

# 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****Loyalty**

Luke 9: 7-62: "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. <sup>58</sup>And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. <sup>59</sup>And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. <sup>60</sup>Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. <sup>61</sup> And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Loyalty to anyone or anything calls for commitment, a commitment that is voluntarily, a commitment that is made for life and we see from this passage in Luke 9 and the other gospels that many in Jesus day volunteered or were called to discipleship. But many fell short of commitment.

Is that not like today?

These 3 men that Jesus spoke to can also be looked at as being prospective disciples of Jesus.

First there was the eager disciple (Luke 9:57) who volunteered to follow Jesus anywhere—till Jesus warned discipleship might be uncomfortable.

Secondly there was the reluctant disciple (Luke 9:59) who, when commanded to follow, wanted to wait until his father had died and been buried! Jesus rejected the excuse. "Go and proclaim the kingdom of God." There is no evidence that this reluctant disciple obeyed.

Thirdly there was also the someday disciple (Luke 9:61), who wanted only a little time. Just to say good-bye to the home folks. Then, someday soon, he would follow. This too was unsatisfactory.

You see, what Jesus seeks is the *now* disciple (Luke 9:62). Jesus wants the person who will put his or her hand to the plough and, without looking back, move straight out to do God's will. This is what Jesus asks of us. To fix our eyes ahead, on Him, and not to look back. We are to take the plough, now, and commit ourselves to His task.

You cannot have conflicting loyalties, you cannot serve two masters Jesus tells us that. If our loyalties to other things conflict with our allegiance to God then we are fooling ourselves and are unfit for the kingdom of God.



## Essentials for Meaningful Personal Devotions

*Brother Fred Carpenter – 2004*

### *From the Pulpit*

I bring you greetings this morning in the name of God our Father who is interested in having a relationship with us as His children.

We want to further look into His word and shall turn to Matthew six.

We are privileged to have the Word of God,

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man,

The way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its history is true and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you.

It is the travellers map, the pilots compass, the soldiers' sword and the Christian's charter.

Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good's design and the glory of God its end.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, paradise of glory and a river of pleasure.

It will reward the greatest labour and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It is the Book of books, it is God's Book the revelation of God to man.

Someone wrote that in speaking about the Bible, we are privileged to have the Word of God freely and openly we believe it as the only infallible rule of faith and practice and so we come in our services again and again to the Word of God and what we want to focus on this morning is not directly related to our services but it is related to our personal lives.

We want to think about 12 essentials for personal devotional life.

By this we are referring to personal Bible reading and prayer and our entering into it with our whole heart.

Devotion means religious fervour, ardent love and affection or a religious exercise.

I would like to read from Matthew six verses six through 13.

**Matthew 6:6-13** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. <sup>7</sup> But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. <sup>8</sup> Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. <sup>9</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. <sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

You realise with me that this is only a portion of this chapter but it brings into focus the thoughts that we want to consider this morning.

What is it that you and I need to do in order to have a meaningful personal devotional life, is this something that is optional to us as children of God?

I think we could just as well ask the question: Is it optional for us to eat to stay alive.

Really there is not a difference in that comparison, if we want to stay alive physically we must feed upon the natural food which God has provided and which our wives and children prepare and if we want to live spiritually we must also feed upon the Word of God which is for us spiritual food, Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, **Matthew 4:4**

And so if you and I want to live spiritually we must feed upon the Word of God, we have God speaking to us in this book it is His message to you, it is His message to me and if we want to hear God speaking we hear Him here, we hear Him in this word.

We are not saying that He cannot speak otherwise but we do believe that this is the main way that God communicates with man today through His written word.

So the first essential I would name from this passage is suggested by the beginning of verse six when He says when thou prayest.

He does not say if thou prayest but He says when thou prayest.

This assumes that you and I are going to be doing it and you know with me anyone who has put any effort into having a personal devotional life knows that it takes determination.

I see that as the first essential, determination, but thou when thou prayest.

I like the words of John Wesley in relation to this I came across the statement that he made: “I resolve to devote an hour morning and evening to private prayer, no pretence, and no excuse whatever.”

I especially like that ending, no pretence, no excuse whatever.

You and I know how easy it is to come up with excuses, you know how easy it is for us if we have not determined to have our personal devotions every day, if we have not determined to do that you know with me that there are other things that enter in that bid for our attention, maybe we do get up very early and we say well we really can't stay awake to read the Word of God so we will do it in the evening.

But when the evening comes and we are tired and we have the same excuse again.

John Wesley said no pretence, no excuse whatever.

And finally we do get the things done that we esteem to be most important, we do take time for what we consider to be most valuable and we need to put this at the top of our list. I believe it takes determination on the part of every one of us if we are going to have a meaningful personal devotional life.

We think about the Word of God and how freely we have it, I read once of a certain village where the people had only one copy of the Bible and because they were so eager to read it they learnt how to read equally well whether they had it as we normally do or whether they were looking at it upside down or sideways, they learnt how to read it equally well because they were so eager to learn to know what the Word of God said to them.

While we have never had to do that we certainly can learn from their desire and I've also read of an individual giving a whole load of hay in exchange for the privilege to have the Bible to read for one day.

We have it in our homes, probably most of us have more than one copy and it is not that hard to get them, if we don't have a copy or don't have more than one we can easily get more it is not really that expensive but how much dust does it collect on our shelves.

We need to have determination to read the Word of God every day.

Now the second essential for personal devotional life I see in the second phrase of this verse six, entered into thy closet.

I would like to underscore the word closet, according to Strong's this means a chamber on the ground floor or interior of an oriental house generally used for storage or privacy, a spot for retirement.

So enter into thy closet.

I see in this the thought of concentration.

I do not believe it is so important whether or not the room that you use when you have your personal devotions is a closet in the eyes of your children or other people, that is not what is so important but what he is speaking about here is that we have a private place where we can concentrate and so I see in that the value of having a specific place, it might be that you choose to use your bedroom, it might be that you choose your study, it might be that you choose to use your living room but there is value in having a specific place and there is value in having a specific time.

Now if you are structured enough in your life that you can make your time let's say 6.30 in the morning and at 6.30 you are right there and you're going to have your devotions that is good, that's fine, you've done more than I have.

If you are not that structured you might find that there is another way to accomplish the same thing and maybe that is attaching it to right after you are dressed in the morning, the very first thing you do soon as you're dressed then you have your devotions or right after you've had your breakfast or immediately after you have eaten supper or somehow attach it to something else in your life where a specific times comes into focus and in this manner it helps you.

For myself I have chosen to do it immediately I'm dressed in the morning, I make a few minor exceptions to that at times but the more we stick at it,

the more we have a set pattern I believe the easier it is for us to then turn our attention to the Word of God.

It is one of the things that helps us, we need a specific place, a specific time and we need a specific plan.

Now while some individuals and maybe you have tried it too, have used the approach you know that they just let their Bibles drop open and whatever it opens to that is what they read. I would not recommend that.

I would commend you if you read your Bible every morning even if that is the approach you use but I think that there is value in us having a pattern, an approach to what we do and I would recommend if you do not have another pattern that you start at the beginning of a book of the Bible and read it a chapter a day.

There are other patterns that can be used but there does need to be a specific plan where we approach the Word of God systematically and I believe that there is value in us reading through the Scriptures and I would recommend it to everyone here that you read through the Scriptures again and again and so there are a variety of approaches that can be taken.

There are guides, outlines that you can follow to get through the Bible in a year and that's good, that's fine but you will have to read more than a chapter a day to accomplish that but there is real value in having a specific plan.

Now we are talking about concentration and it is possible for us to have a specific place and it is possible for us to have a specific time and it is possible for us to have a specific plan but still not concentrate and so I would add to that one more thing and that is a specific focus.

In order for us to concentrate on the Word of God enter into thy closet He says, in order for us to concentrate on the Word of God earthly things must be shut out, we are going to have to turn our attention away from the work, duties and responsibilities of the day and we are going to have to turn our attention to the Word of God and yes there are going to be those times when other things are going to tend to enter in or are going to try hard to enter in, earthly things need to be shut out and heavenly things need to be brought in in order for us to concentrate on the Word of God and benefit from it.

Other family members need to learn to respect our quiet time with God.

Sometimes young couples in their early married life develop the pattern of having devotional life together only, there is real value in having your devotional life together but personally I think it is necessary for us to feed our own souls individually and this is not saying anything against doing it at the same time, I'm not speaking against that at all but I don't think that we ought to combine our personal devotions and our family devotions, I really think there is a value in us having both of them and that we ought to put our energies into that.

You know with me that if our personal devotional life is going to be meaningful we must concentrate on the Word of God.

How many times have you caught yourself reading the Scriptures but your mind is somewhere else, if you've never done that thank the Lord for that but if you've ever done that you know with me or maybe you're praying in your mind is somewhere else, maybe you have a certain pattern in your prayers and you tend to go down that pattern, there is value in patterns but we must concentrate, we must put our minds to it if it is going to benefit us.

We move onto the next part of verse six thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door.

It doesn't say when thou hast shut the closet door it says when thou has shut thy door. That is something that only you can do, that is something that only I can do for myself.

And I see in this meditation and when thou has shut thy door, concentration and meditation are closely related but Psalm one especially verse two says of the righteous man it says but his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law does he meditate day and night, [Psalm 1:2](#)

God in [Joshua 1:8](#) speaking to Joshua the message of God to him was: This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

And I do know that there are individuals who in order to do this have taken time to write down a verse that stood out to them in their personal devo-

tions on a piece of paper they wrote it down and stuck in their pocket and take it with them through the day and sometimes pull it out and read it again and think about it.

It takes efforts like that in order for us to meditate on the word of God, it does not come natural to us to meditate upon the word of God and there is a real value in doing that, there is a real value in memorising the scriptures in order to keep them with us and to meditate upon them.

We must, if our devotional life is going to be meaningful, we must meditate upon the Word of God that we read, we must shut our own door and when thou has shut thy door.

The next one is pray to thy Father which is in secret.  
I see in this presentation.

It is another essential for personal devotional life.

Why is it that we come to God, why do we read the Scriptures, why do we pray?

Well it is because we need God, God does not need us but we do need God and we come and present ourselves to our Father in prayer.

He says in verse eight your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him.

Then why should we pray? Well it is to acknowledge our need of God, it is to make us aware of our need because whenever we go through life without God we still need Him just as much, in fact we need Him more but we do not sense our need of God, we don't realise how much, how badly we need Him and prayer helps us to be aware of our need before God, our need of God in our lives.

In the Old Testament is a Scripture in one of the minor prophets where God gave this direction He said, ask you of the Lord rain in the time of the former rain, ([Hosea 6:3](#)) When you expect it to rain ask God for rain.

Well what is the point if it's going to rain anyway what pray for rain? Well the point is that God wants us to understand how much we need Him.

And so for example here in the Lord's Prayer we are going to look at it a little more closely, give us this day our daily bread, you say, well we have plenty in our freezer, we have plenty in the fridge, there is plenty in the house for dinner why should we pray that?

Well we need to pray that even if our shelves are full because we do depend on God. We need to present ourselves to God for His scrutiny and for His blessing and for His power in our lives.

Presentation is another essential for personal devotional life.

The fifth one I see also in the end of verse six, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. I see in that expectation.

Why is it that we come to the Word of God, why is it that we pray to God? Is it not because we know that this is the source of our strength, is it not because we know that God has promised that He would like to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon us? [Malachi 3:10](#). Is that not why we come to the Word of God; is that not why we pray? Yes certainly, we come with expectation, we come with a desire to receive from God according to our needs which many times we ourselves do not understand but we come because we know that He is the source of our blessing, we come with expectation, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

[Psalm 42:1-2](#) As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. <sup>2</sup>My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Show me thy way oh Lord and make it plain,  
I would that Thy words speak yet again,  
I would not take one step until I know  
Which way it is that Thou wilt have me go.

Oh Lord I cannot see, grant me Thy light  
Darkness bewilders me clouding my sight  
Hold thou my hand and keep me near Thy side  
I do not go alone be Thou my guide.

I cannot see Thy face yet Thou art here  
When will the morning chase my doubt and fear  
When shall I see the place where day and night shall not come  
For Thy glory is its light.

I will be patient Lord and do Thy will  
I do not doubt thy Word my hopes fulfil  
How can I perish when in Thee I hide  
Jesus my comforter my hope and guide.

It is always refreshing to see and to hear an individual express that the word of God or a particular verse means something to them, something that their minds are focusing upon.

I had the privilege I'm not sure how long ago in travelling to sit beside a man on the plane and I talked with him briefly at first then started reading a book and later he got out of his seat, he left his seat for a little while and in the seat pocket in front of them I saw what I thought looked like a Bible and when he came back and sat down again he opened the Book of Acts and I saw for sure that it was a Bible that he was reading, reading from the Bible there on the aeroplane.

So I was very curious and I wondered whether he was reading because he was preparing for something or whether he had some other reason for reading it but he told me that he finds it very necessary for him to spend time with the Lord, he said it is not to get ready for any particular assignment, he finds it very valuable to spend time with the Lord.

That was very refreshing to my spirit to hear that from another person's mouth and to see that he would be willing, how many of you flying on the aeroplane have read your Bible there in the presence of others?

You know are we willing to do that or are we ashamed, does the Word of God mean something to us?

Another question I asked him, "What do you find to be the greatest threat to your spiritual life?"

He thought a little while and then he said, "Not spending enough time with the Lord."

And again that was very refreshing to me, we talked some more there were other things that we discussed and we did not have exactly the same practices but the fact is that is the kind of desire that you and I need to have that is what determines whether we are going to succeed spiritually.

It is not something that I can do for you, it is not something that you can do for me but it is something that we must enter in to ourselves by our own choice.

Another essential the sixth one I take from verse nine, After this manner therefore pray you, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. I see in this the thought of adoration.

If we are going to have a meaningful devotional life we must take enough time for our God to become big to us.

If our God is not big to us then how is He going to be able to help us in the situations that we face in life, the bigger our God is to us the smaller our problems will be, is that not the way it works for you and me, sure it is. The bigger our God is to us the smaller our problems are and so we come to the Scriptures and as we meditate upon them we think of the words of the psalmist who said my meditation of Him shall be sweet, [Psalm 104:34](#).

Whenever our relationship with the Lord is open and our sins are properly taken care off, have you ever meditated on the Lord and not experienced the sweetness, I never have, it always works that way whenever we are right with the Lord and we think about God the more we think about Him the more sweetness it brings into our lives, the more joy and the more strength and the more courage to face whatever we need to face.

I also see in verse 10 a seventh essential and that is resignation.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Many people in saying this say on earth and that's fine but I think part of what maybe in focus when he says Thy will be done in earth is the fact that you and I are made of earth, we are made of clay and we are asking God to have His will done right in here, in us, I want Thy will to be done in earth as it is in heaven.

That's our prayer; we are resigning ourselves to the will of God.

I appreciated the thoughts that were shared earlier this morning that the blessings of God are only experienced by those who are willing to make a commitment to Him, a willing resolve like Saul did that God's will would be his will, that can be the experience of every one of us.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Is that your desire, is that my desire this morning that more than anything else we want God's will to be done in this earth; we want God's will in this earth, this individual.

We need to have resignation in our devotional life.

The eighth one I see in verse 11 and that is supplication; give us this day our daily bread.

You and I need God every day even though our shelves and freezers and refrigerators may be well stocked we need God every day for our daily bread, we need God every day for our breath, we need God every day for strength to resist temptation, we need God every day to be able to make decisions wisely, we need God in everything that we do, Jesus said without me you can do nothing, [John 15:5](#), and yet how many times have we tried it otherwise.

Give us this day our daily bread is our supplication, we come to God asking Him for strength, asking Him for courage it is altogether appropriate for us to ask God to give us wisdom, any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, [James 1:5](#).

It is altogether appropriate for us to ask God for wisdom in our homes to direct our children in the right way.

It is altogether appropriate for us to ask God for wisdom whenever we are talking with someone else to speak the right thing and to not be a hindrance to them.

It is altogether appropriate for us to ask God to choose our pathway, if you have a hard time lining up your work ask God to do it for you, direct my steps today in my work in every detail of life, we have this privilege, God wants to help us there is nothing too small for the Lord to help us in.

You and I are the ones who decide whether or not we seek God's help, James says you have not because you ask not, [James 4:2](#).

If you're having a hard time having the right attitude you know toward the work that you are involved in it is not the most desirable work you're inclined to wish you had something better ask God to help you to have right attitude. You're having a hard time concentrating reading your Bible ask God, God is there for our help He wants to help us, He wants us to have the victory in every area of life.

Also in verse 12 I see the ninth one and that is communication. Here he says forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Now you know with me that we could take other thoughts from this more primarily and maybe you wonder how I get the thought of communication out of this well I would suggest that our ears must be open to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit so we can learn what our debts are, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

God wants to help us to see our lives clearly and when Balaam in the Sunday school lesson this morning was wilfully on his own way totally against better knowledge or whether it was partly through ignorance you know with me that we can be in the same situation.

It is possible for us to have debts, it is possible for us, I was in thinking about money that could be one of the things but apart from that it is possible for us to have debts toward other people, a debt of love.

It is possible for us to have a debt of things you know that we have not forgiven them for that we should be forgiving them for, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

We need to communicate with God.

I think of when I was a student in Bible school Brother Paul Ebersole taught one of the classes that I had on prayer life and I remember him talking about an older saint who was reading his Bible, he would read a little bit and then you could see his lips moving in prayer, he would read a little bit more and you could see his lips moving in prayer, and he would read a little more and you could see his lips moving in prayer. That is communication.

The Bible is God speaking to us and prayer is our speaking to God and in that process there can be communication if we ask the Lord to open our eyes, if we ask Him to open our understanding there can be communication and He can bring thoughts into our minds as we meditate upon the Scriptures He can bring matters to our attention and in our lives, maybe something that we have forgotten about for quite a while and really was not properly taken care of that God brings to our attention.

Or maybe it's not that at all, maybe it is rather that we are facing a situation in our lives and we are wondering what it is that we ought to do and we ask

God to open our eyes and help us to understand and so as we are reading the Word of God He brings us an answer, He brings into our mind an answer and it is altogether proper for us when we read the Word of God to ask God to bring to our minds thoughts to ask Him to fill our minds with thoughts that will help us in this area and God will do that.

He will help us to understand the truth of His Word and to make it useful in our own minds.

Again the songwriter says:

I have a friend so precious so very dear to me  
He loves me with such tender love, loves me so faithfully  
I could not live apart from Him I long to feel Him nigh  
And so we dwell together my Lord and I.

Sometimes I am faint and weary; He knows that I am weak  
And as He bids me lean on Him His help I gladly seek  
He leads me in the paths of light beneath a sunny sky  
And so we walk together my Lord and I.

I tell Him all my sorrows; I tell Him all my joys  
I tell Him all that pleases me, I tell Him what annoys  
He tells me what I ought to do, He tells me what to try  
And so we talked together my Lord and I.

*When we read the Scriptures God is talking to us, are we hearing?*

He knows how I am longing some precious soul to win  
Back to the ways of righteousness from weary paths of sin  
He bids me tell His wondrous love and why He came to die  
And so we work together my Lord and I.

This can be the experience of every one of us, communication is an important and valuable key in this regard for our devotional time to be meaningful this is an essential, communication with God, we must open our ears to God, God always opens His ears to us.

The 10<sup>th</sup> one I would share from verse 13 is application, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

What good does it for us to read the Word of God if it does not help to direct our feet in the paths of righteousness?

That is the purpose of the Word of God, its goal is to direct our feet in the paths of righteousness and so as we come to the Word of God in our personal devotions if you want to grow, if I want to grow the way to do it is to apply the truth right here.

Oh yes it seems that we have 20/20 vision whenever we look at others but whenever we look at ourselves we tend to have about 20/60 you know, but we need to apply the truth right here, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

If we want to grow this is the way to do it and apply the truth to our own lives and the Scripture speaks to a host of issues in fact there is not anything that we can face in this life that there are not at least principles of the Scripture which we cannot find to apply to that situation.

In the positive: Any situation that we face in life the Word of God has principles that address it and will come to our aid so we need to apply these principles to our own lives.

The 11<sup>th</sup> one I would also share from verse 13 where he says, For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

I see in that inspiration.

And how many times have you come to the Word of God and come away just as you have when you come from the end of a day's work and you just felt dirty and you really wanted to clean up and so you got into the shower or the bath tub or whatever and used the water to clean away the dirt and you came out of there refreshed you just felt so much better physically.

How many times have you done that spiritually with the Word of God as you read the Word of God and the Holy Spirit has administered the truth to your heart and it has impressed you, it has inspired you and you come away spiritually impressed.

Well I know that it is difficult to always be equally inspired by the Word of God but is that any different from your food?

Maybe you have eaten eggs every day for the last 25 years, do you still eat eggs? Sure you do, you keep right on at it because you know they are good for you and because you know that you want to keep living and just because they don't always taste equally good does not mean you stop.

And just because you don't always get an equal amount of from the Word of God does not mean you will stop because you know that there is power that, you know there is truth, you know there is life and so you keep reading and you keep looking for inspiration and sometimes you get it more than others but you keep on looking on a daily basis. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

You know we are living in this world where many people are asking, How can God be in control?

That is not what the Bible says, the Bible says for Thine is the kingdom right now, Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

God is not out of control, God is in control in this world, He has the power and He has the glory and He has the kingdom right now and this is an inspiration to us.

And the 12<sup>th</sup> one I would share from verse 13 also where he says: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

I see in that continuation.

What does the Bible say, it warns us that we received not the Grace of God in vain, [2 Corinthians 6:1](#), [Galatians 2:21](#).

I think there is more than one way in which that scripture can be applied but I would like to suggest that one way that scripture can be applied is that if we receive the Grace of God to deliver him faithfully up until sometime before we die and then we turn aside all that Grace that we have received over that period of days, months and years is in vain, it's in vain and what good does it do you and me to read our Bibles every day for two years and then stop?

And by that I'm not suggesting that it did not benefit us for that 2 year period, it did if we enter into it as we have described this morning but the whole point is, you know I read a story once of a farmer that spent quite a bit money drilling a well in fact to the point that he went broke because all

he had was a dry hole and then somebody else bought the place and set up the drill rig again and went two feet further and got lots of water.

Well maybe that is just a story but at least it illustrates for us what can happen in our life spiritually what good is it to stop short of the goal, what good as it to serve the Lord faithfully all this time and then give up?

Well let's not do that we need to continue at it.

The only way that you and I can be sure that we will most definitely make it to heaven is if we follow the advice of the memory passage which was shared this morning, today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts, [Hebrews 3:15](#).

If we do that today will we make it to heaven? Well we surely will.

If every today we hear the voice of God, if every today we do the will of God we will make it to heaven because this is the pathway.

Someone put it this way: Count a day wasted in which you have not gathered heavenly manna from the Living Word.



## THE SANCTUARY OF GOD

"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart "Psalm 73:1. In this beginning verse of Psalm 73, we find a promise given to a people who have a place prepared for the habitation of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" In Psalm 73, the writer takes a natural look at life and the apparent ease of life of those who are not "fighting the good fight of faith." This is the "look" that Satan has used so effectively to cause many a person to slip and fall.

Reading through Psalm 73, we see a pattern of thought that could leave one weary with the battle. Many a shipwreck of faith can be found on the rocks of this storm-beaten shore. Satan would like for us to think that the life of a Christian is all dreary and completely unfulfilling. This tactic seems to be especially useful on younger people. Now let us take an objective look at reality, using verse 17 of the same Psalm, "Until I went into the

sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

A sanctuary is a holy place, a place set aside for worship, a place of refuge. In Old Testament times, this was a place where only the priest was allowed to enter to communicate with God. The rending of the veil at the time of Christ's death showed symbolically that the way was open for each and every one of God's children to enter into this holy place.

After one has gone out onto the battlefield, or encountered the storm, a time of weariness comes. Physically and spiritually, we are subject to fatigue and fear then is when we need to claim God's promises. We need to find our way to that sanctuary of God. Wonder of wonders, that sanctuary can be as near as our own heart! Or as near as our secret place of prayer! At times, we find it at the side of our spiritual brother or sister. As a child runs to the arms of a loving parent, so we can fly to the loving arms of our Heavenly Father.

The world is full of people whose hearts are full, but empty. They are full of temporary pleasures, activities, and things to quiet their conscience. But they are empty of the satisfaction, the comfort, and the pleasure that comes by "dwelling in the secret place of the most high." But David said, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" Psalm 16:11

May we diligently seek out the place of refuge, making contact with our Maker and portraying to others the beauty of this relationship daily. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24).

*Brother Monroe*



## THE ANCHOR AND THE CABLES

*"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,  
And which entereth into that within the veil"*

Hebrews 6:19

Heartily we sing the words of a sacred hymn, "We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love" (Christian Hymnal, no. 483)! But when "tempest rage and the wild winds blow," our faith is often put to the test.

The Scriptures speak of trying times just such as that. Correspondingly, they tell us of a sifting, whereby the true state of the heart is made known. The Word confirms that this may be instigated by the evil one, as in Job's case. And Jesus told Peter that Satan desired to sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31). But Jesus prayed for the apostle that his faith would not fail. True to His high office, our Lord is interceding today for us, also (Heb. 7:25). The prophet Amos foresaw that God, too, would sift His people, but not the least of grain would be lost (Amos 9:9). The atmosphere and conditions of our day are serving as a sieve, and the faith of some is showing itself deficient. Faith in God, which moves one to embrace the faith of the saints, is waning (Luke 18:8). The chaff is becoming more apparent. While this is painful, it is better to know the truth now, before the Judgment Day break upon us. Should one be found wanting, there is grace for needed renewal when we confess our sins. This sifting also helps sanctify and purify the church by bringing to light those impurities that may have been hidden (1 John 2:19).

The sacred hymn quoted above mentions an ominous peril, "When the breakers have told thereof is near..." Then, will one's anchor hold "in the straits of fear?" Far out in the deep, waves are not always so eye-catching, but the ocean is transporting massive amounts of energy in huge swells. As they near the coast and begin to collide with the rising shore, or strike a barrier, as a reef, that energy explodes into geysers of spray and foam. The roar and thunder of mighty breakers can be awesome and fearful.

Our times are like that. The spiritual forces that are crashing now against the reefs and the shores of time have perhaps been approaching out in the deep for decades, even centuries. But now, as Jesus said, there is "distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke 21:25). Furthermore, with the decrease of faith and fear of God there naturally comes more ready indulgence of the lusts of the flesh. These developments are like breakers telling that the reef is near. The culmination of all things is drawing nearer. But in the face of the storm may our hearts sing with assurance, "We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll."

True believers have a lively hope (1 Pet. 1:3). The liveliness of that hope

is in Jesus having been raised from the dead and being seated at the right hand of the Father. The whole scope of the Christian's security is based on "two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). The two unchangeable "things" are God's promises and the oath He swore to confirm those promises. In secular society, "men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife" (Heb. 6:16). Being God could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself. He called upon His very attributes and righteousness to witness the surety of His promises. When faith springs up in the heart and lays hold on these truths, it is the "end of all strife" relating to acute doubts, fears, and unbelief.

God would not be God if He did not do what He has promised. It has been said that God's promise is His debt. That is a fitting way of pointing out the believer's security. God will not—indeed cannot—be slothful in paying His solemn obligation. He gave His only begotten Son to be the testator of all that He has pledged. Christ is now the Amen of every promise (2 Cor. 1:20). The Son of God is the "anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil"(Hebrews 6:19). Furthermore, we have the earnest of the Spirit to confirm this (Eph. 1:13-14).

In the age of sail power, many storm-assailed ships could not manage to enter the harbor during a howling gale because of contrary currents at the harbor's entrance. It is said that sometimes the sailors would then let down a large enough boat to carry the anchor. With bravery and exertion, the men rowed the anchor into the harbor, with the cable playing out behind. They dropped the anchor right in the calm harbor, and the ship was held fast until the storm passed over. The mariners were comforted, knowing that despite the opposing wind and current, the anchor was inside the harbor.

In like manner, Jesus has entered "into that within the veil." One could say that Christ has carried our anchor into the safe harbor. But Jesus Himself is the anchor. He knew the impossibility of our safe navigation into the harbor through the storms of life and oppositions of Satan. Feeling for us, He braved death and then entered right into the harbor of God's presence, there to intercede for us. Although still on the tumultuous, heaving sea of

time, we should be comforted to know that our Anchor is already in the harbor. "And the cables, passed from His heart to mine, Can defy the blast, thro' strength divine." The cable between the Anchor in heaven and our frail bark on the sea of time must be meet to the stress that the storm imposes on our vessel. It is not a question of whether the Anchor will hold. The matter of concern is the cable. A mere intellectual belief will surely snap in the gale of humanism and liberalism roaring today. Membership in the church, of itself, proves of no avail. Vaguely and only culturally being affiliated with a historical faith also will not hold in the straits of fear. Only the "cables, passed from His heart to mine" by the Holy Ghost will keep our "hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

The cables that the Holy Spirit passes from Heaven to us relate to the Word of God. Their composition is true justifying faith and solid conviction on Scriptural teachings. Relating to this, there are too many barks out in the tempest, tossed here and there because of little conviction of right or wrong. They are drifting in the storm, if indeed they realize there is a tempest blowing. It is the pressing burden of Christian parents, and the church, to help our younger generations receive the Heavenly cables that will connect them to the Anchor.

No cable of the nature of which we speak here will hold unless braided throughout with the principle of gospel obedience. This isn't obedience because of a law, or grudging obedience. It is obedience born out of love for the Saviour and the fear of God. It is voluntary, glad servitude from the heart, not mere compliance. In short, the same faith whereby one claims justification takes hold on the Word, moving him to walk the walk. It causes one to shun the vain elements of pride and worldliness. It gives power to the church to call sin what it is and not compromise with casual and luke-warm spirits asking for an easier way.

Sincere believers are concerned about the cables. If one's cables were to be followed to their origin, would they lead in spirit right into the heavenly harbor? No one would accuse God of untruth, so the question of our perseverance relates to the cables between the Anchor and us.

We have found the chart and compass, and are sure the land is near;  
Onward, onward we are hasting; soon the haven will appear;  
Let your voices sound aloud your holy cheer.

*The Anchor of Calvary*  
*From Charles Spurgeon's Gems of Grace*

There was an evil hour once when I released the anchor of my faith; I cut the cable of my belief; I no longer moored myself tight to the coasts of the Revelation of God; I allowed my vessel to drift with the wind; I said to reason, "You be my captain;" I said to my own brain, "You be my rudder;" and I started on my mad voyage.

Thank God, it is all over now; but I will tell you its brief history.

It was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought. I went on, and as I went, the skies began to darken; but to make up for that deficiency, the waters were brilliant with the glitter of brilliancy. I saw sparks flying upward that pleased me, and I thought, "If this is free thought, it is a good thing." My thoughts seemed like gems, and I scattered stars with both my hands; but before long, instead of these flashes of glory, I saw grim fiends, fierce and horrible, come up from the waters, and as I rushed on, they gnashed their teeth, and grinned at me; they seized the bow of my ship and dragged me on, while I, in part, was impressed at the swiftness of my motion, but yet shuddered at the terrific rate with which I passed the old landmarks of my faith.

As I hurried forward with a dreadful speed, I began to doubt my very existence; I doubted if there were a world, I doubted if there were such a thing, as myself. I went to the very verge of the dreamy realms of unbelief. I went to the very bottom of the sea of Unbelief. I doubted everything. But here the devil foiled himself—for the very extravagance of the doubt, proved its absurdity. Just when I saw the bottom of that sea, there came a voice which said, "And can this doubt be true?"

At this very thought I awoke.

I started from that death-dream, which, God knows, might have damned my Soul, and ruined my body, if I had not awoke. When I arose, faith took the helm; from that moment I no longer doubted.

Faith steered me back; faith cried, "Away, away!" I cast my anchor on Calvary; I lifted my eye to God; and here I am, "alive, and out of hell."

## THE GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL

At the sounding of the trumpet when the saints are gathered home  
We shall greet each other by the crystal sea  
When the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come  
What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

When the angel of the Lord proclaims that time shall be no more  
We shall gather and the saved and ransomed see  
Then to meet again together on the bright celestial shore  
What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

At the great and final judgement when the hidden comes to light  
When the Lord in all His glory we shall see  
At the bidding of the Saviour "Come ye blessed to My right"  
What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

When the golden harps are sounding and the angel bands proclaim  
In triumphant strains the glorious jubilee  
Then to meet and to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb  
What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

*J H Kurzenknabe*

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