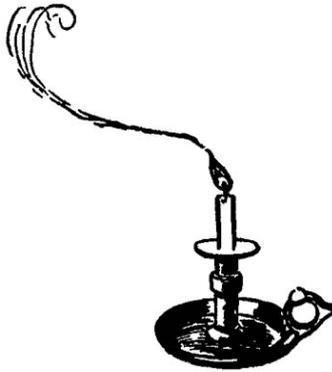


# THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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 Mennonite Perspective

## **From The Editor's Desk**

We often speak of non-resistance and non-conformity and loving our neighbour as ourselves, these are all building blocks we might say of our Christian faith, they are scriptural tenets which if ignored or only half heartedly lived out make us liable to being denied entry into heaven.

Jesus Christ is the author and giver of peace. Those who accept Him into their hearts and follow Him as their personal Saviour will have peace. We cannot do it in our own strength.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" Matthew 5:8.

What do we want most of all? Above all things, peace is the desire of my heart and yours. We want peace in our world, and we want peace in ourselves and with others.

What is peace? Peace is not merely the absence of conflict or strife. Peace is a positive force. You may clear a plot of ground of all undesirable weeds, but that will not make it a garden. It will only be a bare field. It becomes a garden when flowers or desirable plants are growing there. The prophet of old reminds us that just to break up our swords and spears is not enough. Those swords must become plowshares and the spears pruninghooks (Micah 4:3).

To have peace in the world and in our own souls, hate, suspicion, greed, and fear must be rooted out. Joy, peace, love, patience, and understanding must be planted and cultivated.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" Matthew 5:38-39.

To someone who has not experienced the new birth, this scripture seems like an impossibility. However, when we truly have the love of God in our hearts that is the way we want to live. We have no desire to be at variance with our neighbors, friends, or brethren. We have a real longing to be at peace with God and all mankind.

Luke 6:31 is the motto of every Christian who professes to be a follower, a disciple of Christ; "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

May the messages this month help us to examine our relationship with the risen Lord so that we can truly be called His disciples. *J.v.L*



*From the Pulpit*

### *Discipleship Defined*

*From a message by Daniel Horst  
Fall Bible Conference CMCO  
October 12-13, 2008.*

Greetings tonight in Jesus name.

It is a privilege to be here and Fellowship like this together.

I was just thinking as Brother Abner was sharing that wouldn't the best definition of discipleship be if Jesus came right now and called His Bride and all the disciples would leave with Him.

And I was starting to think that it would be nice in fact saying it that way doesn't even describe how that would be.

I look forward to that and I long for that and I can hardly wait for the day when Jesus calls His disciples out of this life and I just thought wouldn't it be wonderful if Jesus did that at the start of a message on discipleship, that would be the greatest definition we could have of what discipleship is.

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 10.

This is a very large subject and yet we could define discipleship in about 5 minutes and you would understand what it is.

In the opening I'm just going to read something to you here.

"When the self-proclaimed mastermind, and some of you might have read this, when the self-proclaimed mastermind of the 9/11 horror Khalid Sheik Mohamed appeared before a military court in Guatonamo, Cuba, he said he wanted the death sentence so he could die a martyr. "Yes, this is what I wish, I have been looking to be a martyr for a long time. I will, God willing, have this by you I understand very well."

One of Mohamed's co-conspirators, Ramsey, echoed the desire he said: "I have been seeking martyrdom for five years, I tried to get a visa for 9/11 but could not and if this martyrdom happens today I welcome it. God is great. God is great. God is great."

Is that discipleship? Sure it is.

Those men were disciples but they were not disciples of the God of heaven, they were not disciples of the Jesus that we love but they were dis-

ciples and it inspired me, no, not that they wanted to die as a martyr, but it kind of challenged me to think, Do I have that kind of an outlook as it relates to Jesus?

And these men, I don't know much about them but, they are following someone, at the bottom of that all they are following Satan, but they are following someone, someone has taught them something and driven something into their minds and they are believing it with their whole heart and they would like to die for what they believe.

Is that not what a disciple is? Isn't that discipleship?

Let me read you something else.

"He grew up in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman, he worked in a carpenter's shop till he was 30 and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home, he never had a family, he never went to college, he never travelled more than 200 miles from where he was born, he did not do any of the things usually associated with greatness, he had no credentials but himself.

While he was yet a young man the tide of public opinion turned against him, his friends ran away, he was turned over to his enemies, he went through the mockery of a trial, he was nailed to a cross between two thieves and while he was dying his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth - a coat.

When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Many centuries have come and gone and all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed and all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the lives of men and women on this earth as much as this one, solitary life."

And then I stand and say: I am one of His disciples, I am one of His disciples! but have I affected the lives of those around me like He did?

Have the people close to me been changed because they felt God through me? That is what Jesus life was all about, the people that came in contact with Him were never the same, and either they said, Yes, He is the Messiah or they said, No, He is just an unusual man.

But they were all changed that came in contact with Jesus.

And I stand and say: I am one of His disciples.

I would like to show you a verse in Matthew 10 that to me, and there are lots of other verses that I probably won't even turn to tonight for sake of time, but there is one in Matthew 10 that gives such an excellent definition of what discipleship really is, it defines it very clearly.

Look at [Matthew 10:25](#), here is a definition for discipleship and it is this thought that we are going to think about tonight and what I base my message on.

Verse 25 at the very beginning says: *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.*

I'll stop reading here – It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master. When I say it enough I might be right but I might be missing something but when Jesus says it is enough He has not missed anything and it is exactly what He means. And this phrase in Matthew 10 has gripped my heart and I really have a desire to be more of a disciple through what He is saying here but Jesus said it is enough that the disciple be as his master. It is sufficient for us to know what discipleship is.

In other words Jesus said be like me, if I'm your Master and you are my disciple then it is enough if you just be like me, just live how I would live and just talk how I would talk and just relate to troubles as I would relate to troubles. And Jesus said it is enough and that is all that we would need to do here tonight, and that would be enough for us to begin a life changing walk with the Master.

It is enough Jesus said.

Suppose Jesus came to you and He said: Are you a disciple, are you a disciple?

And you would say: Yes, of course Jesus, don't you know? I am a father in the home, I teach my children about you, yes I'm your disciple.

Or I might say: Yes, I'm a Minister, I preach the Word and I try to do everything that you want me to, yes I'm a disciple. I go to church, I am a disciple.

And then Jesus would say: So which one of the 12 are you like, of the 12 which I specifically chose which one are you like? Are you like Peter who

denied me? Are you like Judas who betrayed me? Are you like Thomas who doubted me?

And He could go down through the list and He could ask us which one we are like possibly.

What I'm saying is that calling ourselves a disciple is not enough, that is not what it takes just for you to decide, Yes, I'll be a disciple of Jesus, I'll try to follow Him.

That is not enough, calling yourself a disciple is not enough.

I would like you to turn to Luke nine.

*It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master.* I want that phrase to be riveted in your mind and I might say it quite a few times tonight because I want you to remember it.

**Luke 9:57-62**, I'm just going to read this to give us another picture of what disciples of Jesus are expected to be like:

<sup>57</sup> 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.

We see a few things here about the disciples of Jesus but the main thing that I see Jesus saying, and I suppose you already saw it too is that a disciple is expected to place everything lower than Jesus.

Let me say it in a different way, A disciple is expected to place Jesus ahead of everything, there is nothing that you know or believe or live or have that is worth putting between you and Jesus.

You look at those men there, the first one volunteered he said: Lord I will do whatever you say.

But somehow Jesus was able to see through him and I do not know what Jesus saw but Jesus reminded him it is not going to be that great just to walk behind me and if you do that you probably are going to have to give up quite a bit, He reminded the man of that.

And then He asked another man to follow him and the man said, Well, I'd sure like to but first I have to take care of this very, very important matter and so on.

And what Jesus is saying to us that if I'm going to be a disciple I have to place Him ahead of everything else.

Did you know that sometimes the disciples were misunderstood?

But sometimes the disciples misunderstood Jesus heart. If you would look at verse 55 you would see that they had this idea of condemning these men who did not want to accept Jesus or it seemed like they were not wanting to accept Jesus in that little town in Samaria and so the disciples thought we have to take care of these men, they are not interested in Jesus, they are not going to be disciples by the look of it. And so they said Lord we would like to, don't you think we should burn, consume them with fire? [Luke 9:54](#).

And so the disciples obviously misunderstood Jesus' heart and Jesus' motive, Jesus' desire, because in verse 55 He turned and rebuked them and said: Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. [Luke 9:55](#).

The reason I'm bringing this out is because though I call myself a disciple there will be times when I misunderstand what Jesus really wants me to do and there will be times when I am misunderstood by those around me.

Placing Jesus ahead of everything else.

For the remainder of the message I would just like to give a few points as to what discipleship means, what does it mean?

Turn with me to Romans 6.

*It is enough for the disciple to be as his master.*

[Romans 6:6](#), "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

It talks about crucifixion there, crucifixion is death and you think about Jesus, He came to this life so that He could die and the ultimate goal for Him being here, yes it was to fulfil the Father's will, but it was death and He had to be resurrected.

And so the first point I have and I put that as the first reason:  
Discipleship means death.

Discipleship means death and we do not have time to go into a lot of detail on how this really relates to my practical life but discipleship means death. Think of that, the way of the cross, the nature that I am born with is only fit for crucifixion otherwise if it is not crucified then I will be in constant conflict with the way of Jesus, it will not mesh to have my old nature uncrucified and still living as a disciple of Jesus. You will be frustrated and extremely discouraged and you will live like Romans 7 is talking about.

**Galatians 2:20** says: <sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I am crucified with Christ, that is what it means to be a disciple, to die.

How many of you, how many of you would like to die tonight?  
If you were put up against it, if you had to decide whether you would deny the faith or die what would you say?  
We don't know until we are there, but how we live today kind of decides, it kind of tells us and kind of gives God a picture of what we think about that.

Discipleship means death.

Jesus came to do the Father's will and the ultimate goal was for Him to be put to death.

It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master.

If I'm going to be a disciple like Jesus then I'm going to have to die, I'm going to have to die and we don't realize how strong self is sometimes, it does not want to die but it has to, to the very last breath.

Discipleship means death.

The second point I would like you to turn to second Corinthians 10 and there are a lot of points that we could have looked at, a lot of Scriptures we could have touched but what I would like you to remember is this definition in Matthew 10:25, and these thoughts I'm sharing now are simply just some more ideas that give us a picture of what discipleship is.

**2 Corinthians 10:4-5** “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) <sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

And you might wonder what does this have to do with discipleship?

Well I am simply calling it this, if I want to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, if I want to be like my Master then I'm going to have to lay down my weapons, I'm going to have to voluntarily lay down my weapons.

Well what are my weapons?

Before I was a Christian some of my weapons that I had were fear or control or pride or dishonesty, covering up what is really inside. And if I want to be a disciple I'm going to have to lay those weapons down and take up some new ones.

The weapons that come with our old nature are automatically set against God and if I don't get rid of those weapons then it will cause trouble.

You don't have to turn to this part but take your minds to **Luke 22** and that is where we have Jesus in the Garden and He is finished praying now and the disciples with Him and they hear this noise and the band of soldiers come and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss and they grab hold of Jesus, and now they have Him, and Peter steps up hauls out his sword and he wants to do some damage and he swings his sword and all he gets is the ear of Malchus, he cuts it off.

What was he doing? He was trying to defend Jesus, this was his friend, this was his master and so his first reaction was to reach and get his sword and pull it out and defend Jesus but it was his carnal weapon, he had not laid that down, and I think previously to that Peter had said we've got swords, we are ready Jesus.

If I do not lay down my weapons I will use them and whenever I raise my weapons I cause trouble if they are the carnal weapons and these verses talk about it here.

When we become a child of God we receive different weapons and they are not carnal and these weapons work as far it relates to casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.

Matthew 11:19, it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, well what was Jesus like? Did He get new weapons too? Did He lay down some weapons? Probably not but He had the right kind of weapons and in **Matthew 11:19** it says: “The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”

People called Jesus a wine bibber, people called Him a friend of publicans and sinners, a man that did not have proper boundaries, they looked at Him and they said something is not right with the way He is acting, it does not fit with our religion, he is a glutton this man and a wine bibber.

How did Jesus relate to something like that?

I don't really know but I'm quite sure that Jesus did not spend a lot of time saying, No, I'm not a wine bibber I just went there because,....and down through the list, Jesus did not defend Himself usually, He was silent, he was silent when they accused Him.

And we are so quick to raise our defence when someone says something about us that is not very nice and is not true, is far from the truth, and we would love to tell people that is not the way this, I'm not that way, or I didn't say that, or I didn't mean that, we would love to tell people that that is not what we are like.

It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master.

Jesus did not go around defending Himself. If people called Him a wine bibber that is all right with Him, He simply lived the way the Father wanted Him to live.

And so we also want to be like that.

Discipleship means laying down my weapons and picking up a new set of weapons or else I will cause trouble wherever I go no matter how hard I try to do the right thing.

Discipleship means obedience.

Some more challenging verses here in John eight.

Discipleship means obedience, [John 8:28-32](#) “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup> And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. <sup>30</sup> As he spake these words, many believed on him. <sup>31</sup> Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; <sup>32</sup> And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

If you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus then you are going to obey Him. And I would like you to take notice of what Jesus said here.

Jesus was perfect wasn't He? Could Jesus have sinned? That is a question we cannot answer but Jesus was perfect and these steps that He took in life were the right thing and how could He do it?

Well look at what He says in verse 28, He said I do nothing of myself but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

And so I think about my life and how many times I have talked and it was not the heavenly Father teaching me.

Notice what else He said, I do always those things that please Him.

Did Jesus have to struggle with that? I don't think so.

But here He said if you are going to, in essence He is saying if you're going to be my disciple and be like that, just do those things in life that the Father teaches you to do, and just say those things in life that the heavenly Father teaches you to say.

And we hang our heads in shame and say: Lord I have not done that, I have not lived that way.

But Jesus said: It is enough for the disciple to be as he is Master.

And so from here on you can decide and you can lay down your weapons and you can decide that from here on Lord I want only say those things that you tell me to say and I want to do only those things that you tell me to do.

And your life will be changed, your life will be changed.

**Hebrews 5:8** it tells us that: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”

Sometimes I can hardly get my mind around that, Why did Jesus have to learn obedience? Was He not obedient?

There is a lot of truth there but did you ever think of this: That all the hard things that God asks us to do Jesus already was there and did them, all the hard things that God asks us to do, and if it is hard for you to obey then think of that.

If it is hard for you to obey then possibly you need some more suffering because Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Obedience even comes ahead of logic and reason, that is being a disciple where common sense takes second place when Jesus says it, we do it without questioning it.

The fourth point turn to **John 21**, and I know I am looking at these very briefly but I hope it at least stirs in you a desire to study it some more yourself and to remember that Jesus said: It is enough that the disciple be as his Master.

Discipleship means learning my own weakness.

In John 21 we have a picture of when this happened to a man.

It was after Jesus death and resurrection, it was after the disciples followed Him for a long time through his Ministry and now He was crucified and now He is resurrected and now He appears a few times and they saw Him and in verse three, **John 21:3** “Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.”

Well what was Peter? Well he was a fisherman and so what was wrong here?

I don't know whether this was a normal occurrence or not but I don't think so, what I see here is the fact that God when I turn aside from being a disciple of Jesus from my heart and turn back to something that I'm familiar with something that I know how to handle, I'm a fisherman, let's just go back to something we know and how it works and what all is involved then God is going to show me that even in that I can't handle it, even in that. God will test a man or a woman at his or her strongest point and He has ways of bringing a strong man down, He has ways of doing that.

Learning my own weakness, that is part of being a disciple and especially us as men we do not like that because we know we have to be strong and we know there is a lot of responsibility on us and we don't like to learn of our weakness, it does not make us feel good.

But I want you to picture a child running free in the sunlight or in the sunshine and not one thing, the hand of an adult or maybe that parent is reaching for that child's hand and they don't want it. And now picture that child in the middle of dark night, somewhere they have never been before and now what do you see?

You see that child reaching for the parent's hand. Why?

Because they have never been here before and they are afraid. They are grasping for the hand because they are weak.

And I really believe that this is what God is seeking for, vulnerable disciples, men and women that don't know how to operate their lives by themselves, they don't have all the answers but are willing to do what ever their Master did in every situation.

Vulnerable disciples.

Think of Jesus in the dark night of Gethsemane crying out and saying: The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. [Matthew 26:41](#). And He was crying to the Father.

And in [Hebrews 5:7](#) it talks about Jesus praying with strong crying and tears. Jesus had weakness and He admitted that and He showed that to the Father.

It is enough for the disciple to be as his master.

The fifth point, [Luke 14:33](#) simply is this: Discipleship means sacrifice.

And I cannot say this first any better than what it says itself.

Luke 14:33 does not take much explanation: “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

I do not have to explain that do I?

Jesus said if you are not willing to forsake everything for me then you cannot be my disciple, and that word forsake means to say goodbye to it, to forsake it, say goodbye to it.

This verse is saying to me that as long as I have some security that I cling to that I cannot be a disciple.

It can be resources, it can be experience, it can be my logic, it can be my reasoning, my ability to think through things and come up with good conclusions and good ideas, if I am clinging to that as some kind of security and am not willing to say goodbye to that then I cannot be a disciple.

Jesus said: He who forsaketh not all that he hath.

The Lord does not care, thinking about sacrifice here, the Lord does not care how much you give but how you give it. And we find that in [Mark 12:44](#), we don't have time to look at that, Jesus sacrificed till it cost Him his life, that is how much He gave till He died.

And yet we try to live as comfortably as possible.

Think about it: It is enough for the disciple to be as his master. Sacrifice.

Discipleship is fruitfulness.

Discipleship is relationship.

And I do not have time to explain these all but for this last point turn to first John three.

Discipleship is relationship, and I would like you to picture Jesus walking the dusty roads and talking to do different kinds of people and you think of what kind of people they were really, really attracted to Him and hung around Him because they wanted to.

Well the Pharisees they hung around Jesus because they wanted to prove Him wrong.

But the people that were really without hope and didn't have the answers they found something in Jesus, they found a Man that understood that and they found a Man that answered their questions.

And so in **1 John 3:14-16** I see that discipleship means relationship, and you think of Jesus how that people were drawn to Him and now you think of yourself and what kind of response people have to you.

Is there something about you that people are driven away from you? Maybe the way you relate to their problems or maybe the way you relate to life and they are not drawn to you, they are kind of repulsed by your actions.

And I'm saying this to myself but you read 1 John 3:14-16 and you see in there that love is also a part of discipleship.

Discipleship means relationship, Are people drawn to you or are they scared away?

It is enough for the disciple to be as his master.

There is no better way for you to know how to be a disciple then for you to learn of Jesus, no better way.

And if you want confidence when you stand before God and be a disciple, **1 John 4:17**: “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”

If you want confidence when you stand before God then be like Jesus and you will have that confidence.

In closing just a word picture in your minds.

I wish we could all leave this room, take a walk back through time to a place called Golgotha, the place of skulls. And that we could stand at the foot of the cross where Jesus is hanging and as we take in the details of that tragic morning and as we hear His last choked breath we would ask:

Do I really want to follow Him? Do I really want to follow Him?

Because ultimately this is where it begins, His death, where I am willing to die to everything that I am hanging on to as my life, as my security, and after I die from there I step into a way of living which without faith is impossible.

Sometimes I am afraid that in 2008 (or 2013 or anytime) following Jesus becomes too well defined by present beliefs and circumstances and we do not even hear the voice of the lowly Nazarene as He says: *Follow me, it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master.*

## KING ZEDEKIAH'S MISTAKE

Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was a man torn by indecision. The nation he ruled had a divided heart as well.

Many things in the country appeared quite normal in the beginning of his reign. Solomon's glorious temple still stood. The priests continually ministered, and the people came to the temple to worship. Many prophets—false prophets, that is—prophesied that a glorious future awaited Judah. In most ways, life went on as usual in the country as a whole. But all the religion only masked the gross ungodliness of the populace. Idolatry was rampant. All manner of sin was practiced at every level. Covetousness, murder, and adultery were everyday fare, all while the people maintained a facade of godliness.

In this setting, Jeremiah constantly preached an unpopular message. He announced that Jerusalem was to be destroyed because of its rebelliousness, and all its inhabitants would either be killed or taken captive to Babylon. The only way for them to save themselves was to surrender to the Chaldeans. So repulsive was the message that the prophet was incarcerated at least twice, once in a miry dungeon where he would have perished had the king not given permission to rescue him.

Both times that the prophet was in jail, the king secretly went to him and asked what the Lord had to say. Not once did Jeremiah alter his message. "The only way you can save yourself and this city is by total surrender. Give up to the Babylonian army, and you will save yourself, your family, and this city." That was the essence of God's message.

Jeremiah knew many wanted him silenced at all costs; many were insisting that the king kill him. Like all the faithful, the prophet "loved not his life unto death" and continued pronouncing the truth in simple, unmistakable words. Praise the Lord for His faithful servants who will unflinchingly tell the truth, even in the face of danger.

Blessed are they who will heed the message of truth that God's servants bring. God sends the warning because of His love for us and for our sal-

vation. To disregard the truth is always to our detriment when the final results are in.

To his credit, the truth didn't anger King Zedekiah. He must have known it was from the Lord. His soul was not deceived. He appeared to be strongly drawn to take Jeremiah's message and act on it. We can only imagine the fears and the turmoil that plagued his heart. In his agony of soul, he revealed the cause of his crippling fear one day, "I am afraid of the Jews ... lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me" (Jer. 38:19). Just as many today are unwilling to commit themselves to God for fear of the ridicule of those who are carnal, so the king squandered his opportunity for salvation for the fear of man.

The word of the Lord came true, as it inevitably will. For a while it appeared the Babylonian army had given up when they abandoned their siege of the city, but they soon returned. When they finally entered the city, they were merciless. Zedekiah's sons were killed before him, and then his own eyes were put out. He was taken to Babylon, as Jeremiah had prophesied, as a trophy of the victors. What a reward of unceasing public humiliation the king purchased for himself by failing to surrender his proud heart!

God's repeated message to Judah was that if they would surrender themselves into the hands of the Babylonians, they would be saved. But if they resisted, they would lose all. The same choice is before us today. There are only a brave few who surrender to the omnipotent King of kings, regardless of the cost. But they save their souls. All others will suffer infinite loss.

How many, like Zedekiah, are secretly convinced of the truth? Against their flesh, they are drawn to the awful fact that they are on the wrong side. Many read the Bible and listen to the preaching of the gospel but cannot bring themselves to take a stand for the right. They hesitate at the door of salvation until it is too late.

How different Zedekiah's history would read had he heeded Jeremiah's message! What a difference it could have made to his posterity and to Is-

rael in general. Thanks to God that we who read these lines can still make a difference for our descendants and ourselves by heeding God's call.

### *THE OVERFLOWING CUP*

I wanted to be a Christian so I could go to heaven;  
I wanted to have God in my heart and have my sins forgiven.  
But I didn't put forth the effort that I really knew I should,  
Because it took too much effort—did I have to be that good?

But I've found that "what you put in it is all that you're going to get out,"  
Is surely a truthful saying, for I know what it's talking about.  
For being a half-hearted Christian brings only a half-hearted joy.  
If we want our cup overflowing, we must be fully in God's employ.

*Sister Lorna*



Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet,  
And a light unto my path.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH – DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

Jesus said to His followers, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" Matthew 5:13.

The Lord's words lay at once a worthy responsibility on believers and sound an unmistakable warning should they fail to be faithful in their charge.

Salt once was a precious commodity. There was a time in the Roman Empire when labourers and soldiers were paid in salt. Thus, the English word salary is derived from the Latin *salario*, meaning payment in salt. The "salt" that Christ speaks about is also precious in the eyes of God. It is so pleasing to Him that He imputes something of the Christians' seasoning virtues and preserving values to the world's account. Thus, He has, until now, spared the world the judgment that is deserved and imminent. But if the salt should lose its saltiness, who can know the wrath of God upon the nations and the world? (Revelation 14:10)?

The incident of Abraham interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah is telling (Genesis 18). The anxious entreaty of Abraham's heart was, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (v. 23). Answering the father of faith's proposition that if there were "fifty righteous within the city," the Lord said He would not annihilate the city. He would spare the presumably thousands for the sake of fifty righteous. All the way down to Abraham's plea of "peradventure ten shall be found there," the Lord promised not to destroy the cities because of the righteous (v. 32).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the cities of the plain (Genesis 19:29), is well known. The judgment of God fell upon them because of immorality, "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness" (Ezekiel 16:49). But the truth also is that had there been sufficient "salt" within them, the mercy of God would have stayed the catastrophe.

We presume that at one time there were many more righteous in Sodom than only Lot and his two daughters. If that is true, what measure of judg-

ment was precipitated upon the entire population by seven souls who left righteousness! That is cause by default, to be sure. But the fact is that the at-one-time-righteous did not love their fellowmen sufficiently to continue in the righteous way and thus preserve their neighbours.

There is something in the above-mentioned account of Abraham's interceding and God's readiness to spare for the sake of the righteous that parallels the Christians' position and influence in the world. It is confirmed in the New Testament. The apostle Paul wrote, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" 1 Corinthians 6:2. We ought to earnestly consider in what sense Christians are judging, and will judge, the world.

It has been said that true believers in Christ are a type of conscience in a nation. Their chaste and circumspect lives are a reminder to society of right and wrong. They testify to the truth that this world shall not continue forever and that its "glory" is vain. This is one sense of the disciples of Jesus being the salt of the earth. Their lives are judging the world.

By living the truth, Christians are a standard of judgment to the world. Theirs is a weighty calling. At times, maintaining their witness to the truth is unpleasant for the flesh. A pricking conscience is not always appreciated, especially when "the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Consider the example of John the Baptist and the apostles, whose lives and message were a reproof of the sins of the people. Indeed, the same has been true throughout the centuries since the beginning of time.

It is, no doubt, impossible to imagine the great flood of excuses that will gush forth from humanity before the Lord on the Judgment Day. "I didn't know better" or "I couldn't help it that I was so weak" will be judged by the Word (John 12:48) in all rightness. But also, there in that tumult will be the rejoicing victorious saints—proof that the sinners' excuses are untruth. They, too, contended with the fallen flesh. But by believing in Christ and taking up their cross, they experienced the power of His grace. They loved not their lives, even unto death (Revelation 12:11). What incontrovertible

proof for justice the faithful will provide! Thus, we see another sense of how the saints of all ages shall judge the world as a result of their faith and obedience to the Word.

Should intellectual reasoning take the place of true faith, and the believer's personal cross is whittled down or made of lightweight material so that the flesh does not die in carrying it, the salt will lose its savour. Unless the earnest pleading of the Holy Spirit unto revival is heeded, and the enlivening presence of Jesus is longed for, and the faith is kept in its purity, wherewith will the salt be salted? One is sobered to contemplate whether such a condition might be the default cause of the end of the world.

Sometimes it may seem preposterous to think that so very, very few among the innumerable multitudes could make a difference. Or that God would place so much importance on a tiny remnant of faithful ones. However, true faith will tell us that it doesn't take much salt to season the whole. But it must be genuine salty salt, the living presence of Christ in the believers' lives being the essence. The saints hold up in everyday life the merit and love of Jesus' sacrifice for sinners. That is the salt. A mere outward show of religion is salt without savour. So is the shallow exalting of grace that is permissive with the flesh, watering down the very doctrine of being separated from the world unto God. Jesus said such salt no longer serves its purpose.

People of God the face of the world over, can we see the weight of judgment that rests upon us?



Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet,  
And a light unto my path.

## PRESUMPTUOUS RELIGION

Some of the definitions of presumptuous and presume are: being too bold, forward, daring too much, taking for granted, an attitude or belief dictated by probability, and to take upon oneself. For example, it is presumptuous and untrue to insist that God must back us up in whatever we do (taken from World Book Dictionary).

One of the most striking examples of presumptuous religion is found in Luke 13:26-27: "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." They presumed all was well and that they would enter in with the saved. Jesus said, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." What a great and shocking disappointment!

There are many Biblical accounts of people or groups who based their acceptance with God on a presumption. The results were usually tragic. Only God knows how much presumptuous religion is in our land today. Well-meaning people are presuming and taking for granted that all will be well on the great Judgment Day. By observation and comparing the fruits of a true Christian, which the New Testament teaches, one concludes there is surely a great infection of presumptuousness in our deceptive times.

Some of the trademarks of presumptuous religion are: A bold attitude that all is well, and not feeling a need of imploring God for His grace and forgiveness for our daily trespasses, to which we are prone. Another one is resistance to being questioned about one's hope of eternal salvation. There is vocal insistence that all is secure, and they should not be questioned about the matter. When one gentleman was approached on his deathbed about his hope, the door was closed to talk about it. He had previously talked to a certain minister and said he didn't want the subject opened up again. Everything was presumed to be okay.

Another sign is a profession without the true possession of humble Christian virtues. Some of the teachings of Christ and the apostles are disregarded or interpreted as being out of date or not applicable to our time. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke

6:46)? "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

Some have mistakenly felt that their presumptuous and positive attitude was faith in God. But there is a far-reaching difference. Presumption is based on one's own opinion and proving. True faith is based on God's Word and the atoning blood of Jesus. Faithful believers realize that they have no merits of their own but are totally dependent on God's mercy and forgiveness through Christ's completed work on Calvary. The true Christian's answer in respect to his salvation will be with conscientious carefulness. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). True Christians do not proclaim their assurance of salvation in a bold, audacious way.

The great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), which includes our martyr brethren, provides safe examples for us today. They would not in any way or form rely on their own presumptions. With all their hearts, they sought and embraced God's Word. They were really concerned to know and live the truth. They often expressed their unworthiness and lamented their human weaknesses to their Father in heaven.

Thieleman J. van Braght wrote, "Pardon me, O my Lord and my God! that I, who am but dust and ashes approach Thee. I fear to come to Thee, because Thou art a consuming fire, while I am wood, hay and stubble, subject to be burned; yet I must not remain away from Thee, because I have that which is Thine, yea, which is Thy most precious treasure, even the blood and offering of the saints; I must needs come and offer it to Thee" (Martyrs Mirror, p. 5).

How can anyone rest the matter of the great Judgment Day, heaven or hell, and eternity on one's own presumption, thinking, and proving? Surely this is very risky, and God has a better, safer way. There is a true witness and assurance that every Christian should possess.

"And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:8). "The Spirit itself

bearth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Our proving of our spirit is only right when we truly have the spirit of Jesus Christ. And then what an intimate, precious treasure it is! The "water" represents the Word, and we allow ourselves to be continually cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word. The blood is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, giving us the forgiveness we received at conversion. The blood paid the debt we couldn't pay. It also covers our human weaknesses and mistakes. If we lack any of these three witnesses, it would be a question whether we are living our Christian life on a presumption.

God has a great safety for His children through the church and our brethren. When our religion is based on Christ the solid rock, we invite our brethren's proving of our spiritual life and our standing with God. We are unwilling to leave the importance of our salvation rest only on our own thinking or proving.

Presumptuous religion is not the true, pure religion of the New Testament. It is a counterfeit and a great deception of our day. How sincere and careful we should be that our names will be found in the book of life! Then on the great Judgment Day, we will hear those blessed words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

*Brother Richard*

*If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

James 1:26-27

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