THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH IN YOUR LIFE
Text: 1 John 5:1-5

Intro: From these verses, the faith the text is talking about is the faith we put in the Lord when we were saved. Faith in the Lord means to rely upon, depend upon, and trust the Lord. The word believe in these verses means faith. We are saved by faith. Eph. 2:8,9
We become children of God by faith. Gal. 3:26 We are justified by faith. Romans 5:1
You cannot be saved without faith. As a saved person, you cannot please God without faith. Faith is vital to those who are saved.

I. FAITH OVERCOMES THE WORLD.
A. Victory over Satan.
1. The greatest victory we have ever won is the victory over Satan and the world.
2. Satan had blinded us and tried to keep us blind to the truth of the gospel. II Corinthians 4:3,4
3. He only has the power over saved people who allow him to have power over them.
4. We are to resist Satan in the faith. I Peter 5:8,9 He will try to shut us down for God. He will try to get us running on fear and the flesh. We can win this victory.

B. Victory over sin.
1. We are sinners by nature, choice, and practice. Romans 3:23 I John was written to saved people. I John 1:6-10
2. We are not to let sin have dominion over us. Romans 6:14 We have a say in this struggle.
3. We are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. Romans 6:12 We can by God's help prevent it from reigning in our bodies.

C. Victory over self.
1. In Romans 7:14-25 Paul talked about the struggle in his own life with sin.
2. His life is a picture of our lives and the struggle with sin that we deal with.
3. The way to overcome sin in our lives is to put our faith in the Lord and believe His holy Word.

II. FAITH IS NEEDED TO PLEASE GOD. Hebrews 11:6
A. The fact of His person
1. Jesus Christ is the holy divine Son of almighty God. He is the Lord of all.
2. In order to be saved, we had to believe or trust Jesus to be saved.
3. The saved must acknowledge the presence and the power of the Son of God in our daily lives.
4. You are never alone, the Lord is with you. Read His promise in Hebrews 13:5,6.

B. The faith in His person
1. Jesus is able to do what He says He can do. You have no reason to doubt Him.
2. Jesus will do what He says He can do. You have no reason to doubt Him.
3. You can have faith in your money, position, youth, etc., but we do not have these things very long.
4. You must trust Jesus and put your absolute faith in Him. Study Proverbs 3:5,6 We are to trust Him with all the heart.

C. The faith in His promises
1. Those who come to Him must believe that He...
is and that He is a rerewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Text
2. He has made us a lot of precious promises that we need to hold dear to our hearts.
3. You should study and know many of these promises by heart. Philippians 4:13,19 relate two of these promises to us.

III. FAITH COMES BY HEARING GOD'S WORD. Romans 10:17
A. The reading of God's Word
1. The Bible is the divine revelation of God to mankind. The Bible reveals His will, way, and work.
2. Study of God's Word involves reading it diligently. II Timothy 2:15
3. God's Word is inspired and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. II Timothy 3:16,17
B. The receiving of God's Word
1. As we read God's Word, we are to receive it as the Word of God.
2. We are to allow it to lodge in our hearts and minds. We are to meditate on it.
3. Through or by faith we understand some things. Hebrews 11:3 We receive Bible truth by faith as well.
C. The reasoning of God's Word
1. We are to read it. We are to also study the Word. We are to give all diligence to its truth. II Timothy 2:15
2. The Holy Spirit of God will show us the things of God. John 16:14,15
3. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. I Corinthians 2:13 Apart from the Holy Spirit we could never arrive at the truth. We would never receive the truth. Isa. 1:18

IV. FAITH IS THE WAY TO WALK. II Corinthians 5:7
A. Walk by faith
1. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. We are to conduct our lives and behavior trusting the Lord. II Corinthians 5:7
2. We are to walk in the Lord as we have received Him. Colossians 2:6 We receive Him by faith.
3. We are to depend upon the Lord daily for those things that we stand in need of. We stand in need of physical, mental, material, emotional, and spiritual things.
B. Work by faith
1. James went into detail trying to get us to understand that faith without works is dead. James 2:17
2. If you have faith in the Lord, it will be reflected in some works.
3. We do not work to be saved. We work because we are saved. We were saved unto good works. Ephesians 2:10
C. Win by faith
1. Paul was talking about the resurrection of the body and thanked God for the victory in Christ

Jesus. I Corinthians 15:57
2. Our faith overcame the world. Text Faith will always bring about the victory in your life.
3. Hebrews 11 is a chapter of God's word that shows us what people did by faith in Him.

V. FAITH PRODUCES PEACE IN OUR LIVES. Romans 5:1
A. Peace with God
1. We are to let the peace of God rule in our hearts. Colossians 3:15
2. The peace of God is mandatory. Let means to allow the peace of God to rule in your hearts. You may not allow it to rule.
3. We may so live as to not experience the peace of God. Jesus left us His peace. John 16:33
B. Peace with man
1. The peace with and of God leads us to have peace with others.
2. We are to live in peace with others as much as possible. Romans 12:18
3. Jesus is the Peace of the Peace and when He controls our lives, we will live in peace with others.

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AVAILABLE BOOKS
Clark's Counsel to Corinth by Neal Clark
The Principles of Discipleship by Paul Magness
Sermon Outlines by Paul Bazar
38th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
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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
Outlines by Luther Crawford
Teaching with a Purpose by Muncy Harris
What I Have in Christ by Charles Swilling
Christ is the Answer by Paul Goodwin
We Want you to Preach the Funeral by Kenneth McInnes
44th Annual Pastors and Missionaries Conference
Christ is the Answer by Paul Goodwin (Spanish)

THERE IS JOY IN THE LORD
Isaiah 51:1-8

I. THERE IS JOY IN THE LORD THROUGH THE COMFORT HE GIVES v.3
A. By reminding us what He's done in the past
   1. Forgiven other believers when they acted out of faithlessness I John 1:9
      a. As they confessed & sought the forgiveness of God
   2. Changed believer's lives
      a. As they obeyed the Lord, He led & protected them
B. By reminding us how He's going to bless Romans 8:28
   1. Turning what seems ugly into a great beauty
   2. Raising to new life that which seems to be dead
C. By reminding us what He will do
   1. Replace our sorrow with thoughts of happiness
      a. Pleasant memories of happier times / events
   2. Show us reasons to be thankful
      a. The experiences God allowed us to have / enjoy
II. THERE IS JOY IN THE LORD THROUGH THE ENCOURAGEMENT HE GIVES v.4-6
A. As He reminds us about His provision
   1. Of reconciliation
      a. Delivering from sin's penalty
      b. Bringing us into relationship with God
   2. Of His word
      a. To teach us the ways of righteousness
B. As He reminds us about His promises II Peter 1:4
   1. To rescue all who call upon Him
      a. Spiritually most importantly
      b. Physically as within His will
   2. To return & rule as King supreme over all the earth
      a. Justice will prevail
C. As He reminds us about His power
   1. That it will dissolve everything tarnished by evil
      a. Then recreate it in purity
   2. That it is unlimited
      a. Can do anything & has no end
III. THERE IS JOY IN THE LORD THROUGH THE ASSURANCES HE GIVES v.7,8
A. Obedience to God will be rewarded I Corinthians 3:10-15
   1. With understanding & wisdom
      a. Of God's word & life's purpose
   2. With fruitful ministry
      a. Involvement in good works that achieve positive results
B. Victory will be ours I Corinthians 1:1-16
   1. Good will finally win over evil
   2. Satan & his workers of evil will be removed to suffer eternal punishment.
C. Our eternity is secure Romans 8:38,39
   1. God's power seals the souls of believers with the presence of His Holy Spirit
      a. Satan is unable to take the believer's soul from the Holy Spirit
   2. God cannot forget or lose those that He has saved
      a. His Holy Spirit within us is a constant reminder that we are His
      b. He has our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

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Jesus Christ is Risen!

ALLELUIA
SERIES: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORDS!
FOCUS: RECONCILIATION!
TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 5:14-21

INTRODUCTION:
A. REVIEW
1. Through words we gain knowledge - develop - minister - and communicate.
3. There is a great significance in spiritual illumination and perception as it relates to Biblical revelations.
4. We have considered JUSTIFICATION - IMPUTATION - and SANCTIFICATION - Biblical or theological terms that need to be understood in order to activate us to make decisions that affect eternal realities as they relate to our involvement.

B. REVELATION - RECONCILIATION.
1. COMPREHENSION
2. CONDITION
3. CURE
4. CONDUCT

I. COMPREHENSION!
A. The MEANING of the term reconciliation.
1. It means to bring together that which was separated.
2. It means to restore to friendship or harmony.
3. It means to settle differences.
4. It means to be adjusted to a specific standard.

B. The MUSINGS about the term.
1. Reconciling your watch.
2. Reconciling your bank statement.

II. THE CONDITION!
A. STATED
1. Separated from God.
2. Out of harmony with God.
3. Offended God.

B. SENSED!
2. Our involvement.
   a. Romans 5:12
   b. Psalms 51:5
   c. Romans 3:23
   d. Eccl. 7:20

C. Our STANDING! Ephesians 2
1. v.1 - LIFELESS
2. v.12 - CHRISTLESS
3. v.12 - HOMELESS
4. v.12 - HOPELESS
5. v.12 - GODLESS

III. THE CURE!
A. The INITIATIVE - Romans 5:8-10

B. The INCARNATION
1. Bridging the Gulf or gap.
2. He appeased the offended God.
3. He appeals to the offenders.
4. Ephesians 2:13-18


IV. THE CONDUCT! II Corinthians 5:17-20
A. Christ bridged the gap between us and God.
B. Christians are to bridge the gap between sinners and Christ.

Glen E. Tropp

SATAN WANTS YOU
Luke 22:31-34

Intro:
You need to understand from the beginning that Satan is a real person. He considers it a great achievement to convince you that he does not exist. He is as real as the person sitting next to you.

He is not some ugly creature from a Stephen King movie. He is the master of deception. "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" - II Cor. 11:14

Here are some of his titles:
--the devil
--Lucifer
--the wicked one
--Father of lies
--the evil one
--a roaring lion
--the accuser
--angel of light
--the old serpent
--Beelzebub
--the destroyer
--Prince of darkness
--the dragon
--the prince of the power of the air

"So why do I need to know all this? What does all this about the devil have to do with me?" HE WANTS YOU! Look at our text, just as Satan wanted to get to Peter, and did, he wants to get to you.

I. THERE IS A BATTLE GOING ON
A. There is a spiritual warfare raging everyday and every hour. God's people are under attack. Satan controls a spiritual under-world system which consist of ....
   1. His angels
   2. Satan worshipers
   3. False Christians
   4. All unbelievers
   5. People in high government
   6. Backslidden Christians

B. Listen to these verses ...
   1. You therefore must endure hardship as a good [soldier] of Jesus Christ. -- 2 Timothy 2:3. When you accept Christ as your Savior then you have enlisted in His army, and a lot of Christians are A.W.O.L. YOU ARE A SOLDIER!
   2. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual <hosts> of wickedness in the heavenly <places>" -- Ephesians 6:12 YOU ARE WRESTLING
3. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to CONTEND earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."-- Jude 1:3

YOU ARE A CONTENDER

4. "And do not present your members <sub>-conscious</sub> instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members <sub>conscious</sub> instruments of righteousness to God."-- Romans 6:13 If you fall into the wrong hands you could be used against the Lord.

C. As you seek to live for the Lord Satan will tempt you to go his way. TEMPTATION--being tempted to do what is wrong in the eyes of God, by pleasure, or promise of better things. Satan will draw you with your own lust.

II. "WHY WOULD SATAN WANT ME?"

A. You belong to God. Remember that day you gave your heart to Jesus? You bowed and prayed "Lord, I'm a sinner, please forgive me and save me today". Do you remember that? Satan does, he knows all about it. You are now the property of God bought with the precious blood of Christ. Satan wants to sabotage anything that belongs to God. When you get mad at somebody ... you want to do something to their stuff.

B. You insulted Satan by leaving his team. When you accepted Christ, Satan became angry. Listen to this verse "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed <sub>conscious</sub> into the kingdom of the Son of His love"-- Colossians 1:13. He had you right where he wanted you and you escaped, by the grace of God. Now, he is mad at you for leaving.

C. You are now an Ambassador for Christ... "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you<sub>conscious</sub> on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."-- 2 Cor. 5:20 You represent the kingdom of heaven to the world. You have the potential of helping others escape the horrors of hell and bringing them to God. As you yield to the Lord you become His instrument (weapon).

D. Satan knows his time is growing short, he is getting desperate to gain all he can.

III. GET READY

A. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to <fulfill its> lusts"-- Romans 13:14

B. Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean..." 2 Cor. 6:17

C. This message is to remind you that although Satan is real you do not have to be his victim. We can say "No" to the things he tempts us with. We are now to follow after the Spirit of God and not the flesh.

D. We are not able to stand against him alone, and thank God we don't have to. Jesus is our defense. At the very presence of Him the demons tremble. As we continue to walk with Him we will learn how to resist the devil and call on Jesus to help us.

Conclusion:

Just as there is a real Satan there is a real hell. There is an eternal "lake of fire" that Satan and his company will be thrown into. He wants to take you down. Only the blood that Jesus shed for your sin can save you ... there is power in the blood. Be saved today!

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BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN COPIED

1982 Bible Conference Outlines
1989 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 II by Glen Tropp
Sounding Out the Word I
Sounding Out the Word II
Sounding Out the Word III
Sounding Out the Word IV
Reflections of the Heart by Dovie Brown
The Great Conflict by Glen Tropp
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Reflections from the heart by Dovie Brown

If you want these books, we ask that you send an offering to help us with the copying costs. We copy them in order to keep them available to you.
WHY CHRIST JESUS DIED FOR US
I Peter 3:18 Intro:

1. Christ stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the word.
2. Before man was made, His Maker knew he would need a Saviour.
3. The Father made a way whereby all man-kind could be brought to Him.
4. Jesus Christ was willing to come to the world and die that we might have life. AND DIED!

I. CHRIST CAME TO DELIVER US FROM ALL INIQUITY
A. “Who gave Himself for us” Titus 2:14
   1. “That He might redeem us from all iniquity”
   2. Purify unto Himself a peculiar people.
   3. Zealous of good works.
   4. Jesus gave Himself on the cross for our salvation.

II. CHRIST DIED TO BRING MAN TO GOD
A. Christ died once that was enough. “Once for all”
   1. Christ was the Just One who knew no sin.
   2. Christ died the Just One for the unjust ones.
      a. He became our substitute/died in our place.
   3. Christ was put to death, murdered as man.
   4. Christ was made alive by the Holy Spirit.

III. CHRIST DIED THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD
A. Christ gave Himself for our sins. Galatians 1:4
   1. On the account of our sins -- atoned for our sin
   2. He did this to deliver us from the evil power and corrupting influence of the world.
   3. He did this according to His Father’s will.

IV. CHRIST DIED THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD
A. All who receive the once dead now living Lord is a child of God. Revelation 1:18
B. Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. John 5:1
C. “Now are we the sons of God.” I John 3:2
D. Have you come to God through Christ?
E. Come now and receive release and relief.

Bro. W. H. Hitt - Gone Home to Glory - This message taken from a book of limited quantities, EVANGELISTIC MESSAGES, by W. H. Hitt. If you would be interested in more of this book being printed, please contact SOTW.

WHERE IS YOUR HEART
Text Matt. 6: 19-24. (21)

Intro.
1. Jesus and the sermon on the mount
   A. The Lord preached a very long message. You wouldn’t listen to this Preacher that long. So we shall pick for a sermon just a few of His Words from the verses near the end of His message.
   B. He was speaking to His Disciples thus equally to us. (The Preacher, Deacons, Teachers, Officers, Choir Leaders, Church members.)
   C. What is good for one is good for the other. Some feel that they pay the bills and the pastor just lives the good life. Such is grudging to give to God what is already His. He is to have the first fruits, one hasn’t give Him anything until he gives above that.
      (Giving all we can???)

I. THE EXHORTATION FROM THE MASTER TEACHER
A. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.”
B. “But lay up for yourselves treasures In heaven.”
C. No one can begin to understand these words of our Lord until they understand first the reason he said them.

II. THE REASON FOR GIVING THE EXHORTATION
A. V 21. “Where is your heart?”
   1. If your heart is right with God then you are saved, naturally the Lord is concerned about where you are to spend eternity. He doesn’t want you to live out your life here then go to hell for all eternity.
   2. There is no Indication here that one is to gain entrance to heaven by the treasures he might put there. God requires ONE settlement to gain heaven. The price has been paid; you accept it. I John. 1:7 - Romans 10:9-10.
   3. If the heart is right the whole man is.
      1. Saved,
      2. Walking in fellowship with God.
      3. If the heart is right, we are well pleasing unto God and He is not greatly concerned about the quantity of our earthly possessions. He knows, when and what we have need of; and He is well able to provide it properly.
      4. Some claim that they give the “widows mite”. In fact, they crow God, they give so much it’s hard for Him to bless them with enough to live on the next week.
   5. I am thankful to God for the tenth; it’s “God’s BUT that above the tithe is so small. ($5.00) It is more profitable, for God to bless that man that will tithe.

III. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE EXHORTATION
A. Treasures on earth will decay, even while we live. (Rust, Corruption, Moths, Wear out, Stolen, Obsolete Proverbs, 23:5.
   1. Solomon said, “It is vanity to save and not know who you are saving for.”
   2. The Bible puts it this way. I Tim 6:6-10.
B. Money in savings on earth is depreciating fast these days. Treasures laid up in heaven are as secure as God is Strong.
C. So, the argument here is that your treasures are no safer than your heart
1. If saved and living for Jesus; you are secure and rich indeed.
2. Peleg. Also, Man In Lavar County.

Conclusion: THE CONCLUSION TO THE EXHORTATION IS A WARNING? Vs 22-24
A. "One, "If thine eye be (only) evil"
   1. If you have not the light that comes to one when he accepts Christ by faith you are in a great darkness.
   2. You need to get your heart right with God now.
B. If you are saved but you have been trying to serve two Masters, then your heart is not right with God.
   1. You cannot serve God and mammon.
   2. You’ve been wearing the yoke that is heavy, laborious, and hard to bear. Matthew 11:28
   3. Won’t you in humility bow your head before God and give-in to Him?
   4. He wants you to; He wants you to live for Him.

Bro. Leo Massie - Gone Home to Glory - Would you like to see more of these sermons in a book format?? If so, please contact SOTW.

THE FAITH OF THE THREE HEBREW CHILDREN
Text: Daniel 3:8-13, 16-25

Introduction: The kind of faith in God and what they were willing and not willing to do are great examples for us. Our faith in God is the basic guide of what types of Christians we are.

I. FAITH TO FACE THE KING V16
   A. Verse 16 They had faith in the decision they had made.
   B. The world is going to offer a lot to take our time and money.
   C. Faith in God to put Him first.
   D. "We are not careful" - The Lord led them and convicted them and made their decision according to the way the Lord had led them.

II. FAITH TO FACE THE FIRE Vs 17,18
   A. They were put to the test when they faced the fire.
   B. God is going to put us to the test during our lifetime.
   C. Faith without works is dead - If God leads you to do something or tells you in His Word, and we don’t do it, it is sin.
      1. Missions
      2. Tithe
      3. Attendance
   D. Don’t put conditions on your faith -Vs.17,18 - they didn’t. We don’t have enough money. God didn’t open the windows of heaven. Everything goes wrong when I go to church.
   E. Job - Sometimes God just wants to see if we have enduring faith.
      1. If you say you can’t have that kind of faith, the Devil has deceived you.
      2. A hindrance to the church.
      3. Increase your faith through prayer.

III. THE RESULT OF FAITH Vs. 24,25

A. Sin has always bound the human race. Jesus sets us free through faith in Him.
B. Verse 24 - "Bound" Verse 25 "Loose"
C. Jesus will show up and set us free.
D. When we choose to sin after we get saved, we bind our own selves.

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MAN’S WILL AND ETERNITY
Text: Matthew 7:13,14

Introduction: In our continuing study of man’s will, we now will see how man’s eternity will be affected by his will.

I. IT IS NOT GOD’S WILL THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH.
   A. The Bible is God’s love letter to man.
      1. God has told the story of the history of man.
      2. God has told how much He loved man.
      3. God has told what He did to save man.
   B. God does not joy in man’s condemnation.
      1. It does not please God to have to send man to hell.
      2. Neither does it please God to have to punish man.
   C. God has done all God can do!
      1. Remember, eternity is coming in every life.
      2. You can’t stop it by denying it, or ignoring it.
      3. You must deal with it on God’s terms.
   D. Now it is up to man.
      1. "Let God be true and all men liars."
      2. The atheist can only get you and himself in trouble.
      3. God’s way will be done.

II. GOD CREATED HEAVEN AND HELL.
   A. Jesus explained in John 14:1-6
      1. He has prepared a place for all believers.
      2. You have been told the way. Jesus is the way.
      3. You can have a place there, but you must believe.
   B. Heaven is a real place, already in existence.
      1. Many don’t believe in heaven.
      2. You have the right to not believe, but it doesn’t change.
      3. Heaven is still real, if you believe or not.
   C. Hell is also a real place.
      1. By not believing you choose to go there.
      2. By letting the fear of God’s judgment steer you, you can escape this place.
   D. Jesus shows us the two ways we can choose to go.
      1. The Broad way is the way of the world.
         a. Many choose this because they love this world.
      2. The Narrow way is life through faith.
         a. It is not appealing to the flesh but it is
III. MAN HAS THE POWER TO CHOOSE HOW HIS WILL COMES OUT.
A. I can do no more than tell my children God’s will.
   1. God set up the home for us to have influence in our children’s will.
   2. But they must ultimately make their own decision.
B. My teaching and example is my proof of faith.
   1. I must exert my will in the right way every day.
   2. If I don’t, I may be teaching my children to refuse God’s will in their lives.
C. If my children don’t believe, I have failed to change their minds from flesh to spirit.
   1. In some way, we must by our will teach them about God’s way.
   2. They must choose, but it is our responsibility.
D. Every man will finally receive the payment for what he did with his own free will.
   1. When we stand in judgment we will give account for what we did with our time and words.
   2. You have the free will to do this.

IV. GOD Chooses THE TIME, BUT NOT THE ANSWER.
A. God chooses the time of conviction.
   1. This is talking about the age of accountability.
   2. It is also talking about the time of repentance.
B. Man can’t have his cake and eat it too.
   1. Man may choose to enjoy the sin of this world as opposed to doing God’s will.
   2. God will only allow this for a time.
   3. Then God will bring him into judgment.
C. God’s grace is expressed even in giving you a chance to be saved.
   1. He doesn’t owe you even that much.
   2. He gives you this chance because He loves you.
D. He will not answer for you, but will give you a chance.

V. WHAT IS YOUR WILL?
A. Do you believe God’s Word?
B. You must answer, Now! TODAY! Hebrews 3:7,8
   1. Today when you hear His voice harden not your heart.
   2. You can’t choose the time, today is it.
C. What will your answer be?

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS PAPER
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WATER JARS
A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master’s house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master’s house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don’t get full value from your efforts." the pot said. The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master’s house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master’s table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We’re all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father’s table. In God’s great economy, nothing goes to waste.

So as we seek ways to minister together, and as God calls you to the tasks He has appointed for you, don’t be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and allow Him to take advantage of them, and you, too, can be the cause of beauty in His pathway.

Go out boldly, knowing that in our weakness we find His strength, and that "In Him every one of God’s promises is a Yes".