

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

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

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

In both Old Testament and New Testament the word compassion is used a number of times and most of those times in the Old Testament it refers to an attribute of God and in the New Testament it is directly attributed as a characteristic of Jesus.

That part of the character or nature of Jesus was one that He exhibited quite openly as we see for example in Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34 we also see it in the gospels of Mark and Luke.

Paul teaches on compassion in Romans 10, Hebrews 5 and 10, Peter gives instructions as to the use of compassion on our part in 1 Peter 3:8, John in 1 John 3:17 and Jude in Jude 1:22.

The dictionary in one place defines compassion as a feeling of sympathy for someone who is in a bad situation because you understand and care for them but that is not enough when it comes to our responsibility as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not just have a feeling of sympathy for people but He did something about their situation. His compassion led to kindness, care, kindheartedness, benevolence – His actions were concrete actions.

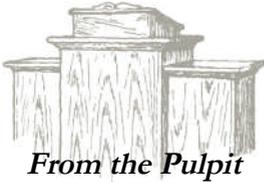
The Apostles Peter and John say this, 1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: 1 John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? And we also have Jude 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference.

It is obvious from these scriptures that compassion is a desirable characteristic for those who claim to be followers of Jesus but we know also in the world around us that there are those who do not profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour who display compassion through various philanthropic and other charitable acts, corporations also engage in this.

Now this is not to suggest that we should go into competition with those people but rather that we exercise the mind of Christ as He did when He had compassion on those He met on His sojourn here on earth.

We know that it was not only His words but also His actions that drew people to Him and by being a living example of our Lord and Master we too can draw others to Him.

We are called to be a light to the world and light draws people. *J.v.L*



From the Pulpit

Test of Christian Compassion
 From a message by Lamar Garman

Pray that we will be open to receiving inspiration from God's Word we have done so already by and I have been blessed by the various aspects of the service thus far.

Open your Bibles now to Luke chapter 10 for the message this morning.

In the Sunday school devotional we read from Mark 10 and Luke 10 and I was impressed that there were two different men who asked almost the identical question, I'm not sure I've ever noticed that before but when our brother read I noticed that the question was almost identical in both.

In Luke 10 we have the account of what we call the good Samaritan it is a passage that we have read many times that we have studied many times but I think it does us well just at times to again read passages like this and be impressed by it and give ourselves a little test and I have entitled this message "The Test of Christian Compassion"

In **Luke 10:25** we have that given and I would like to read what one writer said about the test of Christian compassion

This writer said, "Let us not under estimate how hard it is for us to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires having the disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely and broken but this is not our spontaneous response to suffering.

What we decide most often is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it."

I suppose that is our natural tendency to human suffering it is hard for us to face it but in this passage this morning we want to again be faced with human suffering and how we as Christians need to be responding to it and give ourselves a little test about our response to human suffering and the suffering of others around us. The test of Christian compassion.

Well this account is so familiar and in your mind's eye you could almost see this poor badly injured man lying beside the path on the way to succumbing to his injuries, he is ready to die though it tells us that does not. Jesus was not there personally that day when that man was lying by the side of the road, but He had a representative there to help alleviate the distress of this man who so badly needed help and the question that comes to you and me each day is: Am I the representative of Jesus, am I God's representative in relating to the needs of others?

We know there is much suffering around us even among ourselves there are so many of us, so many individuals that time and again face various circumstances that we can be greatly blessed and greatly helped by the compassion and the help and prayers of others and we want to be that as well. The question is do other people see you and me as God's representatives in trying to alleviate of the needs around us with hearts of love and compassion.

It reminds me of one boy I read about and maybe you heard me give this illustration before but I'll give it again because it fits.

The little boy was ready to get on the subway and he was carrying a jigsaw puzzle in his hand and dropped the box and pieces fell all over the platform, another commuters who was a Christian man saw the little boy's distress, all the pieces lying on the floor in the subway and the train just about ready to leave the station that the boy wanted to get onto and the man stopped in his mad rush in the morning commute and helped the little boy pick up all the pieces and put the lid back on the box and the little boy was so glad and he looked up and said, Sir, are you Jesus?

It impressed him so much that a person took time to stop and help him with what to him was a very distressing need and here someone else stopped and helped in that time of need.

Well in this account Jesus shows how easy it is for a person to be so involved with his own cares that he fails to see the obvious needs around him and that can be a real danger in our lives today also and we want to be impressed anew by this account and evaluate ourselves that we take the time to truly help others.

Another fact that we should notice in the introduction is that Jesus told this lawyer to redefine the term neighbour, the lawyer asked, Who is my neighbour? He probably thought the neighbour was the person who lived in close proximity to him.

In the neighbourhood where my family lives in the summer we have what we call a neighbourhood picnic and those who live nearby get-together for a time of fellowship, the neighbourhood picnic.

Maybe that is what this man was thinking of too but Jesus taught this man that a neighbour is anyone who has a need and we have it in our power to do something about it.

Who is your neighbour? Well anyone that has a need and we have it in our power to do something about it.

Also notice the Bible does not call this account a parable.

In the margin of my Bible it says the parable of the good Samaritan but Jesus did not call it a parable, He said in Luke 10:30 a certain man. So it probably happened that people may have been familiar with this incident and it serves as an excellent lesson for the need of human compassion.

I would like to read these verses now and then using it as an outline first of all we will look at the question, secondly the need, thirdly the opportunity and fourthly the assistance.

Luke 10:25-37 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? ²⁷ And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁸ And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. ²⁹ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? ³⁰ And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. ³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. ³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he

saw him, he had compassion *on him*, (notice that now) ³⁴ And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. ³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? ³⁷ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Well we can ask the question when we come to a service in the church and have a portion of Scripture expounded to us: What is it saying to me, what am I to do?

Well right here we have what Jesus clearly said in the last phrase, Go and do thou likewise.

And that is what we want to test ourselves on this morning whether we are truly going and doing likewise, whether we have that heart of compassion and concern that this good Samaritan had.

Well first of all now the question by the lawyer in verse 25 it seems to be perfectly legitimate, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Now that is right, that's a right concern, this lawyer had a right concern what shall I do to inherit eternal life and that should be the question that each person on the face of the earth has and it is the Holy Spirit answering us telling us what we need to do to inherit eternal life, you must be born again Jesus said in [John 3:7](#), we need to have a heart of repentance and ask the good Lord for forgiveness and ask Jesus come into our hearts as our personal Saviour.

What shall I do to inherit eternal life, it is right for us to be concerned about that and every day of our lives I believe we ought to evaluate our relationship with the Lord Jesus whether we really are recipients of His grace and mercy and whether we are on the road to glory, not that we cast doubt on that every day but that we evaluate our experience, our lives whether we are on the road to glory and whether we are one of God's own children.

It is right for us to ask what shall I do to inherit eternal life, and we are so glad for the love of God and the precious blood of Jesus who gave Himself as an Atonement for our sins and now we can be forgiven and we can be one of God's own children, what shall I do to inherit eternal life.

Christ was and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, **Hebrews 4:12**, and He could see right through this lawyer and He knew that he was not really sincere.

What does it say? Behold he stood up and tempted him saying, Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life? **Luke 10:25**.

Jesus could see that this man was not really sincere and He loved him too I believe and He had a message for him and Jesus somehow knew that this man was trying to discredit Him and His teachings and was trying to make Him look ridiculous.

One is impressed though with the accuracy of the lawyer's answer in verse 27 there it says after Jesus asked him how do you read in the law. He said thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind and thy neighbour as thyself. **Luke 10:27**.

He gave an accurate answer, in fact Jesus said in essence you are exactly right, do what you just said and you will have eternal life.

We could say end of story right, everything is right? No.

Verse 29 then begins with a disappointing conjunction, **But** he willing to justify himself.

What was his problem, why did this lawyer feel the need to try and justify himself? Well he gives himself away by his question about who is neighbour is, it seems likely he maybe was thinking well if my neighbour means the person living right next door to me I have it pretty easy, if I face problems with the people I live close to I can just move and I won't have to face that problem anymore.

I remember hearing of one man some years ago he was wanting to buy a property but yet he was a little concerned about what kind of neighbours he might have so he asked the owner of the property that he was contemplating buying he said, What are your neighbours like?

And the owner gave a wise answer he said, You know your neighbours are what you make them.

And he was right if you treat other people with Christian love and respect and compassion usually, often they will respond in kind.

But getting back to this idea of self-justification now, how often do we do that to sometimes to justify ourselves.

Maybe my relationship with someone else is a bit strained or my spouse tries to show me an area where I could improve in or the church leaders speak to me, or for teenagers my parents tried to give me some advice that is not exactly welcome or for school students the answer in class that I gave is wrong but there we go again trying to justify ourselves.

And usually would you not agree it is a lack of humility so often when we try to justify ourselves it is a lack of humility.

You know the old cliché if the shoe fits wear it. But that is hard to do is it not, it is hard to do, we don't like to do that but we must be humble, if there is pride working in our hearts God cannot bless us.

Remember **1 Peter 5:5** says to be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

We want to be of those who are clothed with humility so that God can bless us it all of our lives and we do not want Him to be resisting us.

Now moving on secondly, The need.

What was the need in this account?

Well verse 30 tells us about this poor man who was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho a distance of about 20 miles I believe if you study into that it was a much travelled road we are told but a dangerous one too because the road ran through mountainous areas where robbers loafed and could easily hide and notice how barbarous and wicked those robbers were. Not only did they rob him but they injured him so severely that he was in great danger of succumbing to his wounds, **Luke 10:30**.

The lesson from the robbers what is it that we can learn from them?

Well especially boys and girls the lesson is never, never, never steal, never take anything from someone else does not belong to you and that is why

your parents try to teach you to never, never steal, it is not right, it is against God's will, it shows a hardness against other people. Stealing boys and girls is when you take something from another that does not belong to you, so never, never steal.

Now in some cultures especially stealing is not viewed as so serious, in some cultures they call it they say it's just thieving and they don't view it as so harmful as long as you do not hurt anyone in stealing, they say it's just thieving.

But we must remember that thieving or stealing can lead to robbery where force is used and people get hurt, robbery can lead to murder and this poor man probably would have died if the good Samaritan had not come along. Well many people are sitting in the prisons of our land and many other countries today because they started to steal in a small way and it led to great, great sins.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: (and what is the rest of the verse?) But rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

You see the will of God is that we are willing workers supporting ourselves and others so we are making enough of an income hopefully so that we can give to them that needeth and so we do not feel the urge to steal as some who do steal.

Let us thank the Lord that He delivered up us those of us who love the Lord, that He delivered us from this sin of the urge of taking from other people in an unholy way.

I think just now, I think it was John Wesley we read about how many years ago he was returning from a journey from a preaching assignment one evening on his horse through a dark wooded area and sure enough some hard men jumped out and stopped his horse and they robbed him, took all the money he had but he was not injured so he went home.

And before he retired to his bed he prayed to the Lord and he said, Thank you Lord that it was I who was robbed and not I who robbed.

I think that was the right attitude, we can thank the Lord that I suffered this injustice and this loss but thank the Lord that it was not me that caused harm to other people.

Well today there many are needs around us and it is not every day that we see someone lying along the road almost dead like this Samaritan but it is every day that we have the opportunity to respond to others with kindness and compassion, every day we have that opportunity, it does not matter who you are you have the opportunity to respond to someone else in kindness and compassion and in love.

Well that takes us to our third point now: The opportunity.

Verse 31 introduces us to the travelling priest, And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side, [Luke 10:31](#).

Doctor Lightfoot tells us that many priests who officiated at the Temple services and their attendants the Levites had their residences at Jericho and this priest, a religious leader however busy he was forgot his true calling.

I would like you to turn with me to Hebrews chapter 5 and read a verse here that is talking about human priests and we want to see what their true calling was, [Hebrews 5:1-2](#) ¹ For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: ² Who can have compassion (we are talking about Christian compassion you this morning and this priest was obligated to that too he was to) have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

That priest and every one of us are compassed with infirmity too and we need the compassion of others too do we not and we are obligated to show compassion and love and care and understanding to others that need it, let's not forget that.

That was his true calling but so often maybe we forget too.

Well to that priest the wounded man lying beside the road was a problem to avoid and that is exactly what he did, he guided his donkey if he was riding way to the other side of the road and kept right on going, he was a problem avoider, he didn't want to see that, he pretended that he didn't see it so he avoided it, he saw there was an easy way out and he missed a splendid opportunity to render service to his fellow man who so desperately needed help, he missed the opportunity.

How often do you miss the opportunity, how often do I? that is a question to ask ourselves do we see ourselves in that priest. Someone needs help, their car ran out of gas or another sister needs a babysitter for good reason and the list could go on and on, let's not miss an opportunity to do good.

You might be thinking, Well some people might take advantage of us if we go out of our way to help others some people might take advantage of us and we might be inconvenienced in doing it.

Especially on our mission fields those of you who have visited there or served there have been confronted by this question in a more real way maybe what we are in this culture when it seems almost at times like we are taken advantage of and we wonder where the balance is between truly helping a person, helping them in compassion for that other person's good or if we help so much that after while we are not helping the person anymore and we constantly struggle for that balance.

May the Lord give us wisdom and strength in knowing what that balance is but the fact of the matter is God shows us, God tells us to be a compassionate people.

Let's be ready to be inconvenienced, to be kind, to be helpful and be compassionate, it is the way of love the way of Christ and the way of eternal life.

Well the priest travelled on and along comes the Levite, how did he respond? Well he probably looked and said: I wonder what happened to him, why he is even bleeding, (Luke 10:32) well he said maybe these things happen sometimes and off he went and he probably had a story to tell at the supper table to his family.

We could say he was curious but he refused to help.

When there is an accident or a fire or death it is only natural for us to be curious about the circumstances, it is natural, but we must be more than curious we must look for ways that we can help, ways in which we can render assistance to those who have need.

Moving on now to the fourth point: The assistance.

Number one under this point is assistance should be given without respect of persons.

Does it make a difference who it is that needs our help, does that make a difference? Maybe sometimes it does but it should not really, we must give assistance without respect of persons and we could go to James 2 and read those verses there where it tells us that we dare not have respect of persons, **James 2:1-9**.

It says in **Luke 10:33** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*. The Samaritan, a certain Samaritan who? Did he not know better, did he not know that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, did he not know about the deep animosity that existed between the two people? In fact in verse 37 it seems like the lawyer could not even bear to say the word Samaritan, did you ever think about that?, And he said, He that showed mercy on him. **Luke 10:37** He didn't say the Samaritan, it almost seems like he couldn't even bear to say that word

The Samaritan knew all about it but here is a man who needs help and he is probably going to die if I don't do something about it, and maybe the robbers were still in the area and they might take me. But what was it that overrode all those objections and moved that Samaritan to offer assistance? Well verse 33 tells us – compassion. That's what it was compassion, a true heart of love and a deep sense of obligation to help the person who needs help, compassion that's what he had. The Greek word means that he pities him, he had sympathy for, and he had a desire to alleviate his suffering.

Well that is what we need to do too, help alleviate suffering around us, maybe I will just read a verse in first Peter, Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous*. **1 Peter 3:8** Is that you, is that me is that how we relate to each other, is that how we relate to those around us in our communities in our neighbourhoods and those that we meet on the job or wherever it is with true compassion.

Secondly under the assistance.

It should be given even at unexpected or unpleasant times.

Be ready to be inconvenienced I said, it should be given even at unexpected or unpleasant times.

The Samaritan was probably not looking for an injured man to help he probably had a schedule to meet too don't you think, I believe he did.

One man I remember hearing about he told his wife that while he was going to work this morning he saw a woman stranded by the side of the road with a flat tyre on her car and rain pouring down and he said I could not believe that nobody would stop to help and he said I sure would have stopped if I had not been on my way to work.

But you see he kept right on going because he was on his way to work and he did not want to be inconvenienced, he might be late for work and those 10 minutes of time taken of his timecard.

Be ready to be inconvenienced.

Now we know that sometimes we miss an opportunity inadvertently, we don't want to miss it.

Just this past week I was driving north on interstate 83 from Baltimore a busy highway , bumper to bumper traffic almost and here I saw a man standing behind his vehicle and it was obvious he needed help, he was broken down and probably did not have a cellphone and as I passed by I took special notice of him I knew should be stopping and he saw that I noticed him and he looked at me almost pleadingly but the traffic was so heavy and we were moving at the speed limit and it seemed like there was nothing I could do. So sometimes even when we want to help we miss our opportunity but we must want to help.

Well thirdly the assistance we must be ready to sacrifice.

Verses 34 and 35 this man, this good Samaritan went out of his way, he was willing to sacrifice his time, his material goods, he went to him bound up his wounds pouring in oil and wine and set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him and when he had to go he told the keeper, now you spend whatever you need to on this man to help him become well and when I come I will pay you. [Luke 10:34-35](#).

He was willing to sacrifice, the good Samaritan was not thinking about the time or money or discomfort it would cost him.

I do not know how far it was to the inn but the injured man was probably riding and the Samaritan was probably walking but he was willing to sacrifice.

Sometimes it cost us something to help others, are you ready and willing to incur some expense to help someone else? Maybe you have to do this work and lose some wages to help someone who had a misfortune, so be it in order to obey the divine injunction of being compassionate.

Number four of the assistance by bearing one another's burdens.

We want to do that do we not, bear one another's burdens, **Galatians 6:2.**

In the home or wherever it is God wants us to bear one another's burdens we want to do that and I gave this illustration before already but I read it in history and it fits to this point.

This story in the autobiography of Booker T Washington, he was raised as a slave boy and he said as slave boys every year they got a few new shirts made out of flax and he said those shirts are a torture to wear for the first few weeks until they were washed a few times and became soft and he said they were so miserable to wear he said remembers so well when he got new shirts his brother who was just a little older than him offered to wear the shirts when they were new until they were washed and they were softer and more comfortable to wear.

Well that was just a little thing that that boy did for his brother but it illustrates how we need to bear one another's burdens in so many different ways that we have the opportunity to do so.

Number five and last now is building others up in the faith.

The good Samaritan in this deed of compassion has inspired sacrificial ministry all over the world down through the centuries ever since.

The lesson for us?

Let's turn to Romans 15 I would like to read three verses there.

Romans 15:1-3 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let every one of us please *his* neigh-

bour for *his* good to edification. ³ For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

In conclusion now here is a phrase that I think we need to remember, someone said already a certain preacher used this phrase so often, I think someone told him it doesn't matter so much what you think it is what the Bible says, the Bible says that even Christ pleased not Himself. And that is a lesson for you and it is a lesson for me, even Christ pleased not Himself.

So as we took this little test of Christian compassion this morning may we remember that even Christ pleased not Himself but He gave his very own life for your sins and mine so that we could be saved and so now He calls you and He calls me to be a people of love and compassion to each other.

Let's ask the Lord to help us to be more of a compassionate people.

Let's ask the Lord to help His love to flow through our hearts so that we can truly respond to others as we ought to with hearts of love and compassion just as the good Samaritan did.

Let's kneel for prayer



THE MIND OF CHRIST

What do we mean or think of when we say that we have the mind of Christ? In 1 Corinthians 2:16, we read, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

The dictionary says that the mind is "the aggregate processes originating in or associated with the brain, involving conscious and subconscious thought, interpretation of perceptions, insight, imagination, memory, opinion, desire, inclination, and the way or state of thinking."

When we use mind as a verb, it means "to obey," as in, "Mind your leaders." A mind-set is "prevailing attitudes of opinions or an individual."

I am deeply impressed with the study of this subject. And I wonder if too many times I listen to my own mind. Moses, the servant of God, said, "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind" (Numbers 16:28). I am sure

things would have been done differently if Moses would have done it all his own way. But the mind of Moses had to be submitted to the mind of God. This is a beautiful lesson for us.

Romans 12:2 teaches us that we need a renewed mind so that we "may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The renewing of the mind is by regeneration. Then the Lord can direct our mind so that we can think, act, and be as the Lord would have us. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:5-7). This teaches us very clearly that we need to have our mind under the control and leading of the Holy Spirit. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews" (Acts 20:19). Here we have another example of how we need a humble mind.

I feel that one outstanding characteristic of the mind of Christ is that He came to do the will of God. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:6-9). Oh, the mind of Christ! How can we obtain more of this? Humility and obedience portray the mind of Christ. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

To have our mind stayed on the Lord is different than having a mind-set without the Spirit's control. To have our mind stayed on the Lord agrees with what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." To love the Lord with all our mind surely includes our thoughts, devotion, meditations, aims, goals, desires, humility, our spirit and our unity.

There are many Bible verses that speak about the mind, and this article

would be too long if I would write very much on each point. But they are so important that I do want to list some of them.

First Chronicles 28:9 speaks of serving God with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. How beautiful when the mind is willing for God!

Daniel 5:20 speaks of a mind hardened in pride. How sad it is when the mind is hardened. Pride is such an enemy to us.

Mark 5:15 speaks of a man that was restored to his right mind. It is God's will that we have a sound mind, that we are sober minded, and that we are balanced, not being overboard one way or another.

In Luke 12:29, we are taught to not be of a doubtful mind. We need to trust God for everything. Our faith in the Almighty God should be firm.

Acts 17:11 speaks of those who received the Word with all readiness of mind. It is a real blessing to see those who have a ready mind to hear and receive the Word of God.

We can also read of some who were given over to a reprobate mind. This is a very sad condition. May we all be spared this.

It is God's will that His children be of the same mind. In Romans 12:16, it says, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." To be high-minded is displeasing to God, but to be humble receives His promise of blessing.

It is God's will "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6). Also, in 1 Corinthians 1:10, it reads, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." To be of one mind and to be perfectly joined together in the same judgment requires that we have the mind of Christ. When we all have the mind of Christ, we will be in unity.

Hebrews 8:10 speaks of our era of time, when God has made a new covenant with His people. It says, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." This is indeed a real blessing that God's

laws are in our mind and written in our hearts. It makes me think of the Psalmist who said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).

There are certain requirements for us to obtain this blessing.

1 Peter 4:1-2, it says, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." This suffering in the flesh means a true repentance and turning from the old life. It means being alive in the Spirit, as we read in Ephesians 4:22-24, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

It is so important for us to permit God to direct our minds in His will. Then we can truly live in newness of life with a renewed mind. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Brother Edward



THE BEGINNINGS OF APOSTASY

It is evident in the Scriptures that within and from the Christian church there would be serious departures from true faith. There are warnings about it; there are descriptions of the extent it would arrive at. And there are references to beginnings that were being manifested already in the time of the apostles.

Paul said to the brethren at Ephesus, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). He wrote to Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1). To the Thessalonian Christians, he said, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a

falling away first ... " (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

In the verses that follow, Paul wrote about a "man of sin" being revealed, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, sheaving himself that he is God." That is apostasy in its ultimate form!

We must realize that apostasy did not then, nor will it now, begin on that level in the church. In his time, however, the Apostle Paul evidently was seeing something that was moving in that direction, for he said, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." There is an awesome mystery in all this. John the Revelator, seeing the fulfilment of this mystery, said, "I wondered with great admiration" (Revelation 17:6).

The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the establishing of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the spread of the faith as explained in Scripture is a thrilling story. But before the Book closes, we are made aware of foreign elements that were rising and making themselves felt. Paul made mention of "Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan" (1 Timothy 1:20). This could have been the same Alexander as "the coppersmith [who] did [him] much evil" (2 Timothy 4:14). John the apostle referred to "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence ... prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9-10).

In the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, the departure from Christian principles is striking. The message was clear that unless restoration would take place, these brethren and churches could not endure.

In observing the operation of the church, the march of truth through the centuries, we see a continued battle. The church has continually struggled to prevent departures from taking place, to save herself from departures from truth and from apostasies that developed. The losses, however, have often been great and painful. It has sometimes happened that the apostate elements have come into great prominence and have nearly monopolized the scene, as happened in the fourth century of the Christian era. We believe, however, that somewhere true faith always survived, though often in an obscure remnant.

We would be most unwise to assume that our times are not conducive to apostasy taking place in the church. Indeed, in view of the extremely effective and prevalent means of communication in our day and the many subtle

and pernicious voices we are subjected to, we must be mindful that we are in perilous times.

The roots and beginnings of apostasy are in any neglect of the commandments of God and disobedience to the Holy Spirit—in any lukewarmness. As long as we are able to recognize and deal with them on time, they cannot bring about serious or general departures. But whenever it happens that an area of problem and disobedience develops that we are powerless to truly correct, we are getting in trouble in that direction.

Among the many warnings that we can gather from the Scripture, let us look at a few that indicate an apostate development.

Jude wrote about something that was facing them: Certain men had crept in unawares, and he termed the process that was taking place as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4). In other words, they must have been placing under the canopy of grace that which was not under grace and emphasizing grace in a way that gave room for serious inconsistencies. When our understanding of grace brings about permissiveness, we are in danger. We are going wrong.

Another warning to look at is the teaching of the apostle Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6. There Paul teaches moderation in financial affairs and warns against the desire for riches. Those who have coveted after money "have erred from the faith." An error had introduced itself among them in that their gain was to them a sign of God being with them: "supposing that gain is godliness" (1 Timothy 6:5). Sometimes there are those who feel comforted and confirmed in their material success or riches. Where that becomes evident or excessive, the instruction is: "from such withdraw thyself." Concerns have been expressed that this may be an area where we have been less successful in maintaining scriptural injunctions as practiced in the church in times past.

Truth is maintained by keeping a straight course, when we "turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7). We do not prevent apostasy by being extreme. The danger in advocating ultra-conservative or too narrow of views is probably not so much in that those views will prevail, though that can happen. Often the greater damage is in causing positions to polarize, and it becomes more difficult to bring about correction.

Apostasy can find an inroad because its early manifestations are appealing. But in its more developed form, it causes much pain, especially as the brotherhood becomes subjected to the tossing about that it brings. We

probably have little idea of the distress we would face in serious departures from the faith as families and congregations would polarize in conflicting situations. But the greatest loss would be that the plain way of salvation would be confused. We all have vital reasons to resist departure from the faith. We all have a crucial part in preventing it, too.

We avoid departure from truth by living deeply committed lives to Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "Casting down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." There is no departure from the truth in that instruction!

Verse 6 of that same chapter goes on to say, "And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." So the first thing is dedicated, self-denied personal lives before God. From there, it goes to our mutual care for each other by encouragement, admonition, reproof, and exhortation.

The discipline of the church is a critical factor and might be called the final line of defence against departure from the truth. We can exhort, we can preach, we can plead, and it all has its place. But if it is not sustained by the proper application of church discipline, including, when necessary, excommunication and the ban, we will lose the battle.

Yes, that is where the battle has often been won or lost. We know the importance of it. Under test, however, we are sometimes inclined to weaken. It is easy enough to have conviction in this when the crisis point is far away. But when it comes close to home—when it is our parents, our brothers and sisters, or our children—that is when we show whether we really believe that it is God's remedy for departure from Him.

Inasmuch as a general slackness or drift overtakes us, we need to be able to come to a general expression and rededication to the course of truth. As ministers and deacons, we often need to renew our commitment to our calling. As parents, we often need our vision renewed as to how we want the church to be for the salvation and prosperity of our families, so that there is always a sure refuge to point our children to, even if some have taken their own way. Young Christians need to deepen their consecration and faith, with a concern for how conditions in the church are now and will be in a future day.

The rewards for maintaining truth and purity are beyond computation. It is then that our fellowship is sweet and the brotherhood is meaningful. It is

there that "the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133:3). Only in that way can we live in safety.

Jude wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).



CALLED BY HIS GRACE

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" John 6:44. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" Ephesians 2:1. "I was found of them that sought me not" Romans 10:20. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" Romans 10:17

Jesus brought Saul to an astonishing repentance when He called him by His grace (Acts 9:6). God has concluded all under sin that He might show forth His mercy. When Saul was converted completely to the gospel, he was freed from the inherited bondage of sin. He was now open to a new birthright by the blood of Christ. We have all sold our birthright in Adam's transgression, and we cannot get it back by our own efforts. This is why we need to be born again by the Spirit and the Word.

Esau is a type of the condemnation under the binding law of God. Esau sold his birthright, and it was not retrievable, though he sought it with tears and repentance. Jesus took the curse and condemnation of the law to the grave so we could be made free from the prison of sin and death. Christ came to call sinners to repentance. The sinner must answer that call by turning to the Lord and calling on His name to be saved (Romans 10:13). They must turn to God and do works meet for repentance (Acts 26:20). God granted the gentiles repentance unto life (Acts 10:43-44). While Peter was speaking, they received remission of sins by believing in Jesus' name. The Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word.

God poured the Spirit of grace upon those at Pentecost, and they recognized that their wicked hands killed the Christ, the Reconciler of men unto God. We are all guilty of the blood of Christ by virtue of our sins, punishable by death under the curse and condemnation of the Law. We are all born with the sentence of death through Adam and Eve's lust.

David's sin is twice an allegory of lust unto death, first he lusted unto adultery, and secondly taking innocent blood. This is a likeness of our sins. David should have given his life for his sins according to the law. So should we have been stoned. David acknowledged his sin, and God put his sin away and withheld death. But the law that was against David had to "die" in Uriah, or David would have had to be stoned. Otherwise Bathsheba would have had two husbands.

The accusation of the law against us because of our sins was quieted in Christ so we could be free to be married to Him. That is the gospel of our salvation (Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 3:1-14, 24-25). Uriah died in the heat of the battle so David could go free. Jesus died in the heat of the battle for our sins so we could go free. Those who fall away from this truth become guilty of the blood of Christ afresh (1 Corinthians 11:27; Hebrews 6:6). Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith. If we fall away from this truth, we become wilful sinners again and forget that we were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) There is no other sacrifice for us, and it is impossible to renew such a one to repentance any other way (Hebrews 6:6).

Out of David's lust, a child was born. This child had to die. All our sins are conceived out of inherent lust, and they must die in Christ. Even our thoughts must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). We still have to do with the flesh, but we do not let it have its way. We do not let our human reasoning and imaginations carry us away into worldly ambitions and desires.

David sorrowed for his child. When the Spirit of grace is poured upon us through believing the gospel, we become sorrowful for our lust. Our hearts are pricked to realize that it took the innocent blood of Christ to atone for our sins. At this point, the sinner comes for forgiveness by the gift of faith to the One who is bearing his sins. This is the gospel. How can this be? Peter said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope ..." (1 Peter 1:3). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Godly sorrow that is born out of the grace of God will never need to be repented of. It will move one to thankfulness and deep gratitude. "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10).

God gave David a second son by Bathsheba. This son was freeborn. He was a type of the kingdom of Christ: his kingdom was peaceable. All those who have been called by the Spirit and the Word are peaceable. They partake of the nature of the One of whom they are born. Those things that are conceived out of our new heart are born out of the Spirit of liberty—they are not of the flesh.

When David's life was spared by God's mercy because of his penitent spirit, it caused a deep gratitude in him. In the Psalms, we read many of his confessions and testimonies, many pointing to Christ. When David confessed Christ in Psalm 16, did he not also see how God spared his life from hell?

In our communion services we are reminded of the grace of God giving us remission of sins through Calvary. We are reminded how that "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus ... the life also of Jesus ... [is] made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:10). Our soul was doomed to hell because of sin, but Jesus came and redeemed us from hell when He entered into our grave of sin. We now can say with David, Peter, and all the saints, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ..." (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

May the grace of God be with His Church

Brother Lewis

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