THE PRESENT POSSESSIONS OF THE SAVED

Text: John 1:12-14
Introduction: John writes about the New Birth of all who receive Jesus as Saviour. We are not born of blood, will of flesh, will of man. We are born of God. A few Bible believing churches and preachers still believe you must be born again or from above. Jesus gives us assurance about what we have or possess in Him. We are saved and know it. We believe God’s Word and are settled on it. We know that we have some things in Jesus Christ because of the New Birth.

I. THE SAVED HAVE REDEMPTION.
A. The meaning.
1. Paul said, "in whom we have redemption through his blood..." Ephesians 1:7.
2. Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ." I Peter 1:18,19.
3. Redeem means to repurchase. Every first born male animal and man belonged to God. The animal was offered to God or money paid to redeem it. An offering was given for male children to sustain the Levites.

B. The motives.
1. In order to do the right things for the right reason or motive, you must be born again.
2. "...and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." I Thessalonians 1:9.
3. The Pharisees prayed, gave alms, fasted etc., just to be seen and praised of men.
4. The saved serve the Lord Jesus out of love and adoration.

C. The magnifying.
1. We are redeemed with the precious blood that Jesus shed on Calvary.
2. We exalt and magnify the Lord for loving and caring for us so much.
3. We thank God for the preacher, Christian witness, Word of God, and churches, but we exalt and magnify Jesus.

II. THE SAVED HAVE THE REBIRTH.
A. The meaning.
1. Jesus said, "...except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.
2. Nicodemus didn’t know what the Lord was talking about.
3. Paul was a lost religious person who learned what being born again meant.
4. God makes us alive spiritually when we trust Christ as our Saviour. This is a heavenly spiritual birth.
B. The motive.
1. The saved person attributes this New Birth all to God. It isn't by blood, will of flesh, or will of man, but of God.
2. Those who are born again have an instilled spiritual love for Jesus and Christians.
3. We also want to talk about this New Birth experience and get others to experience it.

C. The magnifying.
1. The Holy Spirit convicts the lost sinner. The Word is preached to the lost sinner.
3. Those who are reborn magnify and exalt Jesus. We speak of His love, mercy, grace, peace, joy, and forgiveness.

III. THE SAVED HAVE THE REMISSION.
A. The meaning.
1. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Hebrews 9:22.
2. Paul described or defined redemption as the forgiveness of sins. Ephesians 1:7.
3. Remission means pardon or forgiveness of sins. The guilty are forgiven and pardoned because they repent and trust Jesus.

B. The motive.
1. When our sins are forgiven there is great joy and peace with God. Romans 5:1.
2. We acknowledge sin and it's penalty and we want to be forgiven by the Lord.
3. We start out in zealous service because His forgiveness is so wonderful and peaceful.

C. The magnifying.
1. We do not exalt the preacher, teacher, or self; we exalt the forgiving Christ.
2. The forgiven guilty sinners went joyfully on their way telling how Jesus forgives of sin.
3. To the palsied man He said, "...son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2.

IV. THE SAVED HAVE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS.
A. The meaning.
1. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5.
2. "...unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Romans 4:6.
3. Righteous means right or just before God. God makes the guilty righteous and satisfies His justice.

B. The motive.
1. The saved serve the Lord tirelessly because He has made them righteous.
2. We didn't earn it, don't deserve it, couldn't attain to it, but we were made righteous.
3. The new nature moves us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly and righteously, and godly. Titus 2:12.

C. The magnifying.
1. We do not magnify our character, works, deeds, dedication; but JESUS, who loved us so much.
2. Saul of Tarsus became the great apostle Paul who lived and breathed and labored for Jesus Christ.
3. Paul repented of sin and relied on Jesus to save him. He magnified that loving, caring Saviour.
4. We are not good because of our good works.

V. THE SAVED HAVE REJOICING.
A. The meaning.
1. "notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20.
3. Rejoice means delight, It carries the idea of joy, happiness, and gladness. The example shows those who were saved went on their way rejoicing.
B. The motive.
1. When we experience the New Birth a common reaction is joy and gladness.
2. The jailor rejoiced believing in God with all of his house. Acts 26:34.
3. The born again are full of joy and want to do something for the Lord, and want to live for Him.

C. The magnifying.
1. Those who have redemption, righteousness, remission, and rebirth exalt and magnify the blessed Redeemer.
2. We give Him all the credit and glory and honor.
3. We lift Him up as the Holy Son of God who loved us and washed us with His own blood.

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE TEMPLE
By Wesley Waldrum

Text: John 2:18-22

I. THE WISH FOR A SIGN (vs 18).
A. Proof of Power.
B. Public Proof.
C. Proof of Position.

II. THE WORK ON THE SANCTUARY (vs 19,20).
A. The Immediate Response.
B. The Illustration Referred to.
C. The Intellectual Review.

III. THE WORDS ABOUT THE SAVIOUR (vs 21,22).
A. The Reference.
B. The Resurrection.
C. The Remembrance.

THE MINISTRY OF GRACE

Text: Acts 8: 26-39; Titus 2:11-14

Introduction: God's grace touches, tenders, teaches, transforms, transplants, transfuses, translates, and transmits. God's grace seeks, saves, secures, sets apart for service, sends out after others, and supplies one's need! God's grace knows no boundaries, neither shows any partiality or respect for persons! God's grace condescends to all sinners, convicting of need, convincing of the Way, and will convert all who repent and believe in Jesus! For this time...let us review "The Ministry of God's Grace" as set forth in Acts 8:26-39.

I. A "MINISTER" OF GRACE (vs 26).
A. "And the angel of the Lord spake unto..."
1. This is no new teaching or practice.
2. Throughout the Bible one finds such!

NEW BOOK AVAILABLE!
The 37th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference Outline Book is now ready. These outlines were preached by Jim Harrell, Gary Woodard, Glen Tropp, Herbert Brown, Charles Murphy, Brent Summerhill, and Larry Butte.

AVAILABLE BOOKS

Word Studies
John - Chapters 1-3
Sounding Out The Word IV
Right Sermons By Wright
The Salvation Of The Lord
Sounding Out The Word V
Who The Lord Is
1989 Bible Conference
Sounding Out The Word II
1990 Bible Conference
Scanning The Scriptures I
Scanning The Scriptures II
37th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference

Send for all 13 books. If at all possible, please include an offering to help defray the cost of printing and postage. The continued support of your prayers and offerings for this ministry is greatly appreciated.
B. The Lord here uses His "Ministering Spirit!"
   1. To direct His Messenger.
   2. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Hebrews 1:14.

C. The Lord uses many things to get one's attention.
   1. The talking donkey.
   2. A rooster.
   3. A storm.
   4. Snakes.
   5. Angels.
   6. Persons.

II. A "MESSENGER" OF GRACE (vs 26,27,30).
   A. God has always had a message for mankind!
      1. Positive instructions to Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.
      2. A set of limitations or boundaries beyond which man is not to go. Exodus 20, Ephesians 5:11, II Corinthians 6:17.

   B. God has always had messengers available!
      1. Angels.
      3. Animals.
      4. His Son.

   C. Note the qualities of this messenger of Grace!
      1. Active in the Lord's work (vs 5).
      2. Alert! (vs 27).
      3. Attentive and obedient to the Will of God! (vs 30).
      5. He was also able or capable (vs 35, 37). Also see -- Ezra 7:10, I Peter 3:15, II Timothy 2:25.

   D. Peter reminds us that all who "receive" gifts of Grace are to minister the same as "Good Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God." (I Peter 4:10).
      1. We, too, are intrusted with the message of Grace!
      2. We, also, are sent by Grace to those in need of Grace! John 20:21.

III. A "MAN" WHO IS LOST IN SIN AND IN NEED OF GRACE! (vs 27).
   A. A man with some knowledge of the Lord.
      1. He had been to worship.
      2. Salvation comes not by knowledge nor worship.

   B. A man who was a sinner.
      1. Seeking and searching the scriptures (vs 30).

   C. He was a sinner-man in need of Grace that is available.
      1. Grace more abundant than his sin. Romans 20:5.
      5. Grace that is amazing! (Why should He love me so?)

IV. A "MOTIVATOR" OF GOD'S SERVANTS (vs 29).
   A. God's Word fires up His servants! Jeremiah 20:9.

   B. God's implanted love constrains or draws out our best in service! II Corinthians 5:14.

   C. God's example moves the saved to serve, seek, and sacrifice. I John 4:11.

   D. God's Holy Spirit motivates His servants!
      3. He incites us.

V. THE "MESSAGE" OF GRACE! (Isaiah 53; Luke 7:50).
   A. A message about our spiritual state of being. Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23.

   B. A message about the "Sinner's Substitute."
      1. "...a lamb..." Isaiah 53:7.
      2. "He was wounded for our transgressions..." Isaiah 53:5.
C. A message of satisfaction for our sins.

VI. THE OUTWARD "MANIFESTATIONS" OF THE INWARD WORK OF GOD'S GRACE.
A. The desire to follow Jesus in Baptism. "...what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (vs 36).
B. The declaration of the Messenger of Grace. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (vs 37). Also, Romans 10:8-10.
C. The confession. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (vs 37). Also I John 5:1.
D. The open, public manifestation of obedience.
   1. "...he baptized him." (vs 38).
   4. A declaration of intent "...to walk in newness of life."
E. A new found joy sends the believer on his way rejoicing. (vs 39).
   1. Sins forgiven.
   2. Sins washed away.
   3. Life eternal.
   4. Acceptance in the Father's family.
   5. A good conscience that he was an obedient child of God. Baptism does not put away the filth of the flesh (Christ's blood does this), but it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." I Peter 3:21.

Conclusion: In some way Grace has crossed our paths today! Grace has brought the message of sin and salvation from sin by Jesus, the "Sinner's Substitute."

Bible Teaching is the title of Charles Swilling's newest outline book. It is advertised as "what the Bible teaches." Order a copy today!

SERIES: THE WAY TO BLESSEDNESS. #10 FOCUS: SETTLED ON SOME GOALS. SUBJECT: THE ULTIMATE UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE GOALS


Introduction:
A. The REVIEW.
   1. Submissive to the Lord.
   2. Sensitive to the Spirit.
   3. Settled on some goals.
      a. Love
      b. Peace
      c. Righteousness
      d. Godliness
      e. Faithfulness
      f. Patience
      g. Meekness
B. The REVELATION.
   1. Note vs 12 - "follow after" and vs 14 - "press toward."
   2. Two kinds of goals: intermediate goals and ultimate goals.
   3. You can only achieve your ultimate goals by having intermediate goals.
   4. It's foolish to have intermediate goals if you do not know what the ultimate goal is.
   5. These goals relate to developing Christian character.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ULTIMATE GOAL!
A. Identification of the concepts - all related to Christ.
   1. vs 8 - winning or gaining Christ.
   2. vs 9 - found in Christ.
   3. vs 10 - know Christ.
   4. vs 14 - meeting Christ.
   5. vs 20 - seeing Christ.
   6. vs 21 - being like Christ.
B. Insight of these concepts.
   1. Winning Christ (vs 8) deals with rightly evaluating the things of your life. Gaining Christ is what matters most.
2. Found in Christ (vs 9) refers to the day when he'll stand before God. He realizes that if his life is evaluated purely on the basis of who he is and what he's done, he's in real trouble. He's inadequate and not qualified. In Christ, he will be accepted.

3. Knowing Christ (vs 10) embraces knowing Christ experimentally, not just intellectually. Knowing Him as my Saviour, my Lord. Know Him more fully.

4. Meeting Christ (vs 14) is the ultimate of the upward call. A spiritual glimpse of the ultimate causes you to know where you are going.

5. Seeing Christ (vs 20). He lived in anticipation of Christ's coming. He was able to put up with things because he had this sense of the ultimate. This added a dimension to his life that gave him stickability and stability.

6. Being like Christ (vs 21) is the ultimate goal.

II. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ULTIMATE GOAL!

A. The Process - Moving forward toward this ultimate goal institutes a process of change in him. Recognition of the ultimate goal has strong implications on our lives at the present time.

B. The Perception.
   1. Realistic appreciation of his past experience.
      a. He remembers what he is not to forget. He never forgot what Christ did for him.
      b. He forgot that which he does not need to remember. If you admitted and confessed your sin, don't let guilt and remorse overtake you.
   2. Realistic appraisal for his present condition.
      a. Where are you now?
      b. In order to know where you are now, you need to know where you're going and where you've been.

c. I'm not what I should be - I'm not what I'm going to be but thank God, I'm not what I was.
d. Apprehended but haven't apprehended all.

3. Realistic approach concerning the future.
   a. Christ is coming.
   b. Living therefore in the light of Him brings everything to fruition.

III. THE IMPACT OF THE ULTIMATE GOAL.

A. Must have a deeper intimacy with Christ (vs 10).
B. Must have a greater experience of Christ's power.
C. Must have a fuller involvement.

ALL OF THIS AND HEAVEN TOO!

By Randy Cloud

Text: Psalms 116:13

Introduction: Every child of God should be humbly thankful to God for all of His blessings! The Bible says in Psalm 116:17, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord." We need to ever keep in our minds and hearts the benefits and blessings that our Lord has given to us. In trusting Christ as Saviour, many benefits are received. May we consider some of these blessings of being a child of the King.

I. EVERLASTING LIFE.

The Bible says in John 3:15-16, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Bible says in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The Bible says in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
The Bible says in John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand."

II. FORGIVENESS OF SINS.
The Bible says in Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

In Christ we have "redemption through His blood." The word redemption means to buy back by paying a price. What is the purchase price? The purchase price is the precious and powerful blood of Jesus Christ!

With this glorious and great redemption, the saints of God have forgiveness of sins! Our sins are forgiven! Since God has forgiven us, we are taught to forgive one another. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you."

What makes all this possible? It is the marvelous and magnificent grace of God. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

III. PEACE WITH GOD.
The Bible says in Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are justified by faith! The word justified means declared righteous in the sight of God. Our justification and peace with God is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! The unsaved person does not have peace with God. Real peace comes by trusting Jesus Christ!

IV. PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER.
The Bible says in Hebrews 4:14-16, "See then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly into the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The Bible says in I John 5:14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

V. HEAVEN!
The Bible says in John 14:1-6, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Conclusion: In Christ, there are many blessings! However, the greatest blessing is the salvation of the soul. Come to Jesus and trust Him as Saviour!
HOMECOMING
By Calvin Francis

Text: Ruth 1:1-22

Introduction: There are many homecomings recorded in the Word of God: Jacob after an absence of twenty years; Jacob brought into the presence of Joseph in Egypt; the children of Israel after an absence of 400 years from the land; Ezra at the end of the 70 years of exile in Persia. Homecomings are times of joy but our text is the record of one that was not joyous but that later turned into joy.

I. THE TIMES IN WHICH THESE PEOPLE LIVED.
A. It was a time in which people were having a hard time.
B. It was a time that was very much like ours. It was the time of the Judges. Judges 21:25. A time of permissiveness.
C. It was a time that tried the mettle of families as was so in this case.
D. Yet at a time like this the family of Naomi was a breath of fresh air.

II. THE DECISION THIS FAMILY MADE.
A. It was a decision to go to a different place; a place of idol worship.
B. It was a decision that was evidently made in the strength of human weakness; that is, a decision of the flesh.
C. It was a decision that was to prove costly.
D. It was a decision that brought about a very serious observation when Naomi went home. (vs 19-21).

III. NAOMI OBSERVED THAT SHE HAD GONE OUT OF THE LAND...FULL.
A. What makes a person to be full?
B. She belonged to God. Naomi means pleasant and content.
C. Her husband was a devout man of God. (My God is King.)
D. She had her sons.
E. When you have all these things, you are full.

IV. WHAT DID SHE MEAN WHEN SHE SAID SHE RETURNED...EMPTY?
A. That she had been deprived of her joy. Marah means bitter.
B. That she had never really realized that the best things in life are free.

V. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER SHE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE OF BREAD?
A. She became full again (Ruth and Boaz).
B. Boaz was the father of Obed who was the father of Jesse who was the father of David who was the father of the line from which Jesus came.

Conclusion: If you have left the House of Bread and exchanged your fullness for emptiness, you can become full again by going back to where you got off the track.

THE CHURCH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
By Neal Clark

Text: Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction: The church of our day seems to have lost something. Christ is the head and heartbeat of the church. The preaching of the gospel is our job, but it appears at times we place emphasis on the wrong things. There seems to be so much unrest, unconcern, and unfaithfulness among our leadership. There seems to be a lack of:

I. CONFIDENCE IN THE LAMB (John 1:29).
A. Lack of confidence in His power.
B. Lack of confidence in His promises.
C. Lack of confidence in His purpose.

II. CONCERN IN OUR LIVES (Matthew 10:38; Acts 20:28).
A. Concern for the Cross.
B. Concern for the Church.
C. Concern for Christian living.

III. COMMITMENT TO HIS LAW (Psalms 37:5; 119:97-105).
A. Commitment to His Way.
B. Commitment to His Word.
C. Commitment to His Worship.
IV. CARE ABOUT THE LOST (Matthew 28:18-20).
   A. We must warn the sinner.
   B. We must weep for the sinner. (Psalms 126:1-6).
   C. We must win the sinner.

V. CONTENTMENT AMONG OUR LEADERSHIP (I Timothy 3:1-16).
   A. Unrest among the leadership.
   B. Uncertainty among the leadership.
   C. Unfaithfulness among the leadership.
   D. Unbelief among the leadership.
   E. Unhappy leaders mark our day.

THE BLOOD THAT SPEAKS OF BETTER THINGS

By Ed Rhodes

Text: Hebrews 12:24

Introduction: Abel's blood cries out for vengeance. Genesis 4:10, "And He said what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The blood of the martyrs cry out for vengeance. Revelations 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long O Lord, Holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth?"

I. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SPEAKS OF FORGIVENESS.
   A. Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."
   B. We have this forgiveness only on the basis of Christ's blood. Colossians 2:13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all your trespasses."

II. CHRIST'S BLOOD SPEAKS OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION.
   A. Colossians 1:19-20, "For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."
   B. II Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

III. CHRIST'S BLOOD SPEAKS OF REDEMPTION.
   A. I Peter 1:18-19, "For as much as you know as you were not redeemed... But with the precious Blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish..."
   B. Hebrews 9:12, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place..."

Conclusion: God has taught blood redemption since the garden of Eden. Blood redemption was taught in Egypt and especially the advent of the Passover (see also, Hebrews 9:22; 11:28). "Without the shedding of blood there is no redemption..." Also remember the words of the song: "There is a Fountain Filled With Blood -- Drawn From Emanuel's Veins..."

WHEN GOD REFUSES TO HEAR

By L. Chester Guinn

Text: Isaiah 59:1,2

Introduction: Will there ever be a time when God will not hear our prayers? This question should cause each to stop and think. Yes, God does love us. He manifested that fact by giving His Son to die for our sins, Romans 5:8. He wants to hear our prayers, but there are time when He cannot do so.

There are many prayer promises in our Bible:

1. Jeremiah 33:3, "Call upon me and I will answer thee."
2. Psalms 50:15, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee."
3. Matthew 7:7, "Ask and it shall be given you."
4. Mark 9:23, "All things are possible to him that believeth."
5. John 14:13, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name."
6. James 4:2, "Ye have not because ye ask not."
I. WRONG HOME LIFE WILL HINDER OUR PRAYERS (1 Peter 3:1-7).
A. In verse 1, Peter said: "Likewise ye wives..."
   To see the import of this, read 1 Peter 2:18
   where he was dealing with servants. And in
   verse 7, he said: "Likewise ye husbands..."
B. A woman's greatest beauty is in subjection
   and obedience.
C. What is the primary reason for this pas-
   sage? Seen in the words, "...that your
   prayers be not hindered."
D. In I Peter 3:12, the Lord said: "...and his
   ears are open to their prayers..." And then
   He added: "...but the face of the Lord is
   against them that do evil."

II. TO BE WRONG WITH OTHER BRETHREN HINDERS OUR PRAYERS.
A. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:23 and 24, the
   place of prayer should be a place of re-
   membering; and reconciliation with our
   brethren comes before prayer.
B. It is impossible to be right with God and be
   wrong with others at the same time.
C. To be wrong with others produces a life of
   misery.

III. AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT HINDERS OUR PRAYERS.
A. Jesus taught in Matthew 6:14 and 15, for-
   give if you would be forgiven; and God for-
   gives our debts as we forgive our debtors.
B. Forgiveness is used two ways in the Bible.
   God, for Christ's sake forgives us (Ephes-
   sians 4:32). We, for Christ's sake forgive
   others.
C. This law of forgiveness should reign in each
   of our churches (Matthew 18:21,22).

IV. ANY KNOWN, UNCONFESSED SIN SHUTS UP HEAVEN TO OUR PRAYERS.
A. "If I regard iniquity in my heart..." (Psalms
   68:18). This means to hold it, love it, cover
   it up, and excuse it.
B. It may be covetousness - love of material
   things.
C. It may be rebellion against God (1 Samuel
   15:22,23).

D. It may be turning from Bible truth (Pro-
  verbs 28:9).

A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS
By James A. Crain

Text: John 14:6

Introduction:
A. Jesus Christ, the Mediator: a relationship with
   Jesus is a relationship with God.
B. The text: Christ is:
   1. The Way -- to follow.
   2. The Truth -- to learn.
   3. The Life -- to live.

I. THE NEED OF A PERSONAL RELA-
   TIONSHIP.
A. Man's need.
   1. Without His way, man is lost. Isaiah 53.
   2. Without His truth, man becomes a fool
      confused in the darkness of man's wis-
      dom.
   3. Without His life, man is dead without
      help.
B. God's love.

II. THE BEGINNING OF A PERSONAL RELA-
    TIONSHIP.
A. Believing.
   1. The fool rejects. Psalms 14:1. "...fool
      hath said in his heart, there is no God."
      "Faith...by hearing...by the Word."
B. Trusting.

III. THE WAY OF A PERSONAL RELA-
     TIONSHIP.
A. Personal.
   1. Dialogue.
      a. Prayer.
      b. Bible Study.
   2. Priority: Jesus must be first.
B. Church involvement.
   1. Example of Jesus.
   2. Example of Paul.
4. Study together.
5. Projects -- put your faith to work.
6. Social interaction -- encouragement, love, and help.

C. Extension toward others.
   1. Attitude -- loving, forgiving, caring, and understanding others.
   2. Charity -- helping others.
   3. Witness -- tell others.

IV. THE RESULTS OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.
   B. Abundant life -- fulfillment.
   C. Better world -- influence.

Conclusion: Reflect -- what is your life? Consider -- what can it be? Decide!

TAKING A STAND
By Julius Copeland

Introduction: "There is a time and a season and purpose for everything under heaven." Ecclesiastes
It is high time that God's people take a stand against sin and for Bible truth.

I. WE SHOULD STAND UP.
   B. Stand up for the faith. I Corinthians 16:13.
   C. Stand up for the Lord. Philippians 4:1.
   D. Stand up for the Lord's church. Ephesians 5:25.

II. WE NEED TO STAND OUT.
   A. Matthew 5:13.
   B. Stand out as a separated Christian.
   C. Stand out as a praying Christian.
   D. Stand out as a giving Christian.

III. WE NEED TO STAND UP FOR SOMETHING.
   A. Stand up for the faith. Jude 3.
   B. Stand up for the inspired Word of God.
      II Timothy 3:16,17.

IV. WE NEED TO STAND ON SOMETHING.
   A. The right foundation. I Corinthians 3:10-14.
   B. Stand on the right person -- Christ.
      Romans 9:33.
   C. Stand with the right armor. Ephesians 6:13.

V. WE NEED TO STAND TOGETHER.
   A. Nehemiah 6:7.
   B. Amos 3:3.
   C. Philippians 1:27.
   D. Colossians 2:2.
   E. Matthew 18:20.

A Letter From One of Our Readers:

My husband has been receiving your paper for several years now and we never have sent an offering to help
out with the expense of the paper. He really enjoys the paper and has used many of the outlines for sermons.

Enclosed is an offering to help out. May God richly bless you and the work there.

Thank you so much for the paper.

Mrs. James C. Beard

HELP US PRINT THE WORD !!!!

We send books and other publications to 2,266 homes in 11 countries and in 41 states in our
own country. Please consider giving an offering to this gospel ministry. You will surely be blessed
for helping us Sound Out the Word!

HOW TO PRAY FOR AMERICA
By Kenneth Click

Introduction: Prayer is a mighty force. It reaches the very heart of God. The Bible teaches that we ought
to pray, and even our President has requested the nation to pray. I think we need too, but how should
we go about it? How does one pray for a nation?

I. PRAY FOR OURSELVES.
   A. Personal sin and righteousness needs to be
dealt with first.
1. Notice from text - prayers of the "righteous" (James 5:16) and "obedient" (I John 3:22) are more effective.
2. It is a mistake to believe that God honors the prayers of the ungodly.

B. Examples from Scripture.

C. A proper personal relationship with God is vital if we are going to pray for America.
2. Sin must be forsaken. Isaiah 1:16.

D. Prayer, supported by a godly, righteous life, is what America needs.

II. PRAY FOR OUR NATION.
A. As it is important to confess personal sins, it is important to confess the sins of our nation to God.
1. Our nation is not sinless.
2. It is hypocritical to pretend all is well.

B. Examples from Scripture.

C. National sins that need to be confessed.
1. Sexual perversion - legitimizing "alternate lifestyles" (Episcopal Bishop Spong says Paul was a homosexual, articled from Chronicle 2/2/91).
2. The murder of 15 million pre-born babies.
3. Many in government and business are so consumed by greed that they have no sense of right and wrong.
4. Any and all positions our nation has taken that is contrary to God's standard of righteousness.

III. PRAY FOR OUR LEADERS.
A. Pray our leaders realize their personal sinfulness and need of Jesus Christ.
B. Pray our leaders would depend upon God for knowledge, wisdom, and the courage to do what is right.
C. Pray our leaders reject all counsel that violates godly principles.

D. Pray our leaders will be ready to sacrifice their personal ambitions for the sake of our nation.
E. Pray our leaders will restore dignity, honor, trustworthiness, and righteousness to the offices they hold.
F. Pray our leaders remember that they are accountable to Almighty God for the decisions they make.

IV. PRAY FOR OUR SOLDIERS.
A. Pray that they come to know Jesus as Saviour.
B. Pray that God gives them courage and strength.
C. Pray for their protection and safe return.
D. Pray for a quick and clear victory.

V. PRAY FOR OUR CITIZENS.
A. Pray that our countrymen are not deceived by those who would see our nation fall.
B. Pray that our countrymen become as one in support of our troops and the policies our leaders have committed us to.
C. Pray that revival sweeps across our land.

Conclusion: Our nation needs our prayers. Our people need our prayers. We must go to God for them. But let us get our own house in order first.