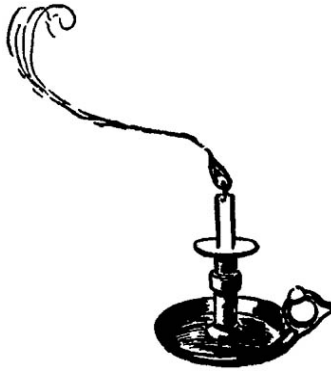


THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

Vol. 9 No. 3 – MARCH 2012



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 Mennonite Perspective

From The Editor's Desk.

A great deal is said in Scriptures about truth, in the Old Testament it is described as a commodity in one place, we are not to sell it but to buy it, together with wisdom, instruction and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23)

In the New Testament it is described as having many different forms, it is verbal, speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), it is written, the word of the truth of the gospel, (Col. 1:5). We could say it is part of our clothing in battle, having your loins girt about with truth (Eph. 6:14). It is something that needs to be obeyed, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? (Gal. 5:7). It is a fruit of the spirit, for the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, (Eph. 5:9) and there are many more examples we could draw from Scripture.

Jesus before Pilate said that He came into the world to bear witness unto the truth. And that every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (John 18:37) But sadly Pilate was not one of those who was of the truth because he asked: What is truth? (John 18:38)

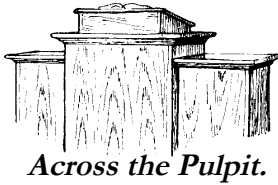
I believe that we today are blessed beyond measure because we have the written word of God to read, study and discover what truth is. Not only is truth an essential ingredient for everyday life it is also I am convinced an essential ingredient to find our way to heaven because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life - life eternal with Christ.

A very vital truth I believe that we need to recognise is that Jesus Himself is the truth, John 14:6, not only that but He is truth everlasting for there is no variableness or even a shadow of turning in Him, James 1:17.

Indeed once we find Him, accept Him and His gift of everlasting life we have not only found The Truth but we have also discovered The Way and The Life (John 14:6) and we could see this Scripture as speaking of the highway referred to in Isaiah 35:8 as the way of holiness, and unless we walk and live in obedience to this revelation by Jesus Christ that He is indeed The Way, The Truth and The Life we shall not see the Father, for no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

In a nutshell we could sum it up and say that we must have a love for truth - God's Truth, we must have a willingness, indeed an eagerness to obey and live that truth and then it will lead to our being sanctified as spoken of by Jesus Himself in John 17:17-19.

J.v.L.



Cultivating a Love for the Truth

*Brother James Siegrist
Blue Rock Mennonite Church
Part 2*

Editor's Note: Last month Part 1 of this message finished with the verse from [2 Corinthians 3:18](#). “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” and the comment that Brother James saw it as referring to light although it does not speak directly of light. Which now leads to the third consideration about walking in the light.

Walking in the light reveals and helps us to see.

You might say: Well what does it help us to see?

I thought of the song in the Church Hymnal with this phrase: Light refuse not and His Spirit's voice obey.

I think it likens the new day to the work of the Spirit in our lives, it gets lighter and lighter and you can see well as the Holy Spirit works in our lives and the Word touches our lives we rub shoulders with each other, light refuse not and His Spirit's voice obey.

Jesus said this in John chapter 3 verses 20 and 21: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light." Why?

We had a number of thefts recently at our place of work and it seems that they like the darkest times best, they don't do it in the day time when it is light, and it seems also they avoid the times in the night when the lights, which we have on a timer, went off. Well why?

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." That word reprov'd means discovered, or has the thought of being discovered, well light discovers what we are and so: Do you and I have anything to hide? Well we shouldn't if we are walking in the light. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. [John 3:20-21](#).

Well how do we make that practical? How do we walk in the light?

I have been alluding to, maybe to make it simple there are three sources of light, three sources of truth, and that is the Holy Spirit firstly, the Word of God secondly and the people of God thirdly, not necessarily in that order, they are all important.

So to recap what we have said about truth and light; walking in the light means obedience when the Lord speaks. If you love me keep my commandments.

And the light comes different ways and I would say also that it means both being respectful of what our brethren believe but also receptive to it, that is the New Testament church life, you read the book of Acts and through the Epistles if you question that, I think that is scriptural being respectful and receptive, we learn from each other.

I want to say a little bit more about light helping us see and us in being open but I want to say a few things firstly here about perceptiveness.

Walking in the light makes us spiritually perceptive and I think we could say it like this; Our love of and our knowledge of the Word indicates how much we love the truth.

Now I have met folks who say: “Well I read the Bible through three times a year or once a year, whatever it is, and well I need to do better, I can learn something from that.”

But what I would say that that is not the only test, it is not the only test whether we are walking in the light, we can read the Bible through a number of times and it doesn't really help us if we are not open to what it says, there are a few people like that, and so we should also be receptive to the Word and we should be becoming more spiritually perceptive.

In other words when we read the Word we should be asking: What does this mean for me today? And what I am doing today will it change anything or will it direct anything?

So that's why we have personal devotions, it is not just part of a formula for being a Christian but it is to find out what the will of God is, it is to help us to be perceptive spiritually.

Now I'm going to say something which, I don't mean to undermine what our brother said and I don't think I am but it is this; I think a weakness in our churches today, our Conservative churches is this, we too often look to

those we perceive to be higher up in the chain of command, we look to them to make the decisions and when we do that we end up making poor choices ourselves in things that should not have to be explained to us or read to us over the pulpit in the form of a statement or something of that effect.

I suppose they have their place but read the Scripture, be sensitive to the conscience of the brethren, listen to what the spirit is saying, make wise choices, what kind of car is appropriate, what kind of work truck is appropriate, what kind of dress material fits with the conscience of the church, fits with truth as we understand and apply it.

I think we can do better in that respect.

I want to say something else and that is:

Parents we need to remember that our children are watching. That is as direction that comes from the church they are watching to see how we respond to that, whether we become kind of cynical or sarcastic or keep on doing the same old thing that we have always done, they notice when we discuss that this brother or sister that he/she is a concern to us, they notice that if they hear it. And so it is important that we respond properly, that we are open to truth.

Now I realise that we don't always, we are not so fickle that we make changes every time someone says something to us, I'm not talking that way, but I think, I hope, I trust that you understand what I'm saying that we are open to our brethren and sisters.

In regards to spiritual perception I want to also emphasise that we must be teaching principle.

Now I know, we know as parents you don't teach a lot of principle to two years old and three year olds, we teach obedience, we teach them that you listen when you are spoken to, you do as you are told, but as time moves on that gradually shifts until that child is in the teenage years, mid teens, then they should be beginning to apply principles that they have been taught, they can make a decision when they are by themselves and no one else sees because they understand what the principle is, and they have been reading the Word, and they respect the brethren and they have the Holy Spirit within.

And the same is true not only of parents but of ministers. I hope that we are doing our part, I hope that we can look to you all for some pointers sometimes, I hope we are open to that, but I hope that in our preaching we are preaching expository sermons, first of all exposing ourselves to the Word of God so that we can expose you to the Word of God and to give you an appetite so that you will go home and want to dig into the Scriptures yourself. Expository sermons, preaching Christ and him crucified, ([1 Cor.2:2](#)) preaching the blood of Christ.

That is a challenge for anyone here tonight that is ordained and I think that when I get to the end of the road and I don't know when that's going to be, but I think the most important thing to me at that point will be, yes that I've been washed in the blood of the Lamb but also that I have preached the blood of Christ, have I preached him crucified and what it means in our lives?

If our children and our congregations remain shallow and spiritually immature whose fault is it? I've realise it can be both sided, I realise our children make their own choices, sometimes they choose contrary to what we have taught them, that can happen, and we want to be compassionate to each other when that happens.

We could give some examples of perception.

The Bible says beware of covetousness. [Luke 12:15](#). What does it mean in my life?

When the Bible says I must forgive. What does it mean in my life? Does it mean I have to give up my resentment? I guess it does.

When the Bible says provide things honest. [Romans 12:17](#) .Does it mean that I need to be accurate in my business dealings and honest? It does.

Read the Scripture, let it teach you how to live your life. I cannot do all that for you, no one else can, that is piety.

One more point yet on walking in the light.

Walking in the light helps us to be open with our brethren.

And again I am going to share what I think is a weakness in our Conservative churches, I say weakness not saying that we are all somewhere out in left field but sometimes we may be hitting the yellow line a little bit at times, I think I can say this because I see it in myself and that is: It is hard to confess your faults.

I'm going to confess to you that it is hard to confess mine, but the Bible does say confess your faults, [James 5:16](#) , and I think that is part of walking in the light, as the light makes manifest that which is not according to truth, as the spirit touches our lives, as we rub shoulders with each other we can confess our faults and there is a spiritual healing that comes as we are open and honest and I can appreciate that as I move about among us, I do find that, I do find some of that, I think we can grow in that area but there can be more of that.

And maybe, we'll take that a step further, I think when we as parents fail, when I, as a Dad fails, it is okay to confess, in fact I think we had better apologise when it is time to apologise, that is being open and honest with our families.

Well we could talk about asking for and receiving advice, we could talk about being easy to be entreated, we could talk about different things as the test of the truth and how we respond to these builds the pillars that undergird our children's faith, it is how the faith is passed on, it is how the truth is appreciated in the next generation I believe.

When I was a youth I remember, and this impacted my memory may be for a couple of reasons, I remember a father acknowledging to us as a congregation, the congregation in which I grew up, that he had failed with his youngest son. And the reason that impacted my memory is because before that for years it was always someone else's fault and finally he got to the point that he realised that maybe that he had something to do with it as well. I realise there are other influences on our children but that impacted my memory because he came to the point, and I hope that I can as a father, that I can confess as well if need be.

Now looking lastly at loving one another.

As I consider truth, as I began to look at the Scripture I was suspicious that this is what I was going to find, but there are just a number of times that love and truth are coupled together, and so to claim that I love the truth

while at the same time I have problems loving you all just really is not scriptural, and when I love the truth I need to love you.

I think that is the essence of pietism sometimes, the reason pietism is attractive is because I don't need to love you quite as much. Isn't that how it is?

We know, maybe I'm only telling myself, but then maybe I'm an average specimen, we know that it is difficult sometimes to love one another as we ought, sometimes we are tempted to despise.

And that is, I want to go to the Scripture here, I'm not sure which Scripture to use but verse nine, first John 2 is one,

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." [1 John 2:9](#).

And I need to confess to you that I struggle with forgiveness myself. I struggle with this thing of, I wouldn't say I hate them but, what does it mean to hate? Sometimes in the Bible the word hate means to love less, it is a comparison word, you don't like them very well, it doesn't mean you hate them you know out and out and that you want to kill them or something, it means that you don't really care for them.

It also has the thought as I would understand it, it can also mean to despise, and that can happen, people of different cultures, and sometimes we don't think on the same wavelength we might say, or might not have the same frame of reference or might have different backgrounds and so it is difficult to love one another. But the Bible says if we do not love one another we are not walking in light, we are not walking in truth we are in darkness.

So that is the essence, or at least one of the important points of first John, in fact all of John's Epistles, and it is said that at the end of his life, and this is tradition and it is not in Scripture, that the Apostle John was carried in to the gathering of the saints and the only thing he could say was: Little children love one another.

So I want to give that as a Scripture reminder both to myself and you.

Love means, number one, means meekness and forgiveness. I think forgiveness or lack of forgiveness rather is what makes us despise or detest each other, makes us hate each other as the Scripture says we are not to do.

Secondly, loving one another means not loving the world. That is here in verse 15 of chapter 2 ([John 2:15](#)).

Loving one another, number three, communicate the right things. Fellowship with each other ([1 John 1:3](#)) and we enjoy Fellowship, when we enjoy Fellowship with the right kind of people it impacts our children because those whom we Fellowship with that is where our children will find their marriage companions, at least by and large, there are some exceptions to that, but by and large that's how it works.

Communication draws Fellowship lines, that is referred to in chapter 3 verses 18 to 21 ([1 John 3: 18-21](#)) where it says that they went out from us because they were not one with us.

And I remember when I was pretty young that there was some Fellowship that took place in my parental home and in my remembrance and probably I'll never forget this image as long as I have my right mind, but heated discussions in our living room and the result of that was that four or five families left our small congregation and it wasn't that they right way denied the deity of Christ as it says here, but they got tangled up in Calvinism and today they are way out we might say, where they never imagined they would go.

And the reason I bring it in because communication and Fellowship helps us to draw the right kind of Fellowship lines, that is part of piety, that is part of communicating truth and appreciating truth and passing that on and I want to challenge us, if I may use that word, that our communication would be upbuilding and for the good of the church.

[1 John 3:17-18](#), our fourth point is that love gives: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. That explains it self.

A fifth point is in chapter 4 verses 17 and 19, and that is that love casts out fear. [1 John 4:17-19](#).

And I want to make an application to those verses.

Perfect love casteth out fear. I think it is talking about interpreting our relationship with the Lord. We can look ahead and yet judgement is coming, the Lord Jesus is going to return and call us home and we can have a certain assurance, we don't need to live in fear because He loves us and we love Him, that is love, and we have reverence yes, but not fear in the sense of terror.

The application that I want to make to is this: That as we are grounded in the Word, as we appreciate our home congregations, as we are responsible to each other, love the Word, listen to the Spirit, we don't need to be fearful and feel intimidated by all those other groups around us who have made their own applications to Scripture. Yes we do draw some Fellowship lines and I don't think on flip-flopping in what I just said, we don't need to fear them, we don't need to be too hard as to how they are doing it and how it is not going to work out because of how they are doing it because it's not how we do it and all that.

I would like to say that loving one another and the application is this, and they are all around us, that we can learn from them.

If my neighbour, my professing Christian neighbour finds the power of God sufficient to quit smoking shouldn't I find the power of God sufficient to quit overheating? Consider that.

If my professing Christian neighbour can use a soft answer to turn away wrath can't I at least have gracious and courteous words? I think we do.

But let's be inspired and learn, and not be fearful and intimidated and insecure.

My neighbour is able to confess his faults why can't I?

There are things that we can learn.

Our brother also mentioned that sometimes the reason that some of those groups appeal to people, and he was focusing on pietistic groups, is because something here is empty. I think that is true.

We can learn, if there is emptiness here we can learn and it can be found in the Word of God with the brethren and through the infilling of the Spirit.

Let me say yet that love prays one for another, that is in chapter 5, [1 John 5:14-17](#). “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. ¹⁶ If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”

Remember John’s words in 3 John 1:4: “I have no greater joy than to see that my children walk in truth.

And that is my testimony as I meet you brethren and sisters, it brings joy to me when you walk in truth, and truth is a lifestyle, I hope I have conveyed a few of those thoughts tonight.

Cultivating truth is not something that we can say okay, tomorrow morning I’m going to block out this or that out of my schedule to cultivate the truth.

It doesn't work that way, it is a lifestyle.

That is my burden for us this evening.

May the Lord bless us to learn of Him, to walk in the light and to love each other. Amen.



Concluding the February extract of:

LITERATURE IN THE HOME

Train up a child in the way he should go.

Proverbs 22:6.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church.

Ephesians 5:25.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15.

Extract From: The Gospel Herald, July 13, 1911.

What Kind to Admit

Of making many books there is no end. —Solomon.

[Ecclesiastes 12:12]

Give attendance to reading. — Paul.

[1 Timothy 4:13]

Every home has its literature. The literature of the home reflects the characters of its members. It not only portrays these characters, but it is also one of the most potent forces in the making of them. It is the duty of the makers of homes to provide literature that will build up character of strength and virtue and religion. With the thousands of swiftly whirring printing presses and with the doubly rapid methods of distributing their product, a flood of literature is making its way to every hearthstone in the land. This literature is endless in its diversification so that it is possible to choose for every purpose and taste under the sun. Talmage once said, "The only way to overcome bad books is by sending forth plenty of good books." This is part of our work, but the obligation does not stop there.

With the millions and millions of pages that are thrust upon the public and are claiming our attention it becomes obligatory to decide not only what shall be procured but also what shall be barred. Our testimony against the literature that appeals to the passions and tends to produce sensuality and crime should be in no uncertain sound. Two young men held up a man in Kansas City for his money. They were brought to trial. They said, "We read a book." A young man in Ohio wrecked a fast mail train, when on trial he said, "I read a book." I need not dwell on this kind of books.

But there is a kind of literature that is flooding the land against which we need to exercise the liveliest kind of discrimination. In this class fall a very large per cent of the newspapers and other periodicals. It seems that in many homes these things have become a necessity — at least they are there. Periodicals that sell their columns to advertise saloons and other dangerous or immoral institutions, “get-rich-quick” schemes, etc., or give over their editorial and news columns to emphasizing the sensual and immoral and insignificant “news of the day” cannot be safely relied upon to be a positive factor for good in the home. It is pitiably nauseating to be affronted with the voluminousness and prominence given the average newspaper to the ball game, the race, the party, the dance, etc. But under the class of literature that is both good and bad perhaps the most dangerous of all that is bidding for admittance to our homes is the religious and semi-religious literature. Much of it does not look well beside the plumb line of orthodoxy. It is made to sell and often times the publishers of it fall into the very serious error of catering to the popular demand rather than advocating the doctrines of Him who was “despised and rejected of men;” teaching only principles that all will accept rather than contending earnestly for a whole gospel. The rapid growth of free thought, criticism, and liberalism as advocated by much of the popular literature of today is a matter of grave concern to the Christian. The press is rather liberal in its patronage of the “isms.” We must discriminate carefully, honestly, wisely. Let our motto be, “To the law and to the testimony.” [Isaiah 8:20] Let us welcome into our homes and our hearts the book and everything that elucidates its teaching and emphasizes its precepts.

C. D. Wenger.

Selection of Literature for the Home

In view of the mighty power of literature upon the minds of young people, great care should be exercised in its selection for each home. Many a boy has had longings for adventure and ungodliness planted in his mind through reading “Wild West” stories and books of daring adventures. On the other hand many a devoted Christian can trace his love of the truth to the reading of sound Gospel literature in his youth. My first knowledge of God’s Word was obtained from a German Bible story book. The book was well illustrated and my desire to know the meaning of the pictures opened the way for my mother to teach me to read and at the same time plant into my mind a knowledge of God’s dealings with the principal characters of

the Bible. Because my life was so much influenced by this early knowledge, I would recommend that an Illustrated Bible story book in simple language be placed in every home. Then I would include biographies of great men of God like Menno Simons, Whitfield, John Knox, Wesley, John Patton, Finney, Moody and others. Good religious papers like the Christian Monitor and the Gospel Herald would also find a place in my home. I would use books of fiction very sparingly as the best of them often teach false principles which do not conform to the teaching of the Bible.

William D. Fretz.

What to Read

Some homes need more literature, less fine carpet, fewer pictures, less cleaning and “fancy touching.” **Many** need **more** cleaning — and literature is among the things to be cleaned out; for a diligent search might reveal all sorts of stories full of exciting lies and filth that should not be found among us. Yet we trust most of the homes to which these lines find their way, are just right. That is — pleasant, clean, happy homes, with enough of the right kind of literature, and all having learned to love good reading, as they love good, true friends. The man who sits for hours with his Bible did not acquire that love of the Book by reading novels and trashy reading. But by daily living upon the “Bread of Life,” which he got no other way than by reading some noble literature. We do not think it wise to read the Bible only, however, there is no danger of us ever reading that too much.

The child needs to learn to love the Bible by something it can grasp. If every mother could and would give the children the Bible in her own language in a manner that they can get it that were well enough. But how many of us do not want the help of those who are much more able to prepare it in a simple tasteful style? Then we must fall back on books for them. “First Steps for Little Feet,” “Child’s Life of Christ;” etc., are good helps and all such reading that will make fine and noble traits of character. All our literature must be based upon the Bible if it shall profit us any.

Let the mother who is tired and nervous over fretful children sit down a few minutes and read some pointed article on child-training and most likely she will resume her task with a stronger body and with some new plan to employ the busy little folks and make them feel they are needed in the world, instead of telling them to “run way, mother is busy and tired.” How soon they may leave us!

Will we then resolve to supply ourselves and our children with suitable reading matter for our ages and circumstances that shall give us large souls for eternity as well as having made us most useful for time?

Bettie M. Keener.

Cultivate Right Desires

We should have plenty of good, wholesome literature in our homes. It should be suited to the various conditions of all the inmates. “If any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house; he hath denied the faith; and is worse than an infidel,” [1 Timothy 5:8] applies to the needs of the mind and soul as well as those of the body. We repeat, It is our duty to provide plenty of good wholesome food for the mind and soul as well as for the body.

In these days of much literature, others will see that we have the quantity, and at little, if any, cost to us, but we may well beware of the quality of any food that is so cheaply scattered abroad. In providing for the body we consider the quality of the food as well as the cost. No one can afford to be careless about the food he feeds upon. Some one says, “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.” This applies to the mind and soul as well as the body. We do not put on our tables food that is not fit for dogs; much less should we allow to come into our homes, books and papers that are in the final analysis suitable only for the development of selfish, dishonest, impure children of the enemy.

Recent years have proved that “the love of money” has lead numerous men to adulterate our food stuffs in all sorts of ways, and nothing short of the most exacting laws keeps them from it at this day. It is only telling the truth to say that the same motive has lead many an author and publisher to put into the literature of the day much that is destructive to real faith and confidence in the great “I AM,” and at last is real poison to the soul. Such are many, yes, perhaps, most of the books so rapidly handed out at the average bookstore. Because they are cheap (and entertaining) they are bought, and they are cheap because so many people buy them. But what if the book did cost only ten cents and yet it contains the poison that will set up destruction in the soul of the child!

We should protect the inmates of our homes by buying our literature from those in whom we have confidence, and further by using our own

best judgement in selecting what we believe to be best for those of our particular home.

With all this care there may still be unwholesome developments from the literature that will come into our child's hands, so we need to cultivate right desire in our children that they may love the good in literature and hate the bad. From youth up they should be taught faith, confidence, honesty, purity. We should always be free to discuss with them the merits and demerits of any paper or book that may come to their notice. Much effort should be put forth to maintain in the home this spirit of conference and cooperation in the support of all good and the resisting of all evil. We do not want to make mean critics of those under our care, and yet we owe it to God to encourage all from childhood up to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil." [1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22]

In writing to the Philippians Paul sets up to prove the literature of the day: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are **true**, whatsoever things are **honest**, whatsoever things are **pure**, whatsoever things are **lovely**, whatsoever things are of **good report**, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**" [Philippians 4:8]. *A.D. Martin*



The Worth of a Soul.

*Transcribed from a message by Brother Fred Carpenter
Decker Lake Mennonite Church*

I bring you greetings this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus and am thankful for the opportunity to draw near to Him. I trust that our physical limitations will not affect our ability to receive a blessing from the Lord spiritually.

I would like to focus our attention this morning on a question which the Lord raised which I believe every one of us needs to consider, Mark 8, the question we find in verse 37: "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

[Mark 8:31-38](#)

³¹ And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. ³³ But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. ³⁴ And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. ³⁶ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ³⁷ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Now we want to consider something this morning that I have never seen and that you have never seen and that is the soul.

The word soul as used in the Old Testament means a breathing creature, a vitality. There are as many different ways in which it is translated into English, not only the word soul but a number of other ways. We have in

[Genesis 2:7](#) the Scripture says; And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became... what? A living soul, a living soul.

In the New Testament all the places that we find the word soul or souls they are the same Greek word which means breath or spirit. In trying to find a good definition and a concise definition for the soul I found difficulty, the best one I've found is: "The seat of real life, vitality or action."

So we are speaking this morning about something that we haven't seen and therefore my descriptions may not necessarily be 100% accurate, maybe you can improve them.

We would like to consider first of all the worth of a soul.

Jesus raised the question here: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Those two words in exchange are the translation of the Greek word which means an equivalent or ransom. What shall a man give equivalent for his soul? What shall a man give as a ransom for his soul?

The implication of this question is that there is nothing that you or I can give that is of equal value to our souls.

1]. Now first of all in relation to this worth of the soul. Your soul is invisible, your soul not your body is the real you. This morning when we look at each other we are only seeing tents, we are only seeing houses in which the real person dwells and it is difficult for us to grasp this truth. Death helps us perhaps to see it in a new light.

2]. But in the second place your soul is invaluable, not only is your soul invisible but it is invaluable, that means it's priceless. In [verse 36](#) Jesus asks the question: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

There is no possible earthly gain than a person might make that would equal the value of his soul. There are people on the earth who are very poor and there are many common people and there are some who are very rich, but how many of those riches do they take with them when they die? Well we know that Scripture teaches, we have observed it personally, that they take none with them when they die. And the soul that is inside of us, that really is us, is worth more than any earthly gain that is possible. What shall

a man give equivalent for his soul? Well really there is nothing that we can find on this earth of equal value to our souls.

3]. Thirdly your soul is inseparable from your spirit. Body and soul can be separated, this takes place when a person dies physically. We put the body into the grave but the soul is gone, the soul is not there any more, the body and the soul have been separated. But spirit and soul can only be distinguished or discerned, I would have to admit that for quite a while I thought that the spirit and the soul were separable, maybe you want to correct me on this but that is how I understand it, the spirit and the soul can be discerned, [Hebrews 4:12](#) says:

"For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Bible alone, the Word of God alone is able to bring a distinction between the two.

One person, perhaps more than one, have used three circles, an outer circle that was the body, inside was a smaller circle and that was the soul, and inside of that a smaller circle yet that's the spirit representing the spirit. Well there are various ways that we can try to distinguish but my understanding is that the spirit and the soul cannot be separated. Your soul is the only thing you possess that will never be taken away from you. You may challenge that statement, I am not sure it is thoroughly defined, but at least in relation to the things of this Earth any thing that we can lay hold off with our hands can be taken away from us and will be taken away from us when we die, including our children.

But your soul is the real you and therefore even though your body is laid in the grave your soul will continue to be you and therefore how can you be separated from yourself? Your soul is the only thing you possess that will never be taken away from you.

Notice here in these verses: Whosoever will save his life and in verse 35 that word life is just a different translation of the same Greek word translated soul. In verses 36 and 37 we could read it this way: "For whosoever will save his soul will lose it but whosoever shall lose his soul for my sake

and the Gospels sake shall save it." It is the same Greek word as translated soul in verses 36 and 37. It uses this, in verse 36, he shall lose his own soul, and in verse 37 his soul. The Lord uses this description in relation to life or soul.

And yet there is a very real sense in which according to the Scriptures our souls are not ours because the Bible says: That all souls are mine. That is a statement that God makes, all souls are mine. [Ezekiel 18:4](#). There is a limited way in which we can call ourselves our own and there is also a very real way in which we need to acknowledge the fact that we are God's.

Your soul is inseparable from your spirit, your soul is also inseparable from your accountability. [Ezekiel 18:4](#) says: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. It doesn't say the body that sins, it is the soul that sins that shall die.

[Romans 2:9](#) says: Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, (*the person who had the scriptures and understood God's will, he will be judged first*) And also of the Gentile. (*the person who wasn't so aware of what God's will was.*)

[In Luke 16:11-12](#) Jesus says this: ¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Ponder that question: Who shall give you that which is your own?

Well this soul that is within me, the real me, is mine yet it is not mine.

4]. In the fourth place your soul is immortal.

It is earthly existence is very temporary, very brief. A saying we hear sometimes is: "One life it will soon be past only what is done for Christ will last."

We have one brief opportunity to hear and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We have in this life one brief opportunity to follow Jesus Christ. We have in this life one brief opportunity to choose our eternal abode. One brief opportunity to safely reach the shores of heaven.

Your soul is immortal, even though the body will die, everlasting life awaits the redeemed souls. Now turn with me to Matthew 25 and notice the last verse, here it is speaking about the Shepherd dividing the sheep from

the goats and the King welcoming His faithful into the kingdom and sending the wicked into everlasting fire:

[Matthew 25:46](#): And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Those words everlasting and eternal are from the same Greek word and we could reverse them and not do any injustice to the Scriptures. These shall go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into life everlasting. It means one and the same thing, they both will continue to exist forever.

The Scripture in another place in relation to eternal hellfire and eternal destruction says: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." ([Mark 9:44, 46, 48](#)).

Most people will agree that heaven is eternal, many try to refute the idea that hell is likewise eternal, the Lake of Fire. But your soul is immortal, you can never die, it can never cease to exist. God has begun in every one of us a life that will continue forever.

Now back to our text; that question in verse 37, Now what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

We would like to consider a second area and that is the wasting of a soul.

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Not only does this question imply that there is nothing that we can give equivalent in value for our soul but it may suggest what we find often happening, in the world today and through the centuries of time, and that is that man has been trying to and been making trades for his soul. Foolish mortals who sellout cheap, Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, ([Gen. 25:32-34](#)) just for the chance to have one meal when he felt faint and said: Well if I don't eat now I will die anyway so I may as well sell my birthright to my brother Jacob for this meal, this one meal and then I will live at least. Well he really wasn't in that desperate a condition but the New Testament says that he despised his birthright, he didn't have a right estimation of the value of things, for one morsel of meat he sold his birthright. ([Hebrews 12:16](#)).

But the rich young ruler had all those earthly riches, the Bible doesn't really tell us how much he had, which of course he couldn't take with him and didn't take with him when he died, he went to Jesus and asked Him

what he could do to inherit eternal life. Jesus said: Well you know the Commandments don't you? Yes, he said, I kept them all from my youth up. Then Jesus said: Just one thing that you lack, go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, come and thou follow Me. And the Bible says that he went away sorrowful. ([Matthew 19:16-22](#)). Because he wasn't willing to give up what he couldn't keep to gain what he couldn't lose.

The rich fool said to himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." You know he tore down his barns and build greater because he didn't have room to put everything in, all the crops that he had gotten. But God said: Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou has provided? ([Luke 12:16-21](#)). God called him a fool. He was busy accumulating wealth and neglecting the true riches.

And still today there are those, and you and I must be on guard that it isn't us too, those who insist on making mud and straw and overlook the Crown that is being offered them from above. If you will but take My way, the Lord Jesus is saying, here is a Crown for you, and we can insist on making mud and straw on this earth, things that are going to pass away and will be of no real value to us in the future.

Well, what do men try to exchange their souls for? There are many things. It is a little bit like if every one of us, say one person would have a \$1000 cheque and he would go into the bank: I would like to cash this, give me a penny. And the teller takes a good look at him and says: Oh sure, and gives him a penny. And so he would walk away with his penny and feel fine. Well you know there is a very real sense in which that is what people are doing spiritually, where they sell out their souls for a few flimsy things on this earth. There is a very real sense in which that doesn't even make an accurate comparison because a penny compared to \$1000 is nowhere near the comparison to all the things of this Earth and the value of our souls, the opportunity to be with the Lord for ever in heaven.

What poor trades us mortals make for the true riches, and it can be you or me! Too busy to have my own personal devotions every day. Too tired to go to midweek Bible study. Too cool to get warmed up about reaching out

to lost souls. Too self protecting to make a commitment to be a part of the body of believers. There are many poor trades that mortals make for true riches.

Some trade in their souls for such flimsy things as a grudge toward another or a bitter attitude toward God and feeling that God is not fair in allowing this or that or the other thing in my life. Or it may be for a vehicle, or for a business deal or for a secret sin, or for a little bit of carelessness or for an article of clothing or for a curt tongue or for a lack of courage in speaking out against taking God's name in vain, or for a smile at a dirty joke or for a few idle words. Or perhaps for a girlfriend or a boyfriend, or husband or wife, or for a little fear of men or for a stubborn heart or a willful way or a small lack of love or a hankering after earthly pleasure or an unconfessed lie or a wrong not corrected or a fleshly lust. And the list goes on and on and on and on.

Some of these things in themselves are sin and some may not be, but if they become the turning point in our lives whereby we dig our feet in and say: I won't go any further! That is where we sell out our souls cheap, we sell them out cheap.

We have the opportunity now to make use of the time and opportunities that the Lord has given us rather than to waste our souls.

In the third-place what is the result then of wasting one's soul? Of making a poor exchange in this life for the value of our souls?

Well verse 38 gives us the answer.

[Mark 8:38:](#)

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

I see here the wishing soul. The wasting soul will become the wishing soul. Wishing, like Revelation speaks about, for the rocks and the mountains to fall on us and to hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb.

Because there is a God to be answered to for how we live our lives and what we do with His instructions to us.

[Ecclesiastes 12:1](#) says:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

You know the wishing soul who has wasted away his life, who has wasted his opportunities will finally get to the place where he realizes that the things that he thought were so worthwhile and so enjoyable are only distasteful in his mouth, they are a little bit like persimmons, I don't know how many of you have ever eaten one, as a boy we used to eat them we had them nearby, they tasted real good but it didn't take long at all and they turned bitter in your mouth and you had that aftertaste that just about turned your mouth inside out, well that is the way sin will be. That's the way it will be with the wishing soul that has wasted away his opportunities to serve the Lord.

Oh that I had sought after God while I had opportunity! Proverbs 5, he is speaking in the context here of staying away from the wicked woman, he says in verse nine:

[Proverbs 5:9](#): Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

[Proverbs 5:11-13](#): ¹¹ And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, ¹² And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; ¹³ And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

Then there will be many wishes.

How I wish I had not been so stubborn. How I wish I would have listened. How I wish I would not have taken my own way. How much better off I would be now.

That will be the result of the wasted soul, the soul who has thrown away his opportunities and has exchanged them for flimsy things of earth and in the end there will be a lot of wishing that will not be realized.

But there is another side to this picture which we also find in these verses.

Not one of us needs to be wasting away our lives, wasting away our opportunities. Not one of us needs to end up a wishing soul, in the end wishing desperately that we would have listened while we had opportunity.

Every one of us can be a willing soul and that is what we like to look at in the fourth place.

Notice in verse 34 Jesus says to the people and to His disciples: "Whosoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's the same shall save it."

The Lord has left it up to the "whosoever will." Our God never forced anyone into His family, He doesn't have children whom He is kidnapped but rather He has children who have chosen to accept His terms. His arms are open wide to receive all His wayward children if they will to follow Him.

The willing soul wills to follow Christ at any cost, he wills to lose on Earth that he might gain in heaven. He wills to lose that which pleases the flesh to gain what satisfies the spirit. He wills to be rejected of men to gain acceptance by God. He wills to be separate from all that is sinful to gain the presence of Him who is Holy. He wills to submit his will to God's perfect will. He wills to surrender his pathway to God's perfect sight. He wills to do all within his power to keep right values. He wills to suffer for Christ now to reign with Him later. He wills to walk the strait and narrow way now to gain an abundant entrance into heaven hereafter. He wills to give all to Christ.

Church hymnal number 428 is a song that helps us to think about this surrender of our lives to the Lord. The songwriter says:

Thy way, not mine, O Lord, However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand; Choose Thou the path for me.
Smooth let it be or rough, It will be still the best;
Winding or straight it leads Right on toward Thy rest.

The Kingdom that I seek is Thine; So let the way
That leads to it be that, Else I must surely stray
Choose Thou for me my friends, My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me, My poverty or my wealth.

Not mine, not mine the choice, In things great or small;
Be Thou my guide, my strength, My wisdom and my all.

This is a picture for us of the willing soul who desires more than anything else that the Lord would show His will and that then I would walk in it. The conclusion of this willing soul and the end of this willing soul is also alluded to back in these verses in Matthew 16, we have these words given very similarly, here in Mark 8 verse 38 it basically gives for us a picture of the individual who has been wasting away his life and what will happen to him. In Matthew 16 we have these words of a similar matter, but it is given slightly different it says: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." [Matthew 16:27](#).

I see in this the end of the willing soul and is what I am calling the welcomed soul. You know that time will come when God will reward the willing soul with an eternal place at His right-hand.

[Matthew 25:21 and 23](#) says

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

That will be the condition, the final condition of the willing soul, the one who has accepted the Lord's conditions, whomsoever will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

The Lord's conditions haven't changed in 2000 years, they are still the same and His terms are still as reasonable as they ever were. And why shouldn't you and I be willing to give to the Lord our whole life, our own wills, our own way, surrender it all to the Lord for a few short years, whether it be 10, 20 or 100, what is that compared to eternity.

May Lord help us to have right values so that we do not waste away our souls and that we properly evaluate the question that the Lord has asked: For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?



SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification—what is it and just what all does it involve? It seems that too many times we hinder the work God would like to do in our hearts and lives.

There is a verse that has become impressive to me that portrays an example of the type of sanctification we sometimes think the Lord will be satisfied with in our lives. In 1 Samuel 15:18-19, we read, "And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?"

We look at these verses and wonder how Saul could so blatantly disobey the Lord's command. But let us look at our own lives. How often are we guilty of the same thing? We could liken the journey Saul was sent on to the times in our lives when the Spirit has shown us something in our lives He is not pleased with. He gently tells us, "Child, go and utterly destroy that attitude or spirit that has troubled you for so long."

We, then, in our weakness try to deal with whatever is in our lives. And just as Saul did, we often miserably fail to deal with that area in our lives the Spirit asked us to utterly destroy. We maybe destroyed the fruit it was bearing, but we did not really get to the root of the problem.

Could it be that we did not make the proper preparation for the journey before we started? In life, when we plan to go on a trip, we make careful preparation before we leave. What might be the preparation we would make before we leave on this spiritual journey? The most important thing to take with us is an open heart and mind, willing to do whatever the Lord will ask of us.

Perhaps our problem many times is that we try to take care of our needs on our own strength. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). We must be willing to completely surrender our will to God and allow Him to work the cleansing in us.

Too many of us are not finding that true joy in Christian living, that quietness and rest. This may be solely because we have not learned what it means to be fully sold out to God.

I finished reading a book not long ago in which the writer stated something that really impressed me. He said that "self" trying to serve the Lord was more to be feared than "self" that was striving to live in disobedience. How many church members are there today who are trying to do the impossible, that is, to convert self? Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

This may be why some people become so frustrated in their Christian walk of life. They try so hard to put on the outward fruits of a Christian, yet deep inside self is still exerting itself and motivating their thoughts and actions. Consequently, it seems to them that no matter how hard they try, Christian life just doesn't work.

How sad this is. Truly, there is no life more worth the living than a life of complete surrender to God. Only as we truly realize our nothingness and come before God as a humble supplicant can we hope to find that quietness and assurance forever that the Bible speaks of.

In John 15, Jesus gives us that lovely invitation to "abide in me." That is where every child of God longs to be—close to the One who redeemed him and called him from darkness into the marvelous light. If each day we keep that desire alive in our hearts, then there will be growth in our Christian lives. Growth brings forth fruit unto perfection.

May our prayer for ourselves and each one be that we will ever strive to draw closer to God so that when the last trumpet sounds we can be found with our robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

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