IT IS TIME TO REPENT

"THIS THEN IS THE MESSAGE WHICH WE HAVE HEARD OF HIM, AND DECLARE UNTO YOU, THAT GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, AND WALK IN DARKNESS, WE LIE, AND DO NOT THE TRUTH: BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP ONE WITH ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESSIONS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT Sinned, WE MAKE HIM A LIAR, AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US." JOHN 1:5-10

This book was written to saved people. John wanted us to know that we will sin against God, but he also wanted us to know that God freely forgives us of sin when we confess our sin. Confessing sin involves (1) admitting personal responsibility in sin, (2) Turning from sin or forsaking sin, (3) Turning to God for forgiveness and guidance. The terribleness of sin is that it will chill our love for God and make us lukewarm in His services. Notice this principle in Matt. 24:12. "AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD." Another scripture is Rev. 3:15. "I KNOW THY WORKS, THAT THOU ART NEITHER COLD NOR HOT: I WOULD THOU WERT COLD OR HOT." The Lord told King David he did three things when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. (1) He despised the Lord, (2) He despised the Lord's Word, (3) He gave occasion to the enemy to blaspheme God. II Sam. 12:9,10,14. Let's notice the times when you need to repent.

I. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME CARELESS

The carelessness. Our Saviour used the word BEWARE on several occasions. It means to watch out, be on guard, be careful. The Lord told His disciples to beware of false prophets. Matt. 7:15 beware of false doctrine Matt. 16:6, beware of covetousness. Luke 12:15, beware of falling from steadfastness. II Pet. 3:17

The worst backslider didn't become backslidden overnight. His condition is first caused by carelessness. You can become careless in your prayer life. Jesus, "spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Luke 18:1 You can get careless in Bible study. II Tim. 2:15 You can become careless in church attendance. Hebs.10:25 You can become care

Charles Swilling

less in submitting to God. James 4:6,7 You can become careless in seeking God's righteousness and kingdom first. Matt. 6:33 Carelessness is being neglectful.

The repentance. When you realize you are careless you need to repent and ask God to forgive you. You know when you are slack, unconcerned, and indifferent in His service. Your heart needs to be broken over carelessness.

II. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME CUMBERED.

The cumberedness. Carelessness causes us to be cumbered. Jesus went to Mary and Martha's house. Mary was sitting at...
Jesus’ feet listening to His words. Notice Luke 10:40-42, "BUT MARtha WAS Cumbered ABOUT MUCH SERVING, AND CAME TO HIM, AND SAID, LORD, DOST THOU NOT CARE THAT MY SISTER HATH LEFT ME TO SERVE ALONE? BID HER THEREFORE THAT SHE HELP ME. AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HER, MARTHA, MARTHA, THOU ART CAREFUL AND TROUBLED ABOUT MANY THINGS: BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFul: AND MARy HATH CHOSEN THAT GOOD PART, WHICH SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER." Martha was full of anxiety and bothered about many things. She thought it more necessary to take care of the things of life than to stop and sit with Mary at Jesus’ feet.

In the parable of the sower Jesus said the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke God’s Word. Matt. 13:22 Luke adds the pleasures of this life choke the Word. Luke 8:14 We get cumbered when we try to solve our own problems and handle daily living in our own way and strength.

The repentance. If you are cumbered you need to repent. You are living a self life. The Lord wants to help carry the load of life. "CASTING ALL CARE UPON HIM: FOR HE CARETH FOR YOU." I Pet. 5:7 Jesus wants to share your problems and burdens. He wants to lift the load and heaviness you feel and free you from the cares of life.

III. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME COLD.

The Coldness. Carelessness brings on cumberedness which brings on coldness. Coldness is basically an unresponsive attitude towards the Lord, His leading, and disobedience to His word. Some times the human heart becomes a refrigerator and even a freezer towards the Lord. Abounding iniquity causes coldness and lukewarmness. Matt. 24:12; Rev. 3:15,16 Coldness is manifested by disobedience and rebellion. This is despising the Lord and His Word.

A cold heart will not produce nor express warmth of love and fire in zeal. You can feel the coldness in some churches. It seems they are lifeless and barren in service. You can feel coldness when you talk with some of God’s people about the Lord and His work. A cold heart loses the joy and gladness of living. Read what David said in Psalms 51:8

The repentance. The Holy Spirit will convict you of your condition. He will cause you to see that you have become cold. The Lord wants you to repent of this condition. He wants to break your heart over a cold life. David wrote, "THE SACRIFICIES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT: A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART, O GOD, THOU WILT NOT DESPISE." Psalms 51:17 David pled for the joy of God’s salvation to be restored in Psalms 51:12.

IV. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME CARNAL.

The carnality. To be carnal is to live a flesh life instead of a spirit life. Paul wrote, "AND I, BROTHERS, COULD NOT SPEAK UNTO YOU AS UNTO SPIRITUAL, BUT AS UNTO CARNAL, EVEN AS UNTO BABES IN CHRIST." 1 Cor. 3:3 One definition of spiritual is man of spirit. The Amplified Bible reads, "But as to nonspiritual (men of flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates)." Paul exHORTs us not to allow sin to dominate or reign in our bodies. Rom. 6:12,14 Paul wrote, "FOR DEMAS HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD." II Tim. 4:10 The Lord’s people can act and live immoral lives. Paul told the Ephesians to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice. Eph. 4:31 Noah got drunk. Peter denied the Lord and cursed. David committed adultery. Solomon went into idolatry. Achan stole some things. Ananias and Sapphira lied. Lot compromised with the world. Jonah ran from God in rebellion. These were saved people who allowed the flesh to dominate their lives.

The repentance. When you become carnal you need to repent of your sins. You need to confess your sins to God. Repent of that sin and ask God to forgive you of sin. Then turn to the Lord and His way. Josh. 24:15; Rom. 12:1,2 A carnal saved person will never be happy.

V. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME CONCEITED.

The conceit. You become conceited when you value your way or opinion above everyone else’s even God. Paul wrote, "FOR I SAY, THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN UNTO ME, TO EVERY MAN THAT IS AMONG YOU, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE ought to think;" Rom. 12:3 He also wrote 1 Cor. 10:12 "WHEREFORE LET HIM THAT THINKETH HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY CONSIDER THIS: WE seeing such great things, who was weak through flesh;" Prov. 16:18 Pride or self conceit elevates self, eliminates God, and evaluates with the world. It is to do what you want to do even when it is contrary to God’s Word. You get to the place you know it all. No one can tell you anything. You don’t even seek God’s will or way.

The repentance. When you are full of pride you need to repent. You need to realize your self sufficient attitude is wrong. Jeremiah wrote, "O LORD, I KNOW THAT THE WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF: IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS STEPS." Jer. 10:23 We need to repent of a self life. Without Jesus we can do nothing. John 15:5

VI. REPENT WHEN YOU BECOME CALLoused.

The callousedness. When you become careless, cumbered, cold, carnal, conceited, you will become calloused. This is the last phase of the sin cycle in our lives. If we refuse to be corrected God’s judgment is faithful and sure. The writer of Hebrews warns us, "TAKE HEED, BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL
HEART OF UNBELIEF, IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD, BUT EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY, WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY; LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN."
Heb. 3:12,13 This kind of heart described as hardened knows what is wrong and goes ahead in sin and will not allow the Lord to speak to or have His way with it. Death is more desirable than going through life with a hardened heart toward God and man. The misery, lack of joy and meaning in life, and emptiness can make life almost unbearable.

The repentance. If you are called you will realize it through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You need to realize you are at fault and to blame. Your sins have brought on this lifeless and barren condition. The Lord can take the emptiness, lifelessness, and hardness away. He can give you a tender heart that can be submissive and compassionate toward others. You need to repent of your sins and ask God to forgive you of your terrible sins. We are assured according to I John 1:9 that He is faithful and just to forgive us of sin and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. There are times when we need to repent.

“SARDIS - THE CHURCH WITH THE FAITHFUL FEW”

TEXT: Revelation 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION:
A. Practical
B. Personal
C. Prophetic

I. THE CHURCH.
A. The City - "Sardis" means "escaping ones" or "some who came out."
   1. Once an exclusive city full of rich men.
   2. Affected greatly by horrible results of war and the great earthquake of the first century.
B. The Church - No one knows for sure when it was started.

II. THE COMMISSION. V 1 "I KNOW THY WORKS"
A. A Beehive of Activity.
B. A picture of organization.

III. THE COMPLAINT. V 1 "THOU HAST A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST AND ART DEAD."
A. Nothing but Ritual.
B. Nothing but Ceremony.

IV. THE COUNSEL. V 2-3
A. Be watchful - The Greek Word.agrupneou means "to chase sleep" - wakeful,sleepless.
B. Remember how thou hast received and heard.
C. Hold fast.
D. Repent.
E. I will come as a Thief. Rev. 3:3

V. THE COMPLIMENT. V 4 History "FAITHFUL FEW"
A. Peter Waldo - 1170 - Wealthy merchant hired two scholars to translate Bible, preached the gospel to the Waldenses. They sowed God’s Word. In 1208 the "Holy Crusade" began. More than one million died.

B. John Wycliffe - First translation in common English, he died before the state church could kill him. They dug up his body and burned it publicly.
C. John Huss - Preached with fire and furor. A crown and mitre put on his head on which was inscribed the words, "The Great Heretic" and was made a martyr sentenced to be burned at the stake. Said while dying "With joy I wear this crown of shame for the love of Him who wore the Crown of Thorns."
D. Savonarola - Born in Florence, Italy, Flaming preacher of God’s Word, hanged, the body burned.
E. Balthazar Hubmeir - Preached from original Greek and Hebrew. Burned at the stake and wife drowned in the Danube in Vienna.
G. John Bunyan - Imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Watched his blind daughter, Mary, sell shoe laces to support the family while he languished in jail for 12 years.
REASONS TO REJOICE

TEXT: Romans 5:1-11
INTRODUCTION:
A. Confusion on the Subject.
1. Joy is not happiness
2. Joy is a product of the Spirit of God.
B. Comfort from the Subject.
1. Joy can be mine
2. Joy is deep sense of contentment in your circumstances.

I. BECAUSE OF OUR SPIRITUAL POSITION. V 1
A. Justified by faith.
B. Peace with God.
C. Standing in grace.

II. BECAUSE OF OUR FUTURE PROSPECTS. V 2
A. Confidence of sharing in the Glory of God.
1. Confidence that the Lord is able to keep that which is committed to Him. I Tim. 1:12
2. Confident that the "day of the Lord" will be a day of glory.

III. BECAUSE OF OUR PRESENT PROBLEMS. V 3-5
A. How maturity is displayed by us. One of the hallmarks of spiritual maturity how you cope with your present problems.
B. How maturity is developed in us.
1. Tribulations work patience. V 3
2. Patience works experience. V 3
3. Experience works hope. V 4
C. How maturity is determined for us. V 5b
1. Through the love of God.
2. By the Holy Spirit.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FUTURE

TEXT: James 4:13-17
INTRODUCTION:
Some people are interested in the past—call themselves history buffs. How many or how few there seems to be who are interested in the present. Many are interested in the future— as we look ahead a lot of things are UNCERTAIN, but on the other hand a lot of things are sure. I have no confidence in what the present day FUTURE TELLERS predict. But I know for sure what God has predicted in His Word, the Bible, will come to pass—will be fulfilled to a jot and a tittle. In the future we can expect:

I. SIN TO INCREASE WORLDWIDE. II Tim. 3:1-3
A. Sin is being made more pleasant & less penalized.
1. Even the criminals are being set free because their rights violated during arrest or trial.
2. Laws are passed to favor the out & out criminal.
3. One can live within the center of civil laws and be an out and out sinner in God's sight.
B. Sin is becoming more public & less criticized.
1. More and more of God's laws being disobeyed and even we as God's people do not criticize the sinner.
2. Words that at one time shocked us—pay no attention.
3. Does a fountain issue both bitter water and sweet?
C. Sin is being committed by more people. II Tim. 3:13
1. So expect evil men & seducers to get worse.
2. Expect more people to be deceived by them deceived as to their need of salvation deceived as to the right plan of salvation, reject the blood plan.
3. Expect sin to increase and be protected by the blood of Jesus Christ.

II. SCRIPTURES TO BE ATTACKED BY THE WORLD.
II Tim. 4:3-4 Notice three ways this can be done.
A. Change its meaning.
1. This is no new thing—in O.T. prophet times there were those who changed the meaning to the message.
2. God said—they say God said it when God did not say.
3. Let the Bible say what it wants to say it has a very valuable message—both for time and eternity.
B. Corrupt its message.
1. Paul warned Timothy. I Tim. 6:20
2. Peter put it this way. II Pet. 3:16
C. Third way they attack the scripture—CONDEMN ITS MASTER.
1. Some say "I don't know much about the scriptures but I have had this experience." Put their own experience above scripture.
2. Some who will not believe the record God has given us of His Son, makes God a LIAR. I John 5:10
3. But who do you suppose is really lying? Man or God.
III. WE CAN EXPECT SATAN TO WAGE ALL OUT WAR.

I. PET. 5:8
A. He will deceive the sensual - the fleshly minded.
   1. Each of us are warned about the deception of Satan.
   2. None of us are exempt from his attacks.
   3. He has many devices to deceive. "WILES OF THE DEVIL" they are called.
B. Deny the Scriptures as he did with woman in Eden.
   1. Cast doubt.
   2. Then deny, "Ye shall not surely die! But sin when it is finished brings forth death. Just like God said.
C. Destroy the sinner.
   1. Will blind the minds of sinners lest the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ should shine into their hearts and be saved.
   2. Satan is likened unto a fowl scratching out planted seed. When God's WORD is sown Satan comes immediately to take it out of the heart, lest the heart believes and be saved.
   3. Seeking whom he may devour or destroy is still his business.

IV. SAINTS TO STAY TRUE TO THE WORD. Rev. 3:8
Church at Philadelphia had some members who had "KEPT MY WORD AND HAD NOT DENIED MY NAME."
So has this church. 2 Tim. 3:16
A. I expect some in the future to TRUST ITS INSPIRATION as fact.
B. I expect some in the future to be TRUE to its instructions in faith. Heb. 11:3,6
C. I expect some church members to be TOTALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE in the future.
D. Some will fall away, love of many wax cold some who run well will be hindered, but not all - some will stay true.

CONCLUSION:
ABOVE ALL EXPECT THE SHOUT OF VICTORY IN THE FUTURE.
A. Keep looking and watching. I Thess. 4:16
B. The trumpet sounds the shout - the voice of God will ring out.
C. The transfer - mortal to immortal (means dyingness to undyingness) corruptible to incorruptible (those in the grave are corrupted but will be changed to incorruption in the resurrection.
D. In the future say good-bye forever to sin and Satan, and live with Christ forever.

ARE YOU LIVING A CUMBERED CHURCH LIFE?


Tom McElmurry

INTRODUCTION:
We are often drawn away from doing service to God in His church by numerous distractions. These trivial distractions are molehills that we make into mountains. The following is only a very short list of the many molehill distractions that keep church members from properly serving God.
A. Distraction by a fear that others will not do their fair share. Luke 10:40B
B. Distraction by our anxiety and worry about the many problems of life. Luke 10:41
C. Distraction by a fear that others will be given more important and impressive work. John 21:21,22

I. DISTRACTIONS BY A FEAR THAT OUR POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP WILL BE LOST. III John 9
B. Distraction by disputes with other church members. Phil. 4:2
C. Distraction by worrying about our past record of service. Phil. 3:13,14
D. Distraction by a fear of failure. Phil. 4:13; Matt. 28:20

II. DISTRACTION BY A LIFESTYLE OF WANTING MORE THAN WE HAVE. Hebrews 13:5
A. Distraction by failing to recognize our place of citizenship. Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:13,14; Col. 3:2
B. Distractions by weariness of the flesh. Gal. 6:9
C. Distractions by a desire for praises from others. Col. 3:23; I Cor. 7:23
D. Distraction by family. Matt. 10:34-37
E. Distraction by the faults of others. Matt. 7:3

III. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANT CHOICE WITHIN THE CHURCH THAT CAN KEEP US FROM BEING DISTRACTED?
B. Matt. 4:4; I Pet. 2:2,3; Matt. 24:35; Romans 10:17; Romans 10:13

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Giving thanks always FOR ALL THINGS. Eph. 5:20
THE BENEFICIAL TEACHINGS
OF CHRIST (Part 14)

As we continue to notice some of the teachings of Christ, our subject in this lesson deals with the matter of praying for our DAILY PROVISIONS. The text is Matthew 6:11 which states, "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD." The subject of prayer, as taught by our Master not only involves adoration and worship but also includes asking, Additional verses verifying this same reality are Matt. 7:11 and James 4:2. "IF WE THEN BEING EVIL, KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS UNTO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE SHALL YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THEM THAT ASK HIM?" "YE LUST, AND HAVE NOT: YE KILL, AND DESIRE TO HAVE, AND CANNOT OBTAIN: YE FIGHT AND WAR, YET HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT."

There are many things involved in this verse of Matt. 6:11. It involves DAILY STRENGTH. It is God who gives us the strength to live daily for Him. Notice Phil. 4:13. It involves DAILY SURRENDER. We need to present our bodies daily to the Lord. Notice Romans 12:1-2. It involves DAILY SUSTENANCE. God meets our needs daily. Remember, we are talking about our daily needs not wants. Notice Psalm 37:25 I. THIS TEXT TEACHES OUR DEPENDENCE UPON GOD FOR EVERYTHING.

It's a shame that the majority of the world does not realize this or give Him thanks for these daily supplies. What would we have and where would we be if it wasn't for God? Surely, all of us can realize our dependence upon Him. James 1:17 states, "EVEN GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABleness,NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING."

The diabolical attitude which is deplorable and needs to be shunned can be summed up in two words: ingratitude and ungratefulness.

Perhaps at this point we need to notice the divine method involved in God providing for us. He supplies our needs but this does not mean that there is no activity on our part. God expects us to work. Gen. 3:17-19 and II Thess. 3:10-13. As we go and apply ourselves, God opens the doors, thus our needs are met. Remember, God supplies for the birds of the air, but He doesn't put the food in their nest. So as we ask God for our daily provision, remember that He expects us to work and then in connection with our asking and obedience to His order He'll meet our needs.

II. THIS TEXT TEACHES THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN LIFE TOO SMALL TO BRING TO GOD. Notice the request of the test. "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD." If we don't come to Him with the little things, then a seed of unbelief will be sown and we won't come to Him with the big things. We are dependent upon God for everything.

III. THIS TEXT TEACHES THAT GOD IS ABLE TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS AND MEET OUR NEEDS. Inability is not known to God. Eph. 3:20 states, "NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US..." It is God's chief and greatest delight to give to His children. He has proven His love, power, and longing to meet our needs. Notice Rom. 8:32, "HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS."

IV. THIS TEXT TEACHES US TO TRUST IN GOD'S METHOD OF GIVING. Notice the expression, "THIS DAY." Our spiritual life is not fed on the storage plan, it is maintained on the contact plan. God is Lord of TODAY.

not just yesterday or tomorrow. Daily we need to apply for our needs. This reminds us of our DAILY dependence upon Him. Notice Phil. 4:19 and connect with this study of Exod. 16:14-36 which reveals that God's method of giving is DAILY.

V. FINALLY, WE NOTICE THAT THIS TEXT TEACHES US OUR READINESS TO ACCEPT THE KIND OF BREAD THAT GOD SUPPLIES.

Often times, we, as God's people complain against God's provisions. An example of this is noted in Psalms 106:1-17. Our desire should be like that of the wise man, Solomon, who prayed the following prayer. "TWO THINGS HAVE I REQUIRED OF THEE; DENY ME THEM NOT BEFORE I DIE: REMOVE FAR FROM ME VANITY AND LIES. GIVE ME NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES; FEED ME WITH FOOD CONVENIENT FOR ME." Perhaps at this point it would be profitable and beneficial to point out that many times our failure to get ahead is because we have robbed. Haggai 1:3-11 should be studied carefully at this point.

In conclusion, we could summarize this lesson up by stating that there are three things that we should do daily. (1) DAILY ask and receive from God. (2) DAILY thank Him - exemplify gratitude. (3) DAILY recognize His claims upon our possessions - Mal. 3:10-12. This will insure greater blessings.

Forgiveness
SOME THINGS WE SHOULD TEACH OUR GENERATION

D.B. Wright

TEXT: Deut. 6:1-15; II Timothy 3:15-17

INTRODUCTION:

A. The Christian's life is designed to influence people by sharing...teaching the truth.
   1. Hebs 10:24
   2. I Peter 3:15
   3. God's "TRUTH" has always had an impact on those who received it.
      a. John 17:7 Sanctify
      b. John 15:3 Clean
      c. John 8:32 Free
      d. Christians GROW in Truth! I Pet. 2:2
      e. God's truth produces faith. Rom. 10:17

B. The Church of God is designed to preserve truth! I Tim. 3:15; Jude 3

C. The faith and teaching of the present generation is designed to prepare the next generation.
   1. Jeremiah and Ezekiel quoted a proverb
      Ezek. 18:2; Jer. 31:29
      a. This was another way their generation had of saying, "THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT."
      b. Or as is often the case today, "MOM AND DAD ARE THE REASON I TURNED OUT BAD."

   2. Now look at the other side of this...
      a. II Tim. 1:5
      b. Listen to the wisdom of King Solomon! Prov. 4:1-4

D. Note with me some things we ought to both believe and teach the coming generation.

I. WE SHOULD "BELIEVE" AND "TEACH" GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH!
   A. Anything short of this results in confusion and the Bible says God is not the author of confusion. II Cor. 14:33
   B. II Tim. 3:16-17
   C. Matt. 24:35
   D. Proverbs 23:23
   E. God's Truth gives LIGHT. Psalm 119:130
   F. God's Truth leads to FAITH. Rom. 10:17
   G. God's Truth is the STANDARD OF ALL JUDGMENT! John 12:48; Rom. 20:12

II. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH "GOD LOVES US" AND THE "COMING GENERATION."

A. I John 4:19
B. Romans 5:8
C. JESUS IS THE GREATEST MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE! I John 4:9-10

III. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE COMING GENERATION "JESUS SAVES" FROM SIN FOR SERVICE!
   A. Matthew 1:21
   B. He was sent to save. John 3:17
   C. He died that we might be saved! Heb. 9:22
   D. He lives to save. Heb. 7:25
   E. He seeks to save...SINNERS! I Tim. 1:15; Luke 19:10
   F. Jesus calls to salvation! Isa. 45:22

IV. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE COMING GENERATION THE "TRUTH ABOUT SIN."
   A. What it is: I John 3:4
   B. Sin earns wages! Rom. 6:23; Ezk. 18:4
   C. Sin will reveal itself! Num. 32:23b
   D. Reaping day is ahead! Gal. 6:7
   E. Our sins will meet us at the Judgment! I Tim. 5:24
   F. TELL THEM THAT DOWN HERE IN THIS LIFE SIN WILL "BIND" LIKE A CORD AND "BLIGHT" ONE'S LIFE AND INFLUENCE! Prov. 5:22; II Sam. 12:14

V. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL!
   B. Jesus describes the place called hell. Make 9:43-48
   C. HELL IS...HORRIBLE...HOT! ...ENLARGED TO TAKE CARE OF THE OVERFLOW! LITERAL! LASTING!

VI. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE COMING GENERATION TO "PREPARE."
   A. To meet God! Amos 4:12
   B. To SERVE GOD IN THIS LIFE!
      1. Those who would teach in secular school prepare!
      2. Nurses prepare!
      3. Doctors prepare!
      4. Even "CLOWNS" a school of preparation!
      5. EZRA PREPARED... Ezra 7:10
      6. GOD TO PREACHERS...II Tim. 2:15
      7. God to ALL BELIEVERS...I Pet. 3:15
   C. Christians must prepare to be "INFLUENTIAL"! As well as "PREPARE" such!
      1. Part of preparation is PURSUIT OF BIBLE TRUTHS! One can not more teach that which one does not know than one can return from where one has never been.
      2. ANOTHER PART OF PREPARATION IS "SELF PURGING". II Tim. 2:20-22; I Cor. 9:27
   D. Christians should prepare to HELP OTHERS!
      1. By first getting our life right with God! Psalm 51:12-13; I Pet. 3:15

VII. WE SHOULD BOTH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE COMING GENERATION. II Peter 1:4
   A. Psalm 89:33-34
   B. John 10:28
   C. Hebrews 13:5
   D. Psalm 37:23-25
   E. I Thess. 4:16-17
   F. I Cor. 15:58
OUR LIVES
IN CHRIST'S HANDS

TEXT: John 21:15-23

INTRODUCTION:
A. It makes a great difference to our peace of mind whether we think our lives are under God's direction or left to chance. Are we like little sail boats blown every direction by capricious winds, or like a ship guided by a wise and skilled captain?
B. We often find ourselves comparing our situation with others. Why is ours different? Easier or harder? Better or worse?
C. Christ has a word for every believer in His word to Peter. Every Christian's life is in Christ's hands, and the way the Lord plans or permits to happen one life may be entirely different from what he plans or permits another.
D. Three principles we may draw out.

I. WE MUST APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN TO US. V 15-17
A. Peter and John called to be apostles, special representatives of Christ.
   1. Peter's denial and return to fishing interrupted that service briefly.
   2. But Christ renewed His commission after his failure. How gracious, to be willing to use us after we have failed Him!
B. The Lord has a variety of services to which He calls His people.
   1. All were not apostles, all not as prominent as Peter and John.
   2. Be thankful for your place, large or small.
      a. Don't fret because your's does not seem as important or useful as others. You're in no position to judge. Leave that to the Lord. Your service may prove to be more blessed than others which attract more attention.
   b. Evaluate your own gifts, and ask God to help you use the talents you have.
   c. Be yourself, but your best self. Not to mimic others. A cheap imitation, not you using your gifts.

II. WE MUST ACCEPT THE CIRCUMSTANCES CHOSEN FOR US BY THE LORD. V 18, 19
A. Peter's circumstances were to change.
   1. He had been young and vigorous, going where he chose.
   2. Now he was to become old, under the power of others. Arrested, crucified (upside down) for the Lord.
B. Whatever Christ wills for us is best and is meant to glorify Him.
   1. Easy to say that, but hard to believe it and accept it when what is happening to us is harsh, disappointing, frustrating.
   2. Does this mean that we are not to resist adverse circumstances? No, else we could not resist disease, illness.
   3. But does mean that when our best efforts, all efforts, may prove useless. What then? Must submit to the circumstances as God's will. A great difference between being resigned to his will and being submissive to it.

III. WE MUST LEAVE THE LIVES OF OTHERS IN THE HANDS OF THE SOVEREIGN LORD. V 20-22
A. Peter's question about Jesus. V 20
   1. Was he only curious? This is natural.
   2. Or was he concerned? He and John had worked as close companions; would they now be able to close their lives together in the same way?
B. Christ's answer, V 22. A gentle rebuke.
   1. Each disciple is in Christ's sovereign hand.
   2. He does not promise equality to his disciples. Not equality of gifts, or of usefulness, or of circumstances. Peter would die a violent death, crucified upside down. John would live to old age, die in exile on Patmos.
   3. Peter must follow Christ, fulfill his own work and life and leave John in Christ's hands.