

My dearly beloved Brothers of the Solid Rock Association, I will now attempt to fulfill your request of being chosen last year to write the circular letter.

Over my years I have heard and read many wonderful circular letters and feel to be so unworthy to attempt to write this letter. I feel we as an association have many more capable brothers to take on this task. I know in my heart without God I cannot do anything on my own, but with his help all things are made possible.

I began to pray that God would overshadow me and revealate my mind and give me the guidance and ability to proceed. I feel that God has led my mind to write about obedience and this with the Lords help will be the subject of this letter. Isaiah 1:19 "If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land." If we look at this scripture closely, I believe we each find it in our heart to understand that to be blessed and to eat from the table prepared by God we must be obedient and we must follow the low still voice of God and do whatever he is telling us to do. If he is telling us to shout, we should SHOUT, if he is telling us to pray, we should PRAY, if he is telling us to move, MOVE, if he is telling us to stand still, stand still. Whatever he is telling you to do you should press forward as hard as you can to do the Will of the FATHER.

So often I have been disobedient in my life. When God was calling me just as a young child at the age of 13 I pushed it away. I thought to myself you are too young, you will be laughed at and scorned. They will never accept you, you have to be old to be forgiven and saved. I can remember where I was at like it was yesterday. I was in an old out house at the Bethel Old Regular Baptist Church in Jenkins, KY. I heard God speak to me. I knew his voice, but I just pushed it away from my mind. Years went by and then the voice began to speak to me again for which I am very thankful for his love and kindness and mercy. There had been such an emptiness in my life. God showed me what a creature that I was by nature, so full of sin, lost, ruint, and undone without God and no hope. At that point I felt a Godly sorrow had set up inside of me. I spent many sleepless nights crying and praying to God, then one night there was something different. I believe I had went as far as I could go I was down so low without God, without hope, I had nothing. I began to cry out and beg to God. I begged God to save my soul. I was no longer concerned about this natural man you see before you, but I was concerned about my soul. I believe brothers that this is when I became obedient and completely surrendered to God and I believe that this is when my travail ended. I believe I had endured until the end and God forgave me and saved me. I believe I was like ole Jonah. By reason of my affliction, I cried, and I believe he heard my cry and delivered me. I believe it is much like a mother giving birth, all the pain she goes through but then it is all forgotten and turned into complete joy when she has delivered. I believe my travail could have been shortened if I had only been obedient, but I was so disobedient. I was stiff necked, hard hearted, and rebellious. I am so thankful I believe he forgave me and cast my sins into the depth of the sea, never to be remembered again.

I believe God sealed me with a lively hope in Jesus Christ. My hope is not of this world, but my hopes are in Jesus Christ. So often we ignore that low still voice and suffer. We begin to starve and hunger for things this world can not give, and until we obey that voice we will continue to suffer and starve. Oh, but what Joy there is in obedience. When we obey that voice and do whatsoever it commands us to do, there is Joy, Joy, Joy. We can eat from the table that Gods has prepared and can shout Glory, Glory, Glory to the King most high.

There was another time in my life when I began to be disobedient to that low still voice. I even began to run and hide, but the burdens began to get so heavy that once again I began to suffer due to my disobedience. I wasn't receiving the blessings that I was seeing given all around me. Then came a day that there was a preacher sent from God to preach a message so plain and so clear. It was as if he knew my complete situation, all my thoughts and feelings. Every word that came out of his mouth began to beat on me and beat on me until the point I could take no more. At that point I became obedient to what that low still voice was speaking to me and again oh what joy I received when I was obedient and finally announced that I felt God had called me to make the offering to preach. When we are obedient to God's word, he blesses us and causes our cup to run over. Our way is not always easy, and our burdens will still come. Our troubles and heartache will still be there, but by obedience we can be made free. Free to eat and shout and give God the glory he so richly deserves. I fall short every day of my life and I am so thankful that we have an advocate sitting on the right-hand side of the father, making intercession for us all.

In the book of John chapter 14 verse 21 it says "He that loveth my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." I believe that once he sets up his abode in you and is found with you there is a love inside of you like you have never known. A desire to do everything in our strength to do the will of God. Once he abides in you, he said he would never more go out.

Brothers in my closing remarks my prayer is that God would bless our little association and that he would add to her waters daily. That we be that witness and light to this lost and dying world. That we always put Christ first among all things. May God bless you and if I never more see you on this side may we meet again on Canaan's bright shore where we can live in joy, peace and happiness forever and forever.

Your unworthy brother in hope,

Elder Michael Stanley