

The Sovereign Grace Messenger

A Publication of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

**"The Lord Hath Prepared His Throne In The Heavens;
And His Kingdom Ruleth Over All."**

Psalm 103:19

Issue 34

Winter 2013

CLASSIC SERMON¹



1834-1892

The Christian's Heaviness and Rejoicing²

Charles H. Spurgeon

***"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness
through manifold temptations."*** 1 Peter 1:6

THIS VERSE TO A WORLDLY MAN looks amazingly like a contradiction; and even to a Christian man, when he understands it best, it will still be a paradox. *"Ye greatly rejoice,"* and yet *"ye are in heaviness."* Is that possible? Can there be in the same heart great rejoicing, and yet a temporary heaviness? Most assuredly. This paradox has been known and felt by many of the Lord's children, and it is far from being the greatest paradox of the Christian life. Men who live within themselves and mark their own feelings as Christians will often stand and wonder at themselves. Of all riddles the greatest riddle is a Christian man. As to his pedigree, what a riddle he is! He is a child of the first Adam, a child *"of wrath, even as others."* He is a child of the second Adam: he was born free; there is therefore now no condemnation unto him. He is a riddle in his own existence. *"As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed."* He is a riddle as to the component parts of his own spiritual frame. He finds that which makes him akin to the devil—depravity, corruption, binding him still to the earth and causing him to cry out, *"O wretched man that I am!"*; and yet he finds that he has within himself that which exalts him not merely to the rank of an angel, but higher still—a something which raises him

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up together, and makes him *"sit together with Christ Jesus in heavenly places."* He finds that he has that within him which must ripen into heaven, and yet that about him which would inevitably ripen into hell, if grace did not forbid. What wonder then, beloved, if the Christian man be a paradox himself, that his condition should be a paradox too? Why marvel ye when ye see a creature corrupt and yet purified, mortal and yet immortal, fallen but yet exalted far above principalities and powers—why marvel ye that ye should find that creature also possessed of mingled experience, greatly rejoicing and yet at the same time, *"in heaviness through manifold temptations."*

I would have you this morning, look first of all at the Christian's heaviness: he is *"in heaviness through manifold temptations"*; and then, in the next place, at the Christian's great rejoicing.

I. In the first place, HIS HEAVINESS.

This is one of the most unfortunate texts in the Bible. I have heard it quoted ten thousand times for my own comfort but I never understood it till a day or two ago. On referring to most of the commentaries in my possession, I cannot find that they have a right idea of the meaning of this text. You will notice that your friends often say to you when you are in trouble, "There is a needs be for this affliction"; there is a needs be, say they, "for all these trials and troubles that befall you." That is a very correct and scriptural sentiment, but that sentiment is not in the text at all. And yet, whenever this text is quoted in my hearing, this is what I am always told, or what I conceive I am always told to be the meaning—that the great temptations, the great trials which befall us, have a needs be for them. But it does not say so here: it says something better; not only that there is a needs be for our temptations, but that there is a needs be for our heaviness under the temptation. Now, let me show you the

Information on upcoming Sovereign Grace Bible Conferences on pages 23 and 24. All who can are welcome and encouraged to attend.

¹Special thanks to Shirley Murrell who sent the article on "Heaviness & Rejoicing," finding it to be of special interest concerning the normality of the believer's inward struggles.

²Delivered on November 7th, 1858, by C. H. Spurgeon at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

difference. There is a man of God, full of faith [and] strong; he is about to do his Master's work and he does it. God is with him and gives him great success. The enemy begins to slander him; all manner of evil is spoken against him falsely for Christ's name sake. You say there is a needs be for that, and you are quite correct: but look at the man. How gallantly he behaves himself! He lifts his head above his accusers, and unmoved amidst them all he stands like a rock in the midst of a roaring tempest, never moved from the firm basis on which it rests. The scene changes, and instead of calamity perhaps he is called to endure absolute persecution, as in apostolic times. We imagine the man driven out from house and home, separated from all his kindred, made to wander in the pathless snows of the mountains; and what a brave and mighty man he appears when you see him enduring all this! His spirits never sink. "All this can I do" says he, "and I can greatly rejoice in it for Christ's name's sake; for I can practice the text which says *"Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy"*; and you will tell that man there is a needs be for his persecution; he says "Yes, I know it, and I fear not all I have to endure; I am not cowed by it." At last imagine the man taken before the Inquisition and condemned to die. You still comfort him with the fact that there is a needs be that he shall die—that the blood of the martyrs must be the seed of the church—that the world can never be overcome by Christ's gospel except through the sufferings and death of His followers—that Christ stooped to conquer and the church must do the same—that through death and blood must be the road to the church's victory. And what a noble sight it is to see that man going to the stake and kissing it—looking upon his iron chains with as much esteem as if they had been chains of gold. Now tell him there is a needs be for all this, and he

“That is what my text declares, that there is an absolute needs be that sometimes the Christian should not endure his sufferings with a gallant and a joyous heart; there is a needs be that sometimes his spirits should sink within him, and that he should become even as a little child smitten beneath the hand of God.”

will thank you for the promise; and you admire the man; you wonder at him.

Ah! but there is another class of persons that get no such honour as this. There is another sort of Christians for whom this promise really was intended who do not get the comfort of it. I do admire the man I have pictured to you: may God long preserve such men in the midst of the church; I would stimulate every one of you to imitate him. Seek for great faith and great love to your Master that you may be able to endure, being *"stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."* But remember that this text has not in it comfort for such persons; there are other texts for them; this text has been perverted for such a use as that. This is meant for another and a feebler grade of Christians who are often overlooked and sometimes despised.

I was lying upon my couch during this last week, and my spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for—but a very slight thing will move me to tears just now—and a kind friend was telling me of some poor old soul living near who was suffering very great pain, and yet she was full of joy and rejoicing. I was so distressed by the hearing of that story, and

felt so ashamed of myself that I did not know what to do; wondering why I should be in such a state as this; while this poor woman who had a terrible cancer, and was in the most frightful agony, could nevertheless *"rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."* And in a moment this text flashed upon my mind with its real meaning. I am sure it is its real meaning. Read it over and over again, and you will see I am not wrong. *"Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness."* It does not say, "Though now for a season ye are suffering pain, though now for a season you are poor; but you are *'in heaviness'*"; your spirits are taken away from you; you are made to weep; you cannot bear your pain; you are brought to the very dust of

death, and wish that you might die. Your faith itself seems as if it would fail you. That is the thing for which there is a needs be. That is what my text declares, that there is an absolute needs be that sometimes the Christian should not endure his sufferings with a gallant and a joyous heart; there is a needs be that sometimes his spirits should sink within him, and that he should become even as a little child smitten beneath the hand of God. Ah! beloved, we sometimes talk about the rod, but it is one thing to see the rod and it is another thing to feel it; and many a time have we said within ourselves "If I did not feel so low spirited as I now do I should not mind this affliction"; and what is that but saying "If I did not *feel* the rod I should not mind it?" It is just how you feel that is, after all, the pith and marrow of your affliction. It is that breaking down of the spirit, that pulling down of the strong man that is the very fester of the soreness of God's scourging—*"the blueness of the wound, whereby the soul is made better."* I think this one idea has been enough to be food for me many a day; and there may be some child of God here to whom it may bring some slight portion of comfort. We will yet again dwell upon it. *"Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."*

And here let me for a moment or two try to explain why it is that there is an absolute needs be, not merely for temptations and troubles, but likewise for our being in heaviness under them.

In the first place, if we were not in heaviness during our troubles we should not be like our Covenant Head—Christ Jesus. It is a rule of the kingdom that all the members must be like the head. They are to be like the head in that day when He shall appear. *"We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."* But we must be like the head also in His humiliation, or else we cannot be like Him in His glory. Now, you will observe that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ very often passed through much of trouble, without any heaviness. When he said, *"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head,"* I observe no heaviness. I do not think He sighed over that. And when athirst He sat upon the well, and said, *"Give me to drink,"* there was no heaviness in all his thirst. I believe that through the first years of His ministry, although He might have suffered some heaviness, He usually passed

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FUNDING OF THE SOVEREIGN GRACE MESSENGER

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It is our desire to publish *The Sovereign Grace Messenger* three times yearly. This depends upon sufficient funds being received by contribution to the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship (SGBF) general fund and those specially designated for the *Messenger*.

We thank those churches and individuals who give to the support of this endeavor. Our God has enabled this work to proceed by providing the laborers, writers, and contributors who support it.

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over His troubles like a ship floating over the waves of the sea. But you will remember that at last the waves of swelling grief came into the vessel; at last the Saviour himself, though full of patience, was obliged to say *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"*; and one of the evangelists tells us that the Saviour *"began to be very heavy."* What means that, but that His spirits began to sink? There is a more terrible meaning yet, which I cannot enter into this morning; but still I may say that the surface meaning of it is that all His spirits sank within Him. He had no longer His wonted courage, and though He had strength to say *"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done"* still the weakness did prevail when He said *"If it be possible let this cup pass from me."* The Saviour passed through the brook, but He *"drank of the brook by the way"* and we who pass through the brook of suffering must drink of it too. He had to bear the burden, not with His shoulders omnipotent, but with shoulders that were bending to the earth beneath a load. And you and I must not always expect a giant faith that can remove mountains: sometimes even to us the grasshopper must be a burden, that we may in all things be like unto our Head.

Yet again; if the Christian did not sometimes suffer heaviness he would begin to grow too proud, and think too much of himself, and become too great in his own esteem. Those of us who are of elastic spirit, and who in our health are full of everything that can make life happy, are too apt to forget the Most High God. Lest we should be satisfied from ourselves, and forget that all our own springs must be in Him, the Lord sometimes seems to sap the springs of life, to drain the heart of all its spirits, and to leave us without soul or strength for mirth, so that the noise of tabret and of viol would be unto us as but the funeral dirge, without joy or gladness. Then it is that we discover what we are made of, and out of the depths we cry unto God, humbled by our adversities.

Another reason for this discipline is, I think, that in heaviness we often learn lessons that we never could attain elsewhere. Do you know that God has beauties for every part of the world; and He has beauties for every place of experience? There are views to be seen from the tops of the Alps that you can never see elsewhere. Ay, but there are beauties to be seen in the depths of the dell that ye could never see on the tops of the mountains; there are glories to be seen on Pisgah, wondrous sights to be beheld when by faith we stand

on Tabor; but there are also beauties to be seen in our Gethsemanes, and some marvelously sweet flowers are to be culled by the edge of the dens of the leopards. Men will never become great in divinity until they become great in suffering. "Ah!" said Luther, "affliction is the best book in my library"; and let me add, the best leaf in the book of affliction is that blackest of all the leaves, the leaf called heaviness, when the spirit sinks within us, and we cannot endure as we could wish.

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And yet again; this heaviness is of essential use to a Christian, if he would do good to others. Ah! there are a great many Christian people that I was going to say I should like to see afflicted—but I will not say so much as that; I should like to see them heavy in spirit; if it were the Lord's will that they should be bowed down greatly, I would not express a word of regret; for a little more sympathy would do them good; a little more power to sympathize would be a precious boon to them, and even if it were purchased by a short journey through a burning, fiery furnace, they might not rue the day afterwards in which they had been called to pass through the flame. There are none so tender as those who have been skinned themselves. Those who have been in the chamber of affliction know how to comfort those who are there. Do not believe that any man will become a physician unless he walks the hospitals; and I am sure that no one will become a divine, or become a comforter, unless he lies in the hospital as well as walks through it, and has to suffer himself. God cannot make ministers—and I speak with reverence of His Holy Name—

He cannot make a Barnabas except in the fire. It is there, and there alone, that He can make His sons of consolation; He may make His sons of thunder anywhere; but his sons of consolation He must make in the fire, and there alone. Who shall speak to those whose hearts are broken, who shall bind up their wounds, but those whose hearts have been broken also, and whose wounds have long run with the sore of grief? *"If need be,"* then, *"ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."*

I think I have said enough about this heaviness, except that I must add it is but for a season. A little time, a few hours, a few days, a few months at most, it shall all have passed away; and then comes the *"eternal weight of glory, wherein ye greatly rejoice."*

II. And now to the second part of the text. Here we have something far more joyous and comfortable than the first. *"WHEREIN YE GREATLY REJOICE."*

And can a Christian greatly rejoice while he is in heaviness? Yes, most assuredly he can. Mariners tell us that there are some parts of the sea where there is a strong current upon the surface going one way, but that down in the depths there is a strong current running the other way. Two seas do not meet and interfere with one another; but one stream of water on the surface is running in one direction, and another below in an opposite direction. Now, the Christian is like that. On the surface there is a stream of heaviness rolling with dark waves; but down in the depths there is a strong under-current of great rejoicing that is always flowing there. Do you ask me what is the cause of this great rejoicing? The apostle tells us *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice."* What does he mean? You must refer to his own writings, and then you will see. He is writing *"to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus,"* and so forth. The first thing that he says to them is that they are *"elect according to the foreknowledge of God"; "wherein we greatly rejoice."* Ah! even when the Christian is most *"in heaviness through manifold temptations,"* what a mercy it is that he can know that he is still elect of God! Any man who is assured that God has *"chosen him from before the foundation of the world"* may well say *"Wherein we greatly rejoice."* Let me be lying upon a bed of sickness, and just revel in that one thought. Before God made the heavens and the earth, and laid the pillars of the firmament in their golden sockets,

He set His love upon me; upon the breast of the great high priest He wrote my name, and in His everlasting book it stands, never to be erased—"elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Why, this may make a man's soul leap within him, and all the heaviness that the infirmities of the flesh may lay upon him shall be but as nothing; for this tremendous current of his overflowing joy shall sweep away the mill-dam of his grief. Bursting and overleaping every obstacle, it shall overflow all his sorrows till they are drowned and covered up, and shall not be mentioned any more for ever. "*Wherein we greatly rejoice.*" Come, thou Christian! thou art depressed and cast down. Think for a moment. Thou art chosen of God and precious. Let the bell of election ring in thine ear—that ancient Sabbath bell of the covenant and let thy name be heard in its notes and say, I beseech thee, say "Doth not this make thee greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, thou art in heaviness through manifold temptations?"

Again, you will see another reason. The apostle says that we are "*elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,*"—"wherein we greatly rejoice." Is the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ girt about my loins, to be my beauty and my glorious dress; and is the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon me, to take away all my guilt and all my sin and shall I not in this greatly rejoice? What shall there be in all the depressions of spirits that can possibly come upon me that shall make me break my harp, even though I should for a moment hang it upon the willows? Do I not expect that yet again my songs shall mount to heaven; and even now through the thick darkness do not the sparks of my joy appear, when I remember that I have still upon me the blood of Jesus, and still about me the glorious righteousness of the Messiah?

But the great and cheering comfort of the apostle is, that we are elect unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. And here, brethren, is the grand comfort of the Christian. When the child of God is sore-stricken and much depressed, the sweet hope that living or dying there is an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for him, may indeed make him greatly rejoice. He is drawing near the gates of death and his spirit is in heaviness, for he has to leave behind him all his family and all that life holds dear.

Besides, his sickness brings upon him naturally a depression of spirit. But you sit by his bedside and you begin to talk to him of the

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Arrayed in living green."

You tell him of Canaan on the other side the Jordan—of the land that floweth with milk and honey—of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and of all the glories which God hath prepared for them that love Him; and you see his dull leaden eye light up with seraphic brightness, he shakes off his heaviness, and he begins to sing,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie."

This makes him greatly rejoice and if to that you add that possibly before he has passed the gates of death his Master may appear—if you tell him that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming in the clouds of heaven, and though we have not seen Him yet believing in Him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, expecting the second advent—if he has grace to believe in that sublime doctrine, he will be ready to clap his hands upon his bed of weariness and cry, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! come quickly!"

And in drawing to a close, I may notice, there is one more doctrine that will always cheer a Christian, and I think that this perhaps is the one chiefly intended here in the text. Look at the end of the 15th verse "*Reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*"; This perhaps will be one of the greatest cordials to a Christian in heaviness, that he is not kept by his own power but by the power of God, and that he is not left in his own keeping but he is kept by the Most High. Ah! what should you and I do in the day when darkness gathers round our faith if we had to keep ourselves! I can never understand what an Arminian does when he gets into sickness, sorrow and affliction; from what well he draws his comfort I know not; but I know whence I draw mine. It is this. "When flesh and heart faileth, God is the strength of my life and my portion for ever." "*I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" But take away that doctrine of the Saviour's keeping His people, and where is my hope?

What is there in the gospel worth my preaching, or worth your receiving? I know that He hath said, "*I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" What, Lord, but suppose they should grow faint—that they should begin to murmur in their affliction? Shall they not perish then? No, they shall never perish. But suppose the pain should grow so hot that their faith should fail: shall they not perish then? No, "*they shall not perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" But suppose their sense should seem to wander and some should try to pervert them from the faith: shall they not be perverted? No "*they shall never perish.*" But suppose in some hour of their extremity hell and the world and their own fears should all beset them, and they should have no power to stand—no power whatever to resist the fierce onslaughts of the enemy, shall they not perish then? No, they are "*kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed,*" "*and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" Ah! this is the doctrine, the cheering assurance "*wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*"

One word before I send you away. There are some of you here to whom this precious passage has not a word to say. Our heaviness, O worldling, "our heaviness is but for a season." Your heaviness is to come and it shall be a heaviness intolerable because hopelessly everlasting. Our temptations, though they be manifold, are but light afflictions and are but "*for a moment*" and they "*worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" but your joys that you now have are evanescent as a bubble and they are passing away, and they are working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of misery. I beseech you, look at this matter. Search and see whether all be right with your spirits—whether it be well for you to venture into an eternal state as you are; and may God give you grace that you may feel your need of a Saviour, that you may seek Christ, lay hold upon Him, and so may come into a gracious state wherein ye shall greatly rejoice, even though for a season, if needs be, ye should be in heaviness through manifold temptations!



The Alignment of New Evangelicals with Apostasy

Richard Bennett

Richard Bennett was an Irish Catholic, trained by Jesuits in his early years. After eight years of theological education, completed in Rome in 1964, he entered the priesthood with the Dominicans. He then spent twenty-one years as a Roman Catholic parish priest in Trinidad, West Indies. After nearly losing his life in a serious accident in 1972 he began a serious study of the Scriptures. After fourteen years of comparing Catholicism to what the Bible taught, he saw and believed the truth of the Gospel in 1986. Saved by God's grace alone, he left Catholicism and its priesthood. He has founded an evangelistic ministry to Catholics called "Berean Beacon."



Evangelicals throughout the centuries have maintained that by justification by faith—and by faith alone—sinful human beings are in Christ made right before the all Holy God.¹ Justification itself is a judicial declarative act on the part of God alone. By it, He declares that only in Christ is a man perfectly just. His judicial declarative act is not made on the basis of anything within a man, but rather it is made solely and wholly upon the righteous life and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior lived a perfect life and upon the cross paid the just penalty for all the sins of His people. Historically, Evangelicals have been in agreement with the Apostle Paul, “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”²

A person calling himself Evangelical is professing to be committed to the Gospel of Christ as proclaimed in Scripture. The true Gospel demands separation from all who teach another Gospel. As the Apostle declared, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”³ “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”⁴ Without such separation the name “Evangelical” signifies nothing. “New Evangelicalism”, which willingly compromises with and accommodates another Gospel, has gained ground everywhere, beginning in the early 1960s. Since then, the Evangelical world has changed beyond recognition.⁵

The first and second National Evangelical Anglican Conferences that met at Keele and Nottingham in the UK in 1967 and 1977, respectively, were primed to launch

and further the new policy of Anglican Evangelicals towards ecumenism. There was a desire on the part of New Evangelicals to be united with ritualistic Anglicans, who were essentially Roman Catholic in belief and practice, and liberals who believed in a fallible Bible. Leading Evangelicals such as John Stott and J.I. Packer endorsed the statements from these. John Stott, who chaired the first conference at Keele, made clear that the conference was accepting not only Anglo-Catholics and liberals, but Roman Catholics also: “All who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek together to fulfill their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit have a right to be treated as Christians, and it is on this basis that we wish to talk with them.”⁶ The conference at Nottingham went further than Keele, giving the compromise already proclaimed a complete seal of approval. Nottingham also endorsed and praised the Charismatic movement and is remembered for David Watson’s reference to the Reformation as “one of the greatest tragedies that ever happened to the church.”⁷

The Most Extensive Exodus from Biblical Faith

The most drastic departure from true Evangelicalism, however, took place in the United States in 1994, some seventeen years after the Nottingham Conference. At the end of March 1994, a group of twenty leading Evangelicals and twenty leading Roman Catholics produced a document entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” (ECT).

The two main instigators of this ecumenical thrust were Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor turned Roman Catholic priest. The specific task was begun in September, 1992. Larry

Lewis of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jesse Miranda of Assemblies of God, John White of the Geneva College and National Association of Evangelicals; and others, including two Jesuits, Avery Dulles and Juan Diaz-Vilar, joined Colson and Neuhaus in the writing process. Cardinal Idris Cassidy, the Head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, was said by Richard Neuhaus to have given “very active support throughout the process.” The Evangelical signatories included J. I. Packer, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Mark Noll of Wheaton College, and Pat Robertson of The 700 Club. Roman Catholic signers included such well known figures as Cardinal John O’Connor, now deceased, Archbishop Sevilla, Archbishop Stafford, and Bishop Francis George, now Archbishop of Chicago.

The Gospel According to ECT

The signers of ECT readily admit to “differences that cannot be resolved here.” Nevertheless, motivated by the desire to face important moral issues together, the authors of ECT flatly state that Evangelicals and Catholics are one in Christ, and that all are truly Christians.⁸ The primary fallacy of the lengthy document is its declaration on the Gospel. The signers state what they believe comes closest to the Gospel of Christ when they declare, “We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ. Living faith is active in love that is nothing less than the love of Christ...”⁹ To be biblical, this statement should read, “We affirm together that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.” The word “alone” signifies that the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus—and that alone—is sufficient before the all Holy God to justify unholy sinners.¹⁰ To so define justification, however, would exclude the Catholic

1 The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646; The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689; The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Adopted by The Baptist Association, 1742; and others.

2 Romans 4:5.

3 Galatians 1:8-9.

4 Ephesians 5:11

5 This is fully documented in Iain Murray’s *Evangelicalism Divided* (Banner of Truth, 2000).

6 Quoted in Michael de Semlyen’s *The Foundations Under Attack: The Roots of Apostasy*, (Herts., WD3 5SJ: Dorchester House Publications, 1998) p.6

7 *Ibid.*, pp.7-8; also John Capon, *Evangelicals Tomorrow* (Glasgow: Scotland).

8 ECT, Section I “We Affirm Together”

9 *Ibid.*

10 Romans 4:5-8, II Corinthians 5:19-21, Romans 3:22-28, Titus 3:5-7,

Ephesians 1:7, Jeremiah 23:6, I Corinthians

1:30-31, Romans 5:17-19, and elsewhere

sacraments and the priests who control them, both of which are necessary for the Catholic people.¹¹ Thus a subtraction had to be made from the Gospel of Christ by excluding what is signified by the word “alone.” In a similar manner an addition had to be made to the Gospel. The ECT addition that redefines faith is, “living faith active in love.” “Living faith” implies works and to Catholics, baptism in particular. This is documented in present day official teaching of the Church of Rome where Rome teaches, “the very root of the Church’s living faith [is] principally by means of Baptism.”¹² It is the same addition to faith that was proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church at her Council of Trent in 1547, “For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites one perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of his body...”¹³ The theology of the Church of Rome always comes back to the concept of “living faith” so as to include “works righteousness” and particularly in her sacraments, that she defines as necessary for salvation.¹⁴

The New Evangelical signers of ECT have concurred with the Roman Catholic definition of “living faith active in love,” and thus they have formally agreed to an addition to the Gospel that nullifies its message. If the New Evangelicals do in fact believe the Roman Catholic concept of “living faith,” then logically they ought also to endorse Rome’s curse upon all who have simple faith in God’s grace—as was officially done by Rome at the Council of Trent,

“If anyone shall say that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to understand that nothing else is required to cooperate in the attainment of the

grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will: let him be anathema [cursed].”¹⁵

To endorse Roman Catholic teaching, therefore, is to deny the clear teaching of Scripture, “*But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.*”¹⁶

Disturbing Effects of ECT

The devastating effect of the New Evangelical compromise with the Gospel is to put a stop to the evangelizing of Roman Catholics across the world. If this compromise of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is accepted, then Bible-believing Churches will refrain from evangelizing Catholics. The impact on the true Church in third world Catholic countries of Central and South America, in Africa, as well as in Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines, is already apparent. If this anti-evangelical trend continues unchecked it will become ruinous to the spiritual welfare of millions of souls. But this is exactly the policy the ECT signatories promote when they state “it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community [church] to proselytize [evangelize] among active adherents of another Christian community.”¹⁷ Since when has it been theologically illegitimate to expose error and heresy?

Compounded Endorsement of Rome

On November 12, 1997, a second document entitled “The Gift of Salvation” was signed and published by Evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders. Its expressed intention was to demonstrate the “common faith” of Evangelicals and Roman Catholics and to further “acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.” It was published in the December 8, 1997, issue of Christianity Today. Explicitly, the Roman Catholic signatories such as Richard John Neuhaus and Avery Dulles,

S.J. state in the document that they are “Catholics who are conscientiously faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.” The Roman Catholic doctrine of conferred justification is taught as the Gospel. The New Evangelicals are now joined together in not only giving a clouded Gospel-Justification message, but also in a distinctively erudite manner endorsing Rome’s doctrine of conferred inner righteousness.

A Studied Denial of the Gospel

This second ecumenical document states “Justification is central to the scriptural account of salvation, and its meaning has been much debated between Protestants and Catholics.” Then it claims that the signers have reached agreement. Their statement of accord is,

“We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God’s gift, conferred through the Father’s sheer graciousness, out of the love that he bears us in his Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. Jesus was ‘put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification’ (Romans 4:25). In justification, God, on the basis of Christ’s righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, and by virtue of his declaration it is so.”

The subject under review is stated clearly in the first sentence. “We agree that justification...is conferred through the Father’s sheer graciousness.” But it is only by careful reading that one comes to see what the two pivotal sentences state grammatically, “it [justification] is entirely God’s gift, conferred [rather than imputed] ...and by virtue of his [God’s] declaration it [justification conferred] is so.” This is traditional Roman Catholic doctrine. To employ the Roman Catholic word “conferred” instead of the biblical word “imputed” is tantamount to putting aside the authority of Scripture on the issue of justification. Since medieval times, the Roman Catholic Church has clearly distinguished between the concept of imputation and the Thomist concept of God’s grace conferred as a quality of the soul.¹⁸ Since the Council of Trent she has condemned the biblical doctrine of

11 Catechism, Para. 987.
12 Catechism, Para. 249.
13 Denzinger, #800.
14 Catechism, Para 1129.

15 Denzinger, #819.
16 Titus 3:4-5.
17 ECT, Introduction

18 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 2 vols., Great Books of the Western World, Tr. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952) Part I of the Second Part, Question 110, Article 1, Obj. 3 and Article 2, Reply Obj. 1.

justification by faith alone. Present day dogma of the Roman Catholic Church not only upholds the teaching of the Council of Trent but also declares that such Councils are infallible.¹⁹ The Council of Trent proclaims the following curse:

“If anyone shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not **conferred** from the work which has been worked [ex opere operato] **but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.**”²⁰

Rome’s reason for such a curse on those who hold to “justification by faith alone” and to “justification imputed” is logical because of what she refuses to concede. For her, justification is not an immediate one-time act of God received by faith alone. Rather, she teaches that grace is conferred continually through her sacraments. Thus she is able to make a place for herself as a necessary means through which inner righteousness is given. She teaches this in her Catechism, “Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy.”²¹ Because inner righteousness, which is claimed to have been conferred, is located in the person, and not located in Christ, it can be lost and may need to be conferred again and again. Thus Rome officially states, “...the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as ‘the second plank (of salvation) after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.’”²²

“Conferred justification” is necessary for Rome because of her claim that the work of her sacraments is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus she states, “‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.”²³ Calling “sacramental grace” the “grace of the Holy Spirit” is pretentious blasphemy against the All Holy God. What is declared in Scripture is the imputation of God’s righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is to “*be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*”²⁴ The Roman Catholic Church’s persistence in using the word “conferred” is an attempt

to exchange her sacraments for Jesus Christ, the Lord and giver of life.

Alignment by Means of Catholic Dogma

In the face of such clarity—both on the part of Scripture and on the part of the Roman Catholic Church—this New Evangelical distortion claims that both sides now agree that the issue of division between Protestants and Roman Catholics for nearly five centuries is now resolved. This it does precisely by using Roman Catholic terminology. The Apostle Paul continually used the concept of imputation (crediting, reckoning or counting); for example he used the term eleven times in Romans Chapter Four, a summary of which is verse five, “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” Now this pivotal truth of God’s righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to the believer is undermined in the document’s most horrifying concept, “and by virtue of his [Holy God’s] declaration it [justification conferred] is so.” With like audacity Rome has always taught from the Council of Trent to the present day.

Defense of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together”

The most serious apologetic for the document entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium”(ECT) is in the book of the same title, *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*.²⁵ The architects of ECT were well aware of the crucial distinctions with regards to the Gospel separating Catholics and Evangelicals, but they chose to bypass them. J.I. Packer writes in Common Mission, “Neither evangelicals nor Roman Catholics can stipulate that things they believe, which the other side does not believe, be made foundational to partnership at this point; so ECT lets go Protestant precision on the doctrine of justification and the correlation between conversion and new birth...”²⁶ That such compromise is unbiblical is seen from his statements earlier in the same article when he said, “Roman teaching obscures the Gospel and indeed distorts it in a tragically anti-spiritual and unpastoral manner”²⁷ and “Rome’s official doctrinal disorders, particularly on justification, merit, and the Mass-sacrifice, so obscure the Gospel that

were I, as a gesture of unity, invited to mass—which of course as a Protestant I am not, nor shall be—I would not feel free to accept the invitation.”²⁸

Packer towards the end of the article speaks of the evils of “humanism,” “materialism, hedonism and nihilism.” To rebuild a Christian consensus, he proposes that “domestic differences about salvation and the Church should not hinder us from joint action in seeking to re-Christianize the North American milieu”²⁹ These are amazing words from the author of *Knowing God*. The orthodox Evangelical J. I. Packer of old spoke of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, Sola Fide, as “like Atlas, it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace”! Now the same saving faith is downgraded to the “domestic differences about salvation.” In a 1994 article, “Why I Signed It,” he refers to Sola Fide (faith alone) as “small print.”

Most Serious and Bizarre Defense

Packer, who leads the New “Reformed” Evangelicals, has struggled to explain his position. In a 1996 article he asks,

“Can conservative Protestants, Eastern Orthodox and mainstream Roman Catholics join together in bearing witness to all that I have spoken of? I urge that we can, despite our known and continuing differences about the specifics of the salvation process and the place of the church in that process...To be sure fundamentalists within our three traditions are unlikely to join us in this, for it is the way of fundamentalists to follow the path of contentious orthodoxy, as if the mercy of God in Christ automatically rests on persons who are notionally correct and is just as automatically withheld from those who fall short of notional correctness on any point of substance. But this concept of, in effect, justification, not of works, but of words—words, that is, of notional soundness and precision—is near to being a cultic heresy in its own right and need not detain us further now, however much we may regret the fact that some in all our traditions are bogged down in it.”³⁰

19 Catechism, Para. 891.
20 Denzinger, #851, Can. 8.
21 Catechism, Para. 1992.
22 Catechism, Para. 1446.
23 Catechism, Para 1129.
24 Philippians 3:9

25 *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*, Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, editors (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1995). Hereafter referred to as *Common Mission*.
26 *Common Mission*, p 167.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 153.

28 *Ibid.*, pp 162,163.
29 *Common Mission*, p. 172.
30 J. I. Packer, “On from Orr”, The J. I. Packer Collection, Selected and Introduced by Alister McGrath (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999) p. 264.

No orthodox Evangelical has ever maintained that “notional soundness and precision” that is doctrinal theory ever saved anyone. Rather, orthodox Evangelicals have always held to Romans 10:10 *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* It appears that Packer is here conducting a little casuistry of his own. He is attempting to preempt his critics by raising an anti-biblical dichotomy between head and heart. This is an old liberal tactic, that is, to create an unbiblical dichotomy and then imply and insinuate that any party who refuses to acknowledge it, must in the nature of the case be unspiritual, opposed to Christian love. None of the historic Evangelical confessions of faith hold out that mere doctrinal “soundness” saves anyone. This is an absurd caricature. Rather, orthodox Evangelicals today, even as they did in the days of the Apostle Paul and at the Reformation, declare that it is the righteousness of Christ Jesus alone that saves a person!

What Packer does in setting aside the crux of the issue that justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ Jesus alone is thoroughly in tune with the practice of the Church of Rome. For Sola Fide, faith alone, is the issue for which the Apostle Paul contended against the Judaizers and for which the Reformers contended against the Roman Catholics of their day. It was the burning issue, foundational to why so many thousands of Evangelicals gave their lives at the stake—John Huss, William Tyndale, John Rogers, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, Anne Askew, John Bradford, and John Philpot, to name but a few. The ardent desire of true Evangelicals to *“be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,”*³¹ was and is the heart of the Gospel, not “contentious orthodoxy” nor

³¹ Philippians 3:9

“cultic heresy.” Christ Jesus’ righteousness is the crown jewel of orthodoxy, the pivotal doctrine of truth revealed again by God in its rediscovery, which began the Reformation.

Dr. Packer has chosen to deny the very doctrine that once stood for him like Atlas and bore a world on its shoulders. What Packer has done is to deny the importance of the Scriptures on the precise point of Sola Fide. He also denies the Reformation history of those Evangelicals who under the Roman Catholic Inquisition gave their lives, not for any correctness in words, but rather for their faith in Christ Jesus alone.

“Separation for the Sake of the Gospel is Not Necessary”

In the same book, Richard Neuhaus stated emphatically, “If, at the end of the twentieth century, separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary, it is not justified.”³² What Neuhaus was effectively saying is that the Gospel is no longer relevant to Christian unity. This seems to be the precise intent of the 1994 ECT document and equally the 1997 “The Gift of Salvation” document. If true Evangelicals do not combat this heinous attack on the Gospel, then Neuhaus’ anti-Scriptural words “separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary or justified” might well fall on them and their children after them. If the lie is swallowed that separation for the sake of the Gospel is not justified, then the logical conclusion is that Churches should cave in and submit to the Church of Rome. This has always been the avowed goal of the Roman Catholic Church, as her documents verify.

Neuhaus argues that “to declare it [justification by faith alone] to be the article by which the Church stands or falls in a manner that excludes other ways of saying the gospel is to turn it into a

³² Richard John Neuhaus, “The Catholic Difference”, Common Mission, p. 199. Emphasis is in the original document.

sectarian doctrine.”³³ The true Gospel of grace has in this statement not simply been declared unnecessary, but it has also been labeled a “sectarian doctrine”. This statement by Neuhaus shows the intent of Catholics who have planned and fostered the whole deceitful compromise with Evangelicals. Their purpose is to make the true Gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone to be irrelevant, all the while promoting as truly Christian the Catholic “salvation by works-gospel,” which is no gospel at all but which [is] so acceptable to the natural man. C. H. Spurgeon’s timely words apply now even more than his own day, “Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, much more the man who labors to restore Popery among us. In our fathers’ days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets.”³⁴ The Gospel trumpet is the very issue at stake, for the Roman Catholic and Evangelical signers of ECT I & II first give the false message of Rome, and then in defense of what they have written, declare that the Gospel of Christ is a “domestic matter” or even “a sectarian doctrine.”

Since it is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, His glorious Gospel and the truth of His Word that is at stake, we rest only in leaving the matter in the hands of the Almighty God, *“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.”*³⁵ It is sobering to know that the all holy omnipotent God will, for the sake of His own glory, rebuke in just measure all those who would pervert the Gospel and make merchandise of His sheep.

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³³ Common Mission, p. 207.

³⁴ Morning and Evening, on Joshua 6:26

³⁵ Hebrews 10:30-31



The Mission Quilt Ministry

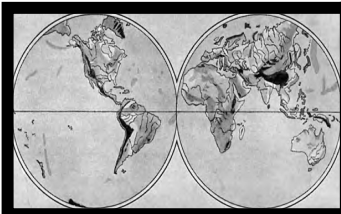
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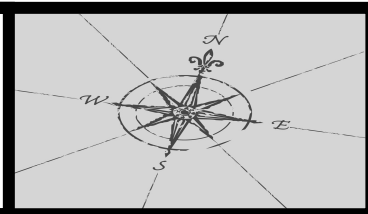
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World Missions



The Preceding of Prayer in Missions

Paul Snider

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.” Luke 10:1-3, NKJV

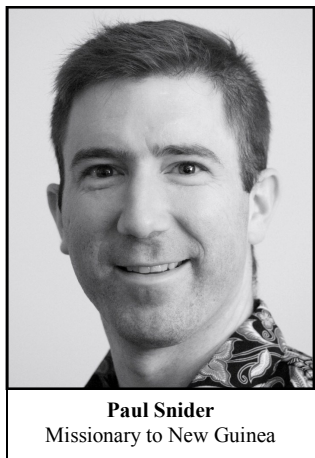
This text is not one widely discussed by theologians and it is given too little place of discussion within the life of the church. I believe this to be a tragic loss to us as students of the Bible. Are we following this command given by our Lord? Is it as binding on us today, two thousand years later, as when it was first given? The command is to pray for a plurality of laborers. Then it is also important to ask why the Lord sent forth laborers in pairs, two by two. The endeavor here is to give weight to both prayer for missions and the need of a plurality of witnesses.

On August 23rd, 1743, a missionary wrote, “In evening God was pleased to draw near my soul, though very sinful and unworthy: was enabled to wrestle with God, and persevere in my requests for grace. I poured out my soul for all the world, friends, and enemies. My soul was concerned, not so much for souls as such, but rather for Christ’s kingdom, that it might appear in the world, that God might be known to be God in the whole earth.”

How is God to be known in the whole earth? What is the task of missions? What is the church’s task in missions? Some might evade the issue by quickly responding, “Tell them of Jesus,” “Plant a church,” “Win souls for Christ,” “Help the

poor and sick.” **All of that is good, but something is missing!!**

What about prayer? What about beseeching God in missions? What about coming before Him to do a miraculous work of grace in the pursuit of missions, namely, to send out more workers so His Truth might be made manifest.



Paul Snider
Missionary to New Guinea

If we are honest, we have not obeyed this command from our Lord as we should have. Perhaps one of us has never prayed this prayer. Perhaps one of us has prayed it once a year at a missions conference, only to find ourselves forgetting the request from our Lord the rest of the year.

How are such laborers to be sent forth? How are such men to be raised up? What does Christ command of us? How are we to see the world as

Christ sees it, as a harvest that is plentiful, but with too few laborers in it? Just as two farm hands would go to the farmer and ask for more workers in the field to bring in the crop, so the servants of God are to ask the Lord to send out more laborers.

Within the context of Luke 10:1-3, there is not only a sending out of people in missions and a sending up petitions of prayer for missions, but a sending out to die in missions. As I studied this text, I asked myself which one of these three statements is the hardest for us to grasp. My belief is that the command to pray is the hardest of the three for most to understand and grasp.

God is a missional God who sends, commands us to pray for the sending out of more workers, and sends us forth into extreme danger. Notice that the command to pray is ever binding on the situation. Jesus’ command to pray is in the sending,

in the going, and in the extreme danger. Never is there any indication in this text to stop this charge.

One writer said, “No man will by himself attain or become a faithful minister of the Gospel, and be able to teach all things that He commands unless the Lord raises him up and plants within him the gifts of the Spirit. This is done by prayer.”

Verse 1 sets the stage for the remaining verses: *“After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town that he himself was about to go.”*

This verse follows the sending out of the twelve in chapter 9, but this account of the seventy is different in that this appointment is to prepare the Lord’s coming into the same places where the seventy were ministering.

These seventy are the ones that took Chapter 9:23 seriously: *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* They were willing to take their cross daily and follow the Lord’s direction for their lives. These are the true disciples that cared not for themselves, and embraced Jesus’ lordship. They took seriously their commitment to Him, unlike the three would-be disciples of Luke 9:57-62. Even though they knew the cost would be great, even death if necessary, they went joyfully into the pack of wolves with no argument, unlike the three men in chapter 9.

These seventy were ordinary, everyday people, as 1 Corinthians tells us, *“God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”*

These “others” (vs.1) that God had predetermined to send out for His own special purpose were the first missionaries to proclaim the same message as that of the apostles. However, they were not apostles. They had no special qualifications that made them sendable. They simply denied themselves and were willing to bear His cross and die, if necessary.

This ought to spur us, at this point, to think of the modern missionary movement. Never in all of history has there been such a time that the Lord still wants to see men and women deny themselves, hate their possessions, hate their families, and take up His mark of suffering, namely the cross, and follow Him into the “*panta ta ethne*,” to all the nations. Everything we have, own, and cherish should look like hate in comparison to the beauty and majesty of Christ. Not that we hate our possessions or families, but when compared with Christ, it would look like hate.

I have been to many churches and shared the work God has called us to, and sometimes people would approach me and say, “I’ve always wanted to do something like that because it just looks cool.” And I ask them why does it look cool, and they respond, “because its fascinating.” That is nothing more than romanticizing missions. I am not talking about a fascination of adventure. Missions will cost you everything, but in the losing of everything, you take everything (Christ) with you, so we never lose anything.

“For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.” Heb. 10:34

When the Lord appointed these seventy, He had less than a year left. He is months away from His passion. There is in this text a sense of urgency to appoint missionaries to go ahead of Him in preparation for His arrival to these southern parts of Galilee.

And it says the Lord “*appointed*” *anadeiknumi* (vs.1) seventy others. This word is used only one other time in Scripture – both times in Luke’s writings. Acts 1:24, “*And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen.”* Judas was to be replaced, and the

Lord chose Matthias. Just as the Lord chose the twelve in John 15:16, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you...*” So it is that no one can, by his own will, be an apostle or disciple. It’s the same in missions. No missionary is sent out by his own will. God is the one Who sovereignly chooses and sets apart people for the task of going to the unreached people who have not heard the message of the G o s p e l . So “appointed” means that Jesus selected these “others,” these seventy, by His own doing and divine plan for His kingdom.

The means are still the same for us today. God’s immutable ways and purposes do not change. He still sets apart people to go, He still appoints and selects by His sovereign decree to send out men and women to cross ethno-linguistic barriers where His name is not known. He is the one that chooses.

In missions today we hear of teams being sent, or teammates joining together in the mission labors, or missionaries partnering with other missionaries, or nationals collaborating together with missionaries. All of the emphasis on this stems from the way Jesus sent out His workers. Verse 1 says, “*and sent them on ahead of him two-by-two.*” This means if seventy men were sent, Jesus sent out thirty-five pairs of missionaries.

Why two-by-two? There is textual evidence in Ecclesiastes 4:9, which says, “*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.*” There is multiplication in pairs. There is encouragement and accountability in pairs.

That verse goes on to say, “*For if they fall one will lift up his fellow.*” The missionary task is not about being alone, or having one’s own ministry, although that permeates many methodologies. What Jesus teaches is that sending missionaries out in teams is a sure way of testifying that whatever they say is true.

This Jesus Christ who came in the flesh and though He was rich He became poor, lived a perfect, sinless life, died on a cross for the sin of man, was raised three days later and is now at the right hand of God. This same Jesus now commands everyone to repent, turn from sin and turn to Him. When you say these things your partner says, “That’s true!”

There is a King coming and His name is Jesus Christ. He’s coming back, and this time He’s coming in full fury with flaming fire to pour out His wrath on those that do not know Him. When you declare this your teammate says “That’s true!” Two witnesses are better than one!

Wherever a missionary is sent, wherever an evangelist goes forth, wherever a witness is sent to speak of Christ, it is for the purpose of preparing people for His coming. And in the preparation abides a response of either acceptance or rejection.

Luke 10:2 says, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*” I believe this statement by Jesus is one of the most interesting statements in several ways. Why say that? What is the intended meaning and its implications? Why would Jesus not tell these men, “Be careful, help one another, pray for one another, be bold, don’t be afraid.” Why this statement?

This particular section is recorded also in Matthew 9, and it is here that we get an inside look as to why Jesus would say this. Matthew 9:37 is identical to Luke 10:2; however, Matthew 9:35-36 tells us why Jesus said this above all else, “*And Jesus went throughout all of the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd.*” (Emphasis mine)

Notice the words “*he had compassion.*” When the Lord Jesus looked upon the crowds of people, He was moved within by

continued next page

feelings of deep pity. Perhaps He was so moved by love within His whole being that He felt physically sick. This is what the word “compassion” indicates. We see much compassion on Jesus’ part, such as when He wept over Jerusalem saying, “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” Matthew 23:37

Think of finding a baby in the cold alone, crying, and starving from hunger. You feel such compassion for the abandoned infant that you feel actually sick. In this situation you would be better able to understand Christ’s compassion in Luke 10:2.

So when Jesus says, “the harvest is plentiful,” He’s saying...the harvest is the close of the age, the final judgment and it is massive. There are plenty of people who are dead in their sin, thinking that they are ok in their “religion,” yet deceived. But mark my words, there will be countless people in hell that were very religious. Heb. 9:27: “It is appointed for man once to die, and then comes the judgment.” The harvest is plentiful, it is massive, and Jesus is displaying His compassion.

We must not get the wrong picture here. Jesus knew exactly who would come to Him, and whom the Father had chosen before the foundation of the world, but notice He still experienced sorrow and deep anguish for the lost. Jesus is not resigned to the fact that says, “Well my Father has this under control. I don’t need to feel anything because my Father has already chosen the many.” No, as He looks upon the crowd He is sick inside, and moved to love.

One writer said, “If your doctrine of sovereignty robs your evangelistic zeal, then you have a sinful reaction to that truth.”

Verse 2, “but the laborers are few.” As Jesus looked with compassion and saw ahead to the wrath and judgment that was to come, He also saw that there are only a few that are warning them. Only a few!

It is estimated that there are twelve thousand ethno-linguistic peoples in the world. The total number of missionaries counted or reported in 2001 was 143,189, not including the ones ‘under the radar.’

If every person in North America went to the nations, that still would not be enough to minister to the peoples of the world. The reality is the Father sent His Son, and so now He calls on His own children – you and me – to go and be sent into the world. I like what one author said, “Christ saves us for Himself in the world.”

I could give you statistic after statistic of all the people groups and percentages of Christians among them, but that would serve no useful purpose. What will do good in the pursuit of missions and the desire to see more people go to the mission field is to PRAY, as Jesus commanded in Luke 10:2 when He said “Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the Harvest to send out more laborers into his harvest.”

Jesus says, “Pray earnestly.” The original sense of this word means “to lack, to be in need of,” but in verse 2, “pray earnestly” means “to plead, to beg, to ask for with urgency.” The same word is used in Luke

8:28 when the demon possessed man said to Jesus, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” (Emphasis mine)

Jesus says, “Beg Me to thrust out more missionaries.” Beg the Lord of the harvest to thrust out more laborers into the harvest. We are not just to pray for the salvation of souls. We must do that according to I Timothy 2, but beg God to send out workers to tell them of Christ. Oh, that God would use my daily prayers to “fan the flame” to thrust out more workers, just as He answered Hudson Taylor’s pleas to send out more workers to China!

One writer said, “The first China Inland Mission party of sixteen missionaries with the Taylors and their four young children set sail on a four month voyage and they had bathed the entire journey in prayer.” Praying for more laborers is not a prayer just for the missionary or for the pastor. It is for the church of Jesus Christ. And the sovereignty of God gives no excuse for us not to pray such a prayer to the Lord of the harvest. This is a command laid out by the one that felt such sickness and anguish in His gut as He saw the people in Matthew 9.

The question should not be, “Do I have the missionary call?” The question should rather be, “What role does God want me to play in the pursuit of missions?” Every one of us should be asking that question! And in our prayers, ask God to reveal to us what part He would have us play.



Paul Snider in New Guinea

Missions Editor Note: After a year on the island of Java, Indonesia with language school, Paul is now in New Guinea and ready to begin his transition to the field. This is the latest note I have from him.

From Paul Snider: “We are at the Johnson’s house in Sentani while they are interior at the present. Also Trevor is without communication because his VSAT is broken. I have his new part he needs and will fly in next week when we start our surveys. Lord willing they are doing well. He took in a sat phone, but no contact has been made with them and usually there must be communication or someone would need to go in by heli and check on them.” (Received, 11-21-2012)

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The Snider Family

The Training of Leaders in Papua, Indonesia

David Rasmussen

In response to the pleas of missionaries and Papuan Christians for Bible teachers, Alison and I are preparing to leave for Indonesia later in 2013, as the Lord opens the door. There I plan to teach and mentor preachers of the Gospel in the Bible College in Sentani and Alison will assist the mission in financial administration.

In 2012 we have been blessed with opportunities to share with many churches who believe that God's sovereign grace compels His people to take the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth, and that God's Word must be taught to the future leaders of the growing churches on the mission field. So far we have shared with ten churches that are part of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship. We are so grateful for your prayers, your generosity, and your love in the Lord. We look forward to meeting more of you in the months ahead.

I have served for over thirty years in Gospel ministry, about twenty-seven of them as a pastor. Our intention is to serve in Papua for the rest of our lives, as long as we are able. Since this is a long-term calling, we must prepare. Our pre-field training will culminate in a one month course in inter-cultural communication, starting in July. Therefore we are aiming at the end of August as the time for our departure for Indonesia. After that we will have about eleven months of language school in Bandung, West Java.

We presently have raised about 33% of our outgoing expenses (including transportation, training, housing setup, and other related expenses). We also have commitments for 40% of our required monthly support.

We thank our gracious Lord for the His provision and protection during our travels so far. Please pray that we would continue to walk closely with our Savior and to bring Him glory. We would also appreciate your prayers that doors would continue to open for us to share about our work, and that our support would reach 100% in time for us to take final pre-field training and to go to Indonesia at the end of this coming summer.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
David Rasmussen



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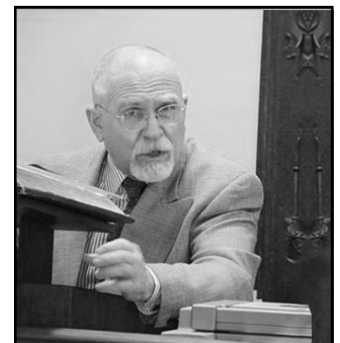
Update from Israel: Baruch Maoz

“I was at the Ophthalmologist today, in central Tel Aviv, when the sirens sounded. Doctor, receptionist and patients all rushed to the Safe Room, where we heard the two interceptions by our amazing Iron Dome! Rockets of destruction proved no match for the Israeli determination to live on.”

“On October 24-25, Baruch participated in a Symposium on Messianic Judaism, organized and attended by adherents of the movement. Baruch was asked to contribute a paper addressing the question, “How Jewish Should the Messianic Jewish Community be?” The symposium was conducted in a generous, friendly atmosphere, although most attendees were committed to a Messianic paradigm. Following Baruch's presentation, a large minority expressed their agreement with the position this paper outlines, indicating that Baruch served as a voice for a significant but silent body.” - The text of Baruch's paper can be found at:

http://attachment.benchmarkemail.com/c58370/MaozNews_No._58,_November_2012.pdf

Missions Editor Note: Of course, the recent bombardment of Israel by rockets from Gaza has been a safety concern for our brother. Please continue to pray for the faithful saints in Israel.



Baruch Maoz

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Trevor Johnson and Family Return to New Guinea

Mission Editor Note: Trevor and Teresa and the kids are back to their jungle home after an extended visit to Australia visiting churches and seeking missionary recruits. They were able to enjoy some family time as well before heading back. Trevor is currently (11-23-2012) out of contact because of some broken equipment, as Paul mentioned. Here is the latest word from him.



The Johnson Family

“After September in the village, we flew out (delayed at first from low water in our river) and went to Australia for a 2 1/2 week trip trying to recruit new missionaries for Asia (especially for Indonesia).

Now, we are back and we head interior this week until the end of the year - when we report to the coast for immigration. We will also visit different villages to help two new missionary families here (one of which is our good friends Paul and Trish Snider) pick an interior ministry.

OUR TRIBAL REGION MADE THE COVER OF MAF's FLIGHTWATCH MAGAZINE: The tribal area we serve was featured in Mission Aviation Fellowship's recent magazine.

The story features me and Teresa, the fine Dutch couple serving about a day's walk to my south in the southern dialect, and the superb pilots that serve us. Our tribe is on the cover and also about page 4 or 5 as well. Here's a snippet... "I can't even begin to express to you just how remote this village is," said John. "There's no town, no roads, nothing but walking paths and huts. And the only landing strip is on the water. The floatplane is the one MAF aircraft that can access Danowage..."



You may reach Trevor (most of the time) at his email:

sovereigngracemissionary@gmail.com

and keep up with him on his blog:

www.tandtfamily.blogspot.com

Danny Roten, Latest Update from Oklahoma City

The Lord continues to work in hearts in our Sunday services. Attendance varies from 2 to 10, with a few steady attendees and several inconsistent visitors. Every week I get to preach the gospel to Spanish-speakers from the US, Mexico, and Peru, and have had visitors from Honduras and El Salvador. None of them speak enough English to understand the gospel, so I rejoice that the Lord has given me this contact with them, and the privilege to minister to them. I am blessed to see the excitement of the regulars who are understanding sound doctrine. I frequently remind them that there is a good reason that we are calling this new work the Iglesia Bautista Todo Por Gracia (All of Grace Baptist Church). As they comprehend their own insufficiency and hopelessness, and the sufficiency and efficiency of Christ's atonement, they are rejoicing in the grace of God. I also usually get to preach the gospel on Wednesday nights to several who will come in with us after an English class that I am helping with.



Danny Roten

I continue preaching in Spanish in the chapel of the federal prison in El Reno. Most of the men that started with me a year ago have been transferred or released, but new ones are starting to come. In the prison, I am not allowed to go out and encourage any to come meet with us. I just have to wait until they see the posted announcements, or until they respond to the encouragement of the inmates who already attend. It is a joy to see when their release comes, how they are looking forward not only to regaining their freedom, but also to serving the Lord in a real church. And they have learned to enough to find a church preaching sound doctrine.

There are still good contacts coming through the website from around the world. Just last week I received an email from a brother on the Pacific coast of Mexico asking for counsel about how to begin a new church. Pastor Tomas Olvera, a faithful pastor in a Mexican border town, is now alternating Bible studies one Friday in Matamoros, and the next in Reynosa (cities whose names are mentioned often in the drug warfare news reports). These both came about as a result of website contacts.

Bro. Eduardo, down in Cardenas where I was last working in Mexico, spoke to me by phone with much excitement that the Lord seems to have done an amazing work of grace in his sister in law.

Please make a note that Sherwood Baptist Church has a new mailing address. Our financial supporters need to be sure that the one who mails out mission support checks has the new address:

**Sherwood Baptist Church
3313 NW 32nd
Newcastle OK 73065**

From Barry Carpenter, Philippines

In 2011 I traveled to the Philippines to conduct a pastor's conference and encourage a church planter with which I had been in contact. While I was there the church planter asked if I would help them to acquire graduate school seminary education. This was the motivation to begin the ministry we are currently pursuing.

Bible Expositors Seminary was created to facilitate theological training for the pastors in the Philippines. Currently, there are eleven pastors in the Master of Divinity program. The program consists of 90 semester hours of study. The lessons have an average of 30 hours of lecture, classical reading, and writing assignments. Each pastor in the Philippines was given a tablet computer to access the assignments. There is a "virtual library" on each tablet that includes Christian classics such as Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, Augustine, John Owen, A. W. Pink, George Whitefield and many others.



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"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

God's Mercy over All that Concerns Us¹

Carolyn Staley

It is not difficult to see God's hand of mercy in our blessings. We are usually quick to acknowledge and thank Him for His goodness at such times. But how often do we perceive His loving care in our afflictions? Are we able to do as James instructed in James 1:2-4? There he said, *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."* Note the purpose given in verse 4. It seems that the key to spiritual joy when in affliction lies in the understanding of its purpose. A perfect work? Will we ever really attain perfection? Yes we will, ultimately, and to that end the purpose of God is overseeing all that concerns us. This perfection will not be realized as long as we are in the flesh; but even now, we are progressing toward it. Can we doubt the mercy of God's providential dealings with us when He has such a gracious design in them? Sadly, sometimes we do!

Far too often we become side-tracked by difficulty because, like the children of Israel, we take a short-sighted view of things. Instead of keeping our sights fixed upon our Lord, we allow our circumstances to form our thinking and overwhelm us. Then, spiritual vision becomes cloudy and we cannot see beyond our present difficulty. Doubt, fear and unbelief launch a three-fold attack against our minds and, as a result, defeat and discouragement loom large. This is not a new problem for the people of God.

As I thought upon these things, my mind recalled the sufferings of the godly remnant during Judah's darkest hour. The destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian army (587 B.C.) entailed much more than the loss of Judah's beautiful capital city. Her virtually impregnable walls surrounded the magnificent temple built by King Solomon. This temple, the place where God was pleased to manifest His glory and presence, distinguished Jerusalem as the city of God in a special sense. So the loss of the city, the deportation of her citizens and the destruction of the temple signified Judah's rejection by God for her national crimes

against Him. Furthermore, Judah's subjugation, first by Babylon and then by a succession of foreign powers, would effectively end the rule of the royal house of David. But God's sovereignty would preserve David's royal lineage all the way unto the birth of Messiah, just as He promised so long ago. (Genesis 49:10)

The author of Lamentations was an eyewitness to the devastating fall of Jerusalem into enemy hands. Her national agony is epitomized in his personal experience at that critical time. Both vicariously, and in reality, he knew the darkness of despair but also the rekindling of faith and hope as he thought upon God and remembered His mercy. His personal testimony is recorded in the Book of Lamentations:

- Lamentations 3:1-3: *"I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day."*
- Lamentations 3:19-26: *"Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him: it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."*

The writer of the Lamentations was obviously a righteous man, part of the believing remnant in Judah. Yet he, and his godly, Jewish brethren, suffered in this national crisis along with the rest of the nation. Judah suffered because of her transgressions against God. But why did the godly have to suffer also? It is an age-old question that has confounded many an



Carolyn Staley² is the wife of Pastor Ron Staley of New Hope Baptist Church, Mechanicsville, Virginia.

afflicted believer! And there is no easy answer to it!

The righteous Job grappled with the same problem even as he suffered the additional pain of false accusation from his so-called friends. Note the agony of his response to their severe judgments of him in Job 19:2: *"How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?"* But even though Job never did fully understand the reasons why he was so afflicted, he perceived the ultimate purpose of it. In Job 23:10, he said *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

Herein (in Job 23:10) lies an important key. The secret is found in the way we take, and the purpose of God that is to be accomplished by it. The way of the believer is found in Proverbs 4:18: *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* It is a path that is leading us to eternal glory and bliss; but much that appears mysterious and baffling to us will happen along the way. The "smiling face" of God's gracious design is often hidden behind what William Cowper called a "frowning Providence."

It may not always seem so, but an eternal purpose of good is concealed behind all of God's dealings with us. His mercy extends over all that concerns us: designing our course, sustaining us in it, and bringing us safely to our journey's end. But why does affliction figure so prominently in it all? Because faith must be tried as by fire if it is to increase and be purified! It must operate in the face of things that resist it. Our faith will only be strengthened as it overcomes that which opposes it.

¹The present article is compiled from a devotional teaching at a Sovereign Grace Ladies' Fellowship.

²Author of *Journey Through Pilgrim's Progress*, which is pending publication.

Gold ore is neither beautiful nor useful as long as it lies hidden in the earth. It must be subjected to the stress of the refiner's fire before the gold's full brilliance can be achieved, and its value as a precious metal attained. And since this very same principle applies to believers in Christ, Scripture uses the metaphor of the refining process in order to illustrate God's work in His children.

- Proverbs 17:3: *"The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts."*
- Malachi 3:2-3: *"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."*
- 1 Peter 1:6-7: *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."*

So if we are going to attain the perfection for which we are predestined, it will have to be through the fire. Remember what God said in Isaiah 48:10: *"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."* This could be a very discouraging thought if we did not have the precious promise given in Isaiah 43:1-2: *"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."*

The fire with which God refines His people does not destroy them. It has no harmful intention, but is carefully regulated by His everlasting love and its discipline is for the purpose of making us partakers of His holiness.

The Christian's life in this world is aptly called a pilgrimage. As the citizens of

Zion, we are strangers and pilgrims here. This world is not our home; neither is it our rest. Our earthly sojourn is the time in which God is preparing us to be with Him forever. This preparation will accomplish God's purpose of bringing us into conformity to the very image of Christ; but it seems a long way from here to there, does it not? We have not the power to effect this transformation in ourselves, so God has designed a course for us that will bring it to pass. And this course entails the trial of affliction, which performs the dual service of making us long increasingly for our eternal home and preparing us for its glory.

**“God’s way is best,
and so is His timing.
We desire the
immediate; but we
need the patience of
faith. God leads
His children in the
right way – always!
But for reasons
known only to Him,
it is not usually the
easy way.”**

In many respects, our earthly pilgrimage may be likened to Israel's wilderness experience. God had mercifully delivered them from Egyptian bondage, but they had not yet reached Canaan. Likewise, the redeemed people of God must sojourn through the wilderness of this world, passing through but not belonging to it. We have not yet reached Zion, the heavenly Canaan.

God revealed His will to Israel through the giving of His law on Mt. Sinai. And even though there was no designated path through the wilderness, God led His people by means of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. These signs were the tokens of His presence among them.

We have something better than even these special manifestations of God's presence. We have the chart and compass of His infallible Word by which to discern the right way. And we have His Spirit within as our divine Teacher, Guide and Comforter. In Isaiah 30:21, we read of His gracious influence and leading, *"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."*

Israel's wilderness experience was a time of trial for them, as is our earthly pilgrimage. God provided abundantly for their every need: guidance, manna, water from the smitten rock, divine protection from their enemies, clothes and shoes that did not wear out, etc. They were totally dependent upon God for their most basic needs, and He was faithful to supply them. Yet, in unbelief, they murmured and complained continually against His goodness.

From their sad example, we learn a profitable lesson. God is faithful and we *never* err when we entrust ourselves completely to His care. Israel's trial in the wilderness proved them faithless. May our earthly sojourn find us faithful, all the way to the end of our journey!

In Israel's battle with and victory over Amalek, we perceive the believer's struggle against the principle of indwelling sin and the subduing of it. Divine chastening is necessary from time to time because of this inward, opposing principle. But as the Israelites, when bitten by fiery serpents, looked upon the brazen serpent that Moses lifted up before them, so we look to Christ for healing, cleansing and forgiveness when we have sinned.

Through the 40 years that Israel wandered in the wilderness, Christ was evidently set before them

- As the Paschal (Passover) Lamb
- As the Bread of Life (manna)
- As Living Water from the smitten rock
- As the Sin-Bearer (brazen serpent)

In unbelief, Israel failed to perceive Christ in the many provisions made for them. He was not their vision; therefore, they perished in the wilderness. But throughout our earthly pilgrimage, our eyes are to be fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly Joshua. He is the Path and He is

continued next page

the Prize! As the entrance to the earthly Canaan was not easy, neither is the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God. We must battle many enemies before we can possess the land. And only those who persevere in faith will enter the heavenly Canaan – Zion – our eternal home.

When God led Israel from Egypt to Canaan, He did not lead them by the common, more direct route. This route was but the journey of a few days, but it would have exposed them to formidable enemies that they were by no means prepared to face. God chose the most unlikely way, one they would not have chosen, one that was lengthy and circuitous. But it was the best way! Can we not say the same thing about our course?

Like them, we are also incapable of choosing the best course for ourselves. We lack the wisdom to make the right choices. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read, *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”* Must we not make the same admission? Would we not have spared ourselves the trials that later proved to be so beneficial to us? Have we not prayed fervently for something, only to realize later how harmful the effects would have been if God had given us our way?

We all must admit to these deficiencies and be thankful that God has provided His Spirit to minister, lead and guide us. Our

very safest course is to submit *our* way to *His* will. Note the wisdom and the promise of Proverbs 3:5-6, *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

God’s way is best, and so is His timing. We desire the immediate; but we need the patience of faith. God leads His children in the right way – always! But for reasons known only to Him, it is not usually the easy way. All is done in His over-ruling Providence. We must undergo necessary preparation; yet He *“will not break the bruised reed”* nor *“quench the smoking flax.”* He is our Father. Not only does He know our frame, but His heart is lovingly disposed toward us. Therefore, with a special regard to our weakness, He gathers us in His arms and carries us in His bosom when the way is dark and difficult. (Isaiah 40:11)

When the journey to Zion seems long and difficult, and our hearts are overwhelmed along the way, may God grant us eyes to see beyond our present circumstances. Do you not see the goal to which we move? Can you perceive the Prize? As Christian from the portal of the Palace Beautiful, and later from the Delectable Mountains, can you discern the light and glory of the Celestial City? Eventually, our course will bring us to Beulah Land, at the very border of the heavenly Canaan. From that

perspective, “the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His (Christ’s) glory and grace.”

But for now, are you a weary pilgrim? Many who read these words would probably say, "Yes!" Then listen to the great and precious promise given in Isaiah 40:27-31:

“Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”



The Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship Welcomes Two New Member Churches



Community Baptist Church of Elmendorf, Texas and New Hope Baptist Church of Seneca, Kansas were received into the membership of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship at the September, 2012 SGBF meeting at Bridgetown Baptist Church of Nesbit, Mississippi.

Purpose of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

From the “CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS”

“To establish and maintain a Fellowship of Baptist pastors and churches which believe that salvation rests ultimately in the sovereign grace of God; to provide a medium for fellowship and mutual encouragement so that such pastors and churches may be edified in love and grace; to cooperate together in the carrying out of the Great Commission in those areas that cannot well be accomplished alone, namely world missions, church planting, and the education of aspiring, God-called ministers; and to assist one another in the maintenance and promotion of sound biblical doctrine and practice in ways deemed necessary and right in the honest light of Holy Scripture.”

Christ Will Not Break the Bruised Reed¹

Richard Sibbes
(1577-1635)

Izaak Walton wrote of his life: *"Of this blest man, let this just praise be given, Heaven was in him, before he was in heaven."*

In pursuing His calling, Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, in which more is meant than spoken, for He will not only not break nor quench, but He will cherish those with whom He so deals.

CHRIST'S DEALINGS WITH THE BRUISED REED

Physicians, though they put their patients to much pain, will not destroy nature, but raise it up by degrees. Surgeons will lance and cut, but not dismember. A mother who has a sick and self-willed child will not therefore cast it away. And shall there be more mercy in the stream than in the spring? Shall we think there is more mercy in ourselves than in God, who plants the affection of mercy in us?

But for further declaration of Christ's mercy to all bruised reeds, consider the comfortable relationships He has taken upon Himself of husband, shepherd and brother, which He will discharge to the utmost. Shall others by His grace fulfill what He calls them unto, and not He who, out of His love, has taken upon Him these relationships, so thoroughly founded upon His Father's assignment, and His own voluntary undertaking? Consider the names He has borrowed from the mildest creatures, such as lamb and hen, to show His tender care. Consider His very name Jesus, a Saviour, given Him by God himself. Consider His office answerable to His name, which is that He should 'bind up the broken hearted' (Isa. 61:1). At His baptism the Holy Ghost rested on Him in the shape of a dove, to show that He should be a dove-like, gentle Mediator.

See the gracious way He executes His offices. As a prophet, He came with blessing in His mouth, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt. 5:3), and invited those to come to Him whose hearts suggested most exceptions against themselves, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden' (Matt. 11:28). How did His heart yearn when He saw the people 'as sheep having no shepherd' (Matt. 9:36)! He never turned any back again that came to Him, though some went away of themselves. He came to die as a priest for His enemies. In the days of His flesh He dictated a form of prayer unto His disciples, and put petitions unto God into their mouths, and His Spirit to intercede in their hearts. He shed tears for those that shed His blood, and now He makes intercession in heaven for weak Christians, standing between them and God's anger. He is a meek king; He will admit mourners into His presence, a king of poor and afflicted persons. As He has beams of majesty, so He has a heart of mercy and compassion. He is the prince of peace (Isa. 9:6). Why was He tempted, but that He might 'succor them that are tempted' (Heb. 2:18)? What mercy may we not expect from so gracious a Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) who took our nature upon Him that he might be gracious? He is a physician good at all diseases, especially at the binding up of a broken heart. He died that He might heal our souls with a plaster of His own blood, and by that death save us, which we were the procurers of

ourselves, by our own sins. And has He not the same heart in heaven? 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' cried the Head in heaven, when the foot on earth was trodden on (Acts 9:4). His advancement has not made Him forget His own flesh. Though it has freed Him from passion, yet not from compassion towards us. The lion of the tribe of Judah will only tear in pieces those that 'will not have Him rule over them' (Luke 19:14). He will not show His strength against those who prostrate themselves before Him.

FOR OURSELVES

1. What should we learn from this, but to 'come boldly to the throne of grace' (Heb. 4:16) in all our grievances? Shall our sins discourage us, when He appears there only for sinners? Are you bruised? Be of good comfort, He calls you. Conceal not your wounds, open all before Him and take not Satan's counsel. Go to Christ, although trembling, as the poor woman who said, 'If I may but touch his garment' (Matt. 9:21). We shall be healed and have a gracious answer. Go boldly to God in our flesh; He is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone for this reason, that we might go boldly to Him. Never fear to go to God, since we have such a Mediator with Him, who is not only our friend but our brother and husband. Well might the angel proclaim from heaven, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy' (Luke 2:10). Well might the apostle stir us up to 'rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice' (Phil. 4:4). Paul was well advised upon what grounds he did it. Peace and joy are two main fruits of Christ's kingdom. Let the world be as it will, if we cannot rejoice in the world, yet we may rejoice in the Lord. His presence makes any condition comfortable. 'Be not afraid,' says He to His disciples, when they were afraid, as if they had seen a ghost, 'It is I' (Matt. 14:27), as if there were no cause of fear where He was present.

2. Let this support us when we feel ourselves bruised. Christ's way is first to wound, then to heal. No sound, whole soul shall ever enter into heaven. Think when in temptation, Christ was tempted for me; according to my trials will be my graces and comforts. If Christ be so merciful as not to break me, I will not break myself by despair, nor yield myself over to the roaring lion, Satan, to break me in pieces.

3. See the contrary disposition of Christ on the one hand and Satan and his instruments on the other. Satan sets upon us when we are weakest, as Simeon and Levi upon the Shechemites, 'when they were sore' (Gen. 34:25), but Christ will make up in us all the breaches which sin and Satan have made. He 'binds up the broken hearted' (Isa. 61:1). As a mother is tenderest to the most diseased and weakest child, so does Christ most mercifully incline to the weakest. Likewise He puts an instinct into the weakest things to rely upon something stronger than themselves for support. The vine stays itself upon the elm, and the weakest creatures often have the strongest shelters. The consciousness of the church's weakness makes her willing to lean on her beloved, and to hide herself under His wing.

"If Christ be so merciful as not to break me, I will not break myself by despair, nor yield myself over to the roaring lion, Satan, to break me in pieces."

¹Excerpt from Richard Sibbes' "The Bruised Reed", The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998, 1st Published 1630

The Theology of Christian Suffering

Warner Worthan

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” 1 Peter 4:12

Suffering is a topic that will never create great excitement because few want to think about it, and even fewer realize its God glorifying aspect or its benefits to the Christian. However, if we are to have a correct theology of suffering, we must first understand the ministry of affliction.

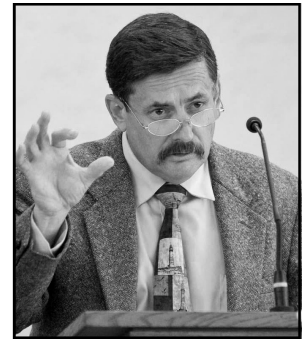
In writing his first epistle, Peter addressed a community of first-century believers who were *“in heaviness through manifold temptations”*¹ due to their participation in the faith. Difficulties had come upon them from various sources; thus, they were experiencing genuine hardship. Therefore, Peter writes to them from a very practical and realistic, rather than hypothetical, standpoint.

The Bible portrays life in (its) stark reality, but never treats the presence of suffering as a trite matter. In both prosaic and poetic form, it is filled with scenes of treachery, violence, brutality, and injustice. Suffering is a common experience among humans, and is not confined to any particular race, gender or socio-economic group. The moral as well as the debauched know hardship. Suffering is found throughout the record of biblical characters. Even the Son of God was guaranteed suffering when He united with flesh. Since the Bible reflects reality, it is not surprising that Peter writes to believers who are experiencing hardships, saying, *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”*² Thus, the first thing we must understand in any theology of suffering is that the Bible itself presents suffering as a part of human existence.

Any theology, however, must have a central focus, and Peter's first epistle provides such a focus. Suffering has the effect of causing us to buckle down and get to the basics. Frills and lace might do well for careless times; but when we find ourselves in the heat of affliction, only that which is solid and abiding will do. Peter constantly points believers to Christ, and more importantly, to Christ and His sufferings as the pattern for the Christian's proper conduct in the midst of difficult times.

For Peter, the meaning of suffering has a Christ-centered significance. It is a grave mistake to begin an understanding of suffering from any other source of approach. The presence of suffering always seems to give rise to the need for answers. Human beings under great affliction want to know why suffering has come their way. The eminent contemporary Bible scholar D. A. Carson, in his book on suffering, handles the matter of solutions as he introduces his work. In the end he sees a great problem with the way many go about seeking answers to the fact of suffering: “One of the remarkable features about most of these proposed ‘solutions’ is that they make no reference to Jesus Christ and His suffering, death, and resurrection. By and large, we are treated to theodicies of theism, not of *Christian* theism.”³ Thus a biblically based theology of suffering must be worked out from Scriptures concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ.

When Peter points to Christ dying, the just for the unjust, he is saying that the atoning work of Jesus Christ lies at the heart of an understanding of both suffering and the believer's response to it. More broadly it can be maintained that Christ's sorrows are at the very heart of explaining the reason for the reality of suffering. The fact of the just dying for the unjust, when unpacked, solves the issue of the presence and significance of suffering. The divine Son of God entered this world of sin in order to give His life a ransom for sinners. The world has been ruined by sin – a world (that when) fresh from the creative fingertips of God was evaluated by the divine Master Craftsman as *“very good.”* Yet, upon the entrance of evil in the world, sin delivered a devastating blow. Follow suffering back to its primal cause and you will see that its genesis is in the fall of Adam. The cosmic presence of sorrow is suggested in Paul's statement *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”*⁴ The sorrow to which the apostle refers is like the pains of a woman in birth labor. The earth presently sorrows due to the effects of sin upon it. Wonderfully, however, the



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'birth pains' also anticipate the day of Christ's appearing when there shall be the delivery of the new creation.

Although Christ's afflictions are a result of sin, He never suffered for His own sins, for He had none. Nor did a root of sin lie within Him. Yet He suffered, and His anguish is only explained by the fact that the wrath of God toward sinners was both concentrated upon and applied to Him, the sinless Redeemer. Christ suffered as the propitiation for His people. Suffering believers should remind themselves of both the terrible devastation and price of sin, as well as the wonderful fact that Christ the just suffered for the unjust. Often, in the life of the believer, suffering seems to occur without reason. In such times we are tempted to compare ourselves with Job, who asked God a reason for his treatment. God's response was to a statement of His greatness. This bothers some, as if God were impervious to Job's suffering. Restoration is provided at the end of the book but still we are left hanging. The reason is clear only if the New Testament is set beside Job. The answer that God provided Job, of the divine greatness in power and wisdom in creation and preservation, awaits its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Only in Christ is the real answer to suffering and restoration displayed. Only in Christ is the full manifestation of God's glorious wisdom and power provided.

Doubtless the matter of suffering, when handled from the aspect of Christ's own sorrows and death, should display the sinfulness of sin. There can be nothing more loathsome than that which, when laid upon the beloved Messiah, brought Him grief and anguish. Listen to the incarnate Son as he cries *“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* This cry of deep sorrow is a great mystery. It was doubtless a genuine cry and not simply a mechanical repetition of Psalm 22. It reflects the

¹ 1 Peter 1:6
² 1 Peter 4:12

³ Carson, D. A., *How Long O Lord*, Intervarsity Press, 2004, pg 36
⁴ Romans 8:22

Savior's anguish as sin was laid upon Him, the innocent Lamb of God. It also indicates some sort of abandonment that Christ suffered from the Father. Scholars have attempted to unravel this mystery and none have provided a sufficient explanation. Clearly however, the judgment of God was laid upon his Son due to the sin that He bore. Sin can appear no more despicable than when the justice of God satisfied itself in the suffering Savior. Thomas Kelly's words are fitting:

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress:
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly,
Nor suppose the evil great,
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed!
See Who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man, and Son of God.

The people to whom Peter wrote were real people whose lives were not neat and tidy packages. They were experiencing great hardships and no doubt there were many rough and ragged edges. Possibly, doubts began to creep in among them as they compared their expectations with their present hardship. Peter presents the truth as he shows that their sufferings were not matters outside God's saving purpose. Being a child of God is not inconsistent with suffering. Interestingly, Peter begins his epistle by highlighting the unique relationship of the suffering ones to God. The opening phrase of the Greek text reads, "*Peter apostle of Jesus Christ, to elect sojourners of dispersion.*" In light of the theme of suffering, the apostle Peter sets the tone of his letter by recognizing his readers as God's "*elect.*" The difficulties in which these believers were engaged necessitated that this tremendous fact be highlighted. They needed to understand that God – an electing, sovereign God – is in full control.

Peter places their distinction as the elect of God within a Trinitarian context and attributes it solely to God's gracious initiative and labor. God's foreknowledge, the Spirit's sanctification and Christ's shed blood and obedience are the bulwarks upon

which their privileged position rests. Therefore, no boasting could be justifiably connected to any supposed excellence of the believers. Most especially, Peter labors to show that Christ's precious blood has paid the redemption price by which they have been delivered. Their salvation is secure through the gift of faith by which they will endure, since they have an inheritance in heaven. Until the inheritance is finally received, the people of God are to remember that they are living stones resting upon the chief cornerstone. They are the dwelling place of God, a holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to God – "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*"⁵ Furthermore, it is in light of this that they are called.⁶ The calling to which Peter refers is a call unto suffering *and* good works. Therefore, he makes it clear that God's sovereign election, sanctification and redemption ensure a suffering and graciously obedient people.

In the first chapter of his letter, Peter makes the astounding statement, "*Wherein [the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time] ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*"⁷ Peter speaks of necessity when referring to the various hardships facing the believers at present. Their salvation was one requiring these things to have happened to them. However, it should be further understood that affliction is employed by God to bring about growth in His elect people. Suffering is a means used by divine wisdom to bring about the ultimate goal of God for His child's salvation. Thus, there is a definite benefit for the child himself in suffering. It is often said that the ultimate goal of God in all things is His glory. This, of course, is absolutely true. But the Christian often creates a false dilemma when it comes to

the matter of God's providence in the particular circumstances of his life. Did affliction come upon him for God's glory or for his good? Supposing that these two options cannot both be true at the same time and in the same way, he feels that a clear choice must be made between them. But in God's infinite wisdom, knowledge and power, He can use the same means for the good of His people and the way by which He magnifies Himself.

There is the story of a Dutch theologian who for a time served a small group of Calvinistic believers in the Netherlands. At one point during his pastorate a great tragedy struck the small village, which caused great suffering among the people. The minister met with them and began to comfort them as they managed their anguish. As he applied pastoral comfort, one of the church members interrupted him with this comment, "Minister, no stranger did that to us."⁸ The doctrines of grace teach that God is absolutely sovereign over all. But, this skeleton of teaching must have flesh applied to it. God who has an elect people is not a mechanical device of cold

**“It is wonderful
for us to know
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steel. He who is the sovereign God is also the kind, loving Father of His people. God himself knows loss to the greatest degree, for He gave His only begotten Son. His own incarnate Son also knows suffering. His own testimony concerning His approach to the cross is, "*My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.*"⁹ Mark comments upon the same event that, "*he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.*"¹⁰ One of the main themes of the book of Hebrews is that the Son is actually one with His people. He is made "*like his brethren in every respect.*"¹¹ This means that He had the capacity to suffer greatly. Along with a heavenly Father, the chosen of God also possess a Redeemer that is one with them. It is wonderful for us to know that as we suffer, we do so as the elect, redeemed children of God. "Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face."

⁵1 Peter 2:9

⁶1 Peter 2:21

⁷1 Peter 1:6 The bracketed statement is from verse five for clarification

⁸Mouw, Richard J., *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport*, Zondervan,

⁹2004 pg. 56

¹⁰Matthew 26:38

¹¹Mark 14:33

Peter is quite clear as to the relationship between the believer and God. He says that God cares for us,¹² which is a matter for our earnest consideration. The apex of God's love for His people came in the act of His own Son, Jesus Christ, dying as the propitiation for their sins. But it should be clearly understood that this matter of love and suffering does not end at Calvary. God's care for His people means that the pattern of love and suffering is to be carried out in the lives of His people. The predestinating purpose of God for His people is that they be made in the image of Christ. This purpose includes suffering and, yes, being bowed down by deep anguish. Earlier, one of Peter's statements was mentioned in relation to the necessity of suffering. (1 Pet.1:6) A further observation will show that not only is the affliction necessary but the "heaviness" is also part of the necessity. After all, afflictions are meant to bring about severe discomfort. This was the case with Paul and his thorn in the flesh. The thorn, whatever it was, was clearly a sovereign requirement by God. The affliction was to Paul a harassing thing. He uses the term "buffet," which indicates a violent beating. To Paul this was no lightweight malady; it caused him a fair amount of hardship, which is exactly what sufferings are designed to do. The thorn was given to the apostle for Christ's sake, but also for the purpose of bringing great hardship upon Paul. However, the hardship was but a mediating device serving two purposes. It magnified Christ's sufficiency and kept Paul from pride.

Significantly, Paul sees that the thorn, though a messenger of Satan, was intended by God as a productive measure. The paradox is astounding: Paul's statement displays a relationship between suffering and evil, while joining suffering with God's gracious provision. Though Satan intended a detriment, God's goal was that Christ's strength be magnified. He also meant for Paul to see his weakness and even boast in it as long as his Redeemer was highlighted. The only paradox that can eclipse Paul's testimony with these same contrary elements is found in the cross of Christ.

Suffering, then, is beneficial, first by bringing glory to the Redeemer. As affliction comes upon the believer, it tends to humble his pride and display the greatness of Christ. One of the most important things that any suffering saint can see is that God's ultimate purpose in all

things is to magnify His own name. Undoubtedly, one of the most important statements in the Bible is Paul's declaration concerning God's self justification in the Gospel. Speaking of Christ Paul says, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"¹³ From the very first element of the Gospel throughout its whole matter, the good news means to magnify God. This is true since a sinner's justification is inseparable from the complete redemptive design of God. Suffering, then, has the purpose of bringing glory to God's name.

Secondly, suffering is beneficial for the believer. Such times are like the harvest time of the field. C. H. Spurgeon remarked that "if we were not in heaviness during our troubles, we would not be like our Covenant Head."¹⁴ This statement is a little perplexing at first. After all, Jesus Christ's heaviness was due to the guilt of His people's sin which He bore. His mission was clearly one that necessitated His suffering as the sacrifice for His own. Suffering and anguish, however, cannot be confined only to the end of Christ's life. He is called a man of sorrows. This is not to say that He never knew joy. But "a deep current of sorrow ran through it and gave it a characteristic tinge."¹⁵ One of the purposes for His affliction is stated by the Hebrew letter, "*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*"¹⁶ It was necessary that the Messiah practically subject Himself to the process of accomplishing the will of the Father. Learning has to do with producing obedience in the sphere of experience or practice. The school in which this practice took place was in the classroom of affliction. It was of course not necessary that Jesus suffer in order to keep Him true to His purpose or to deflect Him from sinning. The writer of Hebrews presents Christ as the sinless Son. The amazing thing is that as the Son he still must, in the flesh, produce a life of perfect performance one step at a time, through each and every circumstance of His life.

For the Christian, obedience is an essential

¹³Romans 3:25,26

¹⁴Spurgeon, Charles, *New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. 4, Pilgrim Publications, 1975 pg. 459-460

¹⁵Blakie, William G., *Glimpses of the Inner Life of Our Lord & The Emotions of Jesus*, Tenmaker Publications, 1995, pg 63

¹⁶Hebrews 5:8

part of his experience. Peter reminds his readers of the time of their lives prior to their faith in Christ. Their lives were characterized by ignorance and, therefore, were lives of unholiness. But now they are a born again people who are living stones and part of God's living temple. They are the household of God and, therefore, the temple of the Holy Spirit. They have an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and one that cannot fade away. However, severe trials have produced heaviness on purpose. This heaviness is necessary for both proving faith and further enlarging the heart for Christ. The believer's obedience to God is carried out in the sphere of experience and the school of hard knocks. In this the Christian follows his Lord – not sinlessly as Christ, but the way of the Christian is one of delighting in obedience to his Lord.

Suffering is often the fertile ground of obedience for the believer. Peter, in his first epistle, emphasizes good works. As would be expected from a letter that significantly handles the theme of suffering, this emphasis on good works is related to affliction. If the flow of the letter is followed, it becomes clear that Peter knows that these folks are living in a world that is very difficult to manage. Redeeming grace has been given them but they still deal with their fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Non Christians seek to destroy their reputations. Authorities, who often oppress the faithful, are in power. Christian servants are bound under evil masters. Believing women are married to unbelieving husbands. Peter's list is not exhaustive, of course; so many other hardships could be added.

Peter presents a rationale for the believer's action in relation to suffering.¹⁷ Christians should be found consistently walking in obedience to Christ when suffering occurs. In such times, their conduct should reflect the death of Christ in dying to sin; and through resurrection power, gracious lives should proclaim the power and glory of Christ's righteousness. In chapter 2, Peter deals contextually with the implications of suffering for righteousness' sake when he writes, "*For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*"¹⁸ Christ

¹⁷Please read 1 Peter 3:17-4:2

¹⁸1 Peter 2:19&20

¹²1 Peter 5:7

dispenses sweet grace to those of His own who are suffering so that they can war against sin in the power of His death, and manifest righteousness in the strength of His resurrection. Indeed, suffering proves that grace produces graciousness.

C. S. Lewis said "God whispers to us in health and prosperity, but, being hard of hearing, we fail to hear God's voice in both. Whereupon God turns up the amplifier by means of suffering. Then His voice booms."¹⁹ Suffering has a unique way of waking up the drowsy believer and making him alert and keenly aware of the realities of Christ's kingdom. He becomes more prayerful and urgent in his petitions. Where the suffering believer is found, he will most likely be located in the security of the cleft of the rock. His faith, though being severely tried and seemingly ready to fail, is upheld by strength greater than his own. To the afflicted believer, God's glory shines brighter, heaven becomes lovelier, Satan more hideous, sin more evil. He learns to rely completely upon the gift of the Spirit and, through personal failure and sinfulness, he sees in himself the frailty and weakness of the flesh. When the deep heaviness of depression falls upon him, how sweet is a fresh view of Christ's beauty! The believer who is being pressed

down with heaviness longs for God's comforting Word to refresh his soul. And how wonderfully valuable is that Word when it comes, throwing open the 'window' of the soul that has been fast boarded up by darkness, and allowing the sunlight of God's glory to shine in.

Suffering produces patience that is satisfied with the will of God. How trying it is for praying people to not see things changing for the better! It is a real trial upon the soul to pray for the church to be edified as well as enlarged numerically. How it taxes the soul to pray and preach, only to watch men slumber in the pews and portray lukewarmness in their lives! As he puts his hand to the plow, there are those who walk beside him as he labors and remind him that his plowing has taken too much of their time. He prays for sinners to be saved as well as sound families to be added to the church; and at times it seems the more he prays and is devoted to God's work, the more of an exodus takes place. All the while the laboring and suffering one seeks to maintain a personally healthy soul amid the vexing influences. Family issues, work-related problems, financial concerns and a myriad of other things place a heavy load upon him. Through and in these things he is taught the sweetness of relying on Christ and waiting for God to

work at his own speed. It is said that Phillips Brooks was known for his patience. However, on one occasion, a friend visiting the preacher found him in his study pacing back and forth with a concerned look upon his face. Upon being asked why he was disturbed he responded, "I am in a hurry but God is not." Patience is a fruit of the Spirit of God mediated through hardship.

Lastly, suffering places the believer in a better position to minister to the saints, especially believers who are struggling with difficulties. Only eternity will reveal how useful suffering saints have been to other struggling believers. Spurgeon recounts a particularly difficult time in his ministry when his soul was under deep depression. In this state he preached upon the text "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" In a portion of the sermon he spoke of his own sufferings. Later he found that through that particular sermon he had unknowingly ministered to a struggling man in the congregation. While in the midst of his own struggles, he says he "saved that man from suicide, and led him into gospel light and liberty."²⁰



¹⁹Blanchard, John, *Gathered Gold*, Evangelical Press, 1987, pg 306

²⁰Spurgeon, Charles, *An All Around Ministry*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1960 pg 221-222



March 20-24, 2013
Spring Bible Conference
Community Baptist Church
5697 Labus Road # 1, Elmendorf, Texas 78112
Kyle White, pastor

Services

The Conference begins on Wednesday, March 20 continuing through Sunday, March 24.

Mornings: 10:00 AM

Evenings: 7:00 PM

There will be no Saturday or Sunday evening services.

Speakers

Daniel Chamberlin, Ron Crisp, Jimmy Downing, J.D. Watson, Mark Webb

Conference Information

Thirteen messages are scheduled, including two assigned subjects: The Authority of Scripture and The Relationship Between Justification and Sanctification.

The church provides a large meal after each morning session. All attendees are invited.

We can accommodate some guests who contact us early: cbcelder59@gmail.com

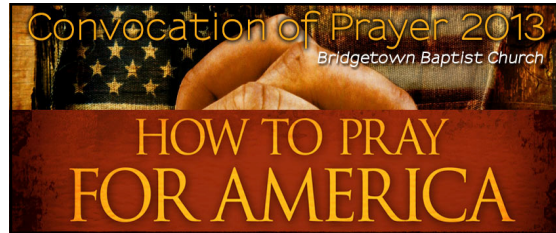
Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship



February 19-21, 2013

A Convocation for Prayer for Revival and Awakening Bridgetown Baptist Church 2779 Malone Road N., Nesbit, Mississippi 38651 Larry Dean, pastor

The three day meeting will begin at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 19 and conclude with the evening meeting on Feb. 21. Afternoons will be spent in prayer and the evenings in preaching and fellowship. A light dinner will be served each evening.



For information on the web:
www.bridgetownbaptist.org

Pastor Larry Dean's email:
larrywdean@aol.com

Hotel information: (662) 449-6000

Nesbit, Mississippi is located just off I55 in extreme northwest Mississippi just south of Memphis, Tennessee.

April 23-25, 2013

Spring Sovereign Grace Bible Conference Bible Baptist Church

3150 Sutton Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63143
Holmes Moore, pastor
Tom Henry, assistant pastor

Services

The conference begins Tuesday morning, April 23, 2013 and continues through Thursday evening, April 25, 2013. Morning sessions begin at 10:00 AM and evening sessions begin at 7:00 PM.

Devotional and prayer at 9:00 A.M. each day of the Conference

Two meals a day, each day of the Conference, are provided by Bible Baptist Church for all who attend. Dinner follows the morning sessions. Supper is served before the evening sessions at 5:30 PM.

For information on accommodations in the St. Louis area, contact the church office at: (314) 645-4248



Check out the SGBF website: www.sgbf.com

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