

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

by Robert Wurtz II

Wurtz's theological work examining foundational Christian practices and institutions, including the biblical basis for marriage as the oldest human institution ordained by God. He addresses fundamental questions about Christian doctrine and the proper ordering of society under divine authority.

10 Chapters

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Getting Back To Basics

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In these last days God is calling out a remnant people; but end time trials, temptations, and detractions have left the Church in spiritual shambles. Radio and Television messages of prosperity and grace abound, while the call to repentance is rarely heard. The Spirit of God is crying out in the earth 'Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and be not partakers of her plagues;' (Revelation 18:4) but the mega-church messages of tolerance have drowned it out. The overall Spirituality of the Church is spinning out of control and the prophetic voice of God is all but silent. Sin is so rampant in the Body of Christ today, that it is doubtful that God accepts any of our services or worship (Malachi 2:15).

The Salt Has Lost its Savor

This generation that now is knows little of a real move of God; and those who do and can remember- are growing fewer by the day. Christians are no longer mocked in America for their peculiar life styles, because it is essentially no different than the world's. The salt that once slowed the decay of society has all but lost the savor of holiness and righteousness; and the result is a society full of rottenous pockets of sin and iniquity. For this cause the Church has been marginalized into a place of irrelevance. And it has happened according to the true proverb, 'They are henceforth good for nothing but to be trodden under the foot of men.' (Matthew 5:13) Christians have held silent in America until the courts have constitutionalized sodomy, evicted God from the classroom and courtroom, and sought to legalize homosexual marriage for the first time in mankind's fallen history. Church organizations that were birthed in the fires of holiness are now ordaining practicing homosexuals into the pulpit in an act that would make Sodom and Gomorrah blush! Then when God sends plagues upon America to get our attention TV and Radio preachers busy themselves rebuking the devil, instead of calling a people who are in the crosshairs of the greatest judgments ever conceived-, to heart rending repentance. They're blaming the devil, but it's the people's sins causing the land to vomit the people out (Leviticus 18:24-30).

Stewards of the Dunamis

Judgment is not coming; it is here. Judgment is coming on a world that looks increasingly like Noah's generation everyday. But before God judges the world it will judge the Christian nations first. And before America is judged the House of God will be judged (I Peter 4:17). And the judgment that comes upon the Church has already begun in the sect that is most worthy- the full Gospel movements. The initial judgment has come in the departure of the great power of God that once was. And why are we judged? Because we are stewards of the message of Pentecost and watchmen of God's glory and anointing. Full Gospel evangelical organizations are SUPPOSED to be preaching holiness and preaching against SIN! To whom much is given much is required and there is no doubt that we have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come (Hebrews 6:5). I fear the youth are rejecting every element of full Gospel but the 'feel good.'

They reject holiness, sanctification, convictions and obedience to their leadership. If America is going to repent it must start in the first place that God will judge- it must begin with the stewards of the dunamis.

Modern Day Pentecostalism

God started modern day Pentecostalism by baptizing a congregation of people in the Holy Ghost roughly 50 miles west of where I am writing this sentence. The time was 1901 and the place was Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. The man God used was Charles F. Parham. Kansas is a name that means 'People of the south wind.' God does nothing with meaningless details. The timing was no less significant as the age of humanism, secularism, and materialism was winding up. God knew that it would require the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer sin and all that the 'imps' of hell would bring to bare in these last days. We must be FULL of the Holy Ghost to have the boldness and power to confront the highhanded sin we are seeing!

From Pentecostalism to Charismania

A great portion of influence that later came to be the Charismatic movement began in a town 50 miles to my east. Kathryn Kuhlman was born-again at the age of fourteen in the Methodist Church of Concordia, Missouri. Her ministry witnessed something different than Pentecostalism; it brought the rise of an emphasis on worship and the presence of God. Katherine showed people how to worship God and entertain the sweet presence of God. Benny Hinn took up this ministry and his services are a near replica of her's. Emphasizing the presence of God gave rise to the concept of a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. In time, we began losing what it means to be FULL of the Holy Ghost, as the emphasis became on feelings and away from the true holiness and righteousness. People began thinking they could regularly 'plead the blood' over their lives and run into the Holy of Holies with iniquity dripping from their fingertips. Now the Charismatic movement has 'spun off' the Faith Movement and the emphasis is on material and physical blessings. Gain is equated with godliness in this belief system and we have to wonder how long God is going to put up with it? (I Timothy 6:5).

The Loss of True Pentecostalism

The Pentecost of the past was characterized by holy living and powerful conviction. People were filled with the Spirit of God and would run to the altar under great conviction. Today, there is such a lack of spiritual power that people actually can feel comfortable nearly blaspheming the Holy Ghost in our services. There is such a lack of control that you almost have to get in the flesh to deal with the highhandedness. Why? Because at the grass roots level people are simply not living right and the power of conviction is not striking fear in the peoples hearts. Sinful saints come to worship services and try to cast themselves on the mercy of God and then expect God to show up! Like the sons of ELI they are committing gross sin and then trying to run into battle with the Ark of the Covenant over their shoulder. You can worship until you are blue in the face, but it doesn't take the place of living right. The evidence is in our altars. Charismania taught us to define power by people falling out or dancing or feeling goose bumps; but all these things happen at football games. We came to believe that if we set the mood right in a service, we could court God like our wife or girlfriend with soft music and a candlelight dinner. That's all fine and good if you're living in fidelity; but when we sin against God all week, mix worldliness into the worship, and then try to

sweet talk God- He must see us as wretched fools (Malachi 2:13-15). Worse than that we can't see how repulsed He is and keep doing it as though He is enjoying it. God would trade all the praise we give Him for simple obedience. We have bought the lie that our sacrifice offsets our disobedience as long as we ask forgiveness. The fruit of this is empty lives, empty altars, and empty spirits. Yes, we are in a crisis in Pentecostalism. The situation; people won't live righteous and holy and as a result our cruse of oil is all but dry. The question: will the true Saints hearken before it's too late?

The Saul Generation

Romans 12:1 tells us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God-, which is our spiritual worship. This is an allusion to the requirement that an offering to God in the New Testament must be holy and without blemish as they were in the Old Testament (Exodus 12:5). We cannot do as did Cain and bring just whatever we want and get mad when God won't accept it (Genesis 4:5). Nor can we forget that obedience is the prerequisite for bringing any offering to God. To obey is better than to sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22). God will not accept our gift at the altar, if we so much as remember in our hearts that our brother or sister has 'ought' against us (Matthew 5:23). II Chronicles 7:12 tells us that God ordained His house as the house of sacrifice. Every time we preach, teach, pray, play instruments, or sing, we are bringing an offering unto the Lord (Hebrews 13:15). On top of this we are to worship in Spirit and in truth. God asked the people through the prophet Malachi 'If you offer a blind sacrifice is it not evil?' In Malachi 1:13 & 14 God says: 'When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?' says the LORD.' (NIV) He goes on to say in the next verse that people who do that are cursed. Cursed of what? Cursed with the absence of the glory of God. Why? Because our sacrifices are laced with sin (Malachi 2:15).

Full Gospel Indifference

The great indictment against us as full gospel believers is how only the older generations truly weep over sin and its effects on God's people. Young people today do not weep over sin. People don't rend their garments anymore- much less their hearts (Jeremiah 36:24). All the while the clock is ticking toward judgment. When you find pleasure in sin it truly is hard to weep over it (II Thessalonians 2:12). We must pray that God will cause us all to HATE sin and iniquity. We must pray for an excellent Spirit that believes we should offend ALL before we offend God (Daniel 6). We must clean our closets of the worldliness that has marginalized those who were once mocked of this world- those who believe in living right and under the power of God. People don't even make jokes anymore! We must get full of the Holy Ghost once again- that we might have the power to confront this train wreck of sin head on.

Back to the Basics

If a person has the least bit of fear of God and good sense they see the urgency to see God's people turn before it's too late. If not they are likely doomed already to reprobation for their highhanded sin. Many will cry 'legalism' or some other blasphemy that makes the word of Christ of none effect. The flesh will not accept these things; this was the case in Jesus' day and was the cause of Him prefacing some of His statements with, 'He who hath ears to hear let them hear' (Matthew 11:15). Not everyone has their Spiritual ears open; some are just too caught up in the

world and are drunk on their sins. Like the notorious doomed frog, many prefer to watch the bubbles of God's wrath- as the pot grows hotter- knowing not they are burning to death. As in Jeremiah's day, the lies, the adultery, and the treachery have got to stop. Dishonesty has to stop, covetous idolatry has to stop, and so do the multitude of categories of secret sins. Convictions must return. No longer can any of the SAINTS continue to partake of other people's sins through the multitude of media choices ranging from Internet to TV and music. We have set in the seat of the scornful too long and filling our minds with sin and grieving the Holy Ghost. We must stop these things not to 'spoil our fun' or 'get legalistic;' we need to do it because God makes no distinction between those who commit the sins and those who have pleasure in partaking with them (Romans 1:32). God is saying 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities' (Revelation 18:4 &5). Getting back to the discarded principals that our elders passed down (and are too often scorned) of God's holiness and righteousness is the first step in avoiding God's judgment.

Chapte 2 The Oldest Institution)

CHAPTER 2

THE OLDEST INSTITUTION

God designed marriage as the foundational element of all human society. Before there was a Church, a government, a school, or a business, God formally instituted marriage. God created man and placed him in a Garden. Because it was not good that man was alone, God took a rib from Adam's side and formed Eve. God then decreed... "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) The institution of marriage is subject only to the rules and regulations set down by God in His immutable word. Individuals may marry, be divorced, and be remarried-, only if, when, and how He says they may. No private individual or the state has competence or authority to decide who may be married or divorced and on what basis. The state has been given by God the task of keeping records, etc., but it has no right or authority to determine the rules of marriage; that is the perogative of God alone.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage

Jesus said that "As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be at the coming at the Son of Man.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark." (Matthew 24:37 &38). For years this passage has made little sense. What could possibly be so bad about marriage and giving in marriage? Is not marriage what God wants people to do? Marriage and divorce are so rampant now that even same sex marriages are being debated and are likely to become law apart from a miracle from God. Having been used to "putting asunder" that which God hath "joined together" these many years- now they seek to join that which God will never regard. Satan is attempting to sit in the throne of God and decree the affairs of men through demonized liberal judges. With sodomy laws now deemed unconstitutional; any sex act imaginable will be sanctioned by the state. Any perverse joining together of man or beast they will no doubt cite as a civil right and will press for public approval and then sanction. No generation including Sodom and Gomorrah would believe what we are seeing in America today. Jesus warned us about this "giving in marriage," but no generation in man's vile and debauched history could imagine this.

Digging up Sodom?

Those cities (Sodom and Gomorrah) were destroyed by fire and are a warning of the eternal fire that will punish all who are evil (Jude 7 NLT). Sexual sins are over-running America and the Church. Revelation speaks of one third of the earth being burned up by fire at the sounding of the first trumpet judgment (Revelation 8:7-10). This is no doubt a reference to a nuclear exchange or a giant asteroid hitting earth at 40,000 MPH. If a third part of the earth is destroyed and the Middle East, Europe, Russia (Gog and Magog), India and China (kings of the east), and Egypt are still

around at the battle of Armageddon- what was this third part that was annihilated? If America does not repent God will not be digging anyone up to apologize- archeologists will be digging up America. There is something about sexual sins and transgressions that bring on the fiery judgments of God and America is in the crosshairs. Never in history has God allowed such highhanded perversion to go long unpunished.

What God Hath Joined Together

Most of society treats marriage as though it were a simple man made agreement or contract that can be entered "into" and "out of" at will. In God's word we discover that marriage is not a contract; it is not a partnership. It is a blood covenant – a covenant of such consequence that a man and a woman have become fused by God into one being. The Bible uses the language: "They are no more twain, but one flesh" (Matthew 19:6). In Mark 10:6-8 we read "But from the beginning of the creation of God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh." When man and woman are joined in marriage and consummate that relationship in the marriage bed, it is a union made by God. The hymen is broken, the blood is spilled, and the covenant begins. This is indeed a remarkable truth. It is hard to find any other physical human experience that can rival such a wonder – that God would join a man and woman together (Mark 10:9). Society is in chaos today because this pattern is so foreign to both saint and sinner alike.

"Blasphemous Unions"

America has literally got a fist in the air in the face of God in this generation. Mankind has exalted themselves to try to define what marriage is and is not. This is utter blasphemy. It should go without saying and beyond reproach that God joins only a male and female in marriage. Same sex unions are born in the same reprobate minds that sought to legalize partial birth abortion. How would God sanction an abomination such as homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22,23) when John the Baptist lost his head over Herod's adulterous and incestuous marriage? Adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality all were under the death penalty in Leviticus 18 & 20. These are the sins that caused God to destroy the world in Noah's time and Sodom and Gomorrah. If God is merciful the land will simply vomit the people out (Leviticus 18-20). Asking forgiveness after the marriage did not allow Herod to keep his brother's wife and it would not allow a man to keep his husband or a woman her wife. God does not recognize them.

The Bowels of Abominations

As soon as the Supreme Court struck down the sodomy laws of Texas in 2003 a lawsuit was filed in Utah challenging Tom Green and Rodney Holm's polygamy convictions. Supreme Court justice Scalia in his dissenting opinion stated that state laws against bigamy, same-sex marriage, adult incest, prostitution, adultery, fornication, and bestiality are called into question by that decision.

As American's have become embolden to not feel sufficed to merely commit such abominations they will seek to have them constitutionalized and rights sought for marriage in each respective category. These reprobate marriages will take Romans 1 and 2 to the next level as the people wholly overthrow the law of God in their minds and set themselves up for FULL BLOWN REPROBATION (Romans 1:28). You cannot excuse God from your heart to commit such sins and not be in danger of eternal damnation. First it will be men marry men and women marry women;

then men and women marrying close family members. We know it today as incest, but it may soon be a civil right. If the Lord spares America from the same fires of Sodom ere many years pedifilia, pologamy, and beastility may well find their days in court. Prostitution may soon be as legal as gambling. Children could be perpetual victims of adult pedifilia. Adults may well take children not yet past the flower of their age to wife or husband (I Corinthians 7:36; also as did Muhummad). After America is overcome with pagan sexuality the only thing left is to integrate idols and their associated demons (Psalm 106:34-38). Temple prostitution could be legal within the next 10 years. All of these things should have any God fearing person vexed- as our society is now officially more abominable than Sodom and Gommorah in this regard (II Peter 2:8). Fear and trembling should be the state of anyone who knows their bible and God's track record of judgment. Genesis 6 would be the only abominations left to commit.

Why God Created Marriage

Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union (Malachi 2:15 NLT). First of all God warns believers not to enter a marriage in which the other person is not a believer. The Mosaic Law clearly stated that an Israelite was never to marry a Canaanite. The Israelite would be constantly tempted to embrace the spouse's god (Exodus 34:10-17; Deuteronomy 7:3-4). This is exactly what happened to Solomon (I Kings 11:1-9). Likewise, the apostle Paul commanded the members of the church at Corinth, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6:14). Statistics reveal overwhelmingly that children whose father's do not serve God are most likely to rebel against God- regardless of whether the mother serves God or not. This leaves generations of damned souls being birthed into the earth. One act of disobedience in this commandment can contribute to the loss of multitudes of souls. A woman who marrys an ungodly man will come under his authority and headship (Ephesians 5:23). When he kicks against the pricks- she and her babies will be along for the ride. God created marriage to raise up godly seed in the earth- disregard this command and the exact opposite will happen. Who could stand watching their sons and daughters damned because they disobeyed God?! This thing ought never happen again among believers; but rebellion and lust is usually stronger than reason, sad stories, or threatenings. In what greater measure could a child of God possibly wax wanton, or sin against Christ than this?

Choosing a Mate

Man in his heart determines his way but the Lord directeth his steps (Proverbs 16:9). If a person seeking a mate will delight themselves in the Lord God will give them the desires of their heart (Psalm 37:4). Psalm 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. When our mind is on God our priorities are right and God will give us the perfect mate. Going ahead of God is sure to bring disaster! God desires good things for His children. James tells us that when we ask sometimes we do not receive because our motive is not love- but lust (James 4:3). This is what Paul was referring to when He told Timothy that young widows often "wax wanton" against Christ by going after a man at the expense of their relationship with God (I Timothy 5:11-13). Waiting on God is worth it.

Society in Chaos

The enemy seeks first and foremost to undermine the basic unit of the family, because it serves as the foundation from which a godly community is built (Malachi 2). We have watched as the spirit of antichrist has invaded our schools teaching children from a young age that many abominations are ok to commit- calling good evil and evil good (Isaiah 5:20). Then the child goes home and Hollywood gives them a good dose of adultery and fornication as if they were normal behaviors. Then their parents divorce and a mass of confusion sets in until it's nearly impossible for those kids to fully recover. This is what Malachi 2:16 means when God said that divorce is as cruel as putting on your victim's bloodstained coat! (NLT).

I hear the cry of the Spirit saying God is tired of fornication. He's tired of adultery. He's tired of homosexuality. He's tired of the whoreing and whoremongering. He's most of all tired of the excuses! He is tired once again of the same sets of sins that have plagued mankind since Noah's time. Sins that once destroyed every breathing creature on earth save those on the ark- and caused fire to reduce Sodom and Gomorrah to a mere remembrance. People with eyes full of adultery are sinning and provoking God- totally ignoring warning after warning after warning (II Peter 2:14). People are leaving spouses without cause and unleashing a torrent of confused, twisted, and complex sin that no Spiritual gift can unwind. All that's left for them is judgment if they don't repent- God has talked all He's going to. Hell will be a refuge for these people if they quit not their sins (Compare Matthew 10:15 & Jude 7).

Writings of Divorcement

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept (Mark 10:2-5). There were two schools of thought in Jesus time Hillel and Shammai; one believed adultery to be the only cause for divorce and the other would grant it over burned biscuits.

The Grievous Sin of Fornication

Fornication is a blanket term defined as any sexual contact between unmarried people. It runs the full gamut of sin from sins of the heart to beastility and beyond (Gk. pornea). It should not be confused with the sin of adultery that takes place when one or more of the parties involved are married to someone else, but adultery is still under the heading of fornication.

God did not intend that men and women treat their bodies like rental property before they get married. So serious was God in the Old Testament about people marrying in their virginity, that if a woman was supposed to be pure and could not produce the token of her virginity at the consummation of the marriage, she was to be taken to the doorway of her father's house and stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:21). If the daughter of a priest especially were guilty of fornication, she should be stoned and her body burnt (Leviticus 21:9); because these things, as Moses observes in Leviticus 19:29 and Deuteronomy 23:17,18, were a great abomination in the sight of God. The broken hymen is the source of the blood covenant that is made between the man and the woman (Hebrews 9:20). God is the witness of this covenant (Malachi 2:14).

Fornication and especially whoremongering is such an agreedeous sin that God has promised to judge the people who are involved (Hebrews 13:4). Fornication with multiple partners is the single

greatest blow that can be dealt to a marriage before it is consummated. Fornication is a sin against God, your future wife, husband, and children. The jealousy that stirs from such behavior can only be dealt with righteously by staying full of the Holy Ghost. For when the flesh takes over it will result in some form of escapism, perversion or extreme anger and resentment.

The coming together of two to make one flesh is such a mysterious and sacred phenomena that we ought to fear and tremble at the very thought of fornication. A fornicator or whoremonger should fear and tremble before the Lord in sackcloth and ashes- zealously seeking to conform to God's word. The body is not for fornication (I Corinthians 6:13), but belongs to God (v13b). As members of the Body of Christ we join Him to a harlot if we dare go in to them (v17). Fornication is the only sin that is specifically against our own body (v18), the Temple of the Holy Ghost (v19). If any person defiles this Temple of God (their body)- God Himself will destroy them (I Corinthians 3:17). To avoid fornication everyone who cannot control themselves needs their own wife or husband (I Corinthians 7:1&2). I Corinthians 10:8 reminds us that God killed 21,000 people in one day over the sin of fornication. In II Corinthians 12:21 Paul bewailed the lack of repentance of fornicators and in I Corinthians 5:2 he rebuked them for not mourning of the extreme fornication going on in that Spirit Filled Church. He took it upon himself to order them to turn the man over to satan so he would repent and not loose his soul (I Corinthians 5:5).

Fornication is the one sin that places us in danger of forfeiting our birthright as Christians (Hebrews 12:16). I Corinthians 5 and Galatians 5 tell us that unrepentant fornicators will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Paul told Timothy to flee fornication (II Timothy 2:22). We are not to fellowship with fornicators (I Corinthians 5:11), because a little leaven leavens the whole lump (I Corinthians 5:6). Allowing fornication to go unaddressed emboldens others to commit the sin. Paul told the Ephesian church not to allow the sin to be named even once among their congregation (Ephesians 5:3). Colossians 3:5-7 tells us that fornication brings the wrath of God upon those who commit it and names them as children of disobedience. The greatest aspect of our sanctification is to abstain from sexual sin (I Thessalonians 4:3). And that, because fornication leads to the pagan practice of temple prostitutes and the like and eventually must lead to idolatry. Solomon is the greatest example of how sexual sin can so dominate a life that it would lead to us forsaking God all together for the allurements of idols. This is brought about by the frequency of yielding to the forbidden sexual sins to no satisfaction. The dulled heart then turns to the mighty sin elixir of idol worship to regain the temporary satisfaction of that sin.

The Damnable Sin of Adultery

Adultery is rampant in society and in the Church. It is a sin that is of an exceptional heinousness in that it opens the door for men to raise children that are not theirs or women to grieve over their husband's mistress's babies as did Sarah with Hagar (Genesis 16). The Old Testament leveled the death penalty for such sins (Deuteronomy 22). And that because people who did such things corrupted whole family geneologies with their sin. Not to mention the extreme hurt and pain that it causes the marriage partner that has kept their vow.

Chapte 3 Divorce)

CHAPTER 3

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER

For the Hardness of Your Hearts

The fact that divorce in the “Church” is statistically the same in terms of percentages as the heathen society in which we live- testifies that the Church is filled with carnality. Two equally yoked Christians walking together in the Spirit of God do not get divorced. Jesus points to the true reasoning for Moses allowing divorce in the first place as the “hardness of the peoples hearts” (Matthew 19:8). It is from this condition that we will discuss divorce- as the error of “hardness of heart” begets the error of divorce. The hearts of the people have to be dealt with- as the hardened hearts of stone are worthless to bring about the true design of marriage within society. Ezekiel 36:26-27 reads... A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. This is what it means to be born again according to John 3:3 and to have His “seed” remain in us since we have been born of God (I John 3:9). Without this process a person is not saved no matter what they profess or confess. Upon realizing the enormity of our sin in light of the true revelation of God’s holiness- we see the great need for our sin to be purged and our hearts to be replaced. Until this happens the cross of Christ appears as foolishness to them that are perishing (I Corinthians 1:18).

Separation Begets Separation

People are not just sinners they are DEAD in trespasses and sins (Separated from God; Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13). You can’t put a Band-Aid on a dead person and send them home from the hospital- they need a transformation of the Spirit that results in their becoming a new creation in Christ that walks NOT after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4). The Gospel of humanism places the emphasis on the assurance of salvation and not the true process of the born again experience itself. The Gospel of humanism says, “be assured,” but the bible clearly warns us repeatedly to “examine ourselves whether we be in the faith” (I Corinthians 11:28; II Corinthians 13:5). The fact that a person would even consider divorce ought to be a red flag to examine themselves- but assurance says, “There is forgiveness.” At the LEAST a Christian seeking divorce is in a “prodigal” state of backsliding. And IF they are true prodigals they WILL “come to themselves.”

Modern Christianity does not teach walking in the Spirit... but rather, is a perpetual “sin-repent-sin-repent-sin-repent” Christianity. This is NOT true Christianity- nor is it victory. It is CARNALITY. The foundation of Christianity is repentance- in which we are then Born Again after the personality of God and receive the witness and working of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). As children of God we have His Holy Spirit- as the old man is dead and the new man is alive to live

after Christ (Romans 6:6). We are to walk in the Spirit free from any conscious sin (Acts 23:1; II Corinthians 1:17; I Timothy 1:5; etc.). Without this foundation in place we may as well be trying to teach a pagan about God's true design for marriage. When Christians are separated from God there is no wonder they separate from their spouses in divorce.

Reconciliation is God's Plan in Times of Trouble

Remember in our previous study of adultery we learned that "adultery was the act whereby any married man was exposed to the risk of having a spurious (illegitimate) offspring imposed upon him." This is the great fear for men or woman alike when it comes to adultery. If a married man goes off and creates an illegitimate child with another woman- a grievous and troublesome wound has been thrust deep within the faithful spouse the likes of which are hard to imagine for a person who has never been there. It carries with it the greatest negative emotion in the human soul... betrayal. However, as gruesome a crime as this is it does NOT necessitate divorce. God never mandated divorce- except in the case of the intermarriage of the Jews with Pagans in Ezra 10. In this case the souls of the kids were damned to the extent that they couldn't even speak the Hebrew language anymore and only knew the language of paganism. In every other case of legitimate marriage- God's plan is reconciliation and restoration of the marriage. Only with the exception of fornication is divorce granted by God and we will assume that if divorce is granted by God- so to there is liberty for remarriage. Otherwise a whole quagmire of nonsensical issues surface which, God knowing the hearts of men, and women, would not allow to go undealt with. It is my argument that God understands the human need for cohabitation and would not grant a divorce to people and expect celibacy when He has already stated that satan will tempt those for their incontinency (lack of self-control) who do not "join together again" with their mate after extended periods of fasting and prayer... so we can glean from this that God would not place man in a scenario where sin would be perpetually crouching at the door (I Corinthians 7:2-5).

Except it be for Fornication

As we mention previously, the liberty given to a man by the Mosaic law to put away his wife "because he found some uncleanness" or something offensive in her (Deuteronomy 24:1) was an accommodation to the hardness of the Jewish heart, and did not harmonize with God's original plan concerning the nature of marriage. The two schools of thought in Jesus day were based in the teachings of Hillel and Shammai. One believes divorce for any cause, the other believing only in the case of fornication. Jesus, being tested by the people answered this issue as follows: He, therefore, who puts away his wife, except on the ground of her fornication, and marries another, commits adultery (Matthew 19:9), and he who thus puts her away leads her to commit the same crime (Matthew 5:32). He who marries a woman that has been divorced commits adultery, and the woman who puts away her husband and marries another man (Mark 10:12) incurs the same transgression. This indicates that God did not acknowledge the divorce to begin with and still considers the originally parties married- otherwise the sin would not be adultery merely some lesser sexual crime. We may observe in regard to the passages pertaining to divorce (Matthew 5, 19, Mark 10, Luke 16), first, that Mark and Luke do not record the exception preserved in Matthew, "excepting for the cause of fornication." Hermeneutically, the plain reconciliation of the passages must be found in the principle that an exception in a fuller document must explain a briefer one.

Fornication for grounds of divorce is a sexual crime since the beginning of the betrothal period (see Matthew 1:19) committed by either of the parties with a third person. Fornication is a blanket term that covers all sexual crimes from adultery to homosexuality to bestiality to incest. The exception of fornication in Jesus' teaching is the SOLE exception as grounds for divorce- to add to or take away from this is to add to yourself the plagues of the Book of Revelation (Revelation 22:19). It cannot be said with any honesty that Christ, in saying "except it be for fornication," gives a sample of the causes which may dissolve the marriage union, as one of many which put an end to the state beautifully called "one flesh." Plainly but one cause of separation with remarriage is in his thoughts. Christ says, let not man put asunder. He gives a rule to his followers, who must follow it, whether the State allows larger liberty or not. To depart from this law of Christ is to set sail into a sea of confusion the likes of which there is no compass- nor map with which to navigate. Christ offered no contingencies for those who IGNORE this warning- to do so is to cast yourself into the hands of the Living God. (Some excerpts taken from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

I Corinthians 7:10-15

But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Pagan Marriage Laws

For 1500 years the teaching of Jesus we just studied kept divorce greatly at a minimum within the Church, because the Church and the State were one and the same and the Church would not act out of harmony with God in putting asunder what God joined together. The early American Colonial laws allowed the court to grant divorce for adultery, fraudulent contract, willful desertion for three years, or seven years providential absence without being heard of after due inquiry made and certified, and in all these cases the aggrieved party might marry again. This legislation remained almost unchanged for nearly two hundred years. In 1843 two new causes of divorce were added to the old, namely, "habitual intemperance" and "intolerable cruelty;" and five or six years afterwards the legislation on this subject reached its climax by the further addition to the causes of divorce of "imprisonment for life," "infamous crime," and any such "misconduct as permanently destroys the happiness of the petitioner, and defeats the purposes of the marriage relation." Now a vague subjective indeterminate cause was added to the determinate causes of former legislation. The law allowed immediate remarriage, does not forbid an adulterer or adulteress to be united after divorce to a partner in guilt, nor divorced persons to be remarried to one another. Divorces have, as might be expected, greatly increased with the new legislation. Now, society is suffering from a 50% or greater divorce rate and the Church is nearly the same. Without question, the family life and morals of a community once most religious, are being gradually undermined and poisoned by such a social evil (excerpts from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia).

God Hates Divorce

The question that must be asked is "What has strengthened the hand of those seeking divorce that they would sin against God with such wickedness?" It has no doubt come on three counts 1) A state that puts asunder what God joined together- not knowing God is not subject to the state 2) A church that allows people to feel they can now get forgiveness for putting away unlawfully since they couldn't get permission. 3) An impenitent and adulterous generation that will do what they will IN SPITE of what God says or the ministers of the Gospel say. This is a sin that will certainly require an answer before God for EVERYONE involved. Especially when you consider the untold numbers of lives destroyed by such a practice. David Wilkerson writes "The servant of God, the layman, who is untrue to his wife, who cheats on her and finally abandons her to remarry another, is even now under God's anathema (curse)- especially if children are involved. God says to them... You cursed (your) children (II Peter 2:14)." God doesn't accept any offering when we deal treacherously with the wife of our covenant (Malachi 2:14). In Jeremiah 23 God says... "I found their wickedness." Verse 14... "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." Let a renewed fear of God give rise to a renewed sanctity of marriage. "For I hate divorce!" says the LORD, the God of Israel. "It is as cruel as putting on a victim's bloodstained coat," says the LORD Almighty. "So guard yourself; always remain loyal to your wife" (Malachi 2:16 NLT).

Chapte 4 Salvation That Saves)

CHAPTER 4

SALVATION THAT SAVES

Strait is the Gate and Difficult is the Way

The pathway that we must travel begins with a narrow gate (Christ) and continues as a narrow road that leads to eternal live. In Matthew 7:13, 14 we read... Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. The implication of these verses is that the wide road is traveled more frequently because the narrow road is a difficult one. The Greek word for difficult is thlibo (thleebo) and it is translated as affliction, trouble, and tribulation. This is first and foremost the reality of the path that we choose to take as Christians. The New Testament believers knew full well what lay ahead of them once they accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. To be a Christian is to be a martus which is translated as "witness" (usually) and carries a full gamut of meaning ranging from simply giving verifiable testimony through our life or by our death from martyrdom (Acts 1:8, etc.). This is a great contrast to the humanistic slant that began being placed on the Gospel 150 or so years ago that deletes the possibility that any suffering can come about from accepting Christ and inserts a "God is my servant" concept. This was the FIRST fatal change that has been made to the Gospel of Jesus Christ since the Reformation. The fact is, the gate is strait, the road is one of holiness (narrow), and it is a difficult road. ALL who live Godly in Christ Jesus WILL suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Marvel not if the world hates you (I John 3:13). In the world you WILL have tribulation (John 16:33). Jesus said, "I send you as lambs among wolves" (Matthew 10:16; Luke 10:3) and again, we are killed all the day long and made as sheep to the slaughter (Romans 8:36). All the apostles save John the Revelator was martyred. Steven the deacon preached one message and was gnashed upon with the people's teeth and stoned to death (Acts 7:59), Peter was imprisoned for preaching. James the half brother of our Lord was beaten to death with a fullers club and that is just the beginning. Paul was beaten, stoned, left for dead, ship wrecked and a host of other inhumane things (II Corinthians 11). The time would fail us to tell of the prophets that were stoned, sawn asunder, afflicted, etc. (Hebrews 11:37).

There is a SHARP contrast between Christ's message and our modern American televangelistic 'gospel' of prosperity: "Come to God and He will bless you financially, etc." This is an American gospel that ignores the fact that 2/3rds of the worlds Christians live in poverty and many of them are persecuted, beaten, or killed for their faith. The fact is, if America's gospel can't be preached in Sudan where Christians die daily; it shouldn't be preached in America! If there was ever a generation that needed the Gospel to be presented EXACTLY as Christ presented it- it is this one. The Gospel itself filters a lot of chaff early on; but if the laborers of the harvest are working the fields as necessary, a new batch will be coming in continually and Christ will glean His wheat from the harvest. The modern "Church Growth" philosophy says... "don't offend" and take down the

cross if necessary, sin is not on the menu. If God had wanted numbers He would have changed the message Himself. Moreover, the true wheat rejects such a message because their conscience warns them of its fraudulence. The impenitent heart embraces it and will even agree with it; but those are not the terms of the agreement we are supposed to be preaching.

Counting the Cost

When Christ called Paul the Apostle one of the first things He did was to show him all the things that he would suffer for the Lord before he died (Acts 9:16). Jesus told us we should count the cost before serving Him. In the next verse He says... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33) The disciples left their fishing nets, tax collecting, and Zealotry to follow Christ. You are literally exchanging the bonds of sin for the bonds of Christ when you genuinely get saved. Jesus intentionally tried to point out something in a person that would disqualify them from following Him (as with the rich young ruler) and often would offend the people to see if they continued following Him (See John 6:54-68). Unless you sell out lock, stock, and barrel you cannot be Christ's disciple (Matthew 10:37-39, etc.). Later in Matthew 19:27-29 we read... Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. This is not a "least common denominator" message; it is a message designed specifically to separate chaff from wheat. Christ was not interested in followers... He wanted disciples.

The Road less Traveled

Key in on a word Jesus used in Matthew 7:14 "BECAUSE" (because narrow is the gate and difficult is the road). There is a reason why impenitent sinners ignore the light that God gives them to see the gate and enter on to the right road. That reason is that they love their sin and that way is the easiest way (in the beginning). John 3:19-21 reads... And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. Here is that word "BECAUSE" again. The broad road is downhill all the way to hell; but the narrow road is an uphill climb all the way to Heaven. It is a narrow and difficult road to travel and because of that it is the road far less traveled. Man does not miss the opportunity to get on the right road because he or she is unaware of it; they miss it intentionally because they don't want it. We see it in America where there is more "light of truth" than anywhere in the world, but is America responding to that light? Is America seeing the road less traveled with great clarity and luminance and jumping right on? The fact is, there are more sources of light (churches, Christians, radio messages, TV, etc.) in America than anywhere in the world; but do they head for that difficult road? The road for many is seen CLEARLY and rejected PLAINLY. They know full well what road they are on and have no intention of doing a "U" turn. The biblical concept for this is called "suppressing the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). It is a condition when a person knows right and does wrong. If a person wants to serve God we must do everything we can to help them along and shepherd them. Changing the message will not draw one person one inch closer to

God. As a matter of fact it brings anathema (a curse) upon our heads (Galatians 1:8). To continue to try to force feed a person the Gospel when they openly reject it is to cast your pearls before swine- to which we were given instruction not to do (Matthew 7:6). Jesus said to wipe the dust from your feet and head out to the next wheat field (Matthew 10:14, 15). We have wasted so much time, energy, and resources trying to convert impenitent chaff to wheat that we have utterly neglected the whited harvest! Some people have heard the gospel so many different times and ways it is nonsensical and a reproach against Christ. It would be like struggling to bring a person who refused to leave from a burning building while others who would readily leave are left to burn to death. As unpopular as it will be- this generation MUST learn to MOVE ON! Far too many people are going to Hell to play games with people. Most of these people know better and know the way out of the building to safety. That is not giving up on people- it is doing what we were told. We need to obey Christ and stop this massive sin.

The Wrath of God Revealed

Romans 2:1 tells that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ALL that hold the truth in unrighteousness. We are all accountable for ALL of the LIGHT we have. Luke 12:47-49 reads... And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? When a person openly rejects Christ they are toying with damnation and it is left to the stewards of the manifold grace of God that must tell them- lest their blood be on our hands and heads (See I Peter 4:10 & Ezekiel 33). As it is written... They who despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:27-31).

Initial Evidence of a Born Again Experience

Much emphasis and rightly so is placed upon the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Ghost (tongues). But how much MORE should there have been these many years... an INITIAL EVIDENCE teaching on the Born-Again experience? Hosea 10:12 gives us a starting point saying... Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. There must be a brokenness that comes by the law of God breaking the heart that it might convert the soul (Psalm 19:7). We "plow" 90% law to break up the heart and we sow 10% grace (seed). If we neglect this stirring of the fallow ground, carelessly sow, or the heart is rock hardened by impenitence, the seed will not survive or be productive. Maximum repentance digs a trench in the heart at the optimal depth for planting the seed of God's word. We then change analogies to that of giving birth. Labor is time consuming and painful- so to when a person is born again. Few if any babies are ever born without tears being shed on part of mother and baby. If a baby is born and does not cry panic soon sets in. So to being born again of the Spirit is a transformation and newness that brings with it HUNGER

and THIRST, with a heart that CRIES out to God. The mouth of a born again believer IMMEDIATELY begins confessing their new life- UNCOERCED- but rather, from the abundance of their NEW heart of flesh their mouth speaketh (Romans 10:10). There is an immediate hunger for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Jesus said His “meat” was to do the will of God and so to it is the “meat” of a born again believer to do likewise (John 4:34). The milk of God’s word provides the initial instructions to satisfy that newborn hunger and it begins with the commandment to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Jesus said baptism was an act to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15) and it is the first real act a born again person can do. The Ethiopian Eunuch heard the gospel and IMMEDIATELY wanted to be baptised out of that newfound desire and NATURE to do the WILL of Him that birthed us by the Spirit. If the “baby” won’t take that bottle when offered it-it is no different than a lack of evidence of tongues for the baptism in the Holy Ghost (only more important). How could they be born as this? There is no such thing as a newborn baby that does not have an appetite. The milk of the word becomes “meat” not when we HEAR it, but when we DO it (James 1:22). The end of this process in keeping with the baby analogy of Christ is uncontrolled bowels (lit. Gk. spleen or intestine) of compassion and mercies, kindness, etc. (Compare Mark 7:19; Acts 1:18 ; Colossians 3:12; I John 3:17). It begins with a crying out of the heart a hunger and thirst for righteousness- followed by God filling them with a means (the milk and later meat of the word) to DO that righteousness (II Corinthians 9:9). When we hear the word and do the work THAT is the “MEAT” of the born again believer- just as it was for Jesus.

Chapte 5 Salvation that Lasts)

CHAPTER 5

SALVATION THAT LASTS

Another Gospel?

The book of Galatians is the most unique of all of Paul the Apostles epistles for this one reason- it was written totally by his own hand. Normally Paul would write a salutation at the beginning and end of each book and dictate the contents to one of his close associates (an amanuensis). When he had completed his work, Paul the apostle took up the pen o - reed, and added, in his own large characters (Galatians 6:11), the authenticating autograph, sometimes with special stress on the fact that this was his writing (1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18; II Thessalonians 3:17), and always with one of the closing salutations, "grace be with thee" or "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Paul wrote in large characters because it is likely he had a terrible eye condition. When Galatians was written- the large characters covered the entire body of the text- as it was written suddenly and urgently under great distress and concern. This no doubt would have caused great alarm to the one opening it.

One of the first things Paul does in Galatians is pronounce a curse upon anyone who would preach a different Gospel (Galatians 1:6). In this case some had come to bring the people under the bondage of the law rather than instructing them to live the life of a Christian by faith. We read in Galatians 3:2-3... This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? This is to ask them whether they were now living the Christian life in their own power or by the power of the Spirit of God. He continues and then adds in Galatians 3:26-27... For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Born Again and Now the Children of God

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (Galatians 4:4-6). This is not a pie in the sky idea- it is a real transformation in which the Spirit of God confirms to us that we are God's children. We CRY OUT to God as a newborn baby would for its parents. He continues in Galatians 4:19-20... My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. DOUBT? Doubt of what? Doubt that they were ever really born again. He continues on... Galatians 4:27-29... For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Ishmael persecuted Isaac and was thrust out of the home with his mother- so to, those who live after the flesh- either under the law for salvation or by the works of the flesh for sin- will likewise be thrust into outer darkness in the end (Galatians 5:19-21). Any life we live that is not by the power of the Spirit of God is in this category.

Ye Did Run Well-Who Did Hinder You?

The passage that asks this question in Galatians 5:7 is the crux of what was going on. Here was a people that was running the race with patience and all the sudden because they listened to a false teacher returned back to trying to live the Christian life in the flesh. They built again the things they destroyed and made themselves transgressors (Galatians 2:18). They became carnal and had no other power but to “walk as men” and live like everyone else (I Corinthians 3:3). When a baby is hungry they will crawl around on the floor and literally pick up anything that will fit in their mouth to eat. These young Christians had been seduced by someone feeding them a deadly poison. They had returned to try to live the Christian life by the beggarly works of the law and by the works of the law will no flesh be justified. Christianity is not a pipe dream; neither legalism nor license- it is a life we live by the Spirit of God.

Romans 8 Parallels Galatians 4

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8:13-16). Here again is that doctrine “the Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are children of God.” This is the key to everything. Ephesians 1:13, 14... In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. And again... Romans 8:9-11... Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. The internal evidence that we are Children of God is that we long to CRY OUT to God and we HUNGER and THIRST after righteousness. The external evidence is by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5)- to which Jesus said it is by their fruits that you will know them and John the Baptist said that if the fruit is not there the tree will be chopped down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 3:10; 7:16-20).

My Sheep

In any given church there are three type of people: sheep, goats, and wolves. Concerning the sheep in John 10:3-5... To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. The goats are those according to Matthew 25 that were in the pasture with the sheep and were divided based upon whether or not the exhibited the love of Christ in their life (Matthew 25:31:46). This is at the end of time we must

remember. The division will not be based upon confession- but on fruits. This is why John said we ought not love in word or in tongue- but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18). The goats heard what the sheep heard- but they were not DOERS of the work (James 1:25). Why? Because they were goats and not sheep. Wolves are there to devour the flock with all manor of false doctrine or sin and desire to draw disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29-31). Paul warned the Church in Acts for 3 years in crying and tears about these sinful deceivers. But the sheep hear the voice of Christ and another they will NOT follow. Jesus said that "if it were possible" they would deceive even the very elect (Matthew 24:24). These deceivers may even produce signs and wonders (Mark 13:22). It is to those sheep that know His voice and do His will that He gives eternal life and they will never perish (John 10:28). God calls the wolves and goats to REPENTANCE. Clearly the difference between the sheep and the goat is their nature: one follows Christ- the other follows whoever.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

God does not save people in their sins, He saves them from their sins. When you are genuinely born again the Spirit of God takes up residence in you to begin a process of transforming you into the personality of Jesus Christ. Everyone right now either has the nature of the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) or you are a partaker of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). Ephesians 2:2-3 reads...Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. We were "of our father the devil" doing the deeds of his depraved nature before we were saved (John 8:44). We loved the world and the things of this world before the love of the Father came in and overthrew by a new nature that former love. As it is written... Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (I John 2:15-17). In other words; how can you cry out in your great love for Him- ABBA Father when your love is for this world? To a sober minded person that could never be possible; but sin has a way of intoxicating us until it actually seems to make sense.

His Seed Remaineth in Them

John the Revelator spoke plainly; but the crafty weavers of doctrinal tapestry can paint a different portrait. It has been said that the Pharisee's were required to be able to prove a false doctrine from scripture to get their credentials- we are not far from that in many ways today. How much clearer can God's word be when a statement like this is made... I John 3:9-10 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. It doesn't get any clearer than that. Oh- the doctrines that have been contrived over the last 2000 years to overthrow this plain fact. The nature of God is to live holy and righteous. The evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the fruits of the Spirit and fruit unto holiness. As it is written... But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord

(Romans 6:22-23).

Salvation the Lasts

Salvation that lasts is a salvation that God began and will personally perform until the day of the Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:6). It is a sovereign act of God that begins when we RIGHTLY respond to the drawing of the Father by the Spirit (John 6:65). Remember, five out of every seven Pharisee's were hypocrites, stiffnecked, and always resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51), and they were the fundamentalists of their day. They knew the word, but not the God of the word. They used their traditions to make of none effect the passages required to bring a person genuinely to Christ (Matthew 15; Mark 7). That "VAIL" is still upon the hearts of many of the Jews today (II Corinthians 3:13-16). The people could not look to the end of those things of the law that they might be schooled unto Christ (Galatians 3:24, 25). The laws "impact" was lessened until it had not the power to convert the soul (Psalm 19:7). It then served to draw proselytes after them that they might make them twice more the children of the devil than the pharisees themselves (Matthew 23). The Gospel told through the traditions of men has brought us where we are today in the Church. Fallen heads in lukewarm seminaries have sent out their disciples with "their gospel" and that "gospel" is responsible for where we are. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is was it is. Ye MUST be born again (John 3:3) and if you are their WILL be verifiable evidence that you have passed from death to life (I John 3:14). True salvation is a salvation that lasts.

Chapter 6 Survival of the Revival)

CHAPTER 6

SURVIVAL OF THE REVIVAL

Do You Really Want Revival?

Revival begins when God sovereignly begins to place an urgency within the hearts of His Saints to awake from their spiritual slumber and repent of ALL their ungodly deeds (Ezekiel 14:6). An awareness comes over His people of the times and conditions in which they live. The Saints of God are carried along with the tide of worldliness and if they are not careful find themselves falling in step with the behavior of impenitent sinners. God calls His people to repent. The word repent is used in connection with the Seven Church's of Asia eight times. Revival begins when man rightly responds to God's call to repent. McIntock and Strong defines evangelical repentance saying "It begins with conviction of sin, accompanied by sorrow for it, confession of it, hatred to it, and renunciation of it." The author as well as the object of true repentance is God (Acts 5:31). Man in of themselves do not desire to repent. It is initiated by God when He sends His ministers to preach repentance to the people (Acts 17:30; Romans 10:14, 15, etc.). The Holy Spirit begins to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8); and it is up to the hearers whether they will submit themselves to God or resist the Holy Spirit and stiffen their necks (Acts 7:51). The Spirit of God will not always strive with man because they are also flesh (Genesis 6:3). Man's response to the call to repentance answers the question if they really want revival or not. Some will heed the call and forsake all their sin and the objects of their sin. Others will continue to believe that they can manage their compromise and in the end will finally believe the lie and be damned because they did not love the truth, but took pleasure in sin (II Thessalonians 2:12).

Short Term Repentance

Some people initially repent because they are in a crisis or they see danger looming and repent only to avoid judgment or to ease the punishment associated with it. If their heart is not changed (replaced) their foolishness will only be driven far from them as it is bound in the heart of the impenitent. When relief from the trial comes they will soon forget their pain and their foolishness will return and take center stage in their life once again. True repentance used to be preached as follows: 1) It must be haughty and not timid 2) It must be total and not partial 3) It must be permanent and not temporary. If the repentance does not follow this pattern it is not true biblical repentance. When those who temporarily repented sinned they felt no shame, but yet they were ashamed to openly repent. They were haughty sinners and timid repenters. They sinned with a "fist in the air" and in all manor of shameless highhandedness, but they repented silently and hid themselves as though they were ashamed to be seen repenting and accepting the Lord. Jesus openly rejects this when He said that if you are ashamed of Me before men I will be ashamed of you before my heavenly Father (Mark 8:38). What wrath must burn in the eyes of Christ when He bore our sin in His own body on the tree laid bare before the entire world; yet a "temporal repentor"

won't even acknowledge that they sinned and caused it. How is it we could embarrass God and all the host of Heaven and then refuse to embarrass ourselves by openly repenting? Show me a person embarrassed to repent and I'll show you them home on Sunday in 6 weeks.

Dangers of Short Term Repentance

Pharaoh remains as the great example of what happens when you resist the Holy Spirit and the judgment of God that brings repentance. As God stepped up the judgment, Pharaoh resisted the Holy Spirit and God hardened his heart all the more. Finally when the judgment reached its apex- Pharaoh agreed to let the Children of Israel go; but later he pursued them to his own destruction. This is how people are, they have no intention to repent until the situation is at its maximum judgment- and by the time they repent they think they have done God a service, but they have only hardened their own heart. And that, because as soon as they find relief they pursue their old sin as though they felt it slipping through their fingers. Short-term repentance is not repentance at all and it is evidenced in the end.

Repentance Means Forsaking Sin and the Means of the Sins

It is not really repentance until the "High places" and the "Groves" are thrown down. Jehoshaphat was one of the great Kings of Israel. It was said of him that he did always have the Lord before his eyes. In II Chronicles 17:6 we read... And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah. When our hearts are truly lifted up to do the will of God we will destroy the High places in our lives. Christians all over this nation have severe strongholds of the devil that have to be dealt with and yet they refuse to. The enemy has built a sin or sins in their life that the person keeps running back to over and over again. True repentance is when we burn the bridges back to our old sins. This may mean getting rid of things that serve as stepping-stones back to your sins. As long as you think to yourself something like this... "Well, if anything goes wrong, I can still go back to thus and such" it is not true repentance. True repentance is when you do as did Elisha and kill the oxen and burn the yoke and plow (I Kings 19:21). True repentance is when we take hold of the plow and refuse to look back.

The Revival Will Last as Long as the Repentance Lasts

When the people fall back into their old ways revival is over. When the newness of repentance has worn off and the zeal to do God's will is wearing thin- there is a danger to falling back into a spiritual slumber. When the people don't get into the word and pray and witness they will be running on the same dead battery they had before. God may "jump start" the people with a sovereign act of revival, but He expects us to then stir up the gift of God that is within us from there on out.

Thermonuclear Revival

There comes a point when God is sending revival that the people keep taking in and taking in and taking in, but they are not giving out. God has empowered them for service and they are using that "power" as a means to a new "spiritual experience" rather than to do God's will. This is where many revivals blow up. People start seeking a "deeper experience" in the Lord in some mystical way and end up ready for the funny farm. Instead of allowing the Spirit of God to empower them for service they keep seeking more and more and more "spiritual blessing" until they just flat loose

it all together! The pressure and drive to minister becomes so volatile that they nearly explode like an atomic reaction from the pressure. Anyone seeking an experience with Christ apart from knowing Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings- being made comfortable until His death- is headed for flakesville. The anointing of God is for service. An experience with God that is genuine causes us to want to share the faith with others and conform to pure religion. A lot of things have been blamed on the Holy Ghost that were not God at all! People don't bark in the Holy Ghost. They don't contort their bodies like epileptics or any other demonic thing. When people don't use their anointing to minister and they keep seeking more and more and more power and blessing—they open themselves up to devils.

Protecting the Ground God has Given Us

It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and not desire greatly to minister to the lost (Acts 4:31). It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and continually struggle with sin (John 16; Mark 16, etc.). It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and not love your neighbor as yourself (I John 4:8). When God sends revival into our lives and into our church serious changes take place. People begin to feel the heart of God to want to witness. They begin to live holy lives separate from sin. Their life is characterized by Godliness. When we begin to wax lazy and begin allowing the enemy to offer us alternative entertainment for our Spiritual walk with God trouble is on the way.

Revival According to Atkins

The revivalists diet is one of strong meat and very little fluff and nonsense. Many people believe that they can turn God on and off like a switch- they can shift into Spiritual mode or compromise mode at will. However, ANYONE who has ever done anything meaningful for the Lord lived with a high level of consecration to God. They were often misunderstood and disliked. They seemed to be dull and boring. This is because impenitent sinners measure their beliefs by their fleshly standards and not by the fruit of the Spirit. What a sinner hates a believer loves- they cannot understand spiritual things.

An" on fire for God" individual has a different diet than a person who is "half backslidden" or lukewarm as a Christian. Too often we forget that Jesus rejects lukewarmness. When we are half in and half out He spits us out of His mouth. When we get into this condition we have need to be taught again Spiritual truths that we once understood. Hebrews 5:12 reads... For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. As a new born babe grows up in Christ they begin to apply the word and understanding moves from the milk to the strong meat (adult food). Milk is for New Converts and when it is needed among aged Christians it is evidence that the senses are not being controlled and all manor of sin is being let in to the heart and mind.

Drowning in Chocolate Milk

Hebrews 5:14, 15 reads... For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The use of meat has less to do about education than it does with our walk with the Lord. Many people in the time of Christ could

not read or write, but they could exhort the meat of God's word. In Acts 4:13 we read...Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. On the contrary, someone who has NOT been with Jesus may have multiple degrees and not know the first thing about the truth of God. The word of God is not intellectually understood- it is Spiritually discerned (I Corinthians 2:14). God hid His truths from the wise and the prudent (Matthew 11:25) and revealed them unto His children (Luke 10:21). Strong truth has little to do with human wisdom and much to do with being born again and simple obedience. The more light we desire to walk in God will give us more light to see with. If there is no hunger and thirst for righteousness- men and women will eat the strong meat of sin and iniquity for years and sip the milk of God's word. Soon it will get so bad that the only thing they will drink is the "Chocolate Milk" of God's blessings and promises. What a meal? "Steak and potatoes sin" washed down with the "chocolate milk" of God's promises. This is the preferred meal of modern Christendom and it's a mockery of God worse than the impenitent sinners on the streets. People trying to use God's promises to assist them in serving their god of mammon. We live in a day opposite of the book of Job according to David Wilkerson. Its as though Satan approached the throne of God and demanded that God bless His people until their vats were full to sift them to see if they would serve God or mammon.

Chapte 7 Fishers of Men)

CHAPTER 7

FISHERS OF MEN

Follow Me

In Matthew 4:18-22 we read... And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. According to John Chapter 1 verse 35-40 Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and it is very likely that John the Revelator himself was, but was careful to studiously conceal his name (See Adam Clark Commentary). This would mean that quite possibly Andrew, Peter, James, and John were all friends before the met Jesus. However that fits together one thing is certain, they were all fisherman. And after their first meeting in John 1, Jesus passes by their way with a life changing command... "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Notice Jesus didn't ask them to follow Him... He told them to follow Him and He would make them to be fishers of men. The scripture is clear to demonstrate that when Jesus gives a command everyone including James and John's father was under His authority for them to obey. And obey they did and they straitway left their father with the work of mending nets and fishing for food and they followed Christ. You see, James and John's dad probably had a career in mind for his sons to take over the family business of fishing; but God had different plans. We know that the family was probably somewhat wealthy because in Mark 1:20 they had hired workers. Scripture does not elaborate on their father anymore, we do not know if he objected to this or not. His wife, indeed, appears in the list of the pious women who were in constant attendance on the Lord towards the close of his ministry, who watched him on the cross, and ministered to him even in the grave (Matthew 27:55,56; Mark 15:40; 16:1; compare Matthew 25:20; Luke 8:3).

Forsaking Your Plans

There is a cost associated with following Christ that can be truly great. Many young men are pressured by the father to be what He wants them to be. Young men, who want to please their dad, often end up doing what he wants. This is one of many obstacles to following Christ. You see, many people like the idea of following Christ, but not the reality of following Christ. They follow in word and in tongue, but not in deed and in truth (I John 3:18). Before Jesus' ministry was over most felt that forsaking all and following Christ was simply taking things too far. Some pretend to follow Jesus, but are never found one single place that Jesus would regularly go and they attend many places He would never be found. You're not a follower of Jesus until you are following where He would be going. Following Jesus means to forsake our will for our life and allow Him to lead us

into His will... the will that He rightfully purchased for us to walk in (with His own blood). We invite God to follow us with His presence into our services, but He is demanding that we follow Him with our presence into the fields.

Self Willed and Spirit Filled “Christians”

II Peter 2:10 paints a portrait of what it really means to walk in the flesh. To describe this he uses a Greek word *authades* (ow-thah-dace) and it means self-willed. It can also be translated as arrogant, but is not rendered as such in the KJV as it is in the RSV, etc. It is translated as “overbearing” (domineering) in the NIV. Christians who so desire to do their own will, that they refuse to do the will of Him that bought them (I Peter 2:1) by their own actions testify that they were never bought with a price. A slave knows they are a slave and they obey their master. When He says go they go; they do not argue or do their own thing; why? Because they are slaves and it is not for them to question. If we are slaves of Christ we follow Him no matter when or how He asks us to “leave our nets” and do His will. This is the #1 problem in Christianity today in my estimation. Nearly everyone is doing their own thing and calling it “following Jesus” or worse yet they believe they can be self-willed slaves of Christ and do their will and pretend to be Christians. But what saith the scripture... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23). Why? Because when they got ready to be seen of men they prayed for the anointing and God used them... but in their life they did their own will and not God's. The things we do that men would “glorify us for” don't even count as God's will (Matthew 6:4-6). We already have our reward on earth when we are praised of men. When you really start doing God's will—you won't get many praises, because God's heart is with the helpless.

The Fearlessness of *Authades* (ow-thah-dace)

The root of a self-willed heart is firmly planted in the soil of rebellion. We see it boldly today in Televangelism. When ministers become “self-willed” they begin to make merchandise of the people. Hear the words of Peter... But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (I Peter 2:1-3). Church, that is EXACTLY where we are today. The “way of the truth is being evil spoken of.” Why? Because of the damnable heresies that make merchandise of the people. Even well intentioned people who you ask to come to church these days will ask you “Do I have to give \$X to come to YOUR church?” Preachers who talk more about money than they do souls are serving the God of Mammon. When they take more time to raise funds than they do to give an altar call they serve Mammon. What shall be their end? “SWIFT” destruction. If a person is obedient to God they don't have to remind Him to bless them. And when He blesses them if they love Him they will do what HE wills with the money. This is why a Bishop's #2 requirement according to Titus 1:7 is they must

not be self-willed. If they begin seeing the Kingdom of God as a "Business" they are OUT of God's will automatically. Soon their decisions making processes are little different than board meetings in a corporation. GOD does not have control of the ministry- the money (mammon) does. It controls their messages and the tone and content of their teachings. Soon no messages will be allowed that may cut down on the offerings. Sin preaching on Television is nearly extinct. There are but a few brave souls left. The Gospel of prosperity is a damnable heresy that seeks to lure people into the Kingdom as though it was a multi level business opportunity. And as Paris Reidhead put it- their "Gospel of humanism" is no different than two men sitting in a coffee shop talking about going down the street to rob a bank in the way it appeals to the flesh. Luke 20:46-47 describes them seeking vainglory, devouring widow's houses and receiving the greater damnation. There are really only two types of people... those who serve their money as God and those who make their money serve God. One serves "mammon" the other serves God- but not both. Christians are slaves to God they are not the servants of mammon.

Taking to The Fields

A lot of people are "gung-ho" to reach the lost until the ministry is placed in shoeleather. The time is coming and now is that real messages of the true Gospel that confront sin and sinners will not be allowed in most Churches- because of the backlash associated with it. This generation, like none in history, cannot endure persecution for the words sake- neither can they endure the word of God when it is merely quoted. It was prophesied by Jesus and is now even is at the door. As it is written... But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Mark 13) That is a prophecy of the last days in which we are now living. People cannot endure sound doctrine and heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. They don't care what you talk about as long as you don't invade their comfort zone. That's hard to do though when God has called you to wake a church up out of its deep slumber.

Does God Honour our Sacrifice?

THE purpose of the Church is to go into the world and teach all nations the Gospel. It is why the Holy Ghost fell at Pentecost and it is why Jesus died on the Cross. It is up to each generation that passes to ensure that Christ receives the RETURN on the investment He made on the Cross. To go into the fields and gather the wheat that He purchased with His own blood. Its as though I hear the Holy Ghost whispering... What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (I Samuel 15:22). How can we in good conscience tell the Lord how much we love Him in all our "worship" songs and not even be in step with a more direct command to reach the lost? We put together an offering for God like unto Cain- its not even what He asked for. We bring in the fruits and vegetables of our songs and hymns- when God wanted the "Spotless Lamb's reward of His sufferings" (souls). To obey is better than to sacrifice. Do we

really believe that God desires our worship more than He desires our obedience and the souls that He came and died for? As I mentioned before, people are all for a feel-good revival, perchance some would endure a revival of worship and possibly repentance. But who could endure a revival of perpetual holy living and reaching the lost through evangelism?

Church in the Community

Drive around the inner city some time and notice something about old churches... they have very little parking. There was a time when everyone came from the local neighborhood to church and the flock was that churches community. You came to church with your next door neighbors. You loved the neighbor (if you were genuinely saved) and could live as Christians around each other to both encourage and make one another accountable. Its not so today. People drive for miles to Church to be with semi-strangers- and the ease to which they fall into sin is immeasurable- because they are not in church with their neighborhood. What would our neighbors say of us if they came to church? Instead of building lots of little churches in communities and having the church reach their immediate neighborhood we build mega churches that are expensive to maintain, require compromising means of raising funds, requiring a compromised message. It exalts leaders into pride because of the numbers and it allows compromising Christians to "hide" among the numbers with little or no accountability with their real neighbors. In this scenario we are sure to find compromise literally EVERYWHERE. This IS the Church growth philosophy played out. But Jesus said to Andrew and Peter and James and John... follow Me and when they followed HIM--- HE led them to where the harvest was and not the other way around.

Chapte 8 The Love We Had At First)

CHAPTER 8

THE LOVE WE HAD AT FIRST

The Reason For Everything

Christianity in its purest form boils down to just two requirements: that we love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30). Upon these two commands rest all of the word of God (Matthew 22:37). Without these two basics elements in our Christian life; no matter how much we give to God or do for God, it is all in vain (I Corinthians 13). I John 4:16 reads... And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. This love that we know and believe then begins to have a profound effect on us as verse 11 states... Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. When we deeply consider the genuine sacrificial love that God poured upon us while we were yet sinners, the natural outworking of that love is to love one another (I John 4:20). When the revelation of God's compassion for us is revealed and is allowed to sink down and touch every fiber of our being, scripture says it would then be impossible to shut up the bowels of your compassion when you see your brother or sister in need (I John 3:17). Moreover, it is the greatest evidence of all that we are truly saved, that our great love for God is translated to also include one another. As it is written... A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35, 36). The one who searcheth the minds and the hearts will give to everyone according to their works and those works must have been motivated by love (Revelation 2:23).

To Whom Much is Forgiven...

There was a time in Jesus' ministry that a woman came and washed his feet with her tears and wiped them off with the very hairs of her head. Jesus said the woman did not cease from kissing His feet. The Pharisee who resented this showed no such affection for Jesus. And herein lies the great lesson about our love for Christ. Jesus answered this Pharisee and said this... Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little (Luke 7:47). The Pharisee showed by his actions that in his own view his sin was about \$50 worth compared to this womans \$500. This pride and arrogance stripped the man of any real and meaningful love for God. He should have known that one cent of sin was enough to damn his soul and that he ought to be thankful. Because he perceived his sin as little and the woman knew her sin was great we learn a lesson about the human condition. When we cease to appreciate the love that God showed us by sending His Son to die upon a cross for our sins, we neither "kiss the Lord's feet" with our love, nor do we welcome others to do likewise. He showed almost no love for Christ or his neighbor in this passage and it it began when he would not recognize his own great need for forgiveness. He did not stop to consider his sins.

He did not take time to name them one by one. He conveniently cast his thankfulness as far as the east was from the west when God cast his sins. How can a person truly love when they never consider their sins? His arrogance expected God to forgive him as is indicated by his unthankfulness.

The Church at Ephesus

The church at Ephesus had the greatest teaching available in the New Testament and especially on the subject of love. Both Paul the Apostle and John the Revelator worked diligently with this church. Paul in the book of Ephesians writes that we should be holy and without blame for Him in love (1:4) and commends the church for their love for the saints (1:15). In 2:4 he reminds the people of the great love wherewith God loved us to quicken us with Christ while we were dead in sins. In 3:17 Paul tells us that we should be rooted and grounded in love and verse 19 we read these words... And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. In 4:2 we are admonished to "bear with" one another in love and to speak the truth in love (v15) until the body is built and edified in love (v16). Perhaps 5:1,2 are the most telling... Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Three times Paul tells the husbands to love their wives as themselves, even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it (5:25, 28, 33). Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit made two final pleas of love when he closed his writing... Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen (6:23,24). It can be noted that I Corinthians was written by Paul from Ephesus which contains the great love chapter- I Corinthians 13 (I Corinthians 16:8). John the Revelator spent much time at Ephesus and is believed to have written the Gospel of John from there. From Ephesus he penned the words "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son...." Ephesus was inundated with the teaching of love, both in word and in example.

The Departure

John the Revelator writing from the isle of Patmos saw visions of the great and mighty majesty and glory of God. As one of the first orders of business Christ gives a report on the condition of the seven churches of Asia. He begins with Ephesus. The Living Bible captures the great essence of what is happening... here Jesus says: "I know how many good things you are doing. I have watched your hard work and your patience; I know you don't tolerate sin among your members, and you have carefully examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but aren't. You have found out how they lie. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. "Yet there is one thing wrong; you don't love me as at first! Think about those times of your first love (how different now!) and turn back to me again and work as you did before; or else I will come and remove your candlestick from its place among the churches." (TLB) What horror John must have felt. They seemed to be doing everything right, but their motivation was all wrong. They had become a sounding brass and a tinkling symbol and all these things profited them nothing. Their hearts were hardened. There was a lot of business, but no real fruit. They hated sin, but did not balance it with their love for Christ. This was no different from the Pharisees that Jesus chastised in the years he walked the earth. They had abandoned their love for Christ that should have been chief and foremost (GK. protos). And if there is no real love for Christ we need not look for a love for the

saints and vice versa (I John 3, 4). After all that teaching on love and all that example of what love was... they forsook the great love that they once had for Christ. They naturally, in an atmosphere such as this would have hated sin without having the heart of God's love for lost souls. They would have been moved by contention, strife, fear, envy, resentment, jealousy, guilt or vain glory, but not by love to do Christ's work (See Philippians 1:16). They would have condemned the guilty without considering their own sins (Galatians 6:1). Perchance they had so forgotten their sins that they may have thanked God that they were not like sinners such as the wretched publicans as did the Pharisee who prayed with himself (Luke 18:11). With them, yes, the Gospel is preached, and we can rejoice, but from the workers point of view it was all in vain because the motivation was not compassion (unmerited love). The fire in the end shall try every man's work of what sort it is (I Corinthians 3:13) and if it were birthed from a heart of great love, that work will not fail the test, because love never fails (I Corinthians 13). They condemned sinners and argued theology real good, but where was the compassion and love?

Retracing Your Footsteps

The church at Ephesus like so many Christians once had a great love for Christ, but lost it little by little. The physics law of the conservation of matter guarantees that the love did not disappear, it was redistributed somewhere else. This is a travesty in the body of Christ. The blood bought Saints of the living God begin to take the love that once belonged only to God and gave it to someone or something else. This is the true definition of harlotry. How does this happen? It is simple. Jesus said that if you love me you will keep my commandments (John 14:15). In verse 16 Jesus says He will send the comforter and in verse 17 says that He (the Holy Spirit) is the Spirit of truth- which the world cannot receive because it sees Him not and does not know him. Why? Because they do not have a heart to keep the commandments of Christ (I John 2:4). The passage says that if a person contends to love God and does not keep the commandments they are a liar. So we see then that the Holy Spirit is sent to steer us and empower us to keep the commandments of Christ and in so doing brings forth the fruit of the Spirit which is above all things love. What happens? The Saints begin to quench the Spirit and disobey the commandments. Both sins of omission (he that knoweth to do good and doeth it not) and sins of commission. The more the Spirit of God is quenched the harder the "soil" of the heart gets. The harder the heart gets the less impact the word has when it is sown. The problem is the soil (see Mark 4:8). Soon preachers preach in vain and teachers teach in vain. Why? Because the "soil" of the peoples hearts are all hard and dried up from quenching the Spirit. Soon they have no fruit of the Spirit in their life and rather than love Christ and their neighbor they begin to love the world and the things of this world and the love of the Father is no longer in them (I John 2:15). Roots of bitterness are then entrenched deep in the soil and must be overturned.

Breaking Up the Fallow Ground

Both Jeremiah 4:3 and Hosea 10:12 deal with breaking up the fallow ground. In Hosea the Saints are depicted as going like a harlot after other lovers and abandoning God's love. The prophet under inspiration tells the people... Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men (Hosea 10:12, 13). How can a person

break up their fallow (unplowed) ground? Simple. Go back and revisit what made it hard in the first place and repent. This requires a serious time of reflection and examination before the Lord. Jesus calls it in Revelation 2 “doing your first works.” So many people never spend enough time in reflection of all their sins (that they can possibly recall) until there is a brokenness before God for what we have done. Psychologists have people recall all the bad things that happened to them so they can blame others for their problems. God says to the backslidden “break up the fallow ground of your own heart.” Recall when you quenched the Holy Ghost and made a hard spot in your heart and started the process of leaving your first love.

Here is the crux of God's argument against the backslidden people in Hosea, your heart needs to be as tilled up as would be a farmer's field at seed time. Go back and repent and repent and repent until you are broken enough to be in a place where the seed of the good word will bring forth the fruit God designed. Who ever heard of a farmer sowing seed on unplowed ground? Plowing is a lot of work, but the indictment against the sinner is that they plowed all sorts of wickedness. They grabbed the plow and tore up with great pain and labor all sorts of God's work in their heart. Now it's time to reflect and do the first works of repentance. Modern Christianity says don't think about what got you here, just keep on asking forgiveness. God says, get about the work of breaking up the fallow ground of the hardness of your heart. Go back and remember what God forgave you of- so your love for Him will not grow cold. Keep his great mercy ever before your eyes by continually considering yourself and your own sins (Galatians 6:1). This does not dig up condemnation church- it digs up appreciation for what God has done and it keeps you humble before God. Were like the pharisee sitting around wondering why the woman is crying all over the Lord and kissing his feet. It's because she knows her sin and she loves much. God forgive us of our arrogance and excuses for blocking out our sins until we had no love left.

Chapte 9 Speaking The Truth In Love)

CHAPTER 9

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

The Most Basic Aspect of Christianity

Scripture tells us in Ephesians 4:16 that the Church is to be built up in love. Love is the very 'mortar' that is holding everything together. We must be built up in this love so that we can understand the full magnitude of what God is doing in the earth as well as understanding the love of Christ which is beyond our comprehension (Ephesians 3:17-19). Moreover, Paul tells us Colossians 2:2 that we are to be knit together in love and in Ephesians 3:17 we are to be "rooted and grounded in love." The very foundation of our behavior and expression of attitude must be love. This is because God is love and he that does not love does not know God (I John 4:8). The word of God boils down to two commandments: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30). On these two commands rest all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:40). Any expression of our religion that does not contain love and is not motivated in love will not stand the test in the Day of Judgment (Compare I Corinthians 3:13; 13:8). Our ministry must be motivated by love. Some ministry is done out of envy, strife, contention and insincerity, but we must minister in love (Philippians 1:15). The word for love used in these passages is the Greek word agape. Vines describes this word saying "Agape and Agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God towards His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Romans 5:8; and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, I Thessalonians 3:12; I Corinthians 16:14; II Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, I John 4:8." Vine then continues saying "This is not a love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Romans 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself."

The Mandate of Agape Love

As we are the recipients of God's sovereign decision to love us apart from any merit, we are then commanded to return that love back to God and then towards our neighbor (John 15:12; I Corinthians 16:22). This commandment is summed up in the passage... beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (I John 4:11). We are commanded NOT to show this love towards the world or the things of this world (I John 2:15). John describes those who say they love God but hate their brother as murderers without the hope of eternal life (I John 3:15). Moreover, we read in I John 4:20... If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? This extends to require that we freely forgive one another (Matthew 18:21,22). Jesus said we must forgive 70 times seven in the run of a day. That number is 7 times the number of members that sat

on the court of the Great Sanhedrin (Hebrew, beth-din- "House of Judgment"; See also Numbers 11:16 70+Moses). This is what scripture means when it said where sin abounded grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20). Moses had 70 helpers to judge Israel, but Jesus sent out 70 with the good news. And Jesus, having ushered in the dispensation of grace, symbolically demonstrated how we ought to show mercy and not judgment to one another. Take them before the Sanhedrin to be condemned? Stone the adulterous woman to death? Call fire down from heaven?

The Wisdom of Forgiveness

Matthew Henry comments on this verse in Matthew 18:21-35 saying... "He (Peter) takes it for granted that he must forgive; Christ had before taught his disciples this lesson (Matthew 6:14,14), and Peter has not forgotten it. He knows that he must not only NOT bear a grudge against his brother, or meditate revenge, but be as good a friend as ever, and forget the injury." He continues saying... "He (Peter) thinks it is a great matter to forgive till seven times; he means not seven times a day, as Christ said (Luke 17:4), but seven times in his life; supposing that if a man had any way abused him seven times, though he were ever so desirous to be reconciled, he might then abandon him, and have no more to do with him. Perhaps Peter had an eye to Proverbs 24:16. 'A just man falleth seven times.'" Because God is the primary offended party in ALL offenses, if He is willing to forgive, we are commanded to.

Shall I Come to You with a Rod or in Love and a spirit of Meekness?

In Zephaniah 2:3 we read these words... Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger. Meekness is the Greek word *prautes* (prah-oo'-tace); and it means mildness and humility. But this does not fully describe the word because there is no English equivalent. The word actually means to have an inwrought grace of the soul; especially towards God so that the person does not fight against Him. It extends to our fellow man, even if they act with evil towards us with insults and injuries that they may inflict, especially for the Gospel's sake; believing they are employed or permitted by God for the purpose of chastisement (W. E. Vines Expository Dictionary). It is not a state of being depressed or down cast because of circumstances, but depressed of the desire to exalt ones-self; and that, because it is not preoccupied with self at all. It is not weakness as some would believe; for Jesus was meek and yet had infinite resources at His disposal at all times. Meekness is to act with restraint when it is well within your power to render evil for evil.

The Meekness of God's Ministers

Meekness is an essential requirement for every one of God's ministers either angelic of human. God cannot long use a person who is not meek. The opposite of meek is arrogance. Arrogance flaunts its abilities as a means to try to intimidate. Meekness restrains a person no matter how sufficient their resources are to do evil or seek vainglory. Moses is the first example I wish to use of meekness. In Numbers 12:3 we read... Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men, which were upon the face of the earth. He had to be. He was the only person qualified for the job that God wanted to use him for. Think of what it would be like to try to use a prideful person to write the first 5 books of the Bible? To tell of the origin of all creation? To tell the great stories of the Patriarchs? To give the Ten Commandments and the written law. To establish the

Tabernacle? To go on the mountain to speak to God face to face? To smite Egypt with all manner of plagues? To cross the Red Sea on dry ground? And that, having been raised in Pharaoh's house! So great were the acts that God did through Moses that God had to bury his body while Michael contended with the devil. In Jude 9 we read... Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. Here is another case of great meekness. Michael would not make a railing accusation against the devil. Not that he was afraid of the devil; but he was concerned that God may be offended. Michael is the Archangel, but could not be so without a great meekness. This is consistent all throughout scripture. When a person ceases in meekness their pride leads them to destruction (Proverbs 16:18). God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Jesus in all His regal power and authority came riding in to town "meek" and riding upon a mule. The meek, God will lead in judgment and teach His ways (Psalms 25:9). He will beautify the meek with salvation (Psalm 149:4) and they shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5).

Precious in the Sight of God

When a person is genuinely meek they will often hold their peace in times of persecution. When this happens God will step in and fight their battle. When Miriam and Aaron spoke out against Moses; God qualifies the situation by reminding us that Moses was the meekest man on the earth. He then called the three of them out with a bath kol (voice from heaven) and pronounced judgment upon Miriam. Why, because Moses was the man in authority and He walked and lived in extreme meekness. In I Peter 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. What a decision to be made that we could decide to walk in love by the Spirit of God in such meekness that God would view us as extremely costly. This is in such direct opposition to the deeds of the flesh that it takes a high amount of submission to the Holy Spirit to bring it about.

The Greatest Man Apart From Christ

When God gets ready to perform a work in the earth- depending on how great of work that needs to be done- He will raise up a man or woman to perform it- that will walk and live in utter humility and meekness. God cannot use a proud person to do his great works unless He uses them in a sense as He did Pharaoh. God has raised up proud men to a place of prominence to do his will as He did Pharaoh. God opened all sorts of doors for that man until He was right in a place to stand opposed to the meekest man on earth at the time-, which was Moses. I would dare say, that Pharaoh was the proudest man alive when He decided to have a stand-off with the God Almighty. As it is written... And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? (Exodus 9:16, 17). On the contrary when God got ready to raise up a man to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ- He chose a man that would yield to Him in great meekness. Jesus said that there was not a man born among women greater than John the Baptist. What was the key to his greatness? One passage of scripture... He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30).

The Tongue is a Fire

There is a people that have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2). These are religious people who do great violence thinking they do God a service (John 16:2). It is important to know what spirit we are of. Lest, like Peter, we would desire to rain fire from Heaven upon peoples heads- and wist not that we were yielded to a foul spirit. Some have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. These are those who perchance may even preach Christ out of envy and rivalry or selfish ambition and not of love (Philippians 1:16). And James said that where envy and rivalry is there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:16). Some are just in a contest with other preachers. But the others preach out of love. It is what qualifies us to minister under the anointing of God (Revelation 2). James 3:13-15 reads... Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. It is earthly at best and demonic at worst. Why? Because without God's love a person does not rightly handle God's word. Anyone can go into God's word and mine out the most wrath based scriptures they can find- incorporate them into a message and literally set a person on fire with the fire of hell if God's not in it. Is this the wisdom that is from above? Does this sow the fruit of righteousness in peace? Is this the love of God? When we have our own concepts of revival that are not God's will- we will err as have most other revival movements. The end of revival is not repentance- nor our concepts of holiness. The ultimate purpose of revival is to bring God's people back into conformity with the person of Jesus Christ. Any other purpose will end this revival as every other revival has ended.

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