



The PARAKLETE

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WHY SOME DON'T BELIEVE

Have you ever asked yourself “Why some people don’t believe in Jesus Christ to the point they allow Him to change their lives?” It is a good question.

I read an illustration that might shed some light on the matter. The illustration, as I recall goes like this: A husband invited an out-of-town friend to dinner at his home. The wife understandably was nervous since she had never met the guest. As it turned out she was delighted to find the gentleman intelligent, engaging, and personable. She also discovered he was the author of a book her husband had given her some years earlier which she had stored away.

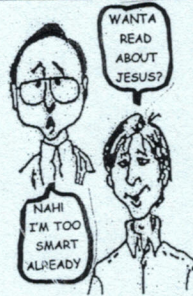
A few days later her husband noticed that every time his wife found a free moment she was reading the book. Finally the husband asked her, “Why, after letting the book gather dust in the closet, she was finally reading it?”

Her reply was the comment that got my attention. She said, “It was only a book until I met the author.” A book is always more interesting if you know the author or the one whose life the book is about.

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible contains an unbroken theme about the Lord Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself said that all the Scriptures speak of Him, Luke 24:27. This truth includes all the Old Testament books and certainly all the New Testament books as well. The very book the world attacks today. Yet it is true Jesus knew this would happen.

He said to unbelieving Jews, “But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believe Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

We need never to apologize for the Bible stories, for Jesus gave His complete endorsement to what Moses,



Daniel, Noah and the other prophets wrote.

Some so called intellectuals and theologians mock the idea of the literal interpretation of the Bible. Yet there is no evidence for their reaction to the Bible.

However, the mature Christian can say with Paul, “...will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all!” Romans 3:3. But how do we account for persons who are highly educated refusing to believe? Jesus’s conversation with Nicodemus sheds some light on the answer. He pointed out Nicodemus was viewing things from a worldly perspective and needed to be “born again” of the Spirit. This statement flows into other obvious reasons some don’t believe. Some reasons are because they:

1. Think there is no evidence...but there is.
2. Are influenced by the ungodly associates.
3. Have life experiences that made them bitter.
4. Are cursed with intellectual egotism.
5. Fear the emotional challenges.
6. In love with their independence.
7. Have morality issues.

The Scriptural reason some reject the Gospel is “*the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel...*” 2 Cor. 4:4.

Satan’s tactics are the same now as it was in the Garden of Eden. First he suggested the Word of God couldn’t be believed. Second he got Adam and Eve to believe they were smarter than God, and third he encouraged them to do what God had told them not to do. He uses this same pattern today.

When the foolish say in their heart “*there is no God,*” Psalm 14:1, “*God uses the foolish things of the earth to confound those who are wise in their own eyes,*” 1 Corinthians 1:27.

If those who think they are smarter than God are fooled by Satan, the God uses foolish things to

WHY SOME DON'T BELIEVE

confound them. His purpose is not to keep them from learning but uses their own foolishness to confound them.

There is one common denominator in these three tactics Satan uses. He is smart enough to know that all three work only if man thinks he's more than he really is. If men think they are wiser than God, then his ego takes over and, who knows, some may become a college professor. Many college professors are ego-maniacs, but all critics of the Bible do trip over their own egos. This would answer the question about why some don't believe, If we go back to the opening illustration about the woman who read the book her husband gave her, after she met the author, it might be helpful.

Before the introduction to the author she didn't see the need to read the book. She may have had other books to read, but after being introduced to the author, she was drawn to it.

Most people won't just pick up a Bible and begin to read it. It is thick, has some big words, and the educational level of its content is above that of the daily newspaper (6th grade level). What will encourage them the want to read it? The world wants evidence and we Christian ought to know some things about that.

Nicodemus was attracted to Jesus and engaged Him in conversation. Nicodemus was a very educated man, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council. Jesus appealed to his condition (lost) not his status in life. Jesus talked to him about the evidence he could observe, changed lives.

Some are never won to Jesus because they don't read the Bible, and they don't read the Bible because they are not attracted to Jesus by His followers. Think back to your own conversion. Were you simply attracted to a book on the coffee table and began reading it? Or was it perhaps someone, a real person living and talking about Jesus Christ as their Savior? I would guess it was the latter.

Paul wrote to the young man Titus to teach the people behave in a manner to ***"make the teachings of our Savior attractive,"*** Titus 2:10. Peter wrote for us to be able to give Bible answers to questions, 1 Peter 3:15-16 and Jesus said that if we loved each other, the lost would know we are His.

Why do some not believe? Besides their own ego, it might be because our lives do not attract the lost and do not talk about Him in the market places or even that we show little or no love for each other.

BARNABAS PREACHERS' SCHEDULES

Denny Coburn - Gallipolis, OH 740/446-6929

I am writing and available to preach with limited travel.

Danny Evans, Associate. - Huntington, WV 304/633-5908

Danny preaches often at congregations in his area when they need a supply preacher. He is available when needed.

GOD'S WORD FROM BEGINNING TO END

There is a unique harmony in the Bible. Take for instance a comparison of the first two and the last two chapters:

In Genesis the earth is created; in Revelation it passes away.

In Genesis the sun and the moon appear; in Revelation there is no need of sun or moon.\

In Genesis there is a garden; the home of man; in Revelation there is a city, the home of the nations.

In Genesis we are introduced to Satan; in Revelation we see his doom.

In Genesis we hear the first sob and see the first tear; in Revelation we read: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying."

In Genesis the curse is pronounced; in Revelation we read: "There shall be no more curse."

In Genesis we see our first parents driven from the tree of life; in Revelation man is welcomed back.

- **London Pillar of Fire**

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING

The longer you read the Bible the more you will like it. It will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more the Spirit of Christ will increase in you.

THE JOKE MAY BE ON US

A preacher walks into the barbershop and a man he never met addresses him. "They tell me you are a preacher, is that right?" The preacher replies, "Yes sir, I am a preacher."

The man then asked, "What kind are you?" to which the preacher said, "A good one I hope." The man quickly snapped, "No, I mean what brand?" The preacher said, "I preach at the First Christian Church on the edge of town."

The inquirer then said, "Oh, you are that narrow minded bunch that thinks your group is the only ones going to heaven, right?"

The preacher said, "No, I'm more narrow minded than that. I don't believe all of us are going to make it to heaven. You can come to worship this Sunday and help me figure out who will and who won't."

DOTS AND DASHES FROM DANNY

Something Light Hearted :

A man, who is sentenced to life imprisonment, decides to dig a tunnel to escape. He works for many months on this tunnel, and finally finishes it. He decides to break out during the day, figuring the guards will not suspect this. As he breaks through the ground to the surface, he finds himself in a preschool playground.

He is surprised, but he rejoices anyway, shouting, "I'm free, I'm free!"

At this a little girl approaches him, puts her hand on her hip, and says, "Big deal! I'm four!"

WHEN SCRIPTURE COMES ALIVE

I am sure I am not the only person that this has happened to but recently some scripture just came to life for me. I have read these verses many times and preached on them or referenced them in messages but in February they made me realize just exactly what they said and meant.

The second week of February each year we have a gathering in Pigeon Forge that is hosted by Barnabas Ministries and it is called Winter Worship and Workshop. This isn't something new because this past February we celebrated our twenty – first anniversary. However, with the restrictions of Covid and the fact that we were not able to have this event in 2021, this year was sort of like a continued restart to get back into the groove of having this meeting. The meeting was a joy but at the same time it was full of pressure for me as I had taken on the planning of this get-together. Several times I looked in a mirror and asked myself, "What in the world have I taken on"? I have a much deeper appreciation of Denny Coburn as he did this task for 20 years. Trying to negotiate all that goes with having this assembly is sometimes monumental.

The thought I am trying to introduce is this verse found in *1 Thessalonians 5: 16* "**Rejoice always**". It is a little verse with big implications. I found great joy at the meeting and since I have returned home I have found myself just remembering what happened there. It was a time of witnessing God

work to bring His people together to worship and fellowship with each other. I have images in my memory of people just caring for each other and allowing the Spirit to fill their cups to overflowing. This all happened because people permitted God to use their talents to lead and share in this. The music was wonderful, the speakers outstanding and the free time was relaxing.

I am still rejoicing from what I brought away from Tennessee. Paul's command in his writing was for Christians to go beyond happiness he says we need to have joy. Happiness is an emotional response to pleasant, favorable circumstances. It is impossible to command people to have happiness but Paul instructs the Thessalonians to rejoice and keep on rejoicing. This is a hard command especially since Paul adds the word "always." It would be easier to rejoice sometimes but always? How does one go about doing this? Paul gives us the solution to this in the verses that go with this passage. He says "we should rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances". The explanation for this command is that this is God's will. God wants us to have these aspects in our lives. If we don't, could we be in spiritual rebellion or just not listening to God's instructions. To do God's will becomes very difficult when we have our own agenda and we start to be unhappy if we don't get our way.

Yes, there will be tribulations in our lives. Satan will do everything he can to make our lives a turmoil. But *1 John 4: 4* gives us great insight into how we can rejoice as it says, "***You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world***". We can rejoice in this truth! God is still in charge.!

I am rejoicing about the meeting and the deep feeling it has given me. Also, what transpired at the meeting gives me joy and I continue to recall what took place at WWW when I get discouraged and down. May we rejoice even in tribulations because God wants that for our life.

**Danny Evans is an associate and trustee
with Barnabas Ministries**

LEARNING with Larry

I recently preached from Matt. 25:31 about when Jesus comes and He will separate the goat from the sheep. That seems to be the first thing He does. This made me think: "Have I separated myself from the things of this world?"

To answer the question I had to look at two words in the text that are similar in some ways. The first is APHORIZO meaning "to divide, or end a relationship, or set apart." In 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18 we are told not to be yoked together with unbelievers. "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?" The same is asked of "light with darkness," "Christ with Belial," or "believer with unbeliever?" "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols" For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you and I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Almighty."

The second word is "sanctifying" (HAGIASMOS) meaning "to cleanse or set apart for use, or to be declared holy." We find the word in 1 Cor. 6:9-11. After listing all the sins of the flesh, Paul ends with, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

These two words speak about coming out of the worldly ways and building an intimate relationship with Jesus. The problem I see is that the evil of this world didn't hit us all at once, no the devil slowly brought into this world slowly so we would not be shocked but gradually accept these things as normal. We know these things are not normal, so by this gradual means Satan has caused them to not bother us as they should.

So as I evaluate my relationship with the Lord, I realize I must separate myself from the things of this world that would jeopardize the sanctification that I desire to live.

A song titled "Mercy Me" states with these words: "Separated; until the veil was torn; the moment that hope was born; and guilt was pardoned once and for all; Captivated; but no longer bound by chains; Left at an empty grave, the sinner and the sacred resolved." Jesus has saved us and set us apart to go into the lost and dying world to bring them to Him. Jesus did not come to this world to make bad people good; He came to

make dead people alive. So as I strive to separate myself from the evil of this world there is a simple chorus I love to sing: "Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living, sanctuary for you."

Until next time, -Larry.

DAFFYNITIONS

EDIFY – A question, "Ed, if I take a run can I reach the other side?"

DELIGHT – Blocking my view, "I can't see de light is in my eyes.

DEFENCE – A barrier, "My horse can't jump de fence, too high.

WEAKEN – Time, "Me and Bubba are going fishing this weaken."

GAY – I changed...it used to mean happy...now "sinner."

BABYLON – Verbiage, to keep talking.

NEBO – Same as elbow but in the leg

BEATING DON'T HELP

Back in 1989 on a flight from New York to Miami, the light indicator for the landing gear, indicating it was down, didn't come on as they approached the runway. The captain and his co-pilots began to thump and pound on the light indicator hoping that would help but the light didn't come on. It appeared that no one thought of aborting the landing. It seems that had an in-cabin manual alternative they never thought of or ignored. The plane crashed with the disastrous loss of about 100 lives.

Beating on the panel of the aircraft did about as much good as thumping people on the head with the Bible. When Paul was in Athens, Acts 17, he didn't even mention the Scriptures, but quoted from their poets.

If you are a pilot in the gospel air craft and they don't hear you, take her up again, and speak their language...you might receive a landing stripe, and you can lower your landing gear.

DRIFTING

If we drift aimlessly through life
And live for self each day,
The lost, who often cross our path
May never find the way.

MINI THOUGHTS

You quickly lose interest in the church if you have nothing invested.

~

Do not entertain ideas – put them to work.

~

We lie to God in prayer if we do not rely on Him after prayer.

~

People do not miss church services because they live too far from the building; it's because they live too far from God.

~

We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.

PEACE

Oh, the peace I find in Jesus,
peace no power on earth can shake. Peace that makes
the Lord so precious, peace that none from me can take.

BARN-a-book (a Barnabas Ministries study series)

A series of studies in encouragement by Denny Coburn

Study Number One Hundred Twenty-eight – Get Your Eyes off of Yourself

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others,” Philippians 2:1-4.

The desire for self-esteem is a highly personal, intensely subjective, even narcissistic activity. Such intense self-preoccupation and introspection may be permitted and required for the person who is seeking healing but it should never be a way of life. Psychotherapy is a permissible and necessary regression to the nearly total self-preoccupation of infancy, but not for the growing Christian. Such a journey down the river of self may be needed to repair personality damage, healing of old wounds and perhaps to experience unconditional love of the therapist. Some have never experienced unconditional love, but this certainly is not true of any redeemed person, for that is what Christ gives.

If there were one piece of advice I’d give someone to help them overcome discouragement, it would be to become actively involved in helping other people. I believe this advice is given in our text, not to overcome discouragement in particular, but as a life style that honors our Lord and is beneficial to both the one helping and the one helped.

It seems to be a paradox but in looking to the interest of others we are freed from self-interests. Unless someone serves my need, I can’t serve the need of others; but in serving the need of others, my own need is served. Self-esteem flourishes in the interplay of serving and being served, of giving and receiving.

Jesus was exalted because he *“made himself nothing,”* verses 5-11 of our text. Those who seek encouragement for its own sake will never find it. Those who seek encouragement for their own need and the needs of others, however, will find it. The phrase *“look not only to your interest”* implies that we are permitted to fulfill our own needs and that our own needs are legitimate. It is good and right and healthy to do all we can to build our own self-worth. It is superficially unhealthy and unethical, on the other hand to seek self-esteem as an end in itself.

The best “adjusted” person is the person who has reached the place where he cares not a whit about his own self-esteem but cares intensely about encouraging others. Such a person may be rare, but there is no inherent reason why such an attitude is not within the reach of every person, for this attitude is the essence of the Christian life. *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus,”* verse 5. What was His attitude? He *“made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,”* verse 7.

Jesus emptied Himself. What does that mean? It means that He did not pursue all that was rightfully His. He was the Creator, John 1:3, who deserved praise and honor, yet He chose to serve the needs of others, others who could do nothing for Him. We are incapable of returning the favor, so He had nothing to gain by His actions, but His actions resulted in His exaltation. There is the paradox again

chose to serve the needs of others, others who could do nothing for Him. We are incapable of returning the favor, and He had nothing to gain in His actions, but His actions resulted in His exaltation. There is the paradox again. He would not have been worthy, as a man of this exaltation until He humiliated Himself for others sake. Notice His steps to “serving others.”

1. He set aside who He was, He **“did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,”** verse 6. We can’t properly think of the needs of others while at the same time thinking about ourselves. Jesus’ thoughts were of us, not for Himself.
2. He not only set aside His own importance, but He **“made himself nothing,”** verse 7. Anyone who thinks he is “someone of importance,” is really not. There is a humorous story of a preacher who said to his wife. “Honey do you know how many great preachers there are in this room?” To which she replied, “Probably one less than you think.”
3. He desired to serve, by **“taking the very nature of a servant,”** verse 7. It may be one thing to forget your title, office, or even becoming a “nothing,” but it’s another step to become a servant.
4. He **“humbled Himself,”** verse 8. There are those who think some things are beneath their dignity, but when we serve others unselfishly, dignity is not a concern. Beyond that, in the eyes of God, dignity is gained in being a servant.
5. He became **“obedient to death,”** verse 8. It would do no good for you, or me to actually die for another, in the sense that Jesus did. Such action, on our part would not improve their life. However, when we die to ourselves, give up our selfish ambition for the sake of others and to praise God, everyone benefits. God is glorified in us, the one we serve is encouraged, and we ourselves are more Christ-like.
6. He left it in the hands of the Father to determine the result of His actions, and God **“exalted him to the highest place,”** verse 9. No one, other than Jesus can fill this “highest place,” nor should we try. However, God blesses those who bless others, and Jesus blessed all mankind by emptying Himself for our sake.

From this point on in the text, we have the record of the enthronement of Jesus and that we should all bow and confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of the Father. This will never apply to us in the sense that it did Him. However, every Christian will receive a “crown of righteousness,” are given the title of “kingdom of priests,” and can bask in His glory. All of this takes us back to the point of the text.

When we forget ourselves, for the purpose and benefit of others, good things begin to happen. Selfishness, in any form, is harmful to self as well as to others. There are those who go through life leaving nothing behind but the debris of broken hearts, disappointment, and other manners of hurt for others. But for the self-emptying Christian the road behind and before them is filled with blessings, joy, and peace. So when the Scriptures state, **“Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others,”** it is giving a prescription for a purposeful and happy life.

Paul opens the second chapter of his discourse to the church at Philippi with the words, “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete...” This is the third blessing of unselfishness for the benefit of others. Paul, a brother in Christ confessed that as an observer, he was blessed by witnessing such humility. Even those who are uninvolved are encouraged by seeing others forget themselves to bless others.

STRESS

Sermon by Denny Coburn

TEXT: James 1:2-12

INTRO: We need to be thankful for God-given stress because it is beneficial for spiritual growth. Stress keeps us motivated and keeps us from becoming bored. However, if not handled properly, it can become overwhelming. If it is consistent and unrelieved, pressure can cause us physical, emotional and spiritual harm.

Biblically, stresses are usually called “trials” “troubles,” and “tribulations.” 1st Peter 1:17, John 16:33, and Matthew 6:34. God has not promised us immunity from stress. In fact He has promised them, 2nd Timothy 3:12. However, we have a spiritual source for help, Hebrews 4:16; 7:25. Let’s look at stress practically.

I.

TYPES OF STRESS

A. OVERWORK – Moses

1. Demands in decision making, problem solving.
2. Assume too much responsibility, Ex. 18:13ff.
3. Solutions solving, Ex. 18:24ff.
4. Changed behavior can solve the problem

B. SUDDEN CHANGES – Job

1. It can be family, finances, health, etc.
2. Search for the purpose in the change, Job 1:21
3. Communication with God about it, 7:15-16; 13:24; 19:10.
4. Trust in God, 9:4; 8, 10, 42:1

C. UNESCAPABLE STRESS – Paul

1. Responsibilities, 2 Cor. 4:8, 9; 11:24-28; 12:7
2. Look at the positive sides, Romans 5:3
3. He says “positional peace” – “in Christ”
4. Saw the peace and righteousness that follows training by stress, Hebrews 12:11
5. Paul knew: Stress leads to a strong productive Christian life.

II.

THREE THINGS

There are three things we can gain from stress

A. PATIENCE/ENDURANCE (v3)

1. We are not as strong as we thought so we will depend on God
2. Teaching us God is faithful.

B. EXPERIENCE/CHARACTER (4)

1. We are tested to make us “complete”
2. We can demonstrate reliability by enduring.

C. CONFIDENCE (vs 4-5)

1. Confidence in God, He will see us through
2. Wisdom we ask for in handling stress

III.

WHAT WE ARE TO DO IN STRESSFUL TIMES

A. CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOR

1. As did Moses in getting more human assistance
2. Learn God provides human help also.

B. CONFIDE IN GOD

1. **God knows we are** limited and expects us to ask
2. That is seeking help from the ultimate source

C. BE PATIENT

1. God’s wisdom is involved, allow it time to work
2. He’s working on us through stress
3. Develop patience as a mind-set (Spirit evidenced)

IV.

LEARN LESSONS FROM PAUL

A. HE EXPECTED STRESS – 9:16

1. Peter knew it – 1 Peter 1:7
2. James knew it – Our text
3. Jesus obviously knew it and said “Don’t be surprised” by it.

B. HE DIDN’T RUN FROM IT – Acts 21:10-14

C. HE DIDN’T AVOID IT FOR MATERIAL OR PERSONAL GAIN – Phil. 4:10-13

D. SET A CLEAR GOAL – Rom. 15:20

E. SEE IT THROUGH ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

CLOSING – In some parts of Florida during the hurricane season, when they know a hurricane is coming, they gather several families in one of the safest homes. They then call other homes where families are gathered and after some conversation they end it with these words, “Have a happy hurricane.”

What they know is this: You might as well accept it and make the best you can of it because it is expected in Florida. Are they happy about it? No, not at all...but they know this, it won’t last forever, so accept it.

THE NAME GAME

Irish police were on the lookout for a Pole named Prawo Jazdy. The man had over 50 traffic offenses, and each time he gave the authorities a different address. But it turns out that Prawo Jazdy is not a name, it’s Polish for “driving license.”

Police officers had apparently assumed that the two words listed at the top right corner of the license constituted the driver’s name and recorded it as such. “It had created Prawo Jazdy as a person with over 50 identities,” said a police memo obtained by Irish newspapers.

That’s funny, but I wonder if some people think that attending a worship service constitutes being a Christian. After all some think being born in America has the same effect. They call this a Christian nation even though less than 20% of our population attends worship services and that is to say nothing of abortions, sexual deviations, drug abuse, and moral decline. Is “Christian” used as part of a name game?

MINI THOUGHTS

**There are many ways to be wrong,
but only one way to be right.**

~

**It is not wise to tell everything you know,
but it is wise to know everything you tell.**

~

**The great task of the church is to get sinners into
heaven and get the saints out of bed.**

NOT SO QUOTABLE QUOTE

William Ayers, founder of the 1970 domestic terrorist group Weather Underground and now a professor of education at the University of Illinois-Chicago, was scheduled to speak at the University of Toronto in Canada but was turned back at the border by officials.

Though having a history of blowing up buildings, killing policemen in the process, and afterwards saying he didn’t do enough, he found the nerve to say, “If it were me, I would have let me in.”

The thought came to mind “I wonder if some people on the Day of Judgment might say the same thing, as they are denied entrance.”

Years ago the Associated Press carried an interview with a 70 years old man who had never had to work a day in his life, due to a large inheritance. He had spent his whole life trying to breed spotted mice. Now I grant he had the right to spend his life as he wanted, and make mice his pursuit, but after 70 years if that’s all he had to show for his life, what a waste! **Back of every wasted life is a bad philosophy, an erroneous perception of life’s worth and purpose.**

OPPORTUNITIES

May-9-11 Spring Clinic Hillsboro, OH. Contact: p2pm_office@yahoo.com

June 23-25 Sugarloaf Family Camp, Wallingford, KY, Contact: vernon.eldridge@mstcoc.org

WHAT MAKES A NATION GREAT?

Not serried rank with flags unfurled,
Not armored ships that gird the world,
Not hoarded wealth nor busy mills,
Not cattle on a thousand hills,
Not sages wise, nor schools nor laws,
Not boasted deed in freedom's cause –
All these may be, and yet the state
In the eyes of God be far from great.
That land is great which know the Lord,
Whose songs are guided by His word,
Where justice rules twixt man and man.
Where love controls in art and plan;
Where breathing in in his native air,
Each soul finds joy in praise and prayer –
Thus our country, good and great,
Be God's delight – man's best estate.

-Alexander Blackburn

THE BIBLE SAYS...BUT...WHAT IF...

Jesus said, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but who does not believe will be condemned,"* Luke 16:16. What if Peter, on the Day of Pentecost only said, "Receive Jesus into your heart and you shall be saved? Would they have been saved?

Ananias told Saul to *"Get up and be baptized washing away your sins, calling on His name,"* Acts 22:16, but what if he had said, "Pray through for salvation." Would he have been saved?

Peter speaking of Noah, his family and the flood wrote, *"...eight in all were saved through water, and this water (flood) symbolizes baptism that now saves you also, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."* 1 Peter 3:20-21. What if I stood in the pulpit and declared that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, would I be telling the truth?

Did Jesus tell His hearer something that was unnecessary? When He sent Paul to Ananias where he would be told what to do, did He send him to a man who would tell him wrong? Finally, do I or anyone who claims to be a preacher of the truth have a right to correct the Bible instructions?

P.R.E.S.

Preacher Recruitment and Encouragement Seminar
Barnabas Ministries is founded on the principle laid out in the texts *"...encourage one another and build each other up..."* 1 Thess. 5:11 and *"...encourage one another daily..."* Heb. 3:13.

We all need encouragement but preachers need it much more than one might think. There is a great responsibility that comes with preaching, and we desire to encourage those who do.

At no cost to a preacher or the host congregation, we will conduct a Preacher Recruitment and Encouragement Seminar for any congregation that is willing to host such a meeting. Barnabas will pay the speakers and their housing, and reimburse the host for the cost of a noon meal as long as funds are available through the supporters of PRES.

To date we have conducted such meetings in Gallipolis and Cincinnati, OH, London, and Madison, KY, Monroeville, PA, and Bluefield, WV. If you would like information, you can email, or call the Barnabas office.

Anyone who would like to support this program, make your check out to Barnabas Ministries and make the "purpose" on the check to read "PRES." All monies received so marked will be spent only for this purpose. Above all, please pray for God's continued blessing on PRES.

JESUS CHRIST, THE COMMUNICATOR

An unbeliever once asked a preacher why John called Jesus Christ "The Word." It seemed a strange appellation to him. The preacher answered, "It seems to me that as our words are the means that permit us to communicate with others, John used it to show that Jesus Christ is the only means whereby He chose to communicate with man."

DID YOU KNOW?

It takes 70 hours and 40 minutes to read the Bible at pulpit rate.

It takes 52 hours and 20 minutes to read the Old Testament.

It takes 18 hours and 20 minutes to read the New Testament

The Bible in the memory is better than the Bible in the bookcase

The Bible is, to many, God's unopened letter.