

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Peter Hammond

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my son, **Christopher William Hammond**, who is living proof of God's prayer answering power. Born with kidney failure, he was given no chance of survival by the medical specialists. By God's grace, Christopher recovered function of one kidney and has confounded the dire predictions. He has led an active, athletic life, climbing mountains and winning awards in sports. Now that he has received a kidney transplant from Lenora he has new energy and health. May God continually be your joy and strength as you grow in grace and knowledge and in service of God and His people.



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Foreword



BY REV. BILL BATHMAN

This book is about implementing the Great Commission. It's not for superficial saints who want to "play church" on Sunday morning. There are big themes. We learn how to *submit to God - resist the devil and overcome the world*. The author's points are hard to refute because he insists on backing them up with Scripture - chapter and verse. This is very disconcerting to those whose little boat has run aground beneath the willows in the shallow waters of a mid-western creek.

Dr. Hammond is both inspirational and practical. The reader is provided with proven examples of methods, tried and tested over many years, in Frontline Fellowship's annual Great Commission Courses and his widely acclaimed Biblical Worldview Seminars. He holds our feet to the fire to ensure responsible accountability and challenges us with searching questions every Christian should answer honestly before God.

The "why" of discipleship is addressed by directing our attention to the wonders of God's Creation and putting the universe in proper perspective. We gain a renewed appreciation of His Majesty, and in awesome wonder cry with Stuart Hine the hymn writer, "How Great Thou Art!"

From this lofty mountain-top experience we're brought back to the valley of every-day life and the practical problems facing every potential disciple. Real problems are faced such as the "fear of man" and correspondingly the "praises of men." Hammond deals with the legitimate fears, and with compromise, treachery, selfishness and the peril of paralysis which results in confessional lock-jaw. He concludes, "We're not called to be popular, but faithful." Well done Peter!

The Bible defines "sin" in specific terms - it is a violation of God's Law. Your faith will be ignited and the resulting fire in your soul will burn brightly, attracting others to the Lord. Who doesn't stop to watch something burn?

Love demands action. This is the inspiration for the Christian work-ethic. Hammond addresses the sin of inactivity with a demonstrated conviction that makes indifference to urgency unacceptable. Sin is serious: "it is more dangerous than an unexploded bomb, more life-threatening than a deadly disease, more insidious than a virus."

Over a century ago General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, warned that a time may come, "when churches would preach a Saviour without a Cross, Salvation without repentance, Heaven without Hell and Christianity without holiness." That time is upon us,

and lamentably we won't find any true disciples to recruit from that environment. What we believe affects our behaviour,".. *faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*" James 2:17

The author is sometimes hard on those of us who do not share his view of eschatology, but his basic points of criticism merit our serious consideration and we are faced with an indisputable conclusion: Practical Discipleship results in changed lives - our own and those in our sphere of influence. As he says, "Forgiven sinners share the way of salvation with other sinners. Blessed Christians seek to bless others."

It is regrettable that in many churches today entertainment has replaced education and expository preaching. Dr. Hammond warns us not to let the Great Commission become the Great Omission.

Bill Bathman

Chairman of the Board

Frontline Fellowship



INTRODUCTION



by **REV.ERLO STEGEN**

The timeless truths of Biblical discipleship need to be proclaimed in every generation. Dr Peter Hammond has set out these truths in an orderly and practical way. It's not by accident that Peter happened upon the word "practical" in his title. Isn't this what it is all about?

Christ's constant refrain "if you want to be My disciple..." is always linked to the day-to-day outworking of following Christ in one's secret life, family life, community life and in every other field.

In Peter Hammond's previous book, the Discipleship Handbook, he says: "If we have not evidenced a dramatic transformation in our beliefs, moral standards, way of life, behaviour and conduct then it is doubtful if we are even forgiven." That book was practical in every way but, just in case Christians have missed that emphasis, this new book lays out the every-day practicality of being a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The central theme of repentance is not lacking in these 30 chapters. Repentance offers hope and renewed faith. What help would one get from a book which explains how to live as a disciple if the how-to-find grace and victory in order to live as a disciple is absent?

Our Lord's command to "go and disciple every nation" is a command to every believer. It is not just a commission applicable to pastors and missionaries. All disciples of Jesus Christ must be obedient to this command. Only disciples can disciple others. As Peter Hammond puts it, "a disciple is a learner". And this new book is a learner's manual with very practical tools for every generation.

Dr Hammond also highlights our complete reliance on the grace and power of God in accomplishing the work of discipleship. Indeed, all our human attempts at achieving the Kingdom goals are utterly in vain if Christ is absent.

Jesus enables His people to live victoriously and shine like the stars in this world (Phil 2:15).

Then, as with many of Dr Peter Hammond's other books, he looks at the crucial importance of genuine revival. The final four chapters: "Heart Cry for Revival", "The Ulster Revival of 1859", "Revival in the Bible and in History" and "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival" are well worth reading again and again.

It should always humble us to realize that Revival is a sovereign act of God but also includes the practical promises that go hand-in-hand with discipleship.

Would that God stir up a fresh agonizing for Revival, while trusting that this is what God loves to give and we should love to seek with all our hearts, in prayer and repentance.

Rev. Erlo Stegen
Director
Mission KwaSizabantu



CHAPTER 1



THE MOUNTAINS OF GOD

Mountain climbing can teach us a lot of discipleship principles. Our Christian walk is not just a short-distance sprint; it is a long-distance marathon - a mountain marathon. There are steep ascents, inevitable descents, but we must stick to the path, follow the guide, take regular compass (conscience) readings, consult the map (God's Word) and constantly re-evaluate our position and our progress, persevering to the end.

Mountain Marathons

I have had the joy of hiking in the Cedarberg, the Drakensberg, Mount Majuba, Mount Mulanji in Malawi, the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, and of course Lion's Head, Devil's Peak and Table Mountain in Cape Town, frequently.

All of my children, from as young as four years old, have hiked Lions Head and Table Mountain. Even very young children can undertake the great Christian adventure of Discipleship. It may be easier for those with long legs, but even by short steps we can get to the top of a great mountain.

The high points, in more ways than one, of our Great Commission Courses, are the mountain hikes, which we undertake at all times of day and night, and in all weather conditions. One of our principles is never to cancel a hike (or an outreach) because of adverse weather conditions. Of course, it is easier to climb in good weather, in pleasant temperature and with perfect visibility. However, when duty calls we need to be willing to climb in fog and mist, rain and storm. In such times of high winds and pouring rain it is even more imperative that we stick to the guide, always within sound of his guiding voice and within reach of his helping hand. We need to trust in the guide, even in the dark and the mist.

Of course, there are always those stragglers who lag far behind, go astray and get lost. There are also some who race ahead of the guide and get into trouble, wasting time by going down the wrong path. Sometimes these necessitate search parties to bring them back.

Mountain climbs can be very dangerous. We need to be well prepared, with tough boots, jerseys for cold weather, and rain jackets for wet weather. We need to be alert for danger, and conscious of weather changes. We need to understand the times and know what we need to do in every circumstance.

We need to carry enough food, water, and First Aid supplies for any eventuality. Mountain climbers also need flashlights. God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

The Mountains of God recorded in the Bible point us to many high points in God's providential history and provide us with vital insights to a dynamic discipleship walk with the Lord.

Ararat

The mountains of **Ararat** (Genesis 8:4) remind us that God is a just and holy God. He hates evil and He judges wickedness. However, He graciously provides salvation for His people. The Ark that God commanded Noah to build is symbolic of the salvation we can enjoy in Christ. However, we need to note that there was only one Ark and only one door to the Ark. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Christ (John 14:6).

We should also notice that, just as God did not save Noah from the Flood, but protected him in the Flood, God does not save us from all our troubles, but He saves us through them. After a tumultuous year, the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And immediately God provided work for Noah and his family. He gave them principles for government and a promise. Every time we see a rainbow we are reminded of God's Covenant with Noah and his descendants.

Moriah

Mount **Moriah** (Genesis 22:2) reminds us of the sacrifice that Abraham was called to make. Abraham was commanded to offer his own son to the Lord. Abraham and Sarah had miraculously conceived Isaac far past childbearing age. God had promised that all the families of the nations would be blessed through his descendants, who would be as numerous

as the stars of the sky and as the sand of the seashore. Now he was commanded to sacrifice his only son!

Yet Abraham loved God so much that he was willing to do this. He trusted God so implicitly that he immediately obeyed the Word of God. Mount Moriah reminds us that we may not always understand God's will, but we can trust it, and we must obey it. As Abraham so prophetically said on Mount Moriah: "**God Himself will provide a Lamb.**" And God did provide for Isaac then, and He has provided for us in, and through, our Lord Jesus Christ who is "**The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.**" John 1:29. God expects full surrender and unquestioning obedience.

Horeb

Mount **Horeb** (Exodus 3:1-2) reminds us of the life-changing encounter which Moses had with Jehovah God in the Burning Bush. Through the ingenuity and courage of his mother, Moses had survived the death sentence of pharaoh against all the male Hebrew infants. Adopted by the daughter of pharaoh and raised in privilege, the throne of Egypt was not beyond his reach. Yet Moses rejected the riches and pleasures of Egypt and chose rather to suffer with the people of God.

In exile he saw the Burning Bush. "**Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground... I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob... I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry... I know their sorrows... I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land... come now, therefore, and I will send you to pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt... I will certainly be with you... I Am who I Am.**" Exodus 3:5-14

God hears the prayers of His people. God sees their distress. And He called, equipped and empowered Moses to command pharaoh to let His people go. Here on Mount Horeb we see that God calls and He sends. We are called to service. We are saved to serve.

Sinai

At Mount **Sinai** (Exodus 19:11-23) we see that God is holy. God's people are called to be consecrated and set apart, to proclaim His Word to all nations. At Mount Sinai God writes with His own finger on tablets of stone, His Law. As the Psalmist David celebrated: "**The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.**" As the Apostle Paul wrote: "**The Law is the schoolmaster that leads us to Christ.**"

"What does the Lord your God require of you but, to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes observe...for your own good." Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Gerizim and Ebal

The Lord commanded the children of Israel: "**You shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Ebal**" of the Law (Deuteronomy 11:29). The curses of disobeying the Law of God were proclaimed on Mount **Ebal** (Deuteronomy 27:14-26). The blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience are fully listed out in Deuteronomy 28. The mountains of Ebal and Gerizim remind us of the blessings of obedience and the curses of

disobedience to the Word of God *"I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing, therefore choose life so that both you and your children may live."* Deuteronomy 30:19

Carmel

Mount **Carmel** (1 Kings 18:19) reminds us of the prophet Elijah's courageous confrontation of the evil false prophets of Baal. Elijah challenged them to a contest before the whole nation of Israel. They would each build an altar, and pray to their god, and the one who answered with fire would be recognised as the true God. The 480 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Asherah, called upon Baal from morning until noon, shouting and dancing and cutting themselves with knives until their blood flowed. Yet, despite their frantic prophesying there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Then Elijah repaired the Altar of the Lord, arranged wood, placed meat on it, and had large jars of water poured over the offering and the wood repeatedly. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed: *"Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel...so that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."* 1 Kings 18:36-37

Then the Fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil and evaporated all the water in the trench. When the people saw this they fell face down on the ground and cried out: *"The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!"* 1 Kings 18:39

We need to repair the altar and restore true worship *"in spirit and in Truth."* The stones remind us of the Bible doctrines we must know. The wood on the altar reminds us that we need more than knowledge in our heads, we need faith in our hearts. The meat that Elijah laid on the wood remind us that we need to live the Truth. We need flesh on the bones of our doctrine. We need to put feet to our faith. The water poured over the sacrifice on the altar remind us of the ministry of prayer. We need to pray the faith.

However, while there were two altars, only one had the fire.

When did the fire fall? When the altar was repaired, when the sacrifice was offered, when the water was poured and when the prayer of faith was made. Where is the fire in your life?

Hermon

Mount **Hermon** (Mark 9:2) reminds us of the transfiguration of Christ. The Lord Jesus had taken *"Peter, James, and John with Him and led them up a high mountain, apart by themselves... and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly.. and Elijah appeared to them with Moses and they were talking with Jesus...Then a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!'"* Mark 9:2-7

Mount Hermon reminds us of who Jesus really is and that if we love Him we will obey His commands. Obedience is an essential part of true worship.

Calvary

Of greatest importance is the atonement which Christ achieved for us on Mount **Calvary**. In the Cross we see that God is holy, He hates sin. But we also see in His provision of *"the*

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" that God loves us and He is merciful and provides for our Redemption. *"God Himself will provide the Lamb."*

Olivet

Lastly, we must look at Mount **Olivet** (Acts 1:12) from where our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven. Before ascending He gave the Great Commission to be our supreme ambition. Henceforth His last command must be our first concern. To make disciples, to teach obedience in all things whatsoever He has commanded us. Here on Mount Olivet we see the fulfilment and completion of our Lord Jesus' first mission on earth. However, we are assured that He will return again in Judgement, as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, to judge the living and the dead.

Through these peaks of Revelation we gain progressive insight into the Word of God and clearer guidance for His work. We see that God judges sin but He provides for the salvation of His people. We see the necessity of obedience and sacrifice, and that God calls His people to service. God can be encountered and experienced. God is holy, He hates evil. We reap what we sow. There are consequences for our sin, but God rewards faithfulness and obedience. There are times when we need to be courageous and bold, to stand up, to step out and to speak out, fighting the good fight of Faith. We can't live on mountain tops, but we need to climb mountain peaks to gain proper perspective and inspiration for the battles in the valley. God hates sin, but He loves us and He has conquered sin, death, hell and the grave. He has risen and He has ascended victorious with all authority, power and dominion in Heaven and on earth. He will return to judge the living and the dead.

How are you doing on this mountain marathon in your adventure of discipleship? Are you sticking to God's path, following His Holy Spirit, listening to your conscience, consulting title map of His Word? Do not straggle behind. Keep close to the Guide, never turn back, never give up. Persevere and endure across all the mountain tops that God will lead you over.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings Good News who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation... your God reigns!" Isaiah52:7



CHAPTER 2



THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is... you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." John4:10

The man who pioneered mass production of motor vehicles, Henry Ford, said that the most successful person would be the one who would fill the greatest need the best.

The Greatest Need

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ remains the greatest person who ever lived, because He made the greatest sacrifice to fill the greatest need for the greatest number of people.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

We need forgiveness for sin and freedom from sin. ***"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** Romans 6:23

We need life, love and light. ***"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*** John 10:10

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, and Jesus Christ came that we may have life and life in all its abundance. Jesus Christ gives us our spiritual life, eternal life and abundant life. We need grace - undeserved favour - and it is in Jesus Christ that we find the mercy we so desperately need. ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*** Ephesians 2:8-9

We are lost, and He is the Good Shepherd Who shows us the way. We are often deceived and confused, but He is the Truth.

"And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." John 8:32

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:36

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

The Greatest Gift

A gift, by definition, is something that we did not earn, but which we receive from someone else's generosity. A gift is appreciated either because of the giver from whom you have received it, or because of the value attached to the gift.

If you received a gift from the Queen of England, I'm sure that you would greatly appreciate that prize. If any Head of State were to award you something, you would probably talk to others about it, and display the item most prominently.

Consider if you were in a court of law, and required to pay a fine that is far beyond a lifetime's earnings. Imagine if somebody else's sacrifice paid your fine and set you free. Would you be grateful? How might you express your gratitude? If that person asked you to do something, would you not willingly and eagerly do it?

Jesus said: ***"If any one loves Me, he will keep My Word..."*** John 14:23

God our Creator has poured out His gifts upon you: your very life. Your talents and abilities. Every moment of every day, every breath you breathe and every ray of sunshine is a gift from

the hand of our Creator. The beauty of His Earth. The splendors of His Creation. Wonderful wildlife. Our pets. Our friends and family relationships. Have you thanked your Creator for all the gifts of life and health?

The Greatest Questions

Have you always loved God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Have you loved your neighbour as yourself?

Have you always obeyed God's Commandments?

Have you ever told a lie?

Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you?

Have you ever failed to return something that you have borrowed from others?

Have you ever committed adultery? (The Lord Jesus Christ said that if you have looked with lust, then you are guilty of committing adultery in your heart.)

Have you ever killed anyone? (Our Lord Jesus Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount that if we hate our neighbour, we have committed murder in our heart.)

Have you ever gossiped and slandered, bearing false witness against your neighbour?

Have you ever coveted, been envious, or jealous, of someone else's possessions, or abilities?

Have you always been respectful to your parents?

Have you worshipped God alone?

Have you ever taken God's Name in vain?

Have you ever made an idol of your possessions, sports or politics?

The more we look at the Ten Commandments, the more we realise that we have broken the Law of our Holy God.

If God was to judge you on the basis of His Ten Commandments, would you be innocent or guilty?

If you were to die today, would you go to Heaven or Hell?

"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement." Hebrews 9:27

Almighty God has come to earth in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He not only showed us the way, told us the truth and offered us life; He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus said to him: ***"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*** John 14:6

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and declared: ***"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"*** John 1:29

Jesus Christ lived the perfect life that you and I should have lived; He died the sinless death we deserve to die. He has paid the punishment for our sins. Not only has He won for us eternal salvation, but He offers us adoption into His family as sons and daughters of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Have you come to God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you repented of your sins?

Have you confessed where you have broken God's Holy Law?

Have you asked for His forgiveness and accepted the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Have you thanked Him for this gift?

Are you living in joyful gratitude for all His mercy and undeserved favour?

Are you introducing other people to the greatest Gift of all?

To whom much is given, much is required. Freely you have received. Freely give. Accept God's gift of adoption into His family and invite others to receive the greatest Gift of all.

'Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!' 2 Corinthians 9:15



CHAPTER 3



How GREAT IS OUR GOD!

"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." Genesis 1:1

The heavens are proclaiming the glory of God, and the expanse declares the work of His hands. Night after night the stars remind us of just how small we are, and how huge God is. Looking out into the far reaches of the universe, we find a seemingly infinite expanse of mystery and wonder, intricately fashioned by God of unfathomable size and power.

The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

Just a glimpse at one of the billions of visible galaxies He has formed resizes us. It shrinks us, and this world we call Home, to seeming insignificance in an instant. But, as tiny as we may seem, the God who knows every star by name also knows you. And, in the most stunning rescue imaginable, God sent His Son to this planet we call Home. The Creator is reconnecting us to Himself with the life that never ends through Christ and His Sacrifice on

the cross. We need only look at God's universe to discover something of the amazing magnitude of His greatness and His grace.

Something of the grandeur of God is seen in His creation. We read in Psalm 33:6: "***By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.***"

The Vastness of the Universe

He made the stars by the breath of His mouth! The nearest star to earth is 93 million miles away: the Sun. The earth is a privileged planet, with just the right conditions for life on earth. We are exactly the right distance from the Sun to benefit from its fierce heat which is 10,000°C on the surface!

The stars remind us just how small we are and how huge God is.

The Sun is a million times the size of earth. If the earth was the size of a golf ball, the sun would be 15 feet in diameter.

Another star in the galaxy, Betelgeuse, is twice the size of the orbit of the earth around the sun! If the earth was the size of a golf ball, Betelgeuse would be the size of three Empire State buildings on top of one another in diameter.

Yet, there is an even larger star, Mucehpei. If the earth was the size of a golf ball, Mucehpei would be the length of two Golden Gate bridges in diameter!

However, not even Mucehpei is the largest star in the galaxy. Canis Majoris is so huge that if the earth was the size of a golf ball, Canis Majoris would be the height of Mount Everest in diameter, in comparison!

God breathed the stars into being. We need to take a glance up into the universe to recognise what a great and majestic, unrivalled and incomparable God we worship.

Sin seeks to shrink God and puff ourselves up. The universe God made shows us what tiny and frail creatures we are. Yet, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, fashioned and formed by the Creator of the universe Himself.

The Complexity of a Single Cell

Just consider how each of us is a product of a single cell from our father, and a single cell from our mother, which united to form a completely new and unique individual.

Twenty-three chromosomes from the mother and twenty-three chromosomes from the father united to form a unique cell, with a three-billion character description in your DNA. Each cell in your body has its DNA code, encoded in the language of God. If the DNA of one cell was stretched out it would be six feet long. In that DNA there's so much information that, if it was read out, one character a second, every moment of every day, it would take 96 years just to read your DNA code in a single cell!

Consider also that, at conception, that single cell of 46 chromosomes then sets out to build the model which now makes up the 75 trillion cells in your body.

There is enough DNA code in your body to go to the moon and back -178,000 times! And your cells are constantly renewing and replacing themselves.

The Wonders of the Eye

At five months after conception, while still in the womb, a million optic nerve cells stretched out to match up with their exact partner, out of a million other optic nerve endings, make possible the miracle of sight. The most technically advanced thing in the world is the eye. At six months, a precision cutting device opened up the skin over your eyes, creating the eyelids, so that you could see.

The Scriptures tell us that the God of the Heavens fashioned you together. He spoke and it came into being. Augustine wrote that men go abroad to wonder at the mountains, the waves, the rivers and the stars, but they pass themselves by and they don't even notice.

Our God is a universe maker and He can hold you together.

You may ask: Does God see? Does He care? Can He do something to help me?

What Holds Everything Together?

Consider the little protein molecules in your body. Laminin is a cell adhesion molecule. It is the glue of the human body, the structural steel that holds the building together. Laminin holds our bodies together.

If you consult a molecular biology textbook you will see that Laminin is a cross-shaped molecular structure. It is this cross-shaped protein molecule that holds everything in our body together.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" Colossians 1:15-17

The supremacy and sufficiency of Christ is attested to by the millions of microscopic crosses holding you together.

The Star Breather became the Sin Bearer. The Universe Maker is the Saviour.

"To whom, then, will you liken God?...Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?...Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in...Lift your eyes on high and see who has created these things. Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name. By the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one is missing...Have you known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might He increases strength... Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall soar on wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:18-31

From the Cosmos to the Cross

Your life is a miracle and the Creator of the universe knows you by name. He is big enough to breathe out stars so huge that we cannot even begin to comprehend them. Yet God is intricate enough to fashion together the trillions of cells that make up every facet of who you are.

The God who spoke the universe into existence made you, too. He knows everything about you - from the smallest molecule to the situation you find yourself in right now. He is aware of your circumstances and intimately acquainted with everything that you do. He cares about you and He promises to carry you through.

From the cosmos to the cross we can find hope in the midst of the darkest situations in life. Though our journey may have been complicated and painful, filled with confusion and chaos at the cross of Christ, God promises to preserve and restore you. He is the One who is holding on to you and holding you together. He gives strength to those who trust in His unfailing love. He is the everlasting God! How great is our God! (*This chapter is based upon Louis Giglio's presentation: How Great Is Our God.*)



CHAPTER 4



THE CURSE OF COWARDICE

Compromise and cowardice hurt everyone concerned. Cowardice is destructive and short-sighted. In Revelation 21:8, Cowards are at the top of the list of those who will be condemned by God for all eternity, thrown into the Lake of Fire.

The Fear of Man

The Word of God commands us not to be afraid of any man (Deuteronomy 1:17). We are warned that the fear of man will prove to be a snare (Proverbs 29:25). The Scriptures tell us of those who would not say anything about Jesus publicly for fear of the people (John 7:13).

The Praise of Man

"Even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John 12:42-43

Compromise

Even the Apostle Peter, who was normally so bold and brave, gave in to compromise and cowardice when *"he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even*

Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the Gospel..." then the Apostle Paul rebuked them openly (Galatians 2:12-14).

Paralysed by Fear

Fear of disapproval, fear of being embarrassed, fear of being ridiculed, fear of unpopularity, fear of being misunderstood and being lied about, fear of failure, of suffering, pain and death, fear of loss and sacrifice can all too easily lead us to stay seated when we should stand up, to stand still when we should step out, to remain silent when we should speak up, to remain passive and inactive when we should fight for what is right.

Selfishness

Selfish desires for fame and fortune, health and wealth, comfort and ease, safety and security all too often seduce us into choosing the way of least resistance, going with the flow, following the crowd, compromising our principles, stifling the still small voice of our conscience, resisting the Holy Spirit, quenching the Spirit, grieving the Holy Spirit, disobeying the Bible and dishonouring God.

Forgetting God

"Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass? You forget the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; you have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor... and where is the fury of the oppressor?... But I am the Lord your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared - the Lord of hosts is His Name. And I have put My Words in your mouth..." Isaiah 51:12-16

Treachery

People pleasers make traitors (John 12:43).

"Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" Proverbs 27:5-6

Legitimate Fears

There are legitimate fears which caution us, sharpen our senses and warn us of the dangers of pain, crippling injury and death. Such reasonable fears, either for ourselves or for others, are put there by God to preserve life and limb, to keep us from extreme recklessness, such as walking too close to the edge of a cliff or driving too fast in dangerous conditions. We warn our children of dangerous behaviour. Wearing helmets on bicycles and motorbikes, wearing seat belts in cars, keeping to speed limits and carefully observing traffic signs, reducing speed when visibility is impaired, or the road is wet, are wise responses to legitimate fear. Love of life and family is God given but never at any price.

True Courage

IF

"If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you;

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting too.

If you can wait but not be tired by waiting, or being lied about not deal in lies, or being hated don't give way to hating, and yet don't look too good nor talk too wise.

If you can dream and yet not make dreams your master,

If you can think and not make thoughts your aim,

If you can meet with triumph or disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same,

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools; Or watch the things you gave your life to broken, and stoop to build them up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch and toss, and lose and start again at your beginnings and never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they've gone; And so hold on when there's nothing in you except the will that says to them: "Hold on!";

If you can talk to crowds and keep your virtue, and walk with kings nor lose the common touch;

If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,

If all men count with you, but none too much,

If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run,

Yours is the earth and everything in it, and which is more, you'll be a man, my son!" Rudyard Kipling

Duty Overcoming Fear

Courage is not the absence of fear, but the determination to do our duty in spite of our fear. Some rational, God-given sense of caution can protect us and our loved ones and prolong life. But if fear paralyses us into inactivity, neutrality, compromise, cowardice, defeat and disobedience, then it is evil.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
2 Timothy 1:7

The Curse of Our Age

The prevailing Arminian, Antinomian, egalitarian, sinner-friendly, Prayer-of-Jabez, self-centred, superficial, sensational, materialistic, cheap grace and easy believism that produces wets, wimps and weeds is gutless, spineless and yellow bellied. We are not called to be popular, but faithful. The Great Commission is not about how to win friends and influence people, but how to make disciples of all nations, teaching obedience to all that the Lord has commanded. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego we need to stand firm in the Faith, no matter what the cost. We are called to submit to God, to resist the devil and he will flee from us James 4:7).

CHRISTIAN COURAGE

We are called to overcome the world: *"Because He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.

Where God guides He provides. God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him.

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
John 16:33

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us."
Romans 8:37

The safest place in the world is in the centre of God's Will. Duty is ours, the results are God's. God's servant is God's responsibility.

Like the German Reformer, Martin Luther, who dared to defy the collective might of the Pope of Rome and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire when he refused their threats and demands to recant, we need to be able to say, *"My conscience is captive to the Word of God...Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God. Amen."*

As Swiss Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli declared, *"They can kill the body but they cannot kill the soul."*

"Some like to live within sound of chapel bell -I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." C.T.Studd

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

As God commanded Joshua: *"Be strong and of good courage... only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* Joshua 1:6-9

"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed... for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." 2 Chronicles 32:7-8

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that... you standfast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation,

and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake..." Philippians 1:27-29

Then with David we can say: *"I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around."* Psalm 3:6; *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid... though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may arise against me, in this I will be confident."* Psalm 27:1-3

"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noon day... for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." Psalm 91:5-11

"I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me... I will not fear. What can man do to me? ...It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Psalm 118:5-9

"Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2

Our Lord Jesus taught us that we should not fear man who can only kill the body, but rather we should learn to fear God alone Who can destroy both body and soul in hell forever. The fear of God will free us from the fear of man. The reverential awe, respect and fear of God is liberating.

Give up your small ambitions and follow Christ!

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Proverbs 9:10



CHAPTER 5



TRUE AND FALSE GUILT

How can you tell the difference between true and false guilt? I had to deal with this issue in a debate on national radio. As so often happens in cases like this, I had only a few hours warning, and I didn't expect the explosive issues that would be brought up in this programme. The request had been to discuss *"healing."* So, I pulled out some studies that I had done on bitterness, forgiveness and restitution.

Political Guilt

However, when the radio programme began, I realised that it was actually a debate between me and two church leaders who were determined to focus on "*political guilt*." To them it appeared that there was only one issue that needed to be dealt with and that was "*apartheid*." It was a bilingual debate. They spoke in Afrikaans and I responded in English.

Collective Guilt

They claimed that all white South Africans were guilty of the sin of "*apartheid*." I asked how that could be considering that most South Africans alive today had not even been born when the system had been introduced. Many whites had opposed apartheid. My family, in the English liberal tradition, had been vocal critics of the apartheid system. Capetonians had been dismantling apartheid from the late 70's. In the early 1980's I had chosen to study theology at a multiracial college and for the last 25 years have been dedicated to serving mostly black people, throughout Africa, some of whom were suffering the very worst persecution in the world today. Most of the apartheid was dismantled over 20 years ago. Most of the people living in South Africa today, being under the age of 16, neither experienced apartheid nor could have been responsible for it.

Guilt According to the UN and WCC

Nevertheless, one on the panel responded that just as the Germans remain guilty for crimes against the Jews in the Second World War, all South African Whites remain guilty of apartheid. Why, even the United Nations and the World Council of Churches had proclaimed apartheid: "*A crime against humanity*." And that, I was told, was a "*very serious thing!*"

In response I pointed out that the Second World War ended over 64 years ago. Most of the people living in Germany today had not even been born, in fact most of their parents hadn't even been born before the Second World War had ended. There could be very few people alive today who had a significant role in any of the atrocities committed in the Second World War - on any side.

Guilt According to God's Word

I asked: "*If God was to speak to us today, would He bring up the sins of other people of decades ago, or would He confront us with our sins of today?*"

It doesn't really matter what the United Nations or the World Council of Churches says, the question is: "*What does God say?*"

Dictators and Apostates Don't Define Truth

The fact is that the vast majority of governments represented at the UN are unelected, have no democratic mandate from the people they purport to represent, and, in fact, most of the governments represented at the UN are guilty of heinous human rights abuses. This makes the United Nations one of the largest collection of unelected mass murderers in the world. As for the World Council of Churches, considering that the majority of its leaders are unregenerate reprobates who deny the authority of Scripture, and support abortions, why should we be concerned what their opinion on anything is?

Violation of God's Law

In the Bible, sin is very specific. It is a violation of the Laws of God. Repentance in the Bible is specific and personal. We are guilty when we disobey one of God's Commandments. Sin is failing to worship God alone, it is making or worshipping an idol, taking God's Name in vain, desecrating the Sabbath, dishonouring our parents, taking innocent life, committing adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, and being covetous.

Personal and Specific

In the Bible, guilt and repentance are specific and personal, not vague and national, and Biblical restitution is to be made by the culprit to the victim directly and entirely.

Restitution is not meant to be some political scam, a cover for corruption, where restitution is demanded from people who didn't do the crime to be distributed to people who weren't the victims.

Guilt Manipulation

Our concern is that much of this raking up of apartheid is more than two decades after the majority of white voters in South Africa rejected it in the Referendum of 1983. Long ago all the essential components of apartheid were dismantled. Trying now to make people guilty of things done by others, before they were even born, is not Biblical.

Biblically, true guilt is when I personally violate a specific command in Scripture. False guilt, or psychological guilt, is a result of selective focus, distortion of reality and ignorance of history. It is vague and it involves guilt manipulation.

Healing and Restoration

When we repent of our personal guilt in violating God's Commands, the result is forgiveness, freedom, healing and restoration. However, as has been demonstrated, you can repent for false or psychological guilt every day for decades, but you will never find freedom and forgiveness from false guilt, because the devil is a hard taskmaster.

Conviction

The Holy Spirit brings **conviction** of sin to lead us to repentance. On the other side of repentance is forgiveness and freedom, healing and restoration.

Condemnation

By way of contrast, the devil brings condemnation in order to paralyse and enslave us.

A Cover for Corruption

My concern, which I related on the radio debate, is that political forces are engaging in guilt manipulation and rewriting history with a selective focus and distortion of reality in order to bludgeon an entire people into compliance and submission to new racial quotas, Black Economic Empowerment, job reservation, extra rates and taxes, all of which are a cover for corruption on a massive scale.

Real Guilt Today

We have enough real sins and genuine guilt of today to deal with, without having to bring up the sins of other people of decades ago.

Murder

God says: "***Thou shalt not commit murder.***" Abortion is murder. The ANC government is responsible for the killing of 900,000 babies in the last 13 years - with our taxpayers money - legally. Over 3,000 white farmers have been murdered- in the most brutal ways, with excruciating torture, in the last 15 years. An average of 20,000 South Africans have been murdered every year over the last 15 years.

Adultery

God says: "***Thou shalt not commit adultery.***" The present South African government has legalised pornography and prostitution and uses our taxpayers money to fund *Lovelife* in our schools, to teach our children to be fornicators and whoremongers. Child abuse and rape have exploded and tens of thousands of families have been split apart by rampant divorce.

Theft

God says: "***Thou shalt not steal.***" Along with the crime wave of house break-ins, armed robberies, and car hijackings, has come an unprecedented tidal wave of corruption with Black Economic Empowerment scams, fraud and extortion, tearing the economic foundations of the country apart.

Deceit

God says: "***Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.***" Much of the state news media and school history books are bearing false witness, rewriting history to glamourise mass murderers such as Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Fidel Castro and Ch6 Guevara while vilifying Christians with false accusations. It is as Karl Marx declared: "*The first battlefield is the rewriting of history.*"

Greed

God says: "***You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.***" But greed, envy, malice and covetousness are officially sanctioned and promoted. Senior Cabinet members have gone on record enthusiastically praising and supporting Marxist dictator Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF regime on their national suicide in Zimbabwe. Senior government officials have publicly stated their desire to see similar confiscations of white farms in South Africa, just like the land invasions of Zimbabwe.

Search Your Own Heart

On a more personal level, are you personally guilty of theft? Greed? Gossip? Pride? Envy? Malice? Covetousness? Selfishness? Bitterness? Unforgiveness?

Listen to God

If God was to speak to you today, what sins would He confront you with? You know that He wouldn't be bringing up other people's sins, He would deal with what you personally are responsible for and guilty of. "*The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.*"

Rejecting Political Manipulation

We have enough sins of our own that we are personally guilty of, without wasting our time following the political agenda of guilt manipulators seeking to get rich over other people's misfortune.

The Solution

At the end of the radio debate, the interviewer asked me what I believed the solution to the guilt of apartheid and the need for reconciliation was. I answered: *"We need to follow Jesus. We need to repent of our sins and do restitution for those sins we are personally responsible for, and we need to love God with all of our hearts, with all of our minds, with all our souls and with all of our strength, and we are to love our neighbours as ourselves."*



CHAPTER 6



FAILING TO DO GOOD

"I'm a good person. I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't do drugs. I don't steal or swear. I'm not a homosexual. I'm a good person!"

Are You a Good Person?

Often, when one engages in street evangelism, door-to-door, or other forms of personal evangelism, one comes across these kinds of reactions. Most people are quite convinced that they are good people. Yet the Bible does not teach the innate goodness of man. *"As it is written: there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God... There is no fear of God before their eyes."* Romans 3:10-18

Sins of Omission

The Lord Jesus Christ describes the Day of Judgment not so much in terms of the bad things we have done, but of the good things we failed to do: *"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me."* Matthew 25:41-43

Sin is not only the bad things we do, but the good things we fail to do.

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." James 4:17

The Worst Sin

If I were to ask you what the greatest sin is for man to commit, what would you answer? Would you say Murder? Idolatry? Adultery? Perversion? Hatred? Or blasphemy?

When the Lord Jesus asked what was the greatest commandment, He replied: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength... you shall love your neighbour as yourself."* Mark 12:30-31

It follows then that the greatest sin would be to fail to love God with all our hearts. Failure to love God is the root sin that leads to all others. You cannot love your neighbour unless you first love God. God deserves our wholehearted love; not with some of, or most of, our hearts, but with all of our hearts. Nothing less than everything we have, and the best that we have, is worthy enough for our Sovereign Lord, our Creator, Redeemer and Eternal Judge. ***"Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honour and glory and blessing!"*** Revelation 5:12

True Love Shows Itself in Action

The Scripture teaches us that our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action (1 John 3:18). Jesus showed us by His great example that true love is measured by sacrifice. Some of the most revealing indicators of our love for God are the sacrifices which we make for Him. Love gives and does not count the cost. Love rejoices in giving and wants to give not out of duty, but out of a glad and willing heart.

Love entails intense enthusiasm, a longing to be near and a desire to serve. Does that describe your love for the Lord?

Do you know your Bible? Are you applying it to every area of life? Do you know what God wants you to do? Are you doing it wholeheartedly?

Faith on Fire

A blacksmith keeps his iron in the fire long enough for the fire to be in the iron. Are you so immersed in God's Word and His presence that His fire burns in your heart? Love is like a fire, it spreads easily, but it constantly needs more fuel to keep it raging. Our love for God feeds by faith in His Word, in worship, in prayer and in praise and adoration. Love is like life - it grows if fed and dies if starved. *"Let me seek You in longing and long for You in seeking, let me find You in love and love You in finding."*

Duties Required

The Ten Commandments are not only a list of prohibitions. Each of the Ten Commandments includes an implicit call to action: To worship God alone. To resist idolatry. To speak respectfully of God and His Word. To work six days and to rest on the Lord's Sabbath. To honour our fathers and our mothers. To respect life. To protect the sanctity of marriage. To respect private ownership of property. To be people of integrity. To maintain a clear conscience before God and man.

The Ten Commandments teach us respect for God, respect for people and respect for property.

The Will of God

Praying the Lord's Prayer demands action: ***"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."*** Matthew 6:10. *Jesus taught that: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven."* Matthew 7:21

Doers of the Word

"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!" Luke 11:28. We are commanded to ***"be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*** James 1:22. The Church today suffers from an abundance of Christians who know volumes more

than they practise. We deceive ourselves if we believe that true Christianity involves merely going to church and avoiding cigarettes, drunkenness, drugs, swearing and other visible and audible examples of sin. We are saved to serve. At creation the Lord issued The Cultural Mandate to be fruitful, to multiply and to fill the earth, caring for His creation, Gen 1:28. We are commanded to raise our children in the love and the fear of the Lord, Deuteronomy 6:2-9. According to the Golden Rule of Christ: ***"Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them..."*** Matthew 7:12

Christian Work Ethic

The Scripture teaches us far more than merely to avoid doing evil. ***"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need."*** Ephesians 4:28. As Christians we are commanded to learn to devote ourselves *"to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful."* Titus 3:14. The Lord rebukes the idle: *"Why have you been standing here idle all day?"* Matthew 20:6

One of the very best sermon illustrations is the daily testimony of a Christian doing his work with integrity and diligence. The quality of our daily work should witness to our faith in Christ.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed." 2 Timothy 2:15

His Commission Our Ambition

The Lord wants eager volunteers: ***"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"*** Isaiah 6:8

The last command of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be our first concern. His Great Commission must be our supreme ambition to make disciples, to teach obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded us, Matthew 28:18-20. As Christians we have to recognise that passivity, neutrality and inactivity are sinful disobedience.

Inactivity is Disobedience

When God speaks, we don't listen.

What the Bible teaches, we don't apply.

What Jesus commands, we don't obey.

Where the Lord sends, we don't go.

We stay seated when we should stand up.

We keep silent when we should speak out.

We stand back when we should step out in faith.

We remain at home when we should be going out into the highways and byways.

Urgency

We are Christians; we are people with a message of life and death. Let us wake up to the urgency of a lost world in rebellion to God rushing on its way to an eternity in hell. Lives are at stake. The truth is under attack. God's Name is being blasphemed and He is not being given the honour He deserves.

Joyful, Prayerful and Thankful

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thess5:16-18

This is God's will, that we be joyful, prayerful and thankful, that we care for His creation, that we be thoughtful and considerate, that we do to others as we would have them do to us, that we love God with all of our hearts, minds, souls and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves; that we apply the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life, making disciples, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded. True Christianity is seen, not just in what we say, but in what we do.

Putting Feet to our Faith

It is spiritually refreshing to step out in faith and obey God. **Let us put feet to our faith.**

Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.



CHAPTER 7



THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18

All too often the cross is seen as the *"national flag"* of the church. But the cross was never meant to be the mere nostalgic symbol of a religious system. Neither is the cross a signpost. The cross was not meant to re-direct our lives, but to end them. The cross is not an ornament, but an instrument of death!

The cross was used by the Romans in the same way as we used to use the gallows, a gas chamber, an electric chair or a firing squad. The cross in the Bible is an instrument of death, yet out of it has come life. It was meant to be the sign of a curse, but it has become a symbol of God's blessing. It should have signified defeat, yet through it Christ achieved a triumphant victory. Christ has turned that instrument of destruction into the means of salvation.

The Centrality of the Cross

When the Apostle Paul summarised the essential basics of the Good News, he put it this way:

*"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.**"* 1 Corinthians 15:3

The centre of the Christian Gospel is the cross, and the salvation that God wrought on the cross is the greatest act in all the history of mankind. It is no wonder that Paul could say:

*"And I, brethren, when I came to you, ... For I determined not to know anything among you except **Jesus Christ and especially His death on the Cross.**"* 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2

The Necessity of the Cross

Although God did not have to save anyone, consequent upon the fact that He determined to do so, it was essential that it involved atonement.

1. God is Holy and He cannot overlook sin. His justice must be maintained.

"Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Romans 3:25, 26

2. God's Law is immutable and His Holy Nature demands punishment of Sin.

"Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this Law by observing them." Deuteronomy 27:26

3. God declared that the penalty for sin would be death.

"The soul who sins shall die." Ezekiel 18:4

"For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23

4. Christ taught His disciples that the Atonement was necessary.

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me... Thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." Luke 24:44-46

The Major Theories of the Cross

The **Ransom** theory. Origin (185-254 A.D.) maintained that through our sin we were slaves of the devil (1 John 3:8), and that Christ paid His life as a ransom to the devil in order to set us free.

The **Satisfaction** theory. Anselm (1033-1109) developed the idea of Christ voluntarily discharging man's obligation to God in order to satisfy God's honour, which had been offended by our sin.

The **Moral Influence** theory. Abelard (1079-1142) argued that Christ's birth, passion and death reveal God's infinite love for mankind and awaken in us a reciprocal love and gratitude, which leads us back to God.

The **Example** theory. Socinus (1539-1604) held the view that Christ's death provided us with an example of unselfish martyrdom, and if we followed His teachings and example then our problems would be over.

The **Governmental** theory. Grotius (1583-1645) saw the Lord's death on the cross as the manifestation of divine justice. God's gracious pardon of offenders had to be accompanied by some exhibition of the high estimate that God sets upon His law, and the heinous guilt of violating it.

The **Penal Substitutionary** theory. Calvin (1509-1564) presented the atonement as an act of redeeming love whereby God takes on Himself in Christ the judgement and penalty of our sin, so obtaining for us pardon for all guilt and the free gift of righteousness before God through faith in Christ as our sin-bearer.

All of the above views have elements of the truth, but with the (exception of the last theory) they may be considered to be inadequate in varying degrees. Christ, by His death on the cross, **did** give His life as a ransom for our sins, but He **did not** pay it to the devil. Christ **did** make full satisfaction for our sins, but "*God was **in** Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*" **God** was the Initiator; it was because **He** "*so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.*" Christ's death **does** reveal His infinite love for mankind and awaken in us a reciprocal love (2 Corinthians 5:14), but that is **not** the basis of our acceptance before a Holy God. Our Lord **did** provide us with a perfect example to follow by His obedience even unto His death on the cross (Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:21), but we are saved by His vicarious sacrifice, **not** by His example. It is also true that Christ, through His death on the cross, overcame the world (John 16:33); disarmed the powers and authorities; making a public spectacle of them; triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15); that Christ destroyed the work of the devil (1 John 3:8); and set us free (Hebrews 2:14, 15). Yet we were not only victims of Satan needing deliverance and liberation; we are also guilty sinners needing forgiveness.

The Work of the Cross

"As it is written: *'there is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks God. They have all turned aside, they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no not one...'*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10-12, 23

All men are guilty sinners, abiding under the wrath of God, alienated from God and in bondage to sin and Satan. Yet all these problems were solved by Christ in His death on the cross.

By Christ's perfect obedience to the whole moral Law and to all the commandments, He fulfilled the just requirements of a Holy God. In His passive obedience to God's Will, Christ submitted to the penal sanctions of the Law and willingly endured all sufferings for the sake of His people.

There are four New Testament words which express distinct facets of Salvation in Christ: Sacrifice, Propitiation, Reconciliation and Redemption.

1. Sacrifice

Throughout the Old Testament redemption is connected with the shedding of blood and with a form of substitution.

When Abel killed the firstborn of his flock as a sacrifice (Genesis 4:4), he symbolised several important truths:

- (a) sin must be judged;
- (b) a price must be paid for sin;
- (c) the innocent must die for the guilty; and
- (d) without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

When Abraham had to kill his only son, God provided a substitute to die in place of Isaac (Genesis 22:8). This foreshadowed the time when God would show His love for us by sending His own beloved Son as a sacrifice to die in our place for our sins.

At the Passover God delivered His people from both the bondage of slavery and from the danger of death through the shed blood of the sacrificial lambs (Exodus 12). In this powerful picture of God's redemption of His people, we can see a type of the Lamb of God. For "Christ, our Passover was sacrificed" 1 Corinthians 5:7, in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and from the sentence of death.

The prophet Isaiah described in detail the future sacrifice of Christ:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed... the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all... For the transgressions of My people He was stricken... When You make His soul an offering for sin... My Righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53:5-11

The New Testament era begins with John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and proclaiming:

"Behold! The Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

Jesus is our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); our sin offering (Romans 8:3); our atonement (Romans 3:25). When Christ, the perfect Son of God, a Lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19) shed His precious blood on the cross, it was a substitutionary death. He died for us, in our place (1 Peter 3:18), the innocent for the guilty, the just in the place of the unjust.

He became like us that we might become like Him.
He was rejected that we might be accepted.
He was condemned that we might be forgiven.
He was punished that we might be pardoned.
He suffered that we might be strengthened.
He was whipped that we might be healed.
He was hated that we might be loved.
He was crucified that we might be justified.

He was tortured that we might be comforted.
He died that we might live.
He went to Hell that we might go to Heaven.
He endured what we deserve that we might enjoy what only
He deserves.

2. Propitiation

While the "Sacrifice" aspect of Christ's work on the cross deals with our guilt, this aspect of "Propitiation" refers to Christ's covering of our sin in order to remove the divine wrath which our sin evokes. God's Wrath is that Holy revulsion of the Godhead against all sin and evil. Christ's propitiation is none other than God Himself taking upon His own holy and eternal heart the implications of His own wrath.

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John2:2

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John4:10

Through His death on the Cross, Christ removed the wrath of God, which was abiding over us, by covering over our sins. By removing our guilt, Christ saved us from God's wrath.

3. Reconciliation

Reconciliation means the abolition of enmity between two parties who have quarrelled.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him! For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life! And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." Romans 5:8-11

On the cross, Christ's love dealt sacrificially with the implications of our sin and gave us "peace with God." Romans 5:1

"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell by Him to reconcile all things ...having made peace through the blood, of His cross." Colossians 1: 19, 20

Reconciliation is God's work: *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"* 2 Corinthians 5:19. Our sin had made us enemies of God and it was necessary that Christ should make peace between us by dealing with the cause of the enmity, our sin, on the cross.

4. Redemption

Redemption is the language of purchase and ransom. Because of our bondage to sin, Christ died to set us free. Christ gave His life "as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). A ransom is the price paid in order to secure a release. The sinner has been bound to the law of sin and death.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us." Galatians3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the necessity of keeping the Law as the condition of acceptance before God.

"For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also by One Man's obedience the many will be made righteous." Romans 5:19

Our redemption from sin embraces several aspects:

JUSTIFICATION Colossians 1: 14

We were redeemed from the Penalty of our sins. This deals with our guilt. We are fully forgiven for our sins.

SANCTIFICATION Titus 2:14

We are being redeemed from the Power of our sin. This deals with our natures. We are progressively delivered from our sins.

GLORIFICATION Romans 8:23

We shall be redeemed from the Presence of all sin. This deals with the very presence of sin. We shall be eternally freed from sin.

"Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed...."
Titus 2:13

"God our Saviour... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth... Christ Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all men." 1 Timothy 2:4-6

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" 1 John 2:2

"You are worthy...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation," Revelation 5:9



CHAPTER 8



WHO KILLED JESUS?

As we consider the sufferings of Christ on the cross, we need to consider the question: Who is responsible for the sufferings of Christ? As we read the Gospel narratives, or as we see the

crucifixion of our Saviour depicted by *The Passion of the Christ* film, we have to ask the question: **Who killed Jesus?**

The Romans

Do we blame the Roman soldiers? Certainly they crucified Him.

Pontius Pilate

Surely it was the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, who was responsible? He alone had the power to enforce the death penalty, it was he who, as a magistrate of the Roman Empire, declared: *"I find no fault in Him"* John 19:4; *"I find no fault in this man"* Luke 23:4. Yet Pilate bowed to pressure and condemned an innocent man for political expediency and popularity.

It was a meaningless gesture for him publicly to *"wash his hands"* and declare: *"I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You see to it"* Matthew 27:24. How hypocritical! He was the Roman governor. As the highest magistrate in the land he had declared: *"Having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this man, concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him."* Luke 23:14

"He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 17:15

The Mob

But what about the mob of people in the streets? They were the ones who pressured Pontius Pilate to condemn the Lord to death. ***"We have no king but Caesar!"*** they cried. ***"Release Barabbas!"*** ***"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"*** was their demand. ***"His blood be on us and on our children"*** Matthew 27:25

The Religious Leaders

However, it was the religious leaders who initiated the arrest and trial of Jesus. It was the religious leaders who incited the mob to scream for Barabbas to be released and Christ to be crucified. (Matthew 26:3-4; Luke 22:3-4; John 7:32). *"And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion...but the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them."* Mark 15:7, 11

"They were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will" Luke 23:23-25

"You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice." Exodus 23:2

Judas

And, of course, it was Judas who betrayed Christ for mere silver. Judas was one of the Lord's trusted twelve disciples, the treasurer, but he became a traitor. It has been common for Hollywood productions to deal very sympathetically with Judas, but the Bible is clear that

Judas was greedy (Matthew 26:14-15); treacherous (Luke 22:47-48); dishonest and hypocritical (John 12:5-6). The Bible states it clearly that Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ (Matthew 10:4). Judas asked the chief priests: *"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?"* Matthew 26:15. The Bible records that the Chief priests were *"delighted"* at Judas' treachery (Mark 14:10-11). Although Judas was the treasurer of the twelve, and feigned concern for the poor, the Bible reveals that, in fact, Judas was a thief, stealing from the funds of the Lord Himself (John 12:4-6). Far from Judas being a well-meaning victim of circumstances, the Bible is quite clear that he was a malicious traitor. John's Gospel plainly states: *"Then satan entered him."* John 13:27. Jesus was betrayed by Judas.

God the Father

Yet was it not God's will that Christ suffer and die on the cross? In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: *"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."* Luke 22:42

Jesus Christ

However, we also need to ask whether it was not the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who was responsible for His own death? As our Lord declared: *"I lay down My life for the sheep ...I lay down My life... no one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself..."* John 10:15-18. Our Lord Jesus was not a victim, or a martyr, He was a willing sacrifice; an Atonement for our sins.

You and I

So, in the final analysis, was it not your sin and my sin that was responsible for the sufferings and the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ? It was for my sins that He suffered and died.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken... and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:5-12

The Lamb of God

Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); our Sin Offering (Romans 8:3); our Atonement (Romans 3:25). When Christ, the perfect Son of God, a Lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19) shed His precious blood on the cross, it was a substitutionary death. He died for us, in our place (1 Peter 3:18), the innocent for the guilty, the just in the place of the unjust.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10

What Are You Going to Do?

God is a Holy God and His righteous standards are seen in His Law. We are sinful and need to repent from our wickedness and place our trust in Christ. Have you acknowledged your

sinfulness and failings before Almighty God? Have you thanked Him for dying on the cross for your sins? Jesus died for you. **Are you living for Him?**



CHAPTER 9



COME BACK!

Frustration and dissatisfaction are the first symptoms of a backslider. No matter how deeply hidden inside, there is that despondent recognition that he is missing out on the abundant life Christ came to give. There is that uncomfortable realisation that he is rejecting Christ's love. The backslider knows that he is out of touch with God and that his once treasured relationship with the Lord has ceased. He is beginning to wonder if he will ever again experience the joy of fellowship with Jesus, the confidence of being in the centre of God's will, the peace of mind that comes from knowing that everything is working together for good, and that inexpressible fulfillment of being in contact and union with Jesus.

What happened? How could anyone who had experienced God's perfect will settle for second best? What on earth could have made him give up? Why did he fall away from Jesus and settle for the world?

Peer Pressure

Was it public opinion, group pressure, or social acceptance that troubled you? Did you find the going too hard or the requirements too tough? Was the opposition too strong or the temptation too great?

Why did you settle for less than God's best for you?

Spiritual Warfare

It is a tragic fact that in the spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18) of the Christian life there are many casualties. That is why Jesus taught us to follow in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21), because the devil's landmines are never found in the middle of God's road (Isaiah 35:8-10), and as long as we stay in God's perfect will we can weather the storms and assaults with safety (Matthew 7:24-27). It is because of the very real danger of the enemy (1 Peter 5:8,9) that the Word of God urges us to put on the full Armour of God.

Superficiality

The Lord Jesus warned us that those who receive the Gospel in a superficial way and do not lay a solid foundation of full commitment will fall away (Mark 4:3-20). Those who only want the blessings and benefits are not willing to pay the cost and make the sacrifices. They will not last long (Luke 14:27-33).

Strangled by Sin

Jesus further warned us that those who allow sin to remain in their lives (1 John 3:8) and do not repent of it and root it out will find that, just as the thorns choke the plants, so these sins will undermine and strangle their spiritual lives (Matthew 13:7).

People Pleasers

Then the Bible clearly warns of the dangers of being concerned with what others think of us (Proverbs 29:25), as that tempts us to compromise on principle and follow their example rather than the Lord's (John 13:15). We must live to please God not men (John 8:29).

Dual Loyalties

Dual loyalties also undermine our devotion to the Lord (Matthew 6:24). Whatever comes between ourselves and the Lord must be rooted out and forsaken (Hebrews 12:1). If money, or ambition, or friends, or material things, or education, or politics, or desires receive more attention and importance than the Lord does, then we must choose which will be our god (Joshua 24:15, 19). Jesus is either Lord of ALL or He is not Lord at all.

Spiritual Starvation

All too often the problem is that the backslider has neglected his spiritual life. The Word of God is to our souls what food is to our bodies. Nobody can survive spiritually without feeding on the Word of God (Matthew 4:4). You can become a spiritual skeleton by neglecting regular, prayerful and obedient study of God's Word (James 1:25).

Spiritual Suffocation

Also, the place of prayer in the Christian life can be compared with the place of breathing in our physical lives. It is essential. Just as a man who stops breathing can expect to die, so also a Christian who does not pray can expect to turn blue and turn into a rotting spiritual corpse within a few weeks (Luke 18:1).

Examples to Learn From

The Bible clearly records the failings of even God's greatest men. All of them failed God and fell away from Him at some time in their lives. For example:

Adam fell by disobedience (Romans 5:12 and Genesis 3:1-6)

Israel fell through unbelief (Romans 9:32)

Saul stubbornly rebelled against God (1 Samuel 15:22,23)

Samson slept in the lap of his enemy (Judges 16:19)

David committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11)

Peter denied Jesus (Luke 22:55-62)

Thomas doubted Jesus (John 20:25-28)

Never Give Up

Nevertheless, it is not God's practice to bayonet His wounded troops. We are in a spiritual warfare; casualties are inevitable and the Lord has made provision for us to return and be restored.

The Word of God challenges us:

"Will they fall and not rise? Will one turn away and not return?" Jeremiah 8:4

Hope for the Backslider

In Luke 15, Jesus gives hope to all those suffering in a backslidden state through three precious parables:

In the Parable of the Lost Sheep: Jesus told how that, if you're part of His flock, and you go astray and become lost, He will search for you and He will not rest until He has found you. You belong to Him. He died for you. He will bring you back to the safety and security of His flock. **In the Parable of the Lost Son:** He tells how you are always welcome in your Father's house, and that there is great joy in God's heart as He welcomes back a backslidden son or daughter. No sin is so great but that God's grace is greater still. **In the Parable of the Lost Coin:** He tells how precious you are to God.

David repented of his sin (Psalm 51) and returned to God to serve Him the rest of his life (2 Samuel 12).

Peter was restored and served Jesus powerfully among the Jews, dying for Jesus on an upside down cross (John 21:15-19).

Thomas continued as an Apostle serving Jesus extensively in Persia and India to die as a martyr for Christ near Madras (John 20:28,29).

The Way Home

How then can one return to the Lord? God tells us in His Word:

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."
Jeremiah 29:13

"'Now, therefore,' says the Lord, 'Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.' So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm." Joel 2:12-13

"'For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused, 'says your God. 'For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,' says the Lord, your Redeemer." Isaiah 54:6-8

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." John 6:37

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7

If you want to return to the Lord your God then pray right now. Open your Bible at Psalm 51 and pray that prayer sincerely, meaning every word of it, and then look up the following helpful verses to show you the way ahead: Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1,2; 1 John 1:9; Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:13; 1 Peter 4:2-5 (and for dealing with temptation see 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4; James 4:7).

You will never be satisfied, at peace within yourself, until you do what you know is right: **turn from your sins and turn to God.**

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Saviour, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen." Jude 24, 25



CHAPTER 10



FULL SALVATION

Can we accept Jesus as Saviour, without submitting to Him as Lord? I have heard this question in various forms numerous times over the last several years.

It is quite disturbing that anyone could consider separating salvation from the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It portrays an inadequate understanding of the problem of sin, the nature of God, Christ's mission on earth and our purpose and calling as Christians.

Freedom From Bondage

Would it have been sufficient for Moses to have proclaimed to the Hebrews, who were slaves in Egypt, that they should accept that in Yahweh they had perfect freedom, whilst leaving them in bondage, and under the whip of slavery in Egypt? Surely, anything less than deliverance from Egypt, freedom from the bondage of slavery, would have been inadequate. God's eternal purposes required the people of Israel to survive the Passover, leave Egypt, cross through the Red Sea, and be established as a free people in The Promised Land.

Sin is Serious

Sin is serious. We are far too tolerant of sin. Yet, sin is more defiling than dirt, more dangerous than an unexploded bomb, more life-threatening than a deadly disease, more insidious than a virus.

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:6-9

Forgiveness and Freedom

We have two major problems: Sins and Sin.

I need forgiveness for my **actions** (sins). I need to be saved from the **guilt** of my sins for what I have done.

I also need deliverance from my **nature** (sin). I need to be saved from the power of sin, from what I am.

Past, Present and Future

The Gospel declares unto us a Salvation that is past tense, present tense and future tense.

If we are Christians, then we have been saved from the **penalty** of sins (our actions). We are fully forgiven.

We are also being saved from the **power** of sin (our nature). We are daily freed.

And we shall be saved from the **presence** of sin (in Heaven). We are eternally delivered.

The Son of God died instead of me so that I could be forgiven. This deals with my guilt. The legal word justification sums up this past tense aspect of our salvation. **Justification**: just as if I had never sinned.

Jesus Christ lives instead of me for my deliverance. This present continuous aspect of our salvation can be called **Sanctification**. This deals with the power of sin.

One day, Jesus Christ will return to this world in glory and He will raise the living and the dead. In our new resurrection bodies, we will be freed from the very presence of sin in Heaven. This future tense of our Salvation can be called **Glorification**.

The Blood and the Cross

The Blood of Christ deals with what we have **done** - it cleanses us from our sins.

The Cross of Christ deals with what we **are** - it strikes at our capacity for sin. The Return of Christ will deal with our very inclinations and temptations to sin.

So, in a real sense, if we are Christians, we can speak of our salvation as being past tense, present tense, and future tense.

We **have been** saved from the penalty of sins.

We **are being** saved from the power of sin.

We **shall be** saved from the presence of sin.

In the cross, we have blood for forgiveness, because *"without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."*

In the cross, there is death for the destruction of sin. *"The Son of God came for this very reason to destroy the works of the devil."*

In the cross, we have victory to conquer satan, because at the cross, Jesus conquered sin and satan, death, hell and the grave.

In the cross, we have provision for holiness, because *"without holiness no one will see the Lord."*

In the cross, we have a door to eternal life. The gate to Heaven is narrow, and that gate is a cross. We cannot get to Heaven without following Jesus and you have to go through the cross. The cross is a requirement for discipleship. ***"Then Jesus said to His disciples; 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'"*** Matthew 16:24

"There is a way back to God from the dark paths of sin, there is a door that is open and you may go in, at Calvary's cross is where you begin, when you come as a sinner to Jesus."

"I know a fount where sins are washed away, I know a place where night is turned to day. Burdens are lifted, blind eyes made to see. There is a wonder working power in the blood of Calvary."

Atonement

Our Salvation depends upon Christ's Atonement alone, and never upon our attainment. It is faith in the fact of Christ's finished work, not my temporary feelings, emotions and feeble attempts.

The precious Blood of Jesus purifies the conscience, redeems us, sets us free, cleanses us from all sin, obtains forgiveness and freedom, sanctifies us, gives us complete freedom to go into the presence of God and wins for us the victory.

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free, His Blood can make the foulest clean, His Blood availed for me."

The Way, the Truth and the Life

We are called to:

1. **Committed discipleship** Following Jesus' example - For He is the Way.
2. **Consistent obedience** Obeying Jesus' teaching - For He is the Truth.
3. **Constant fellowship** Abiding in Jesus' love - For He is the Life.

When last did God speak to you? What did He say? Did you obey?

If someone who did not know the Lord followed in your footsteps would he find Jesus?

Victory in Christ

If we have a proper understanding of the problem of sin, then we must not be satisfied with anything less than full Salvation. Not only are we forgiven from the penalty of sin, but we have victory over the power of sin.

Salvation From Sin

This was one of the aspects of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformers pointed out that Catholicism was offering salvation in sin. People were going to confession, buying indulgences and partaking in the mass, without any true repentance and without the evidence of changed lives. The Protestant Reformation proclaimed a full Salvation from sin.

Set Free to Serve Christ

Israel could not fulfill its calling by remaining in bondage in Egypt. Neither can we effectively serve God today if we remain conformed to this world, in bondage to its sins and idolatries, attempting to accept the benefits of Jesus as Saviour while denying His authority as Lord over all areas of our lives.

Jesus is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. The only Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For the grace of God that brings Salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who came Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:11-14



CHAPTER 11



REPENTANCE

The God who created the universe, and each one of us, is sovereign and Ruler over all. He lovingly provides us with life, health, talents, gifts and, opportunities and He justly commands each one of us to worship and obey Him.

Facing the Facts

God will judge each one of us. He will punish the wicked and He will reward the faithful. An eternal hell awaits the unrepentant. A glorious Heaven is promised to all who truly repent of their sins, trust Christ alone for salvation and follow the Word of God in obedience.

Honest to God

Have you always loved the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Have you always loved your neighbour and done unto others what you would have them do unto you?

Have you ever told a lie?

Have you ever taken something that did not belong to you?

Have you ever looked with lust, or envied others?

If so, you have broken the Law of God and deserve eternal Judgement.

The Word of God warns us: *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderous, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."* Revelation 21:8

Change

The heart of the Gospel is: **a changed life in Christ.**

Choice

But each one of us must make: **a choice.**

Conversion

God will change your life, and your eternal destiny - you must choose to trust and obey Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared: *"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!"* Luke 11:28

You have heard the Word of God - **are you obeying it?**

God is a holy God and His righteous standards are seen in His Law. Man is sinful and we need to repent from our wickedness and trust in Christ. This repentance and faith is to be evident in obedience to Christ, a willingness to sacrifice and to suffer persecution for Christ. To those who turn to Him in repentance and faith God promises great blessings, rewards and eternal life.

The Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry with these words: *"Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."* Matthew 4:17

Our Lord Jesus declared that He had come to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, before he returned to Heaven, commanded His followers: *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations..."* Luke 24:47

A Prophetic Warning

Over a century ago General Booth, of the Salvation Army, warned that a time may come when churches would preach a Saviour without a Cross, Salvation without repentance, Heaven without Hell and Christianity without holiness.

True Salvation

Salvation is by the grace of God alone, received by faith alone, on the basis of Christ's blood atonement on the Cross of Calvary. Biblical Salvation always involves a change of behaviour.

"Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7

Belief Affects Behaviour

There are those who teach that as long as you believe in Jesus you are saved, regardless of how you behave. However, the Scripture makes clear that just as Repentance without Faith is not true repentance, Faith without Repentance is not true faith. Repentance and Faith are two sides of the same coin. If somebody runs in and shouts that your house is on fire, or your car is being stolen, if you just respond: *"Thank you, I believe you."* But you stay seated and do nothing about it, you obviously don't believe what you have just been told. Belief always affects behaviour.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works? Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works... for as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:17-26

Humble and Teachable

The Scripture warns us not to harden our hearts (Psalm 95:8). Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble (Proverbs 28:14).

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."
1 Corinthians 6:9-11

We are not to be hardened by sins' deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:13). A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed - without remedy (Proverbs 29:1). The Lord is close to the broken hearted and He saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18). The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). The Lord promises to hear and heal the responsive and humble heart (2 Kings 22:19).

"Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die...?" Ezekiel 18:31

Transformation

The Bible emphasizes three aspects of repentance:

Conviction: a change of mind,

Contrition: a change of heart, and

Conversion: a change of life.

It is not enough to confess our sin; we also need to reject sin mentally, to loathe it and to forsake it. Repentance involves a change of mind, a change of heart a change of habits, and a change of behaviour.

Repent and be Converted

"Now, therefore, 'says the Lord, Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.' So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness..."
Joel 2:12-13

This was the message of the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost: *"Repent, and let everyone of you be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit."* Acts 2:38

This was the message of the early Church: *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."* Acts 3:19

The first time Christ came to this earth He came as a Saviour: the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. All who turn in repentance away from sin and trust in Christ, following Him in obedience, are saved.

But our Lord Jesus Christ will come again...this time as a Judge: the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. All who have not repented and obeyed His Law will be condemned and eternally punished in hell.

We have a choice to surrender to Christ as our Saviour now, or to face Him one day as our Judge. Is Jesus your Saviour? Or your Judge?

Where will you spend eternity?

"God commands all men everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30



CHAPTER 12



I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:3-5

Jesus Christ came into this world to reach those who feel that nobody cares. The Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ does care, and He is reaching the lonely and the desperate, the confused and the hurt, the depressed and the disillusioned. Jesus Christ, Himself is reaching out to you.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

In Christ

As we turn away from our sin and turn to Christ we find forgiveness and freedom:

Jesus Christ is a Friend to the friendless, a Helper to the helpless.

He gives freedom to the addicts.

He loves the unloved.

He accepts the outcasts.

He changes the unchangeable.

He forgives the unforgivable.

He accomplishes the impossible.

He saves sinners.

He seeks the lost.

He gives direction to the aimless.

He gives hope to the disillusioned.

He gives truth to the confused.

He gives joy to the depressed.

He gives purpose to the purposeless.

He gives hope to the hopeless.

He redeems and He renews.

He touches and transforms.

He answers prayer.

He works miracles before our eyes.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Full Surrender

Have you surrendered your life to Christ? Pray to God, and give Him all the bad things in your life: your hurts, disappointments, fears, failures and sins. Give them to Him, and leave them with Him. Let Jesus Christ heal you inside, and forgive you and cleanse you. He will change you and turn your sorrows into joys, your fears into peace of heart and mind. Submit to Him and He will give you a new direction in life.

"Repent and... be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

Jesus Christ gives us a new start in life and a new life to start. We must not only surrender to Him all our sins and failures, but all the good things that He has entrusted to us as well: our talents and our abilities, our plans and our opportunities, our energy and our time, as well as our love.

Give everything to Jesus Christ and determine: no longer will I do with them just what I want to do, or what other people tell me to do. From now on I'm going to use my talents, time and treasure as God wants me to.

Christian Discipleship

I will ask: **what would Jesus do in my place?**

I will no longer live just for fame and fortune, for popularity and prestige; no longer will it be just for me, myself and I, anymore. From now on I must live for Jesus Christ, no matter what the cost, to help and to love and to reach this world for Him.

His Great Commission will be my supreme ambition. His last command will be my first concern. My highest priority will be to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbour as myself.

We only have one life - it will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.

The will of God will never lead us where the Grace of God cannot keep us.

God's servant is God's responsibility. Where God guides - He provides. God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply.

Our priority must be to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness, then all these things will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33). When we delight ourselves in the Lord, He gives us the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4).

Peace With God

The Word of the Lord promises us: ***"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."*** Isaiah 26:3

Do you know that peace that passes all understanding?

Does the peace of Christ guide you?

Is your mind steadfast?

Are you trusting wholeheartedly in Christ alone?

"For He Himself has said: 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" Hebrews 13:5-6

Revive Your Devotional Life

If you want to revive your devotional life, turn to the Psalms. The Psalms are the middle book of the Bible, the biggest book in the Bible, the Prayer book and Hymn book of the Bible. If you don't know what to pray, or if you don't even want to pray, turn to the Psalms and begin to read and pray through them. There are 150 Psalms. If you pray through just one Psalm a day it will guide your prayers for 5 months. Make the Psalms the prayer of your heart and you will experience a revival in your devotional life.

This is God's Word for you: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit... and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? ... Yet, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come; nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 8:1, 28, 35-39



CHAPTER 13



ARE YOU GRATEFUL OR GRUMBLING?

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Look Up

Martin Luther observed that we exhibit a degree of thankfulness in life in reverse proportion to the amount of blessing we've received. In *Tabletalk*, Martin Luther wrote: *"The greater God's gifts and works, the less they are regarded."* The blessings of life, health, freedom and food are not really appreciated unless they are lost or threatened. Because sunrises and sunsets occur daily, they are taken for granted.

Ralph Waldo Emerson observed that *"if the constellations appeared only once in a thousand years, imagine what an exciting event it would be. But because they are there every night, we barely give them a look."*

Look Around

Similarly, the blessings of rain are barely appreciated unless one has been through a drought. A hungry man is more thankful for his morsel than a rich man for his heavily laden table. A lonely woman in a nursing home will appreciate a visit more than a popular person who has a party thrown in his honour. A Christian who has suffered under persecution for decades and

receives his first copy of the Holy Scriptures will be more thankful for this one book than we are for all the Christian books, Bible translations and magazines that overflow our shelves.

Helen Keller said: *"I have often thought that it would be a blessing if each human being were stricken blind and deaf for a few days for some time during his early adult life. It would make him more appreciative of sight and of the joys of sound."*

An Attitude of Gratitude

There are at least 138 passages of Scripture that deal with the subject of thanksgiving. We are commanded: *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His Name."* Psalm 100:4

"Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:8

"Giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" Colossians 1:12

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Plainly it is God's will for us to be joyful, prayerful and thankful.

A Sacrifice of Praise

"Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name." Hebrews 13:15

"No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." Ambrose

"It ought to be as habitual for us to thank as to ask." C. H. Spurgeon

It has been said that a thankful heart is the parent of all virtues. It is also true that a lack of gratitude is a root sin.

The Sin of Ingratitude

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful to Him, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened." Romans 1:18-21

Here, failure to give thanks to God is the root sin that leads to futile thinking and foolish, darkened hearts.

In Luke 17:11-19, we read of the ten lepers that were healed by the Lord Jesus. When one of them, a Samaritan, threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him, the Lord Jesus asked: *"Were there not ten cleansed? But, where are the other nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"*

In our missions experience we've also found that barely 10% of those we help or sponsor will bother to express their gratitude either verbally or in a letter or card. Evidently gratitude is something of a rarity.

In 2 Timothy 3:1-5 the apostle Paul gives a list of some of the most terrible sins including: *"For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, abusive, disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power."*

Here **ungratefulness** is listed in the middle of a litany of horrible sins.

Expressing Appreciation

One of the first lessons good parents seek to teach their children is to say *"thank you"*. It takes character and courage to admit being in debt to others. It is humbling. However, those who cannot admit their indebtedness to others, cannot learn, nor can they seek forgiveness.

Failure to express gratitude is more than immaturity and rudeness, it is ungodly. We are commanded to honour our parents, our elders and our leaders. It is a sign of maturity to acknowledge indebtedness. Anyone who has learned anything is in debt to somebody else. We are all in debt, firstly and mostly to God Himself, for our life, health, food, talents, family, friends, opportunities and for our salvation itself. We are also in debt to past generations who have sacrificed for the freedoms we now enjoy: reformers, martyrs, pioneers, missionaries, soldiers, parents, teachers, pastors and so many others who have sacrificed for our benefit.

The Pitfall of Pride

Those who do not take advice don't think they have anything to learn. They are often the same people who have a problem expressing genuine heartfelt gratitude to others. It is a sign of pride to be ungrateful - it reveals an unwillingness to acknowledge a debt to others.

Instead of the Christian character of gratitude, our present culture prefers to promote an attitude of entitlement. This is the very opposite of gratitude. It builds on pride and covetousness, and it is fuelled by bitterness, greed and envy. All too many in the present humanistic society take things for granted, demanding to get rather than seeking to give.

Gratitude and Generosity

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty." Proverbs 11:24

A grateful mind is a great mind. *"Be thankful, therefore, for the least benefit and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater."* Thomas k Kempis

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High; To declare Your loving kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness every night."
Psalm92:1-2

"O give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the peoples!... O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." 1
Chronicles 16:8, 34

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name." Hebrews 13:15



CHAPTER 14

THE WILL OF GOD

"The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His Covenant and His testimonies." Psalm25:9-10

Marriage and Career

Most people, when they think of the will of God, are thinking in terms of 'Who is the best person for me to marry?' 'What is the best career for me to go into?', and 'Where should I move to?' However, the will of God is concerned with far more than marriage and career guidance.

Vocation and Location

God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him. Vocation and location become clear when we are studying God's Word and following His instructions. The will of God will never lead us where the grace the God cannot keep us. Where God guides, He provides.

Humble and Teachable

However, the question is: **am I humble and teachable?**

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

The Word of God

God guides us first and foremost through His Word. The best way to know the will of God is to study the Word of God. We need to know the Word of God and the God of the Word. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing is to know God and to make Him known. His Great Commission must be my supreme ambition.

"But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:33

First Things First

When we get our priorities straight, first things first, everything tends to follow from that.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Renewing Our Minds

It is our priority to ensure that we are not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, then we will be able to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand."
Psalm 37:23-24

Forsaking the World to Follow Christ

To be guided by the Lord, we need to be following Him. Have you turned away from this world in order to follow Christ? Have you repented of your sins, taken up your cross and embarked upon this adventure of discipleship, following the teachings and examples of Christ alone?

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps." 1 Peter 2:21

Discerning God's Will

The best way to know what God's will is, is to study His Word, to have our minds renewed by the Word of God. It is when we are taught, rebuked, corrected and trained in righteousness through the Word of God that we become thoroughly equipped for every good work. Then we are able to test and discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:16-17

The will of God is no mystery for us to discover. He has made His will abundantly clear in the Bible.

Holiness

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from sexual immorality...for God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness." 1 Thessalonians 4:3,7

Joyful, Prayerful and Thankful

Those people who say they want to know what God's will is, this is God's will: *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

It is God's will that you be joyful, prayerful and thankful.

Wholehearted

It is also God's will that you be wholehearted: *"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."* Colossians 3:23

Delight Yourself in the Lord

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:4-5

Bible Based, Christ-Centred and Spirit Led

When we are Bible-based and Christ-centred, we will find that we are Spirit-led. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart.

"However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all Truth." John 16:13

"I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16

"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.' Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21

Wisdom From God

To know the will of God we need to know the Word of God. We need the wisdom of God. And the Bible is clear that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1: 7). The Scripture tells us that if any of us lacks wisdom, we should ask God who gives generously to all (James 1: 5).

Listening to God

No one should expect to gain an understanding of the will of God if they spurn the Word of God. *"Then they will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently, but they will not find Me. Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would have none of My counsel and despised My every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way and be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to Me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil"*
Proverbs 1:28-33

Right With God

Before we should even begin considering guidance questions of vocation, location and marriage partner, we should ensure that we are right with God. Jesus taught: "*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...*" John 14:23

Carefully read The Ten Commandments. "*The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*" Psalm 19:7

"But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." James 1:25

Restitution

Is there Restitution that you need to do? Have you ever stolen anything, or borrowed something and failed to return it? If you have not yet done Restitution for that, make that an urgent priority. Restore that property to its rightful owner.

Reconciliation

Have you been responsible for damaging someone else's property? Have you repaired or replaced the item?

Have you been guilty of speaking behind someone's back? Have you repented of this and made right with that individual?

If you are concerned to do God's will, ensure that you apologise to everyone to whom you owe an apology. Forgive those who have spitefully used you. Leave your gift at the altar and go and be reconciled to your brother before you come to worship God. This is the will of God: that you love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and that you love your neighbour as yourself. It is God's will that you do unto others what you would want them to do unto you.

Recognising Who Our Worst Enemy Is

You see, those who seem to think that the will of God is primarily concerned about vocation, location and selection of marriage partner, miss the point. We are our own worst enemy. If we are not right with God it doesn't matter where we are, or what we are doing, or who we are married to. We will take our problems with us.

Seeking First: the Kingdom of God

However, if we have come to the foot of the Cross, surrendered to Christ and forsaken our sin, if we are diligently studying God's Word daily, delighting ourselves in the Lord, seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness, then we will be a blessing, wherever we are. We will also be more responsive and open to understanding God's will. We will be able to recognize His guidance as to the **where**, the **when**, the **who** and the **how**.

Prayerful and Teachable

We need to put first things first. When we are humble and teachable, prayerful, joyful and thankful, wholeheartedly following in the teachings and example of Christ, then we will find the reality of what the Psalmist declared: "*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with My eye.*" Psalm 32:8

God's Best

God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him. You can know the peace that passes all understanding and experience the joy of being in the centre of God's will.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones." Proverbs 3:5-7



CHAPTER 15



THE WORLD vs THE WORD

The World	God's Word
(tells us to):	(commands us to):
(bullies us to):	(frees us to):
Conform ("Everybody is doing It!)	Be transformed
Be greedy	Be grateful
Be selfish	Be generous
Take	Give
Hoard	Share
Indulge ("If it feels good do it!")	Sacrifice
Be self-centred ("Me, Myself and I")	Be Christ-centred
Materialistic ("Give, me! Give me!")	Spiritually minded
Love things (Cruela de Vile "I live for furs! I worship furs!")	Love people
Use people	Use things
Watch TV	Worship God
Read the newspaper	Read the Bible
Revere political and sports idols	Fear God alone
Bow before idols of fame and fortune	Refuse to bow to any idols
Entertain ("Amuse" = not thinking)	Educate (Think)
Justify ourselves ("I'm a good person!" "It's not my fault!")	Confess our sins
Conceal our sins	Forsake our sins
Take revenge	Do restitution
Revel	Repent
Boast	Humble ourselves
Don't conform	be transformed
Seek approval from the World	Seek approval from God alone
Do what is popular	Do what is right
Seek our own advantage	Seek to benefit others
Be politically correct	Be witness to the truth

Take the broad road **Take the narrow way**
Take the easy way **Take the right way**
Accept the majority opinion **Agree with God's Word**
Go with the flow **Stand against evil**

Every decision we make makes us more a creature of Heaven or Hell.



CHAPTER 16



ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

"For we must all appear before the Judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2
Corinthians 5:10

Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii

When the Apostle Paul was being transported as a prisoner to Rome, his ship docked to the south of Rome in the port city of Puteoli. Puteoli was a fashionable holiday resort with hot sulphur springs and many villas. Puteoli lay in the shadow of the great Vesuvius mountain. This rugged mountain was actually a volcano, but as it hadn't erupted in a thousand years, it was considered dormant.

Shortly after the Apostle Paul passed by, Mount Vesuvius exploded. For forty hours Vesuvius erupted and, while Puteoli was spared, nearby Pompeii was destroyed. The 20,000 people of Pompeii were killed by the gases and ash, and then preserved by the destruction which rolled over them and hermetically sealed them in their gigantic tomb.

Pompeii remained buried under 20 feet of volcanic ash and when archaeologists finally excavated it, they found the best example of a perfectly preserved Roman city, frozen in time.

Venus and Mercury

Pompeii was a thriving city, with a neat grid pattern of shop-lined streets surrounded by a secure wall. It was vibrant with industry, and Pompeii was world famous for its wine. The people of Pompeii worshipped two gods: Venus and Mercury. Venus was the goddess of love, and Mercury the god of wealth. The population of Pompeii worshipped prosperity and pleasure.

Like Sodom and Gomorrah

The statues and sculptures of Pompeii, excavated by archaeologists, were hidden for many years in the off-limits areas of Italian museums because they were so obscene. It was evident to the archaeologists that, like Sodom and Gomorrah, Pompeii had perished by fire. Judgment came swiftly, without warning, and on that day there was no escape.

Paganism and Perversion

We know that Pompeii, like Puteoli, heard the Gospel preached by Christian evangelists. However, while Puteoli responded positively to the Gospel proclamation, and soon had several congregations meeting there, there is no evidence of any Christian congregation being established in Pompeii. The archaeological excavations of this doomed city unearthed much evidence of paganism, prostitution and perversion, but no Christian symbols.

The Day of the Lord

The Apostle Peter wrote: "*But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*"
2 Peter 3:10-12

Unpopular and Misunderstood

There is no doubt that the doctrine of Eternal Judgment is the most unpopular subject in the world. Whatever we say on the subject is bound to be misunderstood and misconstrued, as is illustrated by the following conversation which was heard between an old farmer in the country and a new pastor:

"Do you belong to the Christian family?" asked the minister.

"No, they live two farms down," replied the farmer.

"No, no, I mean are you lost?"

"Lost? Why, I've lived here thirty years."

"I mean are you ready for the Judgment Day?"

"When is it?" asked the farmer.

"Well it could be today, or tomorrow"

"Well" said the farmer, "when you find out for sure when it is, -please let me know. My wife will probably want to go both days!"

How Can a Loving God Send Anyone To Hell?

When I was in the army, a foul-mouthed pagan challenged me: "*How can a loving God send anyone to Hell?*"

I looked with amazement at this blasphemer and drunkard, who, by his own admission, was a deceiver and utterly selfish. He boasted of all the girls he had two-timed and deceived, used and ditched.

I responded to him: *"You are living proof why there has to be a hell! Because God is love and light, He will ensure that justice is done for all those girls you've deceived, disrespected, abused and abandoned. You're living proof why there has to be a Hell!"*

From the Lips of Christ Our Lord

Most of what we know about Hell comes from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ preached more on hell than He even did on heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ warned that those who treat their brothers with contempt *"shall be in danger of hell fire."* Matthew 5:22

Jesus warned: *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell."* Matthew 10:28

Jesus taught: *"Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* Matthew 13:40-42

"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:49-50

In his devastating condemnation of the scribes and pharisees, the Lord Jesus exclaimed: *"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of Hell!"* Matthew 23:33

In Matthew 25:41 the Lord Jesus teaches that, on the Day of Judgment, He as the Son of Man: *"will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'..."*

The Lord described Hell as *"outer darkness"* Matthew 8:12; and *"where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."* Mark 9:44

A Glimpse of Hell

In Luke 16:19-31 the Lord Jesus relates the story of the rich man and Lazarus. This is plainly not a parable, as it specifically names Lazarus and Abraham. The Lord presents this as a historical event. In this teaching, the Lord makes clear that Hell is an actual place of eternal torment. The rich man who died and was buried, lifted up his eyes in Hell, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus with him. He cried to Father Abraham to send Lazarus with some water to cool his tongue, *"for I am tormented in this flame."*

Abraham responds: *"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us."*

The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house to warn his five brothers *"lest they also come to this place of torment."*

Abraham responded that they had the Scriptures. The rich man pleaded that if someone rose from the dead, they would repent. Abraham declared: ***"If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."*** Luke 16:31

Here the Lord Jesus pulls back the curtain to give us a glimpse of what lies beyond the grave.

An Appointment None of Us Will Miss

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the Judgment." Hebrews 9:27

There is no mention of a delay in punishment. There are no interim states such as the Roman Catholic concepts of limbo, or purgatory, mentioned. Nowhere in the Bible are such places mentioned. The Lord Jesus never even hinted at the possibility that a person who died unsaved could have another chance.

Fully Conscious

This man that the Lord Jesus referred to was fully conscious both of his own physical torments and the implications for his five brothers. He recognizes Lazarus, and knows who Abraham is. He remembers his brothers. He knows that they have not repented. He longs for a drop of water to cool his tongue. He hears the voice of Abraham answering his requests from Heaven. He remembers that he never helped that poor man Lazarus at his gate.

Unrepentant

There is no indication that this rich man in hell had changed his nature. While he regretted the consequences of his actions, there is no indication that he is repentant for his sins against God. Nor is there any indication that he wanted to do restitution towards those that he had harmed. His concern is still for his own personal bodily desires, and for his own family's welfare. However, there is no indication that he now loves God, or is even truly repentant.

A Day is Coming

The Lord Jesus taught: ***"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."***
John 5:28-29

Everlasting Life or Everlasting Shame

The prophet Daniel wrote of the great Day of Judgment when everyone will be judged according to what ***"is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."***
Daniel 12:1-2

The Day of Judgment

The Apostle John wrote: ***"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of***

Fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire." Revelation20:11-15

The fact of eternal Judgment is stressed throughout the Scriptures. The Creator is the Eternal Judge. The day will come when all the dead shall rise and stand before Almighty God. Each one of us will be judged in accordance with what has been recorded, according to what each one of us has done. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

People who refuse to believe in Hell, or who think that denying it's existence will make it go away, are deceiving themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, more than any other person in Scripture, warned of the awful reality of eternal judgment in Hell.

Eternal Consequences

Moses warned: "***Be sure your sin will find you out***" Numbers 32:23

The Apostle Paul warned: "***The wages of sin is death.***" Romans 6:23

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."
Galatians6:7

God Doesn't Believe in Atheists

It is hardly charitable to encourage the unrepentant to suppose that there is any chance that God does not mean what He says. Refusing to believe in Hell makes about much sense as somebody denying the reality of the law of gravity. The reality will not change no matter how many people say it isn't so. God, and His Word, and His world, are not affected by whether people believe in Him or not. There are millions of people in Hell today, who, while on earth, closed their minds to its reality.

Diabolical Deceptions

From the Garden of Eden, and to this day, the devil has been busy inciting men and women to rebel against God. The best argument that the devil can bring to entice people to sin is to suggest that God does not punish sin. "***You shall not surely die...***"

It serves the purposes of Satan to persuade people that there will be no eternal consequences for their sins. If people can be made to believe that there is no Hell, or that Hell is only figurative, not a literal place, or that they may have another chance to be saved after death, or that, after all, God is too good to condemn unrepentant sinners to an eternity in Hell, then the devil can accomplish his purpose. People can continue to revel in sin, to rebel against God, to refuse to repent, and ultimately to roast in Hell for all Eternity.

Refusing to Face the Facts

The refusal to face up to the reality of Hell, is all part of that movement that denies that people are inherently wicked. Those who deny the Deity of Christ, the Blood Atonement and the inspiration of the Bible, those who believe that mankind is a product of evolutionary chance and getting better all the time, will naturally refuse to believe in eternal consequences for violating God's holy character and Laws.

God's Mercy or God's Justice

Matthew Henry noted: *"Those that love darkness rather than light shall have their doom accordingly...those who will not deliver themselves into the hand of God's mercy cannot be delivered out of the hand of His justice."*

Francis Brerkitt taught: *"Those whose hearts are not pierced by the sword of God's justice shall certainly be cut down and be destroyed by the axe of His judgments."*

Thomas Watson wrote: *"The Lord has a golden sceptre and an iron rod. Those who will not bow to the One shall be broken by the other."*

Time is Limited

Charles Spurgeon declared: *"Time shall be no more when judgment comes, and when time is no more change is impossible."*

A.W. Tozer wrote: *"The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity while death draws every day nearer and the command to Repent goes unheeded."*

J.I. Packer wrote: *"The entire New Testament is overshadowed by the certainty of a coming Day of universal Judgment, and by the problem thence arising: how may we sinners get right with God while there is yet time? "*

How a Sermon on Hell Sparked a Revival

America's greatest theologian, Jonathan Edwards, preached one of the most famous sermons in history: *"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."* It was Sunday 8 July, 1741. A group of women had spent the previous night praying for Revival. When Jonathan Edwards stood up to speak as a guest speaker in the tiny Enfield congregation in Connecticut, he announced as his text Deuteronomy 32:35 *"... their foot shall slip in due time."*

Edwards warned the unconverted that they were dangling over Hell like a spider over a fire. *"O sinner! Consider the fearful danger. The unconverted are now walking over the pit of Hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seenlet everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom."*

All accounts agree that God mercifully used this sermon on the reality of Eternal Judgment in Hell to spark the Great Evangelical Awakening which swept across North America and the British Isles bringing countless hundreds of thousands of people to Christ.

Gehenna God's Rubbish Dump

One of the terms our Lord Jesus chose to describe Hell was Gehenna. This referred to the huge rubbish heap outside the walls of Jerusalem which was continually burning.

"And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worshipped the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Revelation 14:11

It is a sobering thought that most of the valued and coveted, even expensive items which so consume so much of our societies today will end up on the rubbish heap.

All the toys, the magazines, CDs, DVDs, cell phones, computers, cars, and most of the buildings are going to end up on the rubbish dump within the next hundred years. Very few will ever make it to a museum. So much of what people covet, envy, strive for, steal, fight over, prize and idolize is transient. It's going to end up broken and abandoned on some garbage dump.

In some ways, Hell is God's rubbish dump. Those who have no place for God, those who hate God, those who despise His Word and steadfastly refuse to repent will suffer the eternal consequences of their lifelong choices. Those who reject and turn their back on the Eternal Creator will find themselves in Gehenna: God's rubbish dump.

"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire."

Revelation 20:15

The Fruit of Sin

On earth, we see the principle that what we sow is what we reap. Sin regularly puts people into hospitals with diseased bodies. Alcoholism and drunkenness causes innumerable car accidents, drownings, violence and murders. Immorality has led millions to contract AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Crimes frequently result in individuals being locked away in jail. Sin breaks homes and brings disease, death and destruction. Throughout history, and in everyday life, we see the principle that whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

Just as the fruits of sin are seen in trouble and tragedy, heartache, death and destruction, we may be sure that in the next world, God's Laws about sin will not have changed. The torments of Hell are the fruits of sin.

To Whom Much is Given Much is Required

The Lord Jesus warned that the Day of Judgment will be worse for some than for others. Indeed, the Lord Jesus said that Sodom, Tyre and Sidon would find it more tolerable at the Day of Judgment than Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida and other cities that had rejected the Gospel from the lips of Christ Himself. Evidently, the greater the privilege and opportunity, the greater the punishment will be - if one rejects God's grace.

Obviously, some people are more wicked than others, and some have greater opportunities than others. Each one of us will be fully accountable.

"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." Luke 12:48

Censoring the Gospel

General Booth of the Salvation Army warned over a hundred years ago that a time would come when there would be those who would preach, Christ without a cross, salvation without repentance, Christianity without holiness, and Heaven without Hell!

Rescue the Perishing

We need a vision of Hell to energise us to *"rescue the perishing, care for the dying, snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; weep over the erring one, lift up the fallen, tell them of Jesus the Mighty to save."*

The Broadway to Hell

Jesus warned us to: *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."* Matthew 7:13-14

Two Ways

Jesus taught that there are two ways: The broad way and the narrow way. There are two gates: The wide gate and the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14).

There are two types of people: The wise and the foolish. They build two types of houses, on two different foundations. And the house that is built upon the rock of God's Word will stand - even amidst the floods and the storms. However, the house that is built upon the sand of human effort will crumble and be swept away when the rain falls, when the floods rise, when the winds blow and when the storm rages (Matthew 7:24-27).

There are two types of trees, the good and the bad tree. One can tell what type of tree one has by its fruit. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: envy, malice, covetousness, greed, lust, pride and selfishness. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:19-23).

Two Destinations

The Lord Jesus made it clear that there are two ultimate eternal destinations: Heaven, or Hell.

In the Light of Eternity

"Only one life, it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

We need to re-evaluate our relationships, our habits and our lifestyle in the light of Eternity.

Jesus said: *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."* Luke 13:3

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name, cast out demons in Your Name, and done many wonders in Your Name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Matthew 7:21-23

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Mark 8:36

The Lamb of God

The first time the Lord Jesus came to this earth He came as the Lamb of God, the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer to pay the price for our sins.

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

The next time Jesus Christ comes to this earth it will be, not as a Lamb, but as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Eternal Judge.

Every Knee Shall Bow

The question is not: 'Will you bow to Christ?' but: 'When will you?' For the day will come that *"at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* Philippians 2:10-11

We can bow before the Lord Jesus and submit to Him today in the Day of Grace when forgiveness is freely offered and receive Salvation at the merciful hand of our Redeemer.

Saviour or Judge?

However, if we refuse to repent in the Day of Grace, the day will come when we will be compelled to bow down to Jesus Christ, not as our Redeemer, but as our Eternal Judge. On that day it will be too late for forgiveness and mercy. However, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

When will you submit to Christ?
Today in the Day of Grace?
Or on the Day of Judgment?

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

Jesus Christ taught that we should not fear man who can only kill the body, and after that can do nothing else. Rather we should fear God, who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell, forever.

Turn or Burn

The simple choice is before us: turn or burn.

Boycott Hell: **Repent!**

*"Only one life; it will soon be past.
Only what's done for Christ will last."*



CHAPTER 17



HEAVEN

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" 1 Corinthians 2:9

God has created us for eternity. Heaven is mentioned 550 times in the Bible, by that name alone. Heaven is also referred to by many other names. It is described as ***"the better country"*** that the prophets sought after. It is described as ***"the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*** Hebrews 11:10

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: ***"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."*** John 14:1-2

Heaven is a real place. Jesus said He goes to prepare a place for us. The Greek word for place is *topos* from which we get topography and topology the writing and study of places. The Bible distinguishes between three different heavens (2 Cor. 12:2): air: where the birds fly (Matt. 6:26); space: where the stars shine (Acts 7:42); and paradise: which is God's home (Matt. 6:9-10).

Communist Cosmonaut's Campaign Against Heaven

Atheists have always campaigned vigorously against the concept of Heaven (because it would imply a Creator and require accountability as to our ethics). After the Russians sent their first cosmonaut into space, they used him for propaganda purposes on his return. The cosmonaut was sent on speaking tours throughout the schools in the Soviet Union to inform the teachers and students that he had been into space and he could assure everyone that there was neither a God nor a Heaven.

At one school a young girl stood up and replied: ***"But comrade, the Bible tells us that 'only the pure in heart will see God!'"***

Recently this cosmonaut undertook a far more significant journey than his space voyage. They lowered his body into the grave. By now he knows that there is a God, although he may not get much time to see Heaven. I do not know if he turned to God before the end of his life, but we do know that the premise of his propaganda looks more and more laughable as we discover more about our universe. Our solar system is only one of millions, there are millions of suns in countless other galaxies from which our sun and earth would barely be visible. Considering the extremely small section of space between the earth and the moon that this cosmonaut was able to travel through, his confident assertion of atheism is ludicrous.

An Appointment

There is one appointment none of us will miss. In fact, none of us will even be able to be late for this appointment. ***"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."*** Hebrews 9:27

There is nothing more certain than death and nothing as uncertain as the time of dying. We should therefore be ready at all times for that which may come at any time.

The Rich Fool

Someone in the crowd urged the Lord Jesus to help him obtain from his brother a better share of the inheritance. The Lord responded with a warning: ***"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*** Luke 12:13-15

And Jesus told them this parable: There was a rich man - a productive man who had plenty. He had power and prosperity and possessions and he could live for pleasure: ***"Take your ease; eat, drink and be merry."*** Luke 12:16-21

But God said to him, ***"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"*** Luke 12:20. This is how it will be for anyone who stores up things for himself, but is not rich towards God.

This rich man was productive. He had plenty of possessions. He had power and prosperity and could live for pleasure. But he was unprepared for Eternity. He had no greater purpose than accumulating wealth and living for pleasure. The Lord calls him a fool. It is a foolish thing to fail to prepare for Eternity. We plan and prepare for even the shortest trip. If we fail to prepare for Eternity then we are foolish.

Psalms 14:1 declares that ***"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'. They have done abominable works; there is none who does good."*** This rich man was living like a practical atheist as if God did not exist.

The Beginning of Wisdom

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10

But this man did not fear God; he did not even seem to think about God. That is foolish. Proverbs teaches that those who do not choose to fear the Lord, ***"the turning away of the simple will slay them and the complacency of fools will destroy them."*** Proverbs 1:29-32

The rich man was a fool because he was unprepared for Eternity. Each of us should constantly be ready to die and face God's judgment - because death can strike any one of us at any moment.

The rich man in this parable was a self-centred fool. Eleven times in these three verses the man says: *"Me"*, *"Myself and I."* He was a self-centred fool. A godless fool. Purposeless. Unprepared for Eternity. Therefore he was a doomed fool.

Lay up Treasure in Heaven

Jesus warned us: ***"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*** Matthew 6:19-21

The more of Heaven we cherish, the less of Earth we will covet.

Prepared for Eternity

C.S. Lewis wrote: ***"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were precisely those who had thought most of the next."***

C.S. Lewis also observed: *"Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth thrown in; aim at Earth and you will get neither."*

E.M. Bounds wrote in his book *Heaven: a Place, a City, a Home-*. *"Earth is but a pilgrim stay, a pilgrim's journey, a pilgrim's tent. Heaven is a city permanent, God-planned, God-built, whose foundations are as stable as God's Throne."*

Puritan writer John Owen wrote: *"The Lord Christ leads none to Heaven but whom He sanctifies on earth."*

Chrysostom, the pastor of St. Sophia in Constantinople, declared: *"If one man should suffer all the sorrows of all the saints in the world, yet they are not worth one hour's glory in Heaven."*

John Newton, the author of *Amazing Grace*, observed: *"When I get to Heaven, I shall see three wonders there: the first wonder will be to see many people there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to miss many people whom I did expect to see; and the third and greatest wonder of all will be to find myself there."*

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis observed that: *"Creatures are not born with desire unless satisfaction of those desires exist. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water." He noted that although many of our desires can be satisfied on Earth, there are many deep and fundamental desires which cannot be fulfilled on earth and which point to the reality of Heaven. "I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same," he concluded.*

C.S. Lewis wrote that: *"Joy is the serious business of Heaven."*

Are You Prepared?

The real question is not, has a place been prepared for us? The question is: are we prepared for that place? Will your name be called? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life in Heaven? Jesus said: ***"I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me."*** John 14:6

What is Heaven Like?

What will Heaven be like? We are told that there will be no more hunger or thirst (Rev. 7:16); no more sorrow, crying, pain or death (Rev. 21:4); and no more night (Rev. 22:5).

The Apostle John was given a glimpse of Heaven: ***"I looked and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes with palm branches in their hands."*** Revelation 7:9

The martyr Stephen, as he was dying ***"being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into Heaven and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."*** Acts 7:55

The Apostle Paul wrote: ***"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."!*** Corinthians 5:1

"Because of the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven of which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel." Colossians 1:5

In Heaven we will enjoy reunion with loved ones who have gone ahead (Genesis 25:8,17; 35:29; 37:35; 49:33; Numbers 31:2; Deuteronomy 32:50).

We will experience glory (Psalm 73:23-24); the presence of God (Ecclesiastes 12:5-7); divine comfort (Luke 16:25); the Tree of Life (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7); Communion with God (Matt. 22:32); coming into possession of the treasures we sent to Heaven while on earth (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:21; 33-34; 1 Tim. 6:17-19); opportunities to please God (2 Cor. 5:9); gain (Phil. 1:21); being with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23); perfection (Heb. 12:23); safety from the second death (Rev. 2:11); authority over the nations and The Morning Star (Rev. 2:26-28); Christ will confess our names before the Father and His holy angels (Rev. 3:5; Matt. 10:32-33); the waters of life (Rev. 7:16); and worship (Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 4:9-11; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 11,16-18; 19:1-7).

We will have glorified bodies. Our senses will be enlarged greatly in their capacities. We already know that, compared to some other creatures in this world, we are almost deaf and blind. What will it be like when we are released from the bondage of sin? If we can hear beautiful music which causes our hearts to thrill now, when we are limited to such a small range and scale, imagine when we have perfect hearing on every level.

Compared to the eagles we are almost blind when you consider the telescopic, microscopic, ultraviolet and infrared sight capabilities of these magnificent birds. What will it be like in Heaven when our vision is enlarged in perfected resurrected bodies?

Imagine the incredible intellectual stimulation of inhabiting a sinless universe. Our fallen human minds can barely contemplate what tremendous intellectual adventures we will enjoy in Heaven. Even the greatest geniuses barely use over 10% of their mental potential on earth. Imagine when all sorrow and aches, and pains, and grief, and selfishness, and anger, and temper, and pride, and deceit, and darkness, and malice are removed. If we can enjoy so much beauty - even in this fallen world and under the burden of sin - imagine what indescribable beauty will be enjoyed in the Paradise of God?

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
Revelation 21:4

We Will Stand Before Our Creator

We do not know when, or under what circumstances, our lives will come to an end. But we do know that when we die we will stand before Almighty God our Creator and Eternal Judge and we will have to give an account of our lives to Him.

"Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28-29

At death we leave behind everything we **have** and we take with us everything that we **are**. The character with which we die is the character with which we will appear at the Judgment.

In the Light of Eternity

If you are prepared to die then you are ready for anything. Until you are free to die - you are not free to live. It ought to be our business of every day to prepare for our last day. If we take care of our life, then God will take care of our death.

In the Bible we are told that it is better to go to a funeral than to a party because the living should always be reminded that death waits for us all (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

"To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under Heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die..." Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

"Our days on earth are as a shadow..." 1 Chronicles 29:15

"Every man at his best state is but vapour." Psalm 39:5. We are only one heartbeat from eternity.

"No man has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of his death..." Ecclesiastes 8:8

"Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life ? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" James 4:14

"For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground which cannot be recovered, so we must die..." 2 Samuel 14:14

Being mindful of death should make us serious, industrious and conscientious.

"Only one life, it will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

We need to work out our priorities in the light of Eternity. We need to invest our time and talents and treasure into those things which are going to last for Eternity: the people of God, the Word of God and the Kingdom of God. These are what are ultimately important.

In the light of Eternity, and knowing that you are going to die and stand before the Creator and Eternal Judge, you need to review your life's work, your family relationships, habits and activities.

One day you will be standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ where *"God will judge the secrets of men..."* Romans 2:16; *"All the harsh words..."* Jude 15 and *"Who without partiality judges according to each one's work..."* 1 Peter 1:17

Jesus said; ***"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will have to give account of it in the Day of Judgment."*** Matthew 12:36

"So then, each of us shall give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:12

In Eternity: will any of us regret praying too much? Studying the Bible too intently? Sacrificing too much for God's Kingdom? Being too forgiving? Being too generous? Too evangelistic?

Are You Ready?

If you knew that you were to die next year - what would you do differently this year?

Work out your priorities in the light of Eternity.

You must be ready at all times for that which can happen at any time.

Are you ready?



CHAPTER 18



WHAT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

- Are we as Christians doomed to defeat on earth or are we destined for victory?
- Does your understanding of the future inspire you to positive prayer and action?
- Or are you being paralysed into inactivity by an eschatology of escapism?
- Is your faith being strengthened by the victorious vision of the Bible?
- Or have you been neutralised by a defeatist view of the end times?
- Do you long to see the Church revived and faithfully "*making disciples of all nations*"?
- Or do you long to be removed from your responsibilities here on earth?

God has not predestined defeat for His people.

- Is the fulfilment of our Lord's Great Commission your supreme ambition?
- Or is your main obsession to be raptured from your responsibilities here on earth?

Many Christians seem to have succumbed to a negative and defeatist view of the future. Paralysed by pessimism, many passive pew warmers are praying for the rapture to rescue them out of their responsibilities. Yet, if we were to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and correctly understand the signs of the times, we would return to the fight of faith with renewed vigor and a revitalized vision.

God is all-powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. He is sovereign over the affairs of men. History is His-story. God has not predestined defeat for His people. The ultimate victory of the Kingdom of God is inevitable. Christians are not doomed to defeat, but called to conquest.

"Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, be wise; O Kings be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear..." Psalm 2:8-11

"All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You, for the Kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations." Psalm 22:27-28

"In His days the righteous shall flourish... He shall have dominion from sea to sea... to the ends of the earth... His enemies will lick the dust... all shall fall before Him and all nations shall serve Him." Psalm 72:7-11

In these and so many other Psalms it is made clear that the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ will be fulfilled. All the families of all the nations will bow down before Christ, and He will rule the nations. Because of these Scriptural prophecies we can have every confidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled - that all kings will bow down to Christ and all nations will serve Him. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid of the result. **God's cause will triumph.**

A famous verse so often quoted at Christmas time states: *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder... of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end."* Isaiah 9:6-7

The prophet Daniel was given a tremendous vision and insight in to world history. He saw a statue with a head of gold, the chest of silver, the stomach of bronze, the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay. This symbolised the various empires and kingdoms of the world. He saw a rock come and smash the entire statue - the iron, bronze, clay, silver and gold, to pieces. And this stone, which the builders rejected as worthless, grew to be a mountain that filled the whole earth. *"In the days of these kings, the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."* Daniel 2:44

Daniel saw clearly that Jesus *"was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. That all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed."* Daniel 7:14

Even more than this, Daniel prophesied of the day when: *"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His Kingdom is be an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."* Daniel 7:27

This is confirmed throughout the prophets: *"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Habakkuk 2:14

"The Lord will be awesome to them. For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth, people shall worship Him, each one from his place." Zephaniah 2: 11

"The Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The Lord is one," and His Name only" Zechariah 14:9

Is there hope for the future? Absolutely. Almighty God is sovereign. The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus Who loves us (Romans 8:37). Greater is He Who is in us than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). We can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

This is what the Great Commission calls us to: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."* Matt.28:18-19

This is what it means to pray the Lord's Prayer: *"Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."* Matt. 6:10

"The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 11:15



CHAPTER 19



THE GREATNESS OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the Kingdom is the Lord 'sand He rules over the nations." Psalm22:27-28

The Great Commission is great! It contains:

- A great Truth - Jesus is Lord over **all areas** of life.
- A great Commission - we are to make disciples of **all nations**.
- A great Command - we are to teach obedience to **all things** that the Lord has commanded.
- And a great Promise - the Lord Himself promises to be with us for **all time**.

A careful reading of the Great Commission (Matthew. 28:18-10) should make it clear that we are called to do far more than merely *"share the Gospel."*

Jesus Christ declared: *"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth..."* The Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of life must be proclaimed and practised.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." We are not called to make converts, or "decisions", but disciples. We are to make disciples, not only of individuals, we must start there, and of families, which is vital, we are not only to disciple congregations and

communities. The Great Commission commands us to make disciples of nations - **all nations!**

"... Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...", complete submission to Almighty God is essential.

"...Teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you..." Education is an essential part of the Great Commission. And we are not just to teach faith, or a selection of a few of our favourite things. We have been instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ to teach obedience to everything that He has commanded.

Our Greatest Priority

This Great Commission must be our supreme ambition. The last command of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be our first concern.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Romans 1:16

We must never allow distractions, danger, disappointments or determined opposition to deter us from obeying Christ's Great Commission. Our purpose on earth is to *"Make disciples...teaching obedience..."* The life- blood of the Church is its evangelistic zeal. No matter what the situation, or how adverse the circumstances may seem to be, our Lord's Command is to: *"Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching."* 2 Timothy 4:2

We are commanded to: *"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."* Mark 16:15; *"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations..."* Luke 24:47. Jesus declared: *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* John 20:21; Christ made it clear that we are to be *"witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Acts 1:8

When we consider the greatness of The Great Commission, that Christ is commanding us to follow His example, to be sent, even as He was sent, to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations, to be His witnesses to the very ends of the earth, to preach the Gospel to every person, to make disciples of the nations, teaching obedience to all things that He has commanded - we are overwhelmed! The task seems impossible. Which of us can possibly feel adequate to the incredible responsibility of discipling the nations?

The Promised Power

But every command of Christ comes with a promise. When the Lord commands us to go and make disciples of all nations, He reminds us that He has all authority in Heaven and on Earth, and He promises us: *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:18-20

When the Lord commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature He promised miraculous power: *"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word through the accompanying signs."* Mark 16:20

When the Lord commanded *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations..."* He promised *"power from on high."* Luke 24:47-49

When the Lord commissioned His followers: *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you"* He breathed on them and said: *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* John 20:21-22

And at the Ascension, when the Lord commanded His followers to be His witnesses "To the ends of the earth" He promised: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."* Acts 1:8

Nothing that God has commanded us to do is impossible. As we read in the Book of Acts: The Lord went up! The Holy Spirit came down! The disciples went out! (Acts 1:8 - 8:1) A handful of disciples in an upper room went out and changed the world!

The greatest experience is to **come** to Jesus. The greatest task is to disciple the nations for Jesus. The greatest priority is to **go** for Jesus.

Changed lives - changing the lives of others. Forgiven sinners, sharing the way of salvation to other sinners. Blessed Christians, seeking to bless others.

The first recorded words of Christ in His early ministry were: *"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand... Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."* Matthew 4:17-19

Our Lord's call to repentance, to discipleship (*"Follow Me"*) and to evangelism (*"And I will make you fishers of men"*) are all inter-related. We are called to come to Him for salvation and to go for Him to bring the message of salvation to others.

Jesus is: *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* John 1: 29

Jesus is: *"The Light of the world"* John 8:12

Jesus is: *"The Way, the Truth and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through Me."* John 14:6. There's no other way, no other religion, no other hope for mankind. *"Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that My House may be filled."* Luke 14:23 *"Freely you have received, freely give."* Matthew 10:8

Jesus said: *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."* Matthew 12:30

You are either a missionary or a mission field. You cannot be neutral in missions. Walking by on the other side of the road is not an option for Christians.

"Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" John 4:35

Jesus commanded us to look at the fields. We need to investigate and understand the missionary challenge.

How well do you know your World? Did you know that there are 12 000 ethno-linguistic people groups in the world? There are 66 nations which restrict religious freedom and persecute Christians. Over 400 million Christians live under governments which persecute believers. 21 % of the world's population are Muslims; 13% of the world's population are Hindu.

Africa occupies 22% of the world's land surface. 41% of Africans are Muslims. 14 countries in Africa have less than 1% Evangelical Christians: Mauritania, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia,

Comores, Djibouti, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Algeria, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mali. Over 100 million Christians in Africa do not yet possess a Bible.

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the Harvest to send out labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

The Lord commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all Creation. This is a command, not only to go into all the geographical world, but into every level of society. We must go into the world of business and education, the judiciary, government, entertainment, economics, medicine, sports and the arts. And we are to proclaim the Gospel of repentance and forgiveness of sins. We must deal with the primary issue of sin. People are not innocent victims needing deliverance, but guilty sinners needing forgiveness and mercy from Almighty God. *"As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you."* As with Christ's incarnation we need to become one with, and identify with the people we are sent to. We need to live and speak the Gospel in their language and in their culture. *"The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the Kingdom,..."* Matthew 13:38.

"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world..." Matthew 5:13-14

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." Matthew 5:16

The best sermon illustration is the life of integrity of a Christian neighbour, colleague or family member. At Evangelism Workshops, Great Commission Conferences, and Biblical Worldview Seminars that I have conducted throughout Africa, Europe and the USA, I found that the vast majority of delegates surveyed had come to Christ through personal evangelism, from friends, family and strangers in one-one-one witnessing and counselling. So far I have not come across anyone who reported having been converted through Gospel music. Once, in a conference of 400 pastors and evangelists in Nigeria, I came across one individual who reported having been converted through Gospel TV. Even in large groups of several hundred, I've seldom found more than 3% who could, along with myself, report having been converted through an evangelistic crusade. There are normally a few dozen who report Gospel literature having been used of the Lord to bring them to repentance. However, at every evangelistic workshop and conference that I have surveyed, the vast majority report that it was through family, friends, neighbours, and even strangers, in one-on-one personal evangelism that they were converted.

Jesus said: *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven."* Matthew 10:32-33. We dare not let opportunities to witness for Christ pass us by.

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26. Do not be intimidated into silence, fear God and not man.

Jesus assured us: *"There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the Gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time - houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions - and in the age to come, eternal life."* Mark 10:29-30. Sacrifice is required.

"I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Luke 4:43. Don't bottleneck the Gospel. Reach out across boundaries.

"Let us cross over to the other side." Mark 4:35. Overcome all obstacles for the Gospel.

"On this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18

Victory is assured. The best form of defence is attack!

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12. Be bold, innovative, and persistent in seeking first the Kingdom of God. Nothing is impossible, nothing is beyond the reach of prayer - except that which is beyond the will of God. No one is unreachable. The will of God will never lead you - where the grace of God cannot keep you.

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14

"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10-11

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

Is your church consistently praying for the fulfillment of The Great Commission throughout Africa? It is written: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"* Mark 11:17

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven..." Matthew 6:9-10. We need to pray for God's Will to be obeyed not just in the Church but in the world! You are not to be the salt of the church, but the salt of the earth, the Light of the World.

This is the Word of God: *"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!"* Luke 11:28

Give up your small ambitions and follow Jesus!

IF I GO NOT

If I go not to those who have not heard,
If I withhold from them God's precious Word;
If sin-cursed heathen go to Christless graves
Having never heard that Jesus saves,
If by my negligence some souls are lost,
Despite God's mercy and Calvary's untold cost,
If I care not for those in distant lands,
Shall not their blood guilt be upon my hands?

If I pray not for those who witness bear,
If I no intercessory burden bear;
If God's dear servants never are upon my heart,
And in their labours I share no part;

If by my prayerlessness there comes an hour
When they lack wisdom, grace, strength or power,
And captives escape not sin's strong bands,
Shall not their blood guilt be upon my hands!
If I give not, and by my selfishness
I cause God's work and workers sore distress;
If my poor stingy heart hardened be -to needs of others, their necessity;
If by my failure some shall never hear - the message of salvation...
Then I fear - mine is the sin, and justice fair demands
That I accept the guilt of bloody hands!

(See Ezekiel 3:18-20; 33:2-9; 34:2-10; Matthew 25:34-46)



CHAPTER 20



SUFFERING

"For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps." 1 Peter 2:21

Why?

Often, when we are suffering illness, injustice, unfair treatment, frustrations and traumatic situations, we cry out 'Why?' Why do bad things happen to good people? For what reason am I suffering?

The Suffering of Jesus

Perhaps we should ask ourselves why Christ suffered. He was the only truly good, perfect and completely unselfish person who has ever walked this earth. Yet Christ suffered. Jesus was misunderstood, slandered, falsely accused and lied about. People accused him of being insane (Mark 3:21). He was accused of being demon possessed! (John 7:20). Some accused him of being a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19). He was accused of teaching people not to pay their taxes, and of inciting riots (Luke 23:2-5). None of which was true.

Jesus was hated and betrayed. The Lord warned us: *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet*

because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:18-19

The religious leaders made plans to kill Jesus (John 11:53). One of his handpicked disciples, Judas, betrayed Him (Luke 22:48).

Jesus was forsaken by His friends and followers. Many of His disciples turned back and would not follow him any more (John 6:66). When Jesus was arrested all of His disciples left Him and ran away (Mark 14:50).

Jesus was unjustly arrested, illegally tried and wrongly condemned (Mark 14:55-56; Luke 23:14-16; John 19:15).

Our Lord Jesus Christ was mocked, insulted, slapped, beaten, whipped and crucified (Mark 14:65; Luke 23:11; Matthew 27:26; Matthew 27:39).

Christ Himself suffered for us and left us an example to follow in His steps.

Recognising Reality

Many people may consider teaching on suffering to be negative. It is not negative to teach on the reality of everyday life. To recognise that suffering is inevitable is not discouraging at all. The Lord does not keep us from suffering, He keeps us **in** suffering. And the Lord has never expected us to do anything for Him that He has not already willingly done for us. Our Lord and Saviour has led from the front, by example.

The Apostles taught: *"We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God."* Acts 14:22. In this way Paul and Barnabas strengthened the followers of Christ and encouraged them to continue in the Faith.

It is always a privilege to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ. The suffering is temporary, but the glory is eternal. We should note the example of the Apostles, who, rather than claim comfort, safety and luxury at home, chose rather to suffer for Christ while obeying the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Testimony of the Apostles

After a lifetime of church planting, the Apostle **Peter** was crucified upside down in Rome.

After fearless preaching, **James** the elder was beheaded by Herod in Palestine.

After preaching the Gospel in Greece, **Andrew** was crucified.

After preaching to the Gauls, **Philip** died as a Martyr in Asia minor.

Nathanael preached the Gospel in India and Armenia before being flayed alive and beheaded.

Thomas established churches throughout Babylon and India before being axed to death.

Matthew was burned to death while preaching the Gospel in Abyssinia.

James the younger was crucified while evangelising in Egypt.

Jude preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Persia before being martyred.

Simon the Zealot preached the Word throughout Syria and Mesopotamia and was sawn in half in Persia.

Matthias was crucified on a missionary outreach in the Crimea (present day Ukraine).

John was banished in exile to Patmos. (He was the only one of the Apostles who was not martyred.)

Strengthened Through Suffering

The Apostle Paul described some of his sufferings in these words: *"In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness besides the other things, what comes upon me daily; my deep concern for all the churches."* 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write this injunction: *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* 2 Timothy 2:3

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. Not some. Not many. Not even most. All. And not *may* suffer persecution, but will.

And so many of us can say with the Apostle: *"We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the life of Jesus Christ also may be manifested in our body."* 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

So what then is the purpose of suffering in the Christian life? The Apostle Peter wrote: *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."* 1 Peter 1:6-7

The Apostle James encourages us: *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience....Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* James 1:2, 3, 12

Purified and Prepared

Suffering purifies us and prepares us for special service. All of God's great men knew great suffering while God purged and prepared them for His service. **Joseph** experienced twelve years in slavery and prison before being raised up to be governor of Egypt. **Moses** was forty years in the desert before becoming the deliverer of Israel. **David** was an outlaw and a fugitive for years before becoming the King of Israel. The Bible is full of examples of great men of faith, enduring sufferings for the Lord. There is no shortcut to maturity.

As Joseph was able to say to his brothers who had sold him into slavery: *"You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good"* (Genesis 50:20).

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Peter exhorts us: *"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His Glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."* 1 Peter 4:12



CHAPTER 21

SCOFFERS AND MOCKERS

There is a rising tide of anti-Christian intolerance worldwide. Through Hollywood films, in the news media, in all too many schools and universities, Christians are being labeled, ridiculed, blamed and discriminated against. Christophobia, an irrational hatred and fear of Christianity, is a reality. One tactic often used to silence Christians is ridicule. This encompasses everything from insults and name calling, to character assassination and blasphemous mocking of Bible stories.

We shouldn't be too surprised about this. The Bible tells us that even as the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross for our sins: *"those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying 'Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself and come down from the cross.'"* Mark 15:29-30

Throughout the Gospels we read of mockers and scoffers who even sneered at the Lord Jesus Himself. *"The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things and they derided Him."* Luke 16:14

"Many of them said, 'He has a demon and is raving mad. Why do you listen to Him?'" John 10:20

The Bible warns us not to allow the world to squeeze us into its mould; instead we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2).

The human heart is naturally inclined towards folly. We are all too easily enticed by folly's seductive appeal. But the book of Proverbs makes clear that foolishness leads to sin, shame, servitude, punishment and destruction. It produces bitterness, grief, sorrow and ruin. Foolishness transforms its followers into scoffers, mockers, perverted and impetuous persons who oppress others. We are warned to avoid folly as a contagious disease.

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."
Proverbs 13:20

"A proud and haughty man - 'scoffer' is his name; he acts with arrogant pride." Proverbs 21:24

"Scoffers set a city aflame..." Proverbs 29:8

"The devising of foolishness is sin, and the scoffer is an abomination to men." Proverbs 24:9

"Fools mock at sin..." Proverbs 14:9

"He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker..." Proverbs 17:5

"The foolishness of a man twists his way and his heart frets against the Lord." Proverbs 19:3

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."
Proverbs 20:1

"Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; yes, strife and reproach will cease."
Proverbs 22:10

"A prating fool will fall..." Proverbs 10:8

"Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him."
Proverbs 29:20

"The complacency of fools will destroy them." Proverbs 1:32

"Perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord..." Proverbs 6:14

"The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness... the heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness." Proverbs 15:2, 14

"A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart." Proverbs 18:2

"A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul." Proverbs 18:7

"For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge." Proverbs 1:22

"But a fool rages and is self-confident." Proverbs 14:16

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise." Proverbs 12:15

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Even a superficial reading of the Bible will make it abundantly clear that God despises mocking and scoffing. In fact, the Word of God declares: *"The eye that mocks his father, and*

scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will peck it out, and the young eagles will eat it." Proverbs 30:17

At the mount of Crucifixion at Calvary there were three crosses. Initially, the criminals being crucified on either side of Christ mocked Him and hurled curses at Him. Then one of the criminals rebuked the other man saying: *"Do you not even fear God... And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.1"* Luke 23:40-42

There were three crosses at Calvary: one died on the cross of **rebellion** he died in sin. One died on a cross of **repentance**-he died to sin. Jesus died on a cross of **redemption** - He died for sin.

If you have been one of those in rebellion, scoffing and mocking at spiritual truths, you can follow the example of the man who died on the cross of repentance and die to sin. If you recognise foolishness in your life, the Scripture challenges us: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* James 1:5

We all need more wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. May I challenge you to work your way through the book of Proverbs? This treasure trove of wisdom is in the middle of the Bible, just after the book of Psalms. There are 31 chapters to Proverbs, enough for us to read one chapter every day of the month. Prayerfully read through the book of Proverbs over the next 31 days and it will change your life.

Theodore Roosevelt pointed out:

"It is not the critic that counts;

*nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbled;
nor where the doer of deeds could have done better.
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena;
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;
who strives valiantly;
who errs and comes short again and again;
who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions
and spends himself in a worthy cause;
who at best knows the triumph of achievement;
who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while doing greatly,
so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls
who know neither victory nor defeat!"*



CHAPTER 22



BEING RELEVANT AND COMPASSIONATE IN A BROKEN WORLD

"Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to dwell in." Isaiah 58:12

Recognising Reality

That we live in a broken world should be obvious to anyone. That our fallen world needs changing is beyond question. When our newspapers and films glamourise immorality, undermine traditional family values and encourage selfishness, greed and lust; when criminals escape justice by legal technicalities; when half the world suffers under totalitarian dictatorships and persecution; when pornography, perversion, abortions, terrorism and the occult are increasing then we must know that this is a broken world that needs to be changed.

Failures to Face

But most Christians have abandoned their moral responsibility to bring the Light of the Gospel into heathen darkness. Many Christians are allowing their own children to be brought up by godless humanism in state schools and entertained by occultism and pagan magic through Hollywood films and television.

Identifying Threats

There are many anti-Christian forces seeking to undermine and destroy the Christian Faith, including persecution by Muslim and Marxist dictatorships, secular humanist domination of educational institutions, brain washing by the Hollywood entertainment industry, rearranging of reality through secular humanist news media, and even false Gospels and un-Biblical heresies within many theological seminaries, and all too many churches.

Recipes for Defeat

We have allowed ourselves to become misinformed, brainwashed and intimidated into feeling guilty for the great achievements of Christian missionaries and Reformers over the past centuries. Christians who are ignorant of history have ended up apologising for those faithful Christians who converted cannibals, ended inter-tribal genocide, abolished child sacrifices, eradicated widow burning, defeated witchcraft and won whole nations to Christ.

Many Christians today have surrendered to the forces of darkness, entered into negotiations and cooperation with idolaters, removed "*offensive*" Bible passages from their preaching, and lowered standards to allow the unconverted easy access to the church.

In the past the church went out to conquer the world for Christ. Today, in all too many churches, Christ is being sold for thirty pieces of silver, or less. Instead of the church changing the world, in all too many cases the world is changing the church.

Defeat and Retreat

For decades now, many Christians in the West have been turning away from the God-oriented, Bible-based, Christ-centred foundations of the Reformation. Instead, many Christians have been turning to the man-centred humanism of the Renaissance, which has always inevitably led to the extremes of permissiveness or totalitarianism, as seen in the French Revolution and the Soviet Revolution.

The results of this apostasy are plain to see in the abortion holocaust, the pornography industry, the AIDS plague, the political protection of perversions and the drug epidemic.

The results of abandoning God's eternal standards as revealed in the Word of God are: families that fail to nurture, governments that fail to provide security for their citizens, courts that fail to punish the guilty, schools that fail to educate, and churches that fail to be houses of prayer for all nations, making disciples and teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded.

Guilt Manipulation

We live in an age of guilt manipulation when all too many Christians are being prepared for slavery by the abuse of Scripture and by the manipulation of our emotions.

A Strategy for Victory

So what is the solution? What can we do to minister with compassion and relevance in a broken world?

Firstly, we need to study the Scripture more intently to learn the objective truth. The Word of God must be the judge and solid foundation of all our actions. This is where the Reformation started. Back to the Bible. Until we know the Word of God, we can be easily misled. Scripture alone is our ultimate authority.

Secondly, we must realise the truth is never determined by majority opinion, but only by the Word of God. We must never confuse change with advance. New is most certainly not necessarily better. The fact that our kids have lots of computers does not necessarily mean that they are more intelligent than people of generations past. Computers cannot make up for a loss of character. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* And knowledge is not the same as wisdom.

Information is cheap. Raw information such as makes up the bulk of newspapers and the Internet today does not cost very much and in fact is used to start fires, or to line cat litter boxes, or is thrown out only a few days (or hours) after it's published.

Understanding is valuable. Wisdom and discernment which helps us grasp the essence of an issue is of great value. Penetrating articles and any insightful analysis or books tend to be filed for future reference or action.

Participation is precious. That which helps us get involved in making a difference in any important project is most precious. Whatever can help us be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ is of eternal importance.

We must warn our people about the dangers of humanism, immorality, idolatry, and false religions like Islam and Marxist revisionism and distortion of history. We must wake up to what is happening around us and expose the tactics of anti-Christian forces. We need to *"understand the times and know what Israel must do."*

Thirdly we need a clear Biblical vision of God and what he wants done. *"Without a vision a people perish."* We need to inspire and involve our people in fulfilling the Great Commission. Our children need to be educated and enlisted in reaching the lost for Christ. We need to motivate our people and mobilise them to be Salt and Light, to rebuild the moral walls of our society.

Fighting to Win

We cannot have victory without a battle. Sacrifice and risk are essential. We can never win if we keep avoiding the battles. We must solve the problems by facing them and dealing with them Biblically.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

A Spiritual World War

We Christians are in a full-scale World War of Worldviews. But we don't seem to be doing much fighting! The Church is being attacked by the powers of darkness. Spiritual warfare, sin and worldliness are crippling and undermining the church, and yet we don't seem to be aware of it.

All of us have friends and family who are under the attack of the evil one. We have family members chained by the devil, friends trapped in addictions and sinful habits. The churches have sheep who are being chained and carried away captive by the false prophets and filthy demons of hell. We are missing opportunities, squandering resources and wasting our time on trivialities.

The devil has tragically rendered whole congregations ineffective by tempting, blinding, deceiving and deluding Christians to engage in false priorities, embrace false doctrines, employ human solutions, become ensnared in sinful habits and addictions, and by keeping Christians from the Bible and hindering us from prayer. Weakened by worldliness many are casualties of carnality.

The devil is waging an all out war against the forces of Jesus Christ and we seem to be confined to barracks, tamely singing our choruses and enjoying fun and fellowship. Others are mesmerized by make-believe, sucked into soap operas, enslaved to fashions, prisoners of peer pressure, locked into the Internet, *"Mix It"*, *"Face Book"* and *"My Space"*.

Waking Up the Church

Napoleon once said, as he looked out over the vast expanse of China on the map: *"There lies a sleeping giant let him sleep; for if he wakes he will shake the world!"* And the devil could be saying the very same of the church today: *"There lies a sleeping giant...if she wakes, she will shake the world!"*

We Have a World to Win

I believe that we can liberate the world for Christ. We can reach every tribe, tongue and people for Christ-in this generation. There is no limit to what God can do, in and with and through you, if He is not quenched. No limit!

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of Hosts." Zechariah4:6

Turning the World Right Side Up

It was said of the Christians of the 1st Century that they *"turned the world upside down"* (Acts 17:6), and this is exactly what true Christianity, and the power of the Holy Spirit, always accomplishes. Read through the Book of Acts and notice the incredible impact that the Christian lifestyle and message had on the Roman Empire. Whenever the Gospel was proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit there was either a Revival or a riot. Indifference was impossible to such a radical message and such an invincible power.

Don't Settle for Less Than God's Best

Are you dissatisfied with your present Spiritual experience? Are you frustrated by the inroads that the world and the flesh have made into the Church? Do you long to see Christians making a greater impact on society? Is it a burden of your heart that the evangelisation and discipleship of the whole world, in this generation, becomes a reality?

Full Surrender

If you determine to stop quenching and resisting the Holy Spirit and humble yourself, and seek His face and turn from your wicked ways, if you seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness, with a thirsty heart, then as you ask, seek and knock, God promises to fill you with supernatural power and vibrant spiritual vitality and abundant life.

What do we need in order to turn this world upside down, right side up, back to God? **What is needed for us to reclaim the nations for Christ?**

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Well, firstly we need dedicated Christian disciples wholeheartedly committed to Christ, freed from the chains of sin, selfishness and worldliness. **We need Christians filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Led by the Holy Spirit

We need these Christians to be able to be led by the Spirit and to do God's will, to do and to say the right things, at the right time, to the right people, in the right place. God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him. **We need Christians led by the Holy Spirit.**

Praying in the Holy Spirit

Thirdly we need Christians who will pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. God acts in answer to prayer and if we don't pray then we cannot expect God to act. Prayer releases the power of God. The only foundation for Spiritual work is prayer. Prayer is our priority. A prayerful life is always a powerful life. A prayerless life is always a powerless life. Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer, except that which is beyond the will of God. When we pray in the Spirit then we are releasing the greatest power in the universe. **The Church needs Christians who will pray in the Holy Spirit.**

As Andrew Murray declared: *"The one thing needful for the Church, and the one thing which above all others, men ought to seek for with one accord and with their whole heart, is to be filled with the Spirit of God."*

"He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world..." 1 John 4:4

Recognising the Symptoms

We need to face squarely the great moral challenges of our day. The **symptoms** of our broken world are obvious: deception in the news media, degenerate entertainment, dishonesty in business, decadence in government, pornography, homosexuality, AIDS, the escalating crime wave and abortion.

The Root Causes

However, we need to go beyond the outward symptoms and recognise **the root causes** of this catastrophe: ineffective churches, insipid preaching, irresponsible leaders, the rejection of God's Law as the foundation for our families, churches and nation, neglect of the Bible, prayerlessness, selfishness, confusion, compromise, cowardice and at the very core - a lack of wholehearted love for God.

If our churches are motivated primarily by growth in numbers, finance, buildings and community prestige, then issue evasion, a policy of non- confrontation and compromise, is inevitable. Building our own empire does not allow for serving the Kingdom of God.

In the demand for greater and more spectacular crusades, many churches have concentrated on how to get converts, not what they are supposed to get converted for (to love, worship, serve, obey and honour God).

The Great Commission then becomes the Great Omission.

This is because:

- Escapism sells better than service,
- Forgiveness attracts more attendance than teaching obedience,
- Blessings are far more popular than sacrifice.

This has produced churches that primarily stand for escape and entertainment, offering forgiveness for those who neither want to obey nor serve. Churches which are obsessed with growth cannot afford to upset the peace and affluence of their adherents or prospective adherents.

The Choice

For many this is a choice between:

popularity or principle,
Prestige or persecution,
Prosperity or powerful Christianity,
Sensationalism or spirituality,
Success or sacrifice,
Serving man or serving God,

Church growth or church depth,
Respectability before man or Revival from God.

The result is that all too many of our churches entertain their members rather than educate them with expository preaching of God's Word. They spend time comforting their members rather than challenging them and confronting sin. They prefer rejoicing to preaching repentance.

Back to the Bible

What is needed is for our churches to return to the Biblical vision of righteousness, justice, love and compassion.

We need to show compassion to **the victims of tragedy**, to the victims of our sexual ethics, (or should we rather say lack of moral standards):

Abused children: victims of pornography and of the 'use and abuse' mentality;

Abandoned children: victims of the selfish, materialistic, throw away culture;

Victims of divorce: victims of the self-centeredness and lack of loyalty of many;

Victims of rape: victims of the pornography industry and those porn addicts who see women and children as objects;

Victims of AIDS: victims of the prevalence of promiscuity; and

Aborted babies: victims of the callous indifference of selfish people who view life as disposable.

"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My bretheren, you did it to Me."
Matthew 25:40

Unto the Very Least of These

We need to be compassionate to the victims of a selfish and materialistic society: the unlovely, the *'failures'*, the poor, the homeless, the handicapped, the unwanted children and the forgotten elderly. We need to compassionately pray for and speak up for, and, where possible, practically help the victims of political betrayal and exploitation: (for example those Christians who are persecuted for their Faith in Red China, Cuba, Pakistan, North Korea, Sudan and Zimbabwe, etc.); refugees (for example from Zimbabwe); victims of racial hatred and strife (such as the foreign victims of the xenophobic riots in South Africa); victims of man-made famines (such as in Sudan and Zimbabwe); victims of crime (especially those committed by murderers, thieves, rapists and terrorists released from jail).

"'Comfort, yes comfort My people!' says your God." Isaiah 40:1

It is our Christian duty to comfort the afflicted, and to afflict the comfortable.

"A true Christian loves God, a true Christian loves God's Word, a true Christian loves to pray and a true Christian hates sin."

"Bretheren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all." 1 Thessalonians 5:14

This is the message of the Good Samaritan: *"Love your neighbour as yourself... go and do likewise."* Luke 10:27-37

Care for Widows and Orphans

True Christianity is caring for widows and orphans in their distress. It was the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His great Commandment to love our neighbour that mobilised Frontline Fellowship over 27 years ago to cross the borders into communist Mozambique and Angola, and to evangelise in the war zones, ministering to combatants on both sides of the many conflicts, and to those caught in the crossfire.

Serving the Suffering

It has been one of the greatest priorities of Frontline Fellowship to serve the persecuted churches. This we have had the privilege of doing in Mozambique and Angola in the 1980's and 1990's; in Rwanda shortly after the holocaust in 1994, in Sudan in the 90's and throughout this last decade. And in Zimbabwe. It has been our privilege to assist persecuted Christians and prisoners with many books, encouragement, Bible teaching and emergency relief aid (including many tons of medicines, foods, clothes, agricultural tools and seeds and Bibles and Bicycles).

Making Disciples

It was our privilege to provide thousands of Christian textbooks for the over 100 schools which we had helped establish in Sudan. Frontline Fellowship has delivered and distributed over 300,000 Bibles and Christian books in 21 languages throughout fourteen regions of Sudan.

Helping the Persecuted

In Zimbabwe, from 1982 to this present day, Frontline Fellowship has continued to deliver Boxes with Love with medicines, food and other emergency supplies to pastors, pensioners, widows and orphans, caring for some of the most desperately needy people.

Ministering to the Neglected

We believe that to minister with compassion and relevance in a broken world we need to work in war zones, because so much of Africa has been torn apart by conflict. It is also absolutely vital that we are involved in prison ministry. Prisoners are actually some of the most neglected, yet open and responsive people on the continent. Orphanages, crisis counselling and adoptions are all part of love in action. We need to build relationships through exercising the ministry of hospitality, including to strangers. Those who are involved in substance abuse, addicted to drugs or alcohol, need special ministry attention. Some churches have particularly targeted families broken by divorce for ministry attention. All this is vital.

Stretching Minds and Muscles

We need to minister to spirit, mind and body. It is almost impossible for people to be spiritually disciplined, if they are not mentally and physically disciplined as well. Therefore, in our **Great Commission Courses** and **Biblical Worldview Summits**, we always

incorporate early morning P.T., mountain hikes, and other muscle stretching activities. In order to stretch minds, we have debating skill games such as Just a Minute, Bible Drill, Bible exams, missions exams, etc.

Educate and Enlist

We also try to always include outreaches at our seminars. It is not enough to inspire our listeners; we need to involve them. It is not sufficient to educate our students; we want to enlist them into fulfilling the Great Commission.

True Love Waits

We have found **True Love Waits** a very important ministry for compassionate and relevant building in a broken world. Their motivational speakers present abstinence education at school assemblies. South Africa has the second largest **True Love Waits** in the world.

Converting the Soul

We have also incorporated **The Way of the Master** into all of our evangelistic programmes. Using the Ten Commandments as the school master that leads us to Christ is most effective. "*The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.*" (Psalm 19:7)

Answers in Genesis

Ken Ham of **Answers in Genesis** has provided a tremendous service to the Church worldwide through his Creation Evangelism resources. I had the privilege of visiting the Creation Museum near Cincinnati last year. It is one of the finest museums in the world today. I spent two full days exploring and enjoying this extraordinary museum, and I came back with many great DVDs, books and curriculum resources for my own children, for our mission and for school curricula.

The Battlefield of History

Karl Marx declared that the first battlefield is the rewriting of history. Certainly Marxist disciples have been very busy rewriting history and turning reality upside down. Tragically most Christians do not know their history and are easily deceived. This is aggravated by a plethora of Hollywood films which claim to be a true story - where the names and places are true but only the facts have been changed to protect the guilty!

Reformation and Missions

For this reason we are producing history textbooks to help Christian schools rediscover our great Christian heritage: *The Greatest Century of Reformation* and *The Greatest Century of Missions*. Both of these inspiring textbooks include discussion and exam questions at the end. A whole curriculum of well-illustrated PowerPoint presentations, lecture notes, questionnaires and multiple choice exams are available to supplement these textbooks.

Muslim Evangelism

We've also produced: *Slavery, Terrorism and Islam - The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat* along with a *Muslim Evangelism Workshop MP3*, which includes fourteen lectures with Powepoints looking at every aspect of Slavery, Islam, comparing the Bible with the Quran, and practical step-by-step guidance for evangelising Muslims.

Learn to Discern

We also strongly recommend that you contact Movie Guide (www.movieguide.org) for film reviews. It is important that we know before we go. We need to learn to discern so that we can choose the best family-friendly films, but avoid the worst anti-Christian films out there.

A Christian Calendar

We find it important also to promote a Christian Calendar. The very name *holiday* means Holy Day. Most holidays have religious significance. The events that a society chooses to centre its holidays around speaks volumes about the religious worldview and value system of that society.

For example: Ascension Day used to be a holiday in South Africa. Yet, few of us ever appreciated its significance until the government abolished it as a public holiday. The fact that it was replaced with days celebrating mankind such as "*Human Rights Day*"; "*Women's Day*"; "*Workers Day*" and "*Youth Day*" are yet other indications that our society has rejected Christianity and embraced humanism.

In our mission we ignore those spurious humanist holidays and rather observe Ascension Day, Pentecost, Reformation Day (31 October); International Life Chain Sunday (the first Sunday of October); International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (the second Sunday in November) and a National Day of Repentance on 1 February to mark the legalisation of abortion in this country.

Daily Dedication

Relevant and compassionate ministry will address root issues and involve daily dedication to fulfilling the Great Commission and Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And "*those who sow in tears will reap with joy.*"

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Acts 1:8

"Be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

"Make disciples... teach obedience." Matthew 28:19-20



CHAPTER 23



UNEQUALLY YOKED

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" 2

Corinthians 6:14

In the course of my missionary work I have all too often come across the disastrous and tragic consequences of Christians marrying unbelievers. On numerous occasions, while counselling the distraught Christian married to an unbelieving spouse, I've heard of how the other partner appeared to be a Christian, claimed to be a Christian, made a public profession of faith in Christ, but later on revealed that it had all been a charade to secure their marriage. On numerous occasions the tearful Christian asked: "Why did nobody warn me?"

Considering how much the Scriptures teach concerning marriage, and the many passages forbidding intermarriage with unbelievers, it is extraordinary that there is so little preaching and teaching on this important matter.

Abraham

The Father of the Faithful, Abraham, commanded his servant: *"And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the Earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."* Genesis 24:3-4

"Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.'" Genesis 24:37-38

Isaac

The Bible tells of Jacob's twin brother Esau who took Hittite wives. *"And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca."* Genesis 26:34-35

"Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.'" Genesis 28:1

The Law of Moses

"Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son." Deuteronomy 7:3

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth...because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers...therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them... therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them " Deuteronomy 7:6-11

When the children of Israel were preparing to take the promised land, the Lord warned them: *"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be*

that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell." Numbers 33:55

Joshua's Warning

Joshua warned the children of Israel that if they intermarried with the heathen nations, *"Know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you."* Joshua 23:12-13

The Sin of Solomon

The Scriptures record Solomon's great sin of marrying *"many foreign women, as well as the daughter of pharaoh; women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites -from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.'" 1 Kings 11:2*

Ezra Repents for the Sin of Intermarriage

In his great prayer of national repentance Ezra warned against mixed marriages. Israelites had married the daughters of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites.

"For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass. So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair on my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the Words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. At the evening sacrifice, I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. And I said: 'O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.'" Ezra 9:2-6

"Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons... that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever." Ezra 9:12

Intermarrying with the heathen nations around them, Ezra describes as: *"... our great guilt... our iniquities... these abominations..." Ezra 9:13-14*

Nehemiah's Warning

Nehemiah discovered that some of the believers had *"married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab"* and that many of their children could not even speak the language of Judah, *"but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them, and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying 'You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon, King of Israel, sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God*

made him king over all Israel Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" Nehemiah 13:24-27

Nehemiah drove from the priesthood a man who was married to a pagan. Nehemiah banished him, *"because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan."* Nehemiah 13:28-30

Do Not Follow the Crowd

The Law of God warns the believers against following what is popular: *"You shall not follow a crowd to do evil..."* Exodus 23:2

The Apostle Paul warned: *"Do not be deceived; evil company corrupts good habits."* 1 Corinthians 15:33

Marriage

As part of the Order of Service for Marriage, in the Book of Common Prayer, the minister is required to say to persons about to be married: "I require of you both, as you will answer on the dreadful Day of Judgment when the secrets of all shall be disclosed, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be lawfully married you now confess it. For be assured that those who marry, other than as allowed by God's Word, are not joined together by God, and the marriage is not lawful in His sight."

The Laws of God revealed through Moses prohibited marriage between an Israelite and a Canaanite.

The New Testament warns us not to be *"yoked together with unbelievers"* 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Marriage is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "the act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract, both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself...for promoting domestic felicity and for securing the maintenance and education of children."

Adultery

The 7th Commandment declares: *"You shall not commit adultery."* Exodus 20:14

Webster's Dictionary defines adultery as "Violation of the marriage bed; a crime or civil injury, which introduces, or may introduce, into a family, a spurious offspring... the unfaithfulness of any married person to the marriage bed...all manner of lewdness or unchastity...an unnatural union."

Webster's Dictionary defines adulterate as "To commit adultery, debase by foreign mixture."

Adulterated is defined as: "Corrupted; debased by mixture with something of less value"

God's Will for Marriage

"Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4

The Bible tells us that God seeks "...*godly offspring...*" Malachi 2:15. When God established His Covenant with Abraham, He said: "*And I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant... you shall keep My Covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.*" Genesis 17:7-9

Marriage not only involves two individuals, but two families. We need to honour our parents and seek the guidance of our church leaders when we consider marriage.

Those who became unequally yoked are being short sighted and selfish. They are neither honouring their forefathers nor considering their descendants. Nor are they placing God's Word above their own emotions.

"Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God; the faithful God, who keeps Covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments." Deuteronomy 7:9



CHAPTER 24



ALCOHOL ABUSE

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly! At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: 'They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?'" Proverbs 23:29-35

Hospital Records

It is estimated that up to 30 % of general hospital admissions in South Africa are directly or indirectly related to alcohol use.

A clinical assessment of general hospital admissions found alcohol to be a contributing factor in general trauma cases: in 38% of the admissions in the Cape metropolitan area and 49% in rural communities alcohol was found to be a contributing factor.

Assaults

Almost 80% of all assault patients - both male and female - presented at an urban hospital Trauma Unit in Cape Town were either found to be under the influence of alcohol or injured

because of alcohol related violence. In another study, over 50% of non-natural deaths received at state mortuaries in Cape Town had high levels of blood alcohol concentrations.

Train Accidents

58% of people fatally injured in train related trauma (who either fell from or walked in front of trains) in Cape Town had high blood alcohol concentrations.

Road Accidents

60% of pedestrians involved in collision traumas on the road and then treated in a hospital trauma unit were found to have high blood alcohol concentrations. 48% of trauma patients admitted to the casualty department of the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto on a Saturday night were found to be intoxicated.

Drownings

Over 50 % of those who had died by drowning in greater Cape Town, over a ten year period, were found to have high concentrations of alcohol in their blood stream.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

One study found that the incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in Cape Town is 1 per 281 live births. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome occurs in infants born to women who drink heavily during pregnancy. Signs of this syndrome include mental retardation, poor motor co-ordination, hyper activity, facial abnormalities and malformation of organ systems. Amongst the poorer communities, the incidence of Fetal Alcohol effects are consistently high.

Domestic Violence

The Medical Research Council's National Trauma Research Programme reports that 67% of domestic violence in the Cape Metropolitan area was alcohol related. In a study of women abused by their spouses, 69% identified alcohol/ drug abuse as the main cause of conflict leading to the abuse. 76% of domestic violence in rural areas in the South-Western Cape was found to be alcohol related.

Crime

The National Institute of Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) has reported that alcohol contributes substantially to the high incidence of crime in the country. Their study found that just under half of all male prisoners had consumed alcohol or drugs at the time of, or before committing, their most recent crime.

Business

The Medical Research Council has found that alcohol has a negative effect on the business community due to absenteeism, poor productivity, high job turnover, interpersonal conflicts, injuries and damage to property. One study in the Orange Free State found that 20% of gold mine workers involved in occupational injuries had high concentrations of alcohol in their blood streams. The economic costs associated with alcohol abuse in the work place are likely to be in excess of \$1.7 billion (2% of the gross national product) per year.

Vehicle Accidents

The Medical Research Council's National Trauma Research Programme has estimated that alcohol-related costs associated with pedestrian trauma alone are in excess of \$83 million per

year. The Transport Ministry has estimated that motor vehicle collisions cost the country at least \$1.5 billion per year and that at least 50 % of these vehicle accidents are alcohol related.

Homicides

The National Injury Surveillance System in its "Profile of Fatal and Non-fatal Injuries in South Africa", states that South Africa has "one of the highest per capita alcohol consumption in the world" and "more than three- quarters of homicides perpetrated with a sharp object are alcohol related". Approximately 40% of firearm and 58% of blunt instrument homicide victims have consumed alcohol prior to their fatal injury.

Not only are those perpetrating the crimes likely to be under the influence of alcohol, but the victims also tend to have much higher alcohol levels as well.

What Does the Bible Say About Alcohol Abuse?

"Wine is a mocker, strange drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise"
Proverbs 20:1

"Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat." Proverbs 23:20

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing drunkenness and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly." Luke 21:34

"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy." Romans 13:13

"Nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:10

"It is good neither to... drink wine or do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak." Romans 14:21

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbour, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also - drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord's right hand will be turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory. For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, and the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, because of men's blood and the violence of the land and the city, and all who dwell in it."
Habakkuk 2:15-17

It is also noticeable that total abstinence from strong drink was required of the priests:

"Do not to drink wine or other intoxicating drink... It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations." Leviticus 10:9

"He shall separate himself from wine and similar drink..." Numbers 6:3

It is also mentioned in the book of Proverbs as a standard for rulers:

"It is not for kings,... not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink."
Proverbs 31:4

Two of the most exemplary characters in the Bible, Daniel and John the Baptist, were teetotallers:

"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with wine which he drank..." Daniel 1:8

"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, he will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his birth." Luke 1:15

All Christians are commanded: ***"Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."*** Ephesians 5:18

"Woe to... drunkards... those who are overcome with wine!... drunkards will be trampled underfoot... they also have erred through wine and through intoxicating drink... are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they err in visions, they stumble in judgment. All tables are full of vomit and filth, no place is clean." Isaiah 28:1-8

Deuteronomy 21:20 associates drunkenness with stubbornness, rebellion, gluttony and dishonour to parents.

Isaiah 28:7 associates drunkenness with Spiritual blindness and uselessness.

Isaiah 22:13 associates alcohol with a sense of hopelessness.

Hosea 4:11 associates alcohol abuse with whoredom and deception:

"...they shall commit harlotry, but not increase; because they have ceased obeying the Lord... Harlotry, wine and new wine enslave the heart..." Hosea 4:10-11

Testimonies of Transformation

"He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds."

There are many tens of thousands of Christians worldwide who can testify to how alcohol ruined their life, but how the Lord Jesus Christ freed them from their addiction to alcohol, saved their marriage, restored their health and transformed their lives.

"He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:3

Existentialism, Hedonism and Addictions

Our existential and hedonistic societies produce addicts at a faster rate than ever before in history. The reason for this is that our modern cultures have a "quick-fix", convenience orientated mentality. Our society stresses easy solutions. Our era suffers from values confusion and confused morals. Our culture is heavily orientated towards entertainment. Our culture suffers from disrupted family life. Many children grow up in fragmented, dysfunctional homes. There has been a tremendous loss of community. The average person moves home about every 3 years. Ours is a high stress culture and a very high anxiety and abusive society. In this existential and hedonistic environment, drug and alcohol addictions inevitably abound.

Freedom in Christ

To those bound by addictions, whether to alcohol or drugs or anything else, the Lord Jesus is the One who sets the captives free:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18-19

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

"For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8:2

"For you bretheren, have been called to liberty; only do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

"As free men, yet not using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God." 1 Peter 2:16

"That they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, who having been taken captive by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:26

"Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:36



CHAPTER 25



I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

What are you doing of significance today that will matter a million years from now?

"We must all appear before the Judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

Make a Difference

As a new Christian I confronted one of the worst foul-mouthed blasphemers at my school: *"You're lost! If you were to die today you would go straight to hell!"* Now that is hardly the way we're advised to evangelise. Yet I did lead that pagan to Christ that very night! We must be bold for the Lord. Do something that will make a difference a million years from now!

The Most Important Priority

Dr. James Kennedy was one of the most listened to ministers in the world with a radio and television ministry reaching over 156 countries. The congregation he pastored, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, has a membership of over 9,000, and Dr. Kennedy authored over 45 books. He was Founder and President of Evangelism Explosion International, the Chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary and the Founder of the Centre for Reclaiming America. Yet, I learned that every Thursday night Dr. Kennedy went out into the streets and engaged in door-to-door personal evangelism. So, the first time I met Dr. Kennedy, I asked him: *"I hear that you are still involved, every week, in door-to-door evangelism. I am surprised that you have the time, considering your radio, T. V., writing and preaching ministry."*

Dr. Kennedy responded to me with intensity: *"Peter, that's the most important thing I do! All these ministries around me, I doubt that many of them will endure long after I am gone, but Evangelism Explosion, this ministry of multiplication, reaching the lost, bringing them to Christ and training them to reach others also, this is far more important than all my radio, T. V., and writing ministries."*

Perhaps you thought that there is nothing particularly important that you can do, at least nothing as important as those who have high profile ministries? However, I have found numerous prominent ministers who are convinced that the most important thing that anyone can do is personal one-on-one evangelism.

American evangelist, D.L. Moody, in the 19th Century, preached to huge crowds in America and England. However, he did not consider his day to be complete unless he had engaged in one-on-one personal evangelism. He undertook never to go to bed without having witnessed to one person that day. Preaching to huge crowds in the city hall, or a sports stadium, did not qualify. There are numerous funny stories of D.L. Moody walking the streets late at night, in his dressing gown, looking for a stranger to witness to. On these occasions he had apparently been prepared for bed, only to remember that he had not yet completed his day's duties by personal one-on-one evangelism.

This has been a major emphasis of Ray Comfort's Way of the Master. When I met Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron in Los Angeles they impressed me with their enthusiasm for personal one-on-one evangelism. They have designed numerous effective conversation starters and tools for evangelism to help Christians use The Ten Commandments as *"the schoolmaster to lead us to Christ."*

Yet tragically, the vast majority of churchgoers do not engage in any evangelism at all.

I have made it a principle to incorporate Evangelism Workshops, The Way of the Master training and practical outreaches in our leadership training courses, particularly the **Great Commission Course**. When they register, participants of our various courses are asked: *"Have you ever led someone to Christ?"* Most participants respond: *"No."*

Yet, at the end of our courses, most participants write in their Response Forms that the highlight of the course was the personal, one-on-one evangelism on the streets, in shopping malls, in the prisons, hospitals, townships, door-to-door evangelism, and leading someone to Christ for the first time!

Many Christians are absolutely terrified of witnessing, and yet, when they are forced to try it, are amazed by how open and responsive so many people are for the Gospel of Christ.

I was brought up in a secular family. We never went to church or Sunday school. There was no prayer or Bible reading in our home, not even grace before meals. When I was 17 years old I heard the Gospel for the first time at a cinema, which had been hired by a local church for an evangelistic rally. As the visiting speaker, Rev. Rex Matthie, described the sacrifices and sufferings of Christ, he challenged us: *"This is what Christ has done for you; **what have you ever done for Him?**"*

His challenge pierced my heart. I had done absolutely nothing for Christ. I had never even thanked God for His creation, for my life or for my health. I realised that I was a self-centred, lost sinner, truly deserving the condemnation of Almighty God on the Day of Judgment. When the appeal was made at the end, I walked forward and publicly committed my life to Christ. Right from the beginning of my adventure of discipleship, I could not help but be involved in evangelism: door-to-door evangelism, tract distribution in the streets, ministering in old-age homes, Scripture Union holiday missions, teaching in Sunday school, leading a youth group, running the book table, and evangelism at the railway stations. When I was called up for military service I started a daily Bible study and prayer fellowship, out of which our mission, Frontline Fellowship, ultimately developed.

Coming from a non-Christian background, I knew that there were many hurting people out there who would respond to the Good News, if we would only take the time, and make the effort, to share it with them.

We can learn so much from how naturally children share the Gospel. When my oldest daughter, Andrea, was just 5 years old, we were in an aircraft flying to Europe. It was just after take-off, when Andrea shouted loudly for the entire aircraft to hear: *"**We're Christians!**"* I put down my book, turned to Andrea and said: *"Yes, we are, but why do you bring it up right now?"*

Andrea answered: *"The lady was asking if there are any Christians, we should let her know."* I thought for a moment and answered: *"I think that must have been, 'if there are any questions', we should let her know!"*

Just before this trip, my mother had been taking Andrea shopping at

Cavendish Square. She reported that when a magician called across the mall to Andrea: *"Hey, little girl, come over here; we have magic for you!"* Andrea replied: *"My Lord Jesus does miracles, and that's better than your magic!"*

The magician stood there speechless, as did many of the shoppers passing by. *"Out of the mouths of babes..."*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: *"Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor."* You're either a missionary or a mission field. You're either gathering or scattering.

There are so many hurting people who are looking for truth, meaning and purpose in life. One question that we must continually ask people is: *"When you die, what do you think is on the other side?"* The answers will reveal a lot about where that person is on his spiritual journey.

Mark Cahill's book: *"One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven"*: inspired me. The one thing you can't do in Heaven is to talk with a lost person. Shouldn't it be a priority of your life to reach out to all the lost people on earth while you can?

We are commanded: ***"Preach the Word! Be ready in season, and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching."*** 2 Timothy 4:2

Pray for the people whom God will seat next to you on buses, trains and aeroplanes. If God seats a believer next to you, encourage that person to be a bold man or woman of God. If He puts a non-believer next to you, then give that person the best news he ever heard!

"For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Luke 12:12

The Value of a Soul

We need to realise something of the value of other people in the eyes of Almighty God. What is a soul worth? ***"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul?"***

We need to change our mindset from the dutiful "I have **got** to witness" to "I **get** to witness!" It isn't a burden. It's a privilege! It's not that we've **got** to go to church, but that we **get** to go to church! By just changing a vowel, it goes from being a task to being an opportunity! We get to pray to the Almighty God of the universe! We get to read the Holy Word of God! We get to worship the King of kings! We get to give back some of what God has provided us with and invest it back into the work of His Kingdom!

Jesus Christ commanded us to: ***"Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."*** Mark 16:15

Charles Spurgeon declared: *"If there be anything about which we cannot tolerate lukewarmness, it is in the matter of sending the Gospel to a dying world."*

Win-Win

What are the only three possible things that can happen when we share our Faith?

1. The person can surrender to Jesus Christ;
2. The person can reject Jesus Christ; or
3. We can plant a seed.

Obviously, when people surrender to Christ that is a winning situation, when we plant a seed that is a winning situation. So, 66% of the time that you share your faith, it is a winning situation. Aren't those pretty good odds?

But actually, even when someone rejects the Gospel, you receive a reward for being reproached for the Name of Christ (1 Peter 4:14). Jesus said: ***"Blessed are you, when men hate you, and when they... revile you...for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy! For, indeed, your reward is great in Heaven..."*** Luke 6:22-23

Every time we share our faith it is a winning situation!

Into All the World

Wherever satan draws people together, it is an opportunity for us to witness to them. At shopping malls, sporting events, coffee shops, university campuses, parties, music concerts, art festivals, beaches, laundromats, bus stations - all these are great places where we can witness and hand out Gospel tracts.

Let us take the light of the Gospel into the darkness and watch how the Lord works in amazing ways. Choose to go out witnessing on dates. Why can't a date consist of going to the mall to witness? Witnessing to strangers in the mall can be great fun.

We need to be ready to do crazy things in love for the lost around us. They will never forget it. The more we know of the Word of God, and the more we share in love, the more we find people are listening. You will be amazed at what you encounter when you step out in faith and begin conversations about Eternity.

Every time we share our faith it is a winning situation. The only time we lose when it comes to witnessing is when we **don't** share our Faith.

Charles Spurgeon declared: *"I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unravel all the mysteries of the Divine Word, for salvation is the one thing we are to live for."*

Oswald J. Smith said: *"O my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the real work of the church, that of evangelising the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected!"*

Excuses, Excuses

We should desire to be used by God in what really matters to His Kingdom. But, although we know that we should witness, there are many reasons why we don't boldly step out and share our faith, such as fear of rejection or fear of losing a friend. *"I don't know how to"; "I don't know enough"; "I just witness by my life" and "I'm just lazy!"*

The prime reason cited by young people for why they don't share their faith is fear of losing a friend. But what kind of friendship do you really have if you would go to Heaven when you die, but your friend would go to Hell? If you are friends for 20 years, then separated for a million plus years, what kind of friendship is that? If you are not eternal friends, are you really friends at all?

Are you more worried about what people think of you, or about what God thinks of you? Don't worry about losing friends by witnessing to them. When they see and hear the love of Jesus coming from you, you will have more friends than you know what to do with.

Some people say that they aren't interested in "all this Jesus stuff", because they want to be "cool." We can tell them: *"Do you know what cool is? Going to Heaven on the day you die - now that is cool! Do you know what really cool is? Going to Heaven when you die and bringing a whole lot of people with you. Now that is really cool! Going to Hell is definitely not cool!"*

Didn't someone lead you to Christ? If so you actually do know how to lead someone to the Lord.

According to a survey by Christianity Today, only 1% of their readership had witnessed to someone "recently."

Probably the reason most people don't share their faith is that they don't really have any faith to share. Charles Spurgeon said: *"Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that!"*

If you have a theology that's dwindled into a philosophy, in which there is no thrill of faith, no terror of doom and no concern for souls, then unbelief and worldliness have taken over.

If God gave you a thousand rand every time you shared your faith in Jesus Christ, would you share your faith more? Would you deal with your laziness problem for the love of money when you won't deal with it for the love of God?

We can never repay Jesus for what He did for us on the Cross, but what a fantastic **Thank You** we can give Him each time we step out and share our faith with the lost!

Frequently we hear people say: *"I'm just going to share my faith by my actions."*

To them we could say: *"Oh, you must be thinking of Romans 1:16, 'I'm ashamed of the Gospel of Christ...'"*

"But that isn't what the verse says."

"That's true - the verse actually states: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...'" When we don't want to talk about our faith, it is usually because we are ashamed of what people might think of us.

When you ask Christians how they were converted they tend to say: *"My parents led me to Jesus"; "A friend led me to Christ"; "I responded to a sermon..."* Everyone admits that they are a Christian today because somebody verbally explained the Gospel to them, yet now some want to come up with a new way to share the faith - where you don't have to use **words?**

"For whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of Peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!.. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.'" Romans 10:13-17

Prayer Preparation

Usually most people we approach are interested in conversations. Always assume that people do want to talk about Eternity. It is important to pray that the Lord will lead you to lost people during the day and that He will prepare their hearts.

The best way to learn is to teach. Witnessing is one of the best ways that you will learn more about your faith. When you talk with lost people and can't answer their questions, it drives you to the Bible and other books to find the answers. Also, your prayer life changes. As you meet hurting people and want them to know the Lord, you begin to pray more for others and not just for yourself.

Be a Giver

People love gifts, so give them a gift that communicates the greatest Gift ever given, Jesus Christ! The *Jesus* film, *The Passion of the Christ* and *What if Jesus had Never Been Born?* are great films to lend, or give, to your friends, neighbours and family members. Plant Gospel seeds - a presentation of the Gospel on a small piece of paper, a postcard, a booklet, CD or DVD. Share your faith with tracts and audio-visual presentations. As we walk through shopping centres, or airports, hand out tracts. Ask people, "*Did you get one of these?*" This is a great question that makes them feel as if they are missing out on something. And they are.

How will we feel on Judgement Day when God asks us what we plan to do with all that money now that we are dead. The income he blessed us with was intended to support missions, buy Bibles and help spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Be a giver. ***"It is more blessed to give than to receive."***

Stock up with great Gospel literature. Give Gospel tracts to shop attendants, petrol attendants, passers-by and friends and neighbours. Include carefully selected appropriate leaflets with your letters or bills. Subscribe to good Christian magazines for friends and family members. Give gifts that will bless your friends, family and co-workers. Select great books, DVDs and CDs or study Bibles. Invite friends to your home to watch a suitable Christian film together.

Improve your evangelistic training by completing the Evangelism Explosion and *Way of the Master* courses and by participating in the *Great Commission Course*.

The last command of Christ must be our first concern.

The pocket on your shirt is a tract pocket. It is meant to hold Gospel tracts so that you can have them conveniently on hand to give to people you come into contact with during the day. Always have some tracts with you, in your car, bag, briefcase or wallet. Be prepared.

"To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new Heaven here upon earth." Charles Spurgeon.

What Then?

We can be guaranteed that no matter how long we live, we will be dead a whole lot longer. Since that is true you should be searching out what is on the other side, because you will be there a whole lot longer than you will be here on earth.

Ask people about their plans and then: "*What then?*" Right up to beyond retirement and death. "*What then?*" Remember, Eternity is an awfully long time! Make sure you've got the right answer.

Make a friend. Be a friend. Lead a friend to Christ!

87% of all people who come to Jesus are introduced through a friend.

One advert for responsible driving declares: "*A real friend doesn't let a friend drive drunk.*" I would say that a real friend doesn't let a friend go to hell. A real friend tells a friend about Jesus! If you want to see your friends in Heaven - invite them! It is our responsibility to invite others to Heaven with us. It is their responsibility to decide how they are going to respond to this invitation.

We will never regret bringing up the topic of God with people. The only regret we will have is when we don't bring it up.

"If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap into hell over our bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees...Let not one go there unwarned or unprayed for." Charles Spurgeon.

Loaded Questions

Sometimes go to somebody and say: *"I need some directions. Can you help me out?"* People answer, *"Sure, where do you want to go?"* *"I'm trying to get to Heaven, do you know how to get there?"*

If the person says Yes, find out why. If he says No, ask if he would like to know the way.

Another way to transition to spiritual topics is to say: *"Can I ask you an interesting question?"* or *"Can I ask you a tough question?"* This helps to pique curiosity and get people thinking.

Where are you on your spiritual journey?

"If you died tonight, do you know for sure that you would go to Heaven ?

"If you were to die tonight and stand before Almighty God and He asked, 'Why shall I let you into My Heaven?' What would you say?"

"Do you want to go to Heaven? Do you know how to get there?"

As you share your faith, there are three things you should talk about in every conversation: sin, salvation (repentance and the Cross) and the Saviour (who He is and what He has done). For people to understand their need of salvation it is vital that they understand God's Law. ***"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."*** Psalm 19:7

"Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:24

Are You a Good Person?

One of the biggest lies satan tells the lost is that they will be good enough for God on Judgement Day.

Ask people: *"Would you consider yourself to be a good person?"* Most people will respond that they are very good. Then you can point out that God has given us a standard. *"How many of The Ten Commandments can you remember?"* *"Would you mind if I asked you a few questions to see how you are doing?"* *"Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever stolen anything? Have you ever taken God's Name in vain? Have you ever looked with lust? Have you ever hated anyone?"* Most people would have to admit to each of these.

After taking a couple of minutes to review The Ten Commandments you can then point out: *"By your own admission, you have told me that you are a liar, a thief, a blasphemer, an adulterer at heart and a murderer at heart. If God was to judge you on the basis of His Ten Commandments would you be innocent or guilty? If you were to die today, would you go to Heaven or Hell?"*

Be bold in sharing your faith with the lost. To be a missionary you don't have to cross the sea; you just have to see the Cross.

A missionary friend in Japan shared this poem with me:

*"When He saw a need would our Lord just wait?
Would He make an excuse to procrastinate?
If He had the means, would He not reach out?
And if you can too, then why do you wait?
"Let us be His hands, Let us be His feet,
Giving life and love to the ones we meet,
Bringing hope and cheer to those far and near,
Sharing clothes and home, sharing bread and meat
"Calm the anxious fear, Wipe the falling tear,
Lift the fallen ones to the Risen Son
We can make a difference to the life of one,
Then we'll hear our Saviour, when He says 'Well done!'"*

In my Bible I have written a chorus from the 1970s:

"Hear the call of the Lord and set the world ablaze;
Stop awhile, hear His Message and there'll be happy days;
Do His work and obey, and ask no reward,
Then we'll build a new world far our Lord.

"We'll tell the world of our Lord and spread the News abroad,
Then all sinners will know that He loves them so.
Just let Jesus reign and be born again
Is to live in the world of His love.

"Don't be shy. Don't be scared what people think or say.
Tell the world of our Saviour and His love every day,
Let your Faith be your shield and the Bible your sword,
Then we'll build a new world far our Lord."

In the words of that great Hymn ***Rescue the Perishing***:

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep over the erring one, lift up the fallen.
Tell them of Jesus the Mighty to save...
"Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labour the Lord will provide;
Back to the Narrow Way, patiently win them;
Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died."



CHAPTER 26



CONFRONTING CRISIS WITH CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE

We are living in a time of crisis, chaos, crime and corruption. Yet all too many in our churches are confused, cowardly and compromising.

During a recent mission trip throughout the country I learned of many disturbing developments, farm murders, land invasions, endemic crime and corruption, the break down of services and erosion of the very foundations of civilisation. My son, Calvin, and I learned a lot about our nation's history and heritage as we visited mission stations, schools, churches, battle sites and museums. We also learned much about the many different facets of the crisis confronting our country.

Deforestation and Arson

We saw vast tracts of land burned out and deforested. A man involved in forestry informed us that South Africa is approximately 60% deforested. Many of the recent fires have been the result of arson linked with land claims. MONDI and SAPPI, the two largest suppliers of paper, have particularly been targeted for land claims, and have suffered huge amounts of arson against their forests. Yet, despite this ecological disaster, I've read no articles in the newspapers, or on the internet, concerning it and had physically to drive around the country to learn of these developments.

Universalism and Syncretism

One minister reported to me on the extent of universalism and syncretism in the Methodist denomination. He had been present when two candidates for ordination were questioned concerning their beliefs. They both made it very clear that they did not believe that Jesus was the only way of salvation, but that all other religions were valid ways to God. For this reason this man, along with two others, voted against the ordination of these candidates. However, most of the other Methodist ministers voted for the ordination of these universalists and syncretists. Then the three men who had dared to suggest that these candidates were not worthy of ordination, were targeted for vindictive abuse. One of the results was that this minister, who was reporting the incident to me, was expelled from the denomination. A young Zulu doctor came to him and informed him that, in fact, the vast majority of the Methodist ministers at this conference were themselves involved in ancestor worship and syncretism. *"They all have the beads around their waist, and goat skins around their ankles and wrists. They cannot condemn ancestor worship in these candidates, when they are doing it themselves!"*

A New Slave Trade

At the Christians for Truth Conference we received a most disturbing report from Doctors For Life concerning the prevalence of human trafficking. This modern-day slave trade is making huge inroads in our own country, in particular in preparation for the 2010 World Cup Soccer. The DFL reports exposed the deception and drugs used to ensnare vulnerable girls into prostitution, where they are used and abused by pimps in brothels.

The AIDS Plague

If we needed further confirmation of the crisis of crime and corruption in the country, it was from a dynamic congregation which runs a hospital for AIDS sufferers and orphans. The hospital administrator informed me that officially 39,6% of the general population in South Africa are HIV positive. While more than 80% of the people being tested in the hospitals in KwaZulu Natal have AIDS, it is believed that this is double the general average. The fact that almost 40 % of the total population of South Africa could be infected by AIDS is shocking.

Quite aside from this medical crisis we discovered that there is a moral crisis in many churches where people have another kind of AIDS (Acquired Integrity Deficiency Syndrome).

Character Assassins

At a dynamic mission which hosts a Christian community radio station we discovered that some unscrupulous individuals were attempting to hijack the ministry through a combination of character assassination, deceit and intrigue.

Capturing the Culture

Throughout the country we saw evidence that Marxists are stealing our country, stealing our children and stealing our history. They are also attempting to hijack our churches and tell us what marriage is and whom we can employ at church!

Promoting Perversion

The ANC government has had the audacity to attempt to intimidate Christian ministers to accept and endorse perversion. What God calls an abomination we are now meant to regard as a marriage! Not content with interfering with a sacrament of the Church, the state is now demanding that a church apologise for firing a staff member who was an unrepentant pervert. This congregation, which had dared to exercise church discipline, is now also expected to reward the immoral ex-staff member financially.

Subverting Society

We are involved in a World War of Worldviews. This is nothing less than a battle for Western civilisation. Ultimately we are engaged in a world war between the forces of satan and the Kingdom of God. The enemy is subverting society and seducing the church into sin.

Hijacked by Humanism

What has happened? How has Humanism hijacked our culture? And how did communists gain control of our government? How did it come to the point where church synods are even debating what constitutes marriage and whether satan or Hell exist?

Infiltration and Infection

Plainly, Marxists have been infiltrating the five culture-shaping institutions of society. Our **education** institutions have been subverted by evolutionism, situation ethics, sex education and values clarification. The **entertainment** industry has been so subverted as to glamourise evil, popularise profanity and celebrate ugliness. In all too many sections of the news media reality is being rearranged by a selective focus, and rather than news, we are receiving humanist views and propaganda. Many **religious** institutions have been liberalised, ecumenicised and syncretised in order to harmonise with the New Age.

Legalising Vice and Criminalising Virtue

Considering the infiltration and subversion of education, entertainment, the news media and religious institutions, it is not surprising that in all too many of the **political** institutions, socialism and secular humanism have succeeded in legalising vice, criminalizing virtue and disarming potential victims, in preparation for a new world order.

Failures of our Churches

On the church's side we need to recognise that this disastrous hijacking of our culture has been enabled by prayerlessness, neglect of the Bible, gullibility, naiveté and ignorance of history. All of these have combined to enable pagans to entice an entire civilisation into chaos. The enemy has used the time proven tactics of "*corrupt and conquer*" and "*confuse, divide and conquer*."

Distracted and Diverted

We have been distracted from fulfilling the Great Commission and diverted from obeying the cultural mandate. Through guilt manipulation, the rewriting of history and the distortion of reality, Christians have been overwhelmed, undermined and neutralized.

Learning From History

I could not help but see these trends illustrated in the various battle sites and museums we visited. The gullibility of Boer leader Piet Retief in trusting the words of the tyrant Dingaan, leaving his rifles outside the kraal, led to, not only the massacre of Piet Retief and his hundred disarmed followers, but the massacre of hundreds of Boer women and children on the banks of the Bloukrans River.

A Winning Strategy

By way of contrast, the *Wencommando* of Andries Pretorius concentrated their forces, ensured that their scouts knew the disposition of the enemy, and made excellent use of the *laager* strategy, circling the wagons at a strategic location, with the Ncome River on one side and a donga on the other, in order to funnel the Zulu assault towards their *laager* and determined men.

A Recipe for Disaster

Similarly we can contrast the disastrous British defeat at Isandhlwana with the stunning British victory at Rorkes Drift. General Lord Chelmsford unwisely split his forces three ways when invading Zululand in 1879. He then again split his central column in two, only to have the remainder annihilated by an overwhelming Zulu attack. Isandhlwana provided no end of lessons for the British Army: Do not split your forces in the face of a superior enemy. Do not spread out your forces when facing an overwhelming assault. The British at Isandhlwana failed to build any trenches or ramparts. Their wagons formed no *laager*. Their men were inadequately equipped with ammunition. In short order the Zulus annihilated a regiment of over 1,200 men.

Yet a far smaller British rear guard company at Rorkes Drift succeeded in defeating the Zulus who had that same day annihilated a British regiment ten times their number. Lieutenant Chard, although he had barely 130 men, of whom more than 30 were medical patients and out of action, concentrated his forces and made maximum use of cover by heaping up food sacks

and biscuit tins as rampart. Barely 100 men succeeded, where over a thousand had failed earlier that same day.

Hope for the Future

Throughout the country I have been asked this question: **What hope is there for the future?**

God is sovereign and all-powerful. He is working all things together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose. There is power in prayer, and the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. God is chastening His people. He is purging us and preparing us to make us more prayerful and powerful in His service. We need to understand the times and rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Humanism is Self Destructive

Humanist society will inevitably collapse it is self-destructive. What a man sows, that shall he reap. The AIDS plague and sexually transmitted diseases will reap a bitter harvest of death for millions who have sown in the flesh. Zimbabwe is a classic example of the self-destruction that humanist societies bring upon themselves.

A Vision of Victory

God is sovereign over the affairs of men. History is His Story. God has not predestined defeat for His people. The ultimate victory of the Kingdom of God is inevitable. Christians are not doomed to defeat, but called to conquest.

We are called to be Salt and Light to preserve what is good, to expose what is bad, and to create thirst for the Living Waters of Jesus Christ. We are commanded to make disciples of all nations, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded. We are to evangelise or fossilize. Pray or perish. The last command of Christ must be our first concern. We must give up our small ambitions and follow Christ. The Great Commission must be our supreme ambition. We are working towards the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission and the complete and utter destruction of Communism, Islam and Humanism.

"Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potters vessel Now be wise therefore, O kings be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear..." Psalm2:8-11

"All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations." Psalm22:27-28

"In His days the righteous shall flourish... shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth... His enemies will lick the dust... all kings shall fall down before Him; and all nations shall serve Him." Psalm72: 11

In these and so many other Psalms it is made clear that the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ will be fulfilled. All the families of the nations will bow down before Christ, and He will rule the nations. Because of these Scriptural prophecies we can have every confidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled - that all kings will bow down to Christ and all nations will serve Him. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid for the result. God's cause will triumph.

"The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." Revelation 11:15

Our Christian Duty

Our duty is clear: We are commanded to pray (*"Therefore I exhort, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercession and giving of thanks be made for... all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."* 1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Repent (*"If My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* 2 Chronicles 7:14).

Expose evil (*"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."* Ephesians 5:11).

Rebuild the walls (*"... You see the distress that we are in; how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach."* Nehemiah 2:17).

Seek justice (*"... cease to do evil. Learn to do good! Seek justice..."* Isaiah 1:16-17).

Select God-fearing leaders (*"Moreover you shall select capable men from all the people, able men such as fear God, men of truth - hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers..."* Exodus 18:21).

Pro-Abortionists Removed

As we saw one political administration topple so dramatically, we were reminded of the **Imprecatory Prayer Proclamation** warning which we delivered to the President's office and prayed outside the parliamentary gates on 1 February. This Imprecatory Prayer Proclamation warned that should he not repent of the great sin of killing innocent pre-born babies, that we would pray that he be removed and another take his place.

God is sovereign. He raises up and brings down kings and presidents. Jesus Christ is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. We praise God for the power of His Word, the Bible and for the power of His mighty answers to prayer.

A Time for Action

With elections coming up next year, and the toppling of the pro-abortion administration of Thabo Mbeki, we have a new opportunity to mobilise prayer and action for the right to life of pre-born babies. We must do all we can to inform, inspire and involve congregations and communities in standing for the right to life of pre-born babies. Let us educate, encourage and enlist our family and friends in opposing the violence of abortion and promoting adoption as a loving option. We need to motivate and mobilise others to make a positive difference in their community. We must educate and enlist our work colleagues on Biblical issues.

A New Opportunity

The old Mbeki administration, with its ideological intransigence and elitism, has gone and in its place is now a far more populist leadership who seems to be more responsive to public concerns. This can be for good and ill. That should be a great challenge for citizens to be

more informed, involved and vocal. It is time for the silent majority to stand up, step out and speak out for pro-life, pro-family, moral Biblical issues.

Turning the Tide

So often Christians see our position like that of the Dutch - building dykes to keep out the ocean tides from their land, much of which lies below sea level. Perhaps you have heard the story of the young Dutch boy putting his finger in the hole in the dyke to stop a leak while his sister went to raise the alarm and get help. Many Christians see our position in a similar way. The tide of humanism and atheism threatens to overwhelm and flood everything we love and hold dear. We are trying to hold back the tide of this ocean of paganism.

However, we should consider the fact that the situation is actually the reverse. It is not our calling to hold back the tide of paganism, but rather to turn the tide of Christianity. Time, history and the power of Almighty God are on our side. It is the humanists who are frantically building dykes to keep out the rising tide of Christianity. We are called to be the light of the world. All the darkness cannot put out the smallest light. Even a small flickering candle can defeat the darkness around it. Not all the darkness can put out even the smallest candle.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

"The Lord will be awesome to them for he will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him, each from his place." Zephaniah 2: 11

"The Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be - 'The Lord is one/and His Name the only one.'" Zechariah 14:9

Power From on High

He has granted us the keys of the Kingdom; what we bind on earth will be bound, what we loose will be loosed. The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1: 16). We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us (Romans 8:37). Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). We can do all things in Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

The Great Commission is Our Supreme Ambition

This is what the Great Commission calls us to: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."* Matthew 28:18-19

God's Will be Done

This is what it means to pray the Lord's Prayer: *"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* Matthew 6:10

When we understand this, it becomes clear that it is, in fact, the paranoid atheists and humanists who are desperately trying to plug up all the cracks in their dykes as the rising tide of Christianity threatens to sweep away all their filth and rebellion against Almighty God.

Cracks in the Dykes

There are many encouraging cracks in the dykes: Successful films like Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*, C.S. Lewis' *Narnia* series, the *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* film; *Amazing Grace*, the film on the victory of William Wilberforce against the slave trade; the *Hansie* movie, and *Fire Proof*, are putting cracks into the dykes of humanism in Hollywood.

In South Africa, Christian community radio stations like Good News Community Radio, Radio Kwezi and Radio Tygerberg are breaking the secular humanist monopoly of the air waves. JOY! magazine is breaking into what has been a secular-dominated market in the magazine racks of shops and supermarkets. There is a great spiritual hunger growing with tens of thousands of men turning out to Angus Buchan's *Mighty Men's Conference* and at the rallies at Loftus Versveld and Newlands Cricket Stadium.

The rise in Christian schooling and home schooling, the growth of Focus on the Family and Summit Ministries, the establishment of the Creation Museum near Cincinnati in the USA, all of these represent seismic events which are putting cracks in the dykes of humanism. These are only a small foretaste of the coming Spiritual tsunami, when God chooses to send a Spiritual Revival that will fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water. The dykes of humanism cannot stand. It is for us to remain steadfast, immovable, faithful, diligent and energetic for the Kingdom of God. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling,"

"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His Name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end." Hebrews 6:10-11

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ Therefore, My beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:57-58



CHAPTER 27



HEART CRY FOR REVIVAL

"Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" Psalm 85:6

During a ministry trip to Wales, I had the privilege of being a speaker at a congress and preaching in a Welsh church. They were celebrating the Centenary of the Welsh Revival.

Joseph Jenkins, a minister in Cardiganshire, had been seeking a deeper devotional life with the Lord and had experienced an intense love of God in his life. On 1 January 1904, he had a

Deeper Spiritual Life Convention, encouraging others to seek the fire of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

I Love the Lord With All My Heart!

On the 14th February 1904, at a Sunday church service, a 16-year-old girl, Florie Evans, stood to her feet and publicly confessed: "*I love the Lord Jesus with all my heart.*" As she spoke these words, the Holy Spirit seemed to fill the meeting.

Many saw this as the beginning of the Revival. After church meetings were held to seek the Lord's presence and empowerment. Many young people, particularly girls and women in their teens and early twenties began spending extended periods of time in intense prayer, seeking the Lord's face.

O Lord Bend Us!

On 29th September 1904, evangelist Seth Joshua was addressing a convention near Cardigan. Seth had been praying for years that God would raise up a young man from the Coal mines to be used to inspire Revival in Wales. That night he saw his prayer answered. When 26-year-old student Evan Roberts made a heart rendering plea, "*Oh, Lord, bend us!*" the congregation was so gripped with this prayer that Wales made this the prayer of their heart.

Evan Roberts began to speak of an extraordinary work of God in spiritual Revival. He began testifying at his church in Moriah, Lougor, that those who were seeking a deeper spiritual life with the Lord should join him in extended prayer.

Souls Saved and Lives Transformed

At the extraordinary church services, after-meetings and prayer meetings, churches were packed, souls were saved and individual lives were transformed. The societies themselves were changed as countless numbers of souls came to Christ. It was estimated that over 150,000 people came to Christ in Wales in the first 6 months of this move of God. Pubs and bars became empty. Brothels closed down. Men and women who used to waste their money getting drunk then began buying clothes and food for their families, and supporting their churches and neighbours with what they used to squander in drunkenness and gambling.

Theft and other crimes became less frequent, and often a magistrate came to court and found that there were no cases for him to try. Men who had previously used foul language began to sing God's praises. The pit ponies became confused, because the men who had previously cursed and abused them were now so kind and clean spoken that they did not understand the orders that were being given! The ponies had literally to be retrained as they only had been used to cursing and beatings.

The dark tunnels underground in the mines echoed with songs of praises, hymns and prayers, instead of crude speech, coarse jokes and gossip.

People who were in debt and careless about paying their bills came and made free restitution, paying back all that they had owed. Marriages which had split up and people who had fallen out were reconciled. Wales became a God-fearing nation.

Not only were the churches filled to overflowing, but the prayer meetings were packed, vibrant and intense as people sought the Lord and poured out their hearts in prayer.

Keys to Revival

Pastors involved in the Welsh Revival regularly spoke of four keys to Revival:

- 1. Confess all known sin to God, receiving forgiveness by the blood of Jesus Christ.**
- 2. Remove anything from your life that you are in doubt or feel unsure, about.**
- 3. Be totally yielded and obedient to the Holy Spirit.**
- 4. Publicly confess the Lord Jesus Christ and share the Gospel with your neighbours.**

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You." Psalm 51:10-13

Is Revival the Desire of Your Heart?

Are you praying for a great spiritual awakening that will change our cities and our country? Is it your prayer that God may be honoured and glorified in all areas of life?

"Restore us, O God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!" Psalm 80:7

Revivals are a sovereign move of God initiated by the Holy Spirit working through consecrated men and women. A study of the Revivals in the Bible and in history reveal that all Revivals begin with a deeper appreciation for the Holiness of God and a realization of how offensive our sin must be in the sight of our Holy God.

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7



CHAPTER 28



THE ULSTER REVIVAL OF 1859

"Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" Psalm 85:6

During a recent mission to Europe, I had the privilege of visiting sites connected with the 1859 Ulster Revival. The local churches were celebrating the 150th anniversary of this mighty move of God. I purchased a number of books on the Revival and had the privilege of travelling with two of the authors of these books to key Revival sites and hearing their dynamic testimonies.

Can You Not Do Something More For God?

Rev. J.H. Moore exhorted young men in a Bible class to "Do something more for God. Could you not gather at least six of your careless neighbours ... and spend one hour with them reading and searching the Word of God?"

The Prayer Meeting in a School House

In response James McQuilkin, Jeremiah Meneely, Robert Carlisle and John Wallace began a weekly prayer meeting in an old school house near Kells. They met every Friday night from September 1857 through the long and cold winter. As they read and meditated upon the Scripture their hearts began to burn with an unquenchable fire from heaven, which set all Ulster ablaze for God.

Answers to Prayer

They believed in the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture and the secret of holy supplication. They studied the Word and prayed for three months before there were any visible results. Two more men joined their group and then on New Year's Day, 1858, the first conversion took place as a result of the prayer meeting. By the end of 1858, about 50 young men were taking part in the weekly prayer meeting.

Opposition and Criticism

Many people ridiculed these young men praying for Revival. Others criticized their determination not to allow women in their prayer meeting. The young men responded that they did not believe it advisable to allow women in their prayer meeting, as the world would have said that the meetings were being held only for the purposes of flirtation. As it happened, young women started their own prayer meeting, which was also greatly blessed.

Humble Beginnings

Edwin Orr wrote of these humble beginnings of the 1859 Revival: "This Revival which originated in a prayer meeting of four young men in the village school house of Kells made a greater impact spiritually on Ireland than anything else known since the days of St. Patrick."

Spring

Faith grew. Hope brightened. The power of prayer began to be known, felt and seen. A contemporary account describes the Year of Grace in this way; "The winter was passed; the time of the singing of birds had come. Humble, grateful, loving, joyous converts multiplied... the great concerns of eternity were realised as they had never been before... Many walked about in deep anxiety about the one thing needful; while others rejoiced in the experience of a present peace and a complete salvation... The community was altogether changed in its outward aspects, and a pervading seriousness prevailed... a total transformation has been effected in the hearts and lives of those who were the subjects of the change; and throughout all the neighbourhood was heard thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

Conviction of Sin

Church services and prayer meetings began to be attended by "an immense audience, filled to capacity, with much earnestness, many appeared to be in deep mental concern."

"Pubs and bars were closed by the conversion of their owners and for want of trade."

Prayer meetings began to multiply. "Ernest heart searching and prayers of burning fervency pervaded. There was an uncommon thirsting for the Word ... Strong men staggered and fell down under the wounds of their conscience ... Their frames trembled with wringing hands, streams of tears and a look of unutterable anguish, they confessed their sins in tones of unmistakable sincerity, and appealed to the Lord for mercy with a cry of piercing earnestness ...'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my sinful soul; Lord Jesus come to my burning heart; Lord, pardon my sins; O come and lift me from these flames of hell!"

At Ballymena, April 1859, on market day, a man about 30 years of age suddenly fell upon his knees and "alarmed the entire neighbourhood by loud and desperate cries expressing the most appalling agony. 'Lord be merciful to me a sinner!'... There was an overpowering conviction that a great Revival had come at last. Careless men were bowed in unaffected earnestness and sobbed like children. Churches were crowded. Family worship became almost universal. There was joy unutterable."

The School in Coleraine

In Coleraine, in Antrim County, at the local school, a school teacher seeing one young boy clearly under the conviction of sin, advised him to go home and call upon the Lord in private. He sent with him an older boy who had found peace the day before.

After these two boys had travailed in prayer for some time, the young boy was blessed with sacred peace and rejoicing. He returned to the school, and with beaming face, reported to his teacher; "Oh Sir, I am so happy, I have the Lord Jesus in my heart!"

Strange words in cold times, natural words in a time of Revival. But the attention of the whole class was arrested. One boy after another silently slipped out of the classroom and after a while the schoolteacher looked out to see boys on their knees throughout the playground, each one in earnest prayer. He turned to the two boys and asked them; "Do you think you can go and pray with these boys?" They did so and kneeling down with one after another, they began to implore the Lord to forgive their sins for the sake of Him who had borne them all upon the Cross. Silent grief soon turned into bitter cries.

As these cries reached the girls' school, they too fell upon their knees and wept in grief over their sins. The cries of the boys and girls at school reached passers-by in the adjoining streets and conviction of sin came upon them and they fell on their knees in the streets pleading to the Lord for mercy. It seemed as if every available spot was filled with sinners seeking God. Pastors and men of prayer were sought and they spent the rest of the day in counselling and praying with these mourners. "The sweetest of all toils that this earth witnesses, when men labour and intercede for those who are broken hearted by the sight of their sins ... dinner was forgotten, tea was forgotten, and it was not until 11 o' clock at night that the school premises were freed from their unexpected guests."

The Market Place

An open-air meeting was held to hear testimonies from those who had been converted. Masses of people from town and country began to pour into the square. It became clear that the multitude could not hear the voices of the speakers on the platform, so it was suggested that the people should separate into different groups and that different ministers should preach to each group. This was immediately done.

One of the ministers testified afterward; "I never saw before, in any audience, the same searching, earnest, riveted look fixed upon my face as they strained up to me from almost every eye in that hushed and awe struck multitude. I remember while I was speaking, asking myself, How is this? Why is this?"

"A very peculiar cry arose at one side of the square and in less than 10 minutes the whole multitude was overcome with conviction of sin." The minister testified of how he spent the rest of the night counseling and praying with individuals under the conviction of sin. "When the morning dawned, and the sun rose I was wandering from street to street, and from house to house, on the most marvelous and solemn errand upon which I have ever been sent."

The next day the marketplace was a scene of a dense multitude gathering for the preaching of the Gospel and prayer. Many more than on the previous evening sank upon the ground and with bitter cries besought the Lord Jesus Christ to come in mercy to their souls.

The New Town Hall

The new Town Hall of Coleraine had just been completed and it was suggested that those under conviction of sin might gather there for further counsel. In the Coleraine Town Hall, there is kept a copy of the Word of God, which was purchased to serve as a memorial to this time of Divine visitation. In the Bible is inscribed "It is meant to be a memorial of the first opening of the new Town Hall of Coleraine, when, upon the night of the 9th June 1859, nearly 100 persons, agonized in mind through conviction of sin, and entirely prostrated in body, were borne into that building to obtain shelter during the night and to receive consolation, instructions and prayer from Christian ministers and Christian people."

Fruit of Revival

"Full sanctuaries, full Sabbath schools, full prayer meetings, brotherly love, increased generosity and additions by the hundreds to the communion of the churches, these are the fruits that remain" of the summer Revival of 1859 in Coleraine.

Spiritual Hunger

In a church service in Linenhall Street, Belfast, individuals came under severe conviction of sin. At the end of the Tuesday evening meeting, after the dismissal, the people stayed behind in the hundreds. The service was re-convened, as people yearned for peace with God.

What Must I do to Be Saved?

One man stopped a minister on the street and urgently demanded: "What must I do to be saved? I have been a hypocrite and a formalist for nearly 40 years; I have been walking through life with a veil over my eyes, and I feel such a burden of sin, that if I do not get relief I must die and be damned!"

The Belfast Music Hall

A united meeting for prayer was held in the Belfast Music Hall. The Mayor was in the chair, and nearly a hundred ministers of all denominations filled the platform. The building was crowded to excess.

The Botanical Gardens

Soon the Botanical Gardens had to be thrown open for the vast crowd that gathered such as never before had been seen in the North of Ireland.

Resolution

One eye-witness declared: "It was the most impressive spectacle I ever witnessed ... thousands of sturdy and resolute men were congregated ... with a stern purpose... with their Bibles in their hands... pouring on as in an unceasing stream..."

Salvation

In Belfast it appeared that the whole population was attending the prayer meetings and open-air meetings with the deepest seriousness and concern about eternal things. Everyone gave himself to the prayerful reading of the Bible. The city was filled with anxiety about Salvation.

Street People Saved

One humble, devout Christian woman led twenty prostitutes to Salvation and rescued them out of sin and misery. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord."

A Foretaste of Heaven

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord."

In some cases schools had to be dismissed because of the children being stricken down with conviction of sin. One pastor reported "The joy of converts, the cry of penitence, the wailing of friends ... The Holy Ghost was there indeed as a mighty rushing wind ... We saw their eyes beaming with the light of Heaven, their light shining like angels, their hearts heaving with the love of Jesus and their hands clapping with joy before the God of Jacob... A foretaste of Heaven. All was in accordance with order, nothing extravagant... God was there; and all were bowed before Him. To Him be the Glory!"

Unable to Sing

At one communion service, Rev. J.R. Dill, reported, "Such a deep influence of the Spirit came down upon their hearts that they were utterly unable to proceed with singing the words, 'My Body broken thus I give.' Nothing was heard but sobbing."

The Mill

One poor man who was converted became most anxious for the conversion of his fellow workers in the mill. However, his fellow workmen mocked, swore and sang impure songs to distress him. He resolved to pray for them. Suddenly, one day, the men in the mill were astonished by cries coming from their homes nearby. The business in the mill was suspended, and the men rushed to their houses to see what was causing these cries.

They found their wives and daughters prostrate under strong conviction of sin, crying out for mercy to the Lord. The men quickly requested the new convert to come and pray with their family members. Soon the weeping penitents became rejoicing converts.

Some days later the mill again had to be stopped, but this time it was because the men, while engaged at their work, became arrested and smitten down with the conviction of sin. Some of the strongest men and greatest scoffers in the country fell powerless in a moment under the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit. Strong men prostrated themselves on the ground and cried out for mercy. This time it was their wives and daughters who came rushing over to the mill to pray with them, with tears of joy, and they returned thanks to God for His mighty works.

Desperation

Rev. W. Magill, wrote of "Something strange and wonderful... happening in Dundrod." Then a messenger came to summon him home, as one of his daughters "had taken strangely ill." At his house he heard his daughter crying out in a loud voice: "O Christ, help me! Lord Jesus, save my guilty soul! O Jesus, come, come soon, and give relief to my guilty soul! O Thou quickening Spirit, come! O, create in me a new heart, a clean heart! O take away this hard and stony heart and give me a heart of flesh!"

"Such asking, seeking, striving to enter the Kingdom, I never saw before."

Walking and Leaping and Praising God

As peace came upon his daughter, she asked: "Let us sing the 51st Psalm." As they began to sing the Lord began His work. The news spread from lip to lip, house to house, over the county. Hundreds of all ranks and ages met outside the pastor's home to unite in prayer, looking up to heaven for a blessing. "The scene was indescribable; groups came literally walking and leaping and praising God!"

Devotion

One minister in Portrush recorded that he had to counsel over 300 persons who were mightily convicted of sin. Everywhere the presence of God was felt. Rev. Charles Spurgeon was invited to come and address the believers in Belfast. Rev. J.M. Killen wrote of a deep work of God "Deep, silent, solemn and uninterrupted communion with their own hearts, and with their God ... decision of character, devotedness of life, and an elevated tone of holiness which are so conspicuous in many of our converts."

Men were heard to pray openly in the streets: "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner!"

In Armagh, a little girl, about 11 years old, entered school, lifted up her hands and declared: "O, I have found Jesus, I have found Jesus!" Then all the children in the school began to cry out to the Lord for mercy.

Preaching and Hearing

One man remarked to a minister: "The ministers are preaching a great deal better than they used to do." The minister responded: "Perhaps the people are listening a great deal better than they used to."

Another minister declared: "A year ago I was preaching to the dead, but now I'm preaching to the living."

Blasphemer Judged

Some young men planned to mock the Revivalists by pretending to fall down and be stricken with guilt, while the others were to call Christians to come and pray for the pretended cases of conviction. The first young man foolishly to take part in this blasphemous mockery fell dead on the spot. What had begun as a farce ended as a tragedy.

The Fear of God

In Belfast an old grey haired man who had pawned his coat to pay for more whisky went into a bar and found a young woman there, on her knees, crying out for mercy. He left the pub declaring that he could not take his whisky there. However, he soon returned and fell on his

knees, calling out to God for mercy. A coachman drew up, went in and was similarly affected. Before long there were five people in the whisky shop calling out to God for forgiveness and mercy.

Catholics Converted

Many Roman Catholics were struck with a deep conviction of sin, a longing to read the Scriptures, a delight in prayer and praise, and an entire dependence on God, and thoroughly abandoned popery.

The Presence of God

One of the ministers involved in this Ulster Revival of 1859, wrote: "We have now seen the wondrous difference which His presence makes. When He is absent, Christians are cold, ordinances are powerless, sinners immovable and dead, wickedness prevalent.

"When He comes in His love, and grace and power, God's children are lively, tender, loving, fervent, zealous, laborious. The means of Grace prove effectual to the Salvation of multitudes. Hypocrites are unmasked. The careless alarmed and aroused. The ungodly fly to Jesus. Iniquity, abashed hides its head. May the experience of the past stir us up to desire a continued outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

A Revival Prayer

One of the prayers used multiple times in the 1859 Revival was later printed up as a Decision Card for those who wanted to surrender wholeheartedly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

My Decision

I take God the Father to be my God (1 Thess 1:9)

I take God the Son to be my Saviour (Acts 5:31)

I take God the Holy Spirit to be my Sanctifier (1 Peter 1:2)

I take the Word of God to be my Rule (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I take the people of God to be my people (Ruth 1:16-17)

I likewise dedicate myself wholly to the Lord (Romans 14:7-8) and

I do this prayerfully (Psalm 119:94) Deliberately (Joshua 24:15) Sincerely (2 Corinthians 1:12) Freely (Psalm 110:3) and Forever (Romans 8:35-39).

Signed:

Date:



CHAPTER 29



REVIVAL IN THE BIBLE AND IN HISTORY

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7

What is Revival?

Revivals are a sovereign move of God initiated by the Holy Spirit working through consecrated men and women. A study of the Revivals in the Bible, and in history, reveal that all Revivals begin with a deeper appreciation for the Holiness of God and a realisation of how offensive our sins must be in the sight of our Holy God.

It has been well said, that "Revivals are not churches filled with people, but people filled with God."

Revivals involve a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Holiness of God, of the wrath of God against sin, and of the utter depravity of man.

Transformation

In the book of Acts, it was said that these Christians who have turned the world upside down have come here also. In fact, Revivals turn things right side up: Restored relationships. Transformed communities. Drunkards made sober. Thieves returning stolen goods. Blasphemers sanctified. Marriages healed. Estranged children and parents reconciled. The selfish becoming sacrificial. Conversions. Miracles. Healings. Revived churches. Revitalised prayer meetings. Dynamic worship. Decisive action to seek first the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Awakenings in the Bible

Revivals are not churches filled with people, but people filled with God.

In the Bible we read that King **Asa** expelled all the perverts from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made (1 Kings 15:12).

King **Jehu** demolished the idols, and tore down the temple of Baal, turning it into a rubbish dump (2 Kings 10:27).

Under King **Jehoiada**, all the people of the land tore down the temple of Baal, smashed its altars and idols (2 Kings 11:18).

King **Josiah** ordered all the idols and superstitious trappings of Baal and Asherah to be removed from the Temple of the Lord. He burned these idols in the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:4).

King **Jehoshaphat** rid the land of Asherah poles and set his heart on seeking God (2 Chronicles 19:3).

Under King **Hezekiah**, the Israelites smashed the idols of Baal and Asherah and destroyed the high places and altars used for child sacrifice throughout Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 31:1).

King **Manasseh** removed idols and images from the Temple of the Lord (2 Chronicles 33:15).

Under the prophet **Ezra**, the people of God were challenged to reform their marriages and reject intermarriage with the nations around them (Ezra 10:3).

Nehemiah restored the honouring of the Sabbath Day to Jerusalem by ordering the gates to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. He stationed his men at the gates to ensure that the Sabbath was not desecrated (Nehemiah 13:19).

When the Lord **Jesus** entered the Temple area, He made a whip and drove out all the corrupt moneylenders who were turning the House of God into a den of thieves (Matthew 21:12; John 2:15).

What Hinders Revival?

When one reads of the bold Christianity of the Book of Acts, of the Great Evangelical Awakening under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, and of the Revivals of the 19th century, the question arises: What is hindering Revival in our time?

Prayerlessness. Neglect of the Word of God. Worldliness. Selfishness. Pride. Gossip. Slander. Gluttony. Lust. Passivity. Neutrality. Inactivity. Sitting on the fence. Lukewarmness. Half-heartedness. Indecisiveness.

Cowardice. Compromise. These and so many other evidences of the lack of the fear of God quench the Holy Spirit, grieve the Holy Spirit and resist the Holy Spirit. There are so many distractions, deviations and delusions which are ensnaring and enslaving the people of God.

God resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble.

What Can We Do to Work for Revival?

We must determine not to settle for less than God's best. Good can be the enemy of the best. We have to relinquish those second-rate things that fill our heads, hands and hearts, so that we can receive God's best.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."
Matthew 5:6

You cannot expect maximum blessing from minimum commitment. Wholehearted surrender to God is essential. What you surrender to God He accepts, what He accepts He cleanses, what He cleanses He fills, and what He fills, He uses.

In one sense we cannot actually work for Revival. Revivals are a sovereign move of Almighty God. We cannot schedule Revivals, we cannot preach them up or pray them down. There is no way we can manipulate Almighty God to fit in with our plans.

The Holiness of God

However, a study of Revivals in the Bible, and in history, reveals that all Revivals begin with a deeper appreciation for the Holiness of God and a realisation of how offensive our sin must be in the sight of our Holy God.

The Wrath of God

When the Books of the Law were read to King Josiah of Judah, he tore his robes in anguish, and exclaimed: *"Great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us ..."* 2 Kings 22:13. He called all the elders together to hear the Law of God and to repent together for the wickedness that they had allowed to flourish in the land.

The Law of God

"The King stood by a pillar and made a Covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul ...All the people took a stand for the Covenant." 2 Kings 23:3

This repentance was then followed by vigorous action to remove or destroy anything contrary to the Law of God - including the pornographic Asherah poles, the Baal altars where babies were sacrificed and the prostitutes and false prophets who had corrupted the people (2 Kings 23:4- 10).

The Bible records that Josiah: *"... turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses."* 2 Kings 23:25

God sent a prophet to declare to Josiah: *"Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke... I also have heard you, says the Lord."* 2 Kings 22:19

Repentance and Restitution

Conviction of sin is the first step towards Biblical Reformation. This includes focusing on the Law of God, mourning over our sin, confessing that sin and undertaking whatever steps of restitution or obedience are necessary.

"If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbour about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbour, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely... He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs..." Leviticus 6:2-5

Those who claim to want Revival, but are unwilling to repent thoroughly of every known sin and make full restitution, cannot be serious. *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, therefore, be zealous and repent."* Revelation 3:19

The Ten Commandments

Like Josiah, we need to take a careful look at the Law of God. The Ten Commandments reflect the unchanging character of God. They show us our responsibilities to God, to our parents and to other people.

"... The Law was our tutor, to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by Faith." Galatians 3:24

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..." Psalm 19:7

Back to the Bible for Reformation and Revival

Revival is the work of God, but Reformation is our responsibility. Frequently in the Bible we see that God responds to consecrated and dedicated believers' sincere attempts to work for Biblical Reformation by sending a Spiritual Revival.

Our duty is to go back to the Bible for Biblical Reformation and Revival.

Praying the Psalms

To revive our devotional lives we should start in the Psalms. The Psalms are the biggest Book of the Bible, the middle Book of the Bible, the prayer Book and hymnbook of the Bible. The Psalms are the most quoted part of the Bible. In the Gospels our Lord Jesus Christ quoted more from the Psalms than from any other section of the Old Testament.

If you want to revive your devotional life begin praying through the Psalms.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your Salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You." Psalm 51:10-13

Hunger for Reality

Study the Book of Acts to see God's pattern for the Church. It was when Reformers, such as Professor John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Martin Luther and John Calvin, began to study the Bible that God mightily used them to bring about the Great Reformation. We need to hunger for reality, rejecting the cheap grace and easy believeism of modern evanjellyfish. If we want to work for Biblical Reformation and pray for Spiritual Revival then we need to reject the sensational, superficial emotionalism of all too many modern mega-churches as fake. Do not settle for anything less than God's very best.

"Restore us, O God of Hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!" Psalm 80:7

Decisive Action to Seek First God's Kingdom

Wholehearted repentance and thorough restitution is foundational in working for Reformation and preparing for Spiritual Revival. Return any stolen items. Pay back what you owe. Restore broken relationships. Repair what you have damaged. Have the courage to confront sin and thoroughly deal with it. Carefully study the Word of God and seek the Lord earnestly in prayer for guidance as to the decisive action that you need to take to seek first God's Kingdom.

Destroy idols

Are there any CDs or DVDs that you need to break or throw away? Are there publications that you need to tear up and burn? Are there subscriptions and channels that you need to cancel? Are there web sites that you need to block? Are there relationships that you need to end? Are there people that you need to make right with that are at odds with you? Take decisive action to revitalise your devotional life. Reform your family. Restore the prayer meeting. Reform your local church.

"If My people who are called by My Name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Can you not do something more for God?

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7



CHAPTER 30



ANDREW MURRAY THE 1860 REVIVAL

A most remarkable Revival swept across the Cape in 1860.

A Spiritual Wilderness

The Cape Colony prior to the 1860 Revival was a spiritual wilderness. The Dutch East India Company controlled the appointment of pastors and establishment of congregations. Yet, in the first 150 years of Dutch rule in the Cape only five congregations had been established, all within 130km radius of Cape Town. Most of the farmers and *Trekboers* had no access to pastoral guidance, or opportunities for religious services. Even more seriously, although few of the people in the colony spoke Dutch anymore, the authorities deemed their vernacular, Afrikaans, to be unworthy for church services, prayers, or even for personal devotions. This led to very stilted services where the average member of the congregation struggled to understand the high Dutch of the pulpit and found it hard to express themselves in prayer through the Dutch language. The only Bible available was Dutch, which most of the population had trouble reading. Without the ability to pray from the heart, most resorted to following fixed formulas of well worn expressions.

Spiritual Paralysis

Under these circumstances it should not be surprising that spiritual paralysis set in. Nicolaas Hofmeyr despaired at the unresponsiveness of his congregation in Calvinia. During his 6 year ministry there he could not persuade a single person to attend the prayer meeting. Not even once! In addition to the resistance to prayer he also battled an intense opposition to mission work.

Deadening Liberalism

Gottlieb Van Der Lingen was born of Dutch missionary parents. His father was a chaplain to the Cape Corps on the Eastern frontier. Van Der Lingen studied for the ministry in Utrecht in Holland. From his first sermon in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town he warned against the rising

tide of liberalism and called the people back to the Bible. With the Theological Seminaries in Holland turning out unregenerate preachers, spiritual deadness was infecting the churches in the Cape. Ds. van der Lingen energetically promoted Christian schools, but was frustrated that not one church responded to his offer to help establish Christian education in their area!

The Language Barrier

The British first came to the Cape in 1795. As part of their Anglicisation policy all school subjects had to be taught through the medium of English. Most of the Cape Dutch could no longer speak Dutch, nor could they comfortably speak English. There were no Afrikaans schools available and the churches refused to allow the use of the Afrikaans language in either church services or prayer meetings.

Anglicisation

However, the British Anglicisation policy had the unintended result of sparking the most incredible Spiritual Revival which resolved all of these problems and led to the establishment of Afrikaans as a national language.

Revitalisation

With the British excluding the Dutch language from the schools and from government, the Dutch congregations were pointed to Scotland to obtain their ministers. The arrival of 11 Reformed pastors from Scotland, led by Andrew Murray senior, heralded a new era. Andrew Murray's father was appointed to the frontier parish of Graaff Reinet and he married Maria Stegmann of Cape Town on the way to his frontier congregation. Andrew Murray junior was born in Graaff Reinet on 9 May 1828. What the British government had failed to anticipate was that the Scottish Presbyterians would learn the Dutch and Afrikaans languages and, instead of converting the Cape Dutch to English, were used of God to revitalize their faith and culture in an unprecedented way.

Praying for Revival

Without fail, every Friday evening for 36 years, Andrew Murray's father prayed for Revival. When Andrew was 10 years old he was sent to Scotland to be educated. During his 7 year stay with his uncle, Rev. John Murray and the family in Aberdeen, they were brought into contact with some of the most powerful Reformed preachers of the day, including Dr. Chalmers and William Burns. After Andrew and his elder brother, John, graduated with M.A. Degrees in 1845, they headed for Utrecht for further theological studies and to master the Dutch language.

First Fruits

Andrew Murray senior's brother-in-law, Georg Stegmann, was mightily used of the Lord in building up the St. Stephens congregation in Cape Town. Many coloured people were brought to Christ and a dynamic evangelistic work sprang up.

To the Voortrekkers

When Andrew Murray returned from his studies in Scotland and Holland he was still only 20 years old and church law required a pastor in the Cape to be at least 22 years old. The governor, Sir Harry Smith, circumvented this rule by allocating Andrew to evangelise the Voortrekkers between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. The Orange River Sovereignty had been

annexed by Britain in 1848 and the approximately 12,000 Voortrekkers on scattered farms between the Orange and Vaal had been without a pastor since leaving the Cape.

Missionary Travels

As the first pastor appointed to the Voortrekkers, Andrew Murray's headquarter was in the small village of Bloemfontein. In order to minister to his vast congregation Andrew needed to constantly travel to conduct communion and preaching services throughout the sovereignty. He also conducted 4 missionary tours amongst the Voortrekkers in the Transvaal. Dealing with tough pioneering farmers Andrew quickly had to learn to keep his sermons simple, logical and practical. Being the only pastor for the Voortrekkers, Andrew was forced to adopt a leadership role. His speedy intervention prevented bloodshed as he helped negotiate the treaty between the Voortrekker leader, Andreas Pretorius, and the British government which led to the signing of the Sand River Convention of 1852. This led to the recognition of the independence of the Orange Free State.

Character Training

Andrew later looked back on his 11 years of ministry amongst the Voortrekkers as invaluable training for his life long ministry. Ministering on the frontier strengthened Andrew's character, made him decisive in action and powerful in preaching.

Recognising Reality

He also became acutely aware of the desperate spiritual state of most in South Africa. He wrote: "I begin to fear that the state of the great majority of members is much sadder than I at first realized ... nothing but God's mighty Spirit is able to conquer the deep enmity of the unconverted heart".

Educational Crisis

He struggled to establish Christian schools in the Orange Free State, attempting to recruit teachers from Holland, but he faced resistance and inertia on all sides. Despairing of obtaining suitable pastors from Holland, the Dutch Reformed Church appointed Rev. John Murray to establish a theological seminary in Stellenbosch.

When John expressed his reticence over this nomination his father, Andrew Murray senior, challenged him: "Are you willing to place your life on the line for this great task?" John responded with a heartfelt "Yes!" He accepted the nomination and sought the assistance of Nicolaas Hofmeyr and Johan Neethling to launch the Stellenbosch Kweekschool.

A Call to Prayer

In August 1859 three pastors of the Dutch Reformed Church published a challenge for ministers to preach a series of sermons on the character of God, the role of the Holy Spirit and the need for both corporate and private prayer for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. "An Awakening can occur through the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised in answer to prayer is a truth that is clearly taught in Scripture ... We earnestly beseech you to faithfully and fervently pray one hour every week - with others, or alone that God by His Grace may visit our land and give us the blessing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." An 85 page book entitled "The Power of Prayer" was widely circulated throughout 1859. Several articles on Prayer and Revival were published in *De Kerkbode* and *De Wekker*.

Apathy Challenged

Yet, while many of the pastors were enthusiastic about prayer and Revival the average person in the pew remained disinterested and unresponsive.

A number of small prayer meetings began. The one in Montagu never grew beyond three regular attendees prior to May 1860. The weekly prayer meeting in Worcester seldom had more than three or four participants. However, one dedicated intercessor wore a footpath to the top of a hill overlooking the town praying for Revival.

Worcester Conference

Andrew Murray was called to lead the congregation in Worcester at the same time that a conference of churches was to meet to discuss the subject of Revival. Carts, wagons and horses brought in 374 visitors representing 20 congregations. This included 8 ministers from the Andrew Murray family. With great excitement the conference began 18 April, laying out the Scriptural basis for Revival.

A Decisive Moment

According to C.Rabie, a teenager who attended the conference and would later become a DRC minister, the Revival began at the conference itself. He wrote: "Ds. Murray Onr.)'s participation during the first part of the conference was limited to one prayer, but it was a prayer so full of power and emotion that people came under deep conviction of sin. You can safely say that the Revival dates from that moment."

Pentecost at Worcester

Andrew Murray commenced his ministry at Worcester on Pentecost Sunday 27 May with a sermon on "The Ministration of the Spirit". C. Rabie wrote: "It was as though one of the prophets of old had risen from the dead. The subjects were conversion and faith... deadly earnestness."

Andrew Murray preached on: "*What meanest thou o sleeper? Arise and call upon thy God.*" *Jonah 1:6*; "*He that believeth not shall be damned*" *Mark 16:16*; "*Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?*" *Matthew 22:12*. The congregation in Worcester had never heard such straight forward shocking Biblical preaching. The Revival in Worcester came like a firestorm.

Eyewitness Account

One of the pastors who experienced the Revival, Servaas Hofmeyr, wrote: "Before the days of Revival the situation of our congregation was lamentable. Love of the world and sin; no earnestness or heartfelt desire for Salvation; sinning and idleness that was the order of the day for most... when the Lord started to move among us how intense were the prayers for Revival and the cries for mercy! 'I am lost!' cries one here. 'Lord, help me!' cries another. Anxious cries were uttered, heart rendering testimonies of conversion were heard. Visions were seen ... Corporate prayer, even behind bushes and rocks, on mountains and in ravines, men, women, greyheads, children, gentlemen, servants all kneeling on the same ground crying for mercy. And none of this was expected by anyone, nor prepared by anyone, nor worked up, or preached by anyone it was all the Spirit of God, and not for a few hours or days, but months long."

Joy Unspeakable!

Prayer meetings were overflowing and full of fire and zeal. Early in the morning and late at night people would come singing to God's house. Repentance, renewal and rebirth. Devotion was deepened, vision widened. Cases of heartfelt conversion occurred daily.

Amongst the first to be impacted by the Revival were the coloured farm workers near Worcester. A written account of these farm workers described them as: "debased and shriveled with drink and drunk all day long, sullen wretched creatures..." It was this least expected quarter that the Revival hit most powerfully.

Farm workers fell to the ground and cried out for mercy, so greatly was the presence of God felt. At first Andrew Murray was shocked at the emotionalism and apparent disorder. Andrews' knowledge of Revival had been limited to the Scottish experience where congregations were far more orderly and restrained. As Andrew sought to take control of a prayer meeting where people were experiencing agonies of conviction of sin, a stranger touched Ds. Murray and warned him: "Be careful what you do, for it is the Spirit of God that is at work here".

The Real and the False

Andrew quoted from George Whitefield, who stated: "If you try to stamp out the wildfire and remove what is false, you will equally and simultaneously remove what is real."

Nicolaas Hofmeyr wrote: "A Spirit of humility is observable amongst us. We see ourselves in all our loathsomeness as lost and wretched children of Wrath unable of ourselves to do any good thing. ... The Spirit of prayer increases and the supplications become more earnest... - this is the work of the Holy Spirit... the sense of sin is increasing. Deep humility is observable and still our souls have been refreshed... God is being sought in secret."

Montagu & Calvinia

At Montagu, a Scriptural class of coloured farm workers, who were being taught by a young woman, experienced an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of God. Calvinia, which had previously resisted every effort by their previous pastor to participate in prayer meetings, suddenly developed an overwhelming burden for prayer.

Answer to Prayer

Conviction of sin came over the congregations with intense spiritual agony, confession of sin and earnest restitution. Andrew Murray senior visited Worcester and rejoiced that what he had prayed for, over 38 years, was now being experienced by his son. "Andrew, my son, I have longed for such times as these which the Lord has let you have."

Anointed Preaching

Rev. Henry Taylor of the Presbyterian Church in Wellington wrote this report on Andrew Murray's preaching: "His whole being is thrown into the task and he glows with the fervency of Spirit which it seems impossible for human flesh to sustain ... audiences bend before the sweeping rain of his words, like willows before the gale. The heart within the hearer is bowed and the intellect is awed."

Writing Ministry

As Spiritual hunger increased, Andrew was led to provide more discipleship instruction and guidance for converts including writing: *The Children For Christ, Abide in Christ, The Two Covenants, The New Life, The Full Blessing of Pentecost, Holy in Christ, The School of Obedience, The School of Prayer, The Ministry of Intercession, Pray Without Ceasing, Absolute Surrender, Waiting on God and Like Christ*. Andrew Murray became one of the world's most respected writers on the deeper Christian life. He wrote over 200 books, booklets and pamphlets, many of which were translated into numerous other languages, some continually in print for over 100 years. Andrew wrote: "*A Revival of Holiness is what we need. We need preaching about Christ's claim on us that will lead us to live entirely for Him and His Kingdom.*"

Evangelism & Revival

Selwyn Hughes observed: "In evangelism the preacher calls on people to get saved; in Revival people often call on the preacher to ask him how they can get saved."

Transformation

The September 1860 edition of *De Wekker* declared: "The whole of society has been changed, yes, turned literally upside down!" Church buildings needed to be enlarged to cater for the influx of new converts. Side wings were built onto existing churches.

Robert Shand in Tulbagh wrote of: "A deepening of the Spiritual Life within the congregation." In Ceres the church council wrote of: "Coming to life of dead bones." In Robertson Ds. Smidt reported that the Revival was: "Undoubtedly the work of the Holy Spirit."

The Cape Bows to Christ

The Evangelical Alliance issued a nationwide call for all churches in the Cape Colony to set aside a week in January for united prayer. The Cape was literally on its knees.

Revival in Paarl

Ds. Gottlieb van der Lingen preached: "Are you, congregation of Paarl, being awakened by these cries of Revival? Wake up, you who sleep! Arise from the dead and Christ will shine His light on you...! And what if you don't awaken now? Will you then ever be renewed before the terrible Awakening to take place in the hereafter?" It was during that week of prayer in January 1861 that Revival swept through Paarl. There were heart rending pleas for mercy and soul wrenching confessions of sin. The church building became too small to hold the growing crowds. The growing interest in prayer required numerous new prayer meetings to be established. Members of the Paarl congregation experienced lengthy periods of wrestling through self examination, repentance and surrendering all to God. There were great cries for mercy and ultimately many tears of thankfulness and joy.

Ds. van der Lingen exclaimed: "How many years have I not served God as a servant? But what a great difference serving Him as a servant and serving Him as a son! I only now understand the freedom."

Pentecost Services

In May 1862 Ds. van der Lingen suggested that the congregation should assemble for prayer during the ten days between Ascension Day and Pentecost. The adoption of Pentecost services throughout the Dutch Reformed Churches remains one of the significant fruits of the 1860 Revival.

Graaff Reinet

In April 1861 Revival erupted in Graaff Reinet. A prayer meeting that began after a communion service on Sunday evening became so powerfully aware of the presence of God's Holy Spirit that the meeting lasted non-stop until Tuesday midday before the congregation went home!

Reversal of Fortunes

The Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape was changed forever. From the earliest days of the Cape Colony there had always been a desperate shortage of pastors. Now over 50 young men came forward to be trained for the ministry. A Bible based newspaper, *Die Volksvriend*, was launched January 1862 by Andrew Murray and Servaas Hofmeyr. Resistance to missions evaporated.

Missions Launched

Die Vrouwen Zending Bond (Women's Missionary Union) was established with Emma Murray becoming its first president. The first Cape DRC missionaries Alexander McKidd and Henri Gonin were sent out to the Transvaal.

De Wekker editorialized: "What is the aim of Revival? Not to enjoy God's gift in a selfish way. No! But to impart mission work. Every farm must become a mission station and every congregation a mission organisation" *De Wekker* declared that we must send our sons and daughters to the mission field.

Sacrificial Service

Andrew Murray turned to Paul Kruger to help the DRC to establish its first mission station in the Soutpansberg Range. When the first missionaries sent out, Alexander and Hessie McKidd, died of fever, this became a testing time for the revived churches. Henry Gonin faithfully served at Paul Kruger's farm near Rustenburg until his death in 1911. Stefanus Hofmeyr worked faithfully for over 10 years among the surrounding tribes seeing many witchdoctors and murderers come to the Lord.

Education & Evangelism

Despite much spiritual warfare and on-going attacks from liberals in the DRC, Andrew Murray became a renowned author, an international evangelist and the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church. He established the Africa Institute which sent out hundreds of missionaries through Africa. Andrew also pioneered women's education in South Africa and established the Huguenot College for training Christian teachers.

Africa for Christ

The missionary vision of the Dutch Reformed Church exploded with mission stations being established in Mashonaland, Matabeleland, Bechuanaland, Nyasaland, Nigeria and Sudan. In 1927 the Missions Committee of the Cape DRC recorded 304 serving missionaries and

72,079 baptised African Christians. DRC missionaries from the Cape had established 1,447 schools with 2,699 teachers and 96,309 pupils.

Afrikaans Advanced

The language barrier was overcome as Afrikaans became the language of the pulpit and in 1925 Afrikaans was granted equal status with English as an official language of the country. In 1933 the first complete Bible translated into Afrikaans was published.

Murray's Challenge

As Andrew Murray wrote: "Live in the bold and holy confidence that God is able to bless His Church through you... God is really only waiting for prayer in order to give the blessing"

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."
Jeremiah 29:13



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Hammond designed the Discipleship Training Course and the Great Commission Course to empower Christians to put feet to their faith, applying the Lordship of Christ to all areas.

Dr. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Since 1982, often travelling by off road motorbike, Peter has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned. On some mission trips he has flown far behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in Central Sudan with tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. He has then walked throughout the war-devastated Nuba Mountains showing the Jesus film in Arabic, proclaiming the Gospel, training pastors and evading enemy patrols.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship, the Director of the Christian Action Network and the Chairman of The Reformation Society. He is the author of Faith Under Fire in Sudan, Holocaust in Rwanda, the Great Commission Manual, Putting Feet to Your Faith, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, The Greatest Century of Missions, Biblical Principles for Africa, The Discipleship Handbook, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam, The Greatest Century of Reformation, The Power of Prayer Handbook and The Ten Commandments - God's Perfect Law of Liberty. He has co-authored or contributed to: Reforming Our Families, War Against God, Fight for Life, Make a Difference, The Pink Agenda, Character Assassins and South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation ? He is the Editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and the Christian Action magazine, as well as a Contributing Editor of JOY! Magazine.

Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war torn Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked for Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at the Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. Peter is married to Lenora (whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman, have pioneered missionary work, mostly into Eastern Europe, for 60 years). Peter and Lenora have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin, whom they homeschool.