THE BREVITY OF MY LIFE

Text: Job 14:1,2; James 4:13-15.

Introduction: On December 3, 1982 I turned 50 years old. I can't believe it. I look back and it seems like yesterday. All of you are growing old, but it can't happen to me. Job said life is a few days and full of trouble. James says life is like a vapor. It is like grass that flourishes and then is gone. Life is so short and so brief and so soon over with. It is only wise to live this short life the best way possible. I remember hearing older people say, "Time flies. The older you get the faster it flies." You hear them say that and you think it is probably right, but you really do not agree with it. The truth is you look at the future and you think it will never get here. You look back and you can't believe that the time has gone by so quickly. I want to share with you my thoughts on the brevity of my life. 50 years has never looked so young. Even 60 years seems to be younger all of the time.

I. THE HUMILITY I FEEL.

A. My family.

1. My Grandfather Swilling died of a heart attack at church at the age of 46 or 47. I never met him. He had been gone so long before I was born, I do not remember my father talking about him.

2. My father died of sugar diabetes and its complications at the age of 32 or 33. For years I didn't feel I would pass his age in my life.

3. My brother died of cancer at the age of 42 years.

4. As you can see three generations in my family never reached the age of 50 years of age.

5. I filled out a medical report several years ago and the doctor immediately wanted to put me through some tests to check on my health. I thought my wife had talked with them and wanted them to do the tests. They figured from the family history that they had better check me.

B. My fears.

1. I was in a car wreck when I was about 16 or 17. The car turned over and slid about 20 or 30 feet. Car wrecks will always cause you to wonder about life.

2. I was involved in an accident with an 18 wheeler 3 years ago. I thought I was going to die. I remember calling out for God to help me. I just thought it was over and I would die, but I walked away with a bruise on the right side of my chest.

3. I fear the time will come when people will think I am too old to pastor or preach. I have seen others go through this same thing and I fear it will happen to me too. There seems to be a big deal about the age of a pastor now. If you have any grey hairs, it may be a mark against the man of God and that is wrong.

4. Bro. A.J. Finley told me one time that people wanted a 20 year old man with 40 years of experience.

5. The Lord has told us hundreds of times in the Bible not to be afraid. Fear not. We are to trust Him in all of life even when we are afraid.

6. I have a great admiration for men of God who are still pastoring and preaching regularly who are in their 70's and even 80's. These men of God give me courage to keep on going and realizing that God does and will take care of His people.
C. My failures.
1. God has laid His hand upon me and called me to preach His Word. I am still wondering why He called me.
2. My father told my mother one time that he thought he was called to preach. My brother told his first wife that he thought he was called to preach. If this were true, I guess God was scraping the bottom of the family when He called me into the ministry.
3. I fail the Lord so many times in my actions, attitudes, and affections. Many people go through a mid-life crises in their late 40’s and early 50’s. You become aware of the fact that life may soon be over and you look at what you have done. It is common to feel like a total failure.
4. I fail the Lord as a man, husband, father, saved person, and preacher of the Word of God. Sometimes when you try to improve in one area you let down in other areas and the awareness of failing seems to stay with you regularly.
5. I know that I live because of the Lord. He has sustained me and He gives me life each day. I do not know why I have outlived my grandfather, father, and brother. I do know that I live and that my Lord has given me this life. When I walked away from that little pickup truck, on that busy highway 45, three years ago, it was like a new start. My heart was filled with humility. It was a major wreck and I walked away with minor bruises.
6. It is amazing that our Lord can use such weak and weary instruments in His great service.

II. THE HONESTY.
A. The shortness of life.
1. I have heard it from people all of my life that life is short. It goes by so fast. I realize this is so true. It seems like I have heard it for the first time.
2. No one believes it until they experience it and no one will listen to them as they tell them the truth.
3. I remember the first time it dawned on me about getting older. I had pastored a young girl in Jacinto City. Her parents called me and wanted me to perform her wedding ceremony. When I saw the young girl, she was a young beautiful woman that I nearly didn’t recognize. When I got back home after the wedding, I remembered breaking down one day in the bathroom and crying. At 37 I remember thinking if there isn’t more to life than this brief life it wasn’t worth much. There must be more than being born and growing up and getting old and then dying. If that is all there is there isn’t much to life.
4. The generation following us reminds us that life is brief. It is hard to see young children becoming adults and parents. It causes us to realize that life is brief.

B. The seriousness of life.
1. We will give an account of our lives to the Lord. We are going to answer to Him. That fact really doesn’t hit us when we are young, but it becomes something very serious as we get older.
2. The wise man said it in Ecclesiastes 12:13,14. We will stand before an all knowing and just Judge and answer to Him for the way we have lived. This is only right. He has given us life and He sustains and blesses us in life so it is only right that we will have to answer to Him.
3. We are responsible for our actions. We are responsible to our Lord. He has saved us for a purpose. If we do not fulfill the purpose we will still give an account to Him.
4. You may excuse yourself to others for the life you are living. You may not think it is important to live for the Lord. You may sow a lot of wild oats while you are young, but there will come a harvest day. You will reap what you have sown in this life and you will face the Lord with it in the life to come.
5. The older you get the more wonderful the forgiveness of the Lord becomes to you. How could our Lord love us that much? He knows of our sins and yet He is more than willing to forgive us and cleanse us of our sins when we ask Him to. I John 1:8,9.

C. The sadness of life.
1. There is a lot of sadness in life. It is sad to hear of all of the killings, crimes, and misery that is man made and that people have to go through. Pastors who love their people are overcome with a great sadness when they know of the problems and troubles of their people. So many people going through so much and many of them love the Lord and are trying to serve Him.
2. It is sad to see your children grow up and leave home. It hurt me so much when my daughter left home that I wouldn’t talk about it. I didn’t go to her apartment. I told my wife, "Don’t help her". I was hoping she would come back home and live with us again which she did for a while and then moved out again.
3. When my son moved out, I did the same thing. I didn’t help him move. I didn’t talk about it. I didn’t go see him. It’s not that I don’t love my children. I do. It’s sad to me and that is the way that I dealt with it. I realize that it probably isn’t the right way to deal with it.
4. It was sad when my daughter told us she was getting married. I look back and I wish I had run that boy off. It was fine with me if she wanted to marry at 35 or 40, but not at 20.

4. Jerry and I are enjoying HOME ALONE now, but it still makes me sad when I realize that my children are growing up and starting their lives outside of our home.

5. It is sad to lose friends and family in death. It saddens my heart when a preacher brother is called home. I feel for his family. It saddens me because it hits home to me knowing that one day it will be my turn to cross over.

6. The disappointments and heartaches in life are so many. The movies and television programs all paint life as being wonderful and trouble free. You remember the movies where boy meets girl. They fall in love and marry and live happily ever after. That isn’t true of life. With all of the happiness comes a lot of sadness and hurt and heartache.

7. The only way that life can make any sense at all is God’s Word and His wonderful plan for mankind. His salvation, forgiveness, comfort, hope, help, and eternal home gives us a living hope. The best is truly yet to come. A sad and hurting heart can keep on going because there is coming a better day and a great way of life.

III. THE HONOR.

A. The honor of salvation.

1. Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world. He lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death that people might be saved. The gospel story will always be a good tidings of great joy story.

2. I heard the gospel story all my life. I felt the convicting power of God’s Holy Spirit in my life even at a young age. I knew of the guilt of sin and the horribleness of hell and the blessed assurance of salvation and redemption in the Lord Jesus.

3. Three days before I was 17 years old I remember walking down the church aisle in Muldrow, Oklahoma and asking the Lord to forgive me of my sins and save my soul. That church didn’t believe in everlasting life. The pastor ask me if I had ever been saved before.

4. I had attended churches all of my life that kept telling the people you can lose your salvation when you sin against the Lord. After I was saved I drifted back out into the world. I talked like them and walked like them.

5. I started attending the Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Roland, Oklahoma. I got under conviction again. I thought I needed to be saved. Some of the members still remember me leaving church during an invitation and returning to the service. I remember 10 or 15 members kneeling down with me and Bro. Raymond Howard as we prayed together.

6. I was looking for that first experience and it never came. There was a peace and calmness that came over me and then I realized that God saves you eternally. You may get out of fellowship, but you won’t get out of the sonship. What a glorious Saviour and salvation that we have as children of God.

B. The honor of service.

1. I united with the Zion M.B.C. as a candidate for baptism and I became a member of that church. Every time I go back home to Ft. Smith, Arkansas I try to attend Zion. It holds many fond memories of my days as a young person. It is my home church and Bro. Raymond is still my home pastor because I surrendered to preach under his fruitful ministry.

2. On April 22nd when I was 19 years old, I announced to my pastor that the Lord was calling me to preach His Word. I still don’t know why, but I know that He called me to preach. I didn’t fight the call, but I did a lot of soul searching. I wanted to know that was what God wanted me to do.

3. I started to Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary in Henderson, Texas and went to school for 5 1/2 years. I started pastoring in my second year in school.

4. I have been at it for over 30 years now. I have attempted to pastor 6 churches. The Lord has had a place for me to preach and pastor for nearly 29 years.

5. What an honor to serve the Lord in His churches and with His people. The divine call to preach is a blessed privilege that God has given to me.

C. The honor of Scriptures.

1. It is an honor to know the God of the Word and the Word of God. God calls me to preach His unfathomable riches to the saved and lost. What an honor to try to be a mouth piece for Almighty God.


3. God gives to His men a special love for His Word. It is a blessing to me to have preachers that want to share a sermon or thought with you that gets them all excited and stirred up.

4. Jesus said His Spirit would show or teach us the truth. John 16:13-15. The lost do not understand, but the saved can. The man of
God has a high regard and deep love for the
Word of God. His life is involved in the
teaching and preaching of the Word of God.

5. God has special women to stand along side
their preacher husbands. They love their
husbands and support them as they study and
talk to them about the Word of God. There
will be a great reward for those wonderful
women who may never change pastors. My
wife has had the same pastor for 28 or 29
years.

IV. THE HAPPINESS.
A. Obedience to God in morals.
1. Paul passes on some basic truths in Ephesians 4:25-32. He tells us not to lie, but speak the
truth. V25. Speaking and dealing in truth with
people is the best way to live and act. You
never have to cover anything up or lie about
lying.
2. Paul tells us not to steal. V28. We have had
two cars stolen from us since living in
Houston. When others steal your property, it
will make you mad. God's grace can get a hold
of you and straighten you out. Stealing is
wrong. A thief will even hate a thief.
3. We are not to use corrupt communication.
V29. We are to minister to people around us.
Corrupt communication can mean vulgar and
profane words. It is also words of gossip,
slander, backbiting, hurt, hinder, cruel, and
critical. Minister to others with your words.
4. Paul told them to put away bitterness, anger,
clamor, evil speaking, and malice. V31. Certain
attitudes and characteristics can hurt you
physically and mentally and spiritually.
5. Even preachers can display these things that
the apostle Paul spoke of. Hearing the speech
of my brethren, teaches me to guard my words
and not hurt those who are hurting and down
and out.
6. The saved person is to be sexually, morally
clean. The Word of God says marriage is
honorable, but sex outside of marriage is
wrong.

B. Obedience to God in marriage.
1. One of the most important decisions you will
make is the decision to marry. You are
choosing a partner in life. You are choosing a
partner for life.
2. The Lord said marriage is honorable in all.
think, the Bible teaches marriage is honorable
and the best way to live.
3. I met Jerry in August of 1962 in Henderson,
Texas. We had our first date on December 3
or 5th. We were engaged on Dec. 18th. We
were married on February 15th of 1963. That
was 30 years ago this last February.
4. Every marriage will have troubles and trials,
but by God's grace people can make it.
Sometimes you wonder how you will make it,
but the Lord can work things out if you will let
Him.

C. Obedience to God in ministering.
1. True happiness comes by serving the Lord in
whatever way we can. He saved us to serve
Him. I was born in Arkansas. I lived in
Oklahoma about 4 years. I surrendered to
preach and I have lived in Texas for 31 1/2
years.
2. The Lord has a church in a town, city, and
state for you. He may take you away from
your homeland, people, and family to serve
Him.
3. The Lord will convict you to use your life,
talents, and money for His honor and glory. I
had planned to join the Navy and put 20 years
in and retire and do whatever I wanted to. I
joined the Navy and went to basic training in
San Diego, California in 1961. I was discharged
within 10 to 15 days.
4. It was sad and sickening to have your plans
knocked down and taken away from you. God
has His plans and we have our plans. The
following April after I was discharged from the
Navy, the Lord called me into His service. I
believe with all my heart that He had
something better for me to do.
5. Do what you can for the Lord. Do what your
pastor and church leaders ask you to do.
Minister to people. You don't have to be a
preacher to minister to people. If you are
saved, you can minister to people for the Lord.

V. THE HEALTHINESS.
A. Living for the Lord develops physical
health.
1. Living for the Lord will prevent us from doing
some things. When the Lord teaches us to live
His way, it is for our benefit and good.
2. Living for the Lord will prevent us from going
some places. In the Houston area many people
die around night clubs and bad places. A lot of
people never stop and think that where you go
has a lot to do with how healthy you can be.
In our town I have told my wife, "Honey lets
get in by dark and stay there till daylight." That
makes a lot of sense to me.
3. Living for the Lord will prevent us from
associating with certain people. Close friends
and associates can get you to doing a lot of
things that are wrong. You must choose your
friends well, if you do not they can get you
into a lot of trouble.
4. Good christian friends will help develop your physical health. Good friends can keep you healthy. Bad friends can destroy your health.

B. Living for the Lord develops mental health.
1. What we think on and the attitudes we have affect us mentally. The Lord wants us to give time in prayer and Bible study and talking with christian people.
2. Paul tells us to think on certain things in Philippians 4:8. If you do this then you will be influenced and affected by the things we think on the most. Listening to this world will get you to thinking and acting like it.
3. God’s Word teaches us to have faith or to depend upon the Lord. Hebrews 11:6. We are to rely upon Him and with our whole heart. Proverb 3:5,6.
4. God’s peace will keep our hearts and minds according to Philippians 4:7. When you trust the Lord with your heart it will help your mind and mental attitudes.
5. The Lord gives us hope and help in all situations and circumstances in life. This is the very thing that people are searching for in this life. Even though many people will turn the Lord down, what the Lord offers is what the heart of man desires and longs for.

C. Living for the Lord develops spiritual health.
1. The Lord wants us to grow spiritually in grace and knowledge. II Peter 3:18. Our growth depends upon what we do for the Lord. Reading His Word and studying His Word and praying to the Lord for guidance will help us to grow and develop.
2. The Lord desires and demands obedience from us. Acts 5:29. As we obey Him it will help us to grow and become what the Lord wants us to become. It is good to be healthy spiritually because it will help us physically and mentally.
3. When we are all right with the Lord, we are all right. The greatest need that we have is to be spiritually minded for the Lord.
4. Being right spiritually will give us that peace we need, the pardon we need, the protection we need, the purpose we need, and the pillar we need to lean on in life.
5. I am a human being. I go through the same things people around me go through. I am not a super human. I am a man that God has called to preach. I am trying to do my best knowing that I am weak and that I fail the Lord and people. I thank the Lord that He is there for me. He cares and He is there to help me and to supply my needs. The needs are for daily necessities; without them I couldn’t or wouldn’t want to go on.

6. The Lord is my strength. He is my Shepherd that enables me to live my life even as a 50 year old with all of the problems and trials and tests and He makes life worth living.
7. I thank the Lord for the older members of our church. They are a blessing to me in many ways. We have a number of people in their 70’s and 80’s and I love it when they call me a kid and tell me how young 50 is.

MY TESTIMONY

I was saved when I was six years old at Lee Road Baptist Church. It was during a morning Sunday School class. The lesson was over and we were getting ready to leave when our teacher told us the plan of salvation. She let us have some quiet time to pray and make any decisions we felt led to do. So I bowed my head and asked the Lord to come into my heart and save me. After the prayer time was over, I told my teacher what I had done and she hugged me. I hurried to tell my mom still feeling a little scared. A lot had just been accomplished in my little heart—it was overwhelming in some ways. My mom told me to not be afraid and to go tell my dad. So that very morning when the invitation was given, my dad walked me down the aisle and we talked to our pastor. The church voted and I was accepted. About two Sundays later I was baptized. Years later I had some doubts about my salvation, but those were all taken care of and I know without a shadow of doubt that I am truly saved.

I feel that as I have grown in age I’ve also grown spiritually. I’m still not fully mature in the Lord, but I am trying to get on "solid foods" instead of just the "milk" of the Word. The privilege that I have of going to a private Christian school is that I get to have chapel (a mini church service) and a Bible class every day of the week. Our lessons range from faith and love to making decisions and spiritual purity. I am in a place where I can get the necessary spiritual food like my church gives me.

It is very important as I continue in my teen years to rely on the Lord for help in making important decisions, whether it be an issue of personal standards or where to go to college. I know that He is there to guide me in every aspect of my life. All teenagers need to learn that the Lord is always near wherever they may be. This one little fact can help you in choosing where you go with your friends and in what activities you will participate. Just ask yourself this question, "Would I be comfortable doing this particular thing with the Lord seated right next to me?" It is imperative that we be a good witness and have a spotless testimony, so we will not be a stumbling block to ourselves when we try to witness to others.

By Aimee Burchfield
FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

FOCUS: FAITH.
TEXT: Galatians 5:22.
INTRODUCTION.

A. The MEANING of the term 'faith'.
B. The MUSINGS of mankind.
   1. Some say you are what you eat.
   2. Others say you are what you wear.
C. The MESSAGE of the Lord - you are what you believe. True and genuine belief will effect your behavior.

I. THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH!
A. The REALITY - the reliability of faith is contingent upon the object of faith.
   1. ILLUSTRATIONS of this reality.
      a. A chair.
      b. A car.
      c. An airplane trip.
B. The REVELATION of this concept is that the basis of man's faith is the faithfulness of God.
   1. The faithful God.
      a. I Peter 4:19 "WHEREFORE LET THEM THAT SUFFER ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD COMMIT THE KEEPING OF THEIR SOULS TO HIM IN WELL DOING, AS UNTO A FAITHFUL CREATOR."
      b. I Cor. 1:9 "GOD IS FAITHFUL, BY WHOM YE WERE CALLED UNTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."
      c. I Cor. 10:13 "THERE HATH NO TEMPTATION TAKEN YOU BUT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN: BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT SUFFER YOU TO BE TEMPTED ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE: BUT WILL WITH THE TEMPTATION ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT."
   d. 1 Thess. 5:23-24 "AND THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY: AND I PRAY GOD YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS UNTO THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. V-24 FAITHFUL IS HE THAT CALLETH YOU, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT."

II. THE OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING FAITH!
A. The INTELLECTUAL concept of faith - believing that - John 8:24.
B. The RELATIONAL concept of faith believing in - John 3:16.
   1. Enter in to those facts that you believe.
C. The VOLITIONAL aspect of faith believing on - Rom. 9:33.
   1. Rest upon those facts that you believe.

III. THE OUTCOME OF FAITH - FAITHFULNESS!
A. The FACT - faith is exhibited by faithfulness.
B. The FOCUS - 3 key words.
   1. Perseverance - Rev. 2:10.
   2. Reliability - dependable.
   3. Constancy in commitment.

WHAT BEING A DEACON (SERVANT) MEANS TO ME

It was on a Saturday and I was outside mowing the grass. The phone rang and it was Bro. Preston Hill. He asked me how I was doing, so we talked for a little while. Then he asked me if I would consider being a deacon. My mind went blank for a moment because he caught me off guard. I began to think, "Was I qualified to be a deacon and bring the Lord glory and honor?" I started thinking that I loved the Lord, His church, and was willing to be a servant for Him. I answered, "Yes, I would be a deacon."

I know that I cannot do anything on my own, but with the Lord's help and guidance, I can be the kind of person He wants me to be. I know this is a great honor and great responsibility to fulfill. I feel that a deacon is a servant to the church and must work very close with the pastor assisting him when necessary. I also feel very honored and grateful to be asked to be a deacon. I hope and pray that I can be the one the Lord wants me to be. The scariest part is that I will fail the Lord. I have to remind myself to keep my eyes upon the Lord when making decisions. I have realized that He will guide me when making decisions if I ask Him to. I must also remember that the Lord has said,
"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee and he is my helper." The following verse in I Corinthians 15:58 also comes to mind, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In closing, I would like to thank the church for asking me and for setting me aside to be a deacon. Pray for me and all the other deacons in this church. Pray that we will be the kind of deacons He wants us to be and that we will keep the Lord in mind whenever we make any decisions. Also pray that we will ask the question, "What would the Lord do in this situation?", when asked any questions or when we need to make decisions. We must keep the good and welfare of the church in mind when making all decisions.

By Eddie Burchfield

SIX C'S OF THE "COMMENDABLE" CHURCH

**Scripture:** II Cor. 8:1-12

**Introduction:**

A. Let it be stated clearly that a local Church is one body made up of and made what she is by individual members.

1. A Church's name cannot rise higher than the character and influence of her membership.
2. A Church's power cannot be more than the spirituality of her membership.
3. A Church's work is done by membership.

B. This scripture tells us a local church can do conduct itself as to be a recipient of the "Grace of God"

   a. The Church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas, recommended to the grace of God.
   b. Paul and Silas were recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.
   c. Paul attributed all his accomplishments and success to the grace of God bestowed upon me.
      1. I Cor 15:10.
   d. James taught that more grace is available.


e. The Lord taught Paul that His Grace is sufficient for the road! II Cor. 12:9.

2. I am persuaded that before the Lord comes for His Church that she will learn again of the importance of the "Grace of God."

C. Note the possible reasons for them receiving more and sufficient grace upon their churches:

1. They were a willing people.
   a. Willing to suffer
   b. Willing to suffer and serve.
   c. Willing to suffer and give to other churches.

2. They were a liberal people. From poverty they gave.
3. They were a ministering people!

**I. THESE CHURCHES WERE "COMMMITTED"**

A. Committed: Worthy of trust; Vessels worthy of use; AVAILABLE FOR ASSIGNMENT!

B. As Abram was committed to go as directed. Add Philip.

C. As Isaiah was committed to be used. Isaiah 6:8.

   1. Andrew had little literary ability but he won his own brother.
   2. The newly saved Samaritan had little natural or acquired ability--she brought many to Jesus.
   3. These both had "avail-ability".

D. As Paul was committed to do "What Lord".

   1. He didn't waste half of his saved life to get involved.
   2. Listen to his testimony:
      a. Rom 1:15.
      b. Phil 1:17.
      c. Phil 1:20.
      e. I Cor. 9:22.

3. Paul was further committed to clean living and maintaining of Christian influence.
   a. I Cor 9:27.
   b. I Cor 8:8,13.

E. As the early church was committed to obey God rather than men Acts 5:29.

F. The commitment of these churches.

   1. To the Lord.
   2. To the Lord's Preachers:
   3. To their sister-churches:
      a. A scripture to ponder - Gal. 6:10.

**II. THESE CHURCHES WERE COMPASSIONATE.**

A. Compassion: (Tender, Sympathetic, Warm-hearted, Responsive).

B. As their heavenly Father:

   1. Lamentations. 3:22-23.
   2. Psalm 78:38.
C. As Jesus, our High Priest, is!
   3. Moved by compassion Jesus...
      a. Ministered to physical needs:
      b. Fed the hungry.
         1. Matthew 15:32.
      c. Gave them spiritual food out of compassion.
         1. Mark 6:34.
D. As these were compassionate so are we to be:
   1. To our fellow-believers:
      a. I Peter 3:8.
   2. Toward the lost in sin:
      a. Jude 22.
III. These Churches were a compliment to other churches.
   A. This is what this writing is all about. Paul is seeking to use their attitude and action to motivate the Corinth Church.
   B. These were like the Berean Church. Acts 17:11.
   C. These church members were like Timothy to other preachers.
IV. These churches were "Comrades" with Paul and others in the Lord's world wide ministries.
   A. Daniel had those whom the scripture calls "Companions." Daniel 2:17.
   B. John, the beloved, wrote of being a "Companion" with others...Rev. 1:9.
   C. Paul wrote of Epaphroditus-Phil. 2:25.
   D. These helped the church in Jerusalem maintain a lighthouse and carry on the ministering of the Gospel there.
   E. As John writes they were 'Fellow helpers to the truth.' III John 8.
V. These Churches Were "Commendable"
   A. As was the church in Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13. As was David: I Sam. 13:14 Acts 13:22.
   B. As The church at Thessalonica. Thess. 1:8
   C. As Mary.
      2. John 10:42.
   D. As the one who anointed Jesus in the house of Simon.
VI. These without doubt, had a 'compelling influence.'
   A. They were used as an "example" to incite others to action.
   B. Paul to Timothy. I Tim. 4:12.
   C. Jesus to us. Matthew 5:16.
   D. Hebrews 10:24-25.

AVAILABLE BOOKS

Word Studies-Glen Tropp
Sounding Out the Word II
Sounding Out the Word IV
Right Sermons by Wright-D.B. Wright
1989 Bible Conference
1990 Bible Conference
Scanning the Scriptures I-Glen Tropp
Scanning the Scriptures II-Glen Tropp
37th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
The Mysteries of the New Testament-Herbert Brown
The ABC's of Faith-O.H. Griffith
Clark's Counsel to Corinth-Neal Clark
What will you do with Jesus?-Kenneth Bazar
The Preaching of the Cross-George Crawford
The Christian's Jubilee-Herbert Brown
Scanning the Scriptures III (NT)-Glen Tropp
The Principles of Discipleship-Paul Magness
Sermon Outlines by Paul Bazar
38th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Waiting for the Sun Rise-L. Chester Guilln
Ministerial Burnout-Charles Swilling
Fire in the Soul or Soul in the Fire - Kenneth Click

A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO

By Luther Crawford

Text: Ephesians 5:15-17.

Introduction:

A. Ephesians is a good book for both sinners and Christians.
B. It was written by the Apostle Paul while in prison.
   1. It may seem unjust that God would permit this great soldier to be put in prison. (before he was saved, Saul put Christians in prison, persecuted them, etc. Was God showing him what it was like? Don't know can only speculate).
   2. This much we do know, that even in jail Paul was a great servant. He preached in jail, he witnessed in jail, he prayed in jail, he sang in jail, he WROTE MANY LETTERS while in jail.
C. Ephesians is one of those books. It is a book that causes us to THINK, TO TRUST, AND TO THANK GOD.
D. It is a book that challenges us to know and understand the will of God for our lives.
E. In this book we are reminded of what we were 2:1. In this book we are reminded of what we are 2:13. In this book we are reminded of who we are 2:19. In this book we are reminded of what we have 2:18.
F. This book reveals to us what we ought to do with time.
G. This book challenges us to understand what God’s will is for our lives. REVIVAL WILL COME when Christians get right and understand what God wants them to do. We ought to do whatever God tells us to do. At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, the mother of Jesus said, "Whatever He saith to you to do, do it."

H. What is God’s will for your life. What does God want you to do? Our text implies that a person is not wise who does not know what the will of God is.

I. WHAT IS GOD’S WILL?

A. It is not God’s will that any should perish.
   1. As I live saith the Lord, I have no delight in the death of the wicked.
   2. Let the wicked forsake his way.
   3. Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord.

B. It is God’s will that ALL BE SAVED.
   1. All have sinned.
   2. All need salvation.
   3. All men are the object of God’s love.
   4. All are called to be saved.
   5. All sins of all men have been paid for—Christ died for us.

C. Things that need saving.
   1. Souls need saving.
   2. Marriages need saving.
   3. Homes need saving.
   4. Churches need saving.
   5. Nations need saving.

II. HIS WILL IS THAT AFTER BEING SAVED THAT WE FOLLOW HIM.

A. Be ye therefore followers of God. VI. 1.
   1. Follow Him in baptism. Baptism shows the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
      a. God has a will (purpose) for the true New Testament Church.
      b. Evangelize the world, not entertain it.
      c. Edify the saints.
      d. Guard the truth (Buy the truth and sell it not).
      e. Discipline the unruly.

B. Be ye followers of God’s true doctrine.

III. HIS WILL IS THAT WE BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

A. We are convicted by the Spirit.
B. We are led by the Spirit to be saved.
C. We are quickened (made alive) by the Spirit.
D. We are born again by the Spirit.
E. We are sealed by the Spirit.
F. We are led by the Spirit.
G. We are therefore to be filled with the Spirit.
   1. Does that mean then that we are better than others? No.

2. Does that mean then that we will speak in other languages? No.
3. Does that mean then that we will have the gifts of healing, that we can perform miracles? No.

H. It means to be full of the love of God.
I. It means to be full of faith. Of joy and concern.

IV. HIS WILL IS THAT WE WALK IN LOVE.

A. Run the Christian race, Hebrews 12:1.
B. Put on the whole armor of God, Ephesians 6:11.
C. Walk in obedience.

Conclusion:
A. How good it is to know the will of God. But to know and not do is sin.
B. Would you this day take the necessary steps needed in your life to do God’s will? NOW!!!

HOW MUCH DO YOU WEIGH ON GOD’S SCALES?
By Raymond Howard


Introduction:
A. Balances are scales and no one is over weight on God’s scales.
B. Give the story from verse 1.
C. The city of Babylon was protected by a high wall 700 feet at base, 300 at top and 350 feet high.
   Second wall 250 feet high.
D. All that were inside the wall thought they were safe. (Stored provisions for 20 years).
E. There came a fatal night. October 13, 539 B.C.
   Babylon was captured by the Medes and Persians.
F. There are three things presented in the text verse.
   1. God’s standard of measurement for all people
   2. All people when weighed on God’s scales are found wanting.
   3. How can the scales be balanced?

I. WHAT IS GOD’S STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT FOR ALL PEOPLE?
A. Is it being sincere? Proverbs 14:12.
   1. Is it, do the best you can? John 8:3.
   2. Be a member of some church? Pharisees.
      Matthew 23:27.

B. God’s standard of measurement is perfection. Deut. 18:13; Galatians 3:10.
   1. Love God with all thy heart, soul, and mind.
C. Break one law, guilty of all. James 2:10.
D. When one sin is committed, we are found wanting.

II. WHEN WEIGHED ON GOD’S SCALES ALL ARE FOUND WANTING.
A. Eccl. 7:20; I John 1:8-10.
B. Belshazzar and his party.
1. On God’s scales wine is a mockery, Proverbs 20:1.
2. Used the holy vessels that had been taken from the temple. Dedicated to serve God.
3. They broke the first commandment. Didn’t care what God said. Are there any like this today?

C. Found wanting in the eyes of God not man.
1. Man said he was great, but God said found wanting.
2. May look good to ourselves, neighbors etc.

D. When weighed on God’s scales all are sinners. Romans 3:19,23.

E. When weighed on God’s scales all boasting and bragging goes down. I John 1:8 Pharisees.


G. Publican in Luke 18. Will never be saved until you realize and acknowledge you need God.

III. HOW CAN WE BALANCE GOD’S SCALES?
A. Some have tried to cheat when weighing things on scales. (Picking cotton, put rocks in sack).
1. You can’t cheat on God.

B. Sinner tries to weigh enough by good works, reform their lives, doing the best I can.
2. How about past sins? How are you going to take care of them?

C. There is a way to balance God’s scales.
1. We don’t weigh anything by ourselves.
2. Take Christ on the scales with you.

D. Jesus became our two-fold substitute.
1. Paid our sin debt on the cross. The soul that sinneth; it shall die.
2. He became our righteousness. His perfection is imputed to the saved, Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:24-23.

IV. THE RESULTS OF BEING FOUND WANTING.
A. Belshazzar died that night. Daniel 5:30.
B. All are under the sentence of death, Romans 5:12.

V. BELSHAZZAR WAS FOUND WANTING IN THE SIN AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE HE POSSESSED.
A. He knew about Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 5:22,23.

B. Unsaved know they are lost.

C. You can’t help being a sinner, but you can keep from rejecting Jesus.

D. Belshazzar saw God’s hand writing too late.
1. It is not too late for you unsaved person.
2. God’s handwriting is to repent or perish,

Proverbs 1:24-30.

E. God’s handwriting for the saved, Galatians 6:7.

MENIBOSHETH RECEIVED BY THE KING

By Neal Clark


I. FORGIVENESS.
A. He received the king’s kindness.
B. He was restored to the king’s favor.
C. He rejoiced in the king’s presence.
D. Children of God have received the King’s forgiveness.

II. FELLOWSHIP.
A. He enjoyed the king’s presence.
B. He enjoyed the king’s power.
C. He enjoyed the king’s prosperity.
D. Children of God enjoy the King’s fellowship.

III. FAVOR.
A. He ate bread at the king’s table.
B. He enjoyed the power of the king’s throne.
C. He enriched from the king’s treasure.
D. Children of God enjoy the King’s favor.

IV. FORTUNE.
A. He received great fortunes.
B. He received great fame.
C. He received great friendship.
D. Children of God have received the King’s fortune.

V. FAMILY.
A. He was there continually.
B. He was there because of a covenant.
C. He was there because of a commitment.
D. Children of God enjoy the King’s family.

HOW’S YOUR LOVE LIFE?

By Kenneth Click

Text: John 13:34,35.

Introduction: D.H. Lawrence wrote, "Love is a thing to be learned. It is a difficult, complex maintenance of individual integrity throughout the intractable process of inter-human polarity."

A. Definitions of love can be difficult.
B. Jesus calls us to DISPLAY not DEFINE love.
C. Love is to be the supreme identifying characteristic of the Christian!
D. How’s your love life? Your church’s?
E. We must be careful not to forget the importance of love.

I. THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.
A. Everything a christian does should be done in love.
1. I Corinthians 16:14 "Let all your things be done with charity."
2. Romans 13:8 "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
3. Colossians 3:14 "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

**B. Nothing substitutes for love.**
1. The right church cannot.
2. The right version of the Bible cannot.
3. The right set of doctrines cannot.

**C. It’s not easy to love others like Jesus.**
1. It’s easier to be doctrinally strict than to be loving.
2. It’s easier to be spiritually exclusive than to be loving.
3. It’s easier to be active in church work than to be loving.
4. It’s easier to hate than to love.

**II. THE NEGLECT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.**
**A. If we have everything just right, but neglect love, we’re nothing!**
2. Phillips paraphrases, "If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal. If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing."

**B. Without love we become a selfish, proud, arrogant, and silly little people.**

**C. An African Missionary paraphrased it like this, "If I have the language perfectly and speak like a native, and have not God’s love for them, I am nothing. If I have diplomas and degrees and know all the up-to-date methods, and have not God’s touch of understanding love, I am nothing. If I am able to argue successfully against the religions of the people and make fools of them, and have not God’s wooing note, I am nothing."**

**D. We cannot afford to neglect love in our lives.**

**III. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.**
**A. Love is not a feeling but a determined act of will.**

**B. Love is not earned but freely given to all: even to those who oppose us.** Matthew 5:44 - "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

**C. Love is the willing desire to put the welfare of others above our own.** I John 3:16-18.

**Conclusion:** Until Christians learn to love, our witness to the world will be empty. God reaches out in love to the unlovable, so should we.

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**THE POTTER AND THE CLAY**
by Donnie Churchwell

**Text:** Jeremiah 18:1-6.

**Intro:** Jerry Goff sings a song "The Potter Didn’t Throw the Clay Away". Jeremiah chapters 18 and 19 deal with the potter and the clay. Chapter 18 tells about the prophet going to the potter’s house. In chapter 19 the vessel is broken. Chapter 18 speaks of God’s grace. Chapter 19 speaks of God’s judgment. The clay is the nation of Israel. We want to make a spiritual application for us today.

1. The potter is God the Father.
2. The wheel is life.
3. Disobedience is the clay’s own will.
4. The trials the temperance for life.
5. The breaking of the vessel God’s judgment.

**I. THE FASHION OF THE CLAY.**
**A. The Potter’s Power-Job 10:9.**
**B. The Potter’s Plan-Job 13:12.**
**C. The Potter’s Patience-Job 33:6.**
**D. The Potter’s Person.** Our lives are not controlled by blind fate, but by the hands of the Almighty sovereign God.

**II. THE FAILURE OF THE CLAY.**
**A. Marred by self-Genesis 3.**
**B. Marred by sin-Romans 5:8.**
**C. Marred by satan.** Praise God the Potter didn’t throw the clay away. He didn’t start with a new lump. The Potter made it over again. Amen.

**III. THE FURNACE FOR THE CLAY.**
**A. Job went through the furnace of Pain.**
**B. Joseph went through the furnace Pit.**
**C. Three Hebrew Children went through the furnace of Persecution.**
**D. Daniel went through the furnace Prison.** Jeremiah did not mention the furnace, but there had to be one. No vessel is any good without the potter’s furnace. The heat gives the vessel strength. I Peter 1:7. People of great strength, Why? The furnace of God the Potter!

**IV. THE FINISHED CLAY: OR FUTURE.**
**A. The clay’s new Spirit (Holy Spirit)**
**B. The clay’s new Shape (Likeness of Christ-Romans 8:28,29).**
**C. The clay’s new Song (Worthy is the Lamb-Revelation 5).**
**D. The clay’s new sanctuary (Heaven-John 14:1-3).**

**Conclusion:** Aren’t you glad the potter didn’t throw the clay away? Some today-your vessel is marred, some broken, some half filled, and some dirty. II Tim. 2:20,21. Vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Come to the Potter, He waits to mold you again.
NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL

John Paul Jones


Introduction: God's word tells us that God created man a living soul. Genesis 2:7. This makes man different than animals and insures his existence eternally. While we normally spend much more time and effort to insure the well-being of the body, Jesus said that the soul should be our main concern. Matthew 10:28. Jesus said that to gain all the riches in the world and lose one's soul was a poor choice. Mark 8:34. Jesus indicated in the case of Judas Iscariot that it would be better to never have life than to die and go to hell. Matthew 26:24. Because of these things right thinking people need to check their priorities.

I. WHO SHOULD CARE FOR SOULS?
A. Family should care for members of family.
   - Wife for husband - I Peter 3:1.
B. Brothers should care for one another
   2. Andrew found Peter immediately after he found Jesus.
   3. Today we hear of family members killing each other.
C. Church members should care.
   2. We are told to compel men to come to the great feast. Luke 14:23.
   3. Church members who stay away from the services of the church indicate they don't care. Those who fail to support the Church show they do not care.
D. Preachers should care.
   2. Preachers who fail to preach the way of salvation do not care.

II. WHY DON'T PEOPLE CARE?
A. Many reasons -- Some do not believe the Bible. Some do not believe the danger is eminent.
B. The main reason is that we are under the Devil's influence.
   1. The Devil's purpose is to destroy every soul.
      a. He sought to destroy the Saviour. Rev 12:4. He worked through Herod.. Babies killed.
      b. He is our adversary today. I Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:11.
      c. Jesus warned the disciples about the weakness of the flesh. Matthew 26:40-41.
C. Concern with material things.

2. Jesus told of sower sowing seed that fell on soil where thorns sprung up and choked the plant. Matthew 13:7 & 22.

III. HOW WE MAY SHOW THAT WE DO CARE.
A. By praying for the lost. Romans 10:1 - Prayer avails much, James 5:16-17.
B. By Witnessing to the lost.
   1. Results come when we sow seed. Ps. 126:5-6.
C. By living as we are taught in the Bible that Christians should live.
   1. Saved to produce good works. Matt. 5:16-17.
   2. By seeking God's will for our life - "Lord, what would you have me to do?"
D. By promoting the Church that Jesus Christ founded and died for. Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 3:21.

IV. WHO DOES CARE ABOUT SOULS?
A. God Cares.
   1. He would have all men to be saved. I Tim. 2:4.
   2. Story of Prodigal Son.
B. Jesus Cares.
C. The Holy Spirit Cares.
D. Some preachers and church members care.
   1. They keep telling the old, old, Story.
   2. They remain faithful to Christ - one day hear words "Well done".

Conclusion: Do you care if people lose their soul by going to hell. What are you doing to keep them from this tragedy? As men look at you, do they see you care? If you have not been saved, then you are condemned already.

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