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Jesus was on His way from Galilee to Jerusalem, taking the direct route through Samaria. As He entered a village, possibly on the border of Samaria and Galilee, a group of ten lepers standing some distance away recognized Him. With one voice, the ten called out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

Seemingly without any show of compassion or even a promise to heal them, Jesus simply commanded, "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." Immediately, the ten lepers turned in obedience to find the priests. And their faith in Christ was not disappointed, for "as they went, they were cleansed." Ten hopeless lepers wondrously felt Christ's mercy and His miraculous power to heal. Ten were freed from the ravages of leprosy, a disease that eroded the body and reduced men from respected members of the community to social outcasts. Ten were given a new lease on life.

But only one came back to say thank-you. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan."

Jesus was disappointed. "Were there not ten cleansed? ... There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" Luke 17:17-18.

Where are the nine today? Ten out of ten line up to receive the gifts God daily loads upon His children: fresh air and sunshine, abundant food and clothing, family and friends, freedom from poverty and oppression. Can it be that only one out of ten pauses to thank the Giver?

Where are the nine today? Most likely they are among those who believe they deserve their blessings. In the Bible account, the one showing gratitude was a Samaritan. The implication is that the nine were Jews, the chosen people, the possessors of the truth, the keepers of God's Law. And, too often, they saw themselves as superior and deserving of good things.

Could it be that the more blessings a person receives, the less he blesses God? The "unblessed" appreciate the little they have. The nine believe God owes them something. They may not even think of saying thank-you.

Many times we do not fully appreciate our blessings until we lose them. The Pilgrims who observed their first Thanksgiving festival in 1621 did so after a terrible winter of starvation and disease that took half of their num-

ber, including fourteen of the twenty-six heads of homes, and fifteen of the eighteen married women. Is this what it would take to make us truly grateful for our family members, for life, and for health?

Where are the nine today? They will almost surely be found among the discontented, disgruntled, and disillusioned. The unhappy truth is that those who are not grateful for the good things they have received spend their lives chasing the horizon in search of something that satisfies. Those who take the time to count their blessings are the only ones who experience the joy that God intends for all His children. Not only is gratitude a spiritual duty; it is also the only way to joy and mental well-being.

Where are the nine today? They are probably among those who are not enjoying church life very much. Though they have been cleansed from their spiritual leprosy, their ingratitude blights their experience of Christian community. Such persons need to learn some lessons in thankfulness from the apostle Paul, who had learned to be grateful for imperfect saints in imperfect churches. In epistle after epistle, he shows that his thanksgiving for those troubled, first-generation churches was...

- A priority—"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all" (Romans 1:8).
- Unceasing—"Wherefore I also ... cease not to give thanks for you" (Ephesians 1:15, 16).
- An obligation—"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

Even to a church facing division, immorality, lawsuits, and false doctrine, Paul wrote, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him" (1 Corinthians 1:4-5).

Of course, Paul's gratitude did not mean that he excused and ignored sin, but it did mean that he would not insist that all problems be solved or perfection reached before he would appreciate his church and give thanks.

Where are the nine today? Perhaps the real question for us this November is, Where am I—standing among the ungrateful majority or with the one who returned to give thanks?

—*Brother Melvin*

The Faith—Our Trust

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Timothy 6:20). A seasoned, battle-scarred church leader wrote this appeal to a young, perhaps somewhat hesitant and apprehensive, church leader. This appeal was bathed in prayer, written with trembling hands, and stained with the tears of the one who wrote it. Paul was concerned that Timothy would realize what was at stake. Did he understand that he was a link in the chain of perpetuating something of tremendous value?

What is a trust? In the financial world, it is a legal arrangement or instrument through which funds, property, or other securities are held, preserved, and managed for growth or distribution. In the spiritual realm, the trust is an arrangement through which the true riches are deposited, preserved, managed for increase, and distributed. In both realms, financial and spiritual, a trustee or steward is responsible for the riches in the trust. Paul had been a good trustee of this trust. He was now transferring this responsibility to Timothy. The grave responsibility associated with this trust is evident in his appeal, "O Timothy."

A trust should have an official name. The official name of the trust given to Timothy is "the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). This is not to be confused with a faith. The many faiths today should not be confused with the one true faith. The faith was "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). "Once delivered" has reference to the initial deposit. At this change in trusteeship, a part of good business practice would involve taking inventory of the contents of the trust. What were the items in the trust? When Timothy took charge of the trust, what items of faith were committed to his charge?

The faith is life changing. This life-changing faith is "according to the promise of life" (2 Timothy 1:1). This new life begins with the new birth. It changes our standing with God (Romans 5:1) because it changes a sinner into a saint. The changed person testifies, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought / Since Jesus came into my heart."

The faith is both personal and corporate. It is "in thee" (2 Timothy 1:5), and it is "with them" (2 Timothy 2:22). Personal conviction and group voice complement each other. When the individual conscience is open to be educated and stabilized by group voice, a corporate understanding and application is embraced. The faith restrains individualism and imparts accountability. Each member feels responsible to keep plenty of oil in his lamp.

The faith does not change. It spans the generations (2 Timothy 1:5). Indeed, it meets the needs of a thousand generations. It was once delivered,

and it is forever settled. No need for change confronts the faith. It was decreed by an omniscient God, and paid for and deposited by an unchanging Savior (Hebrews 13:8).

This unchanging faith that Timothy was to keep is quite different from the faith that many are promoting today. Their faith is given to change. But the more it changes, the less it is worth. Instead of a faith that overcomes the world, this feigned faith is overcome by the world.

The faith is based upon rightly dividing the Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul borrowed this illustration from his occupation. To rightly divide means to cut straight so that the pieces would fit together when the tent was sewn. Cutting straight requires careful study. For example, some teach that Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are not for the church today. But when we rightly divide the Scriptures, we understand that the teachings of Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are emphasized and enlarged upon in the Epistles. Without question, these teachings are addressed to the church and cannot be cut out from the Gospel.

The faith creates an identity (2 Timothy 1:8). It makes people not "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." It subscribes to a planned pattern of separation. Those who embrace the faith do not cloud that identity by wearing casual or worldly clothing.

The faith is evangelical (2 Timothy 1:8). It gives a testimony to the world. Adherents of the faith declare the Gospel with an aggressive outreach program.

The faith produces a caring and sharing brotherhood (2 Timothy 1:1-18). It shuns commercial insurance and government handouts. Adherents of the faith believe that "it is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8).

The faith prepares us for the future. Paul had kept the faith, and the faith had kept him. He was therefore ready for his departure (2 Timothy 4:6-8). The faith makes ready a people prepared for the Lord.

These true riches of the trust, along with those future riches that are not yet tabulated for us, inspire us to keep this trust of the faith. "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Timothy 1:14).

Brother Donald



Recounting Our 4029 Blessings

Travel with me back to 1989. Following months of corresponding with congressmen and Social Security officials, a meeting was scheduled for January 24, 1989, with conservative groups. These groups were seeking to have the 4029 privilege extended beyond their self-employed members. They desired that an employee who worked for a 4029 holder and held like convictions would also be granted this privilege.

The spokesman for the conservative cause was Andrew Kinsinger, then chairman of the Old Order Amish Steering Committee. Lawyers for the IRS initially presented very complicated formulas, but Andrew was pressing for a simple approach.

The IRS officials finally agreed to this approach, but they did not feel it was possible to gain congressional approval. Yet those appealing knew that God could move the king's heart. On November 21, 1989, the United States Congress passed a Technical Correction Bill making this simple approach legal and functional.

Even without this broadened dimension of the 4029 provision and the associated financial benefits, we would be obligated to follow the Scriptural principles of providing for our own and caring for one another within the brotherhood. Having been granted this privilege, we should live with a constant awareness of the convictions we expressed and the commitments we made when we signed the 4029 form.

When God in this way overruled for the good of His people, what groundwork was laid to help preserve our historic faith? We do see through a glass darkly, but we note the following rays of blessing:

1. Living by faith, one chief characteristic of our lives, is kept central. We daily look to God to supply all our needs through our own labors, through the support of faithful families, and finally through the brotherhood. By faith all governmental subsidies are shunned, and a clear, noble Christian approach is kept vital.
2. Since the two-kingdom concept under-girded the 4029 appeal, God opened the pathway that allows us to continue living as citizens of our heavenly country.
3. Family ties are kept vital and strong because we look upon the care of the aging and infirmed as a God-given privilege not to be infringed upon by the state.
4. We believe that the call to diligent labor and the resultant work ethic extends throughout our entire pilgrimage. Even the aging and infirmed among us desire to contribute as much as they can for as long as they can.

In that process God spares us from lapsing into a soft or even indulgent lifestyle as age comes on.

5. The pursuit of a simple, frugal yet giving, caring, and loving lifestyle is enhanced under the 4029 privilege.

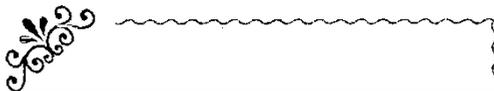
6. By our example of godly contentment within the bounds of this practical Scriptural privilege, a rich spiritual legacy is extended to those around us and those following us.

7. A deep, settled peace permeates our hearts as the privilege of living by faith and by the dictates of our conscience is continued.

By extending this privilege, God has kept open to His people the doors of faith, duty, toil, and worship. We praise Him for this blessing.

Brother Edward

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. . . . And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me (Nehemiah 2:4, 8).



***Minutes of the Conferring Fellowship Meeting
Held at Blue Rock Mennonite Church, September 2016***

Brother David opened the meeting. Brother Nevin led us in singing "Holy and Reverend Is the Name" and "Enter, Jesus Bids Thee Welcome."

Brother Daniel conducted the devotional, reading from Colossians 4.

He noted four teachings for the church today.

- 1) We need to be a thankful people.
- 2) We need to recognize the way God is knitting us together.
- 3) We need to live a disciplined life.
- 4) We need to stand in the will of God.

Brother Daniel led us in a kneeling prayer.

The minutes of the April 14, 2016, conferring meeting were read.

Brother Paul brought the first message, titled Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God, taken from 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

1. The imperative of holiness (Hebrews 12:14)

A. God is the standard of holiness (1 Peter 1:13-15).

- B. Holiness brings rest to the church (James 3:17).
- C. We seek to help others to be holy (Colossians 1:22, 28).
- II. Promises to the holy
 - A. God promised to be with us and be our God (2 Corinthians 6:16).
 - B. He will be our Father, who cares, protects, and keeps us (verse 18).
- III. Conditions for receiving the promises
 - A. Come out.
 - B. Be separate from the world.
 - C. Touch not the unclean.
 - D. Cleanse yourselves from filthiness of flesh and spirit.
- IV Present-day issues
 - A. Maintaining the practice of the Holy Kiss
 - B. Strengthening the ordinance of Holy Matrimony
 - C. Carefulness in holy living
- V Helps for perfecting holiness
 - A. Stay with the tried and proven.
 - B. Promote strong homes.
 - C. Maintain the standards.
 - D. Avoid what leads to evil.
 - E. Listen to the voice of others.
 - E Be willing to suffer.
 - G. Implore the Lord's help.

After singing one verse of "Open the Wells of Salvation,"

Brother Allen brought a message on Article

V of the Articles of Faith, "Of Jesus Christ."

We need an accurate understanding of Jesus in order to be saved. We must believe what the Bible says about Him. He is the central figure of time and eternity.

1. He is the eternal Son of God (Matthew 17:5).
2. He is the perfect God-man (Philippians 2:5-11), made in the likeness of men, yet very God.
3. He is the Word of God (John 1:18). He reveals God to man.
4. He is our Savior (John 4:42). There is no salvation apart from Him.
5. He is our Mediator (1 Peter 3:18). He brings us back to God.
6. He is victorious over death (Ephesians 1:19, 20).
7. He ascended to glory (Ephesians 1:20) and is set at the right hand of God.
8. He is interceding for us today (Hebrews 7:25).

We then sang one verse of "Saviour Who Died for Me."

Brother Lynn spoke on Corrective Discipline—A Means of Teaching.

I. The meaning of corrective discipline (2 Timothy 4:2)

A. Reprove—bring the fault home to the offender

B. Rebuke—less reasoning and more authority

C. Exhort—implies authority to establish and enforce standards

11. The methods of corrective discipline

A. Personnel selection from those who support the church

B. Public statements about an issue

C. Public acknowledgment of wrongdoing

D. Restriction from Communion

E. Excommunication

III. The authority of the church to exercise discipline

A. Matthew 16:19—The keys of the kingdom given to the church

1. The authority to teach and apply Scripture

2. The authority to enforce

B. Matthew 18—Excommunication enjoined

C. Hebrews 13:17—Obedience commanded

IV The value of corrective discipline

A. To help individual members mature

B. To help the individual face the flesh

C. To aid the understanding of Biblical doctrine

D. To preserve a lifestyle that aids in preserving Bible principles

E. To maintain the purity of the church

E To restore the erring

G. To preserve the vision of what the church is and strives to be

At the close of the message, Brother Lynn led in a kneeling prayer. After singing "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour," Brother Paul led in a closing prayer.

The afternoon session opened with Brother Daryl moderating. Brother Philip led us in singing "Thine Is the Kingdom" and "We Now Have Met to Worship Thee."

For our devotional meditation, Brother Daniel drew our minds to the story of Moses and his wise choices. He referred to Hebrews 11 and Acts 7. Moses was faithful in his generation and we must be in our day.

After a kneeling prayer Brother Melvin gave the secretary's report.

Brother Mark gave the first message of the afternoon, titled Principles for Ministerial Teamwork. We need teamwork because the work is greater than any one person can accomplish and because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. He drew his thoughts from Exodus 17:8-16.

I. Teamwork's concentration

- A. Wise leadership keeps God's part and man's part in focus.
- B. Wise leadership faces multiple issues—battle, thirsty people, tired leaders.
- C. Wise leaders need insight because the obvious issue is not always the heart of the problem.

II. Teamwork's cooperation

- A. Their labor must be divided properly.
- B. Each must let others do their part of the work without micromanaging.
- C. Each must do his part.
- D. Others beside the leadership team are necessary.

III. Teamwork's cohesion

Leadership may not be divided—it will quickly be seen.

- A. Joshua–Moses team
- B. Moses–Aaron–Hur team
- C. Aaron–Hur team

IV Teamwork's communication

- A. There was a planned division—Joshua would fight Amalek.
- B. There was an implemented plan—the planned work was done.
- C. There was an adjusted plan—it required communication.
- D. There were long-range plans.

V Teamwork's commitment

- A. The enemy will not go away.
- B. The battle of life is for keeps.
- C. All must be willing to give all they have.

VI. Teamwork's continuity

- A. We face a long battle—we must not tire facing issues.
- B. The rod of God symbolized the eternal God's presence and power.
- C. We must plan for succession of leadership and policies. The SI #14 program was written down for the future.
- D. The work requires steady hands.
- E. We must depend on Jehovah-nisi—the Lord my banner.

A number of comments were shared in the open discussion period. We need strong homes that do not rely only on the institutions of the church. When does cooperation become compromise? We should take our work se-

riously but not ourselves too seriously. We build confidence by not exploiting others' weaknesses but by covering for each other. There was some discussion on the ellipsis in Article 5, "On Jesus Christ."

After singing one verse of "O Where Are Kings and Empires Now," Brother Harry brought the concluding message, The Church—the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

I. A high view of the church

A. It begins with a high view of Christ.

B. There are many beautiful New Testament descriptions of the church.

C. We should read the ministerial qualification passages a few times each year. Many of these qualities are learned at home, and mothers play a big part in this.

II. The ground of the truth

A. We are made from the dust of the ground.

B. Ground is the fertile place for God's seeds to grow.

C. The truth is planted, grows, and produces fruit in the church. In the church we sit in sympathy, we repent in dust, we stand on holy ground, and so forth.

III. The pillar of the truth

A pillar is a visible part of the strength of a structure.

A. A place of strength and beauty like Solomon's temple

B. A place of worship—the pillar of stone altars in the Old Testament

C. A place of witness

D. A place of defined boundaries

E. A place of permanence

We make it real by behaving as we ought in the church. We must believe the truth of the place of the church, maintain a good conscience and unfeigned faith, exercise charity, and be good soldiers and prayer warriors. We must be God-made men.

Brother Harry closed with this thought, "God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, / The courage to change the one I can, / And the wisdom to know it's me."

Thanking God for an inspirational day, we sang "The Church's One Foundation," and Brother Glenn Martin led us in a closing prayer.

Submitted by Brother Melvin, secretary Brother Daryl, assistant secretary

Church Committee Report

Bible Schools

Another season of Bible school is fast approaching. This work requires planning and preparation, which means much effort goes into the work of Bible school. The Board and all involved are jealous that this privilege would promote, in every way it can, the transmission of truth.

Plans are laid for four terms at Ashland and three terms at Numidia. Presently there is plenty of room for students in the December term at Ashland. Teacher response has been better than some years but more are needed to fill the vacant opportunities. An expanding church requires expanding sacrifice. While local demands are real, this churchwide blessing requires churchwide staffing. The blessing and balance are not just a student benefit but a benefit to the staff as well. May God's direction and blessing be your portion of contribution.

Planning is also required for the often-unnoticed areas of work. The trustee committee handles most of the maintenance needs that call for attention. Cook and cook helper positions need to be filled. We are grateful for the willing response and volunteers for this work. Someone must manage the food supplies and organize the food in the kitchens and freezers. Bills must be paid. Funds should be available for the normal and the unplanned expenses. We are grateful for the support of and appreciation for these many times taken-for-granted roles that help the Bible school accomplish its mission of instruction in truth.

Applications indicate stronger interest in the Numidia terms than Ashland terms. We ask parents to direct their youth in respecting and appreciating the effort that is involved in organizing student applications and placement in the various terms. Presently about 653 acceptance letters have been sent in response to applications.

This work of the Bible school is an agency of the church. Our Discipline states, "The brotherhood should participate in and promote such agencies for teaching, fellowship, and Christian service that are consistent for the spiritual benefit of the brotherhood.... These agencies include ... Bible schools."

The Board desires your participation. This includes diligently teaching and applying practical separation at home, supporting the teachings of church leaders, and directing youth in faithfulness to God and the church. We appreciate your prayers and your financial support. Without strong, faithful, humble homes, agencies of the church are at a very serious disadvantage. Youth who come to Bible school with a desire to grow more like

the Master are the material that God can develop for use in His kingdom.
Brother Kevin For the Bible School Board



Wholesome Marriage Relationships (Part 5)

Meeting Family Pressures

Building a house brings many decisions. Do we want a window here? What size shall this closet be? Is this the right color to paint the walls? The very magnitude of decisions to be made can be stressful. Adding to the pressure is the fact that many of those decisions are not easily reversed once they are implemented.

Homebuilding, too, brings many decisions for a couple. Where should we live? Which church should we join? Is this a wise place to take our family? Is this a suitable choice of occupation? Homebuilding decisions are even more abundant and far-reaching than house building ones.

Whether house building or homebuilding, some basic principles will enable a marriage not only to survive but also to flourish under these pressures. A successful couple must ..

Follow the plan carefully. Following the details of a good plan prevents mistakes, both in house building and homebuilding. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7). The husband who bestows honor on his wife by word and deed provides an antidote to the weariness and discouragement that motherhood sometimes brings. "And [let] the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33). The unflagging respect of a godly wife for her husband also aids in combating the pressures of fatherhood.

Work together. No marriage will weather the stresses of homebuilding without a determination to work together. A successful, godly couple works together at filling their complementary homebuilding roles. When a godly husband leads with love and a godly wife submits and supports with love, their marriage will be able to hold up under the greatest of family pressures.

Resolve differences. Differing opinions are to be expected whether a couple builds a house or a home. Disagreements are not a marriage fail-

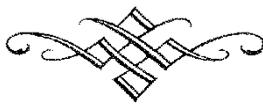
ure—but ignoring them is. For a marriage to succeed, these differences need to be resolved promptly and prayerfully. A couple who diligently works through disagreements in a godly way becomes "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7).

Stay objective about mistakes. Both house builders and homebuilders make mistakes. Under the pressures of building houses and rearing families, these mistakes can be difficult to accept. Disappointment, anger, or pride can easily blow a mistake completely out of proportion. A godly couple is willing to do their best to right their mistakes. Together they ask God's forgiveness. But they are also willing to move on bravely with the faith that God's blessing can turn any mistake into a success.

Homebuilding done God's way brings strength and rest to a marriage. A godly couple should guard against allowing human efforts to run ahead of a simple faith in God. Instead, as they follow His way, they can trustingly experience the sleep of God's beloved (Psalm 127:2).

Be willing to seek advice. Sooner or later most house builders encounter a challenge that requires someone else's advice. As the saying goes, "Success is not knowing all the answers, but knowing the people who have the answers." Homebuilders, as well, benefit from others' perspective and wisdom. When the pressures mount and the questions seem to come faster than the answers, a wise couple will humbly reach out for advice. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

—*Brother Keith*



SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

- **If** you woke up this morning in good health, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- **If** you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are more blessed than 500 million people in this world.
- **If** you can attend a church service without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than 3 billion people in the world.

- **If** you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, and a comfortable place to sleep, you are richer than most of the people in this world.
- **If** you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and in a spare change dish someplace, you are more wealthy than 90 percent of the world's people.
- **If** you can read these words and the Word of life, you are more blessed than millions who cannot read and do not own a Bible.



PRAYER POINT

*“The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much”*

Praise God for the abundant spiritual blessings and innumerable material blessings we enjoy. Thank God for the privilege to worship Him freely.

Pray for the Ministers' Bible Study Fellowship and the Christian Day School Institute at Ashland Bible School. Pray that these meetings would be a blessing to the church at large, to the ministry, and to the teachers and students in our schools.

Pray for the many revival meetings that will be held this month. Pray for those who preach the Word. Pray that the Word would bear fruit in the lives of the hearers.

Pray for the new in the faith. When they "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word," they grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Pray for the elderly among us in the sunset years of life. Pray that they would be faithful until the end, and that their needs would be met.

