



Morning Glory

“The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh” — James 5:8

EXPERIENCED SALVATION • CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP • SIMPLICITY IN WORSHIP

Hauge Lutheran Innermission Federation • February 2010

The Power of Love

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Love is the most powerful force in the world and is one trait of a true Christian. There are at least 14 basic characteristics of God-like love: *His love is very patient and kind - never envious or boastful. It is not conceited with inflated ideas of its own importance and is never rude. Love does not insist on its own way and is not self-seeking. Love never harbors a grudge, nor is resentful, nor keeps a record of wrongs. Love does not rejoice when others go wrong but always delights when truth prevails. Love can overlook faults, is eager to believe the best, and knows no limit to its endurance. Love is always hopeful, ever patient, and will never cease* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). *This love is born of God* (John 1:12-13; 3:3,5); *and we know that we have passed over out of death into Life by the fact that we love the brethren (our fellow Christians)* (1 John 3:14). *The fruit of the Spirit is love* (Galatians 5:22).

He who does not love has not become acquainted with God (does not and never did know Him), for God is love (1 John 4:8). Jesus said: *By this shall all (men) know that you are My disciples, if you love one another (if you keep on showing love among yourselves)* (John 13:35). Our love toward others is more important to the Lord than all our talents, knowledge, faith, or sacrificial giving (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

In order to express His love, the Lord will allow difficult people or circumstances to disappoint us and shatter our expectations. He often permits tragic experiences to allow His love to flow through us. Love is the guideline for measuring attitudes and actions, as well as the key to obtaining power in prayer.

We forfeit our privilege of receiving His forgiveness when we hold a grudge, are resentful, or have an unforgiving spirit – all are forms of hatred. We are warned, *if you do not forgive others their trespasses (their willful sins, and giving up resentment), neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.* (Matthew 6:15)

Love also forgives the inconsiderate actions of others. At one time Peter thought there should be a reasonable limitation to forgiving those who wronged him (Luke 17:4). Christ replied that forgiveness was not to be limited to seven offenses, but that it should extend *seventy times seven* - meaning without limitation (Matthew 18:21-35).

Love will not envy the rich or covet someone's possessions. It is free from both suspicion and evil imagination.

Love will not insist on its own rights. Rather, His indwelling Holy Spirit prompts us to promote the welfare of others (1 Corinthians 10:24,33). Love will return good for evil because we recognize our indebtedness to our Lord for His great love and mercy toward us (Romans 5:8; 12:20-21).

As Christians we can also be thankful that the Holy Spirit will lead us to search our hearts for the reason we are serving the Lord. Often we begin serving the Lord without reservation because of our love for Christ but soon because of praise or success become motivated by a fleshly desire for recognition. *Little children, let us not love (merely) in theory or in speech but in deed and in truth (in practice and in sincerity).* (1 John 3:18)

Taken from *Bible Pathway*

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The Underestimation of SIN

Solomon warned about the damage the 'little foxes' can do (Song of Solomon 2:15) and the citizens in Winfield, Missouri know what he meant. On June 27, 2008, the community of Winfield was flooded when a levee broke. It had been previously secured by hundreds of townspeople, volunteers, and National Guardsmen. They spent days bolstering the levee with sandbags, but it was all for naught. A muskrat, which officials said was either digging for food or building a den, burrowed a hole through the levee. The small tunnel by this 5-pound creature was just enough for the waters to seep through, bursting the levee, and flooding the town.

Sometimes it's the things that seem small, like just a little sin, that cause the greatest damage; so don't overlook sin's potential danger.

Houston Chronicle, 6/28/08

“History fails to record a precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration to ultimate national disaster.”

*General Douglas
MacArthur*

Maine Votes Down Homosexual Marriage

By Dr. Shelton Smith

In a rather close vote, the voters of the state of Maine voted on November 4 to disallow the state legislature's law permitting homosexual marriage. The vote (52 - 48 percent) was a huge upset for the homosexual advocacy groups.

In all 31 states where the voters have faced this issue on a ballot, the outcome has been the same. All of the victories for the homosexual cause have been either created by judicial fiat or by legislative mandate. It is getting to be pretty obvious, however, that the majority of the citizenry are in favor of traditional marriage.

Broadcast TV Morning Shows Offered 64 Words on Maine Gay Vote

"Maine's successful referendum to repeal a newly imposed 'same-sex marriage' law would have been a huge national story if the gay left had won. But since they narrowly lost, the broadcast network morning shows on Wednesday barely acknowledged it. CBS offered 20 words; ABC, 44; NBC said nothing in four hours" (Media Research Center).

Can you imagine the jubilant hoopla the networks would have created had Maine approved homosexual marriage? Their silence now is a real reflection of their support of the homosexual cause.

New Jersey has a battle looming over this now. The talk is that some advocates want to ram through a homosexual marriage law before the recently defeated democratic governor leaves office. We will watch closely to see what they do.

Taken from "Sword of the Lord"

* * * * *

"Righteousness exalteth A Nation: But Sin Is A Reproach To Any People"

Proverbs 14:34

Dear Christian Friend,

I often look back to the memories of Mother and Dad. Each in a special and unique way contributed to the growth and maturing process that helped make me the man I am today.

One of the wonderful traits of my Dad was his strong

hatred of the devil and sin. Through his tract ministry, Dad preached against sin and promoted righteous living. He lived and urged others to live a sanctified life – a life wholly separated unto God.

Mother and Dad were horrified at the direction society was headed. They abhorred immorality, sexual innuendo, and profanity in the media. Often they would turn off the television and read the Bible or uplifting literature, sometimes they would talk about the Lord and his blessings.

Having lived long and productive lives, my parents saw the results of sin in many people; broken and battered homes, diseases and pain, broken dreams and shattered lives. Daily letters arrive in our office that give a clear and heartbreaking picture of the results of sins.

Do you hate sin? Do you really hate the works of the devil that destroy the souls of men and women or do you wink at sin. Is an off-color joke repulsive or just "cute?" Is homosexuality an abomination to God or merely an alternative life-style? The devil has devised a whole new terminology for sin and we must be careful not to let our spiritual sensibilities become jaded or calloused.

I would like to hear from you if you agree. If you do not agree, please write as every letter is important. Your Love Gift is also very important as it means we can continue to print and distribute the Word of God.

David Buttram
Taken from *Harvester*

Editor's Note: Notice how realistic and practical this is also in regards to the 'ministry' of the *Morning Glory* also!

"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity."

Daniel Webster (1782 - 1852)

Believable ... Yet Unbelievable

Evangelical Lutheran leader suggests Bible not the final authority

Chicago – The presiding bishop of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* is suggesting that the Bible isn't the last word on homosexuality.

In a town hall meeting Sunday, Bishop Mark Hanson said, "the understanding we have of homosexuality today does not seem to be reflected at all in the context of the biblical writers." Therefore, he said, Lutherans should consider more modern views on sexual orientation.

At its church-wide convention in August, the ELCA lifted its ban on partnered gay and lesbian clergy, prompting some traditional congregations to withhold funds and begin forming a separate denomination.

But Hanson insisted the ELCA can accommodate both views. In his words, "God is still speaking to us."

He also suggests that more homosexual-friendly policies may help the denomination grow.

Onenewsnow.com 12/7/2009

Swine Flu concerns Compared with Abortion Holocaust

In the seven months from April through October 2009, the Centers for Disease Control say that 114 children died from the swine flu. During that same time-frame (214 days) another 706,000 babies died in the USA's abortion mills.

Sword Press Service

Increasing Numbers of Female Clergy

The number of female clergy in the United States has doubled over the last 10 years according to a recent study conducted by the California-based Barna Research Group. In 1999, approximately 5 percent of Protestant congregations employed female clergy. That number has now risen to 10 percent. The survey reported that 6 out of 10 women serving as clergy are affiliated with mainline Protestant churches such as the American Baptist Churches USA, the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church USA. The remainder of female clergy in the United States likely would be found in Pentecostal or Charismatic churches that accept and ordain female ministers.

—Foundation

Editor's Note: In matters so plainly stated, the Bible should be the final authority rather than what is politically correct or culturally popular.

Abortion Is Not Healthcare

Seventy-one percent of men and women—regardless of party, race, income or age – agree that abortion isn't healthcare. And while there may not be overwhelming consensus on abortion in America, there is a consensus that it should never be federally funded.

Family Research Council

The Rising Casualty Count of Political Correctness

The Left [wing activists] would have us believe that political correctness never killed anyone. But there are 13 fresh graves in Fort Hood, Texas to prove them wrong. When Army Major Nidal Hasan opened fire on a crowd of his own military brothers, the tragedy that followed should warn Americans of the devastation that can come from putting blind tolerance ahead of national security.

By his own admission, Major Hasan was a radical Muslim who expressed an incredible hostility for the very military in which he served. Yet, despite his anti-Americanism, outreach to Al-Qaeda, and jihadist views, Hasan was "treated with kid gloves." Lieutenant Colonel Val Finnell, a student with Hasan, said his superiors were afraid of offending the shooter, even after a poor performance review.

"This wasn't about anyone questioning his religious views. (It's) different when you are a civilian than when you are a military officer," Finnell said. And he's right. As a soldier, political correctness is much more dangerous. It shackles our troops' sensibilities and opens the country up to attacks from within. Obviously, our commanders can't force their men to believe in the mission, but if a soldier has moral objections, then he should be excused from duty. Anything less than zero tolerance for radicalism is destabilizing to our military. This was never a question of Hasan's religious freedom but of his loyalty to the country he was sworn to defend.

Leaving a Muslim extremist to preach hatred about the U.S. Army is a deadly negligence that cost 14 people their lives (there was a pregnant mother among the slain). Diversity is an honorable goal – until it compromises American security. President Obama said we shouldn't

“jump to conclusion’ about Hasan. But as Johan Goldberg points out, we shouldn’t jump away from them either.

—*Family Research Council*

Ministers Rally in D.C. for Religious Freedom

On November 16, 2009, an ad hoc coalition of concerned ministers from various denominations (held) a press conference and rally for religious freedom in front of the Department of Justice.

A group of ministers...will join together with others and boldly preach biblical truth concerning the subject of homosexuality. If believing and proclaiming the Bible is considered a hate crime, then they are willing to be arrested, if necessary, in order to stand for the guaranteed First Amendment right to free speech for all ministers of the Gospel.

Pastor Paul Blair, founder of Reclaiming Oklahoma for Christ, said, “Pastors have preached the Bible in America for over 400 years, pointing people to Jesus Christ, and standing against sin. If preaching the Bible is now against the law, then let us be arrested. If not, may every pastor across America know that he can stand strong and proclaim biblical truth without fear of persecution or prosecution.”

Mat Staver, attorney and founder of Liberty Council, has agreed to serve as legal council for the ministers...

Various legal institutes have offered opinions on the new hate crimes law, including this one by the American Center for Law and Justice: “Hate crimes legislation...creates separate classes of victims. This law makes it a more severe crime to commit a violent act against a homosexual than to commit a violent act against a senior citizen, a mother or countless other classes that could be viewed as meriting special protection. Rather than prosecuting all crimes equally, this law creates a special victim class based on ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity.’ This...(could have a) chilling effect on religious speech...While we firmly believe that the pastor’s First Amendment protections would ultimately prevail, this law could put the pastor’s constitutionally protected speech under a legal microscope.”

—*Christian Newswire*

The ELCA Attacks “Christian Zionism”

An article in *The Lutheran*, June 2009, published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, attacked “Christian Zionism,” as “challenging our Lutheran commitments.” By definition, Christian Zionism is a term applied to Christians who support Israel and believe the

promises of God to Israel are part of an everlasting covenant still in force.

The author of the article accused Christian Zionists as being a reason for people dying in “the occupied Palestinian territories.” He further accused Christian Zionists of using Israelis and Palestinians, not as neighbors to be loved, but “as pawns in a cosmic drama.” The article made no mention of a delegation of ELCA bishops who placed a wreath at the tomb of terrorist Yasser Arafat last January.

While the thinly veiled pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel position of the ELCA and their attacks against Christian Zionists are disgraceful, a larger issue is the Islamization of Christianity. There are within the ELCA and other main-line churches those who equate Islam and Christianity, claiming the Allah of Islam and the God of the Bible are one and the same. They further claim that the Jesus of Christianity and the Jesus (Isa) of Islam are identical. They refer to Jesus as being a Palestinian. But nothing could be further from the truth! The God of Scriptures should never be compared with false god of Islam.

The Vine and Branches, Winter, 2010

GAP Store Opens in Israel

Some 100,000 households in Israel awoke one morning to find a blue shopping bag outside their door. The Gap has come to Israel and the blue bags contained invitations to visit the new outlet at Jerusalem’s fashionable Mamila Mall. The company will open its second store in Tel Aviv in February 2010. From McDonald’s to Kentucky Fried Chicken to Office Depot, many American chains are coming to Israel.

Israel Today, 10/09

The Scriptures are not geared to frivolity, and the tone of the Gospel, while it is indeed Good News, is Good News of a feast, not a frolic. No great revival ever started in fun-making nor ran on such fuel. There is joy aplenty, but it is the heavenly joy of the Spirit of God and not the silly antics of human clowning under religious auspices.

Vance Havner in *Hearts Afire*

Editorial

RES *DISCERNMENT*

(Please read Philippians 1:1-11 & Ephesians 1:15-18)

To me, an 'affliction' that I must carry the rest of my life is 'hearing loss', unless my **Savior** decides to 'heal me'; HE will continue to give me GRACE to carry through until faith becomes sight!

It is most certainly adequate when God says something once; but HE tells us over and over again: "He that hath *ears* to hear, let him **hear!** In HIS GRACE, **HE** gives every saved person some measure of '*discernment*,' for that person's benefit. That is most certainly true of '*discernment*' as well! (NOW before we go any further, keep in mind that '*discernment*' is a GIFT From GOD! – so again we have nothing to boast of as being of ourselves!)

The word discernment means "keenness in detecting, distinguishing or selecting" AND the **purpose** for the believer is so that we will not be *deceived or confused*; so again GOD provides for our benefit. IF we did not have *discernment* we could not tell what was right or wrong, and also we would NEED to share the way of Salvation with fellow believers frequently, because we could not 'discern' IF they are 'Christians' or not; but basically we should know IF their spirit bears witness with our spirit IF they are a child of God or not!

Then *discernment* is intended to help nurture and edify the family of God! So the purpose of discernment is that each of us may "*abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment*" (v. 9-11). All of this is to be used for the common aim to give glory to our God in everything we do (v.11). This is the ultimate purpose of both the church as well as every individual believer. We must grow together and give God glory in a spirit of genuine unity, purposing to obey His Word and yield to His Will.

We are to be '*fruit inspectors*' and it disturbs our Savior when we can 'discern' the signs of the sky but not what is taking place spiritually. "*He answered and said to them, 'When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.'*" (Matthew 16:2-3). In a sense the ALMIGHTY would be wasting His time and effort IF, by His Grace, we cannot discern, for **HE** tells us to *try the spirits and to watch (discern)* or be-

ware of false prophets.

We are not to compare with what we like in our own self; BUT compare with what is being said or done with the **eternal Word of God, the Bible!**

Especially in the latter days the Devil will work signs and wonders to deceive the very elect if possible! What a serious and sobering challenge you and I are facing. Just because something is supernatural does not necessarily say or prove that it is of God! Just recently, in talking with a dear 'fellow believer', the party mentioned that things had changed in their church from ten years ago. The individual went on to say the messages are 'biblical' but something is lacking. I believe this is by no means an isolated case, but notice what the Bible says: "*having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*" II Timothy 3:5. Lest we forget, let me remind you (because we care) of the church of the Laodiceans where many things were in **order** **BUT JESUS (the Holy Spirit) had been pushed outside**, knowingly or **unknowingly!** (*Please read: Matthew 7:15-20, 24:2,11-12, 1 John 4:1, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, Matthew 24:24 & Rev. 13:13-14*).

Thus in your 'Christian walk' you will experience, at times, as you listen to certain messages, songs, activities, persons, etc., a check in the spirit or symbolically a little red or amber 'flag' will come to your attention, but you don't know why. My advice is just **obey the Holy Spirit** (which NEVER leads contrary to the Bible); just obey Him. You don't have to know the whys and the how comes. Do not grieve or harden your heart against the sensitive Holy Spirit! **OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE!** Then, IF you are to know the reasons why and how come, the Holy Spirit will reveal that to you at the exact right time in your life!

ONE basic reason why there is some confusion and dull hearing among some of God's children is because of the lack of **exercising spiritual discernment**; for IF you do not exercise it, it will become dull/or limp! The gift of "discernment" is intended to be EXERCISED for our own benefit AND for those who are of the 'household of faith'! "**For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God" and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone**

who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” Hebrews 5:12-14. ***Mark it: God wants His children to DISCERN to HIS honor and glory!***

Please, please read the following Bible verses that are being referred to: **1 Corinthians 13:6, 1 Kings 3:9-11, 1 Samuel 15:22-26, Isaiah 5:20 & 8:20.** REMEMBER your ‘soul’ and the ‘souls’ of others are at stake for time

and ETERNITY! Can you think of ‘anything’ worse than to ‘think’ you have things right with your Creator and when it is too late you have just been deceived? Oh how tragic!!! *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* II Peter 1:12. **“For this reason ...” II Peter 1:12. (1 Peter 1:3 - 9).**

Honest with God

Acts 5:1-11

One of the more subtle ploys of Satan is to deceive us into thinking we are doing what is right when all along, in God’s eyes, we are sinning. We may impress ourselves with our accomplishments and our efforts toward a noble cause, and we even may gain the applause and admiration of others. But if our motivation for service is to bring attention to ourselves or if we hold back from serving our Lord wholeheartedly, then our work is all for naught. Failure to do what we should do or refusing to do it God’s way robs us of His spiritual blessing. Imagine what likely filled the minds of Ananias and Sapphira as they conspired to seek undeserved glory. They thought an outward display of piety by giving a generous gift to the Lord’s work would certainly please God. They assumed that *what* they did was more important than *how* they did it. But they were seriously mistaken. We, too, are terribly self-deceived whenever we reduce the act of Christian service to just going through the motions.

They learned too late that it was Satan himself who had introduced them to the notion that they could ‘cut corners’ with respect to God’s requirement that both the work itself and the motive behind it be right and honest (v.3). The Lord wanted the church to quickly learn that infidelity and dishonesty bear a heavy penalty (v.11). Ananias and Sapphira’s efforts to impress others at the expense of truth revealed that they themselves were terribly deceived. God knew their hearts and saw to it that truth was vindicated and that others would learn from their example. The Lord only honors works that come from an honest heart. Men may be deceived but not our God. DWC

Taken from “*Feature*”
Fundamental Evangelistic Ass.
Tel. 805 - 528-4971

“Having A Form Of Godliness, But Denying The Power Thereof: From Such Turn Away!” II Tim. 3:5.

Some things look genuine enough, but prove to be mere fakes. This is true also of some religions. Religion should be more than a mere form. If you have the true religion, you have Christianity. That means you have Jesus in your heart. If you possess Jesus as your Savior, then your religion is powerful. All other religions are powerless. Worshipping them is like carrying around a dead weight - it has no life and, therefore, cannot move.

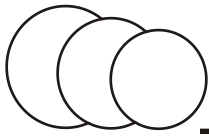
An early frost in Florida had caused the oranges to freeze. Nevertheless, they reached their full size and color. They were gathered, shipped and sold. But, woe to the people who bought those oranges. They looked fine but they were a disappointment. So many people who do not have Jesus in their religion have only a form of godliness. They lack the power of Jesus. From such turn away! Jesus must be the center of our Christianity. A religion in which Jesus is left out has no value.

Dear Lord Jesus, keep us away from any form which does not have Thee in it, or any religion which has not the power of God in it. Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We worship Thee, we pray Thee, In Jesus’ name. Amen.

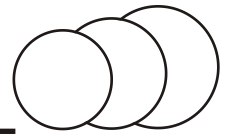
*Thou art the Way, the Truth, and Life from heaven,
This blest assurance Thou to us hast given;
O wilt Thou teach us, Lord, to win Thy pleasure
In fullest measure!*

Taken from the Family Devotional book “*Altar Steps*”
By Pastor R. P. Haakonson

Editor’s Note: ALL the false ‘religions’ of the world emphasize **DO**; while ‘Christianity’ is **DONE!** *Christianity is in the Person of JESUS! HE paid it ALL; BUT* in order for a GIFT to fulfill its purpose, YOU must receive it! Personally, do you know JESUS as your personal Savior?



From Our Fellowship Circle



A. & A. M. **Rothsay, MN**
Thank you for your ministry as the Editor and may our Wonderful Savior bless your heart and by His Grace continue the Good Work.

Have a blessed Christmas and a Godly New Year!

Editor's Note: Thank you so very much for your encouragement as the 'struggles' continue to come; but most certainly we experience an abundance of GRACE in 'blessings' as well! Some of the 'struggles' a person wonders at time IF it is human error or 'attacks' from Satan. For example: In getting this issue of the *Morning Glory* together, there seems to be more 'struggles' than usual. Anyway, God gives the 'victory'! By the GRACE of God, you and I (we) must keep on keeping on! "Occupy till I come".

H. L. **Fargo, ND**
The Morning Glory is a Blessing for me. My husband was an early subscriber. I also like the easy print in your paper for reading and most certainly the old Christianity articles and the current religious news.

God Bless your continuing ministry.

J. T. **Welch, MN**
Enclosed is a gift of \$.... For helping the printing of the magazine 'Morning Glory'. I am enjoying the reading and articles. It has blessed me!

With the touch of Jesus.

J. & J. Z. **Bismarck, ND**
We appreciate the 'Morning Glory' so much and thank the Lord for you and all your hard work and dedication to Him. How refreshing to hear the Word in its Truth!

Could you add a name to your mailing list? Thank you.

T. S. **Forest City, IA**
Thank you for the good Morning Glory. I enjoyed it all very much and keep up the good work.

I am enclosing \$... for your work and May God Bless you in the New Year.

J. & J. Y. **Webster, SD**
We enjoy receiving the Morning Glory for it has many good articles which are so true and which speaks about God's Word; which people most certainly need to hear.

We're enclosing a gift to help your ministry. May God

Bless you immensely for your great work you do for Him. May you have a Blessed New Year.

Lots of Love in Jesus.

K. T. **Livingston, NJ**
Please accept the enclosed donation for my brother. He hasn't been receiving Morning Glory for awhile. I would appreciate it if you would start sending it to him again. Thank you.

We have been blest greatly through the ministry of the Morning Glory.

A. S.
Thank you for your Morning Glory. We read it from cover to cover. May God bless you richly.

J. & J. H. **Ames, IA**
We look forward to receiving the Morning Glory and in reading the articles. Thank you for your work in this ministry and in reaching so many folk with each issue of the Morning Glory.

May the Lord Bless you and we are enclosing a gift of \$.... for the same.

C. K. **Bismarck, ND**
Finally getting around to sending you a check in the mail. Seems like time goes by so fast. Thank you for the invigorating Morning Glory paper. When it comes, I read it from cover to cover.

Have a blessed New Year.

Christians receive *Light* by reading the Word of God, hearing the Word of God, praying, and allowing the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide them (John 16:13). And the key to receiving more *light* on the Scriptures is to live according to the *light* which the Holy Spirit has already imparted to us. ALSO the Holy Spirit works through 'other' believers to enlighten us.

TRUE MINISTERS

Please read Colossians 1:24 - 2:23

By Pastor Paul Larson, Detroit Lakes, MN

It is not always easy to preach on a text that deals with your own position/job or your responsibilities. The ministry, and yet GOD through the Apostle Paul here is talking about the ministry. When I think of this, I think of the fact that this goes out on the radio and there are churches and Pastors in this community that have struggles and difficulties. Something that we need to look at carefully this morning is the relationship that God has meant for us to have among churches and pastors in general. The apostle Paul was many things. He was an apostle, a missionary, a teacher, but he was also clearly a minister.

As we look at our text today I want us to notice three different things that the apostle Paul here refers to when he talks about the ministry, about true pastors, pastors that are **true to God's Word and thus God's Truth**. First, it is a position that's determined by God, not man. Secondly, it's a position that is intended to benefit the members of the congregation. And finally, as we see from our text, it is a position that is filled with struggles sometimes and difficulties.

The first one, a position to be determined by God. The **Bible** makes it very clear that if a man is called by God then it's right for him to serve as the pastor of a congregation, but the Bible also makes it clear that they should be called by God. When Paul was standing before King Agrippa and when he started to share with King Agrippa about the **truth of God's Word** and everything that God wanted him to share, he did not stand up and say, "King Agrippa, I'm an apostle or I'm a missionary." What did he do? He referred back to his calling as a minister. In Acts chapter 26:16 we see that account and he talks here about his calling into the ministry. How the Lord came to him and he said, "*arise and stand on your feet, for this purpose I have appeared to you to appoint you a minister and to witness, not only to the things which you've seen, but also the things which I will appear to you*". One of the things that our society, you might say, has lost today is that the position of Pastor, the position of Minister of a church, is a position where they are to be called by God. Sadly that isn't always the case, but the Bible says that's the way it should be. We have accounts in the Old Testament of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and how they were called by God. The reason that's important is, as we look at the rest of this text, we see the responsibilities and the authority that comes with the position. With that call, if the person is really called by God,

there comes then a real burden for the people that he's ministering to. In fact, the Apostle Paul put it this way in Romans chapter 9. Talking to the believers there he said; "*For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren.*" IF a man is truly called by God he will have a heavy burden for the lost. He will have a burden for the congregation, a burden for both lost and believers. He will understand that God has called him in that position to lead the church and to guide the church in such a way that it will follow after Jesus Christ. The call also comes with a sense of responsibility and authority, even protection. In Hebrews chapter 13 verse 17 it says this concerning pastors and spiritual leaders, "*obey your leaders, submit to them for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, let them do this with joy and not with grief for this would be unprofitable for you.*" A man who is called by God understands that someday he will stand before God and will give an account of how he led. That is a very sobering realization! Thus what I'm doing, I'm doing realizing that I need to make sure that I'm doing the right thing, because some day I will answer to God for what I'm saying, for what I'm doing for what I'm preaching.

This verse in Hebrews makes it very clear that the pastor will be held accountable and the spiritual leaders of the church will be held accountable. He goes on to say to the people in the church, "*...so let them do this with joy and not grief because if you cause grief instead of joy it'll be unprofitable for you.*"

As serious as the accountability of the pastor is to God for what he does, likewise it is a very serious thing to the church members on how you deal with the situation. That warning comes from God, that it will be unprofitable for you if you allowed it to be with grief instead of joy. There is also a responsibility or a checking of things found in 1 Timothy 5:19-20 concerning the elders, the spiritual leaders, or the pastor of the church. God here continues to 'inspire' (True of the entire Word of God, the Bible), in writing to Timothy telling them how to run the church. In these verses he says, "*do not receive an accusation against an elder or a pastor except on the basis of two or three witnesses.*" Unless there are two or three witnesses that can verify the criticism of the pastor, don't even listen to them!

Now the flipside of the next verse is very severe and strong also if there are witnesses to a pastor who's misbehaving what they are supposed to do. "*Those who continue in sin rebuke in the presence of all that the rest also may be fearful of sinning.*"

If a pastor is doing something that is wrong (contrary to Scripture) and there are two or three witnesses, then that pastor should be brought before the congregation and it should be addressed and it should be spoken about. "Listen, this behavior is not right and it needs to stop, there needs to be repentance and you need to deal with this." So, God is not putting up a hedge of protection around the pastor that so encompasses a pastor that he can do anything he wants. He is still accountable to God's Word and to God's truth. You, as a congregation, have to hold your pastor accountable to God's Word and to God's truth and his behavior.

There are many 'reasons' why men enter the ministry and many of these 'reasons' can be (are) very displeasing to our Almighty God! II Corinthians 11 speaks to the same issue. The apostle Paul, talking to the Christians in that church says, "*for such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ, and no wonder, even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*" The Bible clearly states that there are and will be false preachers, false teachers and who are deceiving you into thinking they should be a pastor; but have never been called by God.

Jude says the same thing writing to the believers when he says, "*when I was making every effort to write to you about our salvation I felt it necessary to appeal to you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered for all the saints, for certain persons have crept in unnoticed those who long before had marked out this condemnation for themselves ungodly persons who turn the grace of God into licentiousness.*" Licentiousness simply means a license to sin. There are people who stand in the pulpit today and, instead of preaching the Word of God, instead of preaching repentance, they turn God's grace into an excuse to sin. "God loves you, God will forgive you, so do whatever you want." God says through Jude that these people are not called by God. IF that pastor says some parts of the Bible are not the Word of God or says it doesn't mean what it says, **he is not called of God**. Don't listen to him, don't follow him, get away from such! (1 John 4:2, 2 Peter 2:1-3).

The second thing I want to mention briefly this morning is the Ministry is a position that is intended to benefit the church members. When you look at what Paul says here in verse 27; "*to whom God willed to make known the riches of the glory*"; *that is Christ in you the hope of glory.*" The apostle Paul was saying, "the reason I'm in the Ministry, the reason that I'm preaching the Word of God, is for your benefit." I Timothy 4:6 says "*point out these things to the brethren and you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, constantly nourished on the words of faith and of sound doctrine which you have been following.*" A

Pastor called by God will preach the Bible and is concerned about the people of the congregation. He will encourage them to follow/obey the Word of God. A pastor who is true of God's Word is going to be able to bring to the congregation the *Good News* that **JESUS** saves, that **JESUS** forgives and that if Christ is in you, you have the *hope/assurance of eternal life!* What a joy it is to be able to present that Gospel Message, to be able to tell people that if you know Jesus Christ today as your Lord and Savior you have eternal life. Your sins are forgiven, they are washed away through the **blood of Jesus Christ** and you're on the way to Heaven. The Pastor also will be a pastor who preaches the Word of God. As Paul says here in verse 28, "*we proclaim him*" Jesus Christ. We lift up Christ; we don't point to ourselves or we shouldn't and we don't point to other people or famous things, we don't point to anything other than Jesus Christ. Part of the ministry is admonishing. Part of the ministry is warning people when they're headed in the wrong direction, when they do something wrong. In Timothy it's put this way: 2 Timothy 3:16 "*all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*"

Point three, Paul tells us that the ministry is sometimes filled with struggles. In verse 29, "*for this purpose I labor striving according to the power which works mightily within me.*" Striving to build, the Greek word there is 'fighting'. Paul puts it this way. Timothy says "*fight the good fight of faith.*" The apostle Paul as a minister was not someone who backed away from a conflict, if you read the book of Galatians. In Galatians 5:7, talking to the Christians, he says, "*you were running so well who hindered you from obeying the truth.*" The Galatians were backsliding, they were slipping away! A pastor called by God is willing to fight for their souls, he's willing to stand up and fight against those who would deceive and mislead. He is willing to take a stand for the truth. You, as people in the congregation, need to be willing to do the same because your life will affect other lives also. You need to stand for the truth, you need to defend the truth, you need to stand for and on the **Word of God, the TRUTH**. A Pastor called by GOD experiences the following: 3 John 1:4 "*I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.*" There's nothing more precious to Bible-believing pastors than to know that his members are walking with the Lord. And nothing is more grievous than to see them slipping away from their walk with the Lord.

Editor's Note: This is a basic adapted summary of a recent sermon we were privileged to hear from Pastor Larson.

I Believe ...The BIBLE

By J. H. Sammis

Because it was believed by our Lord and by those contemporary with the writers of its record.

Because it has been, and is, believed by the mightiest and most critical intellects of all the ages.

Because it has produced the greatest and most perfect characters of all the ages.

Because its evidence both in quantity and quality is better than that for any other historical record.

Because its truthfulness is based on the same sort of evidence that guarantees all other such documents.

Because its falsity would end confidence in all criteria of human and monumental evidence.

Because its forty writers were thirty generations on sixty-six books now seen to be one indivisible whole.

Because it would without doubt be unquestioned did it not claim supernatural authority over men.

Because it continues unconvicted of error into the critical light of the twentieth century.

Because it is its spiritual light that blinds natural men who deny its clear marks of divine origin.

Because its negation by doubters can never cancel its confirmation by believers. We have an experience.

Because its philosophy of nature, history and humanity alone stands the test of time and reality.

Because the philosophy and theology of its rejecters are contrary to critical reason, conscience, practice and experience.

Because it produces unfaltering and cumulative conviction of its truth: **I know** it is true.

Because its ideal of manhood, as taught, produced and exemplified by Jesus Christ, is perfect.

Because of its uncompromising abhorrence and condemnation of sin in word and deed and essence.

Because of its insistence on righteousness with God and man in all-embracing, self-denying love.

Because it is the only word that offers a judicial ground of peace to a guilty conscience.

Because it is the only power to renew a soul to conscious fellowship with God in Christ Jesus.

Because it is able instantly to change a degraded criminal or besotted soul into a saint.

Because its power to convict and convert its bitterest enemies is daily demonstrated.

Because its predictions are fulfilled and fulfilling around us with Jew, Gentile and the church of God.

Because itself foretells the ever-current skepticism of prejudice, ignorance and science falsely so-called.

Because its manifold foreshadowings in the Old un-

folded in the New Testament must have been God-arranged.

Because of its amazing aptness throughout to suggest and illustrate moral and spiritual truth.

Because it is adapted to our deepest spiritual needs in all times, moods, trials and circumstances.

Because of its unfailing freshness and inexhaustible fullness shared in common with all other works of God.

Because it does in regeneration, consolation and sanctification all that it promises.

Because its universal application to individual, social and political life would produce universal peace, plenty and happiness.

Because its loss would plunge the race into the darkness of despair, without God, without Christ, without hope.

Because it has saved my soul, manifested my Savior, cheered my sorrows, illumined my future.

*“Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine!”*

Taken from “Foundation” magazine
Fundamental Evangelistic Association, Inc.
Telephone 805 - 528-3534

* * * * *

Prayer As Essential As Breathing

Man can as well live physically without breathing as spiritually without praying. There is a class of animals – the cetaceous, neither fish nor sea-fowl – that inhabits the deep. It is their home. They never leave it for the shore. Yet, though swimming beneath its waves and sounding its darkest depths, they have ever and anon to rise to the surface that they may breathe the air. Without that, these monarchs of the deep could not exist in the dense element in which they live and move and have their being.

And something like what is imposed on them by a physical necessity, the Christian has to do by a spiritual one. It is by ever and anon ascending up to God, by rising through prayer into a loftier, purer region for supplies of divine grace, that he maintains his spiritual life.

Prevent the animals from rising to the surface, and they die for want of breath. Prevent the Christian from rising to God, and he dies for want of prayer.

“Let me breathe,” says a man gasping, “or else I die.”

“Let me pray,” says the Christian “or else I die.”

Dr. Guthrie quoted in *Great Preaching on Prayer*

A Sacrifice That Brought JOY

Most 7 - year - old girls ask for dolls or Barbies for their birthday, but not Riley Taylor. All she wanted was money - or rather, donations.

She and her family members sat on the floor of their living room after coming home from the local skating rink to celebrate her birthday. Money lay spread out before them. They counted it with excitement, knowing that the money given would go to something greater than just toys.

It was their plan to have friends bring donations for Gospel for Asia's Bridge of Hope center to Briley's birthday party. Briley knew she would be sacrificing plenty of fun gifts, but she also knew that the funds she received would help children her age who were in desperate need.

"It was a little bit hard," she remembers. "But we do have a lot of stuff in our playroom, and there's stuff that we don't really use."

Allison, Briley's mother, describes her youngest daughter as having no selfish bone in her body, quick to give away something special without a second thought.

"Almost every day she wants to give somebody something," Allison says, "and it doesn't matter what it is - even if it's her favorite toy, she will give it away."

It was this carefree generosity that prompted Briley's older sister, Berkeley, and the girls' missions group at church to give further to GFA. The girls also had the opportunity to tour GFA's home office near Dallas. They saw photos and heard stories of lives that were changed because of the ministry.

"That was one of the best things that we could've done," Allison states. And one girl's parents later told Allison that their daughter now understands what the Great Commission is all about.

Even Berkeley's heart was changed after seeing how gracious her younger sister was. Every birthday, their parent always gave the option of donating money instead of receiving gifts, but each year Berkeley chose the gifts - until her eyes were opened to the power of giving.

"I kind of felt like, 'Wow! I can't believe she did that,'" Berkeley remembers. "Now that Briley has done it, I know I can do it to help others."

Briley knew that her sacrifice would help bring joy into a child's life - and her own as well.

"It made me happy," she says.

"Almost every day she wants to give somebody something, and it doesn't matter what it is - even if it's her favorite toy, she will give it away." Allison, Briley's mom

Taken from 'Send' (Gospel for Asia News magazine)

Who Will Make A Difference?

"And of some have compassion, making a difference"
Jude 1:22.

Ted Stallard was a typical young boy who loved to play in the dirt and go exploring. His clothes seemed to always be dirtied and wrinkled. Ted didn't care much for school and made very poor grades. None of the other kids seemed to accept him. Even his 5th grade teacher Miss Thompson seemed frustrated with his behavior. Maybe if she had read his official school record, she would have understood him more:

1st grade: Ted shows promise with his work and attitude, but (has) poor home situation.

2nd grade: Ted could do better. Mother seriously ill. Ted receives little help from home.

3rd grade: Ted is a good boy but very serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th grade: Ted is very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest whatsoever.

Christmas time came during Ted's 5th grade year. While all the other children were busy talking of the generous gifts they had bought Miss Thompson, Ted sat quietly in his seat, clutching a small wrinkled brown paper bag. Miss Thompson call them up to her desk and one at a time, each child presented their gift. When Ted's turn came, he was grinning from ear to ear as he presented his gift. Miss Thompson opened it to find an old bottle of perfume and a charm bracelet that was missing some charms. While the other children snickered, Miss Thompson put on the bracelet, sprayed on the perfume, and thanked Ted for the wonderful gift. Ted replied, "Now you smell just like my mother. And the bracelet looks nice on you too. I'm glad you like my presents." It was then that Miss Thompson realized that Ted had given her some of his prized possessions once belonging to his deceased mother. She cried that afternoon when school let out, and committed to becoming a teacher more patient, sympathetic and caring toward her students. What had Miss Thompson overlooked in Ted's life? She had missed the fact that Ted's behavior stemmed from an inward struggle, an inward loss. Had she known about Ted's mother, I'm sure she would have treated Ted differently, and maybe taken more time to help him rather than become frustrated with him. Think about the Teds of your life. Who is it that frustrates, angers, or annoys you? Have you ever stopped to question why they act the way they do? Most people's outward actions are a result of an inward hurt. The Bible speaks of God's compassion when it says, "*But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy*" (Psalm 86:15). In the same way we should reflect God's compassion. The Bible says in Jude 1:22, "*and of some have compassion, making a difference.*" Will you commit to truly making a difference in the lives of others?

Selected

The Wickedness Of Complaining

By Dr. John R. Rice

Speaking of the sins of Israel in the wilderness, God says, *“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways”* (Heb. 3:10)

What was the nature of the sin of this people who always erred in their hearts? (vs. 12). These people did not believe that God would keep His promise to lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey, a land where they would have an eternal inheritance.

Despite all the evidences, their hearts were so wicked that they gravitated naturally toward unbelief. They did not believe in the goodness of God nor His promise, and that unbelief grew from wickedness in the heart.

So, surely complaining and discontent today come from “an evil heart of unbelief.” Paul had learned even in jail, *“in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”* (Phil. 4:11), because he loved the Lord and believed His promises.

So complaining and discontentment and murmuring with what God sends shows a wicked heart of unbelief.

And the case of these Israelites – who did not believe God after miracle upon miracle, mercy upon mercy, provision and deliverance times without number – is an illustration that unbelief is not based upon the facts but comes from an evil heart of unbelief. *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”* (Ps 53:1).

Unbelief comes from the heart, not from the head. Infidels are not made by scientific knowledge which they find to contradict the Bible but by sin in the heart.

The sin of the Israelites was also the sin of ingratitude. Christians in later generations have praised God for his wonderful deliverances of Israel, for bringing them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, feeding them manna from Heaven forty years, giving water out of the rock in the desert, bringing them safely into the land of Canaan and delivering them from all their enemies. But while these blessings were enjoyed, there was ever surging discontent, murmuring and complaining.

New Testament Christians are commanded, *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings:”* (Phil. 2:14). One of the greatest sins of Christians is ingratitude. A lack of praise to God for His mercies shows a wickedness of heart. Discontent, fretting about the future, complaining of hardships are marks of unbelief and ingratitude, marks of one who does not delight in the Lord.

People who claim to be Christians often eat a meal without thanking God. And in some homes where there is a little formal prayer, there is often no real praise, no glad acknowledgment of God’s blessings.

It is shocking to eat in a Christian home and find that children say, “I do not like that” about some good food, or find quarrelsome complaining about the food instead of praise to God and happy enjoyment.

In traveling all over America, Mrs. Rice and I have felt it wise and proper to teach our children to enjoy the food specialties of the area in which we found ourselves. In Louisiana they were to enjoy the rice and seafood gumbo. In California it was swordfish and avocados. In Georgia and the Carolinas it was country ham and grits. In Philadelphia it was scrapple. In Boston it was baked beans and codfish. In Maine it was lobsters.

These wicked Israelites who were punished by the poison of fiery serpents had said, *“Our soul loatheth this light bread:”* (Numb. 21:5). They despised the manna, angel’s food, perfect food!

We are reminded, *“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving”* (1 Tim. 4:4). Thanksgiving is a proper attitude toward the food, the health, the clothes, the housing, friends, job, furniture and car – all from God. The poison of Satan is in a heart that complains and murmurs and is not grateful!

Gratitude of heart ought to make every Christian service appraise meeting. A Christian is commanded to *“serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing ...Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name”* (Ps. 100:2, 4).

There is poison for the body in a complaining spirit. We read that *“a merry heart doeth good like a medicine”* (Prov. 17:22). Surely a man will have better digestion if he delights in the food God has given and if his heart is glad over the blessing, but fear, anger, worry and resentment build up poisons in the body.

The splendid health and strength that God has given me up to my present age of seventy-four is a great mercy and blessing from Him. But that blessing was not given without any relation to a happy, contented heart. My work, my days are happy. I believe that had I been fretful and murmuring and complaining of my lot, I would not have been well and strong as I now am.

Complaining and murmuring from an ungrateful and discontented heart are poison both to the mind and body, and grieve the dear Lord!

Taken from *“Sword of the Lord”*

Saved by Prayer

In the early spring of 1877, Minnesota farmers surveyed their lands, dreading the first hordes of locusts that had caused such widespread destruction the summer before. Another such plague threatened to destroy Minnesota's rich wheat lands, spelling ruin for thousands of families.

Suddenly Governor John S. Pillsbury proclaimed April 26 as a day of fasting and prayer, urging that every man, woman and child ask divine help against the terrible "pestilence that walketh in darkness" and "the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

On that appointed day, shops, offices and schools were closed, and a strange hush fell over the land as Minnesotans solemnly assembled to pray.

Next morning the sun rose in cloudless skies. Overnight, temperatures had soared to midsummer heat. Everywhere the people looked up at the skies in wonder. This was no natural April sun! And, to their horror, the warm earth began to stir with the awakening larvae of billions of the dreaded insects. This was a strange answer to their prayers!

Three days passed, and the unseasonable heat hatched out a vast army of locusts that threatened to engulf not only the crops of Minnesota but the entire Northwest!

Then, on the fourth day, the sun went down in a cold sky, and that night frost gripped the earth. When the sun rose again, it shone on quiet, frozen fields. Most of the creeping locusts had been destroyed as surely as if fire had swept them from the earth!

When summer came, the wheat waved tall and green in Minnesota. And for the grateful farmers, April 26 went down in history as the day on which a people's prayer had been answered.

John Allen, selected

***"Sir, we would see Jesus."* John 12:21**

Have you seen Jesus as your Savior? Look at Calvary and see how He suffered and died for you. Let us not forget the price He paid on the Cross. He wants each one of us to receive Him as his personal Saviour. We should love Him and tell others about salvation.

A young boy had been in the hospital for some time because he could not walk. A kind doctor had made him well, so the boy could go home, able to walk again. When he came home, his parents asked him about the hospital and how he liked it.

"Oh," he said, "the hospital was all right, but you

ought to see the doctor who made me walk!"

"Were the nurses nice to you?"

"Yes, the nurses were swell, but you ought to see the doctor!" And so he kept on and on – the doctor who made him walk was the man to be praised.

My friend, do you understand what Jesus did for you? He came all the way from heaven to save you from your sins, and maybe you have not thanked him for it. May you think as much of Jesus as this boy did of his doctor and say of Jesus: "You ought to see my Saviour!"

"There is life in a look at the crucified One!"

Dear Jesus, let us see Thee more and more clearly until we understand better how wonderful Thou art. Take our hearts, and let us be consecrated, Lord, to Thee. In Thy name. Amen.

*We would see Jesus; for the shadows lengthen
Across the little landscape of our life;*

*We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen,
For the last weariness, the final strife.*

Taken from the family devotional book "Altar Steps"
By Pastor R. P. Haakonson

Editor's Note: This very fine family devotional book may be received for a donation of Five Dollars, plus a dollar shipping. You will be 'blest' in using it in your own 'personal' devotional life and in 'giving' it to others.

Home Going of Mrs. Louise (Torkelson) Jermeland

Louise Jermeland went home to be with Jesus on December 19, 2009.

I remember her testimony in years past and her hospitality when the Hauge Federation would have their annual meetings at Trinity Lutheran Church in Forest City, Iowa. She, along with others, were very faithful in standing behind the dining room counter and serving the vast array of delicious home-made buns and goodies.

I can imagine the joy she is experiencing as she fellowships with Jesus and the host of saints who are in Heaven with her. Also by 'faith' we believe that her five children who died in infancy are also there.

Blessed be her memory as Louise loved and served Jesus while here on earth.

Contributed by Carol Kleveland,
Forest City, Iowa

Jesus or Barabbas?

Two prisoners stand before you today as before Pilate of old. They are Jesus and Barabbas. You are to condemn the one and release the other; the one who is released will be the ruler of your life. This responsibility rests upon all of you who have not made a choice between these two.

The Bible pictures Jesus as one who went about doing good. He healed the diseases of the people and restored sinners from degradation to respectability. He was a friend of the downtrodden. He did not condemn the poor unfortunate woman who was caught in adultery; in kindness He asked her to sin no more. The robber at His side on the cross received a promise of Paradise that day.

Page after page could be written about Him, and every word would picture Him as the best of all good people who have lived on earth. Thousands have praised Him, and countless numbers have faced death gladly for His sake.

I should also like to be among those who praise Him. I sought peace in the world, but found none. I sought as unsuccessfully to find peace by doing good work. I prayed and wept to no avail. Many years of my youth were spent thus. But then one day I found Jesus. It was on a beautiful spring day in one of the valleys of western Norway that I for the first time saw Him as my Savior. Peace came into my soul, and the fear of judgment vanished. Since that day life has changed for me in many ways, but He has always been my friend. He has forgiven me my sin and healed my wounds; He has wiped away the tears from my eyes. What I have found impossible to tell anyone else in the world I could tell Him. When others misunderstood me He could understand. All my joy has had its source in Him.

It is my firm conviction that without His presence my life would have been bleak indeed; but with Him I have had joy for this life and a promise of joy for that which is to come.

"Because There Was"

A man got up to sing in church one Sunday. A large choir had sung *Amazing Grace* again and again and the people clapped exuberantly. This humble man, though, sang "*There's Room at the Cross for You.*" He teared up and had trouble singing, finished as best he could, and sat down. After the service, a young boy came up to the man and asked, "Why did you cry when you sang?" The man hung his head, and with tears in his eyes replied, "Because there was."

*I've found a friend, oh, such a friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am Him, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.*

Christians from every land would give this same testimony. Their one complaint would be that words are so inexpressibly poor in praising His name; all would so sincerely have praised Him better.

What about you who have not become a follower of Him? Has He ever failed you? Perhaps you are one of the many who have called upon Him in an hour of desperate need and have received help from Him. But afterwards you blasphemed as before.

The same Jesus who stood before Pilate now stands face to face with you. Will you judge Him and turn Him away? Or will you make Him your king? It is your turn to answer now.

But who was Barabbas? He is that mighty power in the world which lures and lies, promises and plunders.

He met Eve in the garden and robbed her of all the joy she had and should have passed on to the race. David met this robber on the house-top, and he stole the peace from David's heart and household. The prodigal son followed the counsel of this tempter and lost his home, inheritance and reputation; he starved and suffered among the swine and licentious people.

That robber also had me in his clutches; every time I followed his advice I felt a growing emptiness in my soul. I spent many a sleepless night promising myself that I would not be led astray again. But I had no power to carry out my resolutions. I sank further and further into sin and powerlessness. To this day I bear in my soul the marks of those sins; I would gladly give a great deal to be rid of the memory of those days, but shall have to carry them with me to my dying day.

You, too, will rue the day you yield to this tempter. Let me urge you with all that is in me to choose Christ instead of Barabbas. Then you will also experience with all Christians that it is blessed to serve the Lord.

Taken from *Spirit and Power*
by Ludvig Hope

Update

Choppin' Wood

The chore of choppin' wood is sometimes a tiresome and difficult assignment for a young person (and older?) but it can *teach us a very valuable lesson*.

Years ago in most parts of rural America the wood burning cooking stove and heating stove were a common appliance well into the middle of the last century. Each stove had a particular size of log that would fit in and burn properly. The woodpile was a common sight out behind the house and the job of splitting the wood was an ongoing chore. Each log was cut to the right length and then split to fit the stove for which it was intended. Kindling wood also had to be split to start the fires.

The hours spent at the woodpile doing your part in feeding the fire to cook the food or warm the family could give you time to think and plan for your future. The repetitiveness of doing the same job well could prepare you for the duties of life by providing you with a sense of accomplishment in a job well done.

The work of spreading the Gospel is, at times, like choppin' wood; but I trust even though you may get tired in the 'work', - that you never get tired **of** the Work! *"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 15:57-58)

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GOD BLESS AND THANK YOU!

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Hauge Spring Bible Conference

At

Mt. Sion Lutheran Church

(Lyle Aadahl, Pastor)

In Kasson, Minnesota on March 26 - 28, 2010 (Friday eve. – Sunday Noon)

Guest Speakers: Pastor Jim Haga, Toby Knutson & Rod Stueland

Topic: Bible, Creation, etc.

Plan NOW to attend with more details appearing in the March issue of the Morning Glory!

Please PRAY FOR and EXPECT Great Things From Our GREAT GOD!

HE IS ABLE!

You are very welcome!