

# THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,  
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in  
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

**From The Editor's Desk****Preserving The Faith.**

The first verse of Jude's Epistle says this "... To them that are sanctified by God that the Father and *preserved* in Jesus Christ..." A dictionary definition of preserved is to keep something protected from anything that would cause its current quality or condition to change or deteriorate or cause it to fall out of use. It also defines it as to protect somebody or something from danger especially the danger of being killed or damaged and we have this in Psalm 121:7 The Lord shall preserve the from all evil, He shall preserve thy soul."

To preserve something in the natural world certain definite actions and often ingredients are used and if they are used improperly or in insufficient quantities the preservation will not be successful.

Our heading says preserving the faith and it appears that it is not necessarily hours to do the text verse says that we are preserved in Jesus Christ, there is safety, preservation and protection in Him, the only way we can be preserved is by being in Christ Jesus. We cannot preserve ourselves, we must allow Him to preserve us. We do however have a part to play and in Jude 3 he exhorts us to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. That's our part, it speaks of diligence in putting forth effort God will not necessarily do this for us it is something we must do ourselves.

One of the ingredients, if we may call it that, in preserving our faith is that we need to continue to study the Scriptures and apply it to our lives. There are many who look at the scriptures in the same way that they may look at secular books of which there are often a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or additional additions which generally are revised little bit each time and thus it changes the context and application of the original.

There are people who have been doing that and continue to do that to God's holy word, the Bible, they have tampered with the faith that was once delivered to the saints by altering and revising it and consequently have finished up with a watered down Gospel, one that will not change the life or save the soul, it may soothe the conscience a little attend the end it will not lead us to Christ but away from Christ and it becomes a tool in the hands of the enemy of our souls. Let us stay with the tried and proven and not seek for those things which will please the flesh rather than God. JvL.



*From the Pulpit*

THE QUARRY OF LIFE

*Edited from a message by Stanley Heisey  
Danskin Mennonite Church Revivals 2010*

May the Lord be pleased again to bless our assembly tonight; we greet each one in Jesus name, the worthy name of Jesus, the holy name of Jesus, the precious name of Jesus.

We are glad to have a relationship with Him by faith, we rejoice in His goodness, we rejoice that we are counted to be worthy among His redeemed.

Each evening we have been considering an aspect of personal revival, we've been thinking about David's testimony when he said: Create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me.

We noticed the first night that Psalm 51 is about personal revival and that over and over again in that Psalm David expressed a desire for something to happen to him personally, it was his heart throb to be everything that God wanted him to be and we looked at the steps of personal revival.

We talked about the need of personal examination, we talked about the need of personal desire, we desire what God would have for us, we seek after Him, we long after Him as the hart panteth after the water brooks.

We have talked about the need for personal sacrifice, being determined to deviate from the normal activities more, to give ourselves more fully to a week of meetings like this and experience everything that God wants us to have.

We talked about the need for personal openness and personal involvement, in a personal faith believing that God is able to change my life, make me a new creature in Christ, and alter some things that need attention, that's personal revival.

Tonight I would like to think about personal resolve.

We could have a lot of preparatory steps that are good in personal revival but unless there is a willingness to move forward with what God has told us, that we are open and have faith to believe God is able but, finally, there has

to be a commitment level a willingness to go on and do what God asks us to do. Unless that happens we have not experienced personal revival.

I found that interesting in this Psalm 51 that David having made this commitment again goes on to emphasise the things that he wants to do for God, that his personal revival translated into action, it translated to performance, he was now willing to act upon the will of God for his life it wasn't just a theory but it became a reality for him and so he became very much involved in evangelistic work, he became involved in opening up his heart and his mouth to declare God's goodness.

He knew what sacrifices were all about, he emphasised the doing aspect of personal revival and that is how it is for all of us.

I thought about the experience of the early church when they found Christ. It was a brand-new relationship I think especially of the congregation at Antioch, Barnabas was sent to them when they heard about their new-found faith and Barnabas said that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord.

I always liked that phrase, purpose of heart.

I think wherever there is personal revival experience there is going to be renewed purpose of heart, there are things that have come to our attention that we really want to change, we want to alter the bad things in our life, we want to change the habits that are not God honouring. If we want to conform our life more perfectly to the will of God there must be that heart-throb within us of resolve to act upon things we have heard or we have not experienced personal revival.

I believe we would all agree tonight that true revival always brings change, something happens.

The evidence of revival is the impact the truth has on my life.

God speaks to my heart, I say "Amen" to His will and then there is a resolve to move forward and allow His will to be carried out in practical ways, change.

No personal resolve, no change in our life, no revival.

I want to believe tonight, while it is very true what Brother Ryan shared that we forget so much, Brother Dan also alluded to it also that we forget

so much, God's truth slips through but we do have the possibility to cling to some truth, we still have the truth.

Would to God that we would have a renewed desire to live out in practical ways the things that we know.

I believe when that happens it will translate into a commitment level that will alter the landscape of this community spiritually, there is going to be renewed fervour and more consistent witness, a more powerful influence in this community as a result of personal revival.

I want to share something with you that I came across that is a personal challenge to me, this is the testimony of a young man that was converted to communism and as I read through this I want you to think about your own personal commitment and persuasion to follow the Lord Jesus and see if you can identify with this kind of loyalty and devotion in your spiritual life tonight as one who is experiencing personal revival.

He wrote this to his fiancée as he broke the engagement he said:

"We communists have a high casual to rate, we are the ones that get shot in home and tarred and feathered and jailed and slandered and ridiculed and fired from our jobs and in every way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned, we live in virtual poverty, we turn back to the party every penny we make above anything that is absolutely necessary to keep us alive.

We communists do not have time or money for any movies, concerts or T-bone steaks or decent homes or new cars, we have been described as fanatics and we are fanatics.

Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor – the struggle for world communism.

We communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money can buy, we have a cause to fight for, a definite purpose for life, we subordinate our petty personal selves into a great movement of humanity and if our personal lives seem hard and our egos seem to suffer through our subordination to the party then we are adequately compensated with

the thought that each of us in a small way is contributing something new and true and better for mankind.

There is one thing of which I am in dead earnest and that is a Communist state it is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife, my mistress, my bread, my meat, I work at it in the daytime and I dream of it at night.

Its pull on me grows not lessens as time goes on therefore I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without rating it to the force which drives and guides my life.

I evaluate people, books, ideas and actions according to how they affect the Communist cause and by the attitudes toward it. I have already been in jail because of my ideas and if necessary I am ready to face the firing squad for communism."

All for communism, a hopeless entity!

Christianity should be worth everything to us with the same kind of commitment, the same kind of resolve that we are that committed that we are willing to sacrifice everything for the cause.

I ask us tonight: Does God ask for anything less?

Total commitment I believe is a product of personal revival, let's grow in that, I believe in these being the last days and I want to encourage us to be everything that God wants us to be.

I'm not sure what to say at a time like this after indeed a refreshing time of sharing together with the brothers and sisters here at Danskin, I can say it has been very heart-warming and inspirational in my life, I've probably received more than what others have from you, I have been a beneficiary of your loving kindness in so many ways.

I would like to encourage you here at Danskin each one of you young people, fathers and mothers, God has a special interest and love in each one here, God has a special plan for each one of you and I think it is noble that wherever we are that we seek to understand and follow that plan, to resign our hearts and let God have control and use us as vessels in His hands.

Life is short at best it is short, we are reminded of that at times and so let's give God the very best we possibly can in this short time that we have left so that we all can be ready to meet Him.

Sitting on my desk at home is a motto that is probably somewhat familiar to some of you it goes something like this:

“May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always on your back, may the sun shine warmly upon your face, may rain fall softly on your fields and until we meet again may God keep you in the palm of His hand.”

Those are pleasant thoughts and they reflect noble desires that we should have for each other in whatever situation there maybe, it shows a oneness and a brotherliness, it surely demonstrates our love and care for each other and I think we ought to have each other's interests at heart in life, it kind of dissipates the tendency we have to be competitive and allow jealousy to stir up, we really want the best for each other, we want God's blessing on each other and we ought to feel that for one another.

But you know as much as that is a noble desire to share and a good thought to entertain and to bless others with this life does not always provide the luxury of soft rains and winds that blow gently in the right direction or even soothing sunshine upon our face, sometimes storm clouds roll into our lives bringing pelting rain and destructive winds, as far as the sun it may not shine for days or weeks, sometimes that is the real world in which we live.

Maybe these thoughts are a little more realistic to us tonight, perhaps it gives us a more accurate perspective on life as with our nearsighted vision we tend to get bogged down with the present things that we are dealing with today, our present dilemma, the things that we grapple with in our own little world at this moment.

And I confess that there have been times in my life the last while that you had to kind of force your chin up, we are naturally human enough that circumstances can be discouraging and we have to look up and see the rainbow and look up to see the stars and look up to see the sculptor's face, the one who handles the hammer and the chisel.

When we are discouraged we do not see his face, when we are depressed all we feel is the blow of the hammer or the chisel on our life, we wince, and sometimes we chafe at the pain that comes.

Now I would remind us tonight that is part of Christian living, while we don't understand it all we have heard it said and it is so true when we respond we anticipate gain, where there is pain there is gain.

This is a divine principle that is betrayed in the scriptures repeatedly, God brings circumstances in our life that are difficult so as to help us become better people.

To encourage our hearts tonight and to accept God's sovereign hand in our life, as difficult as it may be, I would like to develop some thoughts on how the sculptor works to shape our lives.

I invite your attention to the book of first Kings chapter 5.

We would like to take a visit to the stone quarry where the sculptor's chisel is busy, I will start reading at verse 13, the setting is the construction of Solomon's Temple, we are familiar with that and notice as I read:

[1 Kings 5:13-18](#)

<sup>13</sup> And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

<sup>14</sup> And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and Adoniram *was* over the levy.

<sup>15</sup> And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

<sup>16</sup> Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

<sup>17</sup> And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

<sup>18</sup> And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the stone squarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

A number of key phrases in verses 17 and 18 especially it says they brought stones, costly stones, hewed stones, and then again the thought is

repeated in verse 18, Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the stone squarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

In chapter 6 verse seven we have an explanation of what was going on here, [1 Kings 6:7](#): And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

I would like to consider three important matters that help us to understand some aspects of this quarry that every one of us tonight, we are all in the quarry of life, it is very real to us.

And one more point I want to bring to our attention about the quarry of life is that it is in prospect, the quarry of life where we are tonight in the quarry and we may sometimes think we are in the hole of the quarry, the quarry of life is about prospects, in other words it is about the divine expectations, it is about God doing things today that have future benefits, future value.

God always works that way, in fact the Scriptures are written in prospect, this passage from 1 Kings 5 is an illustration of how God in His wisdom and foreknowledge is able to bring to our attention again and again a type and have it so accurately illustrate something that He wants us to understand in the future.

As Solomon was building his Temple it was more than just some magnificent structure to serve as a place for God's people to worship.

As Solomon built this Temple it was a pattern of a better work, it was an illustration it was a type of what God wanted us to experience today.

The building of Solomon's Temple I believe is a beautiful pattern in type of the Church of Jesus Christ, it was built in prospect of something better.

The Old Testament was in prospect of something better, a new and better way.

The law served the time and present, it was a schoolmaster to bring people to a better understand the provisions of Calvary, the Old Testament law was in prospect of New Testament grace and this principle is seen over and over again there is a prospect in focus.

This passage illustrates that graphically.

God had arranged in this passage at His own direction and providence what we consider a prefabricated Temple, all the components and all the pieces were made to fit.

And I was impressed how well this parallels with what some of your brethren are involved with here with your timber and log homes that are somewhat cut out and prefabricated and that a draw knife is used and the notches are made and the logs are cut to size and everything is precisely done so that you can take it to the construction site and put it together with a little more cutting and rasping and sawing needed.

A very close parallel.

And so here was an onsite construction project, the work was done in the quarry and the idea was to take it to the building site and there have it all brought together. Amazing, it was a marvel how that every piece was made to fit precisely so that there was no need for a hammer and chisel any more when it got to the site where Solomon's Temple was being built but now it was a matter of putting the pieces together, it was constructed and it was like our little boys taking the Lego blocks and building it up and it was all done, they did not need to use a hammer and chisel either it just happens it comes together.

The plan is constructed, the plan is put together in reality.

Did you ever wonder why it took seven years to build a structure 90 by 30 by 45 feet and the thousands and thousands of people that were involved in this project, why did it take so long?

Well we are used to machinery are we not, there were no C and C Routers, never knew backhoes, never knew mechanical drills they had nothing but raw labour to transform these boulders from the quarry into manageable stones they were made exactly right to fit every one of them, then transported and put into place without any further involvement.

I think this illustrates for us tonight the tremendous laborious task of church building, it takes tremendous time, it takes manpower involvement, it takes sacrifice, nothing is done in a day or a week a year, it's a long process, I think again it helps us to understand God's heart in the building of His Church, it helps us to appreciate the time it takes, ordained brethren especially, schoolteachers, mothers and fathers, it takes a lot of effort and

we are in this process of shaping lives, moulding character, with this ongoing prospect of seeing it a finished product something attractive.

Jesus said I will build my Church, the Lord is doing that today, we need to understand what God had in mind, we need to see beyond Solomon's Temple, we need to see the glorious Temple, the glorious Church as being built today.

We are in the quarry of life, the sculptor's chisel is busy, the Lord is preparing a place by preparing us. He is working in our lives, He is shaping us, there is nothing streamlined about it, there is nothing automated about the process, it is a difficult task but He is shaping lives, He is helping us to be everything that He wants us to be – it is in prospect.

I think that is an inspiring thought, I marvel at God's wisdom how that He can bring to our attention an earthly illustration and help us to grasp a spiritual truth – the quarry of life.

Secondly I would like to note now the process by which God does this.

If you ever visited a stone quarry you would no doubt see massive boulders, huge rocks and machinery, rock crushers pulverising limestone to use of all sizes that can be transported to a site and put to legitimate use.

In the quarry of life there are no rock crushers, we may feel like we are in a rock crusher, we may feel like there are present circumstances that I cannot handle but there are no rock crushers in the quarry of life.

Jesus said one time that if we fall on the stone we are made into usable pieces but if the stone falls on us we will be ground into powder.

I think the rock crusher could be illustrated by those who resist the will of God ultimately the life is crushed but we are looking tonight for lives that are surrendered to the Lordship of Christ, those who have fallen on the stone and have been broken into pieces whose stubborn will has surrendered to the hand of the sculptor and there is a process, it does not happen the day we are converted, it does not happen overnight, just like it was in the experience of Solomon's Temple it is a long period of time, it's a lifetime we say of being in the quarry of life and God shaping our lives, God chiselling away, whittling away at our lives to make us the way that He wants us to be.

He skilfully works with us to get the image that He wants.

His tools are very efficient and very effective and so with carefulness and precision God works on us and I think we ought to be conscious of God's working, we ought to take courage of the fact that God is refining my life and God is shaping my life and we ought to be able to trust the sculptor's hand with us.

He has the ultimate skill, He knows what is best, He knows every blow, He knows how much pressure to apply to the chisel with the hammer in our life to bring about the results that He wants.

And so one of the tools that God uses to shape our lives is this holy message – His Word.

Jeremiah said it so well when he said: Thy word is like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ([Jeremiah 23:29](#)) and that is what God is doing and every time we open His word it has the potential to affect our life, change our life, transform our life and make it more what God wants it to be and we ought to have that kind of an openness and when we open the Bible that God would change us and we would be open to His transformation, we would be open to His chiselling when we consider the sacred message He has for you, for me.

God is shaping my life, He wants to bring it to my attention.

Think about it when you have are having devotions, think about it when someone is discussing a Scripture lesson, what is God saying to me, what does He want me to get out of this, how does He want to shape my life?

God touches various aspects of our life with a chisel, the point comes home, He knows where our needs are, He knows where the rough edges need to be addressed and dressed up and so He works on us through His Word and I'm glad for that tonight.

I'm glad for His faithfulness, His patience, His skill in chiselling away at our life through His holy message.

I also believe tonight that God uses the tools that are sitting here, I believe God uses people as chisels in our life.

Here we are in the quarry of life, each of us are in the quarry and every one of us are under the hand of the skilful sculptor and God uses each of us to help others, God uses others to help us and I think we ought to be very sensitive to that process, sensitive in that we recognise this is how God works.

Maybe at times we are too sensitive and we resist when God uses my sister, my brother to help shape my life. We sometimes take offence at that, we sometimes question their authority to do it but I want to remind us that they do have authority.

Godly counsel, it may be parents, it may be church leaders, it may be my spiritual companions in our journey through life, God uses them.

Let's turn back to those familiar words in Ephesians chapter 4.

I think this passage helps us to understand that tool that God is using to improve us to shape us.

**Ephesians 4:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

This is a lofty objective that God has for us and I think everyone of us here tonight as a child of God has the responsibility to be a vessel in God's hand to be a sculptor in God's hand to have a hammer and chisel in your hands directed by God to help each other to become more refined and a more useful tool in God's hand as well.

We want to perfect each other, we want to edify each other, we want to encourage each other. The Bible says we ought to be provoking one another, stimulating one another unto love and to good works. And that is more than just offering words of commendation, we ought to do more of that, sometimes it is offering words of challenge, words that address a particular weakness and need in someone's life, when we share these kind of things with a loving concern God can use that effectively as a whittling away, chiselling away of things that need to be removed from our lives to help us.

I can bear testimony tonight that I have been a beneficiary over and over again of people that cared enough about me and love me enough to use a chisel in my life and we ought to accept that, we ought to thank God, we ought to thank the brother, thank the sister, thank you for being kind to me,

thank you for being frank and honest, thank you for showing me something that I did not see before.

It is about shaping lives, it is about preparing souls for eternity, our goal is perfection that is God's heart He wants a glorious Church, He wants each of us to identify with a glorious Church and so He uses people to help us.

Thank God for brotherhood tonight, thank God for people that care about us, I would like to help us to develop a fresh appreciation for the brothers and sisters sitting among us here tonight that have that responsibility, let's accept it, that's from God, let's look beyond what may seem to be harsh words and a crude approach and understand it is the hand of the divine sculptor at work. Amen.

Another tool that God uses in the quarry of life along with His Word and His people is His providence in circumstances that God uses to shape our lives.

During my brother's hospital experience following his tragic accident I listened as the doctor referred to my brother's paralysis and told him that he would never walk again, you will never walk again! then the Doctor said something very significant he said: It builds character, it builds character.

And that's how it is, the experiences in life that are difficult that are traumatic, that we feel are unfair, God has the purpose of building our lives, building character, making us better, improving us.

I understand that when experiences are difficult and we find it hard to go through these experiences they are painful, but dear ones tonight if somehow we can look up and see the loving face of the sculptor somehow go beyond the wincing and the pain, the point of the chisel, and see the face of the sculptor and sense His loving heart I believe God can use these difficult circumstances to shape our lives and make us better people.

We all like mountaintop experiences but the quarry of life is usually in the valley and we can have a resistance to those circumstances or we could accept them just like the vessel on the potter's wheel, it was a marred vessel in the hands of the Potter and we can allow that to be perfected, we can allow the Potter to work with us more and shape us more or we can resist it.

I would like to turn to these familiar words in Hebrews chapter 12 I share this for our encouragement tonight.

We should not consider it strange that these difficulties come to us after all we are God's people, after all He is shaping our lives, after all He does have something in prospect, after all we are in this process in the quarry of life of being developed.

Hebrews 12:7-11

<sup>7</sup> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

<sup>8</sup> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

<sup>9</sup> Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

<sup>10</sup> For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Those two words are very important if you endure chastening you are exercised thereby if we can accept the process, if we can accept the hand and the chisel, the hand of the sculptor on the chisel in our lives I'm satisfied it will make us better people.

The last point I would like to share with us tonight as we look at the prospect of what God wants to see happen in the process through which He makes it happen so we can focus on what He wants to accomplish in the product.

Prospect, the process and the product or the production.

God has envisioned in His mind a masterpiece of design.

The scriptures refer to us as lively stones, those who have been animated by God, those who have been born again are lively stones in the building and there is in many ways nothing very impressive about stones.

I would like to pick up on that thought in Ephesians chapter 2, He is taking stones as crude thing as we may be with our weaknesses, our flat spots, our

idiosyncrasies, you name it God takes us and He wants to make something better, every one of us as Christians is in the process of becoming something more that God wants us to be.

Ephesians 2 and notice, [Ephesians 2:21](#) <sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

That is an amazing verse, that word fitly suggests by rasping and sawing shaping the building materials to fit properly together as one whole unit.

Tonight I joy in a process that develops in a product worthwhile.

If God is going to work in us there is something worthwhile to result from that and that should encourage us God is making an holy Temple. What a blessing that is.

He is indeed in prospect making a glorious Church.

I'd like to take us briefly to Revelation 21, I find tremendous inspiration from this chapter, I'm not going to take time to read many verses save a few from [Revelation 21:2](#): And I John saw the holy city, [a holy city] new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared [prepared] as a bride adorned for her husband.

There is a product, that is what God wants to see, there is the end result of all God is working, all the chiselling, all the pain that we enjoy in this life all the hard labour in the quarry, all the chiselling, the rough pieces are now off, the rough edges have been planed and we have now a fitly framed building, a glorious Church, a prepared bride adorned for a husband.

We have now a product that God is pleased with that God is willing to accept.

He picks up that thought again in verse nine, [Revelation 21:9](#): And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

As I read the following verses I see glory and splendour, I see the product of the stone quarry, I see the majestic result of what God has been working at all through our life to finally culminate into a product that meets His ap-

proval. And as we go through there we can read about the glorious, the attractive, the marvellous structure that is described that He says is the Lamb's wife, the Church, the glorious Church.

I thought about the words of the prophet when he said They shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him, [Malachi 3:17](#). We are transformed in the quarry of life from crude stones that Peter talked about into jewels a product of God's handiwork.

I praise the Lord tonight for His interest in us and I want to encourage each of us to look beyond the stone quarry where we are tonight and understand what God wants to see accomplished from stones to gems.

God is in that process I will build my Church, it is not about be programs, it is about God working with people, it is about God working with you and me one at a time shaping our lives, conforming our lives to His will here in the stone quarry perfecting us, shaping us after His perfect image that He can bring us unto Himself as a bride adorned for her husband.

I'd like to take us back to first Kings chapter 6 again and notice the significance of verse seven and noting again what God had in prospect, Solomon's Temple was about the preparation of the glory is Church in the quarry of life.

[1 Kings 6:7](#): And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

The work is being done now, the process is now, there comes a time when the process will end, when the chisel and hammer will be laid down, when time shall be no more and those who are righteous will be righteous still and those who are filthy will be filthy still.

God is anxious for all of us to be conformed to His will.

He works with us so faithfully and so patiently, He wants to shape our lives because He wants to present to Himself a people prepared, it is up to us that process is effective, it is up to us as to how God is able to work.

There will be no more changing over there, there will be no more sound of a chisel and hammer, everything is done here tonight and so I plead that if there is something in your life that is not what God wants it to be, if there is some unresolved problem, some hidden sin, you have never surrendered your life to the hand of the sculptor tonight would be a good night to do that. I want to give anyone and everyone an opportunity to be fully surrendered and I want to believe that most everyone here tonight is in that category but if there is that reservation, that resistance, that unwillingness to accept God's hand that wants to bring about change in your life then acknowledge your desire to change that and surrender to the all wise all loving hand of the sculptor.

It would be a good night to say: Lord take my life and shape it, conform it, I'm fully surrendered to your will.

*Take My Life and Let it Be.*

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.  
Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.  
Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.  
Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.



[Following is the fourth article in a series regarding creation/evolution teaching by Bro. Sumner Loomis. —EDITOR]

#### 4. THANKFULNESS FOR OUR CREATOR AND HIS CREATION

*"In everything give thanks:*

*For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"*

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thankfulness is an attitude, a blessing to others, and a way of life. It also paves the way to success in our Christian walk. By adapting and using it, you will discover increased appreciation for your Creator and multiplied faith for your trials. It works! Have you ever thanked God for creating you? Have you thanked Him for this world, which is the handiwork of His hand? Please try it. (*Read Psalm 8*)

There is pain, grief, suffering, and death in this world. You will experience your share of these. There is no way to escape them. Yet the Bible tells us that He who made all things cares for us, and faith believes it. He knows all about us and everything that takes place, good or difficult. This world is not out of God's control. Rather, He is aware of all your happenings and will achieve His will and work from them. From this we can conclude that life is a training ground and a time of sifting. And through all of it, we must make a choice. The choice is yours alone, and it has eternal consequences. Choose to serve God and fight the good fight of faith and you will obtain your reward with great rejoicing.

Yes, we must be thankful in our trials and suffering. As they come, we must also look forward to the work they will accomplish, remembering that God is nearby in it all. Our thankfulness at these times will draw God close to us and guarantee His help and guidance. When we approached the time of our conversion, most of us found a strong unrest and need in our hearts. When we finally bent before God, we proclaimed that we were willing for whatever was required of us. It is important that we retain this humility before God and continue to regard only Him as our salvation. With this view in our hearts, we can readily accept the path chosen for us and proceed with joy and thankfulness.

Once we accept this view, we are prepared for whatever comes our way. In terms of worldly thinking, we are bullet-proof and equipped with an insurance policy better than anything this world can provide. No matter what comes, no matter what happens (even financial disaster, terminal illness, or

death), our lot will be improved. As Paul stated more than once, even to die is gain (1 Corinthians 9:15; 15:36; Philippians 1:21). Our martyr brethren are a strong and solid testimony to these facts, be thankful for them and our heritage.

There is an interesting story in the Old Testament that portrays the powerful effects of thankfulness and praise in obtaining God's help. This is found in 2 Chronicles 20:20-24, but verse 22 tells most of the story: "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." Your thankfulness and praise toward God are a testimony of your love and commitment to Him and His kingdom. This touches the heart of God. It also establishes and strengthens your reverence for His majesty and righteousness.

Are you depressed by the problems of this world? Does your faith and commitment need reinforcing? Do you need the closeness of God to help you through your day? Is your daily communication with God weak? Does your prayer time need more reality? Are you struggling with thoughts that you wish weren't there? Do you wish for a more effectual witness to those of the world? Do you really believe there is a mighty Creator of the universe, but yet He cares for you? Then try that spiritual vitamin called Thankfulness. It is sure to build a stronger faith in the Creator and a closer walk with Him. Begin to use it today! Once you begin, you are sure to be amazed how the list of items for which to be thankful will grow. You will find a life and a relationship renewed.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet..... O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!" Psalm 8:3-6 *and* v.9

~ Sumner S. Loomis ~



## NOT OF THE WORLD

Jesus taught that His followers, even though living in the world, would not be a part of it (John 17:6-24). Thus, "in the world but not of the world" describes the true Christian's relationship with the world.

Jesus said that His "kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Consequently, His subjects would not be "citizens" of the worldly kingdom. Being "in the world but not of the world" is a fundamental Biblical doctrine that steps on the flesh. It is the foundation for the teaching that the people of God are not conformed to the world (Romans 12:1; 1 John 2:15-17; Numbers 23:9). They have a nobler purpose and calling, being separated unto the service of the almighty, holy, and invisible God.

The worldly realm, of which Christians are not a part, is the pro-self system that rules in the hearts of men. Disciples of Christ live in the midst of these systems. In this sense they are "in" the world. But they have little affinity with the world's structure of thought, lusts, and manner of operation. That is not because of any inherent holiness or inborn goodness of theirs, but it is a work of God's grace upon surrendering to Christ Jesus. Paul says that Christ "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" Colossians 1:13.

Thus Christians are not of the world. The apostle Paul said about his relationship with the worldly realm, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" Galatians 6:14. In other words, in Paul's experience there was no common ground between the world (that is, those systems of pride and structures of power) and himself. There was only tension and mutual opposition. The world sought to crucify him because of what he stood for, and he needed to crucify the old flesh lest it become an accomplice of the worldly domain. In Paul's case, that realm was even religious.

Living in close proximity to the world can vex the soul of the righteous, like Lot's soul was vexed in Sodom. "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" 2 Peter 2:8. But praise God, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (v. 9). It is sobering to see how close Lot came to losing his life in Sodom. And, "Remember Lot's wife" Luke 17:32.

The reality of being "in" the world is sometimes construed as an excuse for weaknesses of the flesh. Such comments like, "The flesh is never converted," or, "Sin is everywhere one looks," are true. However, they might be made in a manner that gainsays the power of the gospel to make one "not of the world." That Christians are called out of the world unto holiness (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 1:15) is sometimes lost in the din of Satan's clamor. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Believers should never use being surrounded by the world as an excuse to not keep a godly standard of holiness. The Holy Spirit calls, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

The spirit that rules in the worldly realm is its life. It is its power and essence. A "body without the spirit is dead" (James 2:26). This gives some light and direction for various issues of the day. A believer uses many of the same things the world employs, and he does not necessarily transgress the doctrine of being nonconformed to the world. The Apostle spoke of using "this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" 1 Corinthians 7:31. An example would be the use of motor vehicles for transportation. But it is another matter should a vehicle speak of pride and self-image, which pertain to the spirit of the world. When one who professes to be a Christian backslides until he is motivated by the spirit of the world, in whatever he does or possesses, or portrays himself to be, he becomes of the world. He has the world's spirit; so the world's life is in him.

It has been noted that Matthew 5, 6, and 7—the Sermon on the Mount—are a beautiful description of Jesus' spirit. It is also true that there is no clearer definition of a Christian's spirit than those virtues and graces set forth there by the Lord. Here again, one finds no common ground with the spirit that prevails in the world. The spirit of the world is opposed on every point to the spirit of Christ. How true the words of James, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" James 4:4!

The spirit of Christ is humble; the spirit of the world is proud and egotis-

tical. One with the spirit of Christ suffers being misused and falsely accused; the spirit in the world protests and demands redress. The spirit of Christ is unselfish and caring of others, while the world's spirit is self-centered and occupied with its interests. The spirit of Christ is God-conscious, while the spirit of the world is man-conscious. The true spirit that Christ taught trusts in God for all his needs, but the spirit of the world puts its trust in the unrighteous mammon with its strategies and securities. Finally, the spirit of Christ is heaven- and eternity-conscious, while the spirit of the world is temporally oriented.

There is no better way to cap the concern of the Spirit than to quote the well-known verses, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" 1 John 2:15-17.

Yes, we are in the world, but let us beware being of the world.

May we never be of those who display the life portrayed in this statement: "The lack of interest in some parts of the Gospel has caused a slump in Christianity." —

Again may the words of that hymn (405 Mennonite Church Hymnal) be our cry in this dying world! "I gave my life for thee, My precious blood I shed!" He gave His life for us – what can we give for Him?

Let the words of this next hymn also be a prayer of consecration to Christ Jesus and dwell in the knowledge that in our love for Him there is and will be no room for a love of the things of this world which could lead us away from His way.

Yes we can and should enjoy the natural things of creation, God has given us those so that we can see and appreciate His workmanship and attention to the finest detail and give ourselves over to worshipping Him, the Creator of all things.

He provides for all our needs and I believe that surely includes a sense of wonder and enjoyment "for the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies, for the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent child" as the words of the hymn writer Sylvanus D Phelps so eloquently express. (*Mennonite Church Hymnal* 582)

**Something for Thee**

Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me,  
Nor should I aught withhold,  
Dear Lord, from Thee;  
In love my soul would bow,  
My heart fulfill its vow,  
Some off'ring bring Thee now,  
**Something for Thee.**

O'er the blest mercy seat, Pleading for me,  
My feeble faith looks up,  
Jesus, to Thee:  
Help me the cross to bear,  
Thy wondrous love declare,  
Some song to raise, or prayer,  
**Something for Thee.**

Give me a faithful heart— Likeness to Thee,  
That each departing day  
Henceforth may see  
Some work of love begun,  
Some deed of kindness done,  
Some wand'rer sought and won,  
**Something for Thee.**

All that I am and have— Thy gifts so free—  
In joy, in grief, through life,  
O Lord, for Thee!  
And when Thy face I see,  
My ransomed soul shall be  
Through all eternity,  
**Something for Thee.**

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