



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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The Blessings of an Eternal Perspective

It is interesting as we notice the change in the life of Paul. We begin with Paul pursuing his own agenda and looking for others to support him. We later find him going in and out among God's people. That is one of the changes that come with conversion. We surrender our identity and in a sense lose our identity in Christ and in the body of believers.

In Luke 6 we have, I suppose,

what we call a parallel passage to the Sermon on the Mount. We assume that it is the same occasion that is being recorded coming from a different writer with a little bit of a different perspective. Of course, it is a different wording, and it is not quite as detailed as the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. Notice the word "now," is used in verse 21, "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.

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Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.” It emphasizes the present against the future. We could say it contrasts that.

A part of Christian experience and Christian hope is that we relate the present to the future. The present issues into the future. If we focus on the present and it is about as big as our circle goes, we only see the present. We will act and choose differently. However, if we have this eternal perspective — that what is pres-

ent — what we see, hear, feel, and experience is temporary and will issue into something — then we choose accordingly. It helps us to relate to the “here-and-now.”

Luke 6:20–26, “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. (22) Blessed are

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ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. (23) Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. (24) But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. (25) Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (26) Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

It is interesting sometimes in life as we think of the Beatitudes, and the blessedness that come. There are certain things that we can do, certain attitudes that we are called to have, and certain ways that we relate and respond that Jesus says will bring a blessing. Therefore, when we want a blessing we live accordingly. Then the blessing comes. Maybe in between the times that we do not quite measure up then we miss the blessing. While that is partly true, we may subconsciously develop, or perceive, a neutral in life. Thus, if I am not living up to the blessedness that is promised here then I missed

the blessing and it is simply kind of neutral. Here it impressed me how that after Jesus gives these "blesseds" then He turns around and comes across the same line again and says "woe." Thus, there is no neutral ground.

It is said that the Beatitudes are the gateway to blessedness. There is another gateway that is opened here too, to that of woe and damnation. Let us notice a few of these beatitudes and comment a bit. Verse 21 speaks of the weeping. I thought of the verse in the Scriptures that says, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Our perspective is that we are not overly burdened by the weeping we experience now, but we know that it is a light affliction. Verse 22 is one that we probably can all identify with. Toward the end of the verse it says, "when men . . . reproach you, and cast out your name as evil." We all are concerned about our reputation.

We know that character is more important than reputation. Nevertheless, regardless of my character I am also concerned about my reputation. If men cast out your name as evil, it does not feel good. It is not fair. It is not just. There is something in us that rises up and we might say that "You can do a lot of other

things to me, but do not mar my name, or cast out my name for evil.” We are quite self-protective of that. It is right that we are concerned about our reputation. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches” (Proverbs 22:1). It is important that we are concerned about the name that we have. However, Jesus says that when people do this unjustly “for the Son of man’s sake” — when this happens to us because we are living for Christ and doing what is right then “rejoice in that day.” Rejoice in the day that your name is counted evil of. Why do we rejoice? It is because of verse 23. “for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.” Do we have as eternal perspective as strongly as we ought to have that we can bear some of these injustices and go on without it unduly affecting us?

In verse 24 we switch to the woes. There is no neutral ground. We have started out in verse 20 with “Blessed be ye poor.” Now in verse 24 “woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.” We, in our lives of affluence, very potentially are caught in this woe. There is a snare that goes with abundance. Verse 25 says, “Woe unto you that are full!” In a temporal sense we are rich and we are full, and it is a very poten-

tial snare. I thought of the verse in Revelation to the church of Laodicea where they said, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). A woe was pronounced on them.

The end of verse 25 says, “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.” I thought again of the expression of the Scriptures of “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22). There is a place for joy, merriness, and laughter but in a very careful way. This can easily issue into excesses. I think that is what is in focus here — those who are excessive in the laughter. Maybe we would think of the entertainment that society offers and those who are caught up in this shall mourn and weep. Let us be careful.

Maybe this would be a special appeal to youth. We think of youth as having a proneness to the frivolity of life because of where they are in life and their inexperience in life. Their perspective of a whole lifetime ahead of them and the strength of the experience can get them caught up in the frivolity. We want to be careful as we enjoy

youth, health and boundless energy that we remember that we take an eternal perspective in life.

The last one yet in verse 26 is again very real to all of us. How many of you would prefer to be spoken well of, or have any desire for that? Does it make any difference to you how men talk about you? Or, are you simply living for Christ and you are looking for God's approval? Is it beside the point what my fellow-men have to say? No, we do not relate that way. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" Sometimes we go out of our way or we are especially careful to keep this being well spoken of men. Again, it is a snare. It is proclaimed as a snare and "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"

There were prophets in the Old Testament who were told by their people to "speak unto us smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10). Some fell to that temptation. They spoke those smooth things so that they would be well spoken of. We have come to know that really is not the best way for one in authority to maintain his respect — to speak only what his followers want him to say. Parents have learned this too. We like to maintain the good will of our children,

and so maybe we step around some issues and sidestep some things that should be addressed because we want to maintain their good will, otherwise, if we have not the goodwill of our children we will lose our effectiveness with them. While there is some truth in that, we need to be careful that we are not emphasizing and focussing on this thing of wanting others to speak well of us, whether parents or church leaders. We need to be careful about being overly concerned about keeping the goodwill of men.

Verse 19 says "the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." The multitude having seen what Jesus wanted to offer had a desire to touch Him. We know what Jesus has to offer and we desire to touch Him. It is not a once and done thing upon our conversion. We continue to want to touch Jesus and be in touch with Him. May that happen in our worship as the Word is preached that it would be our opportunity to reach out, that Jesus (in a sense) will be passing by in our service. We have the opportunity to reach out and to touch. May we do our part.

Scriptural Attitudes in Times of National Election

God, in His divine providence has made provision for man's government, care, and protection basically through two institutions. For spiritual need, provision, and protection, He has provided the Church, and for material through the State primarily. Now, in a sense, Christians carry a dual citizenship. We often say it that way. That is right in some respects. However, the one is for time and that is the State. That is temporary. The other — the Church is for time and eternity. I thought first that maybe you should say the Church is only for eternity but it is for time because we gather to worship and we are members in the body of Christ — the Church. Therefore, the Church is for time and eternity. It continues, but the State will vanish when our Lord comes. We are now “in the world” (John 17:11), but not “of the world” (John 17:14).

There is a certain relationship however, between the two since the Bible tells us they are both “ordained of God” (Romans 13:1). However, Christianity and world politics are not intended to mix well. Let us remember that. We do believe that there is a vast difference in the State's place and responsibility in the world and

the Church. Let us never forget that. Some religious bodies have tried to mix the two but they are not designed to mix well at all. They do not mix properly. It creates a state of confusion when you try to do that. The Church and the State are distinctly different and function best in their respective spheres.

Psalm 33:10–16 is a rich psalm is rich but we do not have time to read it all. “The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. (11) The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. (12) Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. (13) The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. (14) From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. (15) He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. (16) There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.” We could go on with that, but it simply sets the tone. I was blessed by reading and meditating on that Scripture again in

preparation for this message. “Blessed is the nation” (or people) “whose God is the LORD.” The Church really is a nation, or a kingdom, among the kingdoms of the world. It is within the earth. Sure, the Church is here, but like I said earlier we are in the world but not of the world — a kingdom. I should say it is *the Kingdom* above all other kingdoms in the world. Here we are. Now, there are some who have gone on to experience a greater dimension of that kingdom.

As Christians we need to possess spiritual or Scriptural attitudes toward civil government at all times. This is so that when elections times come we will exhibit them then also. I thought of that in relation to this. We do not all simply think about this at election time. We ought to always have in mind what our attitudes ought to be toward the State — the government. That does affect, of course, how we think in times of election.

Certainly it is quite fitting to present some Scriptural attitudes to possess in times of national elections to keep going right. I will not say a lot of new things. Rather, I will simply substantiate, underscore, and present those things that we have always believed among us. It sometimes takes a refreshing of that to keep

ourselves going right. I would like to notice some Scriptural attitudes we need to possess.

1) *An attitude of reverence toward God and His Word.* The psalmist said in Psalm 119:161 in the latter part of that verse, “my heart standeth in awe of thy word.” That is always paramount. We need to keep that there such that we stand in awe and in reverence of God’s Word. In another place the psalmist said, God “hast magnified thy word above all thy name” (Psalm 138:2). His name is wonderful, but His Word, He, Himself has magnified above His name. Therefore, if God gives it that place what should we do as His creatures? Well, certainly we need to have a attitude of reverence for the Word of God in any field, in any subject, in any thing that we face, and give God the reverence for His Word. Listen to it. Obey it. As Christians we want to know and obey God’s Word. Therefore, in this matter it is very important as well.

2) *An attitude of submission, respect, honour and appreciation for the powers that be both locally and on the national level.* I have tried to pull some of those together and speak about them kind of in one lump sum if we can because of our time element. We sometimes think that the

powers that be — and we talk about the nation and the national election “You know that is in the capital. You know that is where it is.” Finally though, it comes right down to our local state, counties, townships, towns, cities, and all where that is represented right before our eyes. All those kind of officials and offices represent the national government. That is the system.

Let us look at some very outstanding Scriptures. You would not expect me to speak without calling attention to Romans 13, I am sure, and we want to do that. This is God’s Word to us, and message to us to help to maintain and establish a Scriptural attitude. Romans 13:1–7 says, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: (4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the min-

ister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

A lot of things are addressed in this portion. We will notice some as we go along in some of our discussion. I would like to include now 1 Peter 2:13–17, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; (14) Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: (16) As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (17) Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.” . . . or the President . . . the highest leader or official of the country wherever you are.

Also Titus 3:1 says, “Put them in mind to be subject to princi-

palities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” “To be subject . . . to obey magistrates” is an attitude of submission. That is this Scriptural attitude. Be careful. We need to be careful how we speak about those in authority. There are some about us who say, “You may as well go in a bicycle race.” That is very disrespectful. I do not believe that we ought to be talking that lowly about those who are in office. I know it brings some smiles, but yet we do need to be careful what we smile at in relation to that when we are out there in the world. It is easy for them to begin to speak about the various persons in office, the parties that are running for office, and things like this. That is very disrespectful, and it shows a kind of attitude that is not Scriptural.

The Bible says that we should “be subject to” them. We should respect them. We should “honour” them. We should “obey” them. Now then, why do we want to make “sport” [Proverbs 10:23; 26:19] of them and “light” of or the ones who are candidates for office, and talk about the President’s wife and so on and so forth and those things. I will give a little more of that, I suppose, as we go along. That is their responsibility and how they han-

dle it, they are accountable before God. Therefore, let us leave them there. We do not need to agree with them in everything necessarily, but we do respect and honour them. 2 Peter 2:10 speaks about those “that walk after the flesh,” and are “self-willed,” and it says they, “speak evil of dignities.” We do not want to be among those. The Bible is teaching us against that kind of thing. Therefore, let us be careful.

It is quite easy when you hear people talking to kind of step in there and listen along. Maybe all of a sudden you begin to pass some remark. I say rather we should respect and appreciate the services that they make available to us, keeping order in our communities, holding evil in check, and lending assistance where needed. They are doing this all the time. It is the system that is there. That is only a few things that I have touched there.

I think about one illustration when I talk about rendering assistance. Many years ago, an older minister in our district (hardly any of you would remember him and maybe some of you would at that) brother Amos Meyer was on the way home in a snow storm, he and his wife. It was necessary for him to put chains on his car to make it

home. He simply could not go anymore without them. He was not working at this long until a state policeman came along and he helped him. His wife said to the state policeman, "You are a God-send." "Woman," he said, "Not many people say that." I am sure that he had many experiences where people did not like to see him, but they appreciated his assistance. That is my point.

They are "the minister of God to thee for good." Did we not read that a while ago? God has set these up. We noticed that already, did we not? Romans 13 says they are ordained of God. We think of ordination for being for leaders in the Church and that is right, but it says these are ordained, or called, of God, and they are ministers "of God to thee for good," and for the praise of those that who well. They do like to offer praise and recognize when people are doing well. We have an officer back in our township who said, "We are here for your protection." I had to call him one night when there was a drunkard at our door and I wondered a little bit what to do. He said, "Well, do not let him in. We are here to help people like you." We did take him to a rescue mission. The officer said, "Call me when you get back, and if you have any problem on the way call

me and let me know. We will come to your assistance. Alright? That is what we are here for — to protect the good people." That is the way he put it, and, of course, to suppress evil.

Maybe we cannot always appreciate some of their personalities, but honour and respect their office at least and the appointment that they have been called to. Obey their laws unless they violate the higher law of God. I think we understand that. Even there as I was meditating, one has to appreciate again the concessions that they give to God's people at times when we say, "Here is a place where this violates what we believe is the higher law of God. Could we have an exception here?" Our CO position is one of those, and they say "Yes." Then, however we need to be careful that we are worthy of that and do not misuse those blessings and privileges as well. We need to respect them very much for their responsibility and for their help that they do give us.

Pay taxes joyfully. I know when they double up as they do we can say, "Well, it is getting quite high. Our school taxes are going up and up. We are paying 'double' school taxes (as it were) because we pay our public school

taxes and then we pay for our own schools.” It is worth it. I believe that God will see to it that we have what it takes to do that. He has been doing that, has He not? If we will put ourselves to it and believe that God has called us to do those things, He will make a way for us. Therefore, we need to pay our taxes. I will say it joyfully. I pay taxes too. I know the feelings. Finally, where will they get the money but from the people. People are trying to live.

That is another thing we talked about, living on subsidies, welfare, and on all kinds of government programs. People say, “The government, you know, they pay this and they will pay this and this for you.” Sometimes I do like to remind people, “Who is the government and where does the government get their money?” They say, “Well, it is right from the people, why sure.” Therefore, the more you get the more other people need to pay in. That is another matter, but we ought to think of it. Maybe sometimes it is good for us to throw little things like that in to people so they do not get so nasty about the government.

3) *We should possess an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving.* 1 Timothy 2:1–4 says this. “I

exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” The first two verses particularly speak to this point. Paul says, first of all, “supplications, prayers, and intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.” We do not do this only for our friends or the church, but also for the State because the Scripture continues, “For kings, and for all that are in authority.” Now, here is something that may help us. If we are tempted to think ill or evil of government officials and to speak derogatorily of them, how can we do that when we make supplication, prayer and intercession for them? If you have that problem, you need to pray for them. Instead of brethren talking about them like we were saying here a while ago, let us pray for them.

The Scripture also says, “and giving of thanks.” Some countries have problems keeping a leader. Those people and those countries get confused and all

“stirred up” because they do not have a leader. Be thankful we have a President Clinton at this point. Be thankful for him, even though some people do not like him. He is the leader now and let us respect him for that. At least we have a leader. We have someone to go ahead. What if we would not have? I will tell you something. It is kind of indicating that it is more difficult to find the man in today’s world to take that place too. Is that right? It seems that way. It is getting more difficult. Why? Well, who wants to be mocked and sneered at anyway in public office like that. Well, certainly no one. Thus, I believe that we need to pray for them — after all, they are only men.

I realize that God cannot work with their hearts like He does with His people’s hearts. Yet, the Bible says “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). I will say this, that the more wicked a nation becomes the less He will turn it in the right way because it will get worse and worse. The kind of people that we have in a nation are the kind of people who will run it. That is what will happen.

It is well to know enough about the government. We ought

to acquaint ourselves a little bit with it, not become too engrossed in it, but know a little who is in office, and a little what is happening. It is well for us to study in our schools something about civics and civil government — we did when I went to school a little in the upper grades. We learned how it functions. In the United States there is the President and his cabinet, the House of Representatives, Congress and things like this. Other countries are different. We can learn how they go about, establish and make laws and things like this. A little of that is in order, so that we can pray for them a little bit more intelligently. I think that is good to a point.

Prayer is the power that moves the hand that rules the world. That is speaking of God, is it not? Abraham did more outside of Sodom for Sodom than Lot did inside of it, standing in the gate. It was probably a public office. Finally, he needed to leave the place. We know the story. The Bible says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Thanksgiving goes to God, however. Let us remember this. Thanksgiving goes to God for His providence that comes to us through the avenue of the Church. Let us remember that

we are always responsible to thank God for every blessing that we receive. It may come sometimes through men, individuals, or some institution but finally God is the giver of it. Let us not forget that. We thank God for our daily food and not the State or the government or the President. That is simply an illustration of it.

We give thanks for the allowing of religious freedom and enterprise and for the rendering of humble service — the privilege to render humble service to needs of humanity around us. We have many opportunities and privileges in the land in which we live. We ought to often mention the State in our public and private prayers.

4) *We need to possess an attitude of being separate from the State.* I was alluding some to that already. I want to give a few more words on that. I would say that we cannot participate in the general activities and interests of an unregenerate society. 2 Corinthians 6:17 is clear on this. I do not have time to go to that but it speaks about coming out and being separate and not touching the unclean thing. Some people say that all politicians are liars. I will not say that, but we do know that, like I said, if there is corruption the nation there will

be corruption, of course, in the government. That is out there and that is one reason why we cannot be a part of it.

We are separate. “Come out from among them” . . . and do not touch those things. We need to be separate from the State. Romans 13 again speaks of “they” and “he,” and Romans 12 speaks of “we” and “ye” — the Church. They are separate there. We are of another country. We do not know how to function in governmental capacities — not at all. We are “ambassadors” (2 Corinthians 5:20) of another country. We are in a “strange land,” as it were, and that is one of the reasons why we do not vote. Since we are an ambassador, an ambassador really does not have the right to vote. He is in a strange country. That is why I said we kind of have a dual citizenship. Finally though our citizenship “is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

We do not have a right to vote in the affairs of a nation nor tell them how to run the State. We do not want them to tell us how to run our churches and how to run our schools, do we? No, that is one of the reasons why we do not take a subsidy for our schools or we do not take transportation for

our schools from the State. It is because the less we can exchange there the better it is. Stay far from that kind of thing.

Again, we need to guard our speech concerning those in office. Avoid saying, “If I would vote, I would vote thus and so.” Do not say that because you are not voting. You have no right to vote, and we avoid identifying with actions of the country. We do not go around saying, “We,” or “Our country bombed Iraq, or sent some missiles over there the other day and they are still sending some more ammunition and some things over.” They have done that. The State has done that — the government officials — not we.

5) *Now, another attitude is an attitude of recognition to God.* We believe finally that God is in control and our vote will not change the mind of God or men. It will not do that. People say, “You good people, you ought to go and vote. You ought to get good men in office.” Back in the 1960’s they were saying “Now there is a Catholic running for President. Now, now get out there.” A lot of Mennonite people were “stirred up” and they went out and voted for the other man instead of Kennedy. Kennedy was elected anyway. [see the tract “Did God Lose the

Election?"]. Do we believe what the Bible says that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17 see also Daniel 2:21; 4:25)? If we believe that God finally has that in control then those individuals who voted against Kennedy voted against God, yet we claim to be citizens of the heavenly country. We see that is not proper.

We need to be satisfied when the election is over that God had His hand in it. Is it all right for me to say that? I think so. I had to think a while when I said that, but I think we need to be satisfied. We sometimes say, “We vote on our knees,” and put it into God’s hand. The thing that I think we ought to continually pray is that God will raise up leaders in the nation that will still leave His people alone so that we can serve Him. It should be our aim to serve Him. Let us remember that. I am afraid sometimes we get a little bit too “bound up” with these things in this life, in this world. (We need to have some of it. There is a balance here). They world can see some of that too and they say, “Well, you do everything but vote” — nearly. No, we do more than that. I must make it a little strong

maybe to get the truth out.

6) *We need to possess the attitude to accept ridicule and be misunderstood.* 1 Peter 2:11, 12 says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” I was alluding in anticipation of this point. The world cannot quite understand us. The Bible says that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). These are the things of the Church — Christ and His Church.

What does the apostle teach us here? He beseeches us as “strangers and pilgrims,” not to get entangled in these earthly things which war against the soul. “whereas they speak against you as evildoers”. As I said, our vote will not change the mind of God. Some think we are not doing our duty by not voting to put right people into office. You know the thinking of people that say, “You people know who

the right people are.” We say we do not (and we do not know) but they think we do. We should not talk that much that they think that we know who the right people are. Since people think that we are not doing our duty to the country “they speak evil against you.” However, we cannot vote out evil at the election polls. That is what they want. They say, “You live a good life and you know how to do it,” but we cannot. Remember that. We cannot vote out evil and rule out the ungodliness that is in the nation, in the world by elections — by voting at the election polls. We cannot do it.

I want to tell you something. We have recourse to far greater power over individuals than that — much greater. All the world can do with their evil is “pen” it up somewhere and punish it somehow and let the rest of it go. That is all they can do. One time I was talking to two state “troopers.” Some bad boys, or naughty boys (or whatever) had been drinking outside at one of our churches. I happened to come upon it and some state troopers got a hold of this. They wanted me to give names and so on of the boys who were there, and so on and so forth. I said “Well, I was not planning to do that. We would rather deal with it” . . . and

they kind of chided me a little bit. They said, “You do not want to contribute to the delinquency of people.” “Well,” I said, “That is right but you could prosecute them maybe, or you could do something with them but that would be dealing with the outside. We would rather deal with the heart — with the inside and get them changed, that way and then, they will not want to do it.” I will tell you what they did. They let me go and said that they saw the point and understood and they do agree with that, and so they left.

Now, I realize that we cannot change their hearts either but God can if they will yield to it. Therefore, I say our goal is not to put right men in an office, but to prepare men to face the King of kings and LORD of lords. That is our mission in the world. We need to look at it from that standpoint during election times and say, “That is out there. That is the world.” We do appreciate that there is a man who has been elected, even if it is Mr. Clinton. So what? We need a man there. Yes, we as a Church need a man in the government, but we do not function with it in its force.

7) *We need to have an attitude that all men need to come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved.* We read that verse a little

while ago in 1 Timothy 2:4. It is God’s will that “all men . . . be saved, and . . . come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Wrapped in that, I believe, are these who are in high places of government capacity. God is concerned about them. Finally, the king eats of the fruit of the ground too, you know. Some look at individuals like that and think “Well, you know there is somebody up here.” In a sense they are as far as the office is concerned but they are normal individuals and they have never dying souls. On death’s bed they will be equal to other men. That is they way it will be. Therefore, they need to be saved as well.

It is said of the apostle Paul in Acts 9:15, “he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the . . . kings . . .” and those who are in authority. We find him going and doing that. When he spoke to Felix “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:25), Felix was moved by the message and he said, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” In other words Paul’s message did get down to his heart. He was moved to the point where he was ready to excuse him for now. We know what that meant — “I will call

for thee.” Did he ever? We have no record that he did. He talked to king Agrippa also and he said, “Thou art permitted to speak for thyself” (Acts 26:1). The point is that he was convicted to the point that he said in verse 28, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” “And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am” (verse 29). “That you would be saved” is what he was saying “except these bonds.”

That should be our attitude. Again, during election times we would like to see even these men who are in office being Christians — being men of God. And when they get that way, I believe, they will want to get out of that kind of an office. We are called both to small and great like the apostle Paul was to witness and to prepare souls to face Jesus the King of kings and LORD of lords. May God help us to have the right attitude.

Scripture References

	Psalms	6:19	153	5:20	161
30:5	151	6:20–26	150	6:17	161
33:10–16	154	6:21	149		
119:161	155	6:24, 25	152	Philippians	
138:2	155			3:20	161
	Proverbs	John		1 Timothy	
10:23	157	17:11	154	2:1–4	159
17:22	152	17:14	154	2:4	164
21:1	160	Acts		Titus	
22:1	152	9:15	164	3:1	156
26:19	157	24:25	164	James	
	Isaiah	26:1	165	5:16	160
30:10	153	26:28, 29	165	1 Peter	
	Daniel	Romans		2:11, 12	163
2:21	162	13:1	154	2:13–17	156
4:17	162	13:1–7	156	2 Peter	
4:25	162	1 Corinthians		2:10	157
	Luke	2:14	163	Revelation	
		2 Corinthians		3:17	152

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” — 1 Timothy 2:1–3.

From the Previous Issue:

The Difference Between Old and New Testaments

From a message by Isaac Sensenig

Sunday, February 06, 1994

Valley View Mennonite Church

The Place of the Old Testament Scriptures

From a message by Daryl Bair

Sunday, June 02, 1996

Centerville Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 28.

Plan of Salvation. — Faith.

I. What faith is. — Hebrews 11:1.

There are some things which have passed into the mind through the medium of the natural senses, and are now stored away for future use. This is knowledge. Then there are many things which we do not know, but which we believe because of the assurance of some power, finite or Infinite. This is faith. When this Power whom we believe or trust, is God, we understand it to be that faith which is an essential feature of the plan of salvation. People who refuse to believe anything their eyes cannot see nor their minds comprehend, have no Christian faith.

II. What faith is not.

1. It is not believing because we know. — (That is knowledge.)
2. It is not the mere expression of belief. — James 2:19.

III. Kinds of faith.

1. Dead. — James 2:19, 20.
2. Living. — Acts 8: 37; 16:31; Galatians 5:6.

ILLUSTRATION. — Some men hear of a place where a large sum of gold has been buried for ages. They at first pay little attention to it, but as the evidence becomes more and more convincing they give it serious thought. The more they look into It, the more they are convinced of the truth of the report. Still, they are interested more in the things that

then engross their attention, and for the time being make no effort to secure the fortune. They have a kind of superstition that the fortune is there, but haven't faith enough in it to make the sacrifice of time and money and convenience to get it. But the evidence becomes so clear that all doubt is set aside. Their interest demands the securing of the coveted fortune, and off they start and secure the prize.

We proceed to draw the comparison. People hear of heaven and the numerous questions connected with it. They have not enough interest in it — or, rather, they are so much interested in their surroundings that they take no time to deny it, and in fact, have a kind of superstition that there is such a place. As they become awakened more and more, they begin to tremble at results. They believe in a measure, but the belief is not decided enough to move them to accept salvation. This is *dead* faith. (It is worthy of notice that the belief which “devils” have is more of a fear that things said of punishment, etc.. might be so, than a belief that these things really are so). But the evidence becomes more convincing. The more they think, the more they are convinced; the more they feel that they are lost, the more they desire a change. As their belief becomes strong enough to move them to leave their sins and live for God, they break away from the bondage of sin and throw themselves upon the mercy of a loving Father. This is *living* faith. As they move forward in the Christian work, the knowledge of Christian experiences strengthens their faith in the power of God to give things not yet experienced; but the faith thus exercised is the same which moved the sinner to accept salvation.

IV. What faith does.

1. Leads to salvation. — Mark 16:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8.
2. Brings joy and peace. — Romans 5:1; 1 Peter 1:8.
3. The medium which holds us to God. — 1 Peter 1:5; Ephesians 1:13.
4. A means of sanctification. — Acts 26:18.
5. A guide through life. — 2 Corinthians 5:7.
6. A means of godly edification. — 1 Timothy 1:4.
7. A means of power. — Matthew 17:19, 20.
8. The shield of the Christian. — Ephesians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.
9. Excludes boasting. — Romans 3:27.

10. Overcomes the world. — 1 John 5:4.

V. How faith comes.

1. By hearing. — Romans 10:17.
2. By prayer. — Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5, 6
3. By the Spirit. — 1 Corinthians 12:9.

VI. What faith did —

1. For Abraham. — Hebrews 11:17–19.
2. For Moses. — Hebrews 11:24–29.
3. Other examples. — Hebrews 11:32–40.

VII. Essential to salvation. — Hebrews 11: 6.

VIII. Faith made manifest by works. — James 2:14–26.

NOTE. — There is no such thing as a faithful Christian leading a faithless life.

IX. The trial of our faith.

1. Worketh patience. — James 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.
 2. When endured, brings eternal life. — James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:7.
-
1. Distinguish between faith and hope.
 2. How does faith become strength to us?
 3. What is the best means of overcoming the unbelief of infidels?
 4. What is “dead” faith?
 5. What Bible character impresses you as the brightest example of faith?

LESSON 29.

Plan of Salvation. — Repentance.

I. Steps leading to, and constituting repentance.

1. Hearing — Romans 10:17.
2. Believing — Romans 10:17.
3. Conviction. — Acts 2:37.
4. Godly sorrow for sin. — Luke 22:61, 62; 2 Corinthians

7:10, 11.

5. Turning away from sin. — Acts 26:20; Luke, 15:17–19; Revelation 2:5.

NOTE. — Turning from sin because a guilty conscience before God moves the sinner to cry for reconciliation, is true repentance. Turning from some sins because we find it more convenient to leave them than to continue in them, constitutes mock repentance.

II. What repentance does.

1. Results in works that can be seen of men. — Matthew 3:7, 8.

2. Moves the penitent ones to make restitution. — Luke 19:8; 2 Chronicles 33:12–16.

III. Exhortations to repent.

1. By John the Baptist. — Matthew 3:2.

2. By Christ. — Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15.

3. By the apostles. Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22.

IV. Necessary to salvation. — Luke 13:1–5; Acts 3:19.

V. A result of God's grace. — Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25.

VI. God's desire that all should repent. — 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9.

VII. When repentance is impossible. — Hebrews 6:4–6; Hebrews 10:26–29; 12:17; Matthew 12:31, 32.

VIII. A timely admonition. — Hebrews 3:15.

1. Repentance and forgiveness remove sin, but they do not remove the knowledge of sin.

2. John the Baptist and Jesus had different missions, but teaching on repentance was the same.

3. Many people with good intentions have needlessly troubled themselves with the thought that they may have committed the unpardonable sin. If they would but reflect that salvation is freely offered to all who believe and accept, their load might be removed. There are instances where it is impossible to renew some to repentance (Hebrews 6:4–6), but the difficulty lies with the impenitent, and not with God. The

very fact that people are grieved over their sins and have a desire to be reconciled to God, is proof positive that it is not “impossible to renew them again to repentance.” Those who are beyond the possibility of repentance are not liable to be burdened with a godly sorrow for sin.

1. Distinguish between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.
2. Who needs repentance?
3. Did Judas Iscariot repent?
4. Can there be repentance without conversion?
5. How far are we required to make restitution?

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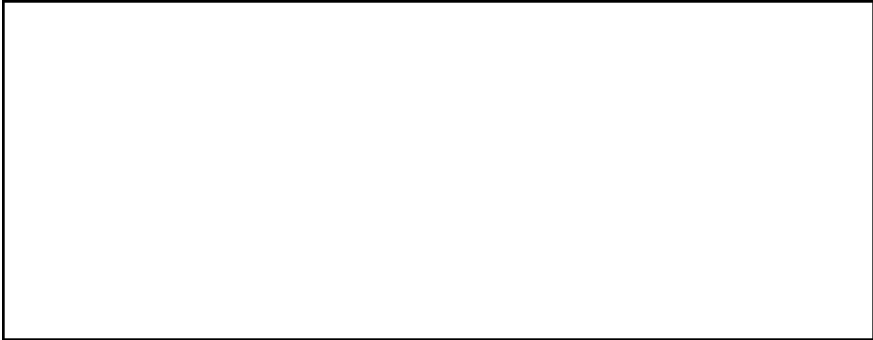
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FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

43. Christ is coming again at the end of the present age.

In support of this hope we have a number of reliable witnesses. Christ said He is coming again (Matthew 25:31; John 14:3), the two men in white apparel (Acts 1:9–11) said He is coming, the apostles said He is coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; 1 John 3:2, 3), so that there is absolutely no doubt about His second coming in the minds of anyone who believes

that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We might add that the references cited are all given in plain didactic language, not in figurative language, so there need be no hesitation in accepting these and many other similar references at their face value and take comfort in the fact that our blessed Lord will come again to receive us unto Himself. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).



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