

IT IS THE LORD

JOHN 21:7-12

JESUS WAS DEAD. THE HOPES OF HIS FOLLOWERS WERE SEALED IN THE GARDEN TOMB WITH HIM. HE HAD TALKED OF RETURNING FROM THE DEAD BUT FEW IF ANY EXPECTED HIM TO RETURN. IN THE CLOSING CHAPTERS OF THE GOSPEL RECORD, THERE ARE SEVERAL OCCASIONS MENTIONED WHERE JESUS WAS RECOGNIZED BY HIS DISCIPLES. (SOME PEOPLE MAY BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR DISTINCTIVE WALK, VOICE, DRESS, HAIRSTYLE OR WORK. (COMPARE R. MEANS) LET US NOTICE SOME AREAS IN WHICH OUR RISEN LORD WAS READILY KNOWN BY HIS DISCIPLES:

I. HE WAS RECOGNIZED BY HIS WORKS -

JOHN 21:6, 11

TIBERIAS WAS A PLACE OF MANY MEMORIES. THIS SEA ALSO KNOWN AS GALILEE, CHINNERETH, AND GENNESARET WAS MORE AN INLAND LAKE THAN A SEA. IT WAS THIRTEEN MILES LONG, SEVEN AND A HALF MILES ACROSS, THIRTY TWO MILES AROUND AND IN SOME PLACES ONE HUNDRED SIXTY FEET DEEP. IT WAS THE CENTER OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN ISRAEL. IT WAS THERE THAT JESUS CALLED ONE-THIRD OF HIS DISCIPLES FOR THEY WERE FISHERMEN. IT WAS THERE THAT HE CALMED A STORM. MANY OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRIES WERE CONDUCTED IN PROXIMITY TO THIS BODY OF WATER. THAT "FRATERNITY OF FISHERMEN" HAD RETURNED TO THEIR OLD OCCUPATION AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION. THE NIGHT HAD BEEN ONE OF UNITED EFFORT BY THESE PREACHERS TURNED FISHERMEN BUT THE EFFORT HAD RESULTED IN MISERABLE FAILURE. TIRED AND DISCOURAGED WITH NO FISH AND NO SLEEP

13 L
7 1/2 W
320
160 ft

1/3

they remembered another day....

Luke 5:1-11

THEY NEARED THE SHORE THAT MEMORABLE MORNING TO SEE A FAMILIAR FIGURE WHOM THEY HAD ~~NEAR~~ SEEN HANGING FROM A CROSS. THEY DID NOT READILY RECOGNIZE HIM IN THE MORNING MIST BUT THEY RECOGNIZED THE RESPONSE OF THE FISH TO THEIR SOVEREIGN GOD. THE BOAT WAS THEIRS, SO WAS THE EQUIPMENT, BUT THE LORD WAS IN CONTROL AND WHAT A CATCH IT WAS. AFTER UTTER FAILURE NOW ULTIMATE FULLNESS. THE LORD JESUS WOULD TEACH THESE MEN THAT THEIR HIGHEST CALLING WAS TO BECOME FISHERS OF MEN AND GOD WOULD FILL THEIR NETS AND REPLACE FAILURE WITH SUCCESS IF ONLY THEY WERE OBEDIENT TO HIM. DO WHAT HE SAYS - THAT'S ALL - THAT'S ENOUGH! WE THINK THAT HARNESSING THE ENERGY OF A GROUP OF DYNAMIC PEOPLE CAN ACCOMPLISH ALMOST ANYTHING BUT IN THIS INSTANCE IT UTTERLY FAILED UNTIL CHRIST CAME ONTO THE SCENE. BY THE WAY, IN CHURCH PEOPLE RECOGNIZE WHEN HE IS WORKING AND WHEN HE IS NOT!

APP!!

John 2:1

East Lyman

Texas Pastor

Special 1, 1/2 hr of hearing?

Strass (Garb.)

II. HE WAS RECOGNIZED BY HIS WAYS

(1) JOHN 21:12:13

(Luke 24:35)

THE DISCIPLES RECOGNIZED JESUS' MANNERS AND MANNER AT MEALTIME. THESE MEN HAD NEVER BEEN MORE WEARY AND THE SIGHT OF JESUS HAD NEVER BEEN MORE WELCOME. THEY HAD SEEN AND HEARD HIM RETURN THANKS AT THE TABLE MANY TIMES. IT WAS SOMETHING ONE WOULD NOT FORGET SOON BECAUSE THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL ABOUT JESUS AT THE TABLE, THE DIVINE HOST. THEY THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD AND NOW THEY WERE HAVING BREAKFAST WITH HIM! (I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT PETER SAID WHEN HE BROKE FROM THE PACK TO MEET THE LORD. ONE THING IS SURE - PETER WAS ONE PREACHER WHO WOULD NEVER EAT CHICKEN AGAIN AND FISH MUST HAVE TASTED MIGHTY GOOD!) THE WORDS

Table manners - (thanks)

Table talk

Table + + +

Restaurant - xns!

(Pills Creek - Kitchen

EL. jah
-3-
1 Kings 19:5-8

"COME AND DINE" REVEALED HOW MUCH JESUS
~~CARED~~ FOR HIS OWN - ~~ALWAYS~~. THEY COULD
WARM AT HIS FIRE AND EAT AT HIS TABLE AND
THEY WERE IN PERFECT FELLOWSHIP ONCE AGAIN
WITH HIM.

(2) LUKE 24:30-35

THIS IS THE EMMAUS ENCOUNTER. EMMAUS
WAS A CITY SOME SEVEN MILES FROM JERUSALEM.
THIS PORTION OF SCRIPTURE REVEALS A SAD
CONVERSATION OF BROKEN HOPES AND DREAMS.
AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY, JESUS WAS INVITED
INTO A HOME OF HIS FELLOW TRAVELERS. HERE
AND THROUGHOUT HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, PEOPLE
LOVED TO HAVE JESUS IN THEIR HOME. BETHANY
WAS A FAVORITE TOWN, AND THE HOME OF MARY,
MARTHA AND LAZARUS, A FAVORITE PLACE.
ALSO, NOTICE IN THIS CHAPTER THE "OPEN
THINGS" - VERSES 31, 32, 45. NOTICE, TOO,
HOW HE REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE SMALL THINGS
OF LIFE.

I works
II ways

III. HE WAS RECOGNIZED BY HIS WORDS -

JOHN 20: ~~21~~6 See Ser. April 7, 1985

20:16

MARY MAGDALENE WAS A REMARKABLE WOMAN. HER
LOYALTY TO JESUS DID NOT DIE WHEN HE DID.
HER UNIQUE CHARACTER IS MANIFESTED IN SEVERAL
WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE:

- (1) SHE TOOK RISKS BY LINGERING
IN THE GARDEN.
- (2) SHE LINGERED WHEN EVERYONE ELSE
HAD GONE.
- (3) SEEING ANGELS WAS NO SUBSTITUTE
FOR CHRIST.
- (4) HER POOR VISION DID NOT DULL
HER GOOD AND SENSITIVE HEARING.

~~Chas~~
~~Computers~~

-4-

~~Elevators~~ - Talk To me!

~~Chas!~~
~~Computers~~

WHEN HE SPOKE HER NAME SHE RECOGNIZED HIS VOICE. SHE REMEMBERED THE FIRST TIME SHE HAD EVER HEARD THAT VOICE. BY THE WAY, JESUS KNOWS OUR NAME, (LUKE 19:5) THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF VOICES IN THE WORLD. WE HEAR THEM ON RADIO, TELEVISION, TELEPHONE, SALES PEOPLE, WAITRESSES - EVEN ELEVATORS! THE VOICES RANGE FROM LOUD TO SOFT, HIGH TO LOW, SOOTHING TO IRRITATING. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT MUCH OF THE FRICTION IN DAILY LIFE IS CAUSED BY THE TONE OF THE VOICE. A PERSON'S WORDS CONVEY HIS THOUGHTS BUT THE TONE OF HIS VOICE CONVEYS HIS MOOD! YEARS AGO, WILFRED FUNK, NOTED LEXICOGRAPHER SUGGESTED THE TEN MOST IMPRESSIVE WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

- (1) ALONE - THE BITTEREST WORD
- (2) MOTHER - THE MOST REVERED WORD
- (3) DEATH - THE MOST TRAGIC WORD
- (4) FAITH - THE MOST COMFORTING WORD
- (5) FORGOTTEN - THE SADDEST WORD
- (6) LOVE - THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WORD
- (7) REVENGE - THE CRUELEST WORD
- (8) FRIENDSHIP - THE WARMEST WORD
- (9) NO - THE COLDEST WORD
- (10) TRANQUILITY - THE MOST PEACEFUL WORD

(*)

SOMEWHERE EUNK MIGHT HAVE MENTIONED THAT OUR NAME IS THE WORD WE LIKE TO HEAR MOST! THE BIBLE HAS A GREAT DEAL TO SAY ABOUT THE VOICE OF THE LORD:

Gen. 3:8
Acts 9: 4-5

(1) MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME: AND I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE.... (JOHN 10:27)

(2) "VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THE HOUR IS COMING, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE DEAD SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD...." (JOHN 5:25)

"Sack, Sack why?"

(3) "TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH. EVERYONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE." (JOHN 18:37)

QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF WORDS WERE JESUS' WORDS?

(1) TRUTHFUL WORDS - "THEN SAID JESUS TO THOSE JEWS WHICH BELIEVED ON HIM, IF YOU CONTINUE IN MY WORD, THEN ARE YE MY DISCIPLES INDEED AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE." (JOHN 8:32)

(2) TENDER WORDS - "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP." (JOHN 10:14)

(3) TOUCHING WORDS - (JOHN 14:1-6)

(5) TEACHING WORDS (MATT. 5:2)

(6) TRANSFORMING WORDS - "THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU - THEY ARE SPIRIT AND THEY ARE LIFE." (JOHN 6:63)
(Jn. 15:3)

"Now ye are clean thru the word which I have spoken unto you."

"NOW YE ARE CLEAN THROUGH THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU," (JOHN 15:3)

IV. HE WAS RECOGNIZED BY HIS WOUNDS -
JOHN 20:20, 25-29

THE STORY OF THOMAS IS VERY FAMILIAR. THE MARKS OF CALVARY CONVINCED THOMAS THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE CHRIST AND HIS CONFESSION IS NO LIGHT OR SMALL STATEMENT CONSIDERING IT WAS MADE BY A JEW! OUR LORD BEARS AND WILL BEAR THE MARKS OF HIS EXECUTION FOR ALL ETERNITY. (REVELATION 5:6) ACCORDING TO ISAIAH 53:5, "HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS...." SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST FIVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WOUNDS:

(1) CONTUSION - A WOUND PRODUCED BY BLUNT INSTRUMENT OR BLOW. OUR LORD WAS SO SMITTEN,

(2) LACERATION - THAT MADE BY A TEARING INSTRUMENT. THE SCOURGING OF OUR LORD PRODUCED SUCH A WOUND,

(3) PENETRATING WOUND - THE SPIKES AND NAILS DID THAT,

(4) PERFORATED WOUND - THE CROWN OF THORNS,

(5) THE INCISION WOUND - THE WOUND PRODUCED BY A SHARP-EDGED INSTRUMENT - NAMELY A SPEAR.

THE SONG WRITER SAID IT WELL: "WOUNDED FOR ME, WOUNDED FOR ME, THERE ON THE CROSS HE WAS WOUNDED FOR ME. GONE MY TRANSGRESSIONS, AND NOW I AM FREE, ALL BECAUSE JESUS WAS WOUNDED FOR ME."

"If... a false Christ
"Show me your wounds!"

(Rev. 5:6)

Rev. 3:20

BEYOND THE TOMB

LUKE 24:1-53

FUNERALS AREN'T FUNNY, THE FEAR OF DEATH IS THE PRIMARY FEAR IN THE HUMAN HEART. I HAVE LOOKED INTO THE FACES OF PEOPLE AT HUNDREDS OF FUNERALS AND IT IS ALWAYS A SOMBER ATMOSPHERE IN MOOD, MUSIC AND SOMETIMES MESSAGE. THE ONE PARLOR WHERE PARLOR GAMES ARE NEVER PLAYED IS A FUNERAL PARLOR. (RELATE STORY OF FRED CASTERLINE DRIVING DOWN THE STREET - PEOPLE TURNING THEIR BACKS - NOT BECAUSE THEY DISLIKED HIM BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID OF DEATH AND FUNERALS.) EVEN THE SUPER-SMART AND SUPER-SOPHISTICATED ARE DEVASTATED BY DEATH. WE ALL KNOW THAT WE WILL BE IN THE CEMETERY SOMETIME - MAYBE NEXT TIME. JESUS' FOLLOWERS WERE NO DIFFERENT THEN THAN WE ARE NOW. THEY HAD SEEN HIM RAISE THE DEAD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY. HOWEVER, WHEN IT CAME TO HIS OWN RESURRECTION THEY WERE BOTH DEMORALIZED AND DOUBTING! HE HAD SAID HE WOULD RISE AGAIN, BUT THEY WERE NOT SURE (JOHN 2:19). RESURRECTION WAS THE EXCEPTION AND NOT THE RULE. IT WAS MUCH EASIER TO FALL BACK ON HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR RESURRECTION THAN TO ACCEPT HIS PROMISE AS TRUTH. IN THE TEXT, THERE ARE FIVE KEY WORDS UPON WHICH WE WILL HANG OUR THOUGHTS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT. (V. 4, 36, 47, 49, 53)

I. THE PERPLEXITY OVER THE EMPTY TOMB -
VERSES 1-12

WHEN DEATH INVADES A FAMILY, IT BRINGS PERPLEXITY. THE WORD PERPLEXITY IS RELATED TO DOUBT. A. T. ROBERTSON SAYS IT SUGGESTS "TO LOSE ONE'S WAY." (EXPLAIN) THE RESURRECTION

Emotionally
Economically — Lost!
Spiritually
Socially

OF JESUS WAS NOT SOMETHING THE DISCIPLES EXPECTED. ① THOMAS DIDN'T EXPECT IT. MARY ② MAGDALENE CONFUSED JESUS WITH THE GARDNER. THE DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO ③ EMMAUS DID NOT EXPECT IT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, WHEN THE ④ APOSTLES HEARD THE TESTIMONY OF THE WOMEN ACCORDING TO VERSE 11, IT SEEMED TO THEM LIKE "IDLE TALES." THESE TWO WORDS WERE USED IN MEDICAL TERMS TO DESCRIBE THE BABBLING OF A DEMENTED MIND! THERE ARE SOME INTERESTING FEATURES SURROUNDING "PERPLEXITY."

(A) THE SEPULCHRE - VERSE 1

THIS WORD THAT IS BOTH DIFFICULT TO PRONOUNCE AND SPELL IS SIMPLY ANOTHER TERM FOR TOMB. IN THIS CASE IT WAS CARVED OUT OF STONE, A PLACE TO PLACE THE DEAD.

(B) THE SPICES - VERSE 1
(if raised - don't need these!)

WHEN JESUS WAS BORN, THEY BROUGHT SPICES IN THEIR ACT OF WORSHIP. HERE SPICES WERE USED AGAIN AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP IN BURIAL. SOMETIMES THESE AROMATIC HERBS WERE MIXED WITH OIL AND APPLIED TO THE BODY IN A KIND OF EMBALMING PROCESS. BODIES WERE USUALLY WRAPPED IN LONG LINEN STRIPS - LIKE BANDAGES AND A BODY WAS THEN LAID ON THE ROCK SHELF IN A ROCK TOMB. IT IS INTERESTING THAT SOME FOLK GET MORE ATTENTION IN DEATH THAN THEY DO IN LIFE.

(C) THE STONE - VERSE 2

THIS PARTICULAR TOMB WAS CLOSED BY A GREAT CIRCULAR STONE SOMEWHAT LIKE A CARTWHEEL WEIGHING TONS. IT ACTS AS A DOOR TO THE TOMB. THE OFFICIALS PLACED THE STONE THERE TO KEEP PEOPLE OUT. THE ANGELS ROLLED IT BACK TO LET PEOPLE IN! THERE ARE STILL FOLK LOOKING FOR

JESUS AT THE EMPTY TOMB. ACCORDING TO MARK THE THREE WOMEN WHO CAME TO THE TOMB ON THAT FIRST EASTER SUNDAY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT WHO WOULD ROLL THIS ENORMOUS STONE AWAY. IT PROPOSED A BARRIER THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW TO OVERCOME. THEY KNEW FULL WELL THAT NOBODY WOULD BE WILLING TO REMOVE THE STONE FOR FEAR OF POLITICAL JUDGMENT. IT NEVER ENTERED THEIR MIND THAT THE STONE MIGHT ALREADY BE MOVED. ~~A SUPERNATURAL SOLUTION NEVER OCCURRED TO THEM - AS IT NEVER OCCURS TO US!~~ JESUS DID NOT NEED ANYONE TO HELP HIM EXIT THE TOMB. SIMPLY STATED IT WAS MOVED TO LET THEM IN, NOT TO LET HIM OUT. THE ANTICIPATED OBSTACLE HAD ALREADY BEEN REMOVED BEFORE THEY ARRIVED. THAT WHICH THEY DREADED MOST PROVED NO PROBLEM AT ALL. ONE MIGHT EXPECT THEM TO TURN BACK IN THE FACE OF SUCH AN UNMOVABLE OBJECT, GO HOME AND FORGET IT. HOWEVER, THEIR DEVOTION TO CHRIST WOULD NOT PERMIT SUCH ACTION. J. D. JONES REMINDS HIS READERS THAT THERE IS A KIND OF SANCTIFIED RECKLESSNESS REQUIRED IN SERVING CHRIST. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN CAREFUL CALCULATION AND CAUTION MUST GIVE WAY TO COURAGE.

(D) THE SHINING ANGEL - VERSE 4

ANGELS ATTENDED HIS BIRTH AND DEATH. THERE WAS SOMETHING STARTLING AND FEARSOME ABOUT THEIR APPEARANCE. MARK DESCRIBES THEM AS YOUNG MEN. THOUGH CREATED THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE THEY WERE FOREVER YOUNG. COULD THIS BE AN INSIGHT INTO RESURRECTION REALITIES?

(D) THE STOOPING - VERSE 12

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY PETER AND JOHN LOOKED INTO THE TOMB IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GLANCE AND A GAZE.

JW. (Peter)
(John 20:5-6)
ff.

II. THE PEACE FOR TROUBLED DISCIPLES - V. 36

ACCORDING TO JOHN 16:33, JESUS' LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT WAS PEACE. IN SCRIPTURE, THERE IS PEACE WITH GOD AND PEACE OF GOD. ONE FOR JUSTIFICATION AND THE OTHER FOR SATISFACTION. SUDDENLY JESUS APPEARED IN THE MIDST OF HIS DISCIPLES. HE DID NOT TIPTOE OR SNEAK UPON THEM, HE JUST APPEARED. FOR THEIR PETRIFIED FEAR HE OFFERED PEACE. THEY WERE NOT SURE WHETHER THEY WERE DREAMING OR HALLUCINATING BUT THEY WERE TERRIBLY AFRAID. FOR OUR MOMENTS OF PANIC HE OFFERS PEACE. (VERSES ON PEACE:

▶ Jn. 14:27

Rom. 5:1 Phil 4:9-9

20:19, 21, 26

III. THE PREACHING ABOUT THE RISEN LORD - VERSE 47

THE SUBJECT OF RESURRECTION IS BOTH AN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT IDEA. IT WAS PROPHESED IN BOTH JOB AND THE PSALMS. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN TODAY'S WORLD IS SOMETIMES FOGGY AND FUZZY IN THE MINDS OF CONSTITUENTS. WHAT DID JESUS TELL THE CHURCH TO DO? ANSWER: MATTHEW 28:19. (SEVERAL YEARS AGO A STORY APPEARED IN A CALIFORNIA PAPER ABOUT SOME HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO PICKETED A RESCUE MISSION. THEY WERE PROTESTING THE FACT THAT IN ORDER TO GET THE MEALS AT THE MISSION ONE MUST LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE. THESE HOMELESS PEOPLE WANTED THE BY-PRODUCTS OF CHRISTIANITY BUT THEY DID NOT WANT CHRIST!) THE MESSAGE OF THE EARLY CHURCH CENTERED AROUND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS WAS ALSO A KEY. (LUKE 13:3, ACTS 19:30, ACTS 20:21, II PETER 3:9) FORGIVENESS OF SINS DOES NOT COME FROM A PASTOR, PRIEST OR PSYCHIATRIST OR EVEN PEOPLE IN A SUPPORT GROUP - ONLY FROM CHRIST. IN THE GREAT RESURRECTION CHAPTER OF THE BIBLE, THIS IS MADE VERY CLEAR. (I COR. 15:1-4, 14:20)

IV. THE POWER FOR NEW MINISTRY - VERSE 49

THE EARLY CHURCH DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFLUENCE TO KEEP ITS LEADERS OUT OF JAIL. ITS POWER WAS NOT IN POLITICAL ASSOCIATION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN RECENT DAYS, EVEN FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED IN PRINCIPLE WITH POLITICAL PERSONS BUT THIS HAS NOT ENHANCED THE CHURCH'S POWER. IT SEEMS THAT WHEN THE CHURCH RESORTS TO HUMAN ABILITY IT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. ITS SUPERNATURAL TASK DEPENDS UPON SUPERNATURAL POWER. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS BOTH THE BELIEVER AND THE CHURCH'S SOURCE OF POWER. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE. AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST, HIS FOLLOWERS WERE DISCOURAGED AND POWERLESS. IN 50 DAYS ALL OF THAT CHANGED - ACTS 1:8. THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME DOWN AND THE INFANT CHURCH WENT FORTH. WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT PENTECOST WOULD HAVE COME WHETHER THEY TARRIED OR NOT. IT WAS A HISTORIC DAY ON GOD'S CALENDAR - JUST LIKE CALVARY. THE 120 DISCIPLES TARRIED IN JERUSALEM IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND. IT SIMPLY PUT THEM IN THE PLACE WHERE GOD COULD BLESS THEM AS HE MOVED ON THE CHURCH. THE SECRET OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS IN THE UPPER ROOM NOT THE SUPPER ROOM. THE WORD WAITING IN THE TEXT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WAITERS! (EXPLAIN)

V. THE PRAISE THAT WAS THE HALLMARK OF THE EARLY CHURCH - VERSE 53

THE HAPPINESS OF EASTER SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT WE WEAR - UNLESS IT IS THE GARMENT OF JOY AND PRAISE! THIS WAS NOT A BROKEN-HEARTED REJOICING BUT ONE OF GREAT BLESSING. JESUS CHRIST SETS THE JOY BELLS OF THE HEART RINGING. I'M IMPRESSED WITH WHERE THIS JOY TOOK PLACE - IN THE TEMPLE. THE WORD

9TV News - Praise
God

"PRAISING" IS THE GREEK WORD FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD EULOGY. A EULOGY TAKES PLACE AT FUNERALS AND SOME JOYFUL CELEBRATIONS. HERE IT MEANS TO SPEAK WELL OF GOD. SOME PEOPLE CHOOSE NOT TO SPEAK OF HIM AT ALL, SOME TO NOD AND NOT SPEAK BUT FOR THE REDEEMED, REJOICING IS PART OF REDEMPTION. THE REASON FOR THE REJOICING WAS QUITE CLEAR - JESUS LIVES! IN JUNE OF 1815, ALL ENGLAND AWAITED THE NEWS FROM THE CAMPAIGN AT WATERLOO BETWEEN NAPOLEON AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON. THOSE WERE THE DAYS BEFORE MODERN, RAPID COMMUNICATION AND WATCHERS WERE STATIONED ALONG THE COAST TO CATCH MESSAGES FROM APPROACHING SHIPS. FINALLY, ONE WATCHER SAW A VESSEL AND THE MESSAGE WAS SIGNALLED "WELLINGTON DEFEATED..." THAT WAS ALL THE WATCHER COULD SEE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE COULD BE RECEIVED. THESE WORDS WERE RELAYED ACROSS ENGLAND AND THE NATION PLUNGED INTO GLOOM AND DISPAIR. HOWEVER, LATER ON, WHEN THE FOG HAD CLEARED, THE REST OF THE MESSAGE CAME THROUGH - "WELLINGTON DEFEATED... THE ENEMY." WITH THAT MESSAGE SADNESS TURNED TO JOY!

Gospel = Good News!

RESURRECTION QUESTIONS

RESURRECTION QUESTIONS FALL INTO TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES, PHILOSOPHICAL AND PRACTICAL.

- ① YEARS AGO, AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN A THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL ENTITLED "WHO ATE ROGER WILLIAMS." (ROGER WILLIAMS ORGANIZED THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA IN THE 1630'S IN MASSACHUSETTS.) IT SEEMED THAT A LARGE APPLE TREE GREW UP OVER THE GRAVE OF ROGER WILLIAMS. SOMEONE DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF THE ROOTS HAD GONE DOWN INTO WILLIAMS' GRAVE AND OVER A PERIOD OF TIME PEOPLE ATE APPLES FROM THE TREE. THEREFORE, THE CANNIBALISTIC QUERY - WHO ATE ROGER WILLIAMS? ② THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE QUESTION HAS MORE TO DO WITH "WHAT WILL WE LOOK LIKE IN HEAVEN? WILL I SEE LOVED ONES AGAIN? WHAT ABOUT BABIES? WILL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?" - ALL QUESTIONS DEALING WITH DEATH AND RESURRECTION. IN JESUS' DAY, ③ THERE WAS INQUIRY ABOUT THE SUBJECT FROM BOTH FRIEND AND FOE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN MATTHEW 22:33-41 A QUESTION BY THE SADUCEES ABOUT MARRIAGE AND THE RESURRECTION WAS POSED TO JESUS. THE SADUCEES WERE WEALTHY, POLITICALLY POWERFUL, ARISTOCRATS WHO WERE OPPOSED TO JESUS AND SOUGHT TO SNARE HIM IN A THEOLOGICAL TRAP THAT HAD WORKED MANY TIMES BEFORE. THEIR INTENTION WAS TO MAKE THE RESURRECTION SEEM SILLY AND ABSURD. THERE WAS AN ANCIENT HEBREW LAW CALLED THE LEVIRATE LAW. THIS LAW STATED THAT IF A MAN DIED CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER WAS UNDER LEGAL OBLIGATION TO MARRY HIS WIDOW. (COMMENT REGARDING SELECTION OF BRIDE OF GREAT FAMILY INTEREST.) ANY CHILDREN BORN TO THE BROTHERS WERE NOT ONLY HIS BROTHER'S CHILDREN - BUT HIS HEIRS, LEGALLY SPEAKING. IF A BROTHER REFUSED TO TAKE THIS DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITY, THE WIDOW COULD BRING HIM BEFORE THE ELDERS OF THE CITY, REMOVE HIS

SANDEL

SANDEL, SPIT IN HIS FACE AND FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES RUIN HIM IN THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY. IT WAS AN ULTIMATE DISGRACE. WHAT THE SADUCEES DID NOT REALIZE WAS THAT THEIR WHOLE PREMISE WAS BASED ON ERROR - A FALSE ASSUMPTION THAT LIFE IN HEAVEN WOULD BE LIKE LIFE ON EARTH. JESUS MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT RELATIONSHIPS THERE WILL BE DIFFERENT, BETTER, GREATER, ABOVE ANYTHING MEN HAVE KNOWN ON EARTH. THE SADUCEES STOOD IN STUNNED SILENCE AS JESUS ANSWERED THEIR UNANSWERABLE QUESTION!

1. WHO SHALL ROLL THE STONE AWAY? - MARK 16:3

THIS QUESTION WAS POSED BY THREE WOMEN WHO CAME TO THE TOMB ON THE FIRST EASTER SUNDAY MORNING. THE LAST TIME THEY HAD LOOKED AT THE GARDEN TOMB A LARGE, WHEEL-SHAPED STONE WEIGHING SEVERAL TONS HAD BEEN ROLLED IN FRONT OF THE DOOR OF THE TOMB TO CLOSE AND SEAL IT. THAT STONE PRESENTED OR PROPOSED A BARRIER THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW TO OVERCOME. SIMPLY STATED, HOW WOULD THEY GET INSIDE TO ANOINT THE BODY OF JESUS? THERE WAS NOBODY WILLING OR AVAILABLE TO MOVE THE STONE. IT NEVER ENTERED THEIR MIND THAT THE STONE MIGHT ALREADY BE MOVED! A SUPERNATURAL SOLUTION NEVER OCCURRED TO THEM, JUST LIKE IT WOULD NEVER OCCUR TO US. JESUS DID NOT NEED THEIR OR ANYONE ELSE'S HELP GETTING OUT OF THE TOMB. HE COULD HAVE EXITED THE TOMB WITH THE STONE STILL IN PLACE. IT WAS MOVED TO LET THEM IN, NOT LET HIM OUT. IT WAS FOR THEIR ~~INTERESTS~~ POINT: THE ANTICIPATED, EXPECTED OBSTACLE HAD ALREADY BEEN MOVED BEFORE THEY ARRIVED. THAT WHICH THEY HAD DREADED MOST PROVED NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER. ONE MIGHT WONDER WHY THEY DID NOT TURN BACK IN THE FACE OF SUCH DIFFICULTY. WHY DID THEY GO ON IN THE FACE OF AN UNMOVABLE OBJECT? WHY DIDN'T THEY GO HOME AND FORGET IT? SIMPLY STATED, THEIR DEVOTION

TO CHRIST WAS GREATER THAN THE DIFFICULTIES THEY FACED. THEY LEARNED AS DO WE THAT GOD IS IN THE STONE MOVING BUSINESS! J. D. JONES REMINDS HIS READERS THAT THERE IS A KIND OF SANCTIFIED RECKLESSNESS REQUIRED IN TRUE SERVICE TO CHRIST. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN CAREFUL CALCULATION IS CALLED FOR IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE BUT THERE ARE ALSO TIMES WHEN CAUTION IS THROWN TO THE WIND AND COURAGE IS REQUIRED FOR THE TASK.

II. WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? - LUKE 24:4

THIS VERSE MIGHT BE TRANSLATED "THE LIVING ONE WITH THE DEAD ONES." AN ANGEL WAS TALKING. THAT ALONE WOULD GET OUR ATTENTION AND IN MOST CASES SATISFY THE INQUIRERS. THEY CAME SEEKING JESUS AND WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH NOTHING LESS, NOTHING ELSE, INCLUDING DIALOGUE WITH ANGELS. THE ANGEL STATED A STARTLING FACT - HE IS ALIVE - NOT DEAD BUT ALIVE. THERE WAS NOBODY IN THE TOMB, ONLY EMPTY GRAVE CLOTHES. THE TOMB WAS EMPTY. THE LIVING DO NOT LINGER IN THE CEMETERY BECAUSE CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A RELIGION OF DEATH BUT ONE OF LIFE. HE IS ALIVE. THROUGHOUT CHRIST'S EARTHLY MINISTRY THE EMPHASIS WAS ON LIFE, NOT DEATH. REPEATEDLY JESUS TALKED ABOUT THE LIVING GOD AND THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE AND THAT LIFE IN ETERNITY DEPENDED ON KNOWING HIM. (JOHN 11:25) PLEASE NOTE, HE SAID I, NOT IT IS THE RESURRECTION! REVELATION 1:18 ONE WHO DIED FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS SPOKE OF BEING ALIVE THROUGHOUT THE ENDLESS AGES. 1 PETER 1:3, 23, 2:4-5. ONCE AGAIN THE EMPHASIS IS ON LIVING. THE LIVING LORD ENCOURAGES HIS LIVING SERVANTS WHO ARE LIVING STONES IN A LIVING BUILDING TO PREACH A LIVING MESSAGE THAT BRINGS LIFE TO SPIRITUALLY DEAD PEOPLE!

III. WHY ARE YOU TROUBLED? WHY DO DOUBTS ARISE IN YOUR MINDS? - Luke 24:36-43

THE DISCIPLES HAD BEEN PRESENT TO OBSERVE THE RESURRECTION OF LAZRUS, THE WIDOW'S SON OF NAIN, AND JARIUS' DAUGHTER BUT SOMEHOW THEY DID NOT BELIEVE JESUS COULD RAISE HIMSELF FROM THE DEAD! TO THEM, IT LOOKED LIKE EVERYTHING WAS LOST - THEIR CAUSE HAD COLLAPSED AT THE CRUCIFIXION SO THEY WENT FISHING. WHEN JESUS APPEARED TO THEM, THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE SEEING A GHOST AND WERE PANIC STRICKEN. THE WORD TERRIFIED IN THE TEXT MEANS TROUBLED, AGITATED, STIRRED-UP, EXCITED OR "SHOOK UP." THEIR EMOTIONS WERE IN A STATE OF SHOCK. HOW COULD THIS BE YET BEFORE THEM STOOD THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE RESURRECTION CONFIRMED BY SUCH A SIMPLE THING AS A MEAL OF FISH AND HONEYCOMB. ALL OF THIS SEEMED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. WHAT HE SAID WOULD HAPPEN DID HAPPEN AND THEY FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE. IRONICALLY, IT WAS NOT A TIME TO BE TERRIFIED BUT A TIME TO TRUST. OUR LORD TOUCHED HIS TROUBLED DISCIPLES AND BROUGHT PEACE TO THE PALPITATIONS OF THEIR HEARTS. THE APPLICATION IS VERY SIMPLE: WE, LIKE THOSE DISCIPLES, DOUBT WHAT JESUS SAYS. WE, TOO, ARE TROUBLED. HE GIVES HIS PEACE FOR OUR PROBLEMS. (MATTHEW 4:36-41) *(Personal 9pp)*

IV. WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? WHO SEEKEST THOU - JOHN 20:15

OTHER GOSPELS TELL HOW THREE LADIES CAME TO THE TOMB BUT JOHN SINGLES OUR MARY MAGDALENE AND HER SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS ON THAT FIRST EASTER MORNING. THIS WAS NO PLACE FOR A SOLITARY WOMAN BUT HER DEVOTION TO JESUS CAUSED HER TO PRESS THROUGH THE DARKNESS INTO THE DAWN. IT WAS A SCENE IN A GARDEN, NEAR A GRAVE AND FILLED WITH GRIEF. IT WAS A TWO-SIDED STORY FEATURING THE SADNESS OF

SEPARATION AND THE GLADNESS OF RECOGNITION. PETER AND JOHN HAD COME TO THE GRAVE AND WERE GONE. THEY LEFT THE TOMB FOR THE SAME REASON SHE LINGERED THERE BECAUSE JESUS WAS NOT THERE! SUPPOSING JESUS TO BE THE GARDNER, SHE SOUGHT INFORMATION BUT NO CONSOLATION AND RECEIVED BOTH WHEN JESUS SPOKE HER NAME. SHE CAME LOOKING FOR JESUS AND FOUND HIM, OR MORE ACCURATELY, HE FOUND HER. THE EMPTY CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB, THE ANSWER TO THE EMPTY LIFE. QUESTION: IS YOUR LIFE EMPTY? ACCORDING TO JOHN 10:10, OUR LORD CAME TO LIVE, DIE ON A CROSS, BE RAISED AGAIN IN ORDER TO MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING. THE MESSAGE OF THE RESURRECTION IS OUR BADNESS AND SADNESS MAY BE TURNED TO GLADNESS WHEN WE COME TO CHRIST.

▲ "The King"

"HE DIED ON EMPTY"

JOHN 20

PEGGY NOONAN'S BEST SELLING BOOK ABOUT THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENCY AND HER PART AS ONE OF HIS SPEECH WRITERS, IS ENTITLED WHAT I SAW AT THE REVOLUTION. SHE VIEWS THE REAGAN YEARS AS DRAMATIC POLITICAL CHANGE — ^{A kind of} ~~AS DRAMATIC AS~~ REVOLUTION. SHE WAS AND IS A REAGAN ADMIRER. HOWEVER THE BOOK ENDS ON A NOTE OF DISAPPOINTMENT. ALL POLITICIANS INCLUDING HER POLITICAL HEROES HAVE CLAY FEET. FOR EXAMPLE SHE SAYS IN THE EPILOGUE "DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH POLITICIANS, THEY ARE ALL A DISAPPOINTMENT. THEY CAN'T HELP IT, THEY JUST ARE. BEWARE OF THE POLITICALLY OBSESSED. THEY ARE OFTEN BRIGHT AND INTERESTING, BUT THEY HAVE SOMETHING MISSING IN THEIR NATURES; THERE IS A HOLE, AN EMPTY PLACE, AND THEY USE POLITICS TO USE IT UP. IT LEAVES THEM SOMEHOW MISSHAPEN." THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS WERE STUNNED AND SAD AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION. THEIR HOPES FOR A KINGDOM HAD BEEN DASHED TO THE GROUND. THEY WERE CRUSHED AND CONFUSED — BUT NOT DISAPPOINTED IN JESUS! THERE WERE NO FUNERAL DIRECTORS IN JESUS DAY SO FRIENDS GATHERED, WASHED AND WRAPPED HIS BLOOD STAINED BODY IN BROAD BANDS OF WHITE LINEN WITH HERBS AND SPICES ENFOLDED. A WHITE CLOTH CALLED A NAPKIN OR HANDKERCHIEF WAS PLACED ON THE FACE AND THEN THE BODY LAID IN A NITCH ON A ROCK LEDGE INSIDE THE TOMB. A HUGE WHEEL LIKE ROUND STONE WEIGHING ~~WANN~~ THOUSANDS OF POUNDS WAS THEN ROLLED OVER THE ENTRANCE TO KEEP OUT BEASTS AND GRAVE ROBBERS. IN CHRIST'S CASE A ROMAN SEAL AND SOLDIERS WERE ADDED. THIS HAD ALL HAPPENED AND IT WAS DAWNING THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WHEN JOHN BEGAN HIS STORY IN THIS CHAPTER. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PROMISING TO RETURN FROM THE DEAD THROUGH OUT HISTORY.

MOHAMAD'S FRIENDS REALLY BELIEVED HE WOULD RETURN FROM THE GRAVE. HARRY HOUDIANE, MASTER MAGICIAN, PREDICTED THAT HE WOULD RETURN FROM THE GRAVE AND PERFORM HIS GREATEST TRICK. HIS FRIENDS WAITED IN VAIN. WHEN JESUS DIED THE WORLD AND ESPECIALLY HIS ENEMIES WERE SURE THAT THEY WERE FINISHED WITH JESUS FOREVER. NO OTHER PERSON IN HUMAN HISTORY HAS SO INFLUENCED AND CHANGED THE WORLD FOR GOOD. THE STORY OF HIS RESURRECTION DID NOT DEVELOP OVER A LONG PERIOD OF YEARS BUT WAS FULL BLOWN THREE DAYS AFTER HIS DEATH. THE GOSPEL THAT WAS TO BE PREACHED ALL OVER THE WORLD AND CHRISTIANITY WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED UNDER HIS OWN WEIGHT IF THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES COULD HAVE FOUND A CORPSE. THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO CHURCH AND NO CHURCH-AGE IF THAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED BUT IT DIDN'T AND COULDN'T HAPPEN! THE GOSPEL IS NOT JUST A STORY ABOUT JESUS TELLING OF HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY BUT IT IS A LIFE GIVING MESSAGE THAT PUTS MEN IN TOUCH WITH HIM PERSONALLY. THE GOSPEL IS NOT ABOUT THE GREATNESS OF A DEAD HERO BUT THE FORGIVENESS OF A LIVING SAVIOUR. WILLIAM BARKLEY HAS POINTED OUT 4 GREAT FACTS THE RESURRECTION ATTESTS:

1. TRUTH IS STRONGER THAN A LIE.
2. GOOD IS STRONGER THAN EVIL.
3. LOVE IS STRONGER THAN HATE.
4. LIFE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH.

IN THE LIGHT OF OUR SUBJECT, THE TEXT BEFORE US FEATURES 3 GREEK WORDS:

- (1). BLEPO - VERSE 5. IT MEANS TO PEEP OR TO GLANCE AT SOMETHING QUICKLY.
- (2). THEOOREOO - VERSE 6. THIS MEANS TO GAZE OR STUDY SOMETHING CAREFULLY. IT MEANS

TO OBSERVE. THE ENGLISH WORD THEATRE COMES FROM THIS WORD.

(3) ORAOO - VERSE 8. IT MEANS TO PER-CEIVE OR ~~COMPREHEND~~ - TO TAKE HEED.

THE DIFFERENCE IN THESE WORDS MAY BE SEEN IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER.

(1) BLEPO SUGGESTS THE WAY MEN IN CHURCH TODAY LOOK AT THE OUTFITS LADIES ARE WEARING.

(2) THE WORD THE THEOOREFOO SUGGESTS THE WAY LADIES LOOK AT OTHER LADIES OUTFITS.

(3) THE WORD ORAOO SUGGESTS THE WAY YOU AT YOUR OUTFIT.

I. PETER AND JOHN SAW THE EMPTY TOMB AND THE

ORDERLY GRAVE CLOTHES-JOHN 20:2-8

THE RESURRECTION PROMPTED A GOOD DEAL OF RUNNING. (VS. 2,4) THERE WAS EXCITEMENT OVER THE NEWS OF AN EMPTY TOMB AND JOHN PROVED TO BE THE FASTER RUNNER. (SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT PETER LIKE MANY PREACHERS HAD BECOME AN "ARCH" BISHOP AND THAT HIS "ARCH" GOT IN THE WAY OF HIS FEET.

A. THE EMPTY TOMB

IF ONE COULD GO TO THE TOMB OF MOHAMAD OR CONFUCIUS OR BUDDA ONE WORD WOULD DESCRIBE THEM ALL - "OCCUPIED". ONE WOULD FIND IN THOSE TOMBS THE REMAINS OF THE FOUNDER OF THAT RELIGION. BUT THE TOMB OF JESUS, ONE WORD PREVAILS - "EMPTY." THERE WAS NOBODY INSIDE. THE EMPTY TOMB COULD HAVE MEANT THAT BODY SNATCHERS HAD DONE THEIR WORK WELL. HOWEVER, THERE WERE OTHER FEATURES THAT SPEAK TO EVIDENCE THAT IS CONTRARY TO THIS THINKING.

B. THE GRAVE CLOTHES

THE BODY OF JESUS DOWN IN A COCOON TYPE BURIAL POSTURE. THERE WAS SOMETHING UNUSUAL

ABOUT THE DISGARDERD GRAVE CLOTHES- THEY DID NOT LOOK DISGARDERD! THE APPEARANCE OF THE GRAVECLOTHES WAS AS IF A BODY DISOLVED ATTHROUGH THE COCOON TO REAPPEAR ON THE OUTSIDE. THERE WAS ORDERLINESS AND TIDINESS THAT LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ONE WHO DEPARTED THE TOMB HAD DONE SO NOT IN HASTE LEAVING A MESS BEHIND AS ONE WOULD EXPECT OF THIEVES. "THE REMAINS" DECLARED THAT "HE REMAINS!"

II. MARY MAGDALENE SAW TWO ANGELS AND THE RISEN CHRIST -JOHN 20: 11-18

THE N.T. SPEAKS OF "MANY MARYS". "THERE ARE SOME 7 OR 8 PROMINENT MARYS NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF JESUS AND MARY OF BETHANY - SISTER TO MARTHA AND LAZARUS. THE WORD MAGDALENE IS NOT HER LAST NAME BUT A REFERENCE TO A FISHING VILLAGE ON THE WEST BANK ON THE SEA OF GALILEE WHICH WAS PROBABLY HER HOME TOWN. THE "MARYS" OF THE BIBLE WERE OFTEN PEOPLE OF GREAT DEVOTION. IN THIS CASE DEATH DID NOT DAMPEN MARY'S DEVOTION. JESUS HAD DONE SOMETHING FOR MARY THAT NOBODY ELSE COULD DO- HE DEALT WITH THE DEMONS THAT TORMENTED HER AND SHE NEVER FORGOT OR GOT OVER IT. SHE CAME TO THE TOMB BEFORE THE OTHERS. SHE WAS FIRST TO ARRIVED AT THE CEMETARY ALONE AND BEFORE DAYLIGHT. SLEEP AND SAFETY WERE NOT HER CONCERN IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT SHE IDENTIFY THE TWO MEN AS ANGELS. HOWEVER, EVEN ANGELS COULD NOT DISPEL HER TEARS. FOR MOST, ENCOUNTER WITH AN ANGEL WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO CHANGE ONES MOOD FOREVER. THINK OF THE T.V. APPEARANCES, BOOKS, SEMINARS, VIDEOS, SONGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMPOSED BY ONE WHO HAD SEEN AN ANGEL. HOWEVER MARY WOULD NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH SUBSTITUTES. ANGELS, GARDENERS, NO ONE ELSE COULD SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

APPLICATION: SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THERE ARE LEAST FIVE SIGNIFICANT FACTS ABOUT MARY'S ATTITUDE ABOUT CHRIST.

- (1) LOVE LINGERS WHEN OTHERS HAVE GONE. *She came early - before others.*
- 20:1 (2) LOVE TAKES RISKS. *(unusually) he pursued safety - not stop*
- (3) LOVE SEEKS MORE THAN TALK WITH CELEBRITIES. *her! angels - ever talk to one?*
- (4) LOVE HEARS AND FEELS BETTER THAN IT SEES. *Recognized his voice*
- (5) LOVE OBEYS WHEN IT DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTANDS.

Jim
Joe THE 5TH IDEA DEALS WITH A PROBLEM PASSAGE IN VERSE 17. WHY WOULD JESUS TELL MARY TO DO WHAT HE INVITED THOMAS TO DO? THE LANGUAGE OF THE GREEK TEXT AND THE PRESENT TENSE HELPS.

IT LITERALLY MEANS "DON'T CONTINUE TO CLING TO ME". THAT IS, JESUS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS DISCIPLES WOULD NOT BE ON A SENSE BASIS OF FEELING BUT RATHER ON A FAITH BASIS. (EXPLAIN).

III. THE DISCIPLES AND THOMAS SAW HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE - JOHN 20:19-28

NOT MUCH IS SAID ABOUT THE DISCIPLES WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF CHRIST. BUT THE EMPHASIS SEEMS TO BE ON THE FACT THAT THOMAS WAS ABSENT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE OR WHY HE WAS NOT THERE. LIKE ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF DISCIPLES. LOVING JOHN, IMPETUOUS PETER, INQUIRING ANDREW AND DOUBTING THOMAS. THOMAS WAS A TWIN. HE WAS TOUGH WHEN IT CAME TO HEARSAY. HE WANTED EVIDENCE. HE DID NOT BELIEVE BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE SAW SOMETHING. HE HAD TO SEE IT WITH HIS OWN EYES. HE WAS "A STUBBORN SAINT". HE WAS

THE "MAN FROM MISSOURI", - WHAT HE BELIEVED HAD TO MAKE SENSE AND HAD TO APPEAL ~~TO~~ TO THE SENSES. (X) A MAN TOLD BILLY SUNDAY THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN ANYTHING HE DID NOT SEE - SUNDAY ASKED IF HE HAD EVER SEEN HIS BRAIN?)

THOMAS' DECLARATION OF DEITY IS ONE OF THE STARTLING AND HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE. ACCORDING TO JOHN 20:31, THIS BOOK WAS NOT WRITTEN TO FILL THE HEAD WITH FACTS BUT TO FILL THE HEART WITH FAITH.

QUESTION: WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN TODAY? THE RISEN SAVIOUR TELLS US THERE IS HOPE BEYOND THE CEMETARY. HE DOES NOT ASK US TO FIGURE IT OUT BUT TO FOLLOW HIM THROUGH DEATH INTO RESURRECTION.

A BETTER RESURRECTION

HEBREWS 11:25

2 notes

A PASTOR ENTERED A HOSPITAL ROOM WHERE A PATIENT WAS WEeping. THE LADY HAD JUST HAD A VISIT FROM A WELL-MEANING CHRISTIAN WHO ASSURED HER THAT IT WAS GOD'S WILL FOR HER TO BE HEALED EVEN THOUGH HER DOCTOR HAD SAID THE ILLNESS WAS TERMINAL. THE PATIENT WAS CONFUSED, FRIGHTENED AND FEELING GUILTY FOR HER APPARENT LACK OF FAITH. THE PASTOR READ THIS VERSE FROM HEBREWS TO HER SHOWING THAT GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS HEAL EVERYBODY. LACK OF PHYSICAL HEALING IS NOT NECESSARILY AN INDICATION OF LACK OF FAITH. SOMETIMES IT TAKES MORE FAITH TO ENDURE AFFLICTION THAN TO ESCAPE IT! (FOR EXAMPLE, THE HEBREW CHILDREN WERE NOT SHORT ON FAITH BUT THEIR DELIVERANCE WAS BY NO MEANS A SURE THING IN THEIR MINDS AS REFLECTED IN DANIEL 3:16-18: "IF IT BE SO, OUR GOD WHOM WE SERVE IS ABLE TO DELIVER US FROM THE BURNING FIREY FURNACE, AND HE WILL DELIVER US OUT OF THINE HAND, O KING. BUT IF NOT, BE IT KNOWN UNTO THEE, O KING, THAT WE WILL NOT SERVE THY GODS....") IF GOD CHOOSES NOT TO RAISE US UP TO GOOD HEALTH, WE ARE HELPED IN KNOWING THAT HE WILL RAISE US UP TO A BETTER LIFE THROUGH A BETTER RESURRECTION. THIS VERSE, LOCATED IN THE FAITH CHAPTER OF THE BIBLE, REFERS TO "OTHERS" WHO WERE JUST AS MUCH PEOPLE OF FAITH AS THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE MENTIONED. FOR THESE "OTHERS" THE PRICE FOR LIFE WAS TOO GREAT. DENIAL OF THEIR FAITH WAS TOO GREAT A PRICE TO PAY FOR LIFE SO THEY DIED RATHER THAN DENYING THEIR FAITH. FOR THEM, THERE WAS SOMETHING BETTER - A BETTER RESURRECTION. THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF EASTER - HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE. LET US EXAMINE SEVERAL FACETS OF THE "BETTER RESURRECTION."

I. A BETTER RESURRECTION PROVIDES A BETTER HOPE - HEBREWS 7:19, I COR. 15:19

MANY PEOPLE SUBSCRIBE TO THE IDEA AS LONG AS THERE IS LIFE THERE IS HOPE BUT WHEN LIFE IS GONE SO IS HOPE. IN OTHER WORDS, HOPE STOPS AT THE CEMETERY. (COMMENT EUNICE SPRADLING) FOR THESE PEOPLE, GRIEF DOES NOT STOP, VISITS TO THE GRAVE DO NOT STOP, BUT ALL REAL HOPE TO SEE THE LOVED ONE AGAIN IS REDUCED TO WISHFUL THINKING, GUESSES AND MAYBES. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST HAS HOPE THAT DEATH CANNOT DESTROY. (I PETER 1:3) IN THIS VERSE, PETER PRAISES GOD FOR HIS MERCY AND FOR NEW LIFE AND NEW HOPE. (INTERESTINGLY, THE HOPE IS KEPT IN HEAVEN, THE HOPERS ARE KEPT ON EARTH!)

THE STORY IS TOLD OF A PERSON WHO VISITED A PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION WHILE HE WAS A STUDENT IN COLLEGE. ONE MAN IN THE INSTITUTION WAS TOLD BY THE DOCTORS THAT THERE WAS NO KNOWN CURE FOR HIS ILLNESS. THE MAN BEGGED FOR ONE RAY OF HOPE BUT NONE WAS GIVEN. THE LAST WEEKS OF HIS LIFE WERE LIMITED TO A SMALL, BARRED ROOM WHERE HE PACED UP AND DOWN IN AGONY MUTTERING TWO WORDS OVER AND OVER AGAIN - "NO HOPE, NO HOPE!" BY CONTRAST RELATE THE INCIDENT OF NICK M. WHO SPOKE OF A 30% CHANCE OF SURVIVAL REGARDING HIS SURGERY. HE DID NOT MENTION THE 70% CHANCE OF FAILURE!) OUR HOPE IS BETTER BECAUSE IT RESTS ON BETTER PROMISES. BECAUSE CHRIST LIVES, WE TOO SHALL LIVE. DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM, IT CANNOT HOLD THE CHRISTIAN. (JOHN 11:25, REV. 1:18)

II. A BETTER RESURRECTION PROMISES A BETTER HOMELAND - HEBREWS 11:10, 15-16

TWO THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE CHRIST WAS BORN, ABRAHAM LIVED IN UR IN THE COUNTRY OF MESOPOTAMIA NOW MODERN IRAQ. HE LEFT UR NEVER TO RETURN AND NEVER TO LIVE IN A CITY AGAIN. HE SPENT HIS LIFE A NOMAD WITH NO PERMANENT RESIDENCE. HE OWNED NO PROPERTY IN CANAAN EXCEPT THE SMALL BURIAL PLACE OF HIS BELOVED WIFE SARAH (GENESIS 23:1-20) ABRAHAM'S TRUE HOMELAND WAS GLORYLAND. HEAVEN WAS HIS DESTINATION AND HE WAS NOT DIVERTED FROM THAT GOAL. IT WAS BY FAITH HE KEPT HIS EYE ON THE GOAL. ABRAHAM IS CALLED A PILGRIM AND A STRANGER. THAT IS TO SAY, HIS RESIDENCE WAS IN A COUNTRY NOT OF HIS BIRTH BUT ONE THROUGH WHICH HE WAS TRAVELING. THE SAME IS SAID OF THE BELIEVER. (I PETER 1:1, 2:11) THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE NEVER REALLY AT HOME IN THIS WORLD, THEY ARE PASSING THROUGH, PRESSING ON TO A HOMELAND WITH CHRIST. ACCORDING TO PHILIPPIANS 3:20, THE BELIEVER'S CITIZENSHIP IS CELESTIAL IN NATURE. (A BLACK PREACHER WAS FOND OF USING THE EXPRESSION "THIS AIN'T IT" WITH REFERENCE TO SOMETHING BETTER FOR THE SAINTS IN THE FUTURE.) C. S. LEWIS STATES: "IT IS SAFE TO TELL THE PURE IN HEART THAT THEY SHALL SEE GOD, FOR ONLY THE PURE IN HEART WANT TO." THERE ARE TWO INTERESTING "MORE" FAMILIES IN SCRIPTURE. THE "MUCH MORES" IN ROMANS AND THE "NO MORES" IN REVELATION. (COMPARE ROMANS 5:9, 15, 17 AND REVELATION 21:1-4, 22:3) WHEN IT COMES TO TEARS, SORROW, PAIN, SICKNESS, HUNGER, NIGHT AND DEATH - THESE WILL ALL BE "NO MORE" IN HEAVEN. (TEAMS OF GOSPEL MUSICIANS ARE NOT NEW. ABOUT THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR TWO MEN

(OFRH.
Quarkest)

NAMED BENNETT AND WEBSTER LIVED IN A SMALL TOWN IN WISCONSIN. WEBSTER WAS GIVEN TO DEPRESSION AND MOODINESS. SO BENNETT OFTEN GAVE HIM IDEAS FOR SONGS TO PULL HIM OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS. ONE DAY WEBSTER WALKED INTO THE DRUG STORE OWNED BY BENNETT, WALKED TO THE BACK OF THE STORE, STOOD BY THE STOVE AND SAID NOTHING. "WHAT'S THE MATTER?" ANSWER, "NOTHING - IT WILL BE ALRIGHT BY AND BY." THE LILT OF THAT PHRASE "IT WILL BE ALRIGHT BY AND BY" STUCK IN BENNETT'S MIND. HE SAT DOWN QUICKLY AT A TABLE AND WROTE THE WORDS TO A HYMN WITH THE RECURRING PHRASE "THE SWEET BY-AND-BY." THIS HE DID IN A FEW MINUTES. HE HANDED THE WORK TO WEBSTER WHOSE EYES LIT UP AND IN A MATTER OF 30 MINUTES OR LESS, THAT HYMN WHICH THE CHURCH HAS BEEN SINGING FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS CAME INTO BEING. THE MESSAGE OF THE HYMN IS THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE. (RELATE ARTICLE IN CURRENT ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK ON THE SUBJECT OF HEAVEN.)

III. A BETTER RESURRECTION PREVIEWS

A BETTER HOMAGE - Rev. 4:11,

Rev. 5:1-13

IT IS POSSIBLE TO ATTEND A WORSHIP SERVICE AND NOT WORSHIP. VANCE HAVNER SAYS ESPECIALLY ABOUT EASTER SERVICES THAT SOME ATTEND TO CLOSE THEIR EYES AND OTHERS TO EYE THEIR CLOTHES. HE ALSO SAYS THAT MANY WORSHIP SERVICES START AT 11 O'CLOCK SHARP AND STOP AT 12 O'CLOCK DULL! JOHN LOOKED INTO THE FUTURE IN PROPHETIC VISION AND SAW ALL OF THE INTELLIGENT BEINGS OF THE UNIVERSE WORSHIPPING GOD. IT WAS NOT JESUS CHRIST THE TEACHER, LEADER OR GREAT EXAMPLE BUT CHRIST THE REDEEMER, THE LAMB BEARING THE MARKS OF HIS CRUCIFIXION. THE LAMB

IS THE CENTRAL SUBJECT IN HEAVEN. QUESTION:
IF THE LAMB AND HIS FINISHED WORK AT CALVARY
IS THE CENTRAL SUBJECT OF HEAVEN, SHOULDN'T
IT BE THE PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON EARTH? BY
THE WAY IN THIS SCENE THERE ARE FOUR
SIGNIFICANT FACTORS PRESENTED:

- (1) WORSHIP
- (2) MUSIC
- (3) FELLOWSHIP
- (4) REUNION

"Listening to WMFR."

IV. A BETTER RESURRECTION PLEDGES A BETTER HOUSE - II Cor. 5:1, I Cor. 15:39-49

OUR EARTHLY HOUSE MENTIONED IN THE TEXT IS A REFERENCE TO OUR EARTHLY BODY. ONE DAY IT WILL BE DISSOLVED, THAT IS DESTROYED OR DIE. THE NIV SAYS THAT "WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN ETERNAL HOUSE IN HEAVEN, NOT BUILT BY HUMAN HANDS." OUR OLD HOUSE IS GETTING OLDER EVERY DAY. USUALLY CAREFUL REFLECTION ON DECAYING BODIES IS RESERVED FOR THE OLD AND THE SICK BUT IT DOES AFFECT THE YOUNG TOO. IN HER BOOK ENTITLED A STEP FURTHER, JONI ERIKSON TADA TELLS OF HER VISIT IN A HOSPITAL TO A HANDICAPPED 15 YEAR OLD BOY. HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN A FIST FIGHT AT SCHOOL, FELL AND STRUCK HIS HEAD ON THE GYM FLOOR, WAS IN A COMA FOR A LONG TIME AND AWAKENED PARALYZED FROM THE NECK DOWN. THE EXTENT OF THE PARALYSIS WAS SHATTERING. THE ONLY THING HE COULD DO WAS TURN HIS HEAD AND BLINK HIS EYES. IT TOOK MONTHS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT SMALL TASK. IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS THIS YOUNG MAN NAMED RICK LEARNED TO BLINK HIS EYELIDS IN A KIND OF "MORSE CODE", ABLE TO MAKE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WANTED TO CONVEY. JONI TOLD HIM THERE WOULD BE A DAY WHEN BOTH SHE AND HE WOULD HAVE A NEW BODY IN HEAVEN.

SHE SAID: "I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT WHEN I WAS ON MY FEET, I NEVER THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT HEAVEN. I PICTURED IT AS A BORING PLACE WHERE EVERYONE WORE ANGEL COSTUMES....BUT SINCE I HAVE LOST THE USE OF MY BODY, I'VE LEARNED THAT ONE DAY I'M GOING TO TRADE IT IN FOR A NEW ONE. NO ANGEL'S WINGS, JUST HANDS THAT WORK, FEET THAT WALK. THINK OF IT, WE'LL BE ON OUR FEET RUNNING, WALKING, WORKING, TALKING ABOUT ALL KINDS OF THINGS." I'M SURE JONI ERIKSON TADA WAS EXPRESSING THE SENTIMENT OF EVERY HANDICAPPED PERSON. IN THE I COR. 15 PASSAGE THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION BODY IS COMPARED TO A SEED PLANTED IN THE GROUND THAT SPROUTS AND RISES TO NEW BEGINNING. SO IT WILL BE IN THE RESURRECTION. THE BELIEVER'S NEW BODY RISES FROM THE GRAVE. SOMEONE HAS COMPARED IT TO A CATERPILLER IN ITS COCOON, BREAKING OUT OF ITS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO BE A NEW AND BEAUTIFUL CREATURE.

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST WE GLORY

GALATIANS 6:14

SIR JOHN BOWRING WAS A SKILLED LINQUIST WHO COULD SPEAK MORE THAN A DOZEN LANGUAGES. HIS WORK AS A MERCHANT, IN THE IMPORT BUSINESS TOOK HIM ALL OVER THE WORLD. WHEN PORTUGUESE TRADERS SETTLED ON THE SOUTH COAST OF CHINA THEY BUILD A MASSIVE CATHEDRAL ON A HILL OVERLOOKING A HARBOR. OVER THE CENTURIES, THE STRUCTURE CRUMBLED AND COLLAPSED EXCEPT FOR THE FRONT WALL WHICH PRESENTED AN IMPOSING FACADE AS A MONUMENT TO THEIR WORK. ON THE TOP OF THE BELL TOWER OF THAT FRONT WALL STOOD A GREAT BRONZE CROSS AND IT COULD BE SEEN BY SHIPS PASSING BY IN THE HARBOR BELOW. BOWRING TOOK NOTE OF THE STRUCTURE WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG IN 1825. THE SCENE SO IMPRESSED HIM THAT HE WROTE A POEM WHICH ITHAMAR CONKEY, A BAPTIST CHURCH ORGANIST IN CONNECTICUT, SET TO MUSIC IN 1849. THE POEM READ "IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY, TOWERING O'ER THE WRECKS OF TIME, ALL THE LIGHT OF SACRED STORY, GATHERS ROUND ITS HEAD SUBLIME." THE BUILDERS OF THAT ANCIENT CATHEDRAL, THE WRITER OF THE POEM, COMPOSER OF THE MUSIC, HAVE ALL FADED INTO HISTORY BUT THE CROSS OF CHRIST STANDS. IT IS THE SYMBOL OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE MAGNETIC MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE DRAWING MEN TO THE RISEN SAVIOR. THE ANCIENT WORLD UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF THE WORD CROSS. IT WAS AN INSTRUMENT OF SHAME AND DEATH. CRUCIFIXION WAS A HORRIBLE WAY TO DIE, A FATE NO MAN WOULD WISH ON HIS WORST ENEMY! SINCE CALVARY, THAT SYMBOL OF SHAME HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF MERCY. TODAY, WHATEVER THE COLOR, RED GREEN OR BLUE, THE CROSS SPEAKS OF LOVING AND TENDER MERCY. WE WILL LOOK AT THE BIBLICAL

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD CROSS:

I. IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST WE SEE THE DARK SIDE OF HUMANITY. - MATTHEW 27:35-40

JESUS CHRIST WAS THE KINDEST, MOST LOVING, GENEROUS, SELFLESS PERSON WHO EVER LIVED. IN RESPONSE TO THAT KIND OF LIFE, HE WAS HATED, ENVIED AND FINALLY KILLED BY HIS FELLOW MAN. THE PEOPLE PUT HIM TO DEATH WERE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WHO CONSIDERED THEMSELVES GOOD AND NOT BAD MEN OR CRIMINALS. THEY WANTED JESUS OUT OF THE WAY. HE WAS CRUCIFIED BY THE "BEST PEOPLE" OF HIS DAY. THOSE PEOPLE REMIND US OF THE BASIC MORAL PROBLEM IN THE WORLD AND THAT IS THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN. THE THING THAT IS WRONG WITH THE HUMAN RACE IS NOT THAT SOME OF ITS MEMBERS KILL, STEAL OR COMMIT ADULTERY, BUT THAT THEY HAVE A BASIC MORAL WEAKNESS OR FLAW CALLED SIN. GOOD MANNERS, SOCIAL GRACES AND REFINEMENT, EDUCATION AND AFFLUENCE MAY COVER THE DISEASE, LIKE MAKEUP COVERS THE BLEMISHES ON THE FACE, BUT THE COVER-UP DOES NOT CURE THE PROBLEM. ALL MEN HAVE THAT MORAL FLAW CALLED SIN AND ALL ATTEMPT TO COVER IT UP AS ADAM AND EVE SOUGHT TO HIDE FROM GOD IN THE GARDEN. GOD'S GREAT GIFT TO MANKIND WAS NAILED TO A CROSS - INCREDIBLE! (TO UNDERSTAND THE HORROR OF CHRIST'S DEATH LET US EXPLAIN BY ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION. PICTURE A WAR HERO SLAIN IN BATTLE ON A FOREIGN SHORE. HIS BODY IS RETURNED TO HIS NATIVE LAND AND BURIAL WITH ALL OF THE MILITARY RITES. THE FLAG FROM HIS COFFIN IS GIVEN TO HIS WIDOW AND SON. A MONTH LATER THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE BURIAL DETAIL VISITS IN THE HOME TO DISCOVER THAT THE FLAG HAS BEEN SHREDDED INTO THREE PARTS, ONE PART TO SHINE SHOES, ANOTHER PART

A BED FOR THE DOG, THE THIRD PART TO
WIPE DIRTY DISHES. QUESTION: HOW COULD
PEOPLE BE SO DISLOYAL AND UNFEELING?

2. THE STORY IS TOLD OF A MAN WHO DREAMED
THAT HE WAS AN EYE WITNESS AT THE
CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. IN HIS DREAM, HE
WALKED UP BEHIND THE SOLDIERS WHO WERE
SCOURGING JESUS. HE SAID THAT HE ROSE
TO GRASP THE SOLDIERS ARM TO STOP THE
CRUEL TORTURE AND WHEN THE SOLDIER TURNED
AROUND HE LOOKED INTO HIS OWN FACE. FOR
IT WAS HIMSELF WHO SCOURGED CHRIST AND
EVENTUALLY NAILED HIM TO THE CROSS! MAN
IS A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CASUALTY AND ONLY
THE GRACE OF GOD CAN DEAL WITH HIS BASIC
SPIRITUAL PROBLEM. ROMANS 3:23, ROMANS 5:12,
ISAIAH 58:6 "THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE
ALL THINGS, AND DESPERATELY WICKED (HOPELESSLY
DISEASED). WHO CAN KNOW IT? I.E. THAT IS,
CAPABLE OF KNOWING ITS OWN CORRUPTION.
(JEREMIAH 17:9). "CAN THE ETHIOPIAN CHANGE
HIS SKIN, OR THE LEOPARD HIS SPOTS?
THEN MAY YE ALSO DO GOOD, THAT ARE ACCUSTOMED
TO DO EVIL." (JEREMIAH 13:23) "THE WICKED
ARE ESTRANGED FROM THE WOMB; THEY GO ASTRAY
AS SOON AS THEY ARE BORN, SPEAKING LIES."
(PSALM 58:3) "BEHOLD I WAS SHAPEN IN INIQUITY:
AND IN SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME."
(PSALM 51:5) QUESTION: WHAT IF JESUS CAME
BACK TO EARTH TODAY? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO
HIM? IF HE TAUGHT AND PREACHED THE SAME
THINGS HE DID DURING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY HIS
FATE WOULD BE THE SAME FOR HUMAN NATURE
HAS NOT CHANGED. ONE MIGHT NOT ACTUALLY
PHYSICALLY LITERALLY TAKE HOLD OF AN
INSTRUMENT TO KILL HIM BUT THERE WOULD BE
NO ACTIVE IDENTIFICATION OR OPPOSITION TO
THOSE WHO DID SEEK TO KILL HIM AND THERE IS
NO NEUTRALITY WITH CHRIST.

II IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST WE SEE THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST--PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8

THIS PASSAGE TELLS US OF CHRIST'S PRE-EXISTENCE. HE WAS GOD FROM ALL ETERNITY. HE BECAME A MAN, SPECIFICALLY A SERVANT IN ORDER TO REDEEM SINFUL MEN. SIMPLY STATED, THE SOVEREIGN GOD BECAME A SERVANT TO MAN IN ORDER TO DIE FOR MAN'S SIN. (MARK 10:45, 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21) THE REASON JESUS CHRIST BECAME A MAN WAS IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DEAL WITH MAN'S SPIRITUAL FAILURE CALLED SIN IN THE BIBLE. IN HIS DEATH, HE PROVIDED A WAY FOR EVERY PERSON TO HAVE DIVINE FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING THROUGH CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CROSS. (EPHESIANS 1:7) THIS ONE WHO HAD NO SIN, BORE THE PENALTY OF OUR SIN THAT WE WHO HAD NO RIGHTEOUSNESS MIGHT HAVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!

III IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST WE SEE THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD--1 COR. 1:17-21

ACCORDING TO THESE VERSES, EVERY PERSON ON EARTH FALLS INTO ONE OF TWO CATEGORIES. HE IS EITHER IN THE PROCESS OF PERISHING OR HE IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING SAVED. THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS CONSIDERED OUTRAGEOUS AND FOOLISH BY THE UNBELIEVER. HOW COULD THE DEATH OF CHRIST, A GALILEAN CARPENTER WHO LIVED 2,000 YEARS AGO, HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH US TODAY? THE CROSS MAKES NO SENSE TO THE PERSON WHO IS TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT BECAUSE HIS CONCLUSION IS ALWAYS--IT IS FOOLISHNESS! (1 COR. 2:14) THE PROBLEM AND THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS IS THAT IT DOES NOT FIT INTO MAN'S INTELLECTUAL PROGRAM AND HIS MIND CAN NEITHER FIGURE IT OUT NOR EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE

OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS. TO SAY THAT MAN IS NOT SAVED BY A PROGRAM, OR HUMAN PROCESS OR THROUGH HUMAN PHILOSOPHY BUT INSTEAD THE PREACHING OF THE DEATH OF A MAN ON A CROSS IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE NATURAL MAN. HE CONSIDERS IT A WASTE TO TIME AND ABSOLUTELY IRRELEVANT. LISTEN TO SANGSTER: "THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL HAS NEVER SEEMED RELEVANT TO UNBELIEVERS, BUT IT HAS TO BE PROCLAIMED AND NOT APOLOGIZED FOR, OR WATERED DOWN, OR TWISTED IN THE INTERESTS OF IMMEDIATE RELEVANCE OR HALF ALTERED TO SUIT THE SPIRIT OF THE TIME, OR DISGUISED TO GET IT PAST THE UNBELIEVER'S GUARD. IT HAS TO BE PREACHED IN ALL OF ITS SEEMING IRRELEVANCE, ABOVE THE CATCALLS AND SNEERS FROM THOSE WHO HATE OR DESPISE IT WITH CONTEMPT AND WHO'S VANITY LEADS THEM TO FEEL SUPERIOR TO IT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HISTORY HAS A WAY OF PROVING THE RELEVANCE OF MANY THINGS WHICH THE WISE OF THIS WORLD HAVE CONSIDERED CONTEMPTUOUS AND IRRELEVANT. THE CROSS WAS THE WORST DEED HUMAN RACE EVER DID BUT GOD MADE IT THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO MAN--INCREDIBLE! BEING SAVED, BORN AGAIN, CONVERTED, WHATEVER NAME ONE CHOOSES IS NOT THROUGH AN INTELLECTUAL PROCESS OF DISCOVERING TRUTH BUT RATHER A DECISION OF THE WILL TO ACCEPT SOMETHING GOD HAS ALREADY DONE. THEREFORE, THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS NOT GOOD ADVICE OR GRAND RECOMMENDATION BUT RATHER GOOD NEWS FOR SINFUL MEN.

IV IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST WE SEE THE SYMBOL OF DISCIPLESHIP--LUKE 9:23

THE EMBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A SWORD, A TORCH, A LAMPSTAND, A HALO OR EVEN COMMANDMENTS ETCHED IN STONE. THE INSIGNIA

OF CHRISTIANITY IS THE CROSS. IN THIS VERSE, JESUS STATED THAT ANY PERSON DESIRING TO BE HIS DISCIPLE OR COME OR FOLLOW AFTER HIM MUST MEET THE CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP: (1) DENY HIMSELF. THE WEYMOUTH TRANSLATION STATES "RENOUNCE SELF"). THE SAME WORD IS USED IN LUKE 22:57 WHERE PETER DENIED THE LORD AND IT IS ALSO USED IN HEBREWS 11:24 WHERE MOSES REFUSED OR TURNT AWAY FROM ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF BEING PART OF PHARAOH'S HOUSEHOLD. WE USUALLY TREAT OURSELVES AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE WORLD AND NOTHING IS TOO GOOD FOR US FOR OUR INTERESTS AND DESIRES COME FIRST. SELF-SERVICE, SELF-PLEASING, SELF-INDULGENCE, SELF-JUSTIFICATION, SELF-PITY AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS ARE ALL PART OF THE "ME FIRST SYNDROME." THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST NO LONGER LIVES A LIFE IN TERMS OF WHAT I WANT, OR WHAT IS BEST FOR ME. IT IS NO LONGER I BUT CHRIST. (GAL. 2:20, PHIL. 1:21). THE POWER TO DENY SELF IS IMPOSSIBLE APART FROM DIVINE GRACE. BUT THERE IS NO DISCIPLESHIP APART FROM THIS APPROACH AND ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE.

(2) TAKE UP HIS CROSS, DAILY. TAKE UP IS IN THE AORIST TENSE. THE WORD CROSS PICTURES A CONDEMNED MAN CARRYING THE INSTRUMENT OF HIS DEATH TO PLACE OF CRUCIFIXION. WHAT THE CRIMINAL DID UNDER DURESS, THE DISCIPLE DOES WILLINGLY. HE FACES LIFE READY TO ENDURE THE WORST THAT MEN CAN GIVE HIM FOR THE SAKE OF LOYALTY TO CHRIST. THE CROSS IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE IS NOT THE ORDINARY DIFFICULTIES THAT ARE COMMON TO ALL MEN SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY SHARE THE SAME PLANET WITH ITS MANY AND VARIED PROBLEMS IN LIFE. A CROSS IS THAT BURDEN ONE CHOOSES TO CARRY BECAUSE OF HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST. IT INVOLVES THE CONTEMPT AND REPROACH OF A WORLD THAT HATES JESUS CHRIST AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIVE AND DEATH. THE TERM DAILY INTERJECTS THE IDEA

THAT DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT RISING TO ONE GREAT CRISIS IN LIFE BUT RATHER DEALING WITH THE DAILY ROUTINE. THE HARD PART OF DISCIPLESHIP IS THE DAILY ASPECT. THAT IS, LIVING A CONSISTENT, EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN LIFE ON A REGULAR BASIS. THAT IN ITSELF IS BECOMING A RARE COMMODITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

(3) FOLLOW ME. THE WORD FOLLOW IS IN THE PRESENT TENSE AND MEANS TO KEEP ON FOLLOWING. THE DISCIPLE MUST GO, DO AND SAY WHAT JESUS DID. THE WORD DISCIPLESHIP IS ONE OF THE MOST OFTEN USED AND ABUSED WORDS IN OUR MODERN DAY CHURCH VOCABULARY. ALMOST EVERY INDEPENDENT CHURCH HAS A DISCIPLESHIP COURSE BUT NEVER HAVE THERE BEEN FEWER DISCIPLES! ~~IN CHURCH HISTORY~~

THE LORD IS NOT LOOKING FOR A FEW SUPERSTARS BUT PEOPLE WHO LIKE HIMSELF WILL INVEST THEIR LIVES AS CHANNELS THROUGH WHOM GOD CAN WORK AND BLESS OTHERS.

CONCLUSION: THE TEXT TALKS ABOUT CRUCIFIXION.

GALATIANS 6:14 SAID THE CROSS IS THE ANSWER TO SALVATION FOR THE UNBELIEVER AND SANCTIFICATION FOR THE BELIEVER. THERE HAD BEEN A TIME WHEN SAUL OF TARSAUS GLORIED IN HIS EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS POSITION, ABILITIES AND BRILLIANCE PLUS HIS MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD. THE CROSS OF CHRIST CHANGED ALL OF THAT. JUST AS HIS CROSS MADE JESUS A "MARKED MAN" SO ALL WHO IDENTIFY WITH HIM AND THE CROSS BEAR SIMILAR MARKS. BY COMING TO CHRIST I ACCEPT HIS CROSS AS MY CROSS AND I TAKE MY PLACE WITH HIM IN THE PLACE OF HUMILIATION AND SHAME. (WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL CAME TO THE RED SEA AND THAT EXPERIENCE THEY SAID GOODBYE TO EGYPT, GOODBYE TO PHARAOH, GOODBYE TO SLAVERY. WHEN YOU AND I COME TO THE CROSS ITS GOODBYE TO THE OLD LIFE AND WELCOME TO VICTORY IN CHRIST. THERE IS IN EVERY BELIEVER THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS OLD LIFE AND NATURE, THE BIBLE CALLS IT THE "OLD MAN OR THE FLESH." IT NEVER

IMPROVES. IT IS A SIDE OF US THAT WE ARE STARTLED AND AMAZED THAT IT GETS NO BETTER. IT REACHES OUT FOR GLORY, IT REACHES OUT TO GRASP AND TO HAVE, TO BE SEEN, TO BE PRAISED, TO BE SOMEBODY, TO MAGNIFY THE FLESH. THE ANSWER TO THE SELF-LIFE IS THE CHRIST-LIFE. CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH IS THE ANSWER TO THAT PERPLEXING PROBLEM. (GALATIONS 2:20).

QUESTION: ARE YOU BOTHERED BY THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN YOUR LIFE. SOME FOURTH OR FIFTH ON OUR LIST OF PRIORITIES BEHIND SELF, FAMILY, JOB, FUN, AND A FEW OTHER THINGS? ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, THERE MUST BE DEATH AND RESURRECTION BEFORE DISCIPLESHIP.

"IT IS THE LORD"

JOHN 21:7-12

IT HAD BEEN THE WORST NIGHT ANY OF THEM COULD REMEMBER. ALL SEEMED TO BE LOST NOW THAT JESUS WAS DEAD. THEY HAD GONE FISHING TO TAKE THEIR MINDS OFF THE EVENTS OF THE PRECEDING WEEK. AFTER FISHING ALL NIGHT LONG, THEY HAD NOTHING IN THEIR NETS - AN INCREDIBLE CIRCUMSTANCE FOR HIGHLY SKILLED FISHERMEN! (SOME OF THEM MIGHT HAVE REMEMBERED WHAT JESUS SAID IN JOHN 15:5). AS THEY HEADED FOR LAND IN THE PRE-DAWN HOURS, THEY SAW A SOLITARY FIGURE STANDING ON THE SHORE. THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM IN THE EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS THAT FOLLOWED. HOWEVER WHEN THEY DID, THIS BECAME ONE OF THE TENDER AND TOUCHING SCENES OF THE BIBLE. THEY WOULD NEVER FORGET THAT MORNING WHEN THEY FINALLY RECOGNIZED THE RISEN LORD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, PETER WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT IT THAT HE FORGET ALL ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE CATCH OR HIS CLOTHES. HIS CONCERN WAS TO GET TO JESUS, BE NEAR HIM, TALK WITH HIM AGAIN. EVERY PERSON HAS RECOGNIZABLE, DISTINGUISHING FEATURES THAT ARE UNIQUE. IT MAY BE VOICE, WALK, DRESS, MANY OTHER THINGS. LET US EXAMINE SOME OF THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE RISEN CHRIST THAT ENABLED THE DISCIPLES TO RECOGNIZE HIM.

"you smell like my mother!"

THE TRIUMPHANT CHRIST

For A Thousand years
~~For A Thousand years~~ Acts 2: ~~24~~, 30-32
~~years~~, Roman General 2:29-32
 arrange the Triumph!

~~THE EASTER STORY - TESTING, TEACHING,
 TRANSFIGURATION, TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.~~

THE TRIUMPH WAS THE HIGHEST HONOR THAT COULD BE GIVEN A ROMAN GENERAL. IT WAS A MAGNIFICENT PARADE IN HONOR OF A GLORIOUS VICTORY. IT WAS GRANTED BY THE SENATE FOR ONE WHO HAD DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF IN DECISIVE VICTORY. IN ORDER TO QUALIFY, AT LEAST FIVE THOUSAND OF THE ENEMY MUST HAVE FALLEN IN ONE ENGAGEMENT AND THE ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY WAS INCLUDED IN THE CONQUEST. THE GENERAL WOULD ENTER THE CITY IN A CHARIOT DRAWN BY NO LESS THAN FOUR HORSES. A CROWN OF LAUREL LEAVES ON HIS HEAD, A SCEPTER IN HIS HAND, HE WAS PRECEDED BY SENATE OFFICIALS, MUSICIANS, THE SPOILS OF BATTLE, HIS VICTORIOUS ARMY, AND THE CAPTIVES BOUND IN FETTERS. THE GENERAL WAS USUALLY CLAD IN A PURPLE TUNIC EMBROIDERED WITH GOLDEN PALM LEAVES AND OVER IT A PURPLE TOGA MARKED WITH GOLDEN STARS. AFTER HIM RODE HIS FAMILY AND SOMETIMES HIS CHILDREN RODE WITH HIM IN THE LEAD CHARIOT. THE CROWDS ALONG THE TRIUMPHANT WAY WOULD CHEER AND HERALD HIM AS A VICTORIOUS SOLDIER. IT WAS AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ROMAN GENERAL - IT HAPPENED ONCE IN A LIFETIME. IN 11 COR. 2:14 WE READ "NOW THANKS BE UNTO GOD, WHICH ALWAYS CAUSETH US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST OR WE ARE IN CHRIST'S TRIUMPH!" HE WAS, IS, AND WILL BE TRIUMPHANT - SO SHALL THE BELIEVER. LET US CONSIDER SEVERAL BIBLICAL ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S TRIUMPH:

OK.
 Triumphant Parade!

act of violating -2-
over trust...

I. HE WAS TRIUMPHANT IN LIFE

FOR MANY, IF NOT MOST, LIFE BEGINS WITH VIRTUES AND MOVES DOWNWARD TOWARD VICES. WE OFTEN BEGIN IN PURITY AND MOVE TOWARD PERFIDY. COURAGE CHANGES TO COWARDESS. NOT SO WITH JESUS. HIS PERFECT PATH LED ALWAYS, STEADILY UPWARD. HE OVERCAME DISEASE AND DEMONS WITH EQUAL EASE. ON THE CROSS, HE WAS THE VICTOR AND NOT THE VICTIM. HE WAS THE HERO AND NOT THE HELPLESS. COMMENTATORS SPEAK OF JESUS' VIRGIN BIRTH AND MISS THE IMPACT OF HIS VIRGIN LIFE. HIS TRIUMPHANT LIFE IS REFLECTED IN FIVE PRINCIPLES HE TAUGHT AND PRACTICED WHICH STARTLED HIS HEARERS AND THE CIVILIZED WORLD.

(1) LOVE WILL TRIUMPH OVER HATRED -

MATTHEW 5:43-48

THIS PRINCIPLE WAS AS REVOLUTIONARY THEN AS NOW! IN A WORLD FILLED WITH HATRED AND SELFISH INTERESTS, HE DARED INTRODUCE A PRINCIPLE THAT COULD CHANGE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS FOREVER. ON THE CROSS, HE DEMONSTRATED IN HIS OWN LIFE THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE. (ROMANS 5:8)

(2) RIGHT WILL TRIUMPH OVER WRONG

MATTHEW 5:10-12

AT TIMES IN HUMAN HISTORY, IT SEEMS AS IF "RIGHT IS FOREVER ON THE SCAFFOLD, WRONG FOREVER ON THE THRONE" BUT THE PRINCIPLE WILL PREVAIL. GOD WILL SEE THAT IT DOES.

✓ JUST —

(ISA. 11:4-5)

(REV. 19:2/11)

HIS RULE 1000 yrs =
Babylon comes

- 2 Co. 5:21

⊛ Don Provansa —
(Maurice to N. York)

why? chance?
Providence — right over wrong

(3) LIGHT WILL TRIUMPH OVER DARKNESS -
MATTHEW 5:14-16

NICODEMUS CAME OUT OF THE DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT AND REMAINED THERE. JUDAS CAME OUT OF THE DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT, BACK INTO THE DARKNESS AND REMAINED THERE. ULTIMATELY LIGHT WILL PREVAIL. GOD WILL SEE TO IT. *I AM the light!*

(4) TRUTH WILL TRIUMPH OVER LIES -
MATTHEW 4:1-11

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST PROVES THIS POINT.

(5) LIFE WILL TRIUMPH OVER DEATH -
JOHN 11:25, I COR. 15:22

Funerals
McClure
"FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIED, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE." THIS PRINCIPLE IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE ORDINARY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE - ALL OF US WOULD RATHER VISIT THE MATERNITY WARD THAN THE MORGUE - SO WOULD GOD. *(Biography - end life - unhindered!)*

H. Chous!
II. HE WAS TRIUMPHANT IN DEATH - JOHN 19:30

"He shall Reign"...
NOTE: HE DID NOT SAY "I AM FINISHED!" WHAT WAS "IT"? THE PHRASE IS ONE GREEK WORD "TELESESTAI". IT WAS USED BY FARMERS TO DESCRIBE AN ANIMAL'S BIRTH. IT WAS USED BY ARTISTS TO DESCRIBE A FINISHED PAINTING. IT WAS USED BY PRIESTS TO DESCRIBE THE COMPLETION OF AN ANIMAL SACRIFICE AT THE ALTAR. IT IS NOT THE CRY OF FAILURE BUT OF FINALITY. WHAT WAS FINISHED? REDEMPTION! EVERY OBSTACLE HAD BEEN REMOVED - NOTHING ELSE COULD OR NEEDED TO BE DONE - REDEMPTION WAS FULL AND COMPLETE. THE WAY TO GOD WAS

Roman soldier to his master - when your only carpenter now?
Biblically a coffin for your Emperor
Eph 1:7 - "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"

WIDE OPEN, NONE NEED TURN AWAY. (IT IS SAID THAT NAPOLEON WALKED TO A MAP OF THE WORLD, PUT HIS FINGER ON A PLACE CALLED WATERLOO AND SAID, "HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THAT PLACE, I WOULD HAVE RULED THE WORLD." IN LIKE MANNER, SATAN MIGHT POINT TO A PLACE CALLED CALVARY AND SAY TO HIMSELF, "HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THAT PLACE, I WOULD HAVE RULED THE WORLD." THE CROSS IS CENTRAL IN HUMAN HISTORY AND DESTINY. WHEN PORTUGUESE TRADERS FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF THE GREAT EXPLORER VESCO DAGAMA SETTLED ON THE SOUTH COAST OF CHINA, THEY BUILT A MASSIVE CATHEDRAL ON A HILL OVERLOOKING THE HARBOR. YEARS LATER, A VIOLENT TYPHOON DESTROYED THE CATHEDRAL EXCEPT FOR THE FRONT WALL. THAT WALL STOOD AS AN ENDURING MONUMENT AND LATER ON, SOMEONE ERECTED A LARGE BRONZE CROSS ON THE WALL. WHEN SIR JOHN BOWRING SAW THE WALL IN 1825, HE WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH IT THAT HE WROTE THE FAMOUS HYMN "IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY, TOWERING O'ER THE WRECKS OF TIME, ALL THE LIGHT OF SACRED STORY, GATHERS ROUND ITS HEAD SUBLIME." THE BUILDERS OF THAT RUINED CATHEDRAL HAD LONG BEEN FORGOTTEN BUT THE CROSS REMAINED A SYMBOL OF THE CRUCIFIED ONE AND OF HIS TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

Marchant
world-wide
import business
Gov. of
Hong Kong

wrote
a poem
Bar.
organist
Set to
music
(1849)

Copy Book

III. HE WAS TRIUMPHANT IN RESURRECTION -

JOHN 2:19 - (Rom. 4:25) -

Evidence
of our
justification

JESUS PREDICTED HIS DEATH - AND RESURRECTION. FOUNDERS OF RELIGIONS OFTEN MAKE EXAGGERATED PROMISES AND CLAIMS WHICH THEY CANNOT FULFILL. TODAY THEY LIE BOUND BY THE GRAVE AND THEIR FOOLISH FOLLOWERS CLOSE THEIR EYES TO THEIR FOUNDERS FAILINGS. JESUS CHRIST LIVES.

HIS RESURRECTION GUARANTEED THE COMPLETION OF HIS BLOOD-BOUGHT REDEMPTION BUT ALSO HIS VICTORY OVER DEATH AND OUR ASSURED RESURRECTION.

IV. HE IS TRIUMPHANT IN THE CHURCH -

MATTHEW 16:18

~~Christ is the foundation~~

After is dead how could the church be built on him?

EASTER IS NOT ^{just} ABOUT HISTORY BUT ABOUT REALITY. JESUS CHRIST IS NOT ATTEMPTING TO MAKE MEN RELIGIOUS - HE WANTS MEN TO ENJOY A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. SAUL OF TARSUS WAS VERY RELIGIOUS UNTIL HE RECEIVED CHRIST AS SAVIOR ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD AND FROM THEN ON IT WAS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE LIVING CHRIST. THE CHURCH'S GREATEST PERSECUTOR BECAME ITS GREATEST PREACHER. REVELATION 1:13 REVEALS THAT CHRIST IS IN THE CENTRAL POSITION IN THE CHURCH. HE IS HEAD OF THE BODY, BRIDEGROOM TO THE BRIDE, FOUNDATION TO THE BUILDING. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS AS IF EVIL IS WINNING AND GOD AND THE CHURCH ARE LOSING MISERABLY. HOWEVER, THE LAST CHAPTER IN HUMAN AND CHURCH HISTORY HAS ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN AND THE OUTCOME IS SURE. THE CHURCH WILL NOT COLLAPSE BECAUSE HE HOLDS IT UP!

V. HE WILL BE TRIUMPHANT IN HIS RETURN -

REVELATION 1:7 (val = a particle used to strengthen an affirmation = yes!)

GOD WILL NOT LET THE WORLD THINK OF HIS SON AS A CRUCIFIED CRIMINAL. AN ETHICAL, MORAL GOD MUST VINDICATE THE SON OF GOD - AND HE WILL. PHILIPPINAS 2:5-11, ACTS 1:11, I THESS. 4:13FF, REV. 19:11. THE LAST TIME THE WORLD SAW JESUS, HE WAS HANGING ON A CROSS. NEXT TIME THEY SEE HIM, IT WILL BE IN TRIUMPHANT GLORY. ((IN THE BIOGRAPHY OF

Class at TSBC. God's design T.ming. Why only believe Him after the resurrection? the special group - the birth then!!!

THE LATE V. RAYMOND EDMAN WHO WAS FOR MANY YEARS PRESIDENT OF WHEATON COLLEGE, TELLS THE FOLLOWING STORY. HE WAS SPEAKING IN CHAPEL ON THE SUBJECT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING. THE BASIS OF HIS SUBJECT WAS HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR HAILE SALASSIE. HE TOLD HOW HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED ON HOW TO ACT, WHAT TO WEAR, WHEN TO BOW, WHAT STEPS TO TAKE. HE TOLD OF HIS PREPARATION FOR THE AUDIENCE WITH THIS EARTHLY EMPEROR AND THE NEED FOR BELIEVERS TO BE REMINDED THAT ONE DAY THEY WILL COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE KING OF KINGS. HE SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR SILENCE, REVERENCE, PRAYER AND AN ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP AS ONE COMES INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE KING OF KINGS. SUDDENLY, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ADDRESS, HE STOPPED SPEAKING AND COLLAPSED AT THE PULPIT. IN A SINGLE MOMENT, THIS AGED SERVANT OF THE LORD HIMSELF WENT TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING. WHETHER IT BE BY DEATH OR TRANSLATION, MEN WILL APPEAR BEFORE HIM IN ALL OF HIS REGAL GLORY.

Dr. Stevens - 2 Wags into Wash.

adj. Material for Psalm Sunday.

HAD ALSO RENEWED HER FAITH IN MANKIND TO KNOW THAT AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD APPRECIATED WHAT SHE HAD DONE. THE CLERGYMAN SAID: "WHEN I RECEIVED THAT LETTER, I DETERMINED BY THE GRACE OF GOD TO WRITE OTHER LETTERS AND TO SAY TO PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO ME - THANK YOU!" PAUL KNEW HOW TO SAY "THANK YOU" AND ENCOURAGED HIS FELLOW-BELIEVERS TO DO THE SAME. (Jody T. Huer)

I. A THANKSGIVING PRAYER - 1:2-3

"I THANK GOD FOR YOU!" - WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN A LETTER! THERE ARE SOME FOLK, WHO WHEN THEY THINK OF OTHER FOLK, CURSE! IN THIS PRAYER, ONE IS SURPRISED THAT THERE IS NO MENTION OF FOOD, FAMILY, FINANCES OR EVEN FELLOWSHIP - JUST THINKING AND THANKING. THESE PEOPLE WERE ON PAUL'S PRAYER LIST. (QUESTION: WHO IS ON OURS?) (THANKSGIVING BY TRADITION HAS BEEN ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING SPECIAL DAYS IN OUR FAMILY - DAD'S PRAYER - A HIGHLIGHT.)

(A) OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE - JOHN 6:11

QUESTION: WHY DID JESUS GIVE THANKS? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE - HE WAS THANKFUL! WHY DON'T WE GIVE THANKS - THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE - WE ARE NOT THANKFUL! ... NOT THOUGHTFUL

(B) PAUL'S EXAMPLE - ACTS 27:34-36

ON THIS VERY SPECIAL AND DANGEROUS OCCASION NOBODY COMPLAINED THAT THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS WERE BEING VIOLATED BECAUSE A PREACHER WAS LEADING THEM IN PRAYER! PAUL DIDN'T MUMBLE OR MUTTER SOME INARTICULATE ROTE PRAYER BUT RATHER HE GAVE GOOD TESTIMONY OF A PRACTICE THAT WAS PART OF HIS LIFE - SO FOR ALL BELIEVERS - IT IS A PUBLIC TESTIMONY. (THERE

IS A LEGEND ABOUT TWO ANGELS WHO WERE SENT TO EARTH TO GATHER UP THE PRAYERS OF MEN. ONE WAS TO FILL HIS BASKET WITH THE PETITIONS, THE OTHER TO GATHER UP THE PRAISE OF MANKIND. SOMETIME LATER, THEY RETURNED TO HEAVEN. THE FIRST HAD HIS BASKET HEAPED HIGH AND RUNNING OVER WITH THE INNUMERABLE PETITIONS OF MEN TO GOD. THE OTHER RETURNED WITH A HEAVY HEART AND A VIRTUALLY EMPTY BASKET. COULD IT BE, THEY THOUGHT, THAT MEN ON EARTH ARE SO THOUGHTLESS AS TO FORGET TO BE THANKFUL?)

IF YOU THINK THIS IS PURE LEGEND AND SPECULATION REMEMBER THE STORY JESUS TOLD ABOUT THE TEN LEPERS - LUKE 17:12-17. SUPPOSE A FRIEND WOULD SAY TO YOU: "I MENTIONED YOUR NAME TO RONALD REAGAN LAST WEEK." MOST EVERYONE WOULD BE SURPRISED AND PLEASED. LET ME SUGGEST THAT THERE IS SOMETHING GREATER, BETTER - TO HAVE ONE'S NAME MENTIONED TO GOD. IF IT IS TRUE, THAT THE GREATEST THING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING CAN DO FOR ANOTHER IS TO PRAY FOR HIM - THEN LET US DO IT AND FOLLOW PAUL'S PRACTICE. (NEHEMIAH -- CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY THROUGH PRAYER.)

II. A THANKSGIVING MESSAGE - 2:13

BROWSING THROUGH BOOKSTORES IS A FAVORITE PASTIME. THERE ONE WILL FIND THE LATEST WORD OF MEN ON ALMOST ANY SUBJECT IMAGINABLE. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL "THE WORD OF MEN" AND THE WORD FOR MEN IN OUR TEXT IS THE GREEK ANTHROPOS - "THE UPLOOKING ONE." THE VERY WORD SUGGESTS THAT MAN IS A DEPENDENT CREATURE OF HUMAN ORIGIN WHOSE VERY EXISTENCE AND SUSTENANCE DEPENDS UPON SOMETHING OR SOMEONE OUTSIDE HIMSELF. THE PSALMIST DESCRIBED IT ACCURATELY WHEN HE SPOKE OF MAN AS "WHOSE BREATH IS IN HIS NOSTRILS." THE WORD OF GOD IS SOMETHING MORE THAN THE WORD OF MEN.

MEN WROTE IT, BUT GOD GAVE IT - DIVINE ORIGIN.
(II PETER 1:20-21) PAUL PREACHED A MESSAGE
THAT WAS MORE THAN HUMAN OPINION. THE
THESSALONIANS MADE A VERY IMPORTANT DISTINCTION.
THE TWO WORDS RECEIVED IN THE TEXT ARE TWO
DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS. THE FIRST SUGGESTS
(1) A FORMAL ACCEPTANCE, THE SECOND AN (2) APPRECIATION
OR WELCOME. (FOR EXAMPLE, IF ONE RECEIVED
NEWS THAT AN IRS AGENT WAS COMING TO AUDIT
ONE'S TAX RETURN, HE PROBABLY WOULD GIVE HIM
A FORMAL ACCEPTANCE. IF THE AUDIT REVEALED
MONEY TO BE PAID, THE ACCEPTANCE MIGHT
DEGENERATE INTO RESENTMENT. HOWEVER, IF THE
SAME AGENT DISCOVERED A TERRIBLE MISTAKE HAD
BEEN MADE, RETURNED TO APOLOGIZE AND BRING
A CHECK WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OWED YOU FOR
SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS THEN ACCEPTANCE
MIGHT GIVE WAY TO APPRECIATION AND A WARM
WELCOME.) THE THESSALONIANS APPRECIATED
THE WORD OF GOD. THEY RECOGNIZED THE BIBLE
AS THE ONLY BOOK THAT GOD EVER WROTE AND
THEY WERE TO TREAT IT WITH GREAT RESPECT.
(*) (NEHEMIAH 8:1-6) THE WORD OF GOD CHANGES
MEN. WHEN HENRY M. STANLEY STARTED ACROSS
AFRICA IN SEARCH OF DAVID LIVINGSTON, HE
STARTED HIS EXPEDITION WITH 73 BOOKS THAT
WEIGHED SOME 180 POUNDS. HOWEVER, AS THE
JOURNEY PROGRESSED INTO DAYS AND WEEKS, HE
WAS OBLIGED TO THROW AWAY THE BOOKS ONE BY
ONE UNTIL HE GOT TO A SINGLE VOLUME - THE
BIBLE. THAT HE REFUSED TO THROW AWAY AND
IT IS SAID THAT HE READ IT THROUGH THREE
TIMES ON THAT REMARKABLE TRIP. THIS COUPLED
WITH LIVINGSTON'S OUTSTANDING LIFE LED HIM
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. WE ARE
TOLD THAT MANY BOOKS TEN YEARS OLD OR MORE,
NEED TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED, UPDATED
BECAUSE KNOWLEDGE IS PROLIFERATING AT A
STAGGERING RATE. SOMETHING IS HAPPENING
IN MANY BIBLE BELIEVING CHURCHES ACROSS

AMERICA. A SUBTLE CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE, ALMOST IMPERCEPTIVELY, BUT CHANGING NEVERTHELESS. PEOPLE ARE BEING DRAWN TO EVANGELICAL CHURCHES FOR THE WRONG REASON. IT MAY BE

① LOCATION AND FACILITIES, THAT IS NO LONGER ARE FUNDAMENTAL CHURCHES THE RUN-DOWN STORE-FRONT SHACKS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RAILROAD TRACK. AFFLUENCE HAS COME TO FUNDAMENTALISM AND OFTEN THE FUNDAMENTAL CHURCH IS THE BIGGEST CHURCH IN TOWN, OR IN THE STATE FOR THAT MATTER. THEREFORE, PEOPLE ARE DRAWN TO THE ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES OF SUCH CHURCHES.

② COUPLED WITH THE MINISTRIES OF DAY CARE AND DAY SCHOOL, WHERE CHILDREN GET GOOD CARE AND GOOD TRAINING, BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIGH SALARIES IN ORDER TO MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN. THERE ARE OTHER

③ THINGS THAT ATTRACT SUCH AS YOUTH PROGRAMS, MUSIC, SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY, TO MENTION BUT A FEW. HOWEVER, THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH IS NOT TERRIBLY IMPORTANT EVEN IN THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO GIVE LIP SERVICE TO MEMEBERSHIP. THE BIBLE AND ITS EXPOSITION TAKES THE BACK SEAT TO COUNSELING, ADMINISTRATION, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. IN OTHER WORDS, "CHURCH STUFF" IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCRIPTURE. (COMMENT REGARDING GRACE SEMINARY - BACK TO BIBLE EXPOSITION.) SIMPLY STATED, THE GREATEST

NEED OF OUR SPIRITUALLY IGNORANT GENERATION IS A SATURATED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD. ANYTHING ELSE, ANYTHING LESS, IS A DOWNWARD PATH WHERE THERE IS NO SURE RESTING PLACE. COMMENT REGARDING PULPIT COMMITTEES. MANY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR BUT SOMEHOW THE BIBLE IS NOT THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. THE PHRASE "EFFECTUALLY WORKETH" MEANS TO OPERATE WITH REFERENCE TO DIVINE ENERGY. ACCORDING TO HEBREWS 4:12, 1 PETER 1:23, PSALM 119:23, THE WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL AND PIERCES INTO OUR INNERMOST BEING WITH DEEP, SWIFT STROKES EXPOSING OUR

INNERMOST THOUGHTS. (COMMENT ON RUNNING RESOLVE - JULY - 260 CHAPTERS, 929 CHAPTERS - TOTAL 1189 CHAPTERS) REPEAT: THE BIBLE IS NOT JUST ANOTHER BOOK, IT IS THE ONLY BOOK THAT GOD EVER WROTE - SONG: THE BIBLE.

III. A THANKSGIVING RESOLUTION - 5:18

"BE THANKFUL WHATEVER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES MAY BE" (PHILLIPS TRANSLATION) THIS VERSE SAYS THAT WE ARE TO BE THANKFUL TO GOD, NO MATTER WHAT! (ROMANS 5:3, JAMES 1:2 - "WHEN ALL KINDS OF TRIALS...CROWD INTO YOUR LIVES, DON'T RESENT THEM AS INTRUDERS BUT WELCOME THEM AS FRIENDS!") (PHILLIPS TRANSLATION) A

THANKSGIVING RESOLUTION SHOULD PRECEDE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION. IT IS BY FAR THE MORE APPROPRIATE HOLIDAY. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS EASY TO BE THANKFUL. WHEN MONEY, HEALTH AND THE ROAD AHEAD IS BRIGHT AND CLEAR, IT TAKES NO EFFORT TO SAY THANK YOU LORD. WHEN TIMES ARE HARD AND WHEN SICKNESS COMES, A LOST JOB, STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS HAVE CAUSED OUR LIFE TO CAVE IN, FALL APART OR BLOW UP, IT IS THEN THAT WE NEED REMINDED THAT THE TEXT SAYS "IN EVERYTHING" - ROMANS 8:28.

✓ ① DR. ALEXANDER WHYTE OF EDINBURGH WAS A FAMOUS SCOTTISH PREACHER OF A GENERATION AGO. HIS PULPIT PRAYERS WERE OFTEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE. ONE STORMY MORNING HE STOOD TO OPEN THE SERVICE AND PRAYED AS FOLLOWS: "WE THANK THEE, O GOD, THAT EVERY DAY IS NOT LIKE TODAY." ✓ ② MATTHEW HENRY, THE FAMOUS BIBLE SCHOLAR WAS ROBBED OF HIS FUNDS BY THIEVES. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE SITUATION ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATED TO THANKSGIVING, HE SAID:

(1) "HE WAS THANKFUL THAT HE HAD NEVER BEEN ROBBED BEFORE."

(2) "HE WAS THANKFUL THAT THEY TOOK HIS MONEY AND NOT HIS LIFE."

(3) "HE WAS THANKFUL THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY TOOK ALL HE HAD, IT WASN'T MUCH."

(4) "HE WAS THANKFUL THAT HE HAD BEEN ROBBED AND NOT THE ONE DOING THE ROBBING."

YOU SEE, HE UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF OUR TEXT. PAUL COULD BE THANKFUL IN JAIL, ON A STORMY SEA, IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY OR POVERTY OR WHEREVER GOD LET HIM GO - HE WAS THANKFUL.

CONCLUSION: REVELATION 4:9 THE PHRASE "THANKS TO HIM" IS PART OF WORSHIP. LET OUR WORSHIP BE A KIND OF "THANK YOU NOTE TO GOD."
SONG: THANK YOU LORD.

AND BE YE THANKFUL

COLOSSIANS 3:15

PAUL KNEW THAT WE ARE MORE PRONE TO ASK GOD FOR SOMETHING THAN THANK HIM FOR SOMETHING. IN DESCRIBING THE "RENEGADE SINNER" HE SAID "BECAUSE THAT, WHEN THEY KNEW GOD, THEY GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD, NEITHER WERE THANKFUL...." (ROMANS 1:21)

IT IS SAD BUT TRUE, THAT MEN MUST BE REMENDED TO BE THANKFUL TO GOD. THE WORD BE IS THE WORD GINOMAI AND COULD BE READ "AND BECOME, OR BE MADE THANKFUL." THIS WORD IS SO TRANSLATED IN JOHN 1:14, 2:9, II CORINTHIANS 5:17, 21 AND 6:14. THERE SHOULD BE A KIND OF HOLY GRATITUDE TO THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BLESSINGS AND IF THERE IS NOT, THE BELIEVER SHOULD ASK GOD TO MAKE HIM THANKFUL. A

① SOLDIER SAVED A COMRADE IN BATTLE IN WORLD WAR II. EVERY YEAR ON HIS BIRTHDAY, THE RESCUED SOLDIER SENT HIS RESCUER A LETTER OF THANKS FOR ANOTHER YEAR THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HAD HIS LIFE NOT BEEN SAVED. THAT LETTER-WRITING EXPERIENCE CONTINUED FOR OVER 25 YEARS! (ONE OF MY FAVORITE STORIES

② CONCERNING THANKSGIVING HAS TO DO WITH THE MAN WHO MADE IT HIS PRACTICE TO WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE EACH THANKSGIVING EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO HIS LIFE. ON ONE OCCASION HE WROTE TO A FAVORITE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER WHO HAD INSPIRED HIM TO PURSUE KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH. IN RESPONSE TO HIS LETTER SHE WROTE: "DEAR WILLIE:
I AM AN OLD LADY IN MY EIGHTIES. I AM ILL AND CANNOT LEAVE MY ROOM. YOUR LETTER CAME LIKE A RAY OF BRIGHT SUN, ILLUMINATING MY DARK DAY AND MY EVEN DARKER LIFE.

YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT AFTER 50 YEARS OF TEACHING, YOUR'S WAS THE FIRST LETTER OF THANKS I EVER RECEIVED FROM A FORMER STUDENT. YOU LIFTED THE CLOUDS FROM ME.")

WE MIGHT DO WELL TO REMEMBER THIS THANKSGIVING THAT THANKSGIVING BEGINS IN THE HEART AND NOT AT THE TABLE. IT MAY BE THAT EVEN BELIEVERS ARE MUCH LIKE THE TWO TRAVELERS MENTIONED IN AESOP'S FABLES, WHO DURING THE HEAT OF A SUMMER DAY SAT UNDER THE SHADE OF A TREE. AS THEY LOOKED UP THROUGH THE LEAVES AND SAW NO FRUIT TO EAT THEY BEGAN TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE USELESS TREE. SUDDENLY, THE TREE SPOKE AND SAID: "YOU UNGRATEFUL MEN, YOU SIT IN MY SHADE AND COMPLAIN THAT YOU HAVE NO FRUIT TO EAT." COULD IT BE THAT WE ENJOY ALL OF GOD'S BLESSINGS, EVEN AS BELIEVERS, OFTEN WITH UNTHANKFUL LIPS. LIFE'S MOST THANKFUL MOMENTS: WALKING THROUGH MALL, REMEMBER FORMER DAYS, ... HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE. THANKSGIVING FAMILY MEMORIES, UNEXPECTED RESOURCES IN TIME OF DEEP NEED -- WERE IT NOT FOR THE DIFFICULT MOMENTS IN LIFE, WE MIGHT CEASE TO PRAISE GOD. (COMMENT REGARDING BUILDER CONCERNING RECESSION,) JESUS EXPRESSED THANKS TO GOD REGULARLY. (1) FOOD -- JOHN 6:11,23 (2) ANSWERED PRAYER -- JOHN 11:41. HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHERE ALL THOSE PEOPLE WERE WHOM JESUS HELPED AND BLESSED WHEN HE WAS ON TRIAL AND ON THE CROSS? WHERE WERE THE PEOPLE WHOM HE FED AND HEALED AND ENCOURAGED? WHERE WERE THE VOICES THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN RAISED IN PROTEST AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF THE ROMANS -- THEY WERE SILENT, BECAUSE LIKE YOU AND ME THERE IS TOO OFTEN TOO LITTLE GRATITUDE TO GOD.

(LET ME SUGGEST A PRACTICE WHICH MIGHT SURPRISE YOU, TAKE A CLEAN SHEET OF PAPER AND PENCIL AND WRITE DOWN A THANK-YOU LIST AND SEE IF YOU CAN LIST 15 THINGS FOR WHICH YOU ARE SINCERELY GRATEFUL TO GOD, SALVATION, HEALTH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS, FREEDOM, NO MAJOR WARS IN THE WORLD, JOB SECURITY, WILL JUST ABOUT EXHAUST OUR LIMITED RANGE OF APPRECIATION).

THE TEXT IN COLOSSIANS SUGGESTS SEVERAL AREAS IN WHICH THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO GOD:

I. BE THANKFUL FOR HIM WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE Rev. 4:9

THIS CHAPTER PRESENTS A BREATHTAKING SCENE. IT SHIFTS FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN. ① A DOOR-- SUGGESTS A WAY OF ACCESS. ② A THRONE -- SUGGESTS AUTHORITY AND A SOVEREIGN RULER. ③ A RAINBOW -- A REMINDER THAT GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES. ④ TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS -- REPRESENTING THE COMPLETE CHURCH BOTH CLOTHED AND CROWNED! ⑤ FOUR LIVING CREATURES -- LIVING BEINGS WHO WORSHIPPED GOD.

THIS SCENE WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR TO JOHN'S READERS FOR IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WHAT THESE PERSONS WERE DOING WAS A FAMILIAR SCENE. WHEN ONE KING SURRENDERED TO ANOTHER, HE CAST HIS CROWN AT THE VICTOR'S FEET. SOMETIMES THE ROMANS CARRIED WITH THEM AN IMAGE OF THEIR EMPEROR AND WHEN THEY HAD SUBJECTED A HOSTILE KING TO SURRENDER THERE WAS A SPECIFIC CEREMONY IN WHICH THE VANQUISHED RULER HAD TO CAST HIS CROWN OR HIS SYMBOLS OF KINGSHIP BEFORE THE EMPEROR'S IMAGE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SCENE IS ONE OF TOTAL SUBMISSION.

ONE REASONS FOR THEIR WORSHIP AND PRAISE OF CHRIST IS MENTIONED IN REV. 5:6. THIS GREAT THANKSGIVING CHOIR IS UNITED IN PRAISE FOR ONE PERSON AND HIM ALONE. (MAY I SUGGEST THAT ANY PERSON WHO DOES NOT LOVE JESUS DOWN HERE CERTAINLY WILL NOT LOVE HIM UP THERE. HEAVEN WOULD BE A REAL DRAG FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T LOVE JESUS!)

EVERY TIME ATTEND A MEETING WHERE SEVERAL THOUSAND BELIEVERS ARE GATHERED TO SING PRAISE TO GOD THIS SCENE IN REVELATION COMES TO MIND AND IF YOU KNOW HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR, YOU WILL BE THERE.

II. BE THANKFUL ALWAYS AND FOR ALL THINGS

EPHESIANS 5:20

IN ONE OF HIS BOOKS, DR. BARNHOUSE COMMENTS THAT HE ONCE HEARD A MAN THANK GOD FOR THE WATER ON THE TABLE. HE HAD HEARD THOUSANDS OF MEALS BLESSED BUT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE COULD EVER REMEMBER ANYONE THANKING GOD FOR THE WATER, A VERY COMMON ORDINARY SUBSTANCE AVAILABLE TO US ALL, WITHOUT WHICH LIFE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. I THESSALONIANS 5:18 SAYS: "IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS: FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING YOU." PAUL PRACTICED WHAT HE PREACHED AND WROTE. SEE ACTS 27:35, 28:15.

THE STORM PAUL ENCOUNTERED ENROUTE TO ROME WAS A DIFFICULT SITUATION OVER WHICH PAUL HAD NO CONTROL. HIS ONLY RECOURSE OR AVENUE OF HELP WAS PRAYER AND PRAYER ALONE.

PAUL COULD NOT HOLD THE RUDDER AND STEER THE SHIP. HE WAS HELPLESS AND TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON OTHERS. THAT STORM REPRESENTS THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS WHICH COME INTO THE LIVES OF ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE. WE TEST THE QUALITY OF OUR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO THANK GOD WHEN TIMES ARE DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS. IN THE MIDST OF SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES PAUL TOOK TIME TO THANK GOD AND HE DID SO FOR THE BENEFIT OF EVERYONE WHO COULD SEE AND HEAR. BY THE WAY, OF THE 276 PEOPLE ON THAT SHIP, NOBODY WAS MAKING FUN OR WRITING EDITORIALS ABOUT CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE. ACCORDING TO 28:16 -- PAUL CAME TO ROME -- HE MADE IT THROUGH THE STORM!

III BE THANKFUL FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYING FOR ALL MEN -- I TIMOTHY 2:1-4

PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT SUPPLEMENTAL BUT FUNDAMENTAL. UNDOUBTEDLY IT IS OUR AREA OF GREATEST FAILURE. SOME MINISTRIES ARE RELATIVELY EASY COMPARED TO PRAYER. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO PRAY FOR ALL MEN. THE PREPOSITION FOR LITERALLY MEANS IN BEHALF OF. PAUL MENTIONS FOUR KINDS OF PRAYER: (1) SUPPLICATIONS -- REQUESTS MADE TO GOD OUT OF A SENSE OF NEED, WEAKNESS, DEPENDENCE AND INADEQUACY. THIS IS THE KIND OF PRAYING DONE DURING A RECESSION OR DEPRESSION. (2) PRAYERS -- A GENERAL TERM FOR PRAYING. (3) INTERCESSIONS -- THE WORD SUGGESTS INTIMATE CONVERSATION WITH GOD. (4) GIVING THANKS -- MEANS MORE THAN ALWAYS ASKING OR COMPLAINING ABOUT SOMETHING TO GOD.

THE GOSPEL WE PREACH IS WORLDWIDE IN ITS DIMENSIONS AND NOT RESTRICTED IN ANY WAY TO ANY MAN UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. ~~NO MAN IS BEYOND THE REACH OF PRAYER.~~ THERE IS NOT ONE SOUL WHOM GOD DOES NOT LOVE AND DESIRE TO BE SAVED. ~~COULD IT BE THAT ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS ANOTHER HUMAN BEING CAN DO FOR ANOTHER IS TO PRAY FOR HIM!~~ (WE THINK OF PRAYER AS A DESPERATE MEASURE, A LAST FUTILE ATTEMPT TO DO SOMETHING TO CORRECT AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. GOD VIEWS PRAYER AS THE MEANS WHEREBY HE MOVES MEN AND NATIONS.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER SONG -- "THANK YOU LORD."

(A PASTOR WAS TRAVELING IN THE DEEP SOUTH WHEN HIS CAR BROKE DOWN. HE WAS ON A BACK ROAD FAR FROM A GARAGE AND WHILE PONDERING WHAT TO DO, A JEEP CAME DOWN THE ROAD AND A MAN STOPPED. THE MAN HAD IN THE JEEP A ~~OLD~~ CUR DOG. THE PASTOR NOTICED THAT WHEREVER THE MAN WENT, WHATEVER HE DID, THE DOG STAYED CLOSE TO HIM NUZZLING HIM WHEN HE STOOPED DOWN. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT MAN AND BEAST WERE FOND OF EACH OTHER. WHILE REPAIRING THE CAR THE MAN SAID "THAT DOG SAVED MY LIFE." HE TOLD THE STORY OF HOW HE HAD FALLEN INTO QUICKSAND UP TO HIS KNEES WITH NO HUMAN BEING NEARBY. OUT OF NOWHERE THE DOG APPEARED AND BY HOLDING TO THE DOG THE MAN WAS ABLE TO STRUGGLE OUT OF THE QUICKSAND AND TO SAFETY. HE SAID, "THAT DOG IS ALWAYS WITH ME. HE CAN HAVE ANYTHING I HAVE. HE EATS WITH ME AND EVEN SLEEPS AT THE FOOT OF MY BED." THE PASTOR INQUIRED: "WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF, DOWN AT THE STORE WHERE YOU'RE GOING, SOMEONE DELIBERATELY KICKED THE DOG?"

WITHOUT HESITATION THE YOUNG MAN SAID:

"MISTER, I BELIEVE I'D KILL HIM."

THE MINISTER REMINDED HIS HELPER THAT IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A HUMAN BEING TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF A DOG, ESPECIALLY ONE THAT SAVED HIS LIFE AT NO REAL COST TO HIMSELF, AND YET THAT PERSON MAY GO THROUGH LIFE'S ENTIRETY TOTALLY INDIFFERENT AND UNTHANKFUL TO A SAVIOR WHO DIED ON A CROSS AT GREAT COST IN ORDER TO PULL MEN OUT OF THE QUICKSAND OF SIN AND RESCUE THEM FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL. PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SO RESCUED ARE USUALLY THANKFUL FOR SALVATION AND REDEMPTION IN CHRIST.)

THANKSGIVING: THANKS AND GIVING

II COR. 9:7

SOMETIMES OUR USAGE OF THE WORD THANKS DOES NOT REALLY MEAN THANKS! "THANKS A LOT, THANKS FOR NOTHING, THANKS ANYWAY, THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS, THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING AT _____, HAVE A NICE DAY." ONE COMEDIAN THANKS HIS AUDIENCE FOR THE MEMORIES AND A SINGER THANKS GOD HE IS A COUNTRY BOY. SOMETHING IS LACKING IN THIS USAGE OF THANKS. THERE IS LITTLE OR NO RELATIONSHIP TO THIS USAGE AND WHAT BIBLE WRITERS HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY SAID: "IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS" (I. THESS. 5:18) "I THANK GOD ALWAYS ON YOUR BEHALF...." (I COR. 1:4) THANKSGIVING IS GOOD THERAPY, SAYS WARREN WIERSBE IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF THE GOOD NEWS BROADCASTER. OUTLOOK IN LIFE HAS MUCH TO DO WITH OUTCOME. PRAISE PROPELS THE BELIEVER FORWARD IN FAITH BUT GRUMBLING PARALYZES HIM IN FEAR. THANKS FOR GIVING (RELATE HISTORY FROM 1972 AND PRESENT DEBT RETIREMENT THREE TIMES ANNUAL BUDGET THAT YEAR.) THANKS IS OFTEN EXPRESSED IN GIVING. GRATITUDE AND GIVING GO TOGETHER JUST AS THINKING AND THANKING GO TOGETHER. (LUKE 8:2-3) FEW PEOPLE WERE AS DEVOTED TO CHRIST AS MARY MAGDALENE. THE DRAMATIC CHANGE IN HER LIFE FROM DEMON POSSESSION TO MINISTERING TO THE LORD AND SHARING HER POSSESSIONS AND GOODS WITH HIM. CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF A DRAMATIC CHANGE. (LUKE 16-1, 19-8) WHEN PAUL ESTABLISHES LOCAL CHURCHES, HE TAUGHT PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP. IN WRITING TO

THE CORINTHIANS, HE SPOKE OF THEIR MANY GOOD QUALITIES AND ENCOURAGED THEM TO ADD ONE MORE TO THE LIST OF VIRTUES, NAMELY, GENEROSITY. (II COR. 8:7) EACH YEAR, USUALLY IN NOVEMBER, WE EMPHASIZE STEWARDSHIP IN OUR CHURCH. IT IS A TIME TO ENCOURAGE NEW BELIEVERS TO INCORPORATE INTO THEIR LIVES WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES. IT IS ALSO A TIME TO REMIND ALL OF US OF THE DANGERS OF BEING CASUAL AND CARELESS REGARDING STEWARDSHIP. STEWARDSHIP IS NOT "TIPPING" GOD ON SUNDAY. IT IS A PRINCIPLE OF LIFE. LET US CONSIDER THREE SUCH PRINCIPLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ALL RECORDED IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS.

I. GIVING IS THE ACID TEST OF LOVE:
LOVE IS THE ACID TEST OF GIVING -
II COR. 8:8, I COR. 13:3

WE TEND TO MEASURE SPIRITUALITY BY BIBLE KNOWLEDGE, CHURCH ATTENDANCE, PIETY IN PRAYER, NUMBERS OF SOULS LED TO CHRIST. THIS VERSE SUGGESTS THAT OUR CHECKBOOK MAY REVEAL MORE OF OUR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER THAN THE HYMNBOOK. THE BELIEVER PROVES THE REALITY OF HIS LOVE BY GIVING. THE WORD PROVE IN THE TEXT IS TRANSLATED ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN LUKE 14:19, ROMANS 12:2, I COR. 3:13. THE LAST REFERENCE HAS TO DO WITH THE BEMA AND SUGGESTS THAT AT THAT JUDGMENT FIRE SHALL TRY OR PROVE EVERY MAN'S WORK TO DETERMINE WHAT KIND OR QUALITY IT IS.

II. GOD LOOKS AT OUR ATTITUDE IN GIVING:
MEN LOOK AT THE AMOUNT - II COR. 9:6-7

WE ARE IMPRESSED WITH MILLIONS IN GIVING. GOD IS IMPRESSED WITH MITES. (LUKE 21:1-4)

THE RICH CAST OUT OF THEIR ABUNDANCE BUT SHE GAVE "ALL THE LIVING" AND THE WORD LIVING IS BIOS. IN OTHER WORDS, SHE GAVE ALL SHE HAD - NOTHING LEFT! IF I UNDERSTAND THIS PASSAGE CORRECTLY, THE ESTIMATION OF A GIFT IS NOT WHAT IS CONTRIBUTED BUT WHAT IS LEFT AFTER THE CONTRIBUTION! THE FRAGRANCE OF THAT OFFERING HAS LINGERED FOR THOUSANDS YEARS LONG AFTER THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE HAD FALLEN. GOD'S ESTIMATE OF GIVING IS DIFFERENT FROM MAN'S. ATTITUDE TAKES PRECEDENT OVER AMOUNT. STEWARDSHIP IS AN ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE. THE "WANT TO" IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE "HAVE TO". THE TERM CHEERFUL IN OUR TEXT IS THE WORD HILARIOUS. IT APPEARS IN THIS FORM ONLY IN OUR TEXT. A CHEERFUL PERSON IS ONE WHO IS JOYOUS, LOVES LIFE, IS POSITIVE AND OPTIMISTIC IN HIS OUTLOOK AND ENJOYS WHAT HE IS DOING. THIS KIND OF GIVING WAS MANIFESTED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE. (EXODUS 35:5) THE OFFERINGS BROUGHT WERE OF A WILLING AND SACRIFICIAL SPIRIT TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT MOSES HAD TO ASK THEM TO STOP FOR THERE WAS ABUNDANCE TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE.

III. GIVING SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN - I COR. 16:1-2

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TITHING WAS A KIND OF RELIGIOUS TAX. IT WAS A LEGAL OBLIGATION FOR EVERY JEW. IT WAS A WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF POSSESSIONS. (GENESIS 14) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, STEWARDSHIP IS A SPIRITUAL GRACE. GOD GIVES THE BELIEVER THE OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE OR BE AN ADMINISTRATOR OVER WHAT HE HAS GIVEN TO US. IN THAT

REGARD, WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM. GIVING IS NOT A SPIRITUAL RABBIT'S FOOT TO WARD OFF BAD THINGS IN LIFE. THE BELIEVER DOES NOT GIVE TO GOD IN ORDER TO GET FROM GOD. I KNOW OF NO NEW TESTAMENT COMMAND REQUIRING BELIEVERS TO TITHE FROM A LEGAL OBLIGATION POINT OF VIEW BUT RATHER STEWARDSHIP IS A SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE AND PART OF A TOTAL LIFE APPROACH TO GIVING. MANY OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE USE THE TITHE PRINCIPLE AS A POINT OF BEGINNING NOT ENDING. A PLAN IS VITAL TO STEWARDSHIP. JUST AS A BELIEVER HAS SPIRITUAL HABITS INVOLVING BIBLE STUDY, PRAYER, WITNESS AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE, SO STEWARDSHIP SHOULD BE PART OF A HOLY HABIT AND HIGH HONOR IN LIFE. (RELATE IMPORTANCE OF A PLAN IN DIETING. COMMENT DOCTOR SPENCER) THE TEXT BEFORE US GIVES 5 QUESTIONS AND 5 ANSWERS CONCERNING GOD'S PLAN:

- (1) WHEN SHOULD THE PLAN BEGIN OR BECOME OPERATIONAL?

"FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK." GIVING SHOULD BE PART OF WORSHIP TO GOD. IT IS NOT A SMALL SEGMENT IN CHURCH SERVICES SET ASIDE FOR THE "COMMERCIAL" OR TO BEG FOR JESUS. IT IS PART OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN OUR WORSHIP OF GOD.

- (2) WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

"EVERY ONE OF YOU." STEWARDSHIP IS NOT JUST A MATTER FOR THE RICH BUT IT IS A CHURCH-WIDE OPPORTUNITY AND OBLIGATION. EVERYONE SHOULD SHARE IN THIS MINISTRY. (R. G. LEE IN HIS BIOGRAPHY TELLS OF AN EARLY PASTORATE IN SOUTH CAROLINA DURING

POST-WORLD WAR I DAYS. A DEBT OF APPROXIMATELY \$11,000 HAD PARALYZED THE CHURCH. IT WAS THE SUBJECT OF CONSTANT CONVERSATION. ONE NIGHT, LEE WENT TO HIS STUDY, GOT ON HIS KNEES AND ASKED GOD FOR DIRECTION. HE SAID IT WAS AS IF THE LORD TOLD HIM TO STOP PRAYING AND ASK THE PEOPLE TO PAY OFF THE DEBT. ON SUNDAY HE ANNOUNCED A PLAN. NEXT SUNDAY WE ARE GOING TO PAY OFF THE CHURCH DEBT! NOBODY MAY GIVE MORE THAN \$500 BUT EVERYBODY INCLUDING THE CHILDREN ARE ASKED TO GIVE SOMETHING. NO PROMISES TO PAY. WHEN THE COUNTING WAS OVER THE OFFERING HAD BEEN RECEIVED \$14,600. AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE IN THE HISTORY OF THAT CHURCH.)

(3) WHERE SHOULD WE GIVE?

"STORING UP" THIS VERSE IS A PLACE WHERE GOOD MEN DISAGREE. 1. ONE VIEW: GIVING IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER THEREBY THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO SET ASIDE AN AMOUNT EACH WEEK AND GIVE IT TO THE LORD'S WORK - PERSONALLY - DIRECTLY - NO CONNECTION WITH A LOCAL CHURCH, IT IS A PERSONAL MATTER. THIS KIND OF DIRECT CONTRIBUTION IS GRATIFYING AND SATISFYING BECAUSE IT INVOLVES NO OTHER PERSON OR ORGANIZATION BUT ONESELF. IT GIVES PERSONAL CONTROL WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE KNOWING HOW MUCH IS INVOLVED IN ONE'S CONTRIBUTIONS. 2. ANOTHER VIEW: THE INSTRUCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE VERSES IS TO "CHURCHES". OBVIOUSLY CHURCHES ARE MADE UP OF BELIEVERS AND THE INSTRUCTION TO BELIEVERS IS THROUGH LOCAL CHURCHES. REGARDLESS OF WHAT VIEW ONE TAKES THE OFFERING TO THE SAINTS OF JERUSALEM WAS ULTIMATELY BROUGHT TO A LOCAL CHURCH AND DISTRIBUTED FROM THERE.

THERE WAS NO DIRECT CONTRIBUTION FROM BELIEVER TO BELIEVER BUT RATHER THROUGH DESIGNATED MESSENGERS. THE WORD "STORE" BRINGS TO MIND A KEY PASSAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. (MALACHI 3:8-10) IN MY OPINION, STOREHOUSE TITHING OR GIVING AT LEAST ONE'S TITHE TO HIS LOCAL CHURCH IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE IT IS SCRIPTURAL, STABLE - MISSIONARIES PREFER HAVING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS COMING FROM A CHURCH BECAUSE CHURCHES ARE LESS LIKELY TO DROP SUPPORT THAN INDIVIDUALS. SPIRITUAL - SUPPOSE A PERSON CONTRIBUTES \$10,000 TO AN ORGANIZATION. HE KNOWS THAT SUCH A LARGE GIFT WILL PROBABLY BE FOLLOWED BY A LETTER OF APPRECIATION OR A PHONE CALL OR SOME ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS GIFT. IT IS GRATIFYING TO KNOW THAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE YOUR GIVING. HOWEVER, SUCH A GIFT GIVEN THROUGH A LOCAL MINISTRY MAY NOT GET SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND THE FLESH BEING WHAT IS IS PEOPLE ENJOY SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS! IT HAS BEEN THE PRACTICE OF OUR FAMILY TO TITHE THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH. WE, TOO, HAVE OTHER INTERESTS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONAL FRIENDS WHO ARE MISSIONARIES. WE HAVE NOT ROBBED OUR LOCAL CHURCH OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS AS A CHURCH IN ORDER TO CONTROL OUR GIVING TO SPECIAL PREFERENTIAL INTERESTS.

(4) HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE?

"PROSPERED" PLEASE NOTICE THAT THE WORD TITHE DOES NOT APPEAR. IT IS A MATTER OF STEWARDSHIP AND A DECISION WHICH IS OURS ALONE.

(5) WHY SUCH A PLAN?

"NO GATHERINGS WHEN I COME" GIVING TO THE LORD'S WORK SHOULD NOT BE BASED ON THE EMOTION OF A MOMENT BUT RATHER IT SHOULD BE A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OR HABIT. THIS DOES NOT TAKE AWAY FROM THE PRIVILEGE OF REACTING TO A SPECIAL NEED OR EMOTIONAL APPEAL BUT STEWARDSHIP SHOULD BE A HABIT. STEPHEN OLEORD IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED "THE GRACE OF GIVING" TELLS THE STORY OF A CIRCUS ATHLETE WHOSE CLAIM TO FAME IN LIFE WAS THE ABILITY TO SQUEEZE AN ORANGE DRY. THE MAN WAS SO STRONG THAT HIS CHALLENGE TO THE AUDIENCE AFTER HE HAD SQUEEZED THE ORANGE WAS A SIGNIFICANT REWARD FOR ANYONE WHO COULD SQUEEZE A SINGLE DROP OF JUICE OUT OF THE CRUSHED ORANGE. ONE PARTICULAR OCCASION, A LITTLE MAN VOLUNTEERED AND TO THE AMAZEMENT OF THE CROWD A DROP OF ORANGE JUICE DROPPED TO THE FLOOR UNDER HIS GRIP. AS THE CHEERS WENT UP THE ATHLETE INQUIRED OF THE MAN'S BACKGROUND AND WAS PROMPTLY TOLD THAT HE HAD BEEN THE TREASURER OF A LOCAL CHURCH FOR MANY YEARS! GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO TWIST ARMS AND BROW BEAT AND BEG FOR HIM. I'M NOT SO SURE THAT HE WANTS US TO SELL ITEMS WHETHER BIBLES, BOOKS OR BRACELETS IN EXCHANGE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A MINISTRY. COMPETITION FOR THE CHRISTIAN'S MONEY AMONG CHURCHES, BENEVOLENT ORGANIZATIONS AND RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES IS AT SUCH A HIGH LEVEL TODAY IT HAS DEGENERATED INTO THE "SQUEAKING WHEEL" RESPONSE. ADVERTISING AND SELLING IS A WAY OF LIFE IN AMERICA AND IT HAS SPILLED OVER INTO THE CHURCH. I AM WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT IN CAPITAL

FUND RAISING PROGRAMS ~~SOMETHING OUT OF~~
~~THE ORDINARY~~ USUALLY MUST TAKE PLACE BUT
I AM NOT SO SURE THAT IS THE WAY GOD
INTENDED STEWARDSHIP TO BE. ~~IF EVERY~~
~~CHILD OF GOD WOULD GIVE GOD ALL THAT~~
~~BELONGS TO HIM,~~ THE LORD'S WORK WOULD GO
FORTH IN GOD'S WAY, WITH GOD'S BLESSING
AND EVERY LOCAL CHURCH COULD DO ALL THAT
WAS NECESSARY IN EVANGELIZING THE LOST.
~~I AM NO DIFFERENT THAN YOU ARE.~~ I AM
~~SENSITIVE TO PHONE CALLS AND SPECIAL~~
~~APPEALS FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED~~
~~IN MY SPIRITUAL WELFARE BUT IN MY DOLLARS.~~
FOR THAT REASON, ~~LOCAL CHURCHES~~ SHOULD
TEACH WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GIVING
BELIEVING GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT WILL BURDEN
THE HEARTS OF GOD'S PEOPLE TO BE STEWARDS
FOR HIS GLORY.

THANKSGIVING AT THESSALONICA

THESSALONICA IS A CITY IN GREECE WITH A POPULATION OF 300,000. IN ANCIENT TIMES IT WAS CALLED THERMA BECAUSE OF THE HOT SPRINGS NEARBY. IN 315 B.C. IT WAS NAMED THESSALONICA AFTER THE HALF-SISTER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT. PAUL FOUNDED A CHURCH THERE ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. (ACTS 17:1-15) UNABLE TO RETURN HIMSELF, HE SENT SEVERAL COLLEAGUES AND WROTE TWO LETTERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GROUNDING NEW BELIEVERS IN THEIR NEW FOUND FAITH. THEN, AS NOW, CONFUSION EXISTED OVER BIBLE PROPHECY. A STUDY OF THESE LETTERS REVEALS A NOTE OF THANKSGIVING WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR OUR STUDY THIS SUNDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING. THANKSGIVING IS OFTEN A MISSING NOTE IN MANY CHURCHES. IF IT IS MISSING IN CHURCH, IT IS ALSO MISSING IN SOCIETY. ONE OF MY FAVORITE STORIES HAS TO DO WITH A GROUP OF MINISTERS WHO MET BEFORE THANKSGIVING TO TALK ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES THEY WERE EXPERIENCING IN THEIR CHURCHES. WHAT COULD THEY DO TO ENCOURAGE THEIR PEOPLE IN DIFFICULT TIMES. AS THEY TALKED, ONE PASTOR SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS GOING TO GO HOME AND WRITE A LETTER TO A FORMER SCHOOL TEACHER AS AN INDICATION OF HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR HER DEDICATION TO TEACHING. A FEW WEEKS LATER, THE MINISTER RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HIS FORMER TEACHER AS FOLLOWS: "MY DEAR WILLIE," AND THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THIS 80 YEAR OLD RETIRED TEACHER WHO HAD BEEN LIVING ALONE AND WAS INDEED LONELY IN THE AUTUMN OF LIFE HAD TAUGHT SCHOOL FOR OVER 50 YEARS AND SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST LETTER SHE HAD EVER RECEIVED EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR WHAT SHE HAD DONE AS AN EDUCATOR. SHE SAID THAT THE LETTER HAD NOT ONLY MADE HER DAY BUT

Swampy Sample

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

NOVEMBER 21, 1993

Not the pilgrim by a pilgrim named Paul
Thanksgiving at Thessalonica
"THE THANKWORTHY THESSALONIANS"
Carolinthian
Appn
Apaling

Hisory
CHURCHES, LIKE PEOPLE, HAVE FEATURES THAT ENDEAR OR ESTRANGE THEM. SOME CHURCHES ARE FRIENDLY AND ALIVE WHILE OTHERS ARE COLD AND DEAD. THE CHURCHES IN PAUL'S DAY VARIED WIDELY. (CONTRAST THE CORINTHIANS AND THE PHILLIPIANS) THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH WAS A YOUNG VIBRANT CHURCH, THE FIRST TO RECEIVE A LETTER FROM PAUL. HE WROTE THEM TWO LETTERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GROUNDING THEM IN THEIR NEWFOUND FAITH. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS THE CENTRAL THEME OF BOTH LETTERS BUT THE IDEA OF THANKSGIVING IS VERY PROMINENT. THERE ARE AT LEAST TWENTY REFERENCES TO THE SECOND COMING AND FIVE USAGES OF THE WORD THANKS IN THESE TWO LETTERS. LET US EXAMINE A THESSALONIAN THANKSGIVING ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING! (ONE OF MY FAVORITE STORIES ON THIS SUBJECT WAS TOLD BY WILLIAM SANGSTER. YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF MINISTERS MET BEFORE THANKSGIVING TO TALK ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES THEY WERE EXPERIENCING IN THEIR CHURCHES. WHAT COULD THEY DO TO ENCOURAGE THEIR PEOPLE IN DIFFICULT TIMES TO BE MORE THANKFUL. AS THEY TALKED, ONE PASTOR SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS GOING HOME AND WRITE A LETTER TO A FORMER SCHOOL TEACHER AS AN INDICATION OF HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR HER DEDICATED TEACHING. HE DID THAT. A FEW WEEKS LATER, HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HIS FORMER TEACHER AS FOLLOWS: "MY DEAR WILLIE," HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SHE WAS EIGHTY YEARS OLD, A RETIRED TEACHER, LIVING ALONE IN THE AUTUMN OF LIFE. SHE HAD TAUGHT SCHOOL FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS AND IN THAT TIME THIS WAS THE VERY FIRST LETTER SHE HAD EVER RECEIVED EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR HER DEDICATION TO EDUCATION. SHE SAID THAT LETTER NOT ONLY MADE HER DAY BUT HAD RENEWED HER FAITH IN MANKIND TO KNOW THAT AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD APPRECIATED WHAT SHE HAD DONE.

1
In gratitude
a sign of our
love to Him!!
Never
Enough!!!

2
Is anyone
thankful for
you??? - 2 -
why?

3
St. Louis
homeless person
- not enough!
credit any amount
of one's needs good

THE PASTOR SAID: "WHEN I RECEIVED THAT LETTER, I DETERMINED BY THE GRACE OF GOD TO WRITE OTHER LETTERS AND SAY TO PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO ME - THANK YOU" (STRAUSS - GARDNER)

I. A THANKSGIVING PRAYER - 1:2-3

Thanksgiving
highlight - thank
Dad's prayer!

Jason - Acts 17:1-9

THIS "THANKSGIVING PRAYER" DOES NOT MENTION FOOD OR FINANCES. PAUL SAID: "I THANK GOD FOR YOU!" WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN A LETTER. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID WHEN WE THINK WE THANK AND PAUL WAS BOTH A THINKER AND A THANKER. THERE IS A LEGEND ABOUT TWO ANGELS WHO WERE SENT TO EARTH TO GATHER UP THE PRAYERS OF MEN. ONE WAS TO FILL HIS BASKET WITH PETITIONS THE OTHER TO GATHER UP PRAISE IN HIS BASKET. SOMETIME LATER, THEY RETURNED TO HEAVEN. THE FIRST HAD HIS BASKET HEAPED HIGH AND RUNNING OVER WITH ENUMERABLE PETITIONS OF MEN TO GOD. THE OTHER RETURNED WITH A HEAVY HEART WITH AN ALMOST EMPTY BASKET. COULD IT BE, HE THOUGHT, THAT MEN ON EARTH ARE SO THOUGHTLESS AS TO FORGET TO BE THANKFUL? IF ONE THINKS THIS IS PURE SPECULATION AND JUST A MEANINGLESS LEGEND WE NEED TO REMEMBER THE STORY JESUS TOLD ABOUT THE TEN LEPERS AS RECORDED IN LUKE 17:12-17. MANY OF US WOULD BE FLATTERED IF A FRIEND SAID HE HAD MENTIONED OUR NAME TO SOME PROMINENT POLITICIAN. WE MIGHT BE SURPRISED - BUT PLEASED NEVERTHELESS. LET ME SUGGEST THAT THERE IS SOMETHING INFINITELY GREATER AND BETTER WE MAY DO FOR A FELLOW HUMAN BEING AND THAT IS TO MENTION HIS NAME TO GOD IN PRAYER. CERTAINLY IT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS ONE HUMAN BEING MAY DO FOR ANOTHER - PRAY FOR HIM. PAUL WAS THANKFUL FOR THREE OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH:

A. WORK OF FAITH - "a faith that works and accomplishes things"

THEIR WORK FOR JESUS CHRIST WAS RUN BY FAITH, IN OTHER WORDS, FAITH PROMPTED AND PROPELLED THEIR WORK FOR CHRIST. A PERSON'S

Denotes a quality
or condition NOT
a concrete object.

CHARACTER IS OFTEN REFLECTED IN HIS WORK. BY THE WAY, THIS PRAYER DEALS WITH THREE "ABSTRACT" TERMS THAT ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO DEFINE AND VISUALIZE. (VERNON MCGHEE TELLS A STORY OF A CONTRACTOR WHO WAS VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S WORK IN CHURCH. IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT HE LOVED CHILDREN. HE MANIFESTED THAT AT CHURCH OFTEN BY CARRYING "GOODIES" IN HIS POCKET WHICH HE GAVE OUT FREELY. ONE DAY IN HIS COMPANY HE BUILT A SIDEWALK NEAR THE CHURCH. HE CAME BACK THE NEXT MORNING TO FIND AND DISCOVER SOME CHILDREN IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAD WALKED ON THE CONCRETE AND LEFT THEIR FOOTMARKS ALL OVER IT RUINING HIS DAYS WORK. HE WAS VERY ANGRY AND WAS TALKING LOUDLY ABOUT THE POOR CONDUCT OF THESE CHILDREN. A CHURCH MEMBER STANDING NEARBY SAID: "I THOUGHT YOU LOVED CHILDREN." THE CONTRACTOR REPLIED: "I LOVE THEM IN THE ABSTRACT BUT NOT IN THE CONCRETE!" SOME OF THESE TERMS ARE HARD TO GET IN THE "CONCRETE".

B. LABOR OF LOVE

LABOR RISES OUT OF A HEART OF LOVE. (A YOUNG LADY WAS SEWING ON A DRESS - IN FACT SHE'D BEEN WORKING ON IT FOR MONTHS. SOMEONE ASKED DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF WORKING ON THAT ONE DRESS ALL THE TIME? HER RESPONSE WAS IT'S MY WEDDING DRESS - IT'S A LABOR OF LOVE AND IT IS NOT BURDENSOME. T.V. Program — the love that

C. PATIENCE OF HOPE

ENDURANCE THAT RESTS ON HOPE. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT HOPE ALWAYS WALKS TOWARD THE DAWN AND NOT TOWARD THE DARKNESS. A PATIENT PERSON IS ONE WHO: "BLOOMS WHERE HE IS PLANTED" WHO HAS A DOGGED DETERMINATION TO STAY BY THE STUFF!

υπομονη
και αρετη - (durety)

IN THIS PRAYER, PAUL THANKS GOD FOR A CHURCH THAT HAS STRONG CONVICTIONS AND STEADY GROWTH. SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED THEIR CONVICTIONS AS "CONVICTIONS OF STEEL". THEY WERE A WELL ORDERED, WELL BALANCED CHURCH. THEY WERE ENERGETIC, EVANGELISTIC EDIFYING AND ENDURING IN MINISTRY. A MODEL CHURCH FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

II. A THANKSGIVING MESSAGE - 2:13 Praise

THIS "THANKSGIVING MESSAGE" HAD TO DO WITH "PILGRIMS" NOT THE PILGRIMS. (EXPLAIN HEBREWS 11:13 "THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF, AND WERE PERSUADED OF THEM, AND EMBRACED THEM, AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.")

not strangers among other people! Residing in a country not one's own

BROWSING THROUGH BOOK STORES IS A FAVORITE PASTIME OF MINE. THERE YOU WILL FIND THE LATEST WORD OF MEN ON ALMOST ANY SUBJECT. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL THE WORD OF MEN AND THE WORD FOR MAN IN GREEK IS ANTHROPOS OR THE "UPLOOKING ONE." THE VERY WORD SUGGESTS THAT MAN IS A DEPENDENT CREATURE OF HUMAN ORIGIN WHOSE VERY EXISTENCE AND SUSTENANCE DEPENDS ON SOMEONE OR SOMETHING OUTSIDE HIMSELF. THE PSALMIST DESCRIBED IT ACCURATELY WHEN HE SPOKE OF MAN AS "WHOSE BREATH IS IN HIS NOSTRILS." THE BIBLE IS MORE THAN HUMAN OPINION IT IS INDEED GOD'S WORD, THE ONLY BOOK GOD EVER WROTE DIVINE IN ORIGIN. THE WORD RECEIVED IN THE TEXT ARE TWO DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS. THE FIRST SUGGESTS A FORMAL ACCEPTANCE. THE SECOND AN APPRECIATION OR WELCOMING OF SOMETHING. FOR EXAMPLE, IF ONE RECEIVED NEWS OR NOTICE THAT AN IRS AGENT WAS COMING TO AUDIT ONE'S INCOME TAX RETURN, HE'D PROBABLY GIVE HIM A RATHER FORMAL ACCEPTANCE. IF THE AUDIT REVEALED MONEY TO BE PAID, THE ACCEPTANCE MIGHT DEGENERATE INTO RESENTMENT. HOWEVER IF THE SAME AGENT DISCOVERED A TERRIBLE MISTAKE HAD BEEN

"welcomed"
(b/c.)

Anger or aspersation!

MADE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY OWED THE PERSON BEING AUDITED A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT ACCEPTANCE WOULD TURN INTO A WARM WELCOME. THE THESSALONIANS APPRECIATED THE WORD OF GOD. THEY RECOGNIZED THE BIBLE AS GOD'S WORD AND THEY TREATED IT WITH GREAT RESPECT. (NEH. 8:1-6)

WHEN HENRY M. STANLEY STARTED ACROSS AFRICA IN HIS SEARCH FOR DAVID LIVINGSTON, HE STARTED THE EXPEDITION WITH 73 BOOKS WEIGHING 180 POUNDS. HOWEVER, AS THE JOURNEY PROGRESSED INTO DAYS AND WEEKS AND MONTHS HE WAS OBLIGATED TO THROW AWAY THE BOOKS ONE BY ONE UNTIL HE GOT TO A SINGLE VOLUME - THE BIBLE. HE REFUSED TO THROW IT AWAY AND SAID THAT HE'D READ IT THROUGH THREE TIMES ON THAT REMARKABLE TRIP. THIS COUPLED WITH LIVINGSTON'S OUTSTANDING LIFE AND SERVICE LED HIM TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.) WE ARE TOLD THAT LIBRARIES CONSIDER A TEN-YEAR OLD SHELF LIFE A LONG TIME FOR A BOOK. IN MANY LIBRARIES BOOKS ARE REMOVED AND REPLACED AND UPDATED BECAUSE KNOWLEDGE IS PROLIFERATING AT A STAGGERING RATE. IN SOME CHURCHES, A SUBTLE CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE. PEOPLE ATTEND CHURCH FOR REASONS OTHER THAN THE EXPOSITION OF THE BIBLE. PEOPLE ARE BEING DRAWN TO EVANGELICAL CHURCHES FOR THE WRONG REASON. IT MAY BE LOCATION, FACILITIES, MINISTRIES RANGING FROM INFANTS TO AGED PEOPLE AND FOR OTHER REASONS. HOWEVER, THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH IS NOT UPPERMOST IN THEIR MINDS. THE BIBLE AND ITS EXPOSITION TAKES A BACK SEAT TO COUNSELING, ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. IN OTHER WORDS, "CHURCH STUFF" IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCRIPTURE. THIS IS SAD BECAUSE THE GREATEST NEED OF OUR SPIRITUALLY IGNORANT GENERATION IS TO BE SATURATED IN KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD. ANYTHING ELSE, ANYTHING LESS IS A DOWNWARD PATH WHERE THERE IS NO SURE RESTING PLACE. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE BIBLE IS NOT JUST ANOTHER BOOK, IT IS THE ONLY BOOK THAT GOD EVER WROTE IT IS THE ONLY BOOK HE HAS PROMISED TO HONOR WHEN IT IS PRESENTED.

Service!

J. Holmesley
"Wordy
Men"
Dr. S. S. So
author of - but

PASTOR
STUCK
on face!

- 6 -

"To make you
one mind
To decide to
do something"

insist
from
nothing

SONG: THE BIBLE

WHAT MEN THINK - EVEN EDUCATED MEN - IS NO
SUBSTITUTE FOR WHAT THE WORD OF GOD SAYS!

III. A THANKSGIVING RESOLUTION - 5:18

Directive

~~THANKSGIVING RESOLUTION~~

PAUL GIVES US A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR A
"THANKSGIVING RESOLUTION" TO PRECEED A NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTION. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS FAIRLY
① EASY TO BE THANKFUL. WHEN MONEY, HEALTH AND THE
ROAD AHEAD SEEMS BRIGHT AND CLEAR, IT TAKES NO
EFFORT TO SAY THANK GOD. HOWEVER, WHEN TIMES
② ARE HARD, EMPLOYMENT IS LOST, SICKNESS COMES,
STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS IN LIFE - IT IS DIFFICULT
TO SAY THEN THANK GOD. (DR. ALEXANDER WHYTE OF
EDINBURGH A SCOTTISH PREACHER OF A GENERATION
AGO SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME REFLECTING ON HIS
PULPIT PRAYER ON SUNDAY MORNING. AS A MATTER OF
FACT, IT WAS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MORNING
WORSHIP SERVICE. ONE STORMY MORNING HE STOOD
UP TO OPEN THE SERVICE AND PRAYED AS FOLLOWS:
"WE THANK THEE O GOD, THAT EVERY DAY IS NOT
LIKE TODAY," "Barbours - Thank... water we drink!

MATTHEW HENRY, THE FAMOUS BIBLE SCHOLAR WAS
ROBBED BY THIEVES. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE
SITUATION ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATED TO THANKS-
GIVING, HE SAID: "① I AM THANKFUL THAT I HAVE
NEVER BEEN ROBBED BEFORE. ② I AM THANKFUL THEY
TOOK MY MONEY AND NOT MY LIFE. ③ I AM THANKFUL
THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY TOOK ALL I HAD, IT WASN'T
MUCH. ④ I AM THANKFUL THAT WHEN I WAS ROBBED
SOMEONE ELSE WAS DOING THE ROBBING AND NOT ME.

GEORGE H. MORRISON REMINDS US THAT: "IT IS
NOT THE HAPPY PEOPLE WHO ARE THANKFUL, BUT
RATHER THE THANKFUL WHO ARE HAPPY."

"Sincere, Real"
FAITH

-2-

(unhypocritical)
(αυτὴ ἀποκρίτου)

- ① Moses mother - Heb. 11:23
② Rahab - 11:31
③ Shunammite woman - 2 Kgs 4:8

1. A CERTAIN WOMAN NAMED EUNICE - V. 1-2

Search "you name"

A Family of Faith

TIMOTHY'S MOTHER IS NOT NAMED IN THIS PASSAGE BUT SHE IS IN II TIMOTHY 1:5

"WHEN I CALL TO REMEMBRANCE THE UNFEIGNED FAITH THAT IS IN THEE, WHICH DWELT FIRST IN THY GRANDMOTHER LOIS, AND THY MOTHER EUNICE; AND I AM PERSUADED IN THEE ALSO."

THE WORLD HAS BEEN SURPRISED AT THE MOMENTOUS EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN WESTERN EUROPE. THE COLLAPSE OF THE BERLIN WALL WAS A SYMBOL OF THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE EASTERN BLOCK COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. THESE EVENTS ARE NOT THE MOST DRAMATIC EVENTS TO HAPPEN IN EUROPEAN HISTORY. THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE CHAPTER BEFORE US, NAMELY, THE ARRIVAL OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. IT WAS A SMALL BEGINNING BUT IT SHOOK AND CHANGED THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE FOREVER. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GREAT SHAKING 1500 YEARS LATER KNOWN AS THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE GOSPEL IN EUROPE, CHRISTIANITY HAD BEEN PRIMARILY AN EASTERN RELIGION CENTERED IN PALESTINE AND ASIA MINOR. THIS CHAPTER MARKS THE INVASION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE WEST.

(A) EUNICE WAS A JEWISH BELIEVER - VERSE 1

... "And A Believer" (2 Tim.)

IN THE EARLY CHURCH, JEWISH BELIEVERS WERE A REGULAR FEATURE, NOW THEY ARE RARE. SOMEWHERE, SOMEWAY, THIS WOMAN HEARD THE GOSPEL AND RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO IT. SHE BELIEVED THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS ISRAEL'S MESSIAH AND HER PERSONAL SAVIOUR. LIKE MANY OTHER JEWS SUCH AS THOMAS, PETER AND JOHN, TO MENTION A FEW, SHE ACCEPTED CHRIST IN HIS TRUE IDENTITY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM AND OTHER SURROUNDING CITIES WAS FILLED WITH JEWISH BELIEVERS.

Faith:
A
Family
Tradition

Mother

Martin Luther
"Real"

Doubt

NOT "mixed-up"!!

(B) EUNICE WAS PART OF A MIXED MARRIAGE

VERSE 1 (she = the spiritual leader in the family!)

A MIXED MARRIAGE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN "A MIXED UP MARRIAGE." WHEN A MARRIAGE IS SPIRITUALLY MIXED THEN IT IS MIXED UP BUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES DO NOT NECESSARILY MESS UP A MARRIAGE. THE BIBLE DOES NOT STATE THE SPIRITUAL STATUS OF EUNICE'S HUSBAND. HE IS DESCRIBED SIMPLY AS GREEK WHICH IS THE GREEK WORD "HELLENIST." THIS MARRIAGE MIGHT INDEED REPRESENT THE CHANGING TIMES OF THAT DAY WHEN EAST MET WEST EVEN IN MARRIAGE.

(C) EUNICE HAD AN OUTSTANDING SON - VERSE 2

Timothy = "One who honors God."

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE USUALLY LED AND NOT PUSHED INTO SPIRITUAL INTERESTS. TIMOTHY WAS SUCH AN EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN THAT THE CHURCH PEOPLE WERE VERY PLEASED WITH HIM FOR HE LIVED UP TO HIS NAME. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT TIMOTHY'S SPIRITUAL STATUS AND SUCCESS WAS DUE IN PART TO THE INFLUENCE OF HIS GOOD AND GODLY MOTHER. WHEN TIMOTHY WAS MENTIONED AS AN ASSOCIATE OF PAUL, NOT MUCH IS SAID ABOUT EITHER HIS TALENT OR HIS TRAINING. THE EMPHASIS SEEMED TO BE ON HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS. EUNICE DID NOT PREACH SOMETHING TO HER SON SHE DID NOT PRACTICE HERSELF. CHILDREN ARE GREAT PSYCHOLOGISTS. THEY FIGURE OUT THEIR PARENTS' VALUE SYSTEM EARLY IN LIFE. IF MONEY, CAREER, PRESTIGE, NEIGHBORHOOD, BUSINESS CONTACTS ARE THEIR PRIMARY INTERESTS WITH SPIRITUAL INTEREST SOMEWHERE WAY DOWN THE LIST, KIDS KNOW THAT QUICKLY. HOWEVER, IF ONE'S CHILDREN FAIL SPIRITUALLY, EVERYTHING ELSE IS VANITY.

"The House that
Roses Built" - NBC Spitz

But own "house" - L.L.!!!

"Network" "Homework"

= Nothing else but O.

① A Colleague of Paul!!!
Good credentials!
V.S.
② Name
T.T.
F.F.
③ Church approval
Reaction = Parent View

Shaw
Woods
Spokane

Character
crucial

WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF INTERESTING VALUES. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A YOUNGSTER RISES EARLY ON SUNDAY MORNING TO DELIVER PAPERS - THAT'S CHARACTERIZED AS INITIATIVE. IF HE RISES EARLY TO GO TO CHURCH OR SUNDAY SCHOOL - THAT'S CHARACTERIZED AS CRUEL. SOMEHOW IT'S IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO TAKE BATHS, GO TO SCHOOL ON MONDAY MORNING, BUT SOMEHOW SUNDAY SCHOOL OR CHURCH IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE TO MANY PARENTS. MOTHERS ARE MOLDERS OF MEN. EUNICE'S ABILITY IS MANIFESTED IN AT LEAST TWO KEY AREAS. 2 Tim 3:15

- (1) SHE BELIEVED HER SON'S SALVATION WAS HER RESPONSIBILITY AND SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO SOMEONE ELSE (11 TIM. 3:15)
"wise unto salvation"

Hamlin
2 girls
Tul/MS
++

TIMOTHY HAD NO SUNDAY SCHOOL, NO CHILD EVANGELISM OR BIBLE CLUBS, NO YOUTH FOR CHRIST, NO SUMMER CAMPS, NO YOUTH GROUP AT CHURCH, SO WHERE DID HE LEARN ABOUT SALVATION? IN HIS HOME. WE DARE NOT TRUST THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN TO HAPPENSTANCE OR SOMEONE ELSE. OTHERS MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR PHYSICAL WELLBEING BUT IT IS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENTS TO CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. SO WE DARE NOT TRUST THE SALVATION OF OUR CHILDREN TO THE INTEREST OR INVOLVEMENT OF SOMEONE ELSE. MANY PARENTS DO NOT FEEL ADEQUATE OR EQUIPPED TO LEAD THEIR CHILDREN TO CHRIST. SUCH IGNORANCE MAY BE CORRECTED QUICKLY. But what a goal!!

Vaccination

Cindy
4/15/81

- (2) SHE BELIEVED THE SCRIPTURES WERE IMPORTANT TO HER SON'S SPIRITUAL WELLBEING - 11 TIM. 3:15

20+

THE MIND OF A YOUNG CHILD IS IMPRESSIONABLE. THEY REMEMBER FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD. (YEARS AGO, A POLICEMAN IN DETROIT TOLD ME OF A BOY WHO COULD STRIP A CAR IN A MATTER OF

(omit)

A.

MINUTES - THAT BOY WAS 12 YEARS OLD!)
(THERE IS A STORY ABOUT A GIRL NAMED REGINA HARTMAN WHO WAS TAKEN BY INDIANS FROM HER HOME IN PENNSYLVANIA TO NEW YORK AFTER A RAID IN 1754. HER MOTHER WAS AT THE MILL AND HER BROTHER AND FATHER AND SISTER WERE ALL KILLED. HER MOTHER SPENT ELEVEN YEARS SEARCHING FOR HER. AT THE CLOSE OF THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR, WORD CAME THAT A GROUP OF WHITE GIRLS HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THE INDIANS. MRS. HARTMAN, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER ANXIOUS MOTHERS, LOOKED THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE CAPTIVES BUT UNABLE TO FIND HER DAUGHTER. ABOUT TO GIVE UP HER SEARCH, AN OFFICER ASKED THE MOTHER IF REGINA HAD ANY DISTINGUISHING MARKS ON HER BODY. NONE. DID THE MOTHER EVER SING TO HER LITTLE GIRL - A HYMN PERHAPS. THERE WAS ONE HYMN SHE HAD BEEN FOND OF SO THE MOTHER BEGAN TO SING IT AND BY THE TIME SHE REACHED THE SECOND VERSE, ONE LITTLE GIRL BURST FROM THE RANKS AND RAN INTO THE ARMS OF HER MOTHER.) EUNICE PROVIDED A GODLY EXAMPLE FOR HER SON AS HAVE MANY MOTHERS SINCE THAT TIME. SOME YEARS AGO, I READ ABOUT A MISSES ELLA CRAIG WHO WAS 81 YEARS OLD WHO HAD NOT MISSED SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN OVER 20 YEARS - A PERFECT RECORD OF SOME 1040 SUNDAYS. SOMEONE ASKED WHAT WAS WRONG WITH MRS. CRAIG? DOESN'T SHE EVER HAVE COMPANY THAT KEEPS HER AWAY FROM CHURCH ON SUNDAY? DOESN'T SHE EVER HAVE HEADACHES, COLDS, NERVOUS SPELLS, TIRED FEELINGS, SUDDEN CALLS OUT-OF-TOWN, BUSINESS TRIPS, PICNICS OR TROUBLE OF ANY KIND? DOESN'T SHE EVER HAVE ANY FRIENDS WHO INVITE HER FOR WEEKEND TRIPS TO EITHER THE SEASHORE, MOUNTAINS? DOESN'T SHE EVER TAKE A VACATION? DOESN'T SHE EVER SLEEP LATE ON SUNDAY MORNING? DOESN'T IT EVER RAIN OR

B.

Q.

SNOW ON SUNDAY MORNING? DOESN'T SHE EVER GET HER FEELINGS HURT BY SOMEONE IN CHURCH? DOESN'T SHE EVER GET MAD AT THE PREACHER, SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER, OR SOME OTHER MEMBER? DOESN'T SHE HAVE RADIO OR TELEVISION? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MRS. CRAIG? THE MATTER IS THE LORD AND THE LORD'S WORK IS PRIMARY IN HER LIFE. *A mother who feels the checker to church*

II. A CERTAIN WOMAN NAMED LYDIA - VERSE 14

THERE IS A SINGLE WORD IN THE TEXT THAT STANDS OUT TO CHARACTERIZE LYDIA - THAT WORD IS OPEN.

(A) SHE HAD AN OPEN HEART *"opened up"*

LYDIA WAS RELIGIOUS BEFORE SHE WAS REDEEMED. LIKE NICODEMUS AND CORNELIUS BEFORE HER SHE WORSHIPPED GOD BEFORE SHE WAS SAVED. *V. 14* HOWEVER, WHEN PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL IN PHILIPPI SHE LISTENED. THE WORD ATTEND MEANS TO TAKE HEED, GIVE CLOSE ATTENTION TO. *V. 15* SHE PAID ATTENTION AND IT PAID OFF. SHE GOT SAVED, BAPTIZED AND HER FAMILY GOT SAVED TOO. (COMMENT REGARDING OUR FAMILY.) IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A FAMILY TO FOLLOW A MOTHER IN FAITH. THIS IS NOT SPEAKING OF A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BUT OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. COMPARE ACTS 16:31 WHICH MEANS WHEN YOUR HOUSEHOLD BELIEVES, THEY WILL BE SAVED TOO. *V. 15*

(B) SHE HAD AN OPEN HAND *(Money - cooney)*

"A DEALER IN PURPLE - DYED GARMENTS." THIS PHRASE IS ONE WORD IN GREEK. THE WORD IS "PORPHUROPOLIS." SHE WAS A "PORPHUROPOLIS PERSON!" WE WOULD CALL LYDIA A BUSINESSWOMAN - AND A WEALTHY ONE. THYATIRA WAS A COMMERCIAL CENTER. LYDIA HAD LEARNED HER TRADE WELL. SHE WAS FROM A "DYEING

"Purple = 4 = opolis"

Please -
no more
"transparent!"
MOST
sensitive
person
I know!

Irony: Paul & Silas were imprisoned
to mistreated - 8- for doing good!
Profits over cure!

HER HEALTH BUT ONLY THEIR HOLD OVER HER.
PERHAPS SHE WAS ATTRACTED TO PAUL BECAUSE
HE WAS NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, HE WAS
INTERESTED IN THE SPIRITUAL WELLBEING OF
PEOPLE AND NOT FOR WHAT HE COULD GET FROM
THEM. YET THIS GIRL WAS SOME MOTHER'S
DAUGHTER. ONE OF THE SADDEST STORIES
IMAGINABLE HAD TO DO WITH A TEENAGE GIRL
WHO WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN AN AUTOMOBILE
ACCIDENT LATE ONE NIGHT. TAKEN TO THE
HOSPITAL A SEARCH WAS MADE FOR HER MOTHER
WHO WAS AT A COCKTAIL PARTY. WHEN THE
MOTHER SOBERED UP ENOUGH TO GO TO THE
HOSPITAL, SHE WAS TOLD THAT HER DAUGHTER
MIGHT NOT LIVE. ONE OF HER DAUGHTER'S LAST
STATEMENT WAS REPORTED AS FOLLOWS: "MOTHER,
YOU TAUGHT ME ALL OF THE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE
THINGS TO DO. YOU TAUGHT ME HOW TO DRINK,
DANCE, SMOKE, PLAY CARDS AND CATCH THE EYE
OF MEN AND I HAVE LEARNED ALL OF THAT
WELL. PLEASE MOTHER, I AM SCARED AND SO
ALONE AND YOU HAD NEVER TOLD ME HOW TO DIE.
PLEASE TELL ME HOW TO DIE." PAUL WAS
REWARDED FOR HELPING THIS POOR, DEMENTED
GIRL BY BEING THROWN IN JAIL. IN THAT
REGARD, HE BECAME A PART OF ONE OF THE
MOST PERSECUTED MINORITIES IN ALL OF THE
WORLD - THE BORN AGAIN, FUNDAMENTAL,
BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT.
HOWEVER, GOD KNOWS THAT CHRISTIANS DO NOT
THRIVE IN A "HOT HOUSE" BUT RATHER IN "HOT
WATER." << YEARS AGO IN A COLLEGE CHAPEL
I REMEMBER THE CHAPLAIN OF A FEDERAL
PENITENTIARY IN ATLANTA SPEAKING OF HIS
MINISTRY TO THE CRIMINALS IN THAT
INSTITUTION. HE SAID THAT EVEN THE MOST
HARDENED CRIMINALS HAD ONE WORD THAT COULD
REACH THEM - MOTHER. I DO NOT KNOW IF THAT
WORD STILL HAS ITS MAGIC RING, BUT THERE IS
ANOTHER PRECIOUS WORD THAT PEOPLE NEED TO
HEAR - THE NAME OF JESUS. (ACT 1:21)

2/3 "Certain Women"

who are "certain" about their
faith. Mom of you...

See you a mother
Spiritual
Certainty?

"THE COMMUNION CUP"

MATTHEW 26:26-30

THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER OCCURRED ON THE VERY NIGHT JESUS WAS BETRAYED, ARRESTED THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS CRUCIFIXION. THERE IS NO HINT OF CRISIS IN THESE VERSES. THERE IS NO TURMOIL IN JESUS' HEART ONLY TRANQUILITY. THE STORMS OF LIFE DID NOT BLOW HIM OFF COURSE. THEY NEVER HAD, THEY NEVER WOULD. JESUS WAS NOT PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN SITUATION BUT RATHER SUSTAINED INTEREST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS DISCIPLES. THIS WAS JESUS' LAST MEAL. THEY WERE EATING THE PASSOVER. THE PASSOVER WAS THE FIRST OF THE ANNUAL FEASTS, ALSO CALLED UNLEAVENED BREAD. HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, IT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE JEWISH FEASTS. IT WAS A REMINDER OF THE JEW'S DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT. (EXPLAIN) AS THEY WERE EATING, JESUS INSTITUTE ANOTHER MEAL. HE TOOK TWO ELEMENTS FROM THE PASSOVER, BREAD AND CUP, AND FROM THESE WOULD DRAW A PICTURE OF HIS OWN DEATH. THE ELEMENTS OF THE MEAL HAVE SPECIAL MEANING OR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CHURCH.

*Passover Lamb.
(Jn. 1:29)*

I. THE SYMBOLS - VERSES 26-28

THE BREAD AND THE CUP REPRESENT SOMETHING ELSE. AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE VARIOUS VIEWS CONCERNING THESE ELEMENTS WHICH SPEAK OF THEM IN A SUPERNATURAL WAY. THE PHRASE "THIS IS..." IS A FIGURE OF SPEECH. FOR EXAMPLE, IF ONE SHOWS YOU A PICTURE OF A LOVED ONE HE MAY SAY: "THIS IS MY WIFE/HUSBAND/CHILD." NO IT ISN'T - IT IS A VISIBLE REPRESENTATION OR A REMINDER OF THE REALITY BUT IT IS NOT THE REALITY NOR WAS IT DESIGNED TO BE! SO THIS MEAL WAS A REMINDER OF A DEEPER MEANING NOT A DIVINE MIRACLE. (1 COR. 11:25-26)

(1.) Look Backward (2.) Look Inward (3.) Look Forward
(1.) Bread = Body (2.) Cup = Blood

II. THE SUBJECTS - VERSE 27

THE WORD ALL IN THE TEXT IS THE SAME WORD USED IN VERSE 31. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT JUDAS ALREADY DEPARTED THE UPPER ROOM. THIS IS THE LORD'S SUPPER OR TABLE. THEREFORE, AS A LOCAL CHURCH IT IS OUR FEELING THAT ALL WHO BELONG TO HIM ARE WELCOME AT HIS TABLE. SIMPLY STATED, WE AS A CHURCH DO NOT PRACTICE CLOSED COMMUNION. HE SPOKE OF BEING "WITH YOU" IN THAT FUTURE KINGDOM. THIS IS THE SAME MESSAGE JESUS GAVE IN JOHN 14:1-3. *(He with them / They with him)*

III. THE SONG - VERSE 30

WHEN THE MEAL WAS OVER, THEY SANG A SONG TO SEAL THE SACREDNESS OF THE SERVICE. IT WAS A HYMN NOT HYSTERIA! THE SONG IN THE UPPER ROOM WOULD SOON BE PLACED WITH THE SUFFERING AND SORROW OF BOTH GETHSEMANE AND CALVARY. IN ALL PROBABILITY THEY SANG EXCERPTS FROM THE PSALMS, SPECIFICALLY, 118. TODAY WE SING A SONG TO REMIND US OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS MEMORIAL MEAL. MANY SONGS ARE APPROPRIATE BUT ONES CONTAINING THE BLOOD AND THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS ARE CERTAINLY FITTING. (COMMENT REGARDING STRAUSS' STATEMENT DURING ILLNESS.) I'M SURE THE DISCIPLES NEVER FORGOT THE MUSIC OF THAT MOMENT. OVERRIDING THIS WHOLE SITUATION IS THE FACT THAT SIMPLICITY PREVAILED. THERE WAS NO PAGEANTRY, CEREMONY, POMP, OR RITUAL. THERE WERE NO SPEECHES, ROBES, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS - JUST A SIMPLE MEAL IN SIMPLE SURROUNDINGS WITH THE SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP PARTICIPATING. SIMPLICITY AND SPIRITUALITY SEEM TO BE VITALLY LINKED. FOR EXAMPLE, IF ONE TRAVELED TO JERUSALEM TO LOOK FOR A MONUMENT REGARDING JESUS LIFE AND MINISTRY HE WOULD FIND NONE. THERE'S AN EMPTY CROSS AND AN EMPTY TOMB. THERE ARE NO GRANITE STATUTES OR BRONZE PLAQUES COMMEMORATING WHAT JESUS DID FOR

THAT EATING SHOULD BE PRECEDED BY SELF-EXAMINATION.

VI. THE PENALTY - VERSES 30-34

THE HOSPITAL AND CEMETERY AT CORINTH WERE POPULATED IN SOME MEASURE BY CARELESS CHRISTIANS. NOT MUCH IS SAID TODAY ABOUT CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE BEEN TAKEN HOME TO HEAVEN PREMATURELY BECAUSE OF THEIR GROSS FAILURE TO JUDGE SIN IN THEIR LIVES. IF I UNDERSTAND THESE VERSES CORRECTLY, IF YOU AND I CHOOSE NOT TO DEAL WITH HIDDEN SINS IN SELF-JUDGMENT, GOD WILL BE REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH IT IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE OUR FINAL DESTINATION. SELF-JUDGMENT IS ONE OF THOSE JUDGMENTS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE THAT WE KNOW LEAST ABOUT. LIKE US, THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WAS SLOW TO DEAL WITH SIN BOTH PERSONALLY AND IN THE CHURCH. CHASTENING IN THE BIBLE IS DESIGNED TO RESCUE AND NOT RUIN BELIEVERS.

US. THAT MEMORIAL IS BOUND UP IN A SIMPLE MEAL. IT IS INCREDIBLE THAT SUCH A MEAL COULD ACCOMPLISH SUCH A TASK. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT THE VIET NAM MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON WHERE OVER 50,000 CASUALTIES OF THE WAR ARE INSCRIBED HAS BECOME OUR "WAILING WALL." WHEN WE COME TOGETHER TO REMEMBER CHRIST IT IS NOT IN AN ATTITUDE OF MOURNING BUT WITH ONE OF REJOICING AND LOOKING BACKWARD TO CALVARY AND FORWARD TO THE RAPTURE.

CHRISTIANS AND COMMUNION

I COR. 11:17FF

WHY DO WE OBSERVE THE COMMUNION SERVICE?
IS IT A RELIGIOUS RITUAL SOMEONE STARTED
AND WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO STOP IT? DOES
IT HAVE A MYSTICAL QUALITY THAT GIVES A
SPIRITUAL LIFT - A KIND OF SPIRITUAL FIX?
THERE ARE TWO REASONS MENTIONED IN THE
TEST FOR OBSERVING THIS CHURCH ORDINANCE.

(1) "I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD" - V. 23

THIS ORDINANCE IS DIVINE IN ORIGIN. IT WAS
NOT SOMETHING PAUL AND OTHER ECCLESIASTICAL
LEADERS PLANNED OR WORKED UP AS PART OF
CHURCH LITURGY.

(2) "AS OFTEN AS" - V.26

THE COMMUNION SERVICE IS A SILENT SERMON IN
WHICH THE BELIEVER PREACHES WHEN HE
PARTICIPATES. SO, WE OBSERVE THIS ORDINANCE
BECAUSE WE ARE INSTRUCTED BY OUR LORD TO DO
SO. SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH ORDINANCES,
THAT VERY TERM IS MENTIONED IN 11:2. IT
IS A REFERENCE TO SOMETHING THAT IS PASSED ON
FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER. IT IS
DIVINE, NOT HUMAN, IN ORIGIN. THERE ARE
JUST TWO CHURCH ORDINANCES, BAPTISM AND
COMMUNION. THE LORD'S TABLE OR COMMUNION IS
ALSO KNOWN AS THE EUCHARIST OR SACRAMENTS.
VIEWS VARY AS TO WHAT THEY REPRESENT BUT FOR
CHURCHES LIKE OURS, BOTH THE FRUIT OF THE
VINE AND THE BREAD ARE SYMBOLICAL IN NATURE.
THE ELEMENTS REPRESENT THE BODY AND BLOOD
OF CHRIST GIVEN FOR US AT CALVARY. THERE IS
A SENSE IN WHICH THIS ORDINANCE GREW OUT OF A

↓
"Traditions"
(παράδοσις)

TRADITIONAL MEAL CALLED THE PASSOVER FEAST. IT WAS DURING THAT MEMORIAL MEAL COMMEMORATING THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT THAT MATTHEW SAID "AS THEY WERE EATING" JESUS INSTITUTED SOMETHING NEW, A NEW MEMORIAL DURING THAT SUPPER. IT HAS BEEN CALLED THE LAST SUPPER BUT IT IS BOTH LAST AND FIRST. THE PASSOVER WAS THE LAST SUPPER OF AN OLD DISPENSATION BUT THE LORD'S SUPPER WAS THE FIRST OF A NEW DISPENSATION.

I. THE PLACE - VERSE 18

THE LORD'S SUPPER OR COMMUNION IS A CHURCH ORDINANCE, NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ORDINANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, SEVERAL YEARS AGO A HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITY DECIDED TO BAPTIZE SEVERAL "CONVERTS" IN HIS SWIMMING POOL. HE WAS NOT PRACTICING A CHURCH ORDINANCE. A BIBLE STUDY GROUP, A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, A COTTAGE PRAYER MEETING MAY BE A CHRISTIAN GROUP GATHERED FOR A GOOD PURPOSE BUT IF IT IS NOT AUTHORIZED AND ADMINISTERED IN A CHURCH ORIENTED FASHION, IT IS NOT A CHURCH ORDINANCE. THE BIBLE IS VERY CLEAR REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF A LOCAL CHURCH. IT INVOLVES PUBLIC WORSHIP, CHURCH OFFICES AND OFFICERS, DISCIPLINE AND MINISTRY. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO BE SPIRITUAL IN THEIR INTERESTS AND UNSCRIPTURAL IN THEIR PRACTICE OF THIS ORDINANCE. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE CHURCH IS BOTH AN ORGANISM AND ORGANIZATION. THE ORDINANCE IS OBSERVED WHEN THE LORD'S PEOPLE GATHER TOGETHER IN PUBLIC WORSHIP. MAN IS INTUITIVELY IDOLATROUS AND HE WILL FIX HIS MIND ON RELICS AND RITUALS OF RELIGION INSTEAD OF THE REDEEMER. IT IS EASY TO FOCUS ONE'S ATTENTION UPON THE COMMUNION SERVICE AND NOT UPON THE CHRIST WHOM THE SERVICE REMEMBERS!

River City
- Church
stop members!

II. THE PEOPLE - VERSE 18

THE COMMUNION SERVICE IS NOT DESIGNED AS A SOCIAL GATHERING LIKE A CHURCH PICNIC. IT IS SPECIFICALLY FOR THE BORN AGAIN - FOR BELIEVERS (I COR. 1:2) SAINTS OF GOD ARE SPECIAL PEOPLE, SOMETIMES CALLED CHRISTIANS, BRETHREN, BELIEVERS EVEN PILGRIMS. WE ARE NOT ALWAYS SAINTLY BUT WE ARE ALWAYS SAVED. THE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THE COMMUNION SERVICE BE RESTRICTED TO A FEW SUPER-SPiritual PEOPLE WHO ARE WORTHY BY VIRTUE OF THEIR OUTSTANDING CHARACTER AND COMMITMENT TO PARTAKE OF THESE ELEMENTS. THE TERM UNWORTHY IN VERSE 27 IS AN ADVERB, NOT AN ADJECTIVE. THAT IS, NO ONE IS WORTHY IN AND OF HIMSELF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNION SERVICE. THE EMPHASIS IN THIS AREA IS ON A PROPER MANNER OR ATTITUDE OR APPROACH TO THE COMMUNION TABLE. IT SHOULD BE DONE WITH A HUMBLE, CONTRITE, SELFLESS APPROACH AND NOT ONE OF SUPERIORITY AND ARROGANCE. - *like the Corinthians!!!*

III. THE PROBLEMS - V. 18-22

PHRASES SUCH AS "I PRAISE YOU NOT", "WORSE NOT BETTER", "DIVISION", "HERESIES", "DRUNKEN", ALL SUGGEST THERE WERE MULTIPLE PROBLEMS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH THAT HAD CREPT OVER INTO THE COMMUNION SERVICE. THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WAS BOTH THE MOST GIFTED AND THE MOST GUILTY OF THE CHURCHES. THE GIFTS WERE GREAT BUT THEY WERE NOT ALWAYS USED IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH PRIDE, IMMORALITY, DIVORCE, LITIGATION, LACK OF SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD AND MANY OTHER PROBLEMS. THERE WAS A CUSTOM IN THE EARLY CHURCH ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNION THAT INVOLVED A COMMON MEAL.

THAT COMMON MEAL WAS CALLED THE LOVE FEAST OR THE AGAPE. IT WAS DESIGNED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. A CHURCH SHOULD NOT BE UNDULY INFLUENCED BY CLASS DISTINCTIONS AND SOCIAL BARRIERS. GOD HAS NO ARISTOCRATS, NO ELITE MEMBERS IN HIS CHURCH. OUR DIFFERENCES ARE DIFFERENCES IN GIFTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, NOT IN STANDING BEFORE HIM. THIS MAKES THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST UNIQUE WHERE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OR PLAYING FAVORITES SHOULD HAVE NO PLACE. THE CORINTHIANS BY CONTRAST HAD FAVORITE LEADERS AND FAVORITE GROUPS AND THE CHURCH HAD SPLINTERED OVER SUCH PRACTICES. AT THE AGAPE, ALL CHRISTIANS WERE TO BRING THEIR RESOURCES IN THE AREA OF FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS, LARGE OR SMALL, TO A COMMON MEAL. IT WAS A TIME OF SHARING. PROBLEMS AROSE AT CORINTH WHEN THE RICH DIVIDED INTO SMALL, EXCLUSIVE GROUPS AND EXCLUDED THE POOR AND OTHER UNDESIRABLES. THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS DIVIDED INTO ALL KINDS OF SOCIAL GROUPS SUCH AS FREEMEN, AS OPPOSED TO SLAVES, GREEKS AS OPPOSED TO BARBARIANS, JEWS AS OPPOSED TO GENTILES. IN THE CHURCH, PAUL MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THESE BARRIERS SHOULD NOT BE ERECTED. CARNALITY RESULTED IN THEIR VARIOUS SPLINTER GROUPS AT CORINTH. PAUL USED THE TERMS HERESY AND SECTS TO DESCRIBE THEM. THAT IS BOTH STRONG-WILLED PEOPLE WHO CLAMORED FOR RECOGNITION AND PUT UNDO WORTH ON THEIR OWN OPINIONS AND BEING WHICH IN TURN CREATED PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH. THE EXCESSES OF THE COMMON MEAL SPILLED OVER INTO THE COMMUNION SERVICE WHICH WAS NOT DESIGNED TO FILL A HUNGRY STOMACH. IT WAS A MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE THE LORD'S DEATH AND HIS SECOND COMING. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, THE CARNAL

TREATED SACRED THINGS LIGHTLY AND INTERPRETED SACRED THINGS IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR APPETITES AND FLESH. BY THE WAY, SOME FOLKS HAVE INTERPRETED VERSE 22 THAT CHURCHES SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY PLACE FOR PREPARING MEALS SUCH AS A KITCHEN. QUESTION: DOES THIS VERSE TEACH THAT IT IS WRONG TO EAT IN CHURCH?

I HAVE KNOWN CHURCHES TO FIGHT AND SPLIT OVER THIS VERY ISSUE - DEMONSTRATING THEIR OWN CORINTHIAN CARNALITY ON THIS VERY ISSUE!

PAUL WAS NOT STATING A GENERAL PRACTICE FOR ALL CHURCHES. HE WAS DEALING WITH THE ABUSE OF THE CORINTHIANS. THE SUPPER WHICH THEY WERE ABUSING WAS NOT A PROHIBITION FROM SOCIAL FUNCTIONS IN THE CHURCH TODAY. THE SUPPER THEY WERE ABUSING WAS NOT LIKE THE FELLOWSHIP SUPPERS WE ENJOY.

IV. THE PURPOSE - VERSE 26

THE COMMUNION TABLE LOOKS BACKWARD TO THE CROSS AND FORWARD TO HIS COMING. THE COMMUNION TABLE RESTS IN THE PAST AND ALSO IN PROPHECY. IT IS BOTH EVANGELICAL AND ESCHATOLOGICAL IN NATURE.

V. THE PREPARATION - VERSE 28-32

THE COMMUNION SERVICE IS A TIME TO LOOK BACK, AROUND, AHEAD AND WITHIN! THE CORINTHIANS WERE ENCOURAGED TO SPIRITUAL SELF-EXAMINATION. THE CORINTHIANS, LIKE MANY CHRISTIANS TODAY, WERE EXPERTS ON EXAMINING OTHERS BUT NOT THEMSELVES. THE PLACE TO START IS WITH OURSELVES AND NOT OTHERS. IT IS A TIME OF SPIRITUAL INVENTORY, A TIME TO GRADE OUR OWN SPIRITUAL TEST PAPER. BY THE WAY, IT WAS NOT SUGGESTED THAT THE CORINTHIANS NOT PARTICIPATE BUT RATHER THEY WERE ENCOURAGED TO EAT BUT