BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF JESUS


Many many years ago Isaiah the prophet predicted by inspiration the birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah wrote, "THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL GIVE YOU A SIGN; BEHOLD A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND A BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL." ISA. 7:14 Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judaea. He was born the Saviour of the world and King of the Jews. The Jewish people were blessed with the privilege of believing Jesus for 33½ years. John said they beheld his glory. The life of Jesus testified to the fact He was someone very very special. People marvelled at Him. They were astonished at the way He lived and the works He performed. Notice His glorious words, works, and ways. A study of the life of Jesus fills our minds and hearts with amazement and wonder.

1. BEHOLD HIS WORDS.
   Words of TRUTH. John gave testimony that Jesus was full

of grace and truth. He wrote, "FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST." V 17 Jesus was and is truth personified. "JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME." JOHN 14:6 Jesus always spoke the truth. Jesus only spoke the truth. When He spoke to 5,000 or one person, He spoke the truth. In a sin darkened, devil blinded, evil world, Jesus spoke the truth. Listen to these precious words in John 8:32 "AND ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Many questions were asked by religious leaders, lawyers, and scribes for the purpose of proving He did not speak the truth. Jesus silenced many an evil and disbelieving mouth by uttering precious truth. Some officers sent to arrest Jesus returned to the Chief Priest and Pharisees empty handed. The officers were ask, "WHY HAVE YE NOT BROUGHT HIM?" JOHN 7:45 They answered, "NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN." JOHN 7:46 Evidently they were so a-mazed at His words they returned empty handed.

Words of TRUST. As Jesus preached and taught, He admonished one and all to believe or trust His Father. He said, "LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED: YE BELIEVE IN GOD, BELIEVE ALSO IN ME." JOHN 14:1 Jesus repeatedly taught men not to trust in the Law of Moses riches, man, or their own self righteousness. They were to trust in God. They were to trust in Jesus, God's Son. You can depend upon Him to save your soul. Paul wrote, "...BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED, AND THY HOUSE."
Acts 16:31 You can place your faith in Him as a child of God. You can have complete confidence in Him as Saviour and Lord. His words pointed men to real hope and help.

Words of TOTAL AUTHORITY.
The Jews had their discussions of truth and error. The religious Pharisees and Sadducees sought to persuade men they were right. In our present world there are 1,000's of religious faiths with new ones being born every year. Men stand to give their reasons for believing a certain way. Even the Lord's preachers have difficulty explaining and interpreting certain texts.

Jesus was not like the Pharisees or Sadducees. He was not like the lawyers or scribes, or doctors of the law. "AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN JESUS HAD ENDED THESE SAYINGS, THE PEOPLE WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINE. FOR HE TAUGHT THEM AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY, AND NOT AS THE SCRIBES." Matt. 7:28.29 There wasn't any use arguing or questioning what Jesus said. You could believe it or not. There was and is up to you. Jesus spoke with authority that amazed His hearers.

Words of TRIUMPH. The words of our precious Lord related the message of victory to His listeners. Jesus taught men they could have victory in their lives. He wanted us to know in our circumstances, trials, situations, temptations, and even in death there can be wonderful victory. John wrote these precious words,"FOR WHATSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD; AND THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH." I John 5:4 Jesus always showed men the way to victory. Jesus said, "...I AM COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE, AND THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY." John 10:10 We live because He lives. John 14:19

II. BEHOLD HIS WORKS.

His HEALING POWER. Jesus had the power to heal bodies that were sick, diseased, and full of infirmities. Jesus was so different from so-called modern day faith healers. "...AND HEALING ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF DISEASE AMONG THE PEOPLE." Matt. 4:23 He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and strength and restoration to the crippled. The people were amazed at His power to heal instantly and miraculously. When Jesus healed you didn't have any questions about the sickness or the healing. The people were full of amazement at how He healed.

His RAISING THE DEAD. There is something else that Jesus did that so called faith healers can't do. He raised the dead. Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead. Luke 7:12-15 Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. Luke 8:49-55 Jesus also raised Lazarus from the dead. John 11:39-45 Lazarus had been dead for four days. There were no questions about the ability and power of Jesus to give life to dead bodies. He has power and authority over life and death. His works give undisputed testimony that He was God's Holy Son. Jesus said, "BUT, IF I DO, THOUGH YE BELIEVE NOT ME, BELIEVE THE WORKS: THAT YE MAY KNOW, AND BELIEVE, THAT THE FATHER IS IN ME, AND I IN HIM." John 10:38 His power OVER NATURE. Jesus' life was full of works and deeds that gave plain evidence that He was much more than a common man. No man has ever had control over nature. Jesus manifested His great power over nature. Jesus rebuked the wind and the stormy sea. Matt. 8:26 Listen to what men said when they witnessed this event. "BUT THE MEN MARVELLED, SAYING, WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS, THAT EVEN THE WINDS AND THE SEA OBAY HIM." Matt. 8:27 On another occasion Jesus walked upon the water. Mark 6:49,50 Ever tried walking on water? Some people are so lifted up with pride and vanity that they feel they can, but any who dare try it have to come up for air sooner or later. On another occasion Jesus fed 4,000 people with 7 loaves and a few fish. Mark 8:4-9 A lot of people would like to be able to feed 4,000 people with 7 loaves and a few fish, but only the Lord had the power to do this.

His power TO CHANGE. Jesus changed water into wine. John 2:3-11 If you study His miracles you will find there were witnesses that could verify the truth. He not only has power over the elements and nature, He has power over sin and the Devil. Saul of Tarsus gave testimony to the fact that He witnessed the death of Stephen. He had letters in his hands heading to Damascus to imprison those who were Jesus' disciples. He even was active in putting disciples to death. Acts 26:9-12 The Lord Jesus changed Saul of Tarsus and made him Paul of Jesus Christ. The blood thirsty hater of the Lord's people became the devoted and beloved brother in Christ. The one who persecuted God's people, now is persecuted for being one of God's children. This same Paul wrote, "THEREFORE IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW." II Cor. 5:17

III. BEHOLD HIS WAY.

His way is a way of LOVE.
"HE THAT LOVETH NOT KNOWETH NOT GOD: FOR GOD IS LOVE." I John 4:8 John 3:16 tells us to what extent God loves us. Jesus is God and He is love. John 10:30 His love offers grace, mercy, long-suffering, and tenderness to those who are undeserving. The life, message, and death of Jesus conveys the undeniable fact that Jesus loves mankind. When the sinner in sin is at his worst, love will always be at its best. The greatest sinner and the vilest offender will be made aware of Jesus' love.

His way is a way of FORGIVENESS. On the cross Jesus said, "FATHER FORGIVE THEM: FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." Luke 23:34 Jesus spoke with mercy, compassion, love, and
grace to the thief on the cross. He told the woman caught in adultery He didn't condemn her. He didn't approve of her sin. He offered forgiveness of sins to the man sick of the palsy. "...SON, BE OF GOOD CHEER: THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE." Matt. 9:2 Jesus commanded that men repent of sin, but He always assured them of forgiveness of sins.

His way is a way of PEACE. Jesus is the Prince and Champion of peace. Isa. 9:6 When men are crying for war, stirring up hatred and strife, and wanting death for others, Jesus is walking the land with a message of peace. Jesus has made it possible for every person to experience His wonderful peace. He is our peace. Paul wrote, "NOW THEN WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST AS THOUGH GOD DID BESEECH YOU BY US: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD. BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD." 2 Cor. 5:20 He wants to be at peace with all even you.

His way is a way of RIGHTeousness. John wrote,"...AND IF ANY MAN SIN, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS. 1 John 2:1 His way is a way of righteousness. Righteousness is not a standard to conform to with the Lord. It is a way of life and a way of living. He deals with all people in righteousness. He desires to impart righteousness to one and all. Paul wrote, "BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Rom. 4:5 Paul wrote, "EVEN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WHICH IS BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO ALL AND UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE: FOR THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE:" Rom. 3:22

There are many things about the Lord that causes us to behold His glory, but His word, works, and ways truly manifest His glory to man. We serve a great gracious glorious Saviour!

BELIEVING IS ESSENTIAL IN PRAYER

Text: Matthew 21:22
Key Word: Believing

Munsey Harris

INTRODUCTION:
A. The Context.
1. Matt. 21:18-22
2. The Lord was giving a "living parallel."

a. The fig tree was covered with beautiful leaves, but no fruit. It looked good on the outside.
1. The "religious" folk of Israel were covered with beautiful foliage - on the outside they looked good.
2. Many today are in the same condition: covered with leaves but bearing no fruit!

b. The fig tree was cursed and withered away.
1. There will be those who will stand before God and boast of their beautiful foliage and He will say "depart from me...for I never knew you!"

B. The Curiosity.
1. Matt. 21:20
2. The Disciples were not concerned with the significance of the miracle, but rather they had been caught up in the power and the wonder of the Lord's act.

a. They tried to figure it out, "How can this thing be? When we passed by this tree a couple of days ago it was in beautiful condition and now, by the power of Christ the sap has been withdrawn and the tree is dead."

b. The Lord takes advantage of the disciple's surprise, and teaches that believing prayer and faith will remove mountains of difficulty.

C. The Content.
1. Notice 3 things concerning believing as a part of our prayer.

I. BELIEVING IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVAILING PRAYER.
A. Prayer WILL Not Prevail Without Belief
   In A Personal God.
1. The Atheist cannot pray a prevailing prayer.
   a. He has no God to pray to.
2. The Pantheist cannot pray a prevailing prayer.
   a. His God is the collective universe and it cannot receive prayer.
3. The Christian can pray a prevailing prayer.
   a. Because he believes in a personal God.
      1. A God who created us in His own image.
      2. A God to whom we can speak, thru Christ, as we would speak to a friend. Ex. 33:11; Heb. 11:6

B. Prayer WILL Not Prevail Without Belief
   In A Perceptive God.
1. The Deist cannot pray a prevailing prayer.
   a. His God is too busy to hear his prayer.
      1. The Deist believes in God as the creator of the universe but he believes man, in the sight of God, is just an insignificant little speck - far removed from God.

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GOD BE PRAISED

TEXT: I Peter 1:3-5
P.A. Dubose

INTRODUCTION:
Praise to God has been voiced by His people throughout the ages and will be voiced even in the eternal age. In this text three great truths are presented and those who have been affected by these truths praise God and rejoice in them.

Maybe we don't praise the Lord as readily as did saints of old because the rush of life leaves little time to reflect on His goodness. Let us consider three great reasons those who are saved should praise God.

I. WE ARE BEGOTTEN AGAIN UNTO A LIVELY HOPE.
A. The term "begotten" is unique to Christianity.
1. Other religions emphasize culture, training, education, etc.,
2. The term "born again" may even be used loosely in some circles in Christianity today.

B. Being begotten of God is necessary to the hope of the text.
1. One must be born of the Spirit of God.
2. Being born again is a must for the entrance into heaven. John 3:5-7
3. The Word of God is used of the Spirit of God to affect the new birth in one's life.
   a. The Word is the sword of the Spirit.
   b. The Spirit of God convicts.
   c. The Spirit of God regenerates.

C. Those who are born again are begotten again to a living hope.
1. Before regeneration one is without hope.
2. Now in Christ, and Christ in him is the hope of glory.

II. WE ARE BEGOTTEN TO AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE.
A. As sons of Adam we had a dreaded inheritance.
1. As heirs of a fallen nature we were the children of wrath.
2. We could rightfully expect God's wrath.
B. Now as sons of God, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
1. We can't comprehend what all this may encompass. It hasn't entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for them that love Him. I Cor. 2:9
2. God spared not His own son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Rom. 8:32
C. This inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, reserved, and fades not away.

III. THOSE WHO ARE BEGOTTEN OF HIM ARE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD.
A. We were reached by the power of God to be saved.
1. Through the gospel of Christ. Rom.1:16
2. We were reached by His Holy Spirit to convict.
3. We were saved by being born of His Spirit. I John 5:1
B. Now we are kept by His power.
1. His power was great enough to save and in doing this over power Satan and his influence in our life.
2. His power is great enough to keep.

CONCLUSION:
In these great truths, those who are saved can rejoice. We have a lot for which to praise God.

HOW CAN WE LIMIT GOD?

TEXT: Psalm 78:41
Danny Chappell

INTRODUCTION:
A. God's wise and benevolent purposes are often frustrated.
B. There are many things God would do for man if permitted.
C. God offers so much but we settle for so little.

I. INCONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING LIMITS GOD.
A. He is limited in fellowship. Isa.59:1-2
1. We are made for Him but sin ruins our fellowship.
2. Many Christians have such a back-log of unconfessed sins that they are robbed of the good things of God. Jer. 5:25
B. He is limited in available witnesses to use. I Cor. 9:27
1. God can't use a dirty vessel to be a witness for Him.
2. Just like a spot on a neck tie ruins its usefulness so does a spotted saint lose their effectiveness.
C. If we want to be used of God we must be usable. Matt. 5:16

II. LACK OF FAITH LIMITS GOD.
A. The disciples were hindered because of it. Matt. 17:20
1. Without faith we can't please Him. Heb. 11:6
2. God's greatest men were men of faith. Heb. 11:33-39
B. John the Baptist was troubled because of it. Matt. 11:3
1. God wants us to have confidence but a lack of faith breeds doubt.
2. It kills the pioneer spirit thus limiting the blessings of God.
3. II Cor. 5:7

III. SHALLOW AND SELFISH PRAYERS LIMIT GOD.
A. God desires to hear and answer prayer but we often refuse to ask.
1. James 4:2
2. Phil. 4:6
B. God refuses to answer prayer because we ask amiss.
1. James 4:3
2. When we pray we should pray for God's will to be accomplished.

IV. A STUBBORN WILL LIMITS GOD.
A. Christ was rejected by His own people. John 1:11; Matt. 23:37
B. We are given the power of choice. Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21
C. God is willing to save all who will believe. 1 Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9
D. Some stubbornly wait for a better time. Festus - Acts 24:25
E. Some are almost persuaded. Agrippa - Acts 25:28
F. Some surrender their will and trust Christ. Acts 2:41-42

WHAT IS REVIVAL?

TEXT: II Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 85:6
I. WHAT IS IT?
A. Not "getting folks saved".
B. Not the series of meetings.
C. Not to promote excitement.
D. It is a "renewing of life" for an individual or a church.

II. HOW DO WE GET IT?
A. First Requirement: Must be God's people
   1. Only saved people can be revived, by definition of revival.
   2. We cannot produce it or bring it about, but until we get it, God's work is impeded.
   3. We must all seek our own revival at times when we stray from the will of the Lord.
B. Second Requirement: Must be humble people.
   1. He gives grace to the humble. James 4:6
   2. One must draw nigh to God. James 4:7
   3. One must purify himself. James 4:8
C. Third Requirement: Must be a praying people.
   1. Revival and prayer are closely linked.
   2. When one humbles himself, he is in the correct spiritual posture for prayer.
   3. "Seek my face" indicates the need for prayer.
   4. For revival, one should first pray for himself, then for others. Without individual revival, there can be no church revival.
D. Fourth Requirement: "turn from their wicked ways"
   1. Repentance is necessary for revival.
   2. Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in the church; if resolution is not made, revival is hindered.
   3. Not only is this the last requirement, but it is the first evidence of revival.

III. GOD'S RESPONSE.
A. He has turned His back because of sin. When He see fruits of repentance, He inclines an ear to His people.
B. He will forgive the sins of His people. I John 1:9 Forgiveness revives one's attitude and purpose.
C. He will heal the land. When all things are made right in the sight of God, life is joyful.
D. When saved people are revived, the lost will be saved.

Richard Spruiell

WHOSE SLAVE ARE YOU?

TEXT: Romans 6:14-23
INTRODUCTION:
A. False ideas concerning freedom.
B. Everybody is a slave/servant.
C. Gospel of Christ transfers control.

I. THE PROMISE: V. 14
A. Statement of the Promise.
B. Scope of the Promise.
   1. Because we are not under law-negative.
   2. Because we are now under Grace-Positive.

II. THE PROBLEM: V. 15
A. Does our being under grace mean that we may allow ourselves in sin without being under sin's thralldom?

III. THE PICTURE: V. 16
A. Two Families.
B. Two Options.
   1. Servants of Sin
   2. Servants of Grace
C. Two Results
   1. Fruit to death
   2. Fruit to life everlasting.

IV. THE PROCESS.
A. Received
B. Respond
C. Obey

CONCLUSION:
"You Become" V. 18 speaks of a conversion, which is: (1) A freedom from the service of sin, it is a shaking off of that yoke, resolving to have no more to do with it. (2) A resignation of ourselves to the service of God and righteousness, to God as our Master, to righteousness as our work.

Maxie Haynes
THINGS THAT WILL BE MISSING IN HEAVEN

D.B. Wright

TEXT: Revelation 21:1-5; 8:25-27

INTRODUCTION:
A. God has a plan by which one can live a happy and prosperous life here in the earth! Psalm 1:1-3
B. The Lord's inspired Word lets us know that not all that comes to one in this world is to be enjoyed. Job 14:1; Psa. 90:10
C. There are some things in the world the Lord doesn't want His children to enjoy! II Cor. 6:17-18; Eph. 5:11; I John 2:15-17
D. For this message I just want to point out some things that will be missing from Heaven, the home of the saved...and I WON'T BE SORRY that they are not there...when I get there (with the exception of one.)

I. STRIFE, WAR AND BLOODSHED WILL BE MISSING FROM HEAVEN:
A. All who are in Heaven will be LIKE JESUS, and He never instigated any of these things.
B. There have been some terrible wars and the worst is yet to be! Luke 24:21-22; Zechariah 13:2; Rev. 14:20
C. The devil and all instigators of war, bloodshed and strife will be IN THE LAKE OF FIRE and there will be no more such.

II. SIN IN ANY FORM WON'T BE IN HEAVEN!
A. Sin is transgression of God's Holy Word. I John 3:4
B. Sin----
1. Deceives: Hebs. 3:13
2. Defiles: Rev. 21:27
3. Defies God and human authority: Jer. 6:16,17
4. Defames the name of God: II Sam.12:14
5. Damages the Church of God: I Cor.5:6-7
6. DESTROYS LIVES, HOMES, NATIONS! I John 5:16-17
   a. David's sin caused the DEATH of several of his children.
   b. Achash's sin caused the DEATH of 36 soldiers.
   c. Corruption of the Lord's Supper caused the death of "church members" in Corinth. Many sleep. I Cor.5:30
   d. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira caused their own death.

7. The SIN OF UNBELIEF damns the soul! Rev. 21:8; John 3:18
C. I want to go where there won't be any sin, don't you!

III. THERE WILL BE NO UNGODLY PRIDE IN HEAVEN!
A. Prov. 16:18
B. God HATES IT and therefore it won't be in Heaven. Prov. 6:17

IV. THERE WILL BE NO CHARACTER ASSASSIN IN HEAVEN!
A. Mischief Prov. 6:18
B. False witness. Prov. 6:19
C. Sowing discord. Prov. 6:19 God hates these and they won't be in Heaven!

V. THERE WILL BE NO SENSUALITY IN HEAVEN!
A. Humanity will sell the soul to SATISFY THE FLESH.
   1. Prov. 7:26-27
B. Companions (men and women) have BETRAYED, FORSAKEN and BROKE THE HEARTS OF INNOCENT LOVED ONES for "stolen waters". Prov. 9:17-18
C. THIS TOO, SHALL PASS AWAY! I John 2:17

VI. THERE WILL BE NO MORE PAIN IN HEAVEN!
A. Can you imagine the pain Job endured?
B. The CRY OF A CHILD IN PAIN is almost too much for me to bear!
C. I have "ministered to", and "prayed with" people in excruciating pain. I've seen it take years for people to die.
D. I have lived in pain for seven years!
E. We'll have a new and glorified body in Heaven! Phil. 3:20-21

VII. THERE WILL BE NO MORE "SORROW" IN HEAVEN!
A. Many are the "KINDS" of sorrow! Disease, Divorce, Desertion
B. Many are the "CAUSES" of sorrow! Death-departure from God
C. Jesus knew sorrow!
D. THERE WON'T BE ANY IN HEAVEN! Rev. 21:4

VIII. THERE WILL BE NO MORE "GOOD-BYES" IN HEAVEN!
A. No good-byes to loved ones.
B. There'll be no more companions go off to war!
C. There'll be no more MURDER!
D. There'll be no more death from any cause!
E. Children won't grow up and leave us in old age and ill health!

IX. THERE WILL BE "NO TEARS IN HEAVEN".
A. Song - NO TEARS IN HEAVEN
B. God will wipe away all tears. Rev. 21:4
C. Down here we are told to "weep WITH THEM THAT WEEP." There'll be no cause for crying there!

X. THERE WILL BE NO "CHRIST REJECTORS" IN HEAVEN!
A. John 1:11-12
B. Rev. 21:8

CONCLUSION:
A. Who will be there? Rev. 8:27
B. We can KNOW FOR SURE DOWN HERE! I John 3:2; 5:13
C. We can REJOICE ON THE WAY! Luke 10:20
THE BENEFICIAL TEACHINGS
OF CHRIST (PART 18)

SUBJECT: THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE AND AMBITION.

TEXT: Matthew 6:16-21

In this study we will notice the teaching of the Master concerning the Christian's attitude and ambition on fasting and treasures. You know, if we would study the Bible and let it speak for itself without being swayed by other groups etc., we would certainly be blessed. So much of the time we formulate our opinions, based upon our observations of others, and then start labeling others or identifying them with others merely because of the outward signs or expressions. We sometimes shy away from some of the teachings in the Word of God because of some people's practices whereby, even in their heresy, they have picked up some outward demonstrations which are Biblical. For instance, we don't shout anymore because we are afraid we will be identified with the Charismatics. True, solid and sound Baptists are not charismatic but we should not let their errors keep us from enjoying and expressing our praise to the Lord. Certainly, we would all agree that these expressions need to be genuine, Spirit led and of the Lord. We shouldn't do anything to try to show off how spiritual we think we are. Our purpose is to "exalt Christ not our spirituality!" The reason for this preceding information is because of the fact that we have shunned away from the teaching of fasting, simply because of the fact that some who teach erroneous concepts include this in their dogma.

1. THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE AND AMBITION CONCERNING FASTING.

Fasting means "to abstain from eating food for a period of time". The Biblical concept involves the fact that one becomes so concerned about some-thing that he or she refrains from eating for a period of time. Now, notice Matt. 6:16-18: "MOREOVER, WHEN YE FAST, BE NOT, AS THE HYPOCRITES, OF A SAD COUNTENANCE: FOR THEY DISFIGURE THEIR FACES, THAT THEY MAY APPEAR UNTO MEN TO FAST. VERILY I SAY unto you, THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD. BUT THOU, WHEN THOU FASTEST ANOINT THINE HEAD, AND WASH THY FACE. THAT THOU APPEAR NOT UNTO MEN TO FAST, BUT UNTO THY FATHER WHICH IS IN SECRET: AND THY FATHER WHICH SEETH IN SECRET, SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY."

Here in this passage we notice a definite attitude to be shunned as well as a divine attitude that we should have if fasting is practiced. We are to shun the Pharisaic attitude and ambition (Matt.6:16 :23:27-39). Their's was a formalistic or outward demonstration. They were concerned only with the letter of the law or wanting to impress others. The Saviour was not pleased or impressed with this attitude. However, the Christian attitude and ambition is also noted in this passage. That attitude is to please God. We should not do it to impress others; in fact; others should not even know that we are fasting. This simply means that we become so burdened and concerned that we just don't eat. The purpose of fasting is to get through to God, our Father, and He searches the heart. I Chron. 28:9 and Jer. 17:10

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE AND AMBITION CONCERNING TREASURES.

There are EARTHLY, ENJOYABLE and ETERNAL treasures. Matthew 6:19, deals with the earthly treasures. "LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH, WHERE MOB AND RUST DOOTH CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL." According to this passage earthly treasures are UNSAFE. This does not necessarily mean that earthly treasures are wrong but rather our minds should not become so pre-occupied with them that we forget or neglect the more important things in life. We should not have our minds constantly on riches and allow money to become an idol. The LOVE of money is THE ROOT of ALL EVIL. I Tim. 6:10 states, "FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL: WHICH WHILE SOME COVETED AFTER, THEY HAVE ERRED FROM THE FAITH, AND Pierced ThemSelves Through With Many Sorrows."

Earthly treasures are also UNSTABLE. Jesus warns about deceit of riches. Riches deceive many people. It keeps some from Heaven (Luke 12:20-21). The important thing is to not let the treasures of the earth become your God. I Tim. 6:6-12. It is not wrong to desire to have things, unless this desire becomes a lust and predominant thing in one's life. You sure won't be able to take these earthly treasures with you. You know, life is strange isn't it. People so many times, break down their health in order to accumulate wealth and then turn around and spend their wealth to get their health back. Notice Psalms 49:10 and 1 Tim. 6:7.

The ENJOYABLE treasures are noticed in Matt. 6:20 "BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DOOTH CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK THROUGH NOR STEAL!". Here, we are encouraged to store our treasures in Heaven where they will never lose their value and are safe from thieves.
The characteristics of this can be summed up in three words: EXCITING - II Cor. 9:7, ENJOYABLE - Luke 6:38, and ETERNAL - II Cor. 9:6. If you give a little - you will get a little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much.

Matt. 6:21 points out that these are ETERNAL treasures. "FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO." If your profits are in Heaven, your heart will be there too. Because of this there will be rejoicing (Prov. 11:24) and reward. II Cor. 9:8 Remember, in reference to our treasures, it is possible to give away and become richer just as it is also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything.

C. A prayer is answered thru faith and belief but it must be accompanied by wisdom, by God's will, by proper motive and sincerity.

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2. The Christian can pray a prevailing prayer.

C. Prayer Will Not Prevail Without Stirring Up Three Worlds.
   1. Heaven
   2. Earth
   3. Hell

4. Prevailing prayer, that comes thru belief, is like water.
   a. Powerless and impotent when it's quiet but powerful when it goes into motion.

5. Prevailing prayer is not believing in my ability to pray but belief in Christ's ability to answer my prayer according to His will for my life.

II. BELIEVING IS ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER.
   A. Because God Has Pledged Himself to it.
      1. He is able to do whatever He wills.
         a. The power of The Promiser was exemplified in the withering of the fig tree.
      2. He is willing to do whatever He promises. Matt. 21:21

   B. Because God has positioned Himself to it.
      1. His position will not allow faith in the interests of folly.
      2. His position will allow faith in the area of His providence.

III. BELIEVING IS ESSENTIAL TO ANSWERED PRAYER.
   A. A prayer that is accompanied by faith and belief will be answered according to God's will.

   B. A prayer is answered in many different ways.
      1. If the request is unwise, God in His mercy will withhold His gift of faith and the reply in "NO". James 4:3
      2. If the request is outside His will, He'll honor your sincere prayer with needed grace, but the reply is "NO".
         a. Such was the case with Paul's thorn in the flesh.
      3. If the request is without proper motive, faith will not accompany the prayer.
      4. If the request is without sincerity, God will withhold faith.
         a. Don't pray for revival unless you are willing to work and witness.