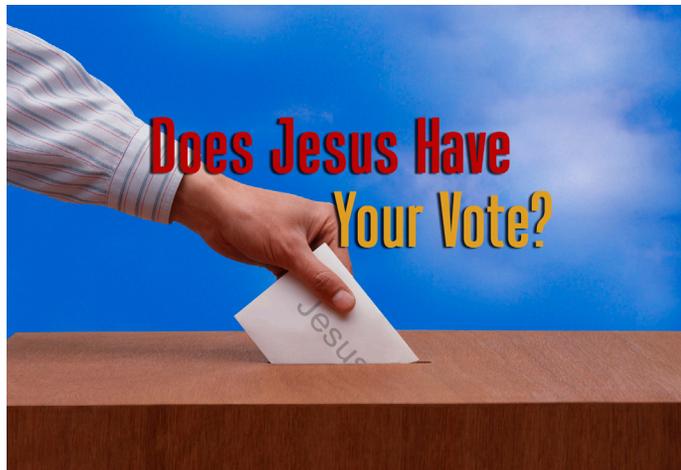

Pilgrims Journal

“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:13–16)

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DOES JESUS HAVE YOUR VOTE?

Within many social circles there are two subjects people seek to avoid in their conversations in order to avoid controversy and heated arguments. They are (1) religion and (2) politics. May I be bold in this article to speak on both! Here in the USA, we have just witnessed a historic election, where a little-known African-American first-term Senator has been elected to be our next president, the President-Elect (or 'PE' in this article). I sincerely wish him well, and to the USA that will be under his hand. We should definitely pray a lot for him; he does not have an easy job.

I am privileged and grateful to live in a land where the right to participate in the selection of the nation's leaders is afforded me. Throughout history, so much of mankind (and even much of it today) has had little or no opportunity to choose their leaders. Often men have had to suffer under corrupt leaders, or even tyrants, whom the people did not and would not choose. We are blessed in the USA with many freedoms, and we should be grateful to God for them. My concern is not so much for the USA, but for the *Christians* who are in it, and that is the point of this article. From the greater viewpoint of

eternity, we must realize that the USA, like all nations, one day very soon will cease to exist as a self-governing nation. That will take place **no later** than the Battle of Armageddon, when Christ's millennial kingdom is established (Dan 2:44-45; Rev 11:15; 19:15). After the 1000 year millennial reign of Christ and the saints, this visible universe and all that is in it, including the USA, will be destroyed by God Himself in order to bring in His everlasting heavenly kingdom! (2Pet 3:10-13; Rev 20:11; 21:1-3) In that kingdom the overcomers will rule and reign with Christ as '**presidents**' eternally (Rev 3:21; 5:10). Our life in this world is a proving ground, for which we are called to **walk worthy** of that great vocation (Eph 4:1-4). In view of that eternal calling my question is, "Did Christians **truly** use their vote for the glory of God?" (1Cor 10:31) Also what were the **motives** and **intents** that influenced the Christians when they voted? (1Cor 4:5; Heb 4:12-13) I would like to address these issues from a scriptural viewpoint.

Without a doubt, voting is a complex matter having many issues that lead people to their choice of leaders. Although this article principally deals with the PE and his policies, President Bush and Senator McCain have both been the subjects of criticism. Many Christians

were understandably displeased that Senator McCain is divorced and remarried. I **do not** suggest that they are perfect leaders, and clearly many in the electorate were displeased with them, and this entered into their decision to select the current PE.

Apparently there were people who voted either *for* or *against* the PE in great part because of his **race**. I would view both groups as clearly **wrong!** Race should **NOT** be an issue (Mat 22:16; Ac 10:34), but rather the policies, purposes, and character of the candidates. Personally, I can think of many black Americans who could make great presidents of our land. If our pastor in Washington, DC, an African-American, were running, I would have **gladly** voted for him. But, I am sure he would say to me, “Brother, I already have a *higher calling* than that!” Our concern about the PE is his strongly **immoral policies**. I will enumerate a few of the PE’s positions here. The PE has the following record: he

- co-sponsored the “Freedom of Choice Act,” a bill that would **invalidate** virtually all state and federal limitations on abortion, including partial-birth abortion
- has said that he will make **preserving** “Roe vs. Wade” a priority as President

- has voted **against** “parental notification laws” that require the parents of a **minor** to be informed of their daughter’s decision for an abortion
- voted in **favor** of funding embryonic stem cell research
- co-sponsored a bill that would have allowed the **cloning** of human embryos for research
- would **not** support a constitutional amendment that defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman
- advocates **repeal** of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act
- **supports** state-sanctioned **homosexual** marriages
- favors justices with “empathy” and expansive, **progressive** views of the Constitution
- would **force** some “faith-based” groups to hire from outside their beliefs
- has always been a **critic** of “school choice vouchers”

I wish that the PE would prove my concerns wrong, and that one day God Himself will say that this PE was the greatest president the USA ever had. But based on the PE’s stated positions, I cannot at this moment foresee that happening. One thing seems clear from the election: *America* is becoming **LESS moral**. I would

like to make it clear that *the PE is NOT the problem. The problem lies in the hearts and minds of America.* I dare say that 50 years ago, **any man** who had the immoral positions of the PE would **NEVER** have come close to being elected President! Sadly, it is a testimony that America *has changed*, and NOT for the better! The election again proves that we as a nation do **NOT** regard the morals, values, and words of God very highly. And **that** is what is so grievous.

I am particularly **shocked** at why many Christians voted for the PE, knowing his strong anti-scriptural stands. A sad thought is that their understanding of the mind of God may be lacking, and/or their real commitment to Christ may be shallow! Although the PE himself spent years attending a Church, from my view he is not a “saved” man. You cannot support **immorality** and be a **moral** person yourself. The two are mutually exclusive (Tit 1:16; 2Sam 23:3; Jms 2:17-26; 1Jn 3:9-10). If your commitment to Christ is shallow, then your commitment to the clear words of God will also be shallow and that will be often seen in your **choices**, including how and why you vote. Jesus told us that we are to be the **salt** of the earth, and the **lights** of the world (Mat 5:13-16). May we not allow that light to become darkness!

Many reading this article will fall into one of three categories:

(1) You may not be a US citizen but may be able to vote in some country for your leaders. In that case, I hope that this article may inspire you to use that privilege in a godly way, to affect your nation and its leaders for Christ. Also, it is **crucial** to remember that how you vote now will also affect your right to sit on God’s throne judging the nations with Him eternally! We **must** judge matters correctly here in this world in order to be overcomers and to be allowed the privilege to judge matters in heaven! (Jn 5:30; Lk 16:10-12) This is **crucial** and you should bear this **closely in mind** when you vote! (Eph 4:1; 1Cor 6:2-5)

(2) Perhaps you are an American citizen and a Christian and did not vote for the PE. You might feel your effort to help stem the increasing tide of sin has failed. You should not feel dismayed and discouraged since we know that a worldwide growth in sin is predicted in the word of God. You are witnessing it as it comes to pass (Mat 24:12; Lk 17:24-30; 2Tim3:1-5). One reason why God’s children should not get discouraged when sin seems to win the day is that we know from God’s word the end of the story of human history. “And when

these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh” (Lk 21:28). Jesus will soon appear in a moment and in the twinkling of an eye for His Bride. You are called to be in that number and inherit a perfect, incorruptible, and everlasting kingdom. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat 25:34). Seven years after the Rapture, the confusion, darkness, and rebellion of this earth will end abruptly and cataclysmically at the bodily appearance of Earth’s true King and Savior—Jesus Christ. Sadly, the nations of this earth will gather to fight against His return to power, when He comes back with His saints (Jude 14-15; Rev 17:14; Rev 19:11-21). The King of kings shall prevail, and reign for a thousand years. Truly the best is **yet to come** for God’s faithful children. Hallelujah!

(3) If you are an American citizen, and a Christian, and you did vote for the PE, then may I sincerely ask you to consider your motives and intentions as to **WHY**? Did you *really* ask God how you could vote for the “glory of God?” (1Cor 10:31) Remember, the motives of our hearts will be examined and judged by the Lord on Judgment Day. Here are few possible issues that may have affected

your choice, along with my response to such issues as well:

○ Firstly, you may feel that it is a secret ballot, so then you don’t have to answer to anyone about your vote, and in part you are correct! But on the Day of Judgment, all of mankind will **have** to answer to Jesus and that will be in front of all of creation (Rom 2:16; 14:11-12; 2Cor 5:9-11; Rev 20:11-15). Better get your answers ready for Him!

○ Maybe you were ignorant of all of the anti-scriptural policies that the PE holds to. *Please!* Next time educate yourself *before* you vote!

○ Maybe you feel that you “weighed in a balance” the good and bad of both candidates and found the PE winning. May I say unto you, that in my view of the mind of God, the anti-scriptural policies that are promoted by the PE are like a proverbial 800-pound gorilla sitting on the PE’s side of the “see-saw.” **How** then could he come out on top? To make such life and death matters as homosexuality and abortion equal in **importance** to temporal matters such as economics is an absolute **abomination** to God! Four thousand innocent babies are put to death **daily** in the USA through **abortion**. Eternal souls are **daily** going into hellfire for the sin of **homosexuality**. If you treat those facts just like “one of many things to

consider that are of equal weight,” then you have *terribly misunderstood* the heart, mind, and values of God.

○ Some Christians voted for the PE because they believe that they will do better economically under his leadership. May I simply say, “**Shame on them!**” That selfish and worldly attitude is a grief to the mind of Christ. The same temptation that Satan used on Jesus, he is using again with Christians today. Sadly, many Christians are failing the test (Job 1:9-12; Lk 4:5-7; 1Tim 6:5-12). Is it not the same attitude as Esau, who for one morsel of food **sold** his birthright? (Heb 12:16-17) If your motive was money, then may I ask you, “What will you say to the millions of ‘aborted’ souls when you see them in the afterlife?” Will you answer them, “Well, I really was against abortion, but you know, the PE said he would put more money in my pocket!” Heaven would **weep!**

○ Maybe you heard that the PE is a “very smart man” that can solve the problems of the USA and the world. To that I say, “**Who** is to define what ‘smart’ is?” “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Psa 111:10; Isa 8:20). May I simply ask you, “Is it *smart* to tell a man that he should be able to marry another man?” And to *solve* the nations’ problems, may I remind you that “except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psa 127:1).

○ Maybe some felt that the PE is a dynamic speaker and can inspire the people. May I say that dynamic speaking is not at all bad, but it does **not** impress God in the least (Ex 4:10-12; Jer 1:4-9; Ac 4:13; 12:20-23; 2Cor 10:10; 11:6). The **more important** issues are the *contents* of one’s speech. To God, **character** is far more important in a leader than dynamic speaking ability and charisma (1Tim 3:2). You also should know that when the anti-christ does come, he will absolutely **thrill** people with his speaking ability (Dan 7:20-25; Rev 13:5). But the anti-christ’s persuasive talents will be *inspired* by the devil himself (Rev 13:2).

○ Maybe you dislike the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and you wanted the PE to bring the troops home. I could not blame you for such a desire. War is tragic and we are living in a dangerous world that will not know true peace until the Millennium (Mat 24:6-7). Sending soldiers into war is perhaps one of the hardest decisions for a President to make. But consider this one point: a few thousand US soldiers have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most at least *chose* to be in the military and *voluntarily* went into those dangerous regions. Many feel that there are just causes worthy of fighting for. If you think the toll is great, do also consider again that 4000 *innocent*

babies are **slaughtered daily** in the USA. May I simply ask you, “Which is the **worse** tragedy?”

○ Some Christians might say, “Well, I just have one vote and can do little to improve America.” To that, I say that you are “*special*” to God. Even **one person** who uses his abilities and choices for God can have a tremendous impact for good on others! Believe it! As one bought with the blood of His Son, He has a special place or “vocation” for you that the unconverted cannot inherit (Eph 4:1). You are called to be a “*president*” in His eternal kingdom and to sit on His throne, judging with Him all things in eternity (Lk 22:28-30; Rev 3:21). Although you have only one vote, it is important to God how you use it. “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over **a few things**, I will make thee ruler over **many things**: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Mat 25:23).

Also consider that you are the light of the world. The world does **not** understand the mind of God, nor the awesome prophetic events which are soon to come to pass, but you do! If so, then you must judge things in this world *exactly* as He would judge them (1Cor 6:2-5). Remember that you are an **ambassador** for Christ to this world (Mat 10:32-33; 2Cor 5:20), and your reward will be very great in eternity if you stand on the Lord’s

side. Often, you will have to take unpopular positions if you stand with the Word of God. But remember that you are standing with and for Christ (Jn 7:7; 15:18-25). Perhaps you have made mistakes in judging things as Christ would judge them, but let us use the opportunity now to renew our commitment to Him, and be lights in this world. Give your life, your ambitions, your choices, and yes, **even your vote** to Christ’s cause, and you will never regret it. You will also be found as a “**president**” with Christ in His everlasting kingdom!

As always, you are invited to write to us, to the care of this publication, with your views.

God bless you all,
Brother Michael Thomas

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Human Error

PART 2 — EATING DISORDERS



In the first installment of this series entitled *Human Error*, we studied some of the troubled trips taken by Jesus and His disciples. In this second portion, we will consider some meals in the New Testament that did not turn out as expected. Naturally, everyone wants everything to work out as planned, but because of human nature things often go wrong in this fallen world. It is good that God's mercy and grace allows us to learn from our mistakes because we make so many of them. In His wisdom, He Who never errs makes **errors our teachers**. By producing successes from our messes, God eventually gets more glory: for it is more difficult to produce good from something bad than it is to make something good become bad. When we learn to trust and praise Him in all things, we find that all along **God had ordained all things to work for our good**. Then our failures and frustrations will only cause us to depend more and more on Him Who never fails. So let us study how some of the difficulties with food and drink in New Testament times can help with our trials today.

Caring For Others

Previously, we briefly noted a getaway trip that got away from Jesus and the disciples. Let us examine that episode in more detail now. If we recall, it started with Jesus having just received a report about the martyrdom of his cousin, John the Baptist. John had been murdered because King Herod had made a rash promise in front of his guests at his birthday party. He had been tricked into decapitating and serving the head of that holy prophet on a platter by his sister-in-law, with whom he was living in adultery. How sorrowful Jesus must have felt when He heard this! At the same time, the disciples returned from a season of successful but exhausting missionary journeys. Because of the non-stop needs and demands of others all around them, Jesus and the twelve were too busy to take care of their own needs. They had no leisure, not even enough time to eat (Mk 6:31). It is ironic that those who take so much care of others often do not take care of themselves.

The Walking Well

We see an illustration of this when the Lord went through Samaria (Jn 4). As the Savior sat exhausted and thirsty on the well of Sychar, He encountered a sinful woman. Jesus asked her for a drink. This was completely

unexpected by the woman since Jews of that day had nothing to do with Samaritans, much less to share food and drink with them. Much more shocking was the revelation that this weak and needy looking man was the source for meeting all of her, and the whole world's, needs! After Jesus revealed deep and eternal truths to this disgraced and despised Samaritan, she left her empty water pot at the well and hurried to witness and become a source of blessing to her community. Jesus never got His drink. *He had used His need to meet hers.* When the disciples returned with food, the Lord told them that He was already full with food they did not yet know about. Confused, they reacted with human reasoning, supposing that someone else must have brought Him food. Like our Lord, **we too will find ourselves fulfilled when we meet the needs of others.** Are you willing to pour out your life for souls? There is a communion with Christ that not all know about nor can naturally-minded men understand. Jesus will turn your thirst for Him and His Kingdom into a source of life for others. **Your hunger for God and His will can become an eternal harvest** (Jn 4:35). "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn 7:37-38).

Empty Vessels Filling Others

In Galilee, when Jesus and the twelve left for the desert in order to get away from everyone, more than five thousand uninvited guests got there ahead of them (Mk 6:33). Instead of feeling sorry for Himself and their frustrated plans, Jesus had compassion on the crowd. *He felt for their needs more than His own.* This sympathy drew out from Him spiritual as well as natural resources that met every necessity. After another trying and tiring day of ministry, the disciples told their Master to send the hungry crowd away. But Jesus told them to feed the multitude first. It is a bit of a mystery as to how their original retreat would have turned out because when the Lord asked them how much food they had, they only came up with five cheap loaves and two small fish. We learn from another scripture passage that even this little meal was borrowed from a boy (Jn 6:9). It would not even have made a snack for the thirteen of them, yet *Jesus gave thanks to God and made use of it.* Unlike Jesus, who was concerned for the people's need, the disciples seemed to be more mindful of the cost and supply problems. So once again the Lord demonstrated His goodness and greatness. After giving thanks to God for the little He was given, He used it. *Jesus had allowed Himself to become*

poor in order to enrich others. It is a spiritual paradox that **God often uses the needy to meet needs and empty vessels to fill others.** “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2Cor 8:9; 6:10).

When all five thousand were fed and filled (and, of course, that was just the number of men) Jesus commanded every scrap to be gathered up. He did not allow any leftovers to be left (Jn 6:12). They collected twelve baskets, one for each of the disciples who had arrived with nothing. This teaches us yet another lesson about God’s economy. Just because something is free does not mean it is not valuable; though abundant, *God’s gifts and graces are always precious.* This principle will still be seen in eternity. In New Jerusalem, even though the street is paved with gold, every stone will still be priceless. Contrary to the ways of commerce in this present evil world, **in the Lord’s business you make yourself poor and others rich.** When we use God’s accounting methods it seems **the greater we acknowledge our own need the more we are used to meet the needs of others.**

Water Into Wine

Another example of human error in eating is seen when the legalistic Pharisees complained to Jesus that His disciples were eating with unwashed hands. It was not that their hands were dirty but that the disciples did not follow the ritualistic manmade traditions that those religious frauds claimed came from the elders. The proud, self-righteous Pharisees thought themselves more holy than others because of the external signs and works they displayed and required of all. They made vain shows of repeatedly washing their hands and baptizing pots and pans and many other such burdensome things (Mk 7:1-5). With the first miracle of His ministry, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, *Jesus showed to His followers His power to transform vain routine and dead religion into joyous, life-giving experiences.* When they ran out of wine at that feast, Jesus had them fill six big stone pots with water. Those empty vessels were there because of the Jews’ empty traditions of cleansing and purification (Jn 2:6). As with the disciples in feeding the five thousand, *Jesus caused the miracle to take place in the obedient hands of others.* Even today **He can bring life out from death and make our religion real.** When the Pharisees finished complaining, Jesus began to rebuke them. He condemned the hypocrisy of their self-

declared honoring of dead elders, while at the same time using their religion to rob and dishonor their living elders (Mk 7:13; Mat 15:6). In the eyes of God, it is not the dirt on our skin or that which enters into our mouths that hurts and makes us unclean; it is that which comes from within, out of our own hearts, that damages and defiles. Nothing manmade can take away such sin and stain, only the blood of Jesus can remove those fatal flaws.

Children's Bread

After upbraiding the Pharisees about their vain customs that excluded those different from themselves, Jesus arose and went to the border of Tyre and Sidon. There He tried to hide inside a house from everyone, but He could not be hid (another plan that did not pan out) (Mk 7:24). A foreign woman who had a demon-possessed daughter (people that the Pharisees would have certainly considered unclean) came and fell at Jesus' feet. She begged Him to deliver her daughter. To her pleas Jesus answered that it was not right to take children's bread and throw it to dogs. Yet this desperate Gentile mother continued to humble herself and begged for at least a crumb from the Jews' table. For this attitude and answer Jesus delivered her daughter. It is true that during His earthly ministry, Christ was sent only to the Jews in order to fulfill the Scripture. It is through His

disciples that the good news is to be taken to the nations. Yet there are lessons to be learned from this incident. **We must keep seeking Jesus for deliverance, even if at times it seems He is hiding from us.** Like the widow who kept imploring the unjust judge until he responded to her, like the host with a bare cupboard who kept on asking his sleeping friend to loan him three loaves until he finally arose and answered him with food, we must keep on humbling ourselves and calling out in faith at Jesus' feet until He answers (Lk 18:7; 11:8).

More From Less

After this, Jesus was once again surrounded by crowds of the spiritually and physically hungry (Mk 8). Once again His compassion caused Him to feed a multitude. This time, however, He had more bread to use and less souls to give it to—seven loaves instead of five and 4,000 men instead of 5,000. In spite of this, there was less left over this time from the miraculous multiplying than from the time before (only seven baskets full instead of twelve). Moreover, the Lord once again had to bear with an all-too-human error of His disciples. They had once again gathered up baskets of leftovers, but when they left by boat, the disciples forgot to take the bread with them. There was only one loaf found among those in the boat. They went

from feast to famine in an afternoon. Instead of multiplying that loaf, *Jesus used their failure to teach them an important lesson*. He warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. This yeast, which symbolizes the spread of evil teaching and immorality, had caused less to come from more: the very opposite of what the pure teaching and life of Christ had produced, which was more from less. **Let us also take care to purge out bitter and wicked attitudes and actions from our midst.** “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump...purge out therefore the old leaven...and let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1Cor 5:6-8).

True Intentions

Sad to say, one of Jesus’ disciples did not heed His warning. Just before the Feast of Unleavened Bread a woman poured out an alabaster box of precious ointment upon Jesus while they were eating. Judas bitterly complained, piously calling it a waste of money that could have been better used to feed the poor. He said this not because he cared for the poor, but for himself, and because he was a thief. Even today many have a burden for the poor with other people’s money. When the Lord rebuked them for rebuking the woman, Judas went to the chief priests

and sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. At the Passover Feast, Jesus ministered to Judas and gave him the choice morsel. From that moment on, Judas was under the control of Satan. Though Jesus had only done and given good to him, Judas turned it into evil. He left the feast to betray Jesus. The others thought he had gone to feed the poor that he had pretended to be so burdened for. Until today, Satan is still trying to enter in and cause us to sin, but **if we allow Jesus to come in and sup with us, He will cleanse us from our sin, make us righteous and keep us in true fellowship.**

Denied That We Might Receive

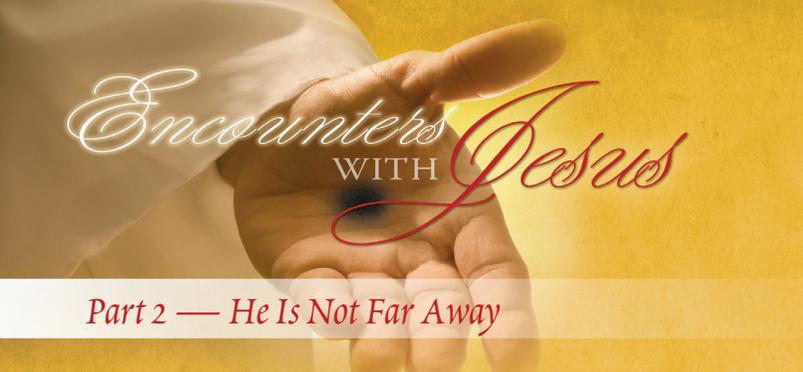
From the upper room, Jesus and the other disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord asked them to pray with Him, and then pleaded three times for the Father to take away the bitter cup of sin and death that was before Him. Those with Jesus did not understand and did not pray with Him in His hour of temptation. *The Lord alone got the victory by completely surrendering to the will of the Father.* He went on to triumph over all by dying on the cross and His resurrection that followed.

On the cross we see Jesus athirst one last time. As a final disappointment, His cry of thirst was mocked and misunderstood. He was given bitter gall or vinegar to drink

which would have made Him even thirstier. “Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink” (Psa 69:20-21). After losing so much blood, sweat and tears, there would have been a raging natural thirst, but Jesus would have had an even greater thirst. This was a thirst for some human compassion and sympathy, a thirst for souls, but above all, a *thirst for the Father’s presence*. **These He was denied in order that they would not be denied us.** □

So far we have studied human errors in travel, food and drink. What else could possibly go wrong? If everything goes according to plan we will find out in the next installment.

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Encounters WITH Jesus

Part 2 — He Is Not Far Away

Just like the people of the past, that had that unique chance to meet Jesus when He walked on the earth, we also can meet with Him and have fellowship with Him even today. According to their needs, people were delivered, healed, cleansed, changed, and much more through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. These same experiences can be ours as well.

There were, however, some people in Jesus' day that seemed far away or unable to get close to Him. Leprosy was a disease that alienated the infected person from others. That person would have to live out their days in isolation or with others who were in the same predicament. But Jesus changed all that. He brought deliverance and healing.

There once was such a man, afflicted with leprosy, that came to Jesus. The reason he came was obvious: for

healing. “When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed” (Mat 8:1-3). Under the law, a man with leprosy had to separate himself far away from everybody else, to prevent the disease from spreading. He also had to identify himself by crying out, “Unclean, unclean.” “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be” (Lev 13:45-46).

In spite of being defiled and unclean, this particular leprous man ran to Jesus and worshiped Him. He looked to the One Who could heal him, and for his faith, he was cleansed. Any fear or apprehension the man had to approach the Son of God seems to have been melted by the grace of God. Our sins have separated us from God. That is the only barrier between us and God. As the Word of God says, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your

God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isa 59:1-2). The great and wonderful truth is that God has now made a way for us, who were far away from God because of our uncleanness, to come to Him. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). Christ is the Door through which we can come to the Father. And the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, ushers us into the presence of God. “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph 2:18). So, we don’t need to stand afar off from God.

When Moses and the elders ascended Sinai, this is what the Lord said to Moses, “Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off” (Exo 24:1-2). Although the elders of Israel had to worship afar off, that is not the case with us today. Now we don’t need to remain afar off and worship God. We can come within the veil and worship Him in spirit and in truth, as true worshipers.

Then there was the centurion who appears to have stayed at some distance from Christ. His servant, who was dear to him, was sick and close to death. When the centurion heard of Jesus, he sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus to plead with Him to heal his servant. It appears that the

centurion felt as if he could not approach Jesus directly. Perhaps he felt he was not included in all the blessings which God had bestowed so abundantly upon Israel, since he was not a member of that chosen nation. Yet, he loved the nation of Israel. He had built a synagogue for them. However, he probably was required to stand outside, not being able to enter and worship the living God. Maybe that is why he sent his friends to tell Jesus that He didn’t even have to enter into his house. He said he wasn’t worthy for that. In spite of his sense of unworthiness, he knew Jesus had the authority to heal his servant. All He had to do was speak the word. That word still has power today to heal the sick, and even the dying (Lk 7:1-10).

Some people feel as if the blessings of God always seem to elude them. Although they reach out for them, they never seem to obtain them. Jesus is the answer. We don’t need to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or descend into hell to bring up Christ again from the dead. *The word of faith is near to us*, even in our mouth and in our heart (Rom 10:6-8). We should always remember that “the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth” (Psa 145:18). So call upon the Lord. He is there. We should also remember that “*the Lord is nigh* unto them that are of a broken heart;

and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psa 34:18). A broken heart and a contrite spirit are precious in the eyes of God. God loves us beyond our ability to measure, and He is waiting to bless us. Those who are in Christ are part of a new nation, a holy nation. The blessings of God are ours in Him. The words God spoke to Israel through Moses long ago are given today to all who believe. Those words are, “For what nation is there so great, *who hath God so nigh unto them*, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?” (Dt 4:7).

The psalm writer understood his nearness to God as he proclaimed, “I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name for evermore. For great is Thy mercy toward me: and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell” (Psa 86:12-13). God’s habitation is in heaven, but He reaches down to the lowest hell to lift up the vilest sinner. The gospel declares that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2Cor 5:19). God has made a way for all who are excluded from the presence of God due to their sins, to still come and approach the Lord. That way is the cross where Jesus died at Calvary.

Even when the God of glory dwelt among the children of Israel in the tabernacle, only the high priest could

enter the most holy place, and that only once a year with the blood of bulls and goats. But now, the veil has been rent and we can enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19). We can come boldly to the throne of grace where we can obtain mercy and grace to help us in time of need (Heb 4:16). Now we are called “*a people near unto Him*” (Psa 148:14). And as a people near to God, we have power with God. Abraham was referred to as “the friend of God.” When he prayed, God listened. We, who were once enemies of God due to sin, are now His friends through Jesus Christ. Our prayers are answered.

A beautiful illustration of this is seen in the life of Esther. When she came before King Ahasuerus, he held out the golden scepter that was in his hand. Seeing that, Esther had boldness to approach unto the king and present her petition to him. Her request was granted by the king. We have far greater boldness to approach unto the King of kings through the blood of Jesus. Our requests will be granted.

Esther’s request was for the life of her people. Our request is also for the life of God’s people in these last days. We are asking for a mighty revival that will raise the church up as a mighty army to fight the battles of the Lord in this final hour. Our battle is not against flesh and blood,

but against the unseen powers of darkness. Who will put on the whole armor of God and take up the sword to fight? God raised up Esther at that particular time to bring about the deliverance of her people from Haman's evil plot to destroy the Jews. When she hesitated to respond to the challenge, Mordecai sent a message: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Est 4:13-14). We can be assured that God has brought us into His eternal kingdom for such a time as this. He has a plan and purpose to fulfill in us while we are here on the earth.

When the apostles preached boldly after the day of Pentecost, the people took note, that these few had been with Jesus (Ac 4:13). Now that *we* are with Jesus, the Lord wants to manifest Himself through us. Just as the branch receives life from the vine, likewise Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches. His life is flowing through us. Jacob's life was completely changed after that night he spent wrestling with the angel. It was now God fulfilling His will

in Jacob, not Jacob striving by his own power and intellect. Now God allows Himself to be called "the God of Jacob."

We can all draw near to God afresh. That new encounter will lead to something lasting and eternal in our relationship with God. May God help us each to humble ourselves before Him, and with all of our hearts *come to Him Who is not far away.* □

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The workmanship of His hands

COMMUNICATION

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1).

God is a God of communication—not confusion. It is only fitting then, that various acts of communication can be seen throughout His created world. And this ability to communicate is not limited to man; countless birds and beasts reveal that their varied sounds and actions are more than just random, mindless motions.

Communication serves several functions. It is used to find food, sound alarms, express pleasure, attract sexual partners, mimic, chase off predators, make friends, warn enemies, entertain, console, instruct the young, threaten, identify foe or friend, surrender, submit, call for help, and express emotions. Every species of creature seems to have one or more unique ways to send messages.

A very good example of animal communication can be found among Old World monkeys who live south of the

Sahara. These monkeys were found to have specific alarm calls for leopards, eagles, and snakes. Given a specific alarm signal, their extended family would either quickly head to the ground or up the trees for safety. Misunderstanding these “words” and going the wrong direction could be a fatal mistake.

Another intriguing example comes from prairie dogs. Findings suggest this rodent has not only unique alarm calls for different predators, but also descriptive “words” in its vocalizations. In one study, researchers made recordings of alarm calls while people of all types and sizes walked past the prairie dogs’ colonies. Some participants wore white lab coats; others wore brightly coloured T-shirts. The results revealed that these animals had a certain common alarm “word” to alert the colony of the wandering humans but encoded additional information into their vocalizations that may have related the color of the person’s clothes, general shape of the intruders, or the degree of concern which the prairie dog had in regards to a certain suspicious human.

Elephants can communicate over hundreds of miles by sub-sonic sounds. When in the heat, the female elephant will emit a series of sounds, which is actually a song, telling nearby bulls that it is time for mating. Sound channels in the atmosphere allow the sound waves produced by the elephant to travel as far

as 60 square miles. She uses her trunk with its 60,000 muscles like a musical instrument, changing notes and frequencies like a trumpet player with dozens of piston valves.

About 70 percent of elephant calls are not audible to the human ear. Their greeting rumble compares with our excited hug. Another is a repeating contact call that makes sure members of the herd are still within ear range. Elephants also use body language commonly, and there are very distinct meanings associated with the flapping of their ears, trumpeting, and shaking of their trunks.

Mice sing to each other too. They primarily use ultrasonic squeaks to communicate, that measures around two octaves above human hearing (although occasionally a squeak can actually be heard by children, who have the sharpest hearing among humans). The mice actually stand on their hind legs and can be seen with their mouths open, their throats inflated, and their bodies vibrating. The complexity and texture of their songs are comparable to bird and whale songs.

Underwater species seem to communicate for the same reasons land species do. They make use of sounds, chemicals, lights, electrical shocks, body colors, and body language. Some fish actually hum. After migrating from the deep Pacific to the U.S. coastline, midshipman fish will hum a love song, which is described as a motorboat drone. They do this to attract

females. They can also make grunts and growls when guarding their nests. The weakfish makes a purring sound and the drum fish makes a drumming sound. Over 208 species off the North American coasts have been shown to make meaningful, species-specific sounds, including catfish, groupers, eels, and crabs.

Dolphins converse in frequencies above our hearing range. Their language consists of whistles, burst-pulse sounds, clicks, raspberries, groans, and a host of body movements, such as slapping their tail flukes against the water and bumping into each other. Furthermore, researchers have found that each dolphin seems to have an individual name. Naming happens shortly after birth and mothers will often use the “name” when trying to find a calf whenever they have been separated. Individual adults will also call out the name to find specific others in a crowd of dolphins or stay in touch with an individual who is out of sight.

Whales communicate with each other far below our hearing capabilities. The calls of the blue whale and finback can be detected by each other for thousands of miles. The blue whale is the loudest; it is able to reach 190 decibels—louder than the loudest crowd at a college football game.

There are countless allusions to the beauty and inspiration of bird-songs in books, poetry, songs, and stories. We

rejoice at hearing birds sing. Indeed, we probably should. They announce the beginning of a new day; they let us know it's the end of a hard season; and their songs are mostly happy melodies. Bird calls include chirps, tweets, honks, squawks, screeches, coos, whistles, clucks, churrs, warbles, squeals and trills. Scientists think every aspect of these utterances has meaning in the bird communities. Professors in England have noticed a decline in songbirds, and although the reason may be pollution, it seems also because of too much noise. This causes birds to learn their songs incorrectly and can severely impair their ability to attract mates later on.

Although most communication in nature is confined to members of the same species, occasionally cross-species communication can be found. The hawkmoth, for instance, will create a pulsing sound at 280 pulses per minute, with intermittent pauses in between. Scientists believe that, since the moths suck honey from beehives without being attacked, their sound mimics sounds made by a queen bee. Evolution can not explain how these moths could slowly develop their protective hum over many generations. They would have to be able to do it straight away or goodbye hawkmoth.

Actually the most complex system of communication next to that of humans is found in the dance steps of the honeybee. The bees dance in a circle, informing others of nearby

sites of interest. The transition dance, which resembles a half moon or sickle, addresses places that are an intermediate distance away. And the waggle dance, wherein the forager makes a figure eight with a "waggle" through the middle, gives information about the nectar or pollen location that may be more than 250 feet away.

If the waggle dance is perpendicularly upward, it means to fly towards the sun; if perpendicularly downward, to fly away from the sun; if the dancer moves upward and 30° to the left of perpendicular, it would mean to fly towards the sun and 30° left of it; and if the dancer moves downward and 30° to the right of perpendicular, it would mean to fly away from the sun and 30° to the right of it. Every bee knows the language.

As much as the animal world is astonishing in its communication wonders, nothing compares to the communicative abilities of man. He is able to go far beyond the simple expressions of earthly needs that all other creation seems to stop at, to be able to express his feelings and ideas to the enrichment of others. It has been said that monkeys will sometimes look at the moon, but only a man will write a poem about it. Why is this? Simply because God has breathed into man His own Spirit and that same God is called the Word. He speaks and all creation lives by Him. □

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A pastor had been on a long flight between church conferences. The first warning of the approaching problems came when the sign on the airplane flashed: Fasten Your Seat Belts. Then, after a while, a calm voice said, “We shall not be serving the beverages at this time as we are expecting a little turbulence. Please be sure your seat belt is fastened.”

As the pastor looked around the aircraft, it became obvious that many of the passengers were becoming apprehensive.

Later, the voice on the intercom said, “We are so sorry that we are unable to serve the meal at this time. The turbulence is still ahead of us.”

And then the storm broke...

The ominous cracks of thunder could be heard even above the roar of the engines. Lightning lit up the darkening skies, and within moments that great plane was like a cork tossed around on a celestial ocean. One moment the airplane was lifted on terrific currents of air; the next, it dropped as if it were about to crash.

The pastor confessed that he shared the discomfort and fear of those around him. He said, “As I looked around the plane, I could see that nearly all the passengers were upset and alarmed. Some were praying. The future seemed ominous and many were wondering if they would make it through the storm.

“Then, I suddenly saw a little girl. Apparently the storm meant nothing to her. She had tucked her feet beneath her as she sat on her seat; she was reading a book and everything within her small world was calm and orderly. Sometimes she closed her eyes, then she would read again; then she would straighten her legs, but worry and fear were not in her world.”

When the plane was being buffeted by the terrible storm, when it lurched this way and that, as it rose and fell with frightening severity, when all the adults were scared half to death, that marvelous child was completely composed and unafraid. The minister could hardly believe his eyes.

It was not surprising therefore, that when the plane finally reached its destination and all the passengers were hurrying to disembark, this pastor lingered to speak to the girl whom he had watched for such a long time.

Having commented about the storm and the behavior of the plane, he asked why she had not been afraid.

The child replied, “Cause my Daddy’s the pilot, and he’s taking me home.”

There are many kinds of storms that buffet us. Physical, mental, financial, domestic, and many other storms that can easily and quickly darken our skies and throw our plane into apparently uncontrollable movement. We have all known such times, and let us be honest and confess, it is much easier to be at rest when our feet are on solid ground than when we are being tossed about a darkened sky.

Let us remember: our Father is the Pilot. He is in control and taking us home. Don’t worry!

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I had a very happy childhood. I grew up in a family with responsible parents who loved us and were able to provide for all of our needs. They were always available for us. I remember my father reading Bible stories to my brother and sister and me. During that time our family attended the Methodist church and Sunday school for a few years.

When I was a teenager I made some bad choices, including using alcohol and drugs, and began to reap the consequences of my sin and rebellion. I became very depressed and felt that I had no reason to live.

At this time a thought came to me that God is the answer for the problems in my life; and if God is the answer, I should read the Bible. Although I told no one of my desire to read the Bible, within a few days my friend's mother gave me a New Testament. I went home that night and began to read it from the beginning. As I reached the fourth chapter of the gospel of Matthew, I felt the presence of God come into my room. In that moment I was made aware that Jesus is the Son of God. I knew that I was

a sinner and that if I died I would go to hell. All my past sins soon came to mind and I began to ask God to forgive me for all of them one by one. I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. The presence of God which I felt in the room came inside me and I experienced a peace which I had never known before. I knew at that moment that God had forgiven my sins and given me eternal life, and that if I died, I would go to heaven. From that day onwards I began to see God answering my prayers.

As I continued to read the Bible, I understood that water baptism was a commandment given by Jesus, and I knew I should take baptism. But at that time I was not attending a church which practiced water baptism by immersion.

As I continued to read the Word of God, I came across the words of Christ in John 7:37-39. Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He was speaking about the Holy Spirit which would be poured out upon believers after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Although I had peace with God, I realized I did not have this experience that Jesus was talking about. I wanted a deeper experience and I believed that God would give it to me, although, I

did not understand what Jesus meant by “rivers of living water” flowing from deep within. As I continued to read the Bible, I came across the accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and at other times which are recorded in the Book of Acts. I prayed for one hour every day for about two weeks that God would give me this experience. One day as I was riding in a car the Lord visited me. I began to realize that I had been a sinner on my way to hell and God had rescued me. I saw that my sins had put Jesus on the cross, and that I was responsible for Him being crucified. He revealed to me at that moment, that although I had crucified Him, He loved me, He forgave me, and He was taking me to heaven. When I saw this, I said, “Thank you, Lord!” Immediately I was filled with the power of God. I felt rivers of living water flowing from my belly. I began to speak in other tongues. My mind kept telling me to stop speaking words I could not understand. But the power was so great, the joy so wonderful, and the peace so incredible, I couldn’t stop—I had no desire to stop. I spoke in tongues all the way home—about 25 to 30 minutes. I continued to speak in tongues as I got out of the car and went into the house, and for some time thereafter. The moment I was filled with the Holy Spirit, the Lord spoke to me. He told me

that I had been dead in sin, and now He had given me life. Now my life belonged to Him, and the purpose of my life was to bring others to Christ. From the next day I began to tell everyone I met about Jesus, and what He had done for me.

The following year I transferred to a Bible College, and I attended a church which was led by a Spirit-filled pastor. But the Lord kept speaking to me about forsaking all, living by faith, and serving Him in the way that I had been called. Toward the end of that school year, I met Sister Alice Varghese as she visited a family near my home. I then went to visit the faith home in Washington, D.C., and met Pastor Don Spiers. My eyes were opened to see Zion and New Jerusalem. I was baptized in water that weekend. As soon as the school year was completed, I went to visit the faith home, and after some time, was taken into the ministry through the laying on of hands. God has kept me to this day joyfully loving to serve the Lord, Who has done so much for me.

*Pastor Gregg Wilson
Houston, Texas*

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“The nearer I get to Christ and His cross, the more do I long for direct contact with the heathen.” This was the inspiration and motto of the life of James Chalmers—a Scottish missionary to the Cook Islands for ten years and to Papua New Guinea for twenty-four years. His missionary zeal and desire to work for the Lord in the most dangerous conditions and settings have inspired many to lay down their lives for the Lord.

In his early teens, Chalmers gave his heart to the Lord and committed his life for Christian service. One day in church, he heard a letter read by a missionary from the Fiji Islands. At that time there was violence and much danger in that country, yet the missionary spoke of the power of the gospel to change lives—even the lives of cannibals! The letter was an open invitation for any who would like to dedicate their life to be a missionary and bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the cannibals. At that moment, young James dedicated himself to the service of the Lord and on his way home knelt by the roadside and petitioned the Lord to make

him a missionary. Yet Chalmers didn’t continue walking in the ways of the Lord. His heart slowly drifted and became cold to the things of God.

When Chalmers was eighteen, he and a group of friends were going to attend a revival meeting but not for revival. Instead they were going to cause some mischief during the meeting. However, one of his friends persuaded him to go in the right spirit to receive something from the Lord. That day the Lord brought conviction to James and he soon realized how lost he was. The following day he re-committed his life to the Lord and sought out a means of fulfilling his previous dedication to take the gospel to the cannibals.

Chalmers joined the Glasgow City Mission and labored there for eight months in preparation for his future endeavors. His zeal to serve the Lord and be a missionary continued to grow, and many were impressed with his Christian character. They commented: “He was a real man of God and a tender-hearted Christian disciple.”

He had a tremendous adventurous spirit and wanted to get out on the field as soon as possible. However, before departing, he spent a year with another minister studying the Rarotongan language which he would need in the future.

On October 17, 1865, Chalmers married Jane Hercus who would become his partner in his upcoming missionary

adventures. Two days after their marriage he was ordained into the ministry and in January of 1866 they set sail for Rarotonga.

When he first arrived they asked for his name and when he said “Chalmers” they replied “Tamate,” and that was the name that stuck with him for the rest of his life. He was initially disappointed to find that the island was already influenced by Christianity (his adventurous spirit wished for a hard, brand-new challenge). However, after some time he realized that there was still a lot of work to be done in order to bring about a true and lasting change in the lives of the native people. One of his greatest battles was against drunkenness in the land. He would often surprise a group of people in a drinking party, command them to stop drinking and then preach the gospel to them. Although the Lord blessed Chalmers and his work in Rarotonga yet his heart was set to seek out the cannibals in an unevangelized area.

Chalmers had an attraction and great desire to reach out to the cannibals and to that end he and his wife set sail for Papua New Guinea in 1877. One man described the condition of the land that Chalmers was entering by saying it was “full of terrors and human degradation beyond comprehension of civilized man. The common religion was a fear of evil spirits and belief in the deathlessness of the soul.”

Chalmers’ method was never to use force or threats like the natives were used to. Therefore, whenever a mob came to get something from Chalmers by threatening he would never yield to them. In this way Chalmers was teaching them the right way—the way of Christ.

He showed kindness to the people which they were not accustomed to, and that slowly started to work in their lives. Truly the love of Christ can change even the hardened cannibal!

The Lord continued to bless and prosper the work of Chalmers as many natives came to the Lord. He had the oversight of the first Christian settlements in various areas but then proceeded to the interior of the island for greater adventures. He was an agent of peace in the midst of violent and hostile tribal warfare. Tribes that once fought against each other would worship together in the same house after hearing the gospel. As he traveled to different islands, the natives welcomed him and even offered their heathen temples for him to preach in. After one meeting, one cannibal responded: “No more fighting, Tamate, no more man-eating; we have heard the good news, and we shall strive for peace.”

After thirteen years of labor in New Guinea, Chalmers returned to Rarotonga to visit the souls there. They were so

overjoyed to see him again as was Chalmers to see the fruits of his labors continuing on with the Lord. Yet Chalmers returned to New Guinea to continue his work among the cannibals.

In 1900 he was invited to come back home to England but he replied “I cannot rest with so many thousands of savages without a knowledge of Christ near us.” On April 4, 1901 Chalmers took his last adventure in the region of the Goaribari Island. He went to make friends with the savages there but instead it became his entrance to the gates of heaven. He went ashore to meet the natives along with another missionary, but instead of receiving them kindly, the natives attacked the missionaries, killing them and cutting off their heads.

James Chalmers lived and died for the salvation of these savage cannibals. He desired to die while on duty serving the Lord. He did not fear death nor did he fear the cannibals, and therefore he was able to pour out his life for the Lord he loved and for these savage people who held a very special place in his heart. He was an agent of peace in the midst of violence and bloodshed. A martyr’s crown and reward is reserved for him in heaven.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it

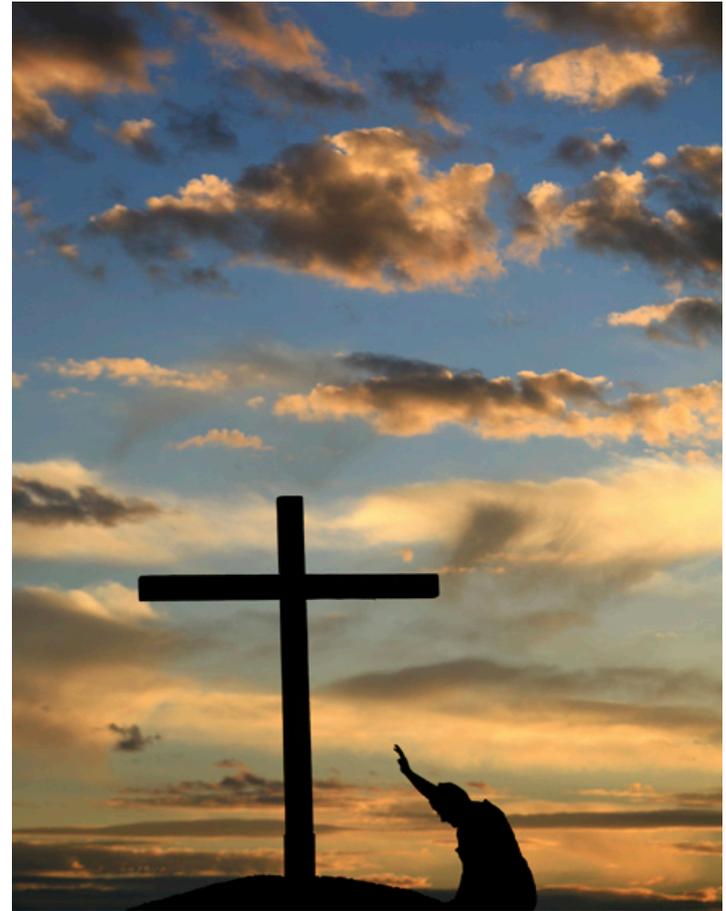
bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour” (Jn 12:24-26). □

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A Grateful Heart

You, the reader of this article, have many things to be grateful for: you can see, you can read, and obviously you have some desire to know more about the things of God. But when was the last time you thanked God for any of these things? We are surrounded on all sides with things to be thankful for, but unless our hearts are *grateful* hearts, we are bound to never notice. The tenth leper reminds us that any man, no matter how greatly blessed he may be, is still incomplete without a heart of thanksgiving. All the ten lepers were cleansed, but only the one who returned (repented) to give glory to God was told, "...thy faith hath made thee **whole**." There are greater depths of thanksgiving to learn from the example Christ left us in His short time on earth.

Imagine Jesus' situation of having to feed four thousand men (and women and children besides). Jesus took the little that He had—"He took the seven loaves and the fishes, **and gave thanks**"—and the rest is history. A grateful heart can be the beginning of your miracle. Christlike thanksgiving is not bothered about what it doesn't have; it is always grateful for whatever little is there.



We might have been quick to thank God for answered prayers: “I got the job! Thank You, Jesus!” But for unanswered prayers, is there anything to be grateful for? Consider Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus had come too late for the funeral. Now, at Jesus’ request, the stone has been rolled away. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, “**Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me**” (Jn 11:41). There was no evidence to be seen that the Father had heard anything—but that’s exactly what faith is: *the evidence of things not seen*. Faith’s evidence had so convinced the heart of Jesus, that He burst out with gratitude, not needing to see the answer in front of Him. Christlike thanksgiving doesn’t need to wait for prayers to be answered; it is grateful just to have a Father who hears.

One man of God once shared about the thankfulness of Christ, quoting from Matthew’s gospel: “**And He took the cup, and gave thanks...**saying, “This is My blood...which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” We had sinned, and He had to shed blood to forgive us—and He was not only willing, He was *grateful* for the opportunity to do that for us. Being *willing* to forgive has seemed an impossible task for many of us: but the grateful heart of Christ gives thanks to God for the privilege to forgive. We are given this gift of heaven, to release others from the guilt of the sins they

commit against us. Aren’t you so thankful for such a divine bestowment as this? Christlike thanksgiving rejoices over any opportunity to offer forgiveness, without a moment’s hesitation.

“The Lord Jesus...took bread; and **when He had given thanks, He brake it**, and said, ‘Take, eat: this is *My body, which is broken for you*: this do in remembrance of Me.’” Of course, we partake of the Lord’s table, remembering His broken body. Yet in remembrance of Him, remembering what He has done for us, we can also be broken that others might be made whole—and again, *be grateful for the opportunity*. “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...even as Christ forgave you...and be ye thankful” (Col 3:13,15).

May the Lord give us His grateful heart, that multitudes might be fed, that the dead may be raised, that sinners might find forgiveness—and that we would be made whole. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **do all in the [character] of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks...**” (Col 3:17).

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