



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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Discipleship in a Permissive World

The assignment is, in my mind, not necessarily an easy assignment. "Discipleship in a Permissive Society." One can let their mind begin to wander. Where do you start? Where do you stop as we think of the society we live in today, where it has gone in terms of moral integrity and those type of things? We wonder. As I think of this subject, my mind goes back to the days of Noah. The Bible says

that in those days that the "imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). I wonder how much different is it today than it was back then. Sometimes you wonder, "Lord, how long? Can you wait much longer?" I cannot comprehend the mercy of God. Therefore, I cannot answer that question. That is why we are still here.

As we think of being disciples

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in a permissive society, I think it is a very great challenge to each one of us. I thought we would read the verses assigned to start with. Matthew 7:21–23. As we think of our permissive society, Satan is permissive. Let us settle that right now. In contrast, God is absolute and those two will not fit together. As His children, we need to keep those lines clear and straight. Satan is permissive. God is not. He is absolute. “Not every one that saith unto me,

Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

I trust there will be no one who reads this who will hear those

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words when that final day comes. These verses were not written necessarily to our permissive society. They were written to God's people because here we have an account. The challenge is that what we say will not count on the day of judgment. It is what our life lines up with, and what we have done. Yes, you can say it, but you do not live it. The Lord does not recognize that. He is expecting a life of discipleship, if we expect one day to enter into heaven. The Scripture says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord," and He gives this list of things that they have done. They have prophesied in His name, they have cast out devils and done many wonderful works. What will He say? "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." That is serious thinking. There is that great possibility that the permissive society we live in will be able to influence the Church to this point if we are not careful.

By the grace of God we would like to draw some lines and find out the permissiveness of our society about us today. As I thought of the title, "Discipleship in a Permissive Society," I gave it a wording of my own. I wrote it this way, "Living a Life that is Morally Good and Right by the Power of God." It is contrary to

the old flesh to do that. Accomplishing this among a society, or people, who at large today are saying, "It does not really matter how things are done. Suit yourself. Do as you please. Whatever feels good," is not easy. That is the kind of society we are living among today. As God's children we are called to live a life that is morally good and upright in this world. No, not by our own strength, but by the power of Jesus Christ and His shed blood.

It is possible to do that. The old flesh will be denied if we will walk that life of discipleship in this permissive society, because we are human beings and we are influenced by those around us. We cannot deny that. We rub shoulders from day to day. It does not make us one bit better than that individual who is living in the wicked society about us. We are flesh and blood. We are made out of dust like they are. I trust we are sinners saved by grace and that we are walking a different life — one that is according to the will of God.

Webster's says permissive means, "granted on sufferance, tolerated." Sufferance means, "to consent on sanction implied by a lack of interference or failure to enforce a prohibition." It is simply something which needs to be

upheld. When it is not upheld, it is implied that it is okay to do it when it is wrong, because it is not taken care of. Another definition is, “granting or tending to grant permission, tolerant, allowing a discretion, optional.” That fits our society well today. Nobody likes to think of things being absolute. They want room for the flesh to move. Remember the way to heaven is “strait . . . and narrow” (Matthew 7:14). There is a way, but there is not room for the old flesh to go along. The world does not like to hear that tonight.

I would like to take it a step farther. I am afraid that there are too many so-called church members who do not like to hear that today either. That is what concerns me. The old flesh needs to be denied if we will walk on that road of holiness. As I thought of the church in the midst of this permissive society, when the church fails to address sin and they let it go, it is implied that it is okay. We become permissive and the drift is on. That is simply how it works. As we allow sin to be in our midst and we do not take care of it, it soon becomes in the minds of our people that this must be okay because it is not being taken care of. However, that is not according to the Word of God.

I would like to leave the challenge with you as we read 2 Peter 2:1–8 to think of the day and the time we live in. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. (4) For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; (5) And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (6) And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; (7) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (8) (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing

and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)”

I think I could be sympathetic with Lot as I think of our day. It says, “That righteous man . . . vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.” As we look at society about us today, and some of the evils taking place, I can sympathize with Lot here on that point. We wonder how much more we will see and how bad it will get, as I mentioned in the beginning. Let us not be dragged into this. Let us take a lesson. Lot dwelt there in that wicked city. He lost his family because he related too closely. It appears as though Lot himself maintained his righteousness but he lost his family because of the influence of that ungodly society.

Verse 2 says, “many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” In our day, our permissive society will make fun of God’s children. That happens, but I would also like to get a step closer. Sometimes, I am not sure, if we do not face more of that from those who once knew the truth and have sidestepped and are not walking in full truth. They will make fun of God’s children who are endeavouring to maintain the

whole Gospel of Jesus Christ. We face it from both fronts. Can we take that in our day as God’s children — as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Can we stand to be made fun of for the cause of Christ.

One thing we want to keep clear is that this society is under the condemnation and judgment of an almighty God. This wickedness — yes, God is tolerating it today, and it appears as though it is getting worse. The Scripture says, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecclesiastes 8:11). It seems like men keep doing more and they think they are getting by with it. However, the day is coming when God will call all things “into judgment” [see Ecclesiastes 11:9].

The permissiveness of our society, if we are part of it, will be on the wrong side of God in that day. This is where the battle lies between God’s children and our permissive society. I would leave the challenge with you: are you gaining ground, as we think of the battle that is before us? Are you simply maintaining ground? Or, are you losing ground? You know we are somewhere. What are you doing in your personal life? How is it

with you? Remember the devil is behind this permissive society. His influence is powerful and he is trying to gain the Church of Jesus Christ.

Another encouragement for us is that the Bible also says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). It does not matter how wicked it gets, or how evil, if you choose to serve the Lord, He will give you grace to live above the dictates of an evil society. It does not matter if you are made fun of — whatever takes place — He will give you that grace.

Isaiah 55:2 says, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Where do you spend money for that which is not bread? Society is seeking after a meat that does not satisfy. This is the reason for a lot of the things we see taking place in our society and the evil. They pursue more and more and more. There is a void within every individual given by God from birth. There is a lack, and our society is trying to fulfill that void with material things, pleasures, lusts, and you name it, and that will not satisfy. That is where these evil things

come from because the old nature is evil and it only gets worse. Therefore, it will never fill that void. They do all these things — meat that does not satisfy — and they keep adding more, and are still unsatisfied. It is only the true disciple of Jesus Christ who will know satisfaction in our day. They have come to know the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour, and that is the only thing that will satisfy that void within each one of us.

Do you have that satisfaction? Even as a church member, if you do not have that satisfaction you will have problems in your life. You will be hankering after the dictates of the world, if Jesus is not satisfying your heart. It is a brokenness and a giving up. "Lord, here I am. Whatever you ask. Whatever you want I am willing to do it." When you find a person of that nature, and heart, you have a person who is easy to direct and guide in the ways of truth. They will want truth. They will want to know what is there for them for their safety and direction. May you be that person. If you are not, you know that while there is life there is opportunity. Find that.

As a disciple of Jesus, we will simply walk according to His words, and His teachings in the Bible. They are not complicated.

They are simple unless we make them complicated because of our desire to do otherwise. 1 John 2:15–17 is a clear explanation of what our permissive society is looking after. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” How serious do we take this? We see what the world has to offer. What condemnation does the world have? That is a consolation for us. If you are serving the Lord with a genuine heart, you will live forever. However, if you are following this old world and its dictates, and the permissiveness that is out there, you will pass away. You will be judged and suffer eternal condemnation in the pits of hell.

The choice should be easy to make as we think of that. Nevertheless, the Devil is so real. He can grip people even in church settings. You wonder sometimes. You feel like you should shake them out of their seat, but the Devil is real. The flesh is real and he will hold

them. He will keep them serving that old flesh, even for a short time of enjoyment in this world. Then, they soon pass away to eternal condemnation.

As we see what is in our society, a true disciple of Jesus Christ will not allow things to be tolerated or optional in their lives that the Word of God speaks clearly about. When the Word of God instructs and gives direction in an area in your life, the true disciple of Christ will do that. They will walk that way. This is where the conflict begins to arise. It is contrary to those who walk the permissive way of life. A true disciple of Jesus Christ may talk with someone who maybe does not care about life. Some very difficult conflicts may come forth sometimes in those times. Practical everyday deeds in your life and their life will be evidenced in the life of a disciple or a man of the world and will tell you which side they are on. The Bible says, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). That is clear and simple. Why make it so complicated?

We become permissive when we lose our proper reverence and fear of God — a holy God who will not tolerate sin. Today we have God held up as a God of love (and He is). He sent His only Son in this world to die for

us who left the glories of heaven. He has provided salvation for us. He is a God of love, but He is a holy God and He cannot stand sin. As I said before, while there is life, there is hope. Yes, you may sin now. You may still be alive but the day is coming when that sin will not stand before a holy God. Let us settle that sin now. The Bible tells us if we take that evil to God before hand to judgment it can be taken care of [1 Timothy 5:24]. However, if we keep living in it until the day we leave this life, then it will follow us into the day of judgment.

Recently, I saw a church sign somewhere which said, "Where death finds you, eternity will keep you." That simply says that when we leave this life, if we are living a permissive life, that is where eternity will keep us forever. If we are living a life that is according to the Word of God, that is where eternity will keep you forever. It is the difference of the two places.

Some battlegrounds tonight that I think we face in this area of our permissive society. By the grace of God, I would like to share it clearly and also would like to share some concerns as I think of the church of Jesus Christ and some of the influences that face us as well. In Genesis 3:6-8 we see this beautiful gar-

den where God had created all things well. It could not have been a brighter picture for man. There was no sin. It was a garden probably with no weeds. Everything was perfect. Man had a golden opportunity. Sometimes we look back there and think "If I would have been there, I would have done it differently." No, I do not believe you would have. We are made of the same flesh Adam was. Yes, we read the story now and think we would do differently. However, I give the challenge, why do not some people do differently in the Church of Jesus Christ today than what they are doing? It is the same story. It is simply the same story over. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (7) And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (8) And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."

What took place in the garden? This perfect picture was all at once marred because man sinned and fell. They reached out and they took of that fruit of that tree they were not to partake of. That relationship with the Lord was severed. The next time the Lord came down they were hiding. They were afraid because they knew what took place. In fact, the Scripture says, “they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together.” What is the battlefield we are facing today? In verse 21, after they went through the accusations and the Lord pronounced the judgments as to where they should be then it says, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” 1) *The battlefield is this: God has planned that humanity be clothed.* It is that simple. We have a society that is very well undoing that very fact. We have church people who are undoing that fact and calling it right. I would simply say that God will not permit the undress of our society in His righteous heaven. It is sin. It is contrary to the will of God. Do not think for one moment that we, or anybody as a church, can bring the effects of the same thing in our midst and expect that God will accept it, because He will not. He has

planned that man be covered.

What has it done for our society? Today, in our western society (I say it this way) they are returning to the fig leaves that Adam and Eve tried to start with. In fact, it is worse than that. They are doing their own thing. They would say, “Dress however you want to dress today. Undress to whatever extent you want to today.” I do not need to say it all. You can see it out there. It will not get any better. What will we do as God’s people as we face this? It is a battlefield. It is anything from the wild dress we see to the hairdo’s and you name it.

I would like to give a few challenges brethren (young brethren and older) as we face this battlefield of permissiveness in our society. What are you doing with your eyes and your mind as you face this undress society? Are you gaining ground? Are you only maintaining ground? Or, are you losing ground? It is a battlefield and there is something happening in your life personally. You cannot deny that — every one of us, because it is out there and we face it. We need to make decisions. We are making them one way or another. What are you doing? The Bible is clear. It gives us some very simple direction on this. It says, “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22),

“Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18), “Gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Peter 1:13). Let us take those things in hand. Yes, we can combat the evil out there if we will do that. However, if we do not, we will head the downward road.

As I think of “Gird[ing] up the loins of your mind,” the thought of girding up and loins gives the thought of “the centre of the body.” Girding up the loins of your mind — I would like to picture that as having a hold of your mind by the power of God. Not merely a little bit of it but a good hold of it. You are directing your mind to the right things in life and allowing this evil society to pass by.

It is a battleground. How are you maintaining? Are you gaining? I have heard already of those who try to say, “Well, those things do not bother us.” Brethren you are only fooling yourself. We are only human — every one of us. We must make decisions in life.

As I thought of our society and what it is offering us, from undress to hair styles and to things of all sort, then I thought of the church. First of all, it is a shame, but too often it is true. *We can detect the direction of the wild winds of our permissive society by the movements of the*

curtains in the Church of Jesus Christ. It happens too often. Why would we want to follow the trend of a downward course when we know it results in eternal destruction? The devil knows well that he will not get the church of Jesus Christ to take one jump to this kind of undress and permissiveness that he sees in our society today and that he is directing. He has a plan to get the church there a little bit at a time.

How about the hair styles, tight fitting casual clothes, you name it, anything that draws attention to me as an individual that shows itself in our midst sometimes. When the world dictates long hair why do we see it in the church? We need to work on it. When the world says, “Cut it all off,” then we need to work with that in the church. When the world says, “Grease it up and make it look straggly and very unkempt,” then we need to work with that in the church. What causes those kind of things? Why is it that way?

Thinking of our sisters, sometimes we see these tight fitting dresses, high heeled shoes, the puffed up hairdo’s, and things like this. These are things that have their roots somewhere else. I am not against modesty or long dresses. What is wrong with a

long floor length dress? Nothing. We want to be modest. However, as I have observed some of these things when those people walk, those dresses wrap around them because they are too full and they can be more immodest than the one they left to replace it. The thing that bothers me worse is that these kinds of things have a direct start in the world. This style was there. That is where it comes from. Why do we need to work with these things?

As I think of the permissive society and these things it brings on us, what is the answer brethren to these kind of things? We have church standards and I believe they are good and well and in order. We need them as we think of our permissive society. However, we will have problems in the Church of Jesus Christ. We will always face things we need to work with. As these things from our permissive society press in on us, can we not get a vision of what is happening? My Bible tells me that if my heart seeks after the things of this world, then I am an enemy of God. It is that simple. That is the words from the Book. The devil will not take us down all in one step. He has a plan in mind, to break down our moral character and cause us to become permissive in the church. No, it does

not look that bad, but he will get that permissive spirit started within the church. Once he has that in place, he can bring the rest on later. He can take us a step at a time. He has done it for hundreds and thousands of years and he is still doing it. Why do we not sit up and take notice to what is happening? It does not need to be that way. We have testimonies of churches and people that have recognized the inroads of the devil in these things and have maintained a stand against a permissive society.

Jesus said, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). It is possible, but the choice lies with you and your heart what you really want. It will be your decision. A true disciple of Jesus Christ will in all honesty seek to avoid these traps. They understand that they are human. That is another thing that blesses my heart. Show me a person who has a committed heart to the work of Christ and to the cause of the Kingdom, and it is not hard for that person to find a decent hairstyle, a decent dress, and you name it. It is not hard to find it, because the heart wants it. That is what makes the difference.

Our permissive society will laugh at our modesty. Can you maintain it in spite of that? Are

you willing to be laughed at and called old-fashioned and something else? The apostle Paul tells us that he became a fool for Christ's sake [1 Corinthians 4:10]. He was willing to do that, and he even lost his life because of that. It did not stop him from serving His Lord.

2) *Divorce and remarriage is another battlefield of this permissive society we face.* Mark 10:1–12 says, “And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. (2) And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. (3) And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? (4) And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. (5) And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. (6) But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. (7) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; (8) And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. (9) What therefore God hath joined

together, let not man put asunder. (10) And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. (11) And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. (12) And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”

Can we get the message any clearer? It is simple. These are Jesus' own words to His disciples. We live in a society that is telling us that it is acceptable. We have so-called ministers of the Gospel who tell their people and give them a false hope, and they go ahead and remarry them. They were not converted before they were married the first time and now they are converted, it is forgiven. I do not believe in the eyes of God that it is accepted. It is sin. According to the Book here it is adultery. The Bible says that no adulterer shall enter into the kingdom of heaven [1 Corinthians 6:9]. I shudder at the blood that must be on the hands of those who give that false hope to the people they share with. We say “Well, we have a clear vision on that.” I trust we do. However brethren, if we lose out on some of these other areas this is sure to follow. It is part of the whole lustful package the devil has in

place and it will follow. Let us keep our lines clear.

What happened to John the Baptist? He lost his head because he was willing to stand and say this was wrong. He told Herod that the wife that he had was not his and he lost his head for it. That did not change his mind. Are we that convinced that we would be willing to give our life and stand on line and maintain a truth from the word of God like this?

3) *Society believes certain people were “born” with inordinate affections.* Again, maybe it does not bother us to a certain point. Yet, let us be careful. In Romans 1:21–28 we have another sort of situation that our society will tell us that we have individuals who are created this way — they were born this way and the church puts them in for ministry. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, (23) And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the

lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: (25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: (27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. (28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

I do not think I need to make it any clearer. We have the world exchanging the natural for the unnatural and those types of things we know about that are under the judgment of an almighty God. It is a choice that man makes. It is something that God does not accept. Yet our permissive society is challenging us by saying, “Yes, they were created this way.” May we keep the vision clear. God’s judgment will be upon that. We know He will not change. He destroyed

the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for that reason. That was quite a calamity and I am convinced that He has not changed His mind because God never changes. His righteousness always stands. He pulled that righteous Lot out of those two cities. That is one picture of the mercy of God. Think of that. One man — a couple of people yet because of a righteous man's prayer, they went down there and pulled that one righteous man out of that city — The mercy of God. Nevertheless, the Lord destroyed those cities because of that sin. He feels the same today.

4) *The thought of honesty.* Our society today will tell us, "Well, we do things right — fairly good — if you can slip a few things through here and there and the people do not know it, that is okay." In fact, they will tell you that you need to in order to make ends meet today. However, I trust as God's people, we still have a vision of honesty and what it is all about, and we are not willing to bow down to those kind of measures simply to make ends meet. We will lose the blessing of God in our life if we do. Am I willing to tell the truth even though it may cause me to be shortchanged or cause me to lose money on a certain situation? Am I willing to tell the

truth and be honest? "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:37). Simply let your yes be yes and your no be no and keep it that way. When you start trying to twist the two and mix them together it will become evil and it is not what the Lord wants. Be honest.

"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Proverbs 20:14). Here we have a situation again this would be on the side of buying something. We try to run it down and then when we get our way, we go and talk about it. I want to think on the other side of that. When we sell something, do we have an honest representation of what we are selling? That is part of honesty. We can "pull the wool over people's eyes," so to speak on business deals and situations. As I said before, the world — the permissive society would tell us, if you do that and not be discovered, it is quite acceptable. You might be able to but remember one thing, you will face it in the day of judgment because the Lord has a record of that. He understands. He knows if you are honest or not and you will be revealed. Let us keep those lines clear tonight.

Another thought along the line of our doings and business dealings is, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). Again, this is a very clear Scripture. How do you give to others? Do you give in good measure? The Bible tells us, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

Sometimes we are tempted to think of some of these types of things, and feel like if I do not do some of this crookedness, I will never make a living. Proverbs 10:22 says, "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Maybe we will not have the most money in this world, but if you are under the line of the blessing of the Lord you are a rich person. Keep that above the crookedness our permissive society is promoting in our day.

Honesty in our taxes. Here is an area where our society would tell us "Our government does not need it. Beat him all you can." As Christians what are we doing? Are we keeping those lines clear? Jesus was faced here with a ques-

tion again. He was challenged, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not" (Matthew 22:17)? I would like to think of that the government of our land. Jesus told them, "Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:19-21). I think that is clear enough. God expects us to pay our dues to the government of our land. If we will try to beat them on the basis that they do not need it, and we think we know better, we are disobeying God's plan for His children. Let us be careful with that brethren.

We can do these things, as I have mentioned, but the Lord has the record and we will give account to Him on the day of judgment. He knows it all. I am amazed sometimes how people think that they can sew without reaping when God is the one who created us. He is the one who gives us every breath that we take until the time we die. He sees us every second of the day. He knows our thoughts before we think them. How do we think we can do something here that God

does not see that we will not need to pay for in eternity? The Lord has it all in His record. It is a foolish thought.

5) “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (*Exodus 20:8*). It was Saturday in the Old Testament time, but we believe it is the first day of the week in the new dispensation. Our society, even itself, has changed greatly over the last fifty years on this last issue. I heard my father share already that when he was a young boy and had his car, if he did not buy gas for the car by 8:00 Saturday evening that was the last opportunity until Monday morning. You could not buy any gas because the gas stations were closed. They were not open on Sunday. Today it is quite different. You know we notice a little more of this and we notice a little more of that. The gas stations are open. The Walmarts are open. The grocery stores are open. More are open all the time. Some of us who saw some of these things partially take place, have some warning signs that go up. Then, we then have another generation coming on who thinks that this is the way it has always been. They do not know anything different. How can we keep these things alive in our minds and in their minds as well — the importance of

“Remember[ing] the sabbath day, to keep it holy?”

In our permissive society, we have many so- called Christian people today who do their business on Sunday. They do all kinds of things on Sunday and they seem to be good people. It is a battle ground we are facing. What will we do about it? For our permissive society today, Sunday is the day to go shopping. It is the day to eat out, mow the grass, buy gas, go on your camping trips, and do your farming. It is opening up even in our area. We did not see it in the past, but as time goes on we begin to see a farmer who starts to do his work on Sunday. It is a slow losing out of “Remember[ing] the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

What are we doing about it as God’s children? Are we concerned enough for the next generation that they get a clear vision? Yes, the Bible says if the ox falls in the ditch on the sabbath day pull him out. That simply telling us that there are a few things, like animals which need taken care of. There are a few things that are acceptable to do on the sabbath, but our work, the basic routine of life comes to a halt as we think of the sabbath day as a day of rest. I challenge us as brethren even on the farm, the ones who farm (that is what I

do) there are things that even can be done on Saturday to make less work for Sunday to help that day of rest. Is it easy for us to slip off and buy gas on Sunday and those type of things? Our families are following. They see what we are doing. What for a witness are we leaving?

These battlegrounds we mentioned are not nearly all of them. The losing side of these different battlegrounds we talked about is simply a taking God's people away from Him and heading them toward evil. That is what it does. When we do not maintain, we do not gain ground. It is going away from God. Psalm 9:17 gives a clear picture of what is happening, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Tonight, if we are on that losing side, and are on that road of forgetting God, we are heading the wrong direction. We will pay the consequences. Adam and Eve did. They thought they could not be discovered, but they paid the price. They died spiritually. We suffer from it today.

I thought of the man of God in 1 Kings 13. He was called to go to Israel and prophesy to them. He was very clearly commanded to prophesy and not to return home the same way, nor to eat anything while he was there. He

went and he did his duty, but you know there was a man an old prophet who heard he was there. He sent his sons to go find this man. He told him, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water" (1 Kings 13:18). How many times do we face that same kind of situation? People that call themselves Christians are doing it. What is the wrong with it? The man of God listened, but he paid the consequences. The Lord said that he should not do that. He started back home, and a lion met him by the way and that was the end of his life.

Death by a lion would not be too bad if he knew that heaven was waiting. However, if we turn from God the Scriptures says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). There will be no returning from that destruction. We will be there forever. I want to leave that challenge. We cannot afford to miss it. We cannot afford the risk of following our permissive society. What do we have to gain? Nothing. We have all to lose if we do that.

In closing, I would like to read 1 Corinthians 16:13. "Watch ye,

stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” By the power of God we can do that even in the midst of a permissive society. If you find yourself in eternity in that place of destruc-

tion because you followed the permissive society remember one thing. I have said it many times: you chose to be there. That is why you are there.

Scripture References

	Genesis	55:2	202	4:10	208
3:6–8	204		Matthew	6:9	208
6:5	197	5:37	210	6:18	206
	Exodus	7:14	200	16:13	213
20:8	212	7:20	203		1 Timothy
	1 Kings	7:21–23	198	5:24	204
13:18	213	22:17	211		2 Timothy
	Psalms	22:19–21	211	2:22	205
9:17	213		Mark		1 Peter
	Proverbs	10:1–12	208	1:13	206
10:22	211		Luke		2 Peter
20:14	210	6:31	211	2:1–8	200
	Ecclesiastes	6:38	211		1 John
8:11	201		Romans	2:15–17	203
11:9	201	1:21–28	209	4:4	202, 207
	Isaiah		1 Corinthians		

From the Previous Issue:

The Garden City Confession Series

Wilmer Eshbach

Preached at Orchardville Mennonite Church

Article II

OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

Sunday, August 22, 2004

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 32.

Plan of Salvation. — Redemption.

I. Definition. — To buy back, “ransom, liberate, deliver. Leviticus 25: 25-27; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23.

II. Man’s need of a Redeemer. — Psalm 49:7, 8; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:12.

III. The remedy.

1. Man must be redeemed by sacrifice. — Hebrews 9:22.

2. Human sacrifice could not avail. — Ephesians 2:8, 9; Hebrews 10:1; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

3. Christ the only hope. — John 1:29, 36; Acts 4:10–12; Galatians 4:4, 5.

4. How Christ effected our redemption.

a. By His death. — Romans 5:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

b. Especially by His blood. — Leviticus 17:11; Acts 16:28; Hebrews 9:12, 22; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

5. Salvation a free gift. — Romans 5:18; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8

NOTE. — So much the greater man’s reason for rejoicing. Man cannot feel puffed up for having earned this priceless boon. Salvation is a gift which God bestows freely upon them that call upon His name.

IV. Christ’s work of redemption necessary and sufficient for all.

1. The Old Testament saints. — Hebrews 9:15.

2. The church. — Ephesians 5:25–27; Titus 2:14.

3. The wicked. — 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2.

4. The individual. — Galatians 2:20.

5. All creation. — Romans 8:19–23.

V. What redemption delivers from.

1. Sin. — Matthew 1:21; Romans 6:18, 22; 8:3.

2. The bondage and curse of the law. — Galatians 3:13; 4:5.

3. Power of the world. — Galatians 1:4; 6:14; 1 Peter 1:18.

4. Power of the devil. — Hebrews 2:14, 15.

VI. What redemption procures for us.

1. Reconciliation to God. — Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:21–23.

2. Forgiveness of sin. — Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14.

3. Justification. — Romans 3:24.
4. Adoption. — Galatians 4:4, 5.
5. Sanctification. — Ephesians 5:26, 27; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 10:9, 10; 13:12.

Just one connecting-link between heaven and earth; yet this link is strong enough to bind every human soul to God. God has done His part; Christ has done His part; it is now left for man to say whether the redemption freely offered shall be accepted.

1. Distinguish between the atonement made by the sprinkling of blood in Jewish sacrifices, and the atonement made by the blood of Jesus
2. Are all people redeemed?
3. Does an infant need redemption? Explain.
4. Distinguish between atonement and redemption.
5. Explain Hebrews 6:4–6.

LESSON 33.

Plan of Salvation. — Regeneration.

I. Definition. — *Re* — again; *generare* — to beget or create; *ion* — act of, or state of being. Re-genera-tion — act of begetting again.

II. Necessity of regeneration. — John 3:3; Galatians 6:15.

NOTE. — “Doctor” the old man, tone down on bad habits, walk circumspectly before the world, adorn your brows with wreathes of worldly laurels — all these avail nothing in the work of regeneration. A new birth is necessary. Nicodemus probably possessed all these qualifications, yet when Christ propounded to him the doctrine of regeneration, he asked in astonishment, “How can these things be?”

III. Who needs regeneration?

1. Not the child (Matthew 18:3; 19:14), but —
2. They who have reached years of accountability. — Romans 7:9, 24.

IV. The work of regeneration.

1. Man’s part of the work.

2. God's part of the work.
— Ephesians 2:1–8; Titus 3:1–7.

NOTE. — Man's part is to believe, trust, accept. God does the rest.

3. No necessary physical sensation. John 3:8.

Note. — The testimony of the man who had been healed of his blindness correctly describes the experience of those who have experienced regeneration: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). After the work of regeneration is complete, we are conscious of new desires, new aspirations, new affections, etc. We are conscious of the change, but ignorant of the manner in which the change was brought about. Many persons have mistaken the emotions arising from the consciousness of the new birth, for the operation of the Spirit itself.

V. Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and the Word of God, recognized in the work of regeneration. — John 1:13; Titus 3:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 4:15.

NOTE. — The Word instructs, the Son redeems, the Father gives life and the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

1. Name some Scriptural evidences of regeneration.
2. What promise did Christ give the regenerated in Matthew 19?
3. Who only can understand regeneration?
4. What effect has regeneration on understanding the Word of God?
5. Name some things that people sometimes substitute for the work of regeneration. Will any of these substitutes suffice?

Children's Book Reprint *continued*

The Little Woodchopper

While William had been occupied with his sorrow outdoors his brothers were busy eating the remnants of their evening meal and emptying the whisky jug. They were considering together

what to do with their Youngest brother. He was too young to go with them on their long hunting expeditions, and to leave him at home for days, and often weeks, would not do either. Besides,

their hearts were full of hatred towards him because, though so young, he would admonish them at times and plead with them not to go "poaching." He had told them that poaching was stealing, and that God said, "Thou shalt not steal!" His father had taught him so.

His childlike prayers were very disagreeable to them, because they constantly reminded them of their condition before God. The question with them was how they could most conveniently rid themselves of the boy. Poor William! His father had been dead only a few hours, and his brothers were already considering how to do away with him.

"We can't take him along when we go hunting," said the oldest one; "he would betray us as soon as he got a chance."

"But what shall we do with him?" asked the second one; "he'd be better off in the grave with his father."

"Hold on!" broke in the third brother; "He's our brother, and we must not touch him; not a hair of his head shall we hurt, if I can help it."

"What shall be done with him, then," growled the eldest.

"I know what we could do," replied the fourth. "The best way would be to take him a few days' journey into the forest, and then

leave him to his fate. He may then go where he chooses. He won't find his way back to us very soon."

"But then we must see to it that Caesar stays in the cabin; otherwise we will have trouble, because William himself can't drive him off. Besides this, I would advise you to take the boy almost to the other side of the forest, and from there he may be able to find some one to go to."

"Very well," said the youngest of the five brothers; "let us take him into the forest. We can take one of the donkeys along and put him on it, so that we may be able to walk fast; when we have gone far enough, we will leave him at night."

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

After a little more talk back and forth, they concluded to start the wicked plan the next morning. It was now late, and as they decided to be off very early in the morning, they all went to rest. William too, after eating a little, went to bed.

The day had hardly dawned when all was astir in the log cabin. The breakfast was prepared in haste. A sack full of Provisions was loaded upon the strongest donkey. William was

wakened early and after dressing and washing himself, he stood and looked on, thinking no evil, awaiting the preparations.

When all was ready for the journey the oldest brother took the little one by the hand, ordered him to put on his hat, and lifted him on the donkey which stood in readiness outside.

“Where are we going?” asked William, who would rather have stayed at home, but he dared not make any objections.

“Into the forest to chop wood and chase deer,” responded one of the brothers with a laugh.

“What! are you going to steal the good forester’s game again? Don’t do it!” begged William, with a sad look.

The brothers gave no answer but looked at each other.

“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. “Ecclesiastes 8:11.

Caesar was ready to follow the donkey on which his young master was sitting. Wagging his tail gladly, he waited impatiently for the company to start on the journey. At this moment, one of the

brothers came with a strong rope, tied it around the neck of the dog, dragged the unwilling and resisting animal into the cabin, and locked the door.

“Can’t Caesar come along?” asked William.

“No,” replied his eldest brother.

“Then give him some bread and water, so that he won’t starve while we are in the forest,” said the little one.

“Do not mind things which are not your business,” replied the older brother roughly; “we will take care of the dog.”

William said no more, but with difficulty he kept back the rising tears.

At length they began their journey — up hill and down hill — to the left to the right and to the left — and about noon they came to an open space where they stopped and built a fire, then cooked and ate their dinner. After a few hours they started forward again, and in the evening they came to a large cave, near which a fine Spring was bubbling. Here they spent the night; William was so tired that he fell asleep without eating any supper.

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).



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