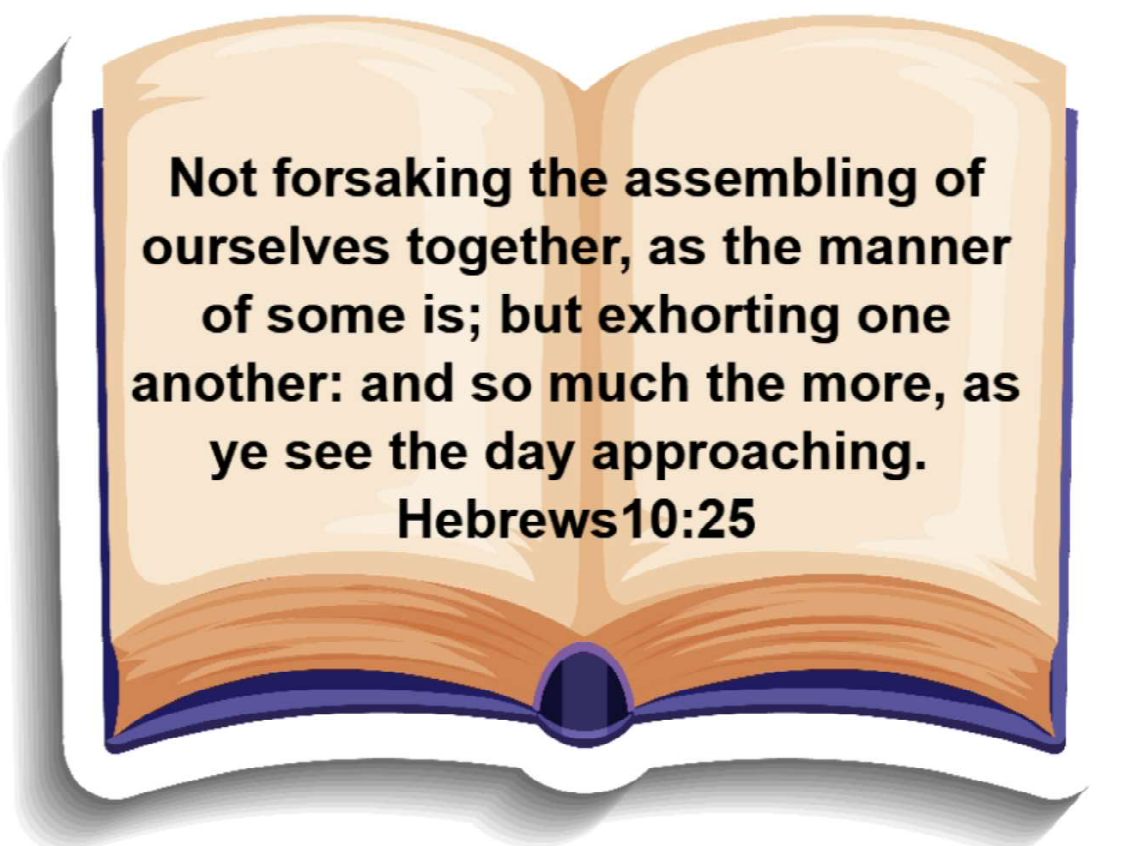


Glorious Gospel



Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25



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Contents:

Here We Go Again Gordon Crook	1
Christ Our Supply Vicky Moots	5
Poem: How Often Debra Isenbletter	8
Sharing Testimonies	9
Bible Study: Ephesians Introduction Gordon Crook	10
Seven Personal P's of John 14 Jack Davis	13
Words of The Preacher Abigail Sumeracki	17
The Obedience of Faith Gary Giddings	20
The Encouraging Word Martha Wainright	25

ANNOUNCEMENT

**Printing Testimonies from the saints called SHARING.
Please send your testimony, either by mail or e-mail.
Thank you in advance.**

Here We Go Again

Gordon Crook, Pastor
Grace Assembly, Wichita, Kansas

"My times are in thy hand: . . ." Psalms 31:15

Once again, we have come into a new year. It often seems that time is just moving faster than we can adjust for. When I was thinking about the new year, I realized that "New Year" is just a nomenclature for us to account for periods of time in our life. So are all other periods of time (day, week, month, etc). Our life continues on and on until God brings it to an end.

This is not going to be some morbid, depressing article. In fact, it will be just the opposite. Time continuing no matter what we think, and increasing our age with no care as to what it is doing to our bodies, is simply just a fact of this life. We cannot change or stop the passage of time. However, we do have reason to have hope in the midst of all of this.

In December, we are brought to consider the first advent of Jesus when He came as a baby and grew into a man that gave His life for our redemption. Not just so we could go around claiming to be righteous people, but so that we could spend eternity with Him. This is exactly what He told us, **"that where I am, there ye may be also."** (John 14:3).

This is truly our great hope. Yes, time is moving on and we cannot stop it, but we should be looking even more urgently for the coming of our Lord to take us to be with Him. **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting**

one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25. “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Romans 13:11.

My desire for this new year is to encourage God’s people to check their focus. Many people will make new years resolutions, most of which will not be kept. I do not recommend making resolutions that will simply be ignored soon. I do recommend getting into the study of your Bible. It will help you find the right focus.

Many Christians today are focused on the current events in the world. They might be focused on the politics of their local community or their country. They might be focused on improving the situation through politics and other means. All of this is just a distraction that we are warned about. **“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers SHALL wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But CONTINUE THOU in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;” 2 Timothy 3:12-14. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” 2 Timothy 2:4.**

Scripture is very clear on the direction that the world will go as Jesus’ coming gets closer. There is no scripture that tells us that we will, or even should try to, improve the world system. I have no illusions about where things will go in our country or any other. Our focus needs to be squarely on Jesus, and our expectation of His soon return. In Revelation 2, we find Jesus saying the

following to the church at Ephesus; **“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”** “First love” is “preeminent love” “first in time or place, in any succession of things or persons, first in rank, influence, honour.

Is Jesus all of this to me? To you? Are other things taking this place in our lives? I feel compelled to stress more and more the importance of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is after all what true Christianity is really about.

So much of what the world offers to Christians sounds good, and even has a small bit of truth mixed in. Satan is not stupid, and we should be very careful to not underestimate him. Paul tells us that we should know Satan’s methods. **“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” 2 Corinthians 2:11.** We really must stay immersed in God’s Word if we are to understand and recognize Satan’s devices against us.

Many things are going to change in our world. AI (Artificial Intelligence) is increasingly taking over and presenting us with all kinds of information and things that can sometimes be difficult to discern. My personal opinion about technology is that it can be very useful and it can be used for very evil purposes. This has always been true of technology.

I say all of this as a reminder that we are to be alert and watching. Not watching the world for what they are doing or going to do, but watching for our Lord. Alert to the devices of the enemy, but watching eagerly for our Lord. When our Lord was on His way to the cross, He did not tell His disciples to try to stop that or to be concerned with what the government was doing. He told them to watch and pray.

It is certainly possible that we might see things get much worse in the coming days or years, if the Lord tarries. Don't be moved by these things. Be steadfast in your faith and your hope that is in Christ Jesus. The world will likely hate us more and more, and more Christians will be moved to try to counteract this hatred. We are not told to counteract the hatred of the world, but simply to trust in our Lord. **"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." John 15:18. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." 1 John 3:13. 1 "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:" Peter 2:21-23.**

Time will continue to pass until Jesus returns, and the most important thing we can do is to wait expectantly for Him. May we **"love His appearing" 2 Timothy 4:8.** And may we say with those in **Revelation 22, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."**



Christ our Supply

Vicky Moots

Phil. 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We know that Paul's God was a very personal God to him because he uses the personal pronoun "my." He calls God, "my God." David spoke something very similar to this in Ps. 23:1: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want [lack]." They both had a personal relationship with God and depended upon Him to meet all of their needs. We, too, can have that same personal relationship with Him through salvation.

Next, Paul states that God "shall" supply all your needs. He did not say "maybe" or "perhaps" He might, but that He "shall" supply. It is a father's responsibility to supply the needs of his children. When we are born again, then God becomes our Father, and we can trust Him to take care of us. We should have the same confidence that our needs will be met that Paul and David had.

Paul then makes it clear that God shall supply "all" of our needs, not just a part of them. Nothing shall be lacking. Notice that he did not say that He would supply our "wants" or satisfy our "greed," but that He would supply our "need." He knows exactly what we need both physically and spiritually. Our natural needs are important, but not as important as our spiritual needs.

A father would be expected to provide clothing, food, shelter and comfort. Our spiritual needs for those things have already been provided for us by our Heavenly

Father, for He knows what we have need of. For clothing, He has given us His righteousness; for food, we can feast on the Bread from heaven and the sincere milk of the Word; for shelter, we can hide under the shadow of His wings and in the cleft of the Rock; and for comfort, we can lean on His everlasting arms.

As His children, we have the privilege and the right to come to Him at any time and ask for what we need. In Matt. 7:7-11 Jesus encourages us to come to the Father regarding our needs: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

An earthly father may not always have the resources to give his children everything that they need, but our Heavenly Father has unlimited riches in His storehouse. He is willing and able to supply our need and to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

Paul declared in the last part of Phil. 4:19 that God would supply all our need "according to" His riches in glory. He did not say "out of His riches." "Out of" means to give "a portion of" His riches, whereas "according to" means to give "in the same proportion as" His riches. If a millionaire gave you \$1,000, it would only be a small portion of his riches. It would not be "according to" His

riches. God's riches are unlimited, so if He supplies our need "according to" His riches, then that means that He will keep on giving as long as we keep on asking, and the supply will never run out.

Sometimes we do not know what we need, but He will always answer according to His will. He knows what is best for us. Some of the greatest blessings that we receive come in a package marked "trials and tribulations."

Paul concludes this verse by stating that our needs will be met "by Christ Jesus." They are not met according to or by our works but by Christ Himself and paid for in full on Calvary. If Christ is all we have, then we have all we need.



HOW OFTEN

How often have I sat and watched -
and seen You go before.
To pick me up each time I fall,
to open wide a door.

How often have I knelt and prayed -
my strength was almost gone,
yet in Your love, You gave to me,
Your strength to rest upon.

How often have I sat and watched -
Your strong right Arm stretched out.
In my behalf, You conquered all,
and left no room for doubt.

How often have I knelt and prayed -
and wept before Your face.
And never have You turned away,
but always given Grace.

How often have I sat and watched -
You care for every need.
Both small and great, You saw them all,
I had no need to plead.

How often have I sat and watched -
the power of Your Word.
What joy! What grace! What hope! What love!
The hearts that it has stirred!

Debbie Isenbletter
Springfield, Missouri

SHARING TESTIMONIES

Earlene Davis

I experienced sever sharp pain in my chest area that came on me suddenly. I didn't know what it was or what caused it and thinking it was my heart, but it was not on the left side. It was not constant, but happened every time I moved my arms. At my age I thought it would go away in time, but it became worse in the following days. I was prayed for by my pastor and I did not get an instant healing, but it seemed to be getting better the next couple of days. But then it came back stronger. I called by doctors office and received no help at all and they always say call us first. Well, that proved not to be the thing to do. I was prayed for again by the Assembly and the Lord took the pain all away right away. Praise the Lord! I give Him all the glory.

I also want to share an interesting letter from a woman in Missouri that told me what she did with her past issues of the Glorious Gospel magazine. She sent them to a group that sends Bibles and other reading matter out to others. I appreciate her telling me about that.

If the Lord has blessed you in supplying your needs in any way, pray about writing it down and sending it to share and encourage others by your testimony in the magazine.



Ephesians

Gordon Crook, Pastor
Grace Assembly, Wichita, Kansas

Introduction

The letter of Paul to the Ephesians has some of the greatest instruction for God's people. It helps us understand our position in Christ and what God's purpose for us is.

Ephesus was a prominent port city in Asia Minor, in what is current day Turkey. It was a major religious site as the temple of Diana was there. This made it a wealthy city due to trade and religious tourism (pilgrimage). This religious aspect comes into full view as Paul evangelizes there in Acts starting in chapter 18.

He first goes to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem but does not stay long, but he leaves Priscilla and Aquila there. When Apollos comes, they are able to help instruct him more perfectly in the gospel and he is an effective witness for the gospel.

In Acts 19 we find Paul returning to Ephesus and asking the believers if they have received the Holy Spirit. They have not yet heard about the Holy Spirit, and so Paul lays hands on them and they receive. When rejected by the Jews in the synagogue, Paul then goes to the gentiles with his message of grace.

He then stay for over two years and ministers mainly to the gentiles since the Jews had rejected his ministry. It

seems that this allowed the gospel to be heard all over Asia at that time. "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." **Acts 19:10.** Likely this is an effect of Ephesus being a major city with a lot of commerce and people traveling to and from there all over the known world.

In **Acts 19:19** we see a great turning of people to God. They turn from their idolatry and witchcraft and burn their related books and the Word of God grows greatly.

When we study the letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesian saints, we come to realize that these were more mature saints than those at Corinth. The topics in this letter are a higher understanding of God's purpose and work in the lives of His children. Paul wants these saints to know some important topics and have a deeper understanding. He even prays for them in this way. **Ephesians 1:16-23.**

Paul starts this letter the same way he starts most of his letters. With a salutation and his credentials. "**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:**" **Ephesians 1:1.** We know who wrote this and we know that Paul has been called by Jesus (apostle). He is the apostle to the gentiles (**Galatians 2:7-8**).

This is good, because many of the believers in Ephesus were gentiles. And, of course, we are also gentiles. Aren't you glad God saw fit to call the gentiles to salvation through Jesus Christ as well as the Jews? This amazing

fact is exactly what we find as we begin reading this letter.

**“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Ephesians 1:2.**

An important reminder to us that we are here by God’s grace through Jesus. All that we are and all that we have comes to us through God’s grace. Paul uses this greeting in all of his letters. Paul understood personally the importance of God’s grace, because he had experienced it in His own life (**1 Timothy 1:12-16**).

As we go through this letter, we will find that Paul reminds us exactly what we are and what we have through Jesus, as well as what God desires to do through us. All through God’s grace. This letter is for those who would desire to mature in their relationship with Jesus. It provides instruction that we need and requires us to truly desire to look closely into it.

I think that we often read through some of these things quickly and enjoy something on the surface but then fail to dig deeper. God’s Word has much more than can be taken in with a cursory reading. I encourage you to take time to meditate through this letter to the Ephesians so that you can understand what God wants to work in your life. **Ephesians 1:17-19.**

Bible study in Ephesians will continue.



SEVEN PERSONAL P'S OF JOHN 14

Jack Davis

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:1-3

Jesus is speaking of some simple and exciting things in such a personal way, and they are recorded for believer’s enjoyment and encouragement. Let us consider and take them to heart.

HIS PEACE – “Let not our heart be troubled.” What wonderful care and cure for troubled hearts. There is certainly a significant increase in troubled hearts today. But Jesus said in Lk. 21:26-27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you..” The world has so many artificial tranquilizers, that are so temporary, and contain many harmful side effects. But when we cast our care on Him, He promises that the peace that passeth understanding shall guard as with a garrison our hearts and minds - Phil 4:6-7. Most any city, state, or country of any size has a peace keeping force, but our Lord has for us powerful and personal protection of our heart and mind. Oh, how great the need. We are instructed to “let the peace of God rule (act as umpire in all decisions) in our hearts” Col.

3:15. The things happening in this troubled world, bombard us with external destroyers of an outward tranquility. But thank God for the deep settled peace that our dear Lord places within, which is our privilege to allow to reign there. He keeps in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on Him – Isa. 26:3.

HIS PERSUASION – (the true essence of faith.) “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” The peace that rules in our hearts is there as a result of faith. THANK GOD, we may now live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us – Gal. 2:20. Paul assures us that God has not given us the spirit for fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. We also may know Him whom we have believed, and be **persuaded** that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day – II Tim. 1:7,12. Oh, how comforting to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not lean to our own understanding – Prov. 3:5-6.

HIS PLACE – “I go to prepare a place for you.” There are many places in the Father’s house already prepared for others by the Father, but Jesus has gone to prepare for us personally, special places.

HIS PURPOSE – “I go” He came here to go. Our dear Lord did so many wonderful things while He was here. Oh, the gracious , marvelous words that proceeded out of His mouth. He prophesied, and fulfilled prophecy, but He always knew that He was on His way to the cross. His face was set like a flint. His destiny was determined, and He would not be detoured by Satan nor men. Thank God! He finished His course, completed His circuit, and could say to His Father, “Mission accomplished.”

HIS PREPARATION "I go to prepare." His preparation began by going to the cross, in order to prepare us for a place. Therefore we see His preparation was two fold, "for us and in us." In this work He is changing us mightily, and inwardly – II Cor. 3:18. He is developing his life in us, bringing us to maturity. He is at work to make overcomers out of us. He is working in us the will and do of His good pleasure, having began a good work in us. He is also subduing our otherwise mindedness (Phil. 2:13, 3:15,21) as we are available, and yielded. This preparation is especially **"training for reigning."** Remember these things are being done by **His power unto His praise** – Eph. 3:20-21; 1:6,12,14, and 2:7. This certainly delights the overcoming heart.

HIS PROMISE – "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," Do we believe it? Are we expecting Him to keep His promise? Are we awaiting God's Son from heaven? How personal! We read, "The Lord Himself shall descend." His promise gives us such wonderful hope. In Him we enjoy blessed hope, living hope, glorious hope – the hope of the ages, it is in our hearts, and anchors our souls.

HIS PRESENCE -"That where I am, there ye may be also." Glory, glory! What a pleasant presence. Shall we not sing in sweet anticipation, "In thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" – Ps. 16:11. "So shall we ever be with the Lord – I Thess. 4:17. Jesus Christ **paid** for our being there, our transport right into the heavenly presence of our Lord and Father. Several scriptures tell us so. The one quickened to my heart in this connection, **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for**

the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit – I Pet. 3:18. On the way to the cross Jesus also **prayed** for it. **Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory. Which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world"** – Jn. 17:24. He expected God the Father to answer his prayer, shouldn't we? I expect to be there, don't you?



What Will It Be?

**If salvation is so great and free,
If the Savior is so good to me;
If His loving face I always see,
Oh, what will it be to be there?
If we each can say, "I know he's mine,"
And our fellowship is so divine,
Moving upward in the royal line,
Oh, what will it be to be there?**

**To be there! To be there!
Oh, what will it be to be there?
With the Lord in the air!
In the midst and round the throne,
Falling down 'for Him alone,
All His royalty to own,
Oh, what will it be to be there?**

– A. S. C.

Words of the Preacher

Abigail Sumeracki
Michigan

We have been going over the type, shadow, or appearance of Jesus in each of the books of the Old Testament. Today it will be Ecclesiastes, which the theme of the book is “under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2, **“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”**

Solomon wrote this book, but notice he says **“the words of the Preacher”** and **“saith the Preacher.”** The word preacher is capitalized; it is used as a name. The Preacher is a reference to Jesus, so we see Jesus as the Preacher.

One thing about this book is it focuses on trying to find satisfaction, joy and happiness “under the sun” in this life. Eccl. 1:14 says **I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.** The works that we do “under the sun” are all vanity and vexation of spirit. It does not satisfy.

Eccl. 3:19, **For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as in the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.**

Eventually this life ends and if the Lord carries everyone will eventually die. That is just the way it is with men, this life is temporary. And because everything in this life, everything under the sun, is temporary we cannot find eternal and lasting happiness or satisfaction in anything that is under the sun.

Jesus, the Preacher, says in Matthew 6:19-21, **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

The treasures that Jesus has for us in heaven are eternal and when our heart is focused on the **Son, S-O-N**, then we are living a life that is over the sun, **S-U-N**. When we see that our treasure is in heaven then we can be satisfied and happy in this life.

But how do we become an **“over the sun, S-U-N person who is focused on the Son, S-O-n**? Eccl. 4:9-10, **Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.** Two are better than one and one will lift up another.

Jesus, the Preacher, says in Matthew 11:28-30, **Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in**

heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The two that are better than one is us joined to Jesus. He is the one who lifts us up. To be an **over the sun person** we first need to be joined to the Son and it is only in the Son, **S-O-N** that we can find rest, satisfaction, and happiness not only in eternity but now here on earth while we walk under the sun.

The fact of the matter is that we have all that Solomon was looking for while we are under the sun when we are joined to Jesus. That does not mean that life will always be easy or that we will never face any difficulties or hardships. Remember when two are joined together one will help the other up. Well, when we are joined to Jesus, He will help us up during the difficult times in our lives. The fact of the matter is, when we are joined to Jesus, we can have the peace of God in any situation that we face because we know that Jesus is right there with us in the situation.

So, in the book of Ecclesiastes we see Jesus as the Preacher who reveals to us eternal treasures we have over the sun and joins Himself to us so we can walk as "over the sun people" while we live "under the sun."



**Article sent in by
Sharon Townsend
Pastor of Grace Assembly
Cherterfield, Michigan**

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Gary Giddings – Broken Arrow, OK

OBEDIENCE isn't a word that we usually like to hear because we tend to do what we want to do, instead of listening to someone else. But we have found that the only way to live and be blessed by God is by OBEYING Him.

In Acts 17, the philosophers of Athens urged the Apostle Paul to tell them about the "new doctrine" he proclaimed in the marketplace. He was ready to declare the Good News to them because "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (v.16). The Apostle Paul spoke of the God of creation, the One who is "Lord of heaven and earth," and that all people are His offspring. Then he declared the truth that many didn't like to hear: "God ... **commandeth** all men everywhere **to repent**: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (vs. 30-31).

We don't like to be told what to do because we are born with the Old Nature which is self-centered and stubborn. But God in His love and grace towards us, **commands** us (charges us, declares to us) **to repent**, to change the way we think and do things. We need to do this because JUDGMENT is coming. Jesus will come and JUDGE the world, ready or not! But the Good News is that when we put our trust in Jesus and receive Him as Savior, all our sins are under the blood. We don't fear JUDGMENT because we have **obeyed** the Gospel call and have

received God's forgiveness and peace. The Book of Romans is the grand presentation of the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it **begins** and **finishes** with OBEDIENCE.

Romans 1:5 "By whom [Jesus] we have received grace and apostleship, for **obedience to the faith** among all nations, for His name." From the Amplified (2015) "... **to promote obedience to the faith** and **make disciples** for His name's sake among all the gentiles." Yes, it is wonderful to accept Jesus as Savior, which is the most important decision that we'll ever make. But there is more! It is an **act of obedience** to accept Jesus as SAVIOR, and then it is a **continuing act of obedience** to accept Jesus as LORD. A **disciple** of Jesus is one who **continually obeys** Him, not just from time to time.

Who reigns on the throne of your heart? Is it you or Jesus? It is important that we let Jesus rule and reign over us, otherwise we are just living carnal lives, acting according to our own will (which the world does constantly). We praise God for everyone who receives Jesus as Savior, but we praise God even more for those who LIVE FOR JESUS, not just for SELF.

Romans 16:25-27 "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for **the obedience of faith**: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

Not all faith is good faith. We can put our faith in the things of this world and in the institutions of man. But this always leads to disappointment. But when we OBEDIENTLY put our **faith** in God, this is where life begins! The more that we **believe** God, the more that we will be able to be OBEDIENT. God has given us the **ability to respond** to His Word, and so we all have this **responsibility** to handle His Word correctly. When we put all of our **faith** in God (all of our heart, soul, and might), this is OBEDIENCE that we will never regret, for it has eternal rewards.

Why is OBEDIENCE important to God? There's something about putting our **faith** in Him that pleases Him. God delights in those who CHOOSE to be with Him, who CHOOSE to have a relationship with Him instead of living for themselves. Those who don't want God won't be forced to be with Him, so God will grant them their evil desire to be left alone, to be without Him. Question: God showed His **love** for us by **giving** us His only begotten Son. Jesus showed His **love** for us when He **laid down His life** for us. How do we show our **love** to God? We show our **love** by OBEDIENCE.

Consider what Jesus said ... John 14:21-24 "**He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:** and he that **loveth** me shall be **loved** of my Father, and I will **love** him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love me, he will keep my words:** and my Father will **love** him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John 15:9-10 "As the Father hath **loved** me, so have I **loved** you: continue ye in my **love**. **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;** even as

I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

What are God's commands to us now? The 10 Commandments? All of the commands that God gave to Israel in the Old Testament? Jesus said, "Thou shalt **love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt **love thy neighbor as thyself**. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). **Love** is the answer to all of God's commands. Where do we get this **love**?

1 John 4:19 "We **love** him, because he first **loved** us."

God's **love** is unselfish, self-sacrificing care and concern. But human **love** is limited and conditional. It was God that got the ball rolling in the first place; it is with God's **love** that we can **love** Him and **love** others. In John 15:11, Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 **This is my commandment, That ye love one another**, as I have **loved** you."

The Apostle Paul said, "Owe no man anything, but to **love** one another: for **he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law** ... **Love** worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law**" (Rom. 13:8-10). The Apostle John also told us what **commands** God wants us to OBEY ... 1 John 3:23-24 "And this is His commandment, That we should **believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and **love one another**, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He **abideth** in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us."

We are called into a relationship of **love** that goes beyond all human **love**. We have this wonderful opportunity for Jesus to ABIDE (continue, dwell, remain) in us and for us to ABIDE (continue, dwell, remain) in Him. John 15:4-5 "**Abide in me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye **abide in me**. I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him,** the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Everything we do must be in OBEDIENCE to God, or else it will come to nothing. We don't want to spin our wheels in vain, so we are learning to LET GOD have His way in everything we say or do. This takes discipline!

From the chorus of the song, "Trust and Obey"

Trust and obey – For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus – But to **trust and obey**.



**My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.**

**I love Thee, because Thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.**

**I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.**

— W. R. F.

The Encouraging Word

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."
Isaiah 53:4

"We love, because He first loved us." I John 4:19

"Do not be afraid nor of the onslaught of the wicked
when it comes. For the LORD will be your confidence..."
Proverbs. 3:25-26

"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and
feed on His faithfulness." Psalm 37:3

"The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his
steps." Proverbs 16:9

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began
a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ
Jesus." Philippians 1:6

"O LORD, our lord, How majestic is your name in all the
earth." Psalm 8:9

"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give
glory because of your loving kindness, because of your
truth." Psalm 115:1

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