church is located on state highway 363 about one mile south of Mantachie, Mississippi. Readers are always welcome to visit our services.

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

Anxiety and the

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rightly. These emotions were created to automatically prepare our bodies in dangerous or trying situations. We do not want to yawn and get sleepy when our car starts skidding out of control in a bad storm. That is why our heart beats faster and we get butterflies in our stomach. When we are in danger our body responds by diverting blood from our abdominal organs to the brain putting our body on alert, ready for "fight or flight." The brain is ready to perform the quick and necessary decision to run, fight, or protect. But, if the body stays in this state, the blood is continually being directed to the brain, and less is going to the abdominal organs, which causes physical problems. When a person lives in a perpetual state of anxiety, physical problems occur because our body is not functioning as it ought. We are in a constant state of "fight or flight" thus creating many physical ailments. It is not natural to live in anxiety. God created our bodies to react to a bad situation but not to carry the stress and worry with us for the rest of our lives.

Medical science recognizes that it is not natural and not healthy to live in such a condition. No one has ever said "What I really need is a nice anxiety filled evening, full of stress and worry!" Everyone knows you should not live in constant anxiety – but knowing the problem and finding the cure are worlds apart. The fix, more often than not, is for the doctor to prescribe some sort of medicinal treatment, which is often treating the symptom and not the disease. There are occasions where chemical imbalances can cause our body to be out of whack. Sometimes our unhealthy lifestyles can cause depression and anxiety.

The cure could be simply a little bit of exercise, or going for a walk outside. I am not denying that there are physical issues, but I will say that before a Christian ever goes to the doctor for treatment for anxiety they should first go to the Physician of their souls. Medical science is trying to heal the soul with the bottle and they have not the qualifications or the power to heal. Every person has anxiety. Christians get overwhelmed and are full of care and worry. The Heavenly Doctor has prescribed the cure for the anxious child.

When everything in life seems to be going wrong and when you try and you try and you can not make anything better and everything gets worse, your body physically reacts to your emotional state. When you are in a terrible situation and not only cannot escape, but have no options to relieve it or postpone the inevitable. Or when there is more month than money, and when there are sicknesses than cannot be cured, pain that cannot be quenched, fears that are powerful, and threats that are consuming, we are tossed about by wave after wave of anxiety. Our minds become confused. The sense of hopelessness shadows the soul like a dark cloud that seems to never end. Discouragement sets in and hope is lost. The world seems to cave in on you and you would take off and run away if there were any place to run. One burden is thrust on top of the other and the weight of it is crushing. You need to do something. You MUST do something, it is your God given job to do something...but what? There is no answer and because of weakness, or because of providence, you cannot do anything. You put on a strong face. Perhaps you come to church and smile and laugh. Maybe you put on a strong face for

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Toward the Past Toward the Future

By Raul Enyedi
of Bocs, Romania

"As another year is going by, and at a time like this, we are looking both toward the past and toward the future. Most people, when looking back at their life, perceive it as a series of happy and sad coincidences without any connection one to another. But what people consider being mere accidental happenings are actually events so complex that they surpass by far our power of comprehension. In order to find ourselves in a certain place at a given moment (school, work, church, etc.), billions of factors beyond our control need to work in perfect timing. If a single such factor does not work, we would not make it to the desired destination.

Let us consider this: What would happen if one of the thousands of components of our means of transportation would break down? Probably we would not make it, or at least we would be late. What would happen if one of the thousands of components of other accessories on which we depend, such as our cell phone or computer, goes wrong? What would happen if one of the billions of components of our body does not work normally and we would get sick?

In order for one single event to take place, billions of factors directly connected to our person, but upon which we have no control, need to work together in a precise harmony. But our

path intersects with the paths of many other persons. Every such intersection means billions of other factors that timed themselves in such a way to make the meeting possible.

Taking a superficial look, people call these things happenings or coincidences. However, Christians know from the Bible that nothing is left to mere chance, that with the God who created and sustains everything there is no coincidence or accident. God has a plan for His creation: an immense and complex one, a plan which includes the smallest part of the atom and the largest galaxy, a plan that includes the entire human race, yes, every single one of us.

The Scripture teaches us that **"we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28). When a child of God looks back at all the things that happened to him, he or she can understand that all the events in his or her life intertwined in such a way that even the greatest sufferings worked together for his or her good.

Let us look upon every event we are going through as a development of His great plan, made for our good. And then we, too, may say with the apostle: **"For I am persuaded, that neither ... things present, nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Rom. 8:38-39). We do not know what the future has in store for us, but we know that no matter what will come upon us, nothing will ever separate us from our God. We know that all things, be they joyful or sad, will work together for our good because the One who designed the plan is on our side.

And if He is for us, then who can stand against us?

Who may say what joy, sadness or pain we will experience in the year that lies ahead? We cannot tell. But if we look at our past experiences and see how God has worked in our lives, we will be encouraged to know that the One who began a work in us will most certainly complete it. Let us, therefore, look toward the past with thankfulness and toward the future with confidence and then we shall joyfully live the present, being in all things pleasing to God!"



Anxiety and the

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your family and friends, and laugh off your heartache. But when you leave, and walk out into the sunlight, sit in the car alone, there is a shadow over your soul. A real shadow of pain, fear, trembling, and uncertainty that you can hide from others but cannot escape. The situation may indeed be dire. The concern is warranted – but you know that you can not keep going in the darkness. There is no joy, no comfort, no hope. All seems lost and all seems hopeless. You go on because you must go on. You keep pushing on thinking that all is vain and soon your tired trip will end. The darkness crushes. It crushes all hope, all life, all joy. Everything looks and feels barren and life looks long void of any hope or comfort.

Have I, in some measure, described your situation? Do you recognize the person I was talking about? That is not uncommon, to be overwhelmed by life and trials. The Word of God does not deny this happens to people. The Word of God does not deny that this happens to Christians,

so why should we deny that it happens to us? How foolish to ignore the problem when God mercifully gives us the cure? Far too long have Christians hidden their burdens from their brothers and sisters in the church, that they may keep up and polish the idol of Testimony. The Word of God tells us that anxiety can be dealt with and how to escape the darkness of melancholy. Our passage of Scripture deals with this very issue.

I will be straight with you from the start. The Lord may not deliver you out of your present situation. In fact, it might get a whole lot worse. I cannot promise that you will be relieved of your problems. But I can tell you that you can (and will) be relieved of the fear, the anxiety, the worry, and the life crushing shadow that comes when the heart does not look to God, if you will hear His promises. **"The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 4:5-7).

THE LORD IS AT HAND

The Lord is at hand in the sense that He is ready to the return of the Lord. There are many promises and exhortations to Christian living that are connected to the return of the Lord and that is a comfort (if you know and love Christ) that He is coming again. However, there is another way the Lord is at hand – Jesus is at hand in place and time, the Lord is present, He is near--the LORD is near you, believer. Rejoice, the Lord who parted the sea is near. Stand fast, the Lord who walked with the Hebrew men in the midst of the fiery furnace is present. Do

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not be anxious, the Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides is at hand. The loving Shepherd is close by the sheep, even when the sheep feel alone. **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”** (Ps. 23:4). The valley can be dark and dreadfully frightening, but the Shepherd is near to protect and comfort. Christ is real and He is present with His own. Our first cure of anxiety is to realize that the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour, is near you during this trial. That the God-man who died for you is not uncaring, but with you and promised not to forsake you. Ye of little faith, do not be like the faithless disciples who doubted whether or not the Lord cared that they were in the storm. Christ was with them in the storm He sent them into.

THE HEART FULL OF CARE

When the Scripture tells us **“to be careful for nothing”** (Phil. 4:6) it simply means do not be full of care; or in other words, do not be anxious. We are not robots and it is a crime to be apathetic towards a life, not caring for anything. God gave us this emotion for a reason and there are ways in which it is okay to be anxious. A pastor must be concerned and full of care for the good of the church (Phil. 2:20). Church members should care about not starting trouble in the church (I Cor. 12:21-26). A man must care for and care about his family (I Tim. 5:8). A wife and mother must care for and be concerned for the temporal needs of the family and the unmarried saint is anxious about serving the Lord (I Cor. 7:32-34). A godly and responsible adult should be

concerned about and analyze the facts and take into consideration the possible outcomes and prepare for them as best as you can. If you are sick, it would be foolish not to have some concern and seek a doctors care. If your mind does not produce a concern for yourself or for others when situations arise that are life threatening, or life changing, then you have a whole other set of problems. We ignore reality and have an apathetic view of life where we do not care about anyone or anything except ourselves. So what is God telling us, rather, what is God commanding us in this verse about care and anxiety? **“Be careful for nothing; BUT** (conjunction- rather, instead of that, this) **in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Phil. 4:6-7) (emph. DN).

This text is dealing with the heart and mind (verse 7 **“keep your heart and mind”**). The person with the anxiety has a heart and mind problem on top of the actual problem they are facing. All people experience anxiety and as we have seen, not all anxiety is sinful, and a lack of anxiety in some situations is sinful. What we are dealing with is the state of anxiety, the continual anxiousness about things that are out of our control, and more times than not are over worldly possessions and worldly things. If you have a disease or a real physical issue, concern over your health that motivates you to seek medical attention is right and proper. However, to worry and fret over what you have no control over is the sin we are laboring to mortify, and mortify with a vengeance. Once a person has, with all strength and lawful labor,

done everything he can to provide, to earn, to keep, and to protect, he is now to do something with that anxiety. The care that motivated you to do your duty cannot stay and find a comfortable home in your heart and must quickly be shown the door. Anxiousness has done his task and now has to go. That emotion serves its purpose by motivating us to action, but he is not allowed to stay. Care is going to be there, you are going to have it, but it has to be dealt with and God has provided the remedy. The text tells us that the care is in the heart and in the mind, otherwise a God given peace would not be necessary. If you were free from care, why would God need to give you peace? You need peace when you do not have it, and if you are anxious, you do not have peace. God is telling you, Christian reader, how to deal with the anxiety you have and how to empty the heart of care. So, we take comfort that Christ is near and realize that since Christ is near, anxiety is not allowed to stay, so how do we empty our hearts of this care?

THE HEART FULL OF PRAYER

What do you do with the anxiety? – Take it to the Lord in prayer

*Take your heart, full of care
Empty it to God in prayer*

The Christian should not live in a state of anxiety but rather take everything to God and pour your heart out to Him in prayer. Empty every burden, tell Him every pain and struggle. Everything. Do not hide from God and do not try and hide from Him. Do not hide your failures, faults, and sorrow from God. There is a temptation to deeply bury our sin and our pain and to straighten up before we go to God. You are not able to “hide” anything from God anyway, and besides, you will probably look

ridiculous in fig leaves (Gen. 3:7-10). A Christian does not need to hide from God. We do not need to fix ourselves before coming to Christ. This is my temptation. That I am too sad or too broken to pray---but that is exactly when I need prayer most of all. I am forgiven, loved, and cared for by my Priest-King-Saviour. I should not try to atone for my own sins with my tears and break the reed that Christ would not break. Yes, confess. Mortify. Repent. But keep going till you reach the healing cross.

When the heart is full of care, PRAY! If your anxiety is over spiritual issues, pray, pray and be honest with God and confess your faults. Often our anxiety is over our lack of honesty in prayer. We know why we are troubled and know that is sinful, so we bury it instead of confessing. We think “this is wrong to be like this and I can not be acting or thinking like this” so we put it out of our mind and pray for the country and pray for sick people. God knows what is going on, so be honest with Him in prayer. Confess to Him that your attitude is sinful. Confess to Him that you are struggling with something and confess that you know it is wrong and you do it anyway. How do we pray? You pray to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit. Pray, speak to God in the sense of worship and adoration to God. **“In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD”** (emph. DN).

When praying, remember that you are talking to the Almighty, worshiping God for who He is and remember who it is you are talking to. Whether in the early morning, during the day, at lunch, on the job, washing dishes, you are speaking to

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WATERING THE TULIPS



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



It Is Simpler Than We Often Preach

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

We, as Christians, have confused the Gospel today. We have gotten away from **“the simplicity that is in Christ”** (II Cor. 11:3). Though we have been sent into the world to share the Gospel with every creature, most believers do not know how. Many feel they don’t completely understand the formula because they have witnessed it being presented in so many ways. Does a person have to bow his head and raise his hand? Does a person have to repeat a certain prayer? Does a person have to do this at the front of a church? To the vast majority of Christendom, it seems simpler just to let the preacher do this... and anybody can see why. There is confusion.

The vast majority of what can be witnessed in churches today is a confusion of the Gospel and a confusion of the requirement of salvation. The New Testament churches presented a much simpler message than what we commonly see. It should interest our reader that we never once

see a crowd instructed to bow their heads while those that desire salvation raise their hands (sadly, this immediately encourages people that it is okay to be ashamed of Jesus...but that is not our lesson today). It should interest the reader that not one person is ever instructed to repeat a “magical” prayer in order to get into Heaven. These things add complexity to something that is simple.

Paul and Silas were once asked, **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** So they said, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”** (Acts 16:30-31). Now, Paul was inspired by God to pen more of the New Testament than any other man. If there was some complex formula, we would have seen it here. But, Paul kept it simple. And more importantly, these instructions to the Philippian jailor are in perfect accord with the declaration of Jesus in our text verse.

Folks, an unbeliever can repeat words. This often happens. And sadly, we have convinced a generation that Heaven is their future home based on their having repeated some words. Many are trusting in that prayer, and not in Christ. And, by both the declaration of Jesus and Paul, they are still yet in a state of condemnation.

But, what is belief? Is it just a mere belief that Jesus existed? Is it some idea that Jesus was a good man? No, it is a trust that He is the only Way of salvation (Ephesians 1:13). Paul said it best in I Corinthians 15:1-4, **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto**

you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” Is this your hope today?



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the Almighty Creator.

•You are praying to One who hears, through Christ.

•You are praying to One who cares.

•You are praying by One who prays for you.

•You are praying through One who prays for you.

•You are praying to One who wants you to pray to Him.

•You are praying to One who wants you to tell Him all your problems, all your cares, all your worries, all your pain.

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Pet. 5:7). God wants you to pray to Him. That is amazing! God delights in hearing the weak and feeble prayers of His children. Take all your worry and anxiety and tell your Father. Tell Him why, admit that you know you should not act like this and you know that you should not feel like this, but confess that you do. Confess you do not want to be anxious, and why that it is wrong. Confess to your Father that you are not trusting Him by worrying about whether or not He will take care of you. Confess to Him that you know that He is good and you know that He will care for you. Confess, that you feel alone, even though you know the Lord is at hand.

SUPPLICATION WITH

THANKSGIVING

After you have prayed in worship, pray in supplication. There are different kinds of prayer. If all you ever do is pray for sick people, you have an unbalanced prayer life. But, if you do not pray in supplication, you are also unbalanced. You are commanded to pray in supplication which is a petition or a request. Ask God for things! What are you concerned about? Ask God, plead with God to intervene in your life. Let your requests be made known. Do not say “God will never...” Ask Him.

Do you withhold your requests because you know they are wrong? Then why be anxious about that? If you do not pray and ask God for things you are worried about, then you probably should not desire to have what you are wanting. If you are anxious about providing a good life for both your wife and your girlfriend, anxiety is not really the issue. But if it is a lawful need or desire, ask God for it, ask your Father because your Father is good. And, if your wise Father knows that it will not be good for you, then He will not give it to you because He is too good to give you something that will harm you. He will not give us a rock when we ask for bread, but most of the time we are asking God for the rock and He is telling us, “No.” We are wanting a live rattlesnake for supper instead of flounder (Luke 11:11). We come to God as children, not able to understand why things we want, which are good, will not be good for us to have. Oreo ice cream is really good. Oreo ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and supper is not good. Children know ice cream is good, but do not know why it is not good to have constantly. If it is good, then more of it all the time must be good, right? A good and wise parent will say no, because

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they know why it is not good for the child to have ice cream all the time. Sometimes, because of a weakness in the body, you are not able to have good things because they are harmful. A child with diabetes cannot have the same food as a child without diabetes. The parents know that this particular child, due to their frame, cannot have the same thing as the other children can have. You might not be able to have what other of God's children have because it will be harmful to you, but not to them. What else do you pray for to cure this disease of anxiety?

PRAYER WITH THANKSGIVING

This is not the "gimmie, gimmie, gimmie" kind of asking because you deserve something. Supplication along with thanksgiving is praying, having a thankful heart. "Lord, I would desire that this happen, but thank you for what you already have given me." "Lord, I would like this to go this way, but I am thankful that you love me and you hear me." "Father, thank you for giving me life and hearing me. I do not deserve the least of your graces. If you are pleased Father..."

Ask, being thankful, not demanding like a spoiled child. The text says **"let your requests be made known unto God."** Tell Him. Make them known. But does God not already know? Jesus said, **"your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."** Why do we have to make known our requests, if God already knows? This takes us back to our hearts and minds. We started with our hearts and minds full of care. The instruction was to pray unto God and let Him know why and what over which we have worry and anxiety. Why do we do

that? Why do we pour our hearts out unto God? **"Be careful for nothing; BUT (rather than having a heart full of care) in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests (the things you are anxious about) be made known unto God.** And (conjunction – connects the previous with what comes next...) **the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 4:6-7) (emph. DN).

Do not be anxious, and when your heart and mind is full of care, take all your cares to God in prayer, make them known, because when you do, the peace of God, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. When we pray, we are communing with God, giving Him our burdens, unloading our cares and remembering Who it is that is taking care of us. God in turn, takes our anxiety away and replaces it with His peace. This is a supernatural blessing of the Holy Spirit. It is a miraculous act of God's grace and it will not be found in the Harvard Medical Journal because it is beyond the understanding of men.

THE PEACE OF GOD IN CHRIST

This is the work of God in the believer – God grants him peace. When the mind is troubled and full of care, and by faith pours out his heart unto the Lord, God grants him peace. What did the person NOT have at the beginning? Peace. He was full of care, and we are not supposed to be full of care. So, take the heart full of care to God. Be honest. Pray in the Spirit, knowing that God hears you. Knowing it is God that you are actually praying to and know that both the Son and the Spirit intercede for you and you are heard. Know that

it is through the blood of the Only Begotten Son that you have access to your Father, and pray not as slaves but as sons. Make your requests, as sons, not slaves. Make your requests knowing that your Father, Who cares and provides for the birds and clothes the fields with flowers will not do less for His own children. What does God do? Does He give you the requests? Sometimes He does. Does the child get what he asks for? Sometimes, yes! But what does the child who is anxious get EVERY TIME? The peace of God. If confession is made, and humble petitions are made, and prayerful worship is given, then God will grant His peace. How? Why? How is that possible? It is beyond the understanding of the natural man, that God would give peace – peace to the sinful, weak, wretched soul. That the Father will bless His children with a quietness of soul to endure struggles, pains, and sorrow. This peace keeps our hearts and minds. *Thayers* defined the word translated peace as "to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight. The peace that can only come from God, protects your heart and mind like a military guard." God's peace destroys the advance of the enemy. It shields the darts of doubt and it prevents the hostile invasion of despair. It protects the heart and the mind from the crushing shadow of anxiety and allows the mind and heart to rejoice, and again I say, rejoice. No man is whipped till he is whipped on the inside, then he is altogether beaten, no matter how strong he is on the outside. God's peace will protect your heart and mind, through Christ Jesus.

This peace is not found in meditation. This peace is not found

in yoga or quiet time. It isn't found in vain repetitions. Those things can quiet the mind for a season and can be explained. This peace, the keeping of the heart and mind is found only in Christ Jesus.

God does not owe you this peace. In fact, we are enemies of God. It is through Christ, and Christ alone that a person can have peace with God. You cannot make your peace with God, but Christ made peace between God and man on the cross. Perhaps you have no peace because you do not know Christ. You do not know Him to be a perfect Savior. But, oh how it is true! He completely saves us from our sins and washes us clean. By His blood, we are forgiven of all our transgressions, free from the guilt and burden of our sins – our crimes against God. Repent, repent and turn unto Christ. Flee to the Saviour and trust Him, there you will find rest for your souls.

Are you full of care and worry, Christian? Are you anxious about a great many things? Has anxiety overcome you till you are crushed under it?

Pray dear believer. Christ Jesus has made peace with God for you, dear child. Pray. He hears you. Pray. He cares for you. Pray. Pour out your heart, make your cares known. Empty every care, concern, burden, worry, and pray to Him about everything. Hide nothing from your Father. Confess your sins, do not hide them. Confess your worries, do not bury them. Let them be honestly known unto God. And through Christ Jesus, He will give you peace. He will protect and keep your heart and mind. He will take the heart and the mind that is full of care and worry and trouble, and He will give you peace, and He will guard and keep it, because He cares for you.



Doing the Impossible

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In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself said, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:44). There is no room in the Bible for the idea that one person can lead another one to Christ! Neither is there any room here for the idea that the Holy Spirit uses saved folk to lead others to Christ. In fact, as far as the Bible is concerned, the Holy Spirit does not lead lost people to Christ, the Father does. Oh! But brother-so-and-so says... - Yes, but the Bible says that the Father does the drawing! Let us be safe and correct and say what the Bible says!

Somebody says, what about John 1:41-42 where Andrew led his brother Simon Peter to Christ? Let us examine what the Bible says: **“He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.”** This was a physical bringing of Peter (called Simon and Cephas here) by Andrew. Those disciples whom Christ called to be with Him had already been saved (and baptized by John the Baptist). Andrew did not “win” his brother’s soul by bringing him physically to Jesus! This passage has nothing at all to do with the modern heresy of “soul winning.” The Lord Jesus was physically in a place and Simon Peter was in a different place. Andrew went and got Peter and told him of finding the prophesied Messiah and physically escorted

him to where Jesus was at that time.

Here is a quotation from the website of the Thousand Oaks Baptist Church, Thousand Oaks, California: “If you’ll allow me, I’d like to introduce you to the wonderful ministry of leading souls to Jesus Christ. For most of you who have been saved for quite a while, this probably will be mostly review. For others - especially for those of you who are relatively new Christians - this may be the first time you’ve ever heard about this. First of all, let me say this: God has called and chosen and ordained every Christian to learn how to lead people to Jesus Christ.” This presentation is typical of the easy-believe-ism camp. No Scripture is cited for these assertions. It is assumed they are true. After this sales pitch, the author goes on to misapply the Scriptures regarding bearing fruit. Our answer in part is this: the fruit about which the Bible speaks is not a Christian reproducing himself or herself as if they could birth someone into God’s family or even lead someone to Christ. The Bible tells us what the fruit of the Spirit in our lives is in Galatians 5:22, 23: **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”** In Ephesians 5:8-11 Paul writes to the congregation of Christ at Ephesus and further identifies the fruit of the Spirit as being holy living - living that is separated from that of the world. There he wrote: **“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no**

fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

This preacher was in his youth enrolled in two or three “soul winning classes.” In Bible college the name was more intellectual sounding: the class was entitled “personal evangelism.” In each of these courses instructions were presented in the least offensive ways to get lost people to admit that they were sinners. We were taught to ask the “candidate for salvation” if they had ever stolen a cookie from their mother’s cookie jar or perhaps taken a pencil or crayola from another child in elementary school. If they admitted to having done such a thing, we were taught we were well on the way. If we handled the matter right, we could usher a soul into salvation! The “candidate” had admitted that he or she was a sinner. Now all we needed to do was tell them that such a thing was a sin and that sin would keep them out of Heaven, but that if they would pray and ask God He would forgive them and they could go to Heaven. In this way we were taught to lead people to Christ. Reader: if you really think that seeing yourself as a sinner is admitting to stealing a cookie or a crayon, you are in peril. If you think praying a prayer based on that kind of sin is coming in a saving way to Christ you ought to examine your own experience. If you see no deeper than that, there is something seriously wrong with your experience of grace.

This kind of soul-winning idea is pumped from the same bilge as that of the preacher who used to boast that he could stop at a red traffic light, put his car in to park, set the parking brake, unfasten his seat belt, get out of his car and speak to a pedestrian - a stranger - at the crosswalk and lead him

to Christ, get back in his car and be ready to drive off by the time the light changed to green. Bilge water! In fact that kind of talk is more harmful than bilge water. At the worst bilge water will only kill a person physically. This kind of “soul winning” nonsense is in the same category as the evangelistic efforts of the Pharisees. To them the Lord Jesus said, **“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves”** (Matt. 23:15). Wrong methods produce wrong results!

Only the Giver of Life can give life! Only the Father can lead/draw a lost person to Christ! Regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit! The Lord Himself said, **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”** (John 3:6). Whatever happened to the preaching of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ? Whatever happened to witnessing to others about what Christ did for you and leaving the results in God’s hands? These are the things Paul testified to everywhere he went according to his words in Acts 20:21. There his words are: **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Whatever happened to godly sorrow - that absolutely necessary thing that produces repentance? **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”** (II Cor. 7:10). Does God have a new way by which He produces repentance? Does He have a new way in

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which lost people are brought to Christ? Is looking back upon past sins and feeling bad about them godly sorrow? Or is there a brokenhearted-ness worked by God wherein the sinner is enabled to see himself as a helpless and hopeless continual offence to a holy God? What about **“...I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6)? What happened to repentance? Have things changed since the days of the apostles? Has the Word of God changed? Or is it that many Baptists have changed?

Preachers who promote this soul-winning nonsense lay heavy burdens upon their members. The reason their church is not “a growing church” is because the people are not out “soul winning.” God called their church to have a “bus ministry,” and a “gun club ministry,” and a “basketball ministry,” and a “Corvette club” ministry (ad infinitum, ad nauseum): all to “win souls!” But these things are not working! “It’s all the fault of the members! They need to be out door-knocking and leading souls to Christ!” A favorite text of the “lead-a-soul-to Jesus” crowd is Proverbs 11:30 which says, **“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”** How are your mental gymnastics? It is quite a mental jump to think that Solomon, in that verse, is talking about the modern idea of “leading souls to Jesus,” is it not? Are you up to such a jump? No less a Bible commentator than Albert Barnes says this about the words “winneth souls,” “The phrase is elsewhere translated by ‘taketh the life.’” Barnes refers the reader to I Kings 19:4 where the phrase “winneth souls” is

translated in our King James Bibles by the words “take away my life.” And again in Psalm 31:13 where the phrase is rendered by the King James translators as “to take away my life.” It is quite clear that the Hebrew does not mean “winneth,” but better “taketh” or “captures” or “gains.” The phrase means something like “to gather” or “to take souls unto oneself.” Is not this same idea found in Genesis 12:5 where the Bible speaks of the servants Abraham brought from Syria down to Canaan? In that verse we read: **“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.”** Did you notice the phrase, **“the souls that they had gotten?”** The ownership of servants was a measure of wealth. Abraham was a wise man and got many souls – i.e. servants. His wealth in part was measured by the number of servants he had gotten. He was a wealthy man! Is not Solomon in Proverbs 11:30 stating that a wise man in that day will increase his wealth by by “taking lives” in the sense of gathering souls to himself as servants? Is that not more according to the context of the Book of Proverbs? Does not Proverbs deal much with wisdom and practical matters of living? Further to the point, Young’s Literal Translation renders the last phrase of Proverbs 11:30 as: **“And whoso is taking souls is wise.”** One thing for sure: if the easy-believe-ism idea of “soul winning” is to be found in the Scriptures, it is not found in Proverbs 11:30.

We would say one thing more about this idea of leading souls

to Christ: it is a shortcut that leads nowhere. Talk is cheap and anyone who can in a few moments talk a person into “making a profession of faith” in Christ has accomplished nothing other than the deception of himself and his “convert.” In doing so, he may have made his convert **“twofold more the child of hell”** than he himself is. Paul tells us in no uncertain terms how Christians are used of God in bringing others to Christ. In I Corinthians 9:19-22 Paul wrote these words: **“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”** Do you want to “gain” men: i.e. to **“save some?”** (Those are Paul’s words!) To the saints in Corinth Paul wrote: **“...in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”** (I Cor. 4:15). Anyone who thinks Paul’s ministry in Corinth was taken up with the modern easy-believe-ism method of “leading souls to Christ” needs to read about his stay in that city. The Bible tells how, **“...he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks,”** and how **“...he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them”** (Acts 18:4, 11). It is by right living, service, and a willingness to meet people where they are as well as teaching

the gospel that God uses His saints to point others to Christ. It is not by psychological maneuvering and herding the unsuspecting into praying a little ditty that sinners come to Christ.

A brother in Christ was imprisoned by the Communists in Romania several years ago because of his service to Christ. The Communists confined him along with all sorts of criminals and other men. These men had never hear the gospel. They had never before met a Christian. No Bibles were allowed these prisoners. After repeatedly telling these men about Christ, a younger one of them asked him, “What is this Jesus like?” Having no Bible from which to tell the man about Jesus Christ, the faithful believer said, “Jesus is like me.” Upon hearing this, the young man declared his desire to have Jesus as his Lord and Savior: “If Jesus is like you, I want to know Jesus,” was the substance of his words. Upon first hearing of this I was shocked. Was this brother not blaspheming? But upon more consideration, I think the brother was right. If we are born again will we not be like the Lord Jesus Christ and will we not display to the world the Lord Jesus Christ? Does not God use us when we reflect His glory by behaving like Christ? Our lives and our words together are our testimony to Christ! Speak earnestly about Christ and His finished work to the lost around us, yes! But back up your words with your life! Is this very thing not what Paul wrote about in the last quoted passage above: **“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more...”** May God use His people to **“gain the more!”**



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a man who was taken with devils. This was a man who was lost and undone and in the thralls of spiritual bondage. And yet, at the conclusion of this passage we find that this man is a lover and a follower of God.

It remains true today that the world fears the unknown. The events that took place in this chapter, prove to us that the world is not a willing participant in the progression and the fulfillment of the will and purpose of God. Those things which are unknown – those things which take place on a spiritual level – these things are feared by the world.

In fact, just as in the case of the Gadarenes, the people of the world today have no love for Jesus Christ nor any love for the things of God. The world of men today, by and large, wants nothing to do with God and the heavenly matters that are described for us in our text chapter. The world demonstrates **“great fear”** when the spiritual and Heavenly deeds of God are performed. The world will desire Jesus Christ **“to depart from them,”** and have no desire for His presence or His Word or His ways, unless the Holy Spirit would quicken and make alive the spirits of those who are born dead in trespasses and sins.

However, this “Maniac of Gadara” wanted to be with the Lord. Once he was saved, once he was converted, he had no greater desire than to be with and to know Jesus Christ. What a change took place in the life of this man! And then our text passage reveals to us, that based on his desire to be with the Lord, the Lord sends him out as an ambassador of the things of God. This man would now go forth and talk about the



“great things” that God had done for him.

Now, I want to talk about the one who will go out and “publish throughout the city.” I want to consider some characteristics that this man had, that made him eligible for this task; and, I want to consider the example that this man sets for us, and the characteristics that we, too should exhibit, if we are to “publish throughout the city,” the name and the deeds of Jesus Christ.

THE PUBLISHER MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE

In order for a man to publish the deeds or the praise of another, he must first have some familiarity with the subject of his praise and service. Indeed, the evidence is plain, that this man had much to speak about! In fact, it is certain that this man had a wondrous experience with Jesus

Christ, and he had plenty to talk about. **“And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not**

command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked” (Luke 8:27-33).

Consider for yourself what a wonderful experience this man had at the hands of Jesus Christ! Who could wonder that this man who had been cursed with demons, would be willing and eager, now, to go forth and publish the praise and the name of Jesus Christ? **“And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel”** (Mark 5:20).

If we want to use this man as our example today, why do not you and I pause, just for a moment, and consider the blessings and the favors that God has bestowed upon us? Are you saved by the grace and power of God? Are you blessed by the mercy and the love that He has shown unto you? Examine your life and your situation today. If you are saved, then ask yourself, “What has God done for me? What good thing has He done for me in this life? What good thing(s) has He done for me in the life to come? What blessings and favors are already mine – and what blessings and glories await me in the life to come?”

If you are saved, and if you are amazed at the goodness and grace of God, then why not share your amazement and your awe concerning God and His love? I believe that what the man of our text passage has done, is no less and no more than what God would re-

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quire of each of us that are saved. He has ordained that the gospel of salvation, and the good news of the Word of God would be carried throughout the world by the words, the deeds and the lives of those who have been redeemed and ushered into the family of God. It is up to us to publish the Word of God throughout the city, throughout the countryside, and throughout the world! **"And the gospel must first be published among all nations"** (Mark 13:10).

Without doubt, those who have been saved ought to be about the business of sharing the salvation found in the gospel of Jesus Christ! Without any hesitation and without any reluctance and without any complaint (instead, with joy and praise in our hearts), those that have had experience with Jesus Christ ought to be ready to tell others about that experience. John Trapp said, "This was all the fee Christ looked for for his cures."

THE PUBLISHER MUST HAVE A LOVE AND A LONGING FOR GOD

So, just as the (formerly) mad-man of our text, we, too, must have experienced the grace of God in order to be properly qualified to tell others about the Lord Jesus. But, in addition to experience, it also is incumbent upon us that we would have a "love and a longing" for God and the things of God. We would make poor witnesses indeed if we had no love for the Saviour of Whom we testify!

It is clear from our text passage, that this man had a love for Jesus Christ. **"Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right**

mind: and they were afraid" (Luke 8:35). This man who had been considered a raving lunatic; this man who had been a dread and a fear in this place; this man who had been out of his mind, was now **"in his right mind,"** and he sat meekly and happily **"at the feet of Jesus"** – the feet of the very Man who had brought unto him salvation!

The simple love and devotion that is described here, is something that we ought to imitate as we publish the praise and worship of Jesus Christ. Why do we sometimes long to be somewhere else instead of in the presence of Jesus Christ? Why do we sometimes love someone or something else, more than we love Jesus Christ? Where is our devotion? Where is our longing for our Master and our Saviour?

Let me give you another example from the Gospels: **"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"** (Luke 10:38-42). Mary of Bethany was a woman who had **"chosen that good part."** I am not saying that she chose Jesus Christ as her Saviour before the Lord knew her; instead, we know that Jesus Christ came to her, loved her and chose

her, because He had first loved and chosen her. But, I am saying that Mary of Bethany chose to be with Christ, and she chose to place Him in a position of higher and better importance than anything else in her life. What a good example she is to us! We, today, are encumbered about with **"much serving."** And, we, today, are wrapped up in the busy ways and the distractions of our lives. But, the better – indeed, the best – part of our lives is found in the quiet company of Jesus Christ through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Let us be about the business of loving our Lord and our Saviour. Let our very lives demonstrate the longing that we have for His presence and His blessings in our lives.

Certainly, the man in our text passage had nowhere else that he wanted to be, and he had no One else that he longed to be near. **"Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying"** (Luke 8:38). He cried out to Jesus Christ to take him with Him when the Lord was ready to depart. Instead, the Lord sent him away to be a witness and a testimony of the things that God had done for him. I have often said, that the ones who most desire to be in the presence of the Lord, are the ones who are most qualified to be sent from Him as a witness and a testimony.

There was an occasion when the Lord openly questioned the love and the longing of the disciples who followed Him: **"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are**

sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:66-69). The eloquent answer of Simon Peter should thrill our hearts, and should inspire our minds to be more loving, and to demonstrate more longing for our Lord and Saviour. There is not anyone else for us except Jesus Christ! There is not anything else more wonderful than the blessed Son of God Who has the **"words of eternal life,"** and Who is the Salvation of our souls!

THE PUBLISHER MUST HAVE DEDICATION

Thirdly, I want you to know that the one who will publish the Word of God must be diligent and dedicated in the fulfillment of his duties. Without a doubt, it must be true, that this man described in our text passage, must have worked diligently, in pursuing the course that Jesus had set him on. **"Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him"** (Luke 8:38-39). This man did not just publish from time to time and from place to place. Instead, we are told that he **"published throughout the whole city,"** the things that Jesus had wrought in his life. How could this man publish these wonderful things throughout the whole city when you and I find it difficult to publish the wonderful gospel of Jesus Christ just in our own neighborhoods?

Consider these words of David: **"When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with**

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laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him (Ps. 126:1-6). The Lord **"hath done great things for us."** We should be **"glad."** We should demonstrate a dedication and a faithfulness unto God, based upon the faithfulness and the goodness that God has demonstrated towards us.

I believe that this man, spoken of in our text passage, probably spoke of and published the deeds of Jesus Christ on a daily basis. Wherever he went; whoever he was with; whatever the time of day; I believe that this man was diligent and dedicated in describing the grace and the mercy of God. He probably spent a lot of time and words telling others of their need for a Saviour. He probably spent a lot of time and words describing the wonderful things that Jesus Christ had done for him. The folks that he spoke to knew that he had been possessed with devils. These people of his homeland would have known his tainted and miserable past. So, the change that they saw in his life must have been remarkable. And, without doubt, he never hesitated to give God the glory for the miracle that had taken place in his life.

It was said of the disciples, and the early Church, **"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and**

preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Preaching and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just a task for Sunday or Wednesday! Rather, the folks who need the gospel the most are the ones who rarely (if ever) set foot in the public worship services of the churches of Jesus Christ! We must, on a daily basis, proclaim to the world the works, words, and the praise of Jesus Christ. It is not always easy, but it is never too difficult. It is not a time for ease and for relaxation, but it is a time for labor and work and diligence in the things of God. **"The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin"** (Prov. 10:16).

THE PUBLISHER WILL HAVE SUCCESS

Finally, today, I want to use our text passage to prove that this man must have had success. In fact, when the Lord Jesus Christ returned to this same area, we find that the very same people who had hated and feared Christ were ready and waiting to receive Jesus Christ. **"And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him"** (Luke 8:40). I like the picture that is presented to us here. I like to imagine being in the presence of the hateful mob that had sought to chase Jesus from the midst; but, later, this same hateful mob was transformed into a joyous congregation of folks who gladly received Him, and who had been eagerly waiting for His return. What a miracle took place in the life of the "Maniac of Gadara"! Also, what a miracle took place in the lives of the hard-hearted and wicked men and women who had previously despised the person of Jesus Christ!

And yet, we know that this man had success when he published the things of God, because of the

grace of God that was granted unto him, and because of the power of the Holy Spirit Who accompanied him and his teachings. The Apostle Paul once said, **"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed"** (I Cor. 15:10-11). This (formerly) madman of Gadara would have been quick to point out that the salvation of souls was the work and domain of God. He would have been quick to point out that any successes he had in the ministry of Christ were based solely upon the Grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. And yet, I am sure that he was not surprised that Jesus Christ could do what He did – after all, Jesus Christ had saved him, so why not these others?

I hope and pray that you will join me in diligently proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that you will join me in a fervent expectation of success in the preaching of the Word. There is salvation in the Word of God! There is peace and joy in the knowledge of Jesus Christ! There are blessings untold that await those who will publish the gospel of Jesus Christ. **"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"** (II Tim. 4:6-8).

CONCLUSION

Let us close by thinking about

what effect the words and deeds of the Lord had upon the man who had been afflicted with the devils.

First, this man – after that he was saved – longed for and desired to be in the presence of Jesus Christ. He desired Christ's company as much as others dreaded it. He besought Christ that he might be with Him, while others desired that He would depart. What a contrast is shown! What a love for God is shown, cast upon the backdrop of fear and loathing!

Second, I believe that it is safe to say that this man now desired that Christ would be to him a protector and teacher, and that he might be to Christ for a name and a praise. He wanted and longed for further fellowship with Jesus Christ. And, he wanted and longed for further experience and further growth in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He was hesitant to stay among those rude and brutish Gadarenes!

Third, as we have seen from our sermon, Christ did not allow him to come with Him, but sent him out to publish the tidings of the good words and good deeds of Jesus Christ. Those who are closest to Him are qualified to be sent the furthest away! And, as a result of this close relationship with Jesus Christ, this man who had been a burden to his country, will now be a blessing!

Finally, it must be true, that sometimes we must deny ourselves certain pleasures – even the pleasure of the company of the Lord, such as this man must forgo – so that we can gain the opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. In the end, this man was a standing and living monument of the goodness and the grace of God. May God grant us such favor as was bestowed upon this madman of Gadara!



END

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

What two questions are you asked the most as a pastor, and what is your answer to these questions? - Editor

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1. If God is sovereign and has chosen to save a specific number of people, then why are we responsible to preach the Gospel to every creature?

In light of Ephesians 1:3-7; II Thessalonians 2:13-16; II Timothy 1:9; I Peter 1:2-5 it is obvious that God has chosen the elect before the world began according to the good pleasure of His own will. There is no doubt that all of those whom God the Father chose, those who Jesus Christ agreed to die for, and those who the Holy Spirit agreed to regenerate in the covenant of grace will be saved in time according to the immutable will of God. The Lord Jesus Christ promised as much in John 6:37-40.

While all of the above is true, it is also true that God has commanded us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48). We are responsible to obey God's commands (I John 2:3-7; 5:1-3). Our cheerful and consistent obedience to God's commands glorifies God and proves that we truly love Him (John 14:15; 15:14). Glorifying God through obedience should be our chief motive in declaring and sharing the Gospel with

every man, woman, boy, and girl (I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23).

God's bare command to preach the Gospel should be enough. We are not commissioned to philosophize about the Gospel, we are called to share it with everyone. We do not have to worry about all of the ramifications of God's sovereignty and how it all coalesces with our responsibility. All we need to do is simply obey. Let God sort everything else out. We just need to preach the Gospel to every creature because God commanded us to do it.

If God is all glorious and His sovereign grace is so wonderful, should we not be consistently engaged in sharing these blessed truths with everyone we know and meet? The perfections and infinite worth of our dear Saviour should be shared with everyone (Psalm 96:2-7)! We should count it a holy privilege to tell the world of the glory of our Lord and what He means to us even if no one else is ever saved!

It is also obvious that God is sovereign in the use of means to bring about the fruition of His will in the calling and salvation of the elect (Isa. 46:9-11; Rom. 10:17; I Cor. 1:21; 9:16; II Thess. 2:13-15).

2. How do you start a New Testament Baptist Church?

The Lord Jesus Christ started the very first New Testament Baptist Church during His earthly ministry and promised perpetuity to His kind of church (Matt. 16:18; 28:18-20; John 15:16). Christ organized the

first church with the baptized disciples of John the Baptist. Jesus then authorized the first church to preach the Gospel, baptize the converts, and teach them the truth until His return (Mark 13:34-37). The first Baptist church at Jerusalem started by Christ, later sent forth Barnabas with authority to organize the church at Antioch (Acts 11:22-26). Later the church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul (Paul) with authority to establish and organize other New Testament Baptist Churches (Acts 13:1-3). Therefore we must conclude that the scriptural pattern set forth for establishing new churches is that an already existing church authorizes and organizes other churches. This simple process naturally involves an organic succession since each local church is likened to a body of Christ. In the physical realm every natural body that is born must derive its existence from an already existing body. Likewise, in the spiritual and ecclesiastical realm every new body of Christ that is organized must derive its existence from an already existing body or church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Scriptures are the final authority for all faith and practice, we must conclude that the simple pattern of an already existing church organizing new churches is how Baptist churches are started. The authority and glory of Christ resides in His church as a Divine institution (Eph. 3:21). No man has the right to baptize and start churches on his own apart from the authority of Christ's church. To do so is a blatant attempt to rob Christ of His glory and dishonor the authority of the kind of church which He established.

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Recently I have been asked, "Why have past articles in the BBB seem to be a political platform rather than sound Biblical teaching?"

Before I continue with the answer, I have tried to rack my brain for questions and really have none that come to my mind. I will answer the question above and call it good for now.

The members of PLBC have seen me go thru a great deal of change concerning politics and my views about what a Christian is, in this world. **"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection"** (Luke 8:14). My answer was that the cares of this world have begun to overcome God's people. I know this verse is concerning those that have heard the Word and never were regenerated. Preachers and teachers that have begun to speak the same way and act as the world to the point that there is no difference between the two. I wonder if it really does apply? Only God knows the difference.

Moses did not cross over to the promised land because he failed to sanctify God before the people. **"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them"**

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(Num. 20:12). Many preachers and teachers that have the best of intentions will stand before Christ and say, **“Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works”** (Matt. 7:22)?

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Have the cares of this world overcome you? Do you worry about what is to come of this world we live in? Are you anxious as to what the outcome of elections will be and the possible affects it may have? Many are, why?

MIKE DEWITT

whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (I Cor. 12:26).

I rejoice to be able to answer this question with a “Yes, certainly, we will keep you in our prayers!” I just wish that more folk might realize the power of prayer by godly men and women and seek to bring the entire congregation into intercessory prayer for their loved ones. How mightily God will work when the church is in one accord! **“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”** (Phil. 2:2, 5).

2. Is this short enough? or long enough?

This question is generally asked about either hairstyles or dress codes. Some folks have real problems determining what the modesty demanded by God's Word involves in our culture that has gone haywire over fads, customs, styles and plunging depravity. If promiscuity is on one hand, the fear of legalism is on the other. The pastor has a responsibility to preach messages that will give moral guidance to the assembly and to give one-on-one counseling to concerned members. Typically, my answer will be that a clear distinction must be made between the genders. Too long hair on a man is when he begins to look feminine from any angle. Off the collars and ears is not too much to ask. Not long enough clothing on a woman or man, is when little is left to the imagination. The purpose of clothing is to cover, not to reveal!

3. Would it be okay if I went to...? ...if I did...?

With the staggering pressure put on our young folk today, this

question comes up frequently. Can I go to see this movie? Can I go to this event on Wednesday night or Sunday afternoon? The questions of morality in these desperate days does not always have an easy answer. Like Balaam, we want the Lord (and our pastor) to give us assent to “bend” the rules a little for the exigencies of our lives. As God told Balaam “no,” the first time, so too, will the pastor strive to follow His explicit commandments and answer “no,” many times.

As a dear pastor friend of mine once said, “Too often we ignore the black and white's of Scripture and try to live in the shades of gray, using our liberty in Christ as an excuse...” Beloved reader, if anything hinders your service to God, ditch it, flee from it, despise it! Selah! Think about it! **“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons”** (Col. 3:22-25).

4. Do you need anything? Is there anything we can do for you?

It is with awe and wonder that I receive this question from my dear members at the Big Creek Baptist Church. It is the only church that I have ever pastored, so I can not tell you what is typical, but I think the Lord's churches are typical of their Head, our Saviour, the tender-hearted Lord of grace and mercy. How it moves me and impresses upon me the love of the precious church members that ask me from time to time

what they can do for me! Some perform random and regular acts of kindness toward me and my family without even asking the question! How remiss I would be if I did not take this opportunity to let them know how they have touched my heart with their love and ceaseless care of their pastor! God bless you all! Selah! Think about it!

5. What does your church believe? What kind of Baptists are you?

Whether as potential visitors or casual conversation when they find out that I am a pastor, it will inevitably come to this question, if casual becomes extended. Selah! Think about it! What would you tell someone in the few moments of this “window of opportunity” to exalt our Lord?

Typically, one can tell fairly quickly whether the supplicant is actually interested in the doctrine of our church. Many times, if it was just a perfunctory question, the gospel of Christ is the answer. To respond with questions of my own is usually the reaction. Do you know Jesus? To present Christ as the Saviour and the Author and Finisher of our faith is our commission and obligation. The light must shine into the darkness of the lost folk we come into contact with. Whether it lights unto glory or condemnation is not our responsibility, but only that the Light might shine.

To those that have real interest in our doctrine, I usually concentrate my answers on grace and church truth. Sovereign grace has a rare beauty about it that can attract the attention of many solicitors. It still amazes (and appalls) me how many folk have never contemplated the sovereignty of God! The doctrines of election and predestination

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No one question really stood out to me, so I thought I might list the top seven questions typically asked of this pastor. I will separate them into questions asked by members in the first four, and questions asked by nonmembers in the last three.

1. Will you pray for me... my family... my friend?

This is by far the most common question asked of this pastor by his church members. As the spiritual shepherds of the churches, pastors are in a position to give solace and strength to the members. We can convey their prayer request to the church body, that we might all joy and sorrow, as the event circumstances may require. **“And**

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might be hated by established religion, but the sweeping epic of God's almighty decrees and omnipotent omniscience still appeals to the starved souls of men and women touched by the influence of the Holy Spirit. What a story we have to tell! Selah! Think about it!

Many have an ecumenical attitude that it matters little the denomination, so I may mention a few Biblical truths that validate the Baptist name; adjectives such as landmark, independent and missionary. To follow up on these stronger doctrines is rare in these days, but God has given me the opportunity to discuss them in some detail at times.

6. Does your church help out with groceries? ...with electric or utility bills?

Many has been the phone call at our church with this question. It usually turns into an opportunity for me to witness unto them of the necessity for them "to be in church." I will ask them where they go to church before we talk about anything else. If they have a church, my question will be "Why do you not go to them, first?" Obviously, if they go this route, they either have quit going, or on rare occasions, the church "is too small." As the Lord leads, we have invited folk to come to our services, that we might be able to validate their undue circumstances. To date, several have attended and we have made payments and/or purchased groceries as the church is led.

I have followed through on various occasions and found the suppliant to be dishonest and/or professional beggars. But there have been times, where sincere appreciation has been seen as

our charity goes forth in the Biblical mandate of hospitality. **"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body"** (Heb. 13:1-3).

7. You are a pastor! What do you think about tattoos? the lottery? social drinking?

The pastor is a figure of some standing still yet in the community, although his prestige is not anything at all like it used to be in America of yore...! Like the morality questions for church members, these questions by the community have answers that will rarely be appreciated. Many times, these folk will have their "Biblical sound bites" at the ready. "Jesus drank wine, you know!" "You can not judge me, because the Bible says- 'judge not, that ye be not judged!'" "You have to love everybody, do you not!"

Time and space would fail to answer these questions, but rest assured that pastors do answer these questions faithfully every day. We are not allowed the privilege of "tickling ears" or being the "sinner's buddy"... We are required to live sanctified lives and rejoice in the opportunities that God gives us to stand for His Word and His Name. **"Only let your conversation (answers-TMS) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"** (Phil. 1:27). Selah! Think about it!

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The first question I get asked as a pastor the most is; "Do you believe the current President of The United States is the Antichrist?"

My answer is "No." I do not believe our current President of The United States is THE Antichrist. But I do believe he is AN antichrist.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18).

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (I John 2:22).

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:3).

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (II John 1:7).

My answer further for not believing this is because even though we do not know of a surety where this President was born, I think the Bible is plain that THE Antichrist comes out of Babylon, for it is the city of the devil. And that the Antichrist is a Jew and will become the king of Syria. This hardly fits our current President.

However, I believe the Antichrist has been born, but

before the Antichrist can appear the Holy Spirit must be **"taken out of the way"** (II Thess. 2:7-8). In other words, we that have been **"born again"** will be raptured out.

The Antichrist will be (at first) loved by the Jews and the world; he will have the respect of all nations. Our current President is the laughing stock of other nations, and I do not think has gained the respect of Israel. The Antichrist must have the respect of Israel to succeed; Israel will be deceived by him.

We could go on and take up much space, but let us end with this one last thought. I believe our current President is a type of the Antichrist in the fact that we can see how many of the American people have been blinded and deceived by this pathetic and weak individual and have rallied around him as a god. It gives us a glimpse (at least for me) that we can surely see how the people of this world will be deceived by the true antichrist.

The second question I get asked as a pastor the most is; "What do you think of the now reigning pope?"

My answer is not very long! I think he is the most evil and wicked of all popes that have ever lived, and if you want to know how evil he is, look up and read about the Jesuits, they are about as evil as it gets. Try this web site: http://one-evil.org/content/entities_organizations_jesuits.html.

I do not want to assume here, but I believe that this pope is The False Prophet. And if he is not, than I believe he is going to play a major role in the Catholic Church when THE Antichrist comes on the scene. God Bless!

ROGER REED



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out of it, then it can be justified. Arminians are good at this awful practice of changing the gospel of sovereign grace to a more palatable fleshly gospel of works, so they can fill their pews and their offering plates. Baptize the infants, so they will not go to Hell! Pragmatism never takes into account the holiness of God, does it? Selah! Think about it!

But the attribute of God that I would like to examine is the sovereignty of God. Pragmatism at any level, defies the sovereignty of God. Shortcuts of immorality or heresy inherently distrust God's purposes and decrees of sovereignty.

I have often used the example of Adam returning to Eve in the garden and finding her with the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in her hand and the juice dripping off her lips. Adam was not deceived! He KNEW she was dead! **"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Adam was no fool, but he was mutable and faced with an extraordinary circumstance. What should he do? Selah! Think about it!

Well, as Abraham later learned the lesson of faith and unqualified obedience on Mt. Moriah (God will work things out!), Adam should have trusted God implicitly and dropped to his knees and prayed for his beloved bride! Adam KNEW that God loved him AND Eve! Beloved reader, we need to understand the depths of the immutable God of our salvation! God NEVER stops loving ANYONE that He has EVER loved! Else we would have no confidence in our eternal state in glory! The only reason Esau is in Hell today, is because

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). How much difference is there between that love and hatred? **"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever"** (Mal 1:2-4).

God will NEVER stop despising Esau the rebellious sinner! The most terrible words to be met with on the precipice of eternity are from the lips of Jesus Christ, Himself. **"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."** (Matt. 7:22-23). I never knew you. I never loved you. How awful!

But the opposite is just as true! **"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. ...Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth...a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall**

not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn" (Jer. 31:3, 8-9).

We can not have it both ways! If God loves eternally (and He does in both eternity past and eternity future!), then He also has eternal revulsion toward the unrepentant sinner. Again, eternity past and eternity future.

So, returning to that pitiful couple in the garden, what was Adam's greatest sin? Rebellion, obviously, but I think we need to see the pragmatism in that rebellion. What was the purpose of Adam knowingly eating the forbidden fruit? Not for the flavor. Not for wisdom or to become a god. Being undeceived by the serpent's vile lies, Adam truly despised the thought of partaking of its deathly taste. But **"he did eat."** Why?

I believe it was pragmatism. I believe that he understood something of the grace of God. Certainly he knew much of the love of God having experienced it firsthand. With this terrifying prospect of Eve being separated from God and then himself, he ended up balancing his love for His God, with his love for his wife. Selah! Think about it!

You know what? I think Adam knew instinctively that God would never stop loving him. He knew that God could do anything. Whether salvation, or resurrection, as Abraham told his servants, God can raise the dead to life again! As we run the scenarios through our minds, God could have given him "another" Eve. Taken another rib out and performed another wedding ceremony. But Adam did not want "another" Eve. He wanted HIS Eve! And so he "nobly" sacrificed himself for her. He essentially told God (in stark rebellion) "God, I love my wife

too much to lose her! I'm gonna eat the fruit, too! Now you're gonna have to save the BOTH of us!" But before the beloved reader gets too sentimental about Adam's sacrifice, I want to state that the "noble" sacrifice was made on the altar of pragmatism. Adam knew it was wrong to eat the fruit, but he thought the end justified the means.

Beloved, it does not! It is NEVER justified to disobey God! To do wrong is wrong! We can not murder a baby (worldly terminology- abortion) to try and save a mother's life! Why? Because it is wrong to murder babies! God must be obeyed in every single episode of our lives! For us to decide moral equivalents is immoral! God sets the standards, and all we can do is remain obedient unto the law of God.

Adam's pragmatism defied the sovereignty of God! Sure, to Adam's eyes it LOOKED like all hope was lost! Eve is dead- separated from God! But beloved reader, please trust in the Almighty! I want to look at two verses in consecutive context. First, Job 1:20-22, **"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."** After all he had gone through, Job still retained his integrity---his trust in God's purposes and sovereignty! He worshipped God! Even though the next verse had not yet been penned by the Apostle Paul, it must have strengthened the

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inner soul of this beleaguered saint, **“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”** (I Cor. 2:9).

Adam’s pragmatism bypassed the glorious grace of God yet unseen! It could never enter into the heart of man, the kind of wondrous events God has prepared for His loved ones! Even at the point of Eve’s spiritual death, Adam should have “hoped against hope” that God could (and would) take care of this desperate situation! Adam’s actions defied the sovereignty of God and conceded unto his shallow vision of God’s grace! “God’s got to save us both now?” How presumptuous! Where will this pragmatic solution lead to? The total depravity of an entire human race! Not just Eve now, but EVERYONE! How it must have crushed Adam to find his beloved son Abel dead in the field! Especially knowing that it was his misguided approbation of God’s grace that caused it and all of the thousands of heartaches witnessed during the remainder of his 930 years as the world hurtled toward the judgment of the great deluge. **“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** (Gen 6:5). A direct result of Adam’s pragmatism.

Adam should have trusted in the true power of God’s love! The power to cleanse and make us holy and sanctified! Yes, even dead EVE! If Adam had (like Job) believed and trusted in

that power of immutable love, then he could have turned both her and the situation over to his loving God! When Job’s precious “Eve,” known to us as Mrs. Job, held out the fruit of death to him, his response was the OPPOSITE of pragmatism! Obedience and submission! **“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips”** (Job 2:9-10). Surely evil calamity was staring Adam in the face. But he (and we) MUST accept that God will allow us to be tested by that rascal Satan from time to time. May the LORD help us to shave our heads and worship Him in such occasions.

But Adam sought out his own inventions via pragmatism and how we should shudder! We can not trust in our own strength or plans! We need to examine our level of comfort to find and eradicate that pragmatism from our own lives! Are we holding on to sins in our families and churches that are keeping us from serving our Master? Sins that we in our deepest inner self are saying: “God will forgive me, because He loves me? I will just do this one more time, because I just can not help myself!, or so that my neighbor will not be offended” when God is still offended? A holy God is outraged? Beloved, we CANNOT presume upon the grace of God! **“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified,**

an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:29-31).

Our churches have become occupied in many cases by this evil of pragmatism! Sin is not preached against, because it will drive off members. Immoral clothing is put up with because offending members is deemed a worse offense than offending God! Unfaithful church members are not disciplined, because more value is put on the large church roll and no consideration is given of the spiritual benefits of loving discipline, just the provisions of the flesh! Selah! Think about it!

Do not think that pragmatism is not alive and well in Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist churches. Beloved reader, the ONLY way that changing the element of the Lord’s Supper from the wine that Jesus Christ Himself used to the modern juices of so many churches can be justified is pragmatism! How can it be justified to change an ordinance of God? And yet so many say that God will be “okay” with what has been done. Are we so afraid that the power of drunkenness will trump the power of the Almighty? Do we think that the cleverness of man to homogenize and pasteurize will remove the leaven of pragmatism? The end does NOT justify the means.

Can the Catholic filth and the stench of the Mass be eradicated from X-mas without pragmatism? Not hardly! How misguided Baptists justify and temporize when it comes to the clear teaching of God’s Word to

come out of the world and that harlot and BE YE SEPARATE! The end justifies the means? “I will celebrate this day unto the Lord!” we claim pragmatically. And, like our father Adam before us, we will take whole generations down with us. **“Our God is a consuming fire”** (Heb. 12:29).

If the world can not tell the difference between a true Christian and a pretend Christian, its likely source of difficulty is the pragmatism we cling foolishly unto. We can preach to thousands if we drop our standards. Oh, I mis-typed that! We can preach to thousands if we drop GOD’S standards! We can share pulpits, we can rub elbows with the influential folk of the world, if the ends justify the means. But they do not, so God has given us colder and colder hearts to preach to, and America is reaching the point of no return. **“Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. ... Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched”** (Jer. 7:16, 20).

Easy divorce is a result of pragmatism. **“And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave**

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The Pragmatic

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his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:4-9). Instead of following Scripture and praying for our mates and each other, we errantly terminate our blessing of marriage. Polls have shown the divorce rate in Christian homes are little different from carnal homes! Why? Because we "assume" that God will understand our weaknesses and forgive our failures, then plunge right back into another relationship built on the shifting sands of temporal beauty and lusts! Beloved Christian, we need to seek God's will and pray that HE will send us a wife or husband and not seek out one on our own, then ask God to bless our ill-founded relationship! The end DOES NOT justify the means! The means need to be relegated back to a purposeful journey in God's will and commandments! Then the end will be a glorious joy and adoration of our providential God!

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Cor. 7:10-11). The Bible clearly prohibits second marriages. Not just to pastors, but to all humanity! Already quoted is Christ's axiom that **"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."** But folks do divorce and remarry, just like folks murder and steal. God regulates

those evil actions, and that is what the bill of divorcement is for: to clearly mark the offending party. **"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce"** (Jer. 3:8). **"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house"** (Deut. 24:1). The bill of divorcement as used in Scripture is NOT a "get out of jail free" card that one can use to go back into the marriage mart as a single individual! You are STILL married! God, Himself considers it so just six verses later in Jeremiah 3:14, **"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."** The one holding the bill of divorce in their hand is still considered married by Scripture! Remaining in a single state until the time of reconciliation!

Any conceived "right" to remarry is beyond the pale of Scripture. She MIGHT go out and pragmatically/rebelliously get married a second time, as Deuteronomy 24 continues, **"And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife,"** (Not the "may" of permission in verse 4, but the "may" of perchance in the Hebrew) but that is NOT God's revealed will to us, via His precious statutes! Yes, I know that God will recognize the second marriage! In Deuteronomy 24:4 it forever precludes any reconciliation:

"Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife" and in Hebrews 13:4, **"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."** Only a second marriage can do what divorce could never do—end the first marriage. But do not let that become a pragmatic end, without a lawful means of bringing glory to God. The Apostle Paul enumerates the wonderful potential of a single person serving God with 100% of our time and resources. But all we want is Eve. Or worse than our father Adam, "another Eve," forgetting the marvelous love of God! Beloved reader, the power of God's love can fix ANY situation, if we will submit to His will and ways! Selah! Think about it!

Sometimes folk will even see that it is a sin to remarry, but pragmatically go through the divorce and new wedding ceremony, defying the sovereignty of God problematically. And God may be gracious to them and give them a spouse that loves them. And some will even live happily ever after, by God's grace, but we cannot presume upon that grace! What kind of example are we giving our children? No wonder we have a generation of young folk that enter marriage on a "trial-n-error" premise! That is what our pragmatism has taught them! Selah! Think about it!

What will it take for us to see the folly of pragmatism? Perhaps a graphic illustration before we close. Beloved, I fully believe that God has elected every aborted child and every childhood victim of a seemingly untimely death before they are able to be aware of sin and its penalty. Scriptures abound with evidence for God's

mercy and grace in the matter of an "age of accountability." I believe it varies from child to child and that imbecilic adults are within this realm of blindness taught in John 9:41 and Romans 7:9.

So, that being the case, pragmatism will rear its ugly head and justify the killing of children and sending them on to Heaven, rather than face this evil world! How many cults have done exactly that? "Kill 'em! You are doing them a favor!" Is God pleased? NO! A thousand times, NO! Defying the sovereignty of God, they have usurped the providence of a God that works ALL things out after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL. Submit ourselves to God and we can reap the promises of blessings beyond proportion! **"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"** (Mal. 3:8-10). Read the entire book of Malachi and see that not just in tithes and offerings, but in every aspect of conduct we have the responsibility to submit ourselves to God's sovereign rule over our lives! Beloved reader, let us show pragmatism the door! May God help us to see the pragmatism of Adam and ourselves more clearly and let us turn back to trusting in the sovereignty of God and His Bible! Selah! Think about it!



Let the King James Translators Speak

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

I confess to loving the King James Version Bible. Like you probably do, I most often use a KJV edition based on the 1769 revision of Benjamin Blayney. However, I do have two copies of the original 1611 edition. I have not been able to learn whether they are Cambridge or Oxford editions. As you are aware, most books have a preface, or a foreword, or an introduction. These introductions often give valuable information to help the reader understand the book. Both copies of the original King James Bible that I own have the introductory material placed in them by the King James translators. It is a sad and hurtful thing that most of today's Bible publishers no longer include the translators' introductory material in the King James Bibles they print. Since this introductory material is not in the Bibles most of us own and use, the purpose of this article is to acquaint the reader with some of that introductory material provided by the King James translators. The introduction addressed to King James by the translators is brief. But the words addressed to the reader run to eleven pages of small print in my original King James copies. Let us look at some things that the King James Bible translators thought the readers of their Bibles should know. Our quotations are mostly from what they titled, *"The Translators To The Reader."* We have called attention to quotations by using

italic type and have kept the old style spelling, inserting [brackets] throughout for clarification of obsolete terms, etc.

First of all the King James translators believed in the Divine inspiration of the Bible. They wrote, *"The originall thereof [original Scriptures] being from heaven, not from earth; the authour being God, not man; the enditer [dictator or composer], the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Pen-men such as were sanctified from the wombe, and endewed [provided] with a principall [large] portion of Gods spirit..."* Thus they believed what is stated in II Peter 1:21: **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."** We believe that too!

Second, the translators recognized the importance of Bible translation to ordinary people. They wrote, *"Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtaine, that we may looke into the most Holy place; that remooveth the cover of the well, that wee may come by [get possession of] the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which meanes the flockes of Laban were watered. Indeede without translation into the vulgar [familiar] tongue [language], the unlearned [those not schooled in Hebrew and Greek] are but like children at Jacobs well (which was deepe) without a bucket or some thing to draw with."* They understood the principle expressed by Brother Paul in I Corinthians 14:11: **"Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a**

barbarian unto me."

Third, the King James translators had real and valuable insights into exactly what translators can do and what they cannot do. In speaking of the errors that creep into translations for various reasons, they explained why the Old Testament quotations cited by the apostles differed at times from the Septuagint when they quoted it. (The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament said to be made by seventy Jewish elders in seventy-two days). The translators wrote: *"...the Seventie [translators of the Septuagint] were Interpreters, they were not Prophets; they did many things well, as learned men; but yet as men they stumbled and fell, one while through oversight, another while through ignorance, yea, sometimes they may be noted [seen] to adde to the Originall [Scriptures], and sometimes to take from it; which made the Apostles to leave them many times, when they [the Seventy] left the Hebrew, and to deliver the sence [sense] thereof according to the trueth of the word, as the spirit [Holy Spirit] gave them utterance."* The King James translators understood that translators are mere "Interpreters" and not "Prophets" with a new revelation from God. As Baptists today we must regard the King James translators as "interpreters" or "translators" and not "prophets." We cannot regard the King James translators as "prophets" because no prophet of God would have been a member of a idolatrous man made religious organization that taught baptismal regeneration (a false gospel) whose leaders persecuted and killed Baptists, but the King James translators were all members and ministers of the Anglican Church. Old John was the last "revelator." In another place in

their introduction to the reader they wrote about the Septuagint again, saying, *"The translation of the Seventie dissenteth [disagrees] from the Originall [Scriptures] in many places, neither doeth it come neere it, for perspicuitie [clarity], gratvitie [seriousness], majestie [dignity or grandeur]; yet which of the Apostles did condemne it? Condemne it? Nay, they used it, (as it is apparent, and as Saint Jerome and most learned men doe confesse) which they would not have done, nor [because] by their example of using it, so grace [approve] and commend it to the Church, if it had bene [been] unworthy the appellation [designation] and name of the word of God."* This is a most interesting point. They say that even though the Septuagint translation was not perfect and fell far short of the original from which it was translated, the apostles did not condemn it, but rather they used it – though they corrected it in their quotations of it. The King James translators said that use of the Septuagint by the apostles was a recommendation of it to Christians. Little can be said against the Septuagint since the apostles did quote from it – remembering they were able to correct it in certain places because they had the revelatory gift as apostles.

Fourth, the King James introduction mentions the existence of a multitude of very early translations throughout the Roman Empire. Those first generation Christians: *"...provided Translations into the vulgar [familiar] for their Countrey men [fellow citizens], insomuch that most nations under heaven did shortly after their conversion, heare CHRIST speaking unto them in their mother tongue, not by the voyce of their Minister onely, but also by*

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the written word translated." Thus it was through the written Word as well as the preached Word that the Lord's congregations were established in the truth down through the centuries. This is helpful information to the Baptist historian. If the King James translators were correct many of the anabaptist groups had the Word of God in their tongues.

Fifth, it is very interesting that the King James translators viewed even the poorest translations of the Bible as being the Word of God – not as merely containing it. They wrote: "*wee doe not deny, nay wee affirme and avow, that the very meanest [inferior in quality] translation of the Bible in English, set foorth by men of our profession (for wee have seene none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the Kings Speech which hee uttered in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latine, is still the Kings Speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expresly [explicit or clear] for sence, every where.*" It is a fact that many sinners heard the gospel from earlier translations – probably some of them inferior ones – and having heard only these poorer translations were nevertheless converted. People were converted before these men produced the King James translation – and we dare to hope that some have been genuinely converted since even by the use of some of the modern inferior translations of the Word of God.

Sixth, the King James translators did not claim to be making a new translation at all. Rather they thought to be making a better

one by revising older translations. They said that they were revising the earlier English translations such as the Bishop's Bible in particular (as ordered by King James) and Tyndale's – whose words make up a great portion of the King James New Testament. The King James translators wrote as follows: "*Truly (good Christian Reader) wee never thought from the beginning, that we should neede to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principall [great] good one, not justly [only] to be excepted [objected] against; that hath bene our indeavour, that our marke [goal].*" Their claim to be revisionists is more clearly stated in the long title to the original 1611 King James Bible which says in part, "*THE HOLY BIBLE, Conteyning the Old Teftament and the New: Newly tranflated out of the Originall tongues & with the former Tranflations dilligently compared and revifed [revised] by his Maiestes fpeciall [Majesty's special] commandment...*" In this they stated they "compared and revised" the "former Tranflations."

Seventh, the translators spoke of the difficulty of translating and of the need for placing alternative readings in the margins. Today we have an abundance of lexicons for both Hebrew and Greek as well as other helps. In those early days of translation helps were scarce if extant at all. The exact meaning of words had to be determined by the context as well as the usage of the word in other places – even in secular Hebrew and Greek writings. It was and is often difficult to know the correct meaning of some words. The King James translators had this to say: "*Some peradventure [perhaps] would have no varietie of sences [senses or meanings] to*

be set in the margine, [margin] lest the authoritie of the Scriptures for deciding of controversies by that shew of uncertaintie, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgmet not to be so be so sound in this point... There be many words in the Scriptures [original texts], which be never found there but once, (having neither brother nor neighbour, as the Hebrewes speake) so that we cannot be holpen [helped] by conference of places [i.e. comparing usages of words in different places]. Againe, there be many rare names of certaine birds, beastes and precious stones, &c. concerning which the Hebrewes themselves are so divided among themselves for judgement, that they may seeme to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, the [than] because they were sure of that which they said, as S. [Saint] Jerome somewhere saith of the Septuagint. Now in such a case, doth not a margine [note in the margin] do well to admonish the Reader to seeke further, and not to conclude or dogmatize [be dogmatic] upon this or that peremptorily [admitting of no contradiction]? For as it is a fault of incredulitie [unbelief], to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can beno [be no] lesse then [than] presumption. Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that varietie of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures [original texts]: so diversitie of signification [meaning] and sense in the margine [notes in the margins], where the text [original Scripture texts] is not so cleare, must needes doe good, yea is necessary, as we are perswaded [persuaded]." The King James translators strongly stated their case for the inclusion of marginal notes in their translation –

saying such marginal renderings were "necessary." The translators themselves admitted that some words and names were difficult to translate with certainty and so gave us alternate marginal readings in the original King James Version. We think it a shame that the American public has most often been deprived of the complete work of the King James translators. Americans generally do not have the introductory material or the marginal notes thought to be "necessary" by the King James translators.

Eighth, the King James translators understood that translation is not mere mechanical word swapping. They wrote as follows on this subject: "*An other thing we thinke good to admonish thee of (gentle Reader) that wee have not tyed our selves to an uniformitie of phrasing, or to an identitie of words, as some peradventure [perhaps] would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men some where, have beene as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not varie [vary] from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing in both places (for there bee some wordes that bee not of the same sense every where) we were especially carefull, and made a conscience [were careful or scrupulous], according to our duetie [duty]. But, that we should expresse the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greeke word once by Purpose, never to call it Intent; if one where Journeying, never Traveiling; if one where Thinke, never Suppose; if one where Paine, never Ache; if one where Joy, never Gladnesse, &c. Thus to minse [be brief or cut short our comments on] the matter, wee thought to savour [taste*

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or smell] more of curiositie then [than] wisdom, and that rather it [to always use the same word] would breed scorne in the Atheist, then [than] bring profite to the godly Reader. For is the kingdome of God become words or syllables? why should wee be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when wee may use another no lesse fit, as commodiously [handy or serviceable]?" They stated that they were not mechanically bound to one English word for one Greek or Hebrew word.

Ninth, let us consider what the King James translators mentioned last in their introduction. They wrote about their use of old church words. Our research indicates that King James, through the Bishop of London, gave fourteen rules to the translators about how they were to do their work. Rules numbered one, three and four required the translators to substitute certain old church words instead of translating the original words literally. Those three rules are these: 1. *"The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original [Scriptures] will permit."* 3. *"The old ecclesiastical words [religious words used by the Catholic and Anglican priests] to be kept; as the word church, not to be translated congregation, &c."* and next, 4. *"When any word hath divers [different] significations [meanings], that to be kept which has been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers [old Catholic church fathers], being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of the faith [Anglican doctrine]."* In stating that they followed the king's rules, the translators wrote to the reader:

"Lastly, wee have on the one side avoided the scrupulositie [careful correctness] of the Puritanes [Puritans], who leave the olde Ecclesiasticall words [old Roman Catholic church words], and betake them [go] to other, as when they put washing for Baptisme, and Congregation in stead of Church..." Because of this practice sound Baptist preachers down through the four hundred plus years since the King James was translated have had difficulties. They have had to explain the true meaning of those old Roman Catholic words: not only baptism and church, but also other Catholic words such as bishop, deacon, Easter, presbytery, cross, etc. - words that appear in our King James Bibles.

Summing it all up, what we have in the introductory material is a great amount of information which helps us understand the King James Bible. It is a grave loss to us all that this material is no longer included in our Bibles. That loss has resulted in misunderstandings as to what the King James Bible actually says. And it should be noted, that, as far as this preacher is able to learn, none of the popular newer translations remedy this loss. They keep mostly if not completely to the old Catholic words. What a thing it would be if the publishers of modern versions actually translated correctly the Greek words "baptizo," "ekklesia," "pascha" and "stauros" as well as others. Modern "evangelicals" - including many Protestant Baptists - would probably refuse to buy their Bibles - and their revenues would go down. For the sad fact is that most Baptists do not have an inkling as to the meaning of these Greek words and blithely go about believing Roman Catholic doctrines taught by these "olde Ecclesiasticall" English

words: "baptism," "church," "Easter," and "cross," as well as others. We live in a time where libraries and the Internet make available to us sources so that we can know the truth regarding these and other words. We have no excuse for believing error. Let us rejoice in the freedom that knowing the truth brings as our Lord Jesus said, **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth**

shall make you free," (John 8:32). And let us be properly appreciative of the work of the King James Bible translators who told us what they believed and how they made their translation of the Word of God. By means of their own introductory words we can better understand God's Word!



Broken Cisterns the Fountain of Living Waters, or Broken Cisterns – Which Do You Worship?

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

Whether he wills it or not, whether he admits it or not, man is by nature religious and must worship some god or gods, even if that god is only himself. When we call a man irreligious, we really mean that he is not religious in a conventional sense; he worships a god or gods that we do not recognize as such.

No wonder the Bible tells us it is only the fool that has said in his heart, **"There is no God"** (Ps. 14:1). In his very denial of the existence of God, the atheist seeks to set himself upon the throne of deity.

POOR SUBSTITUTES

In our text, the God of the Bible calls Himself **"the fountain of living waters,"** and refers to the false gods of His professed people as **"broken cisterns, that can hold no water."**



Even a good cistern, its natural staleness and accumulation of filth, is a poor substitute for a never-failing fountain

of fresh, pure water: how much worse are broken cisterns, that can hold no water! And so Jehovah calls upon the very heavens to be astonished, afraid, and desolate at the spectacle of a people who have known something of the true God, but **"have changed their glory for that which doth not profit"** (Jer. 2:11).

IDOLATRY

In the second of the Ten Commandments God forbade the making of images to be worshiped and the worshiping of such images or likenesses. No doubt such images were among the false gods of Jeremiah's day.

Literal idolatry is less common in the world today, thanks to the wide influence of the Bible, even among unbelievers. But people of

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inferior intelligence, ignorant of such Scriptures as John 4:24, can still be found worshipping pictures, crucifixes, statues, or other images even while they profess a form of so-called Christianity. All such images are but **“broken cisterns.”**

MAMMON

However, it is not necessary to have a material image in order to be guilty of idolatry. Colossians 3:5 tells us plainly that covetousness is idolatry, and in Ephesians 5:5 a covetous man is called an idolater.

Jesus Himself tells us, **“Ye cannot serve God and mammon”** (Matt. 6:24). Mammon simply means wealth, or money and all that money can buy. Sooner or later it will turn out to be a broken cistern.

PLEASURE

If there is no resurrection of the body, **“if the dead rise not,”** Paul tells us (I Cor. 15:32), we might as well adopt the philosophy of some of the Epicureans: “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”

So a faithless generation gives itself over to entertainment, amusement, so-called “recreation,” avoiding useful work so far as possible in order to rush madly from one pastime to another.

Moses chose **“rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”** (Heb. 11:25), but lesser men have made a different choice, devoting themselves to the great god pleasure, as to a broken cistern.

FASHION

Ignoring the teaching of Scripture, **“the customs of the people are vain”** (Jer. 10:3), and the strict command of God, **“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil”** (Ex. 23:2), untold millions of souls are enslaved to

the god of fashion – partaking of all kinds of indecencies to keep style.

Not only in a dress (or undress) and physical adornment (or camouflage), but in their whole pattern of life (if such mechanized puppetry can be called life), they anxiously fawn at the feet of fashion – a broken cistern.

PRAISE

Some people seem to worship and live for human praise – for popularity, for the plaudits of the populace, for the flutter of flattery. Even some preachers appear ready to corrupt the truth to attract supporters (Acts 20:30).

Surely the praise of men is a broken cistern! **“How can ye believe,”** asked Jesus, **“which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only”** (John 5:44)? And in John 12:43 we read of some sort of (secret) believers that **“they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”**

EDUCATION

An idol most characteristic of the modern world is education with a capital E. Sad to say, multitudes of supposed-to-be Christian parents are more concerned that their children have a worldly education than that they come to know the true God, His word, and His salvation.

Our superstitious generation vainly imagines that education can take place of God – that all the ills of the world can be cured by education, culture, and the spread of material prosperity – blithely blind to the fact that it is Education that has produced and distributed the weapons that may destroy us.

America’s most dangerous outside enemy is so dangerous precisely because of “education” – but much more dangerous to

America is the fact that most of the American people have turned away from God to the broken cistern of education.

SINCERITY

Surely it is better to be sincere than hypocritical. But if Satan cannot induce a sin-blinded soul to be consciously hypocritical, he has a more effective trick: let that soul worship the god Sincerity, forgetting that it is possible to be sincerely wrong. In fact, most erring souls are more or less sincere.

Scripture reminds us that **“the way of a fool is right in his own eyes,”** and even makes the soul-searching statement that **“every way of man is right in his own eyes”** (Prov. 12:15, 21:2).

Jesus warned His disciples: **“The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service”** (John 16:2). There is hardly a crime on record that has not been justified of the Word of God.

Doing the best you can, letting your conscience be your guide, is a rotten substitute for the worship of the true God – a broken cistern in place of the fountain of living waters.

LEGALISM

Even in our common translation, the book of Galatians quite clearly shuts out “the law” as a means of justification with God. But the original language rules out not only “the law” (of Moses) but law in general – law without the definite article.

“If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been from law.” (Gal. 3:21: note absence of the article in the Greek.)

So, in Galatians 2:16, 21, we read in accurate translation: “Knowing that a man is not justified.” “For if righteous (is) through law, then

Christ died in vain.”

The point is that not even New Testament “law” can be used as a means of justification before God. We cannot get right with God by a mere outward obedience to His law, moral or ceremonial, Old Testament, but only through saving faith, which is counted to us for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

The greatest tragedy of professed Christianity through the centuries is the falling away (Gal. 5:4) from the saving grace of God (Titus 2:11) and the hewing out of broken cisterns – of new forms of legalism.

FORMALISM

Not only have false churches invented various forms and rituals to ensnare and deceive the people, but Satan and his apostles have perverted even the sacred scriptural symbols of baptism and the Lord’s Supper into false gods for deluded souls who trust in the outward forms instead of trusting the Christ of Whom these forms are meant to remind us.

Truly the turning from God to idols in Jeremiah’s day was no greater occasion for astonishment, fear, and desolation (Jer. 2:12) than the modern turning of self-styled Christians from the blood of Christ to the water of baptism or to the fruit of the vine as having saving power. From the living God to dead forms and rituals – from the fountain of living waters to broken cisterns!

SELF

As suggested at the beginning of this sermon, all these and other false gods or broken cisterns are but varied forms of self-worship – a rejection of the true God in order that a man may worship an object of his own choice – involving ultimately the worship of himself.

This “will worship” (Col. 2:23),

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this rebellion of human pride, is sometimes found even among God's people – and this is the astonishing, fearful, desolating truth!

But **“what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it”** (I Cor. 4:7)? Shall we turn even the blessings from the fountain of life into broken cisterns? **“Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh”** (Gal. 3:3)?

Jesus invites “whosoever will” to **“take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17), from our human pride and self-will, if we would truly be His disciples. **“Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”** (Luke 14:33).



A Biblical Definition of Preaching

By Richard H. Heatherly
of Wingo, Kentucky

As an example of sounding good and Biblical, but not quite getting there, listen to how one preacher of a large popular church defines



preaching. He correctly defended the need of preaching as opposed to the churches who do not want their services to sound preachy.

After saying that we should never apologize for preaching in our churches he gave the following definition of preaching. “Preaching is simply a passionate and dynamic communication of an important and vital truth from the Bible.” This is a fairly good secular definition and would probably be the one given by most; but it seems to come short of a Bible definition. Dynamic and passionate communication can be done totally through human ability without the power of the Holy Spirit. But God honored Bible preaching is defined in the Bible as Holy Ghost empowered preaching. **“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”** (I Cor 2:4-5). **“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance”** (I Thess 1:5). Our Lord said in Luke 4:18, **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel.”** Now I fully realize that our Lord was and is God incarnate, and that He preached with a power that no man will ever have as His equal, but that in no way diminishes the Bible definition of preaching being by and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It seems that a definition of preachers and preaching, if it is Biblical, ought to have in it the need of a call from God and empowered by the Holy Spirit lest it give the impression that no special call or anointing from God is needed. Preaching does not have to be dynamic in order to be effective; but it must be in the power of the Holy Spirit. No doubt being dynamic in delivery may make the words more palatable

to human ears; but if the Holy Spirit is in control of the preacher the message will be life changing whether it is dynamic or not.

The Scripture recorded that the people said of Paul’s preaching, **“For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible”** (II Cor. 10:10). Men may disagree as to the exact and complete meaning of this verse; but it is certain that men did not consider Paul a dynamic preacher. What the church needs today is not dynamic preachers but God called and Holy Spirit filled preachers.

Many of the most powerful preachers in church history were uneducated and very plain and ordinary and in no way dynamic; but they were powerful through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some were highly educated and not the least bit dynamic but powerful in the Spirit. Still others were highly educated and very dynamic and their preaching was powerful through the Holy Spirit. A classic example of this is the well known and still much read sermon “Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God” by Jonathan Edwards 1703 – 1758. If what I have read concerning this preacher is correct he was certainly not a dynamic preacher. He is said to have read his sermon in a much labored and unattractive manner. However, all who recognize the need of God’s anointing in preaching, acknowledge that he was one of the most effective Holy Spirit empowered preachers in history.

Many times the most dynamic preachers are more concerned about being politically correct and positive and tactful in their delivery than they are of the need of Holy Ghost power. There is another thing the Bible makes clear when defining preaching; if

it does not include reproof, and rebuke of sin through doctrine, it is not the kind of preaching Paul told Timothy to do in II Timothy 4:2.

This is not said as a put down of dynamic preaching; it is not even a dismissal of the potential benefit of dynamic preaching ability. However, it matters not how dynamic preaching may be, if it is not done in the power of the Holy Spirit it will be completely worthless spiritually no matter how successful in attracting religious crowds. I say again, what the church needs today is Holy Spirit filled preachers, not dynamic preachers. To use this preacher’s definition of preaching, which leaves out any mention of the Holy Spirit, leaves out the most vital part. Bible preaching, is a spiritual endeavor to reach the spirit of men, and therefore it can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If a man is dynamic and Holy Spirit anointed in his preaching he will be extremely successful. On the other hand, if a man is Holy Spirit anointed and without dynamic ability he also will be extremely successful. It matters not how polished or unpolished his talent, or how visible and applauded or obscure and ignored by man his ministry may be. Dynamic preachers without Holy Spirit anointing will be complete failures no matter how big the crowds that follow them and how numerous the accolades heaped upon them.

I once knew a godly preacher who was the best personal witness for Christ I have ever known. He always pastored small insignificant churches by men’s estimation. He said to me on one occasion: “No man will be a success for God until he is willing to be a complete failure in the eyes of

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A Biblical

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men." I am confident that honest study of the Scripture will prove that statement Biblically correct. Professional dynamic "preachers" who are preaching without the power of the Holy Spirit; are many times fearful of being unpopular. For this reason they say the right

things in a way which does away with any real and meaningful application of the Word they preach. Paul took satisfaction in the fact that his preaching was fully known, clearly stated and he expected spiritual application from his hearers (II Tim. 3:10, 4:17, II Cor. 4:2).



THE

BIBLE AND OTHER NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

PRO-GAY GROUPS SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE SOUTH

(WNS)--The nation's largest gay rights advocacy group is putting down roots in the South. Last week, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) announced it will spend \$8.5 million over the next three years to set up permanent offices and staff in Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. HRC's goal is to expand social and legal protections in those states for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) residents. HRC says the program, called Project One America, is targeting Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi because they lack sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and because all three states constitutionally define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. They blame some of this on lack of funding, citing a study that found that grant funding for every LGBT adult in the Northeast in 2011-2012 was \$10.10, compared to \$1.71 in the South.

GOOGLE GOADED INTO PURGING PRO-LIFE ADS

(WNS)--NARAL Pro-Choice

America has been pecking at Google to remove "deceptive" advertisements placed by crisis pregnancy centers (CPC) for months. In late April, the abortion-rights group trumpeted victory: Google has apparently plucked from its search results more than two-thirds of ads placed by CPCs for allegedly violating its policy against "misleading, inaccurate, and deceitful ads" that "hurt everyone." NARAL President Ilyse Hogue called the ads a "deliberate misinformation campaign" and "manipulation" targeting women who are searching online for abortion services and resources. *The Washington Post* reported that an analysis by NARAL discovered 79 percent of CPC ads "indicated that they provided medical services such as abortions, when, in fact, they are focused on counseling services and on providing information about alternatives to abortion." NARAL representatives did not respond to my request for an interview.

CHRISTIANS KICKED OFF HGTV FOR THEIR FAITH

(WNS)--Twins Jason and David Benham found out Wednesday their

pro-life and pro-family values aren't welcome at HGTV. The brothers were five weeks into filming a new show with six families learning how to work together to flip a house. *Flip It Forward*, was set to air in October, and an HGTV promo touted that in each episode, "the guys help a deserving family find a fixer-upper and transform it into their forever home." But HGTV has a large LGBT audience, and Ellen DeGeneres recently announced her own design show on the network. Activist group Right Wing Watch dug into the Benhams' lives and brought down the politically correct hammer. Most of the "dirt" that Right Wing Watch found on the brothers actually came from their father, Flip Benham, a preacher and colorful pro-life activist.

DID PLANNED PARENTHOOD HELP ARIZONA RAPIST GO FREE?

(WNS)--Planned Parenthood Arizona is under fire again for alleged misconduct—but this time, the charges aren't coming from undercover pro-life activists. The Pinal County Sheriff's Office alleges that the abortion center intentionally hid a rape involving what turned out to be a serial rapist. The *Casa Grande Dispatch* discovered documents implicating Planned Parenthood while investigating the April 28 arrest of 18-year-old Tyler Kost, who is accused of raping or molesting at least 18 girls in San Tan Valley. The sheriff's office report based on detectives' interviews included a girl who said she became pregnant after Kost raped her last year. The girl's mother told a Planned Parenthood staff member about the assault at the girl's New Year's Eve appointment.

PRO-LIFE PRIESTS TAKE OBAMACARE FIGHT TO COURT

(WNS)--Pro-life priests should

♦ (Continued on page 140)

BЕРЕА BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 4-1-2014 to 4-30-2014

Beginning Balance	\$7,212.75
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
TOTAL	325.00
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	454.98
Postage	49.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	504.48
Interest06
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,033.33



BЕРЕА BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 4-1-2014 to 4-30-2014

Beginning Balance	\$2,117.91
RECEIPTS:	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Janet Stevens, Marion, KY	40.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	30.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	600.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Philip Ledington, Nancy, KY	10.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Ryck Conley, Georgetown, KY	40.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Burghill, OH	75.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Wayne West, Excelsior Springs, MO	3.00
Subscriptions	209.22
Anonymous	1,200.00
Dividing checks	0.00
Sub Total	\$3,928.17
TOTAL	\$6,046.08
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	701.21
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Supplies	89.37
Total Expenditures	\$3,756.48
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,289.60

Bible & the Newspaper

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not be forced to cooperate with a government scheme to expand contraceptive coverage, Priests for Life attorneys argued in early May before the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. “This is a battle of Biblical proportions,” Fr. Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, said after the arguments. “We will obey God rather than man.” Priests for Life, a nonprofit with about 50 employees, sued the government last year cover the contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act, which requires employers to over health insurance coverage for contraceptive and abortifacient drugs. Priests for Life and other faith-based nonprofits have received preliminary injunctions against the mandate, but these proceedings proceeding marked the first time an appeals court has heard the merits of one of those cases.

PRO-LIFE MOVIE REBOUNDS AFTER GETTING KICKED OFF POPULAR CROWDFUNDING SITE

(WNS)--A proposal for a pro-life movie is breaking records for crowdfunding, despite one popular website’s refusal to continue hosting its fundraising campaign. The campaign for *Gosnell*, a documentary about the Philadelphia abortionist convicted last year of murder, has raised more than \$1.1 million to date, becoming the largest non-celebrity film on any crowdfunding site, according to The Heritage Foundation. The campaign, hosted on Indigogo, has reached 55 percent of its \$2.1 million threshold since it launched on March 28, putting it in a good place to meet its May 12 deadline. Some celebrities have also picked up the cause, including actor Kevin Sorbo from *God’s Not Dead*, and actor Nick Searcy, from the hit

television series *Justified*. “This is a story that needs to be told,” Searcy told the Washington Examiner. “No one wants to talk about it because the details are too damaging to certain political agendas.”



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL and pastor Doyal Thomas will be hosting a summer meeting, beginning on June 25 and going through June 29. The week night services will begin at 7:00 each evening, and the Saturday and Sunday morning services will begin at 10:00. The prime speaker will be Elder Arthur Blevins of Aztec, NM. We will, in conjunction, host the quarterly fellowship on Saturday, June 28, and our guest speaker for that service will be Elder Shawn Berry of Clarksville, TN. All are invited, and a Saturday noon meal will be provided by the church for all who attend.

The Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV and pastor Paul Stepp will be having a Bible Conference from June 19th through June 22nd. Services will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday

and Friday, and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. All are welcome to attend.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL and pastor Todd Bryant would like to announce a Bible Conference August 1st through 3rd. Scheduled speakers are Elders Mark Campbell and John Fry. The theme of the conference is “Where the Bible Meets Life.” All are invited to attend.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church’s website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

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