A FAITHFUL AND TRUE CHURCH MEMBER
Text: Rev. 2:10,11

Intro: To different preachers the seven churches of Asia means different things. Some believe they represent 7 distinct periods of the church age. To others it is 7 different conditions that can exist in any church at any time. Jesus told these church members to be faithful unto death. Serving the Lord in a New Testament church should last an entire lifetime. God help us to be faithful and true as church members to the church of our membership.

I. THE ATTENDANCE OF A TRUE AND FAITHFUL CHURCH MEMBER.
A. The acceptance of the truth
   1. We are to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. Hebrews 10:25
      This is a plain Bible teaching that I preach and teach and try to practice.
   2. We are to give glory to God in the church by Christ Jesus. Eph. 3:21
      This is not the only place where we can give glory to God. You ought to be giving glory to God on your job, in your home, on vacation, and when you enjoy entertainment.
   3. Jesus custom was to go into the synagogue on the sabbath day. Luke 4:16
      The Lord made it plain that we should put God first in our lives. Study the words of our Lord in Matthew 6:33.

B. The application of the truth
   1. When you know what the Bible says, it is our duty to apply that truth to our lives. We often accept the truth, but do not apply it to daily living.
   2. The application means to put into practice the truth of the Bible. Jesus told His churches to teach them to observe or practice the all commands of the Lord. Matthew 28:19,20
   3. The Lord's people should go to church Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday night and other services that are scheduled.
   4. It should be a real joy and glad experience to attend the house of God to fellowship with the Lord and His people.

C. The alteration in treasure

II. THE AFFECTION OF A FAITHFUL AND TRUE CHURCH MEMBER.
A. The love for the Saviour
   1. John teaches us to love Him because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19
   All that we know about the Lord should move us to love Him above and beyond anything in this life.
   2. The love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:5
   This is a divine work of God that enables us to love God, His Word, His people, and His cause.
   3. Jesus tells us how we can know that we love Him. Study what He said in John 14:21-23. If you love Him, you will obey Him. That is a plain truth found in this passage.
   4. Churches and individuals can lose their first love
which is their love for the Lord. Rev. 2:4, 5 We can allow the flesh to reign and ruin us for the Lord.
5. The greatest commandment is to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, soul, and strength.

B. The love for the Scriptures
1. The love of God causes us to love the Word of God. The Bible is inspired and profitable to us. II Timothy 3:16, 17 The psalmist loved the Word of God because he loved God.
2. There is a natural love in the new saved person's heart for the Word of God. We want to know more about our precious Lord. We are hungry and thirsty for the food for the soul.
3. God's Word teaches us about God and His work. You may form your opinion apart from the Word of God, but you better form your opinion by the Word of God.
4. Study II Timothy 2:15; 3:16, 17. The spiritually minded love to study the spiritual knowledge. The Bible is a spiritual book and the spiritually minded will study it.
5. You will be judged by the Word of God, so you ought to know it and try to live according to its teaching. The psalmist wrote what the Word of God does in Psalm 19:7-11.

C. The love for the saved
1. John said we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. I John 3:14 The saved person will have a special love for saved people.
2. I have preached revivals in churches that I did not know anyone except the pastor. As I met the people, there was a natural love for these strangers who were believers in the Lord.
3. Jesus said all men would know we are His disciples by the love we have for one another. John 13:34, 35 Other saved people can tell if you are a disciple of the Lord by your love for other saved people and even the lost sinner.
4. All saved people are part of our spiritual family. There is a natural love for God's people in our hearts. After all we are part of the same spiritual family.
5. We are closer to some of God's people than we are to our own families. We have a lot of mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters in the Lord.

III. THE ASSOCIATION OF A FAITHFUL AND TRUE CHURCH MEMBER.
A. The acceptance of the truth
1. We are to assemble together with the people of God. Hebrews 10:25 You believe the Bible and you want to be around people who believe the Bible.
2. We are to have fellowship with them as we walk in the light together. I John 1:7 True fellowship is around the Word of God. It is not around those who have fun, eat food, or take part in functions.
3. Fellowshiping with those of like faith will encourage us and challenge us and comfort us in the Christian walk.
4. Birds of a feather will flock together. I have heard that many times in my life. The saved should be around the saved. We need the fellowship of other saved people.
5. Fellowship is so important. Fellowship with other saved people helps us. It ministers to us. When you fellowship with the Lord's people, you will not leave the same person. It will affect you.

B. The application in truth
1. There are some saved people who apparently don't like to associate with other saved people. This may cause us to wonder about their salvation.
2. Hebrews 10:25 says, "And so much the more as you see the day approaching." The closer we get to the second return of Jesus the more we need to be around one another.
3. Look at your life in light of what God says. Make the needed corrections for the Lord. Apply God's Word to your life. That is the very purpose that we read and hear God's Word preached.
4. How do you measure up to this Bible truth? You don't sit down to eat for someone else. You eat for yourself. Listen to God's Word for your own benefit and profit.

C. The alteration in treasure
1. Every sermon and lesson we hear, should be applied to our lives and we should seek to alter our lives because of it.
2. We are to have our treasure in heaven. Matt. 6:19-21 The other you get the more you have on the other side. Everything of earthly value will fade away. It will only last for this life time.
3. The Lord will always give you some close friends to fellowship with and lean upon and be strengthened by. If you are faithful and true, you will always have good friends.
4. Several years ago several families decided to leave our church. I accounted them friends. It hurt me. It discouraged me. I wanted to give up and quit.
5. About that time God gave us some new members that healed the hurt and encouraged me in the services of the Lord.
6. I am trying to keep my eyes on the Lord. People will always disappoint you and discourage you, but the Lord never will.
7. When some desert you, stay put; the Lord will replace them with others who will be a comfort and consolation to you.

IV. THE ASSISTANCE OF A FAITHFUL AND TRUE CHURCH MEMBER.
A. Assist with your money.
1. In the Old Testament the Jewish people were to tithe or give 10 percent of their increase to the Lord. They were to give offerings throughout the year to the Lord as well.
2. The offerings supported the Priest and Levites who took care of the services of the Lord. When the people stopped giving the Priests and Levites had to be provided for some other way.
3. The Lord's work is supported by tithes and offerings of the Lord's people today. Your offerings help us do the work of the Lord. Study what the Lord said in Matthew 23:23.
4. Practice tithing regularly. Give every time you receive a pay check. This may be once a week, every two weeks, or once a month. Have the attitude the tithe belongs to the Lord.

5. When God blesses you in a special way, give an offering to His cause in a special way. Give gifts so the cause of the Lord will go on.

6. God’s preachers and their families are to be taken care of as they do the work that God has called them to do. His family must be taken care of. I Corinthians 9:9-14.

B. Assist with your ministering.

1. The Lord has blessed you with certain talents that you can minister to others with. You should use your natural talents to minister to others.

2. Teaching, singing, playing an instrument, encouraging people, meeting people, etc., are talents and abilities that come from the Lord.

3. The Lord wants you to be a witness and a worker for Him. Romans 12:1,2 There are a lot of things that you can learn to do.

4. You were saved to serve the Lord and to minister to people around you as a saved person. Jesus came to minister, not to be minister unto. Matt. 20:28.

5. Saved people who minister have reached a mature condition in their Christian lives. Most saved people still need to be ministered to.

C. Assist with your manual labor.

1. There is a great need for painters, grass mowers, repair people, general fixers etc., in the work of the Lord.

2. Most of this must be done by volunteer labor. Some of it must be paid for. A lot of work is done around a church by people who love the Lord and because they love Him they want to do something for Him.

3. Anytime something needs to be done, if you can do it, you should try to do it for the Lord. Be a volunteer for the Lord.

4. He gives you the health and ability to get around in this life. Try to give some of it back to Him. There are things that you can do for the Lord.

5. A growing Christian grows as he or she uses what talents and abilities they have for the Lord. I want to be busy doing something for the Lord when He returns or when He calls me home. I don’t want to go in a rocking chair.

V. THE ALLEGIANCE OF A FAITHFUL AND TRUE CHURCH MEMBER.

A. The acceptance of the truth

1. The text teaches us to be faithful unto death. God wants you to be loyal to Him for a life time. There are too many saved people who are hot and then cold. This cycle goes on it seems like forever.

2. He is faithful and true to you and He wants you faithful and true to Him. Study what John wrote in 1 John 1:9. Jesus is called the Faithful and True in Revelation 19:11.

3. The Lord's cause could be so much more if all of the Lord's people were faithful to Him.

4. A lot more people would be doing a lot more work for the Lord. We would have a greater witness for the Lord. You owe your first allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ who lived and died for you.

5. Matthew 6:33 is still in the Bible. We are to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. He comes first in all or He doesn't come first at all.

B. The application in trust


2. Are you faithful to the Lord's work? This question requires an answer. You are accountable to the Lord. One day you will give an account.

3. Reason things out with the Lord and His word. Make a self examination. Every message and lesson should be applied to your life.

4. Too often we would rather excuse, justify our sins, cover up the way we live, ignore the truth, than to apply the truth and change by the Lord’s help.

C. The alteration of the treasure

1. Once the examination is made, make the alteration that is needed. The Lord can't do it all for you. You must realize the truth and ask Him to help you change.

2. Too often we know what we need to do, but we don't do it. This makes us accountable to God. How sad for people to know what to do and yet not commit to the Lord to do it.

3. Would to God we would take every service to examine our lives and change to become what the Lord wants us to become. If this world would change into what the Lord wants it to, it would be a better place to live.

4. Look at what the Lord did with Saul of Tarsus! The persecutor became a preacher. The blood thirsty became a beloved brother. The religious became redeemed. The lost sinner because a loving saint of God.

5. There are times when saved people need to repent of their sins and ask the Lord to forgive them. This is no more than a good old fashioned revival meeting between the Lord and His people.

6. It breaks my heart to see so many people wasting their lives. They are wasting precious time they could be working for the Lord.

BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN COPIED

1982 Bible Conference Outlines
1980 Bible Conference Outlines
1990 Bible Conference Outlines
Going All the Way by Glen Tropp
John Chapters 1-3 by Glen Tropp
Right Sermons by Wright by D.B. Wright
Scanning the Scriptures I by Glen Tropp
Scanning the Scriptures II by Glen Tropp
Sounding Out the Word I
Sounding Out the Word II
Sounding Out the Word III
Sounding Out the Word IV
Word Studies by Glen Tropp
Introduction:
A. The REVIEW:
   Neh. 1 - The passion
   Neh. 2:1-10 - The preparation
   Neh. 2:11-20 - The procedures
   Neh. 3 - The participation
   Neh. 4 - The persistence
B. The REVELATION - today we focus on the problem of dissention or division.
   1. They had an internal problem of discord.
   2. There was a lot of murmuring going on.
C. The REALITY that we need to perceive - the greatest weapon that Satan has to hinder the work of the Lord is not an attack from within, but rather an attack from within - specifically and namely dissention and division.

I. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM! Neh. 5:1-5
A. PRESENTING the problem - there was a great influx of people to this place when they started building. This produced a problem of over population which caused the problem of food shortage. This food shortage affected their economy. Some of the poor had to mortgage their belongings and buy on credit. Some of the more well to do had taken advantage of the situation by imposing severe amounts of interest etc. This produced the internal dissention.
B. PERCEIVING the real issue.
   1. Real issue - selfishness and carnality.
   2. This is what causes dissention and division among God's people.
   3. If we do what we do for the honor and glory of God then we'll work together and have an understanding attitude.

II. DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM! Neh. 5:6-11
A. The CONDITION - this was a true or valid situation. V6
B. The CONSULTATION - V7 - "consulted with myself."
   1. Why? His advisors were the guilty party.
   2. Thought worthy of note.
      a. Spiritual leaders must be free to deal with the situation as it really is.
      b. This must always be a free pulpit - not bound by anyone or any group.
      c. No group can be a privileged group in the congregation.
C. The COURAGE of the man of God, Vs 7-11
   1. Faced the issue - open and above board. V7
   2. Lays the problem on the table. Vs 7-11
      a. Notice his wisdom.
      b. Notice V9 specifically.
         1. He says - what your doing is wrong.
         2. Don't you realize that you have a testimony for God?
         3. Don't you realize your testimony is a reflection upon your God?
         4. Can you imagine what lost people say about this?
         5. Illus. - a man who threw a fit because of something that happened - a man who I had worked with for nearly 3 years was there. He never came back.

III. SOLVING THE PROBLEM Neh. 5:12,13
A. The RESTORATION V12
   1. It takes a real Christian to admit that they were wrong and make restitution.
   2. There is nothing more healing or redeeming in a congregation than when those who are mature enough in the Lord will say I was wrong or I am sorry.
   3. Illus. the excluded man who came and apologized - a real revival broke out.
B. The REACTION of the people V13
   Conclusion: Vs 14-19 deals with a contrast between the nobles and Nehemiah.
   A. He had the presidency, position, and power to take advantage of the people, but he didn't.

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From Singapore
Thank you very much for the SOTW publications which are a great blessing and strong encouragement to read and receive regularly. These sermons and many Bible study outlines are a useful tool to better and deepen our understanding and greater appreciation of the various doctrinal topics and subjects in the Bible.

From Nigeria
Thank you so much for your recent mailing which arrived in good condition. The outline books and the SOUNDING OUT THE WORD papers they are a tremendous blessing to me and I know
now they are useful to me in my preaching and teaching ministry. Keep up the good work going on.

As pastors and leaders, we constantly look for the new ideas and illustrations we can share in our ministry. I shared your printing materials with others pastors and Christian leaders. They demanded for more copies.

I promise you I will send you names and addresses of other countries bordering very soon, so that you may mail your publications to them. I have already began to read and study the outlines and papers to get me a message for my people. Keep sending us your outlines and SOUNDING OUT THE WORD papers to be sharing with others pastors, Bible school teachers and Bible school students.

White Unto Harvest Ministries
The brethren report that they gave out 600-copies of FUNDAMENTALS IN CHRISTIAN LIVING by Michael Crane. Certificates of completion issued to those who had gone through the book were 77. Souls saved while studying this course-10. This ministry is sponsored by the Nacogdoches M.B.C. in Nacogdoches.

WHO SHOULD PRAISE THE LORD?
Psa 106:1-5

I. THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED GOD’S MERCY.
   V1,2
   A. Blessed by God’s longsuffering 2 Peter 3:9
      1. His patient endurance of rejection
      2. His waiting to be acknowledged
   B. Cleansed by Jesus’ blood 1 John 1:7
      1. Soul washed clean of sin’s stains
      2. Desire changed to do righteousness
   C. Directed by the Holy Spirit’s presence John 16:13
      1. To repent of sinful ways
      2. To return to the Lord in loyalty

II. THOSE WHO HAVE ENJOYED GOD’S LEADERSHIP.
   V3
   A. Into obtaining understanding Prov. 3:13
      1. Of God’s Word and it’s application to our daily lives.
      2. Of God’s purpose for us in life
   B. Into keeping judgment - evaluation Psa. 119:105,106
      1. Making decisions that are within God’s will
      2. Holding true to God without compromising His teachings
   C. Into doing righteousness
      1. Rejecting influences to do evil
      2. Putting aside self to help others

III. THOSE WHO HAVE ENCOUNTERED GOD’S POWER. V4,5
   A. Provision of needs. Phil. 4:19
      1. Spiritual Col. 1:13,14
      2. Physical
   B. Receipt of blessings. Psa. 24:4,5
      1. Apparent tragedy turned into good
      2. Misery and sadness becomes joy and happiness
   C. Changing of lives Eph. 2:12,13
      1. From unbelievers condemned to hell to believers destined for heaven

2. From selfish believers to submitted servants

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AVAILABLE BOOKS
37th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
The Mysteries of the New Testament by Herbert Brown
Clark’s Counsel to Corinth by Neal Clark
What Will you do with Jesus? by Kenneth Bazar
The Christian’s Jubilee by Herbert Brown
The Principles of Discipleship by Paul Magness
Sermon Outlines by Paul Bazar
38th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Waiting for the Sun Rise by L. Chester Quinn
Ministerial Burnout by Charles Swilling
Fire in the Soul or Soul in the Fire by Kenneth Click
Who the Lord Is by Glen Tropp
Object Lessons for Every Age by Muney Harris
39th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Finding your Way by Sammy Eldridge
Outlines of Philippians by Ray O. Brooks
Discipulado (Spanish) by Marvin Prevost
Moral, the Master, and Me by Kenneth Click
Illustrations Which Illustrate by Don Shultz
Outlines of Colossians by Ray O. Brooks
40th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
The Jordan Divided, the Healing of the Spring, and Other Miracles of Elisha by O. H. Griffith
Bible Lesson Work Book by Mike Daniel
What are You Waiting For? by J. B. Powers
The Revelation of Jesus Christ by John Turrentine Jr.
Discipulado Bíblico Basico by Raymond McAllister
What Young Preachers Need to Know by Herbert Brown & George Crawford
The Finished Work of Christ by Elvin Crocker
41st Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Outlines on the Holy Spirit by Vernon Lierly
A Study of Psalm 119 by J. W. Griffith
The Family by Sammy Eldridge
Women for His Vessels by Violeta B. Hayes
What If This Were Your Last Day to Live? by Gordon Shaffer
The Fundamentals of Christian Living by Michael Crane
Ensenanza Bíblica (Spanish) by Charles Swilling
42nd Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Faithfulness of Deacons by John Gillmore
The Second Mile by George Crawford
Victory In Jesus by Jesse Spurlock
43rd Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Outlines of Malachi by O.H. Griffith
The Salvation of the Lord (Reprint) by Charles Swilling
My Old Notebook by Neal Clark

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING was written by Michael Crane. It is used in 5 or 6 prison ministries at the present time. We printed 6,000 copies of this book in August of 1996. We have less than 1,800 copies of this book on hand. We are making plans to print 10,000 in the near future. We will have all the work done. If you can help us with an offering for this project, please do so.
LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Text: Hebrews 6:1-3

Introduction: We are saved to serve Him and in order to serve Him we must grow as Christians. We must move forward from the new birth to the meat of the Word. God wants us to press toward the mark of living for Him.

WE NEED TO:

I. LEAVE THE WAY OF SIN Philippians 3:13,14
   A. The control of Satan
   B. The corrupt ways of sin
   C. The curse of Satan

II. LEARN THE WILL OF THE SAVIOR John 7:17
   A. Follow Him
   B. Find joy in Him
   C. Fellowship with Him

III. LEAN ON THE WORD OF THE SCRIPTURE II Timothy 3:16,17
   A. By hearing His Word
   B. By heeding His Word
   C. By hiding His Word in our hearts Psalm 119:11

IV. LISTEN TO THE WISDOM OF THE SPIRIT John 16:13
    A. He will guide us into truth.
    B. He will guard our testimony.
    C. He will gather us in triumph.

V. LOVE THE WORSHIP WITH THE SAINTS Hebrews 10:25
   A. Singing together His praises
   B. Serving together in His service
   C. Shouting together His message

WHAT A WONDERFUL AND GREAT BLESSING!!! We received letters from Nigeria, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, and Ethiopia one day in September.

WHY JESUS LEFT HEAVEN AND ITS GLORY TO COME TO THIS WORLD
Text: I Timothy 1:15

Introduction:

1. It staggered the mind to think of Jesus leaving the glories and beauty of heaven and the blessed relationships which He enjoyed to come to this world of sin and darkness.

2. Hear Him pray, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." What a position He must have enjoyed!

3. What a price Jesus paid in living and walking among ungodly mankind! (Rejection, Ridicule, Railing, Raging, Hate, Shame, and Humiliation) For you! For me! For the lost of Adam's race!

4. What power He demonstrated before mankind! Power over the elements! John 2:1-11 At His Word the storm ceased. Matt. 8:26 The cripple walked, the blind see, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise to live again. Matt. 11:5 At His call men left their occupation and became WITNESSES, PREACHERS, SOUL WINNERS! Matt. 4:19-22 Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Matt. 9:9

5. To what purpose did He come to earth? What was that accomplishment Moses and Elijah talked with Him about on the Mt. of Transfiguration? Luke 9:31 What assignment did He finish on Mt. Calvary? John 19:30

I. JESUS CAME TO REVEAL GOD THE FATHER TO HUMANITY!
A. God is revealed in the Scriptures! Gen. 1:1; 17:1
B. God is revealed in creation! Psalm 19:1
C. God is revealed in Jesus! Matt. 11:27; John 14:9; Heb. 1:3; John 1:18
   2. Jesus revealed the Father's ATTITUDE. John 12:50
   3. Jesus revealed the Father's ABILITY! (To save, sustain, and supply. Luke 7:50; II Tim. 4:17 He revealed His power to meet our needs by multiplying fish and bread).
   4. Jesus revealed the Father's AVAILABILITY! He was there! He was there when He was not recognized. Luke 24:16; Ps. 46:1; Phil. 2:13

II. JESUS CAME TO REDEEM FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW AND TO REMOVE THE LAW!
A. In His MANIFESTATION of Himself to Israel: John

THANKING HIM FACE TO FACE

How good it is to know
As I greet each new day
That I'm made in God's image
And an angel keeps watch over my way.

How great to know he chose me
To be part of his plan
And that I could tell the story
How Christ died for fallen man.

How wonderful to look around me
And know I'm kept by his love
Then know when time for me is ended
I'll thank him face to face above!

Dottlee Duggan Reid 2106 East James, Baytown, TX 77520

Praise The Lord!
I:31; Matt. 3:15
B. In His TEMPTATION; Matt. 4:4, 10
C. In His INSTRUCTIONS: John 6:38; John 9:4
D. In His SUBMISSION: Matt. 26:39; John 12:27

III. JESUS CAME TO REDEEM FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW AND TO REMOVE THE LAW!
A. The REVELATION of the Law: The Law reveals our sin and imperfection and points to the need of the Redeemer. Romans 3:19, 20; Gal. 2:21
B. The LIMITATION of the Law: Rom. 8:2, 3; Gal. 3:11
C. The PROPITIATION and SATISFACTION and REDEMPTION from the law.
1. Matt. 5:17 Jesus fulfilled every demand of the Law to perfection FOR US.
2. Col. 2:14
3. His blood became the PROPITIATION (covering) for our sins. Rom. 3:25
4. Isaiah 53:10
5. Thus Gal. 3:13 and Romans 6:14; Eph. 2:8

IV. JESUS CAME TO RANSOM FROM SIN'S DEBT (To obtain release from captivity by paying the DEMANDED PRICE-Webster)
A. The wages of sin is death! Romans 6:23
B. All have sinned. Romans 3:23
C. Jesus came to give his life a ransom for man." Matt. 20:28
D. Jesus is the ONLY ONE who could make such a payment! I Tim. 2:5,6
E. Jesus was made sin for us. II Cor. 5:21 and made of Himself the SUFFICIENT SIN-OFFERING for us. Heb. 9:26
F. Jesus was the LAMB OF GOD...WITHOUT SPOT whom John introduced to the world. John 1:29; I Pet. 1:19

V. JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO REACH-OUT TO SINNERS, CALLING THEM TO REPENTANCE!
A. Luke 5:32; Matt. 9:13
B. Luke 13:3, 5
C. Luke 24:46,47

VI. JESUS CAME TO THIS EARTH TO RESCUE AND REGENERATE SINNERS.
A. Matt. 1:21
B. John 3:17
C. Luke 19:10
D. The Text: I Tim. 1:15
E. He is able to save! Hebs. 7:25
F. There is no other way! Acts 4:12
G. He is the One who gives NEW and ETERNAL LIFE! John 10:28

VII. JESUS CAME TO LEAD AND LIVE A LIFE REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT GOD DESIRES HIS CHILDREN TO BE!
A. Jesus lived a SANCTIFIED life! John 4:34
B. Jesus lived a SINLESS life! Hebrews 4:15
C. Jesus lived a SELFLESS life! John 6:38
D. Jesus lived the life of a SERVANT! He ministered to the needs of others! Phil. 2:7; John 13:5; Matt. 20:28

Conclusion:
A. He did it all IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD THE FATHER!
B. He did it all TO THE GLORY OF THE FATHER! John 17:4

C. He did it all to REVEAL THE FATHER TO MANKIND!

Bro. Wright has changed addresses from the earthly to the heavenly.

EVILS OF HALLOWEEN
I used to play the witch
Every Halloween night.
I was in my black robe,
My face was a terrible sight.

I would hang my false teeth around my neck,
Put on a floppy hat,
I painted spiders on my cheek,
On my shoulder a black bat.

The kids would scream and holler
And they seemed to be having fun.
But then I began to have convictions
With God's people, should this be done?

But the convictions went away
As the season finally was past.
But next year when they asked me,
The conviciting spirit came back fast.

I really hated not to be it
For the children loved it so.
Then I asked myself the question,
Is this the way the Devil wants us to go?

Is he worming his way into our service
Swiftly in the games children play?
Are we so blinded we do not see it,
Or are we just looking the other way?

Then I prayed forgive me Father
For even being a little part
Of letting evil enter our doorway.
Never again will I play the part.

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GOD'S CHRISTMAS TREE
Text: Jeremiah 10:1-6

Intro:
1. It seems in the days of Jeremiah when God's people had turned to the worship of idols, that trees became one form of their idolatry.
2. Verse 1 says they were to hear the Word of the Lord. Verse 2 says learn not the way of the heathen.
3. Verse 3 says they cut down a tree out of the forest, this denotes work of the hands of the workman.
4. They would decorate the tree with silver, gold, and fasten it with nails and hammer. The trees were upright as the palm tree, but they don't speak, and they must be carried, they cannot do evil, neither is in them any good. (This certainly seems to be associated with heathenism.)
5. I don't know when or how the modern day Christmas tree came about as part of the celebration of Christ's birth. It did not happen overnight, or all of a sudden. It seems to be a custom that gradually spread throughout the world.

6. With many, the selection of the tree is a big thing. It must be the right size and shape. The decorations must be so-so. The lights and other ornaments must be in the right place. If all this is done in the 'Spirit of Christ', then it's a beautiful sight. If it's done for show, or tradition, then it becomes commercialized idolatry. A shame the amount spent for these decorations, don't you think?

7. I want to show you in this message, God's Tree. And in order to make this message Christmas centered, we have to go beyond the cradle, and manger, the birth place of Christ to a hill outside of Jerusalem called Golgotha, the place of a skull. We must go to Calvary to see God's Christmas tree.

I. THE OLD RUGGED CROSS IS GOD'S CHRIST-TREE!

A. I don't remember what kind of tree it was, or who selected the tree, or when it was selected to be used in the crucifixion.

B. I do know that God grew that tree. The tree upon which His Son would be displayed and crucified.

C. I do know that trees are very significant in the Bible.

1. Trees were created by God. Gen. 1:11,12
2. Trees can be grafted, amen. Romans 11:24
3. Trees are used for shade. Gen. 18:4
4. Trees are used for burial sites. Gen. 35:8
5. Trees are used for food. Deut. 20:19,20; Acts 5:30
6. Trees are used for buildings. I Kings 5:10
7. Trees are used for idolatry. Isa. 44:14-17
8. Trees are used for fuel. Isa. 44:15,16-19
9. Trees are figurative of Righteousness. Psa. 1:1-3
10. Trees are figurative of the believer's life. Prov. 11:30
11. Trees are figurative of Wisdom. Prov. 3:18
12. Trees are figurative of eternal life. Rev. 22:14

II. THE DECORATIONS ON GOD'S CHRIST-TREE!

A. There was just one Light on that tree. Now whoever heard of having just one light on a Christmas tree? Why folks put lights all over their tree.

1. On God's tree was His Son, the Light of the world.
2. He is the Spiritual Light of the world. He Himself said, "The people who sit in darkness saw a great light."

B. There was a Rock on that tree. Now who in the world would put a rock on their tree? God put one on His.

C. There was Bread and Water on God's Tree. Christ is the Spiritual Bread and Water, needed by the world.

D. There was blood on God's Tree. Would you put blood on yours? Probably not, but God did, as an atonement, as a covering for sin.

E. When you think about the decorations on God's tree, humanly speaking, you would have to say, not very appealing, but God only put the necessities on His tree.

III. THE GIFT ON GOD'S TREE:

A. There will be found on and under the Christmas trees of the world all kinds of gifts. They will be wrapped beautifully. Some of those gifts will be expensive, some not worth bringing out of the store. I am sure there will be homes without any gifts at all. Some will perhaps not even have food to eat, and this is sad indeed. Many will be without medicine, and the bare necessities.

B. The gift on God's tree is the Greatest Gift of all time.

C. The gift on God's tree is a Gift of forgiveness, love, hope.

D. The gift on God's tree is unspeakable.

E. The gift of eternal life was on God's tree. The gift is for all mankind. No one has to go through the Christmas season without a gift. God has given His Son to you. He is the greatest gift ever given.

F. The gift of God to you must be received. Just as someone will no doubt hand you a gift on Christmas Eve. You must receive it. Whoever heard of someone not reaching out to receive a gift at Christmas time?

G. So poor lost needy sinners must RECEIVE CHRIST into their hearts by repenting of sin and believing on Him as their personal Saviour, their personal gift from God. How easy it is to have the greatest gift every given. Amen!

Luther Crawford, P.O. Box 16, Pickton, Texas 75471

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THE CONDITIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Text: I John 1:5-10

Introduction:

A. Men are saved because they exercise faith in Christ.

1. Repentance and faith
2. No other way
3. This brings us into a right relationship with God.
4. We then have fellowship with God.

B. This relationship can never be severed.

1. Regardless!
2. However, our fellowship with God can and often is hindered.

C. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

1. Holy, pure, perfect, righteous
2. Light pervades darkness
3. Light is the opposite of darkness which is the symbol of sin and death.
4. But, in Christ is no darkness at all.
   a. God cannot sin.
   b. Jesus the sinless One.
   c. Light dispels darkness (sin) this was the purpose of Christ.

D. John gives the message of fellowship with God.

1. This fellowship is through Christ.
2. This fellowship is conditional "if".
3. "If" a big little word.
4. John says there are some "ifs" to fellowship.

I. THE FIRST IF...V6

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

A. What "fellowship" means.
1. Act of partaking, participation, joint-action.
2. There is no fellowship between darkness and light...Can't have both at the same time.
3. There can be no habitual continuance in sin.

B. Those who walk in darkness.
practicing fellowship?
Julius Copeland 2542 Hwy. 157, Judsonia, Arkansas 72081

ITS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD
Text: Hosea 10:12

Intro:
1. Hosea is called a "Minor prophet", not because the message is minor, but because of the length of the book. In no way is this message a minor message. The book is directed toward the people of God, calling them to leave their idols and come back to God...calling them to repentance. As you study the history of God's people, you will find an unmistakable cycle; the people would be in fellowship with God, then they would fall into idolatry or wickedness, then God would send them a prophet telling them to repent...they wouldn't listen...so God would send judgement upon them...then they would listen and come back and serve God.

2. Then in a few years, the cycle would repeat itself over and over again. Time after time in the O.T. you will find these words."Israel again served idols..." I find it very little different from God's people today. We walk with God, fellowship with God, serve God, then idols come in...and God warns us, don't listen...God judges us, and we repent...the same cycle effects the people of God today.

3. Now in Verse 12, we find how to remedy that situation. "It is time to seek the Lord." I don't think there has ever been a time in my Christian life when I have thought so much that it is time to seek the Lord. I think of my own life and my own heart. I realize that God works in cycles and in stages...When Jesus spoke of fruitfulness in John 15, he spoke of three different degrees...fruit...more fruit...and much fruit.

4. We, as Christians, doing what comes supernaturally, bearing fruit...BUT GOD IS NEVER SATISFIED WITH THAT...He wants MORE...He wants MUCH FRUIT...the tragedy is that while God is not satisfied, many of us are! One of the reasons we need continual revival and repentance is because we are satisfied with things God is not satisfied with!

5. Then in John 15:8 He says, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." The Father is not receiving glory when we bear fruit...or more fruit...BUT WHEN WE BEAR MUCH FRUIT! It is easy, and dangerous, for us to think that just because I am involved in some small service...just because I am doing some work for Christ, I am bearing fruit...therefore, God is pleased...instead, He is continually purging us to make us more fruitful.

6. This then, is the message, "It is time to seek the Lord." God puts in us the desire to seek Him because if He left it up to us, men would never seek God. Jesus told His disciples, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Our mind is too ignorant, our hearts are too stubborn, our eyes are too blinded to seek Him, THEREFORE IT IS GOD WHO ALWAYS TAKES THE INITIATIVE...creating in us a HOLY HUNGER and a DIVINE DESIRE, letting us know IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD!

I. THERE MUST BE PERSONAL PREPARATION. "Sow
to yourselves righteousness, reap in mercy."

1. Mercy is the quality of God that keeps us from getting what we deserve. Grace gives us what we do not deserve. Sowing to others is evangelism, but here He says "sow to yourselves." Our own hearts need to get right with God. Those areas in our lives that have not been what they should be.

2. If God is going to pour out His rain upon us, the ground must first be prepared. Remember II Chron. 7:14? If my people... The greatest problem in America is not the criminals, the politicians, the media, the homosexuals, the entertainers, or the liberals... THE GREATEST PROBLEM IN AMERICA IS GOD'S PEOPLE!

3. The best example is the prophet Jonah. When that ship was in a storm, about to be broken up and destroyed, it wasn't the atheism or polytheism of the sailors that caused it. Neither was it their wickedness, immorality, or their violent lifestyle. The PROBLEM THAT THREATENED THEIR SHIP AND THEIR LIVES WAS THE REBELLIOUS MAN OF GOD THAT WAS ON BOARD.

4. Sodom and Gomorrah... God was willing to spare for the sake of ONLY 10 RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE... and I submit to you that if LOT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE KIND OF WITNESS HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN, EVEN IN HIS OWN HOME AND FOR HIS OWN FAMILY, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN 10 RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE IN THAT CITY. Faithful Abrahim, interceding against the judgment of God, No, Lot was why judgement fell.

5. When God judges America (not if) it will not be because of the wickedness of the worldly crowd, BUT BECAUSE OF THE CARNALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CROWD! Not because of the INIQUITY IN OUR CITIES, BUT BECAUSE OF THE IDENTITY OF OUR CHURCHES. Church after church in this country is filled with COLD, CALLUSED, AND CARNAL CHRISTIANS who go about the business of their lives as if God did not exist.

6. God's work, God's will, God's worth, and God's worship are no longer a priority to the people of God. If you will search the pages of this book, you will find this as the source of the judgment of God falling upon nations more than any other cause!

7. That is not to ignore the deplorable conditions that are running rampant in our country today. We spent years trying to influence America through the political process. We thought if we could get the right man in the White House, the right people in congress, and the right judges on the Supreme Court, we could change the laws of this country and change America.

8. Others turned to programs of social activism, thinking we could change America by changing circumstances. We cleaned up one slum area, ONLY TO CREATE A DOZEN MORE. WHY? BECAUSE YOU CANNOT CHANGE CIRCUMSTANCES WITHOUT CHANGING CHARACTER.

9. There is only one power in the universe that can take a BAD MAN AND MAKE HIM GOOD, and that is the POWER OF THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST. but before we can change the world, a revival must first occur among the people of God.

10. During the Welsh Revival, G. Campbell Morgan and F.B. Meyer decided to travel there from London to investigate what was happening. When they got off the train, they didn't know where to go, so they stopped a policeman and asked him, "Where is the Revival?" The policeman smiled and pointed to his heart and said, "IN THERE, IN MY HEART." That is where Revival begins.

II. THERE MUST BE PAINFUL CULTIVATION. "Break up your fallow ground..."

1. The fallow ground is the soil of human hearts. What does it mean to "break up fallow ground?" Well, remember that fallow ground is not new ground. New ground has never been cultivated, never been in production, but fallow ground is ground that was once productive, but has been neglected.

2. A crust forms, the soil grows hard, until you can throw all the seed on it you please, it will do no good. Even the rain is not able to penetrate it effectively, it runs off too quickly.

3. To break up fallow ground, means to run the plow deeply in the ground, until all of the soil is turned over, and no part of it remains undisturbed. Vance Havner used to say, "FALLOW GROUND IS UNPRODUCTIVE BECAUSE IT IS UNDISTURBED."

4. Does that fit you? Can you remember a time when the Spirit of God dealt with you more powerfully and forcefully than He does now? Do you remember when you would come to a service and sense the presence of God, and you were moved and convicted and challenged... leaving out with that precious joy of the Lord radiating from your countenance?

5. Perhaps you've been thinking, "There's something wrong at the church..."... YOUR RIGHT, ITS YOU! Perhaps you remember a time when your life was fruitful, but it isn't now. Any farmer knows that you cannot afford to neglect the soil. Being a successful farmer means being forever diligent concerning the soil. If you neglect it, allow weeds to grow here and there, don't cultivate it properly, your yield begins to decline.

6. IF FARMERS NEGLECTED THE SOIL THE WAY WE NEGLECT OUR HEARTS, THEY WOULD BE OUT OF BUSINESS. We wouldn't dream of treating the soil the way we treat our hearts.

7. Christmas Evans, a great preacher, almost all his sermons were on the blood of Jesus, used to travel to his appointments with his wife in a buggy. She would drive while he studied. ON his deathbed, he suddenly sat up and shouted, "For 50 years I've preached the blood of Jesus." He turned to his wife and said, "Now, drive on." On his way to one revival, God convicted him of a cold heart. He reigned in his horse, and for four hours he knelt in the frigid temperatures, in confession and repentance, until finally he was refreshed by a renewed sense of the presence of God. When I heard that, I, too was convicted of a cold heart. I wanted to get down on my knees and pray for about 30 seconds for a renewed sense of the presence of God in my life.

8. Are we willing to get on our knees, not caring about the time, and seek God, confess our sins, until revival comes?

Personal Preparation, Painful Cultivation, now

III. THERE MUST BE PERSISTENT SUPPLICATION. "It is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you."

1. Oh, how we need the rain of God in our world today, and I
don't care if it comes with that "slow, gentle rain" or as a flood, because WE NEED BOTH! The flood to flush away the filthiness, and the rain that soaks in and restores and heals. There is no alternate plan. We, God's people, get on our knees and pray until the Lord comes and rains righteousness upon us. We've been trying for too long to water the world with a water pistol, throwing out a drop of commitment here, a drop of righteousness there, a few drops of service, a sprinkle of programs thrown in for good measure...

2. If there is to be a revival in this community, the windows of heaven must open to rain righteousness upon us, and when that happens, we will see what we really be accomplishing. You see, there can't be "much fruit" without the rain of God's blessings. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.

Conclusion...Personal preparation, painful cultivation, persistent supplication...God's plan to bring revival to any nation. Remember, the greatest threat to our nation is not the wickedness of the world, but the carnality and complacency of Christians...

FRUIT...MORE FRUIT...MUCH FRUIT...God wants MORE FRUIT and expects MUCH FRUIT from this church.

Richard Hamlin, P.O. Box 7161, Branson, Missouri 65615

FOLLOWING JESUS...REDUCING STRESS
Text: Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34-36;

Introduction:
A. All four gospel writers wrote about what Jesus said concerning following.
1. So much stress in our society. Doctors are busy, publishers busy printing books that tell us how to overcome stress. Matthew 13:22
2. Would it be possible that if every believer would follow Jesus that believer would be free of stress?
B. Combine some words Jesus said about following Him.
1. "If anyone chooses to follow me, he must renounce, disown and deny his wants, desires, hopes and dreams and in his choice bear the shame and disgrace of a criminal convicted for crimes against the state and sentenced to death by crucifixion and go where I go."
2. This will give us an idea of His combined words on this subject.

I. WHOSE DECISION IS IT TO FOLLOW JESUS? Luke 9:23
A. It is your decision - the word WILL or WANTS TO.
1. Has the idea of choosing to follow Jesus.
2. We must make the decision to do it.
B. We are not allowed to ride the fence waiting for someone to push us over one way or the others.
1. If we are not following Jesus and going forward, we are losing ground.
2. Matthew 12:30 "He that is not with me, is against me."
3. Luke 9:50 "Forbid him not; he that is NOT against us is for us."

II. WHAT ACTION MUST I TAKE TO FOLLOW JESUS? Luke 9:23

A. It is not easy, but first, "Deny yourself."
1. Renounce, disown, deny - same word used for Peter's denial.
2. Deny your life refers to yourself.
3. Deny the real part of you, like your hopes, dreams, desires, thoughts, attitudes.
4. A young man told the late Dr. J. Campbell Morgan, "I'd give my life to write commentaries like you!" The wise Dr. Morgan said, "That's exactly what it will take."

B. Next, "Take up YOUR cross daily and follow me."
1. Jesus had not mentioned His crucifixion to them as yet. He had talked about His death only once.
2. Disciples were familiar with this term referring to crucifixion for this was the Roman way of death reserved only for non-Romans and was shameful and disgraceful.
3. Our death row inmates seemingly feel no shame or disgrace and many of them become celebrities, but not so for those condemned to crucifixion.

C. So, if you want to reduce stress, renounce your own desires and life daily with shame and disgrace from the world (if need be) and "go where Jesus goes."

A. We are in a war! Luke 12:51-53
1. Paul declares that we do not war after the flesh. II Corinthians 10:3-4
2. Even our closest relatives could be our enemies. Matt. 10:35,36

B. Another reason to follow Jesus is to save your life. Matt. 10:30
1. Whoever wishes (literally chooses) to deliver his wants, desires from distress shall lose them. Luke 9:24
2. He who has developed a fondness, a caring, a genuine concern for his own thoughts, desires, and wants...shall lose them. John 12:25
3. But whoever loses (Matthew, Mark, Luke cf) or decisively rejects and detests his own thoughts, desires, wants, attitudes, in this world, shall keep it to life eternal (John) and deliver them from distress. John 12:25

Conclusion: Let's take a look at the end results, the bottom line. Luke 9:25,26.
A. Deciding not to follow Jesus:
1. Gaining the whole world by destroying, ruining your inner man, profits nothing.
2. Being afraid of public ridicule (being ashamed) by being identified with Jesus and His teachings.
3. Makes us undesirable, unworthy of Jesus...anything He is, has, or represents.

B. Deciding to follow Jesus: John 12:26
1. We become the servant of Jesus.
3. We can be with Jesus, "Where I am, there you may be also."

C. And when we follow Jesus, serve Him, the Father will honor us.
1. He will evaluate us properly as the servants of Jesus.
LORD, I NEED TO TALK TO YOU
Text: Genesis 21:9-20

Visual illustration:
A. There was a boy named Ishmael, whose father was Abraham and mother was Hagar.
B. Ishmael's life was not pleasant because there was a lot of problems at home.
C. His father sent him and his mother away.
D. It was hard for them and their food and water soon ran out.
E. Thinking they would die, his mother left him alone under a bush and went to pray.
F. Before his mother called upon the Lord, Ishmael had already spoken to Him. God told his mother that He had already heard the voice of the lad.
G. Ishmael knew that he needed to talk to the Lord and their Lord supplies his need.
H. There are times in all our lives that we just need to say, Lord, I need to talk to you.

I. WHEN THINGS HAPPEN AT HOME THAT UPSET US.
A. When mom and dad seems to be so unreasonable.

1. Talk to the Lord. He understands.
2. Ask Him to help you to be obedient because "This is right." Ephesians 6:1-3
3. Ask Him to help your parents to understand and be patient. Ephesians 6:4
B. When brother or sister make you so mad you could poke their eye out, say, Lord, I need to talk to you. Listen to Him say, "Be kind one to another, forgiving one another..."

II. WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING THAT IS WRONG.
A. Before talking that cigarette, dope, or alcohol, say...
B. Before allowing anyone to touch your body in places they should not, say...
C. The Lord does not want you to put anything in your mouth that will harm your body, nor does He want you to be made unclean by evil hands. "
D. Before becoming so angry that you say ugly words and hit someone, say...

III. WHEN YOU ARE AT CAMP.
A. Lord, I need to talk to you about my behavior in class, in worship, in the cafeteria, in the dorm and on the playground.

1. Lord, is it right for me to disturb the teacher and others only to draw attention to myself?
2. Lord, is it right for me to create problems that causes problems for other people?
B. How do you think the Lord will answer?

IV. WHEN YOU ARE IN TROUBLE.
A. Ishmael was in trouble not because of something he had done. We get in trouble sometimes when we don't deserve it.
B. Talk to the Lord. Seek His help. Talk to some of the Lord's helpers, pastor, or teacher.
C. Avoid trouble. Stay away from anything that even looks like it might be wrong.

V. WHEN YOU FEEL ALL ALONE.
A. He is near to listen. He heard Ishmael when he was all alone.
B. It doesn't matter where you are, the Lord is near enough to hear you.

VI. WHEN YOU FEEL A NEED TO BE SAVED AND COMMIT YOUR LIFE TO THE LORD.
A. Tell Him you know that you are a sinner and need to be saved.
B. Ask Him to forgive you and cleanse your heart.
C. Thank Him for answering your call.

Conclusion: Do you need to put in a call to the Lord right now? His line is open.

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THE MANNER OF LOVE
Text: I John 3:1-5

I. THE LOVE BESTOWED V1
A. The beholding
B. The bestowing Gal. 3:26
C. The believing

II. THE LIKENESS BLESSED V2
A. The love John 3:16
B. The likeness Phil. 2:5;3:21
C. The longing Phil. 3:10

III. THE LONGING BEAUTIFIED V3
A. The person Gal. 5:17
B. The purity I Peter 1:15,16
C. The purifying I Cor. 9:27

IV. THE LAW BROKEN V4
A. The definition of sin Rom. 14:23; I John 3:17
B. The danger of sin Rom. 6:24
C. The defiance of sin Eph. 2:3

V. THE LORD BELIEVED V5
A. The saved Matt. 7:21-23
B. The Saviour Eph. 2:8
C. The shiess John 1:29

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