



The PARAKLETE

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OIL AND WATER, GRACE AND LAW

When asked if you are a Christian have you ever thought or said, "I hope so," or "I'm trying to be," or other words along those lines? Do you know what causes someone to think or reply in such a manner? Such answer as quoted above are due to a complete misunderstanding of law and grace. Before I discuss grace I'd like to address law.

Laws don't solve the sin problem, it simply points it out. "Law," as used in the New Testament, comes from the translation of the Greek "nomos" which is akin to "nemo," VINES GREEK DICTIONARY: When not referring to the Old Testament Law it simply means "to divide out, distribute, primarily meaning that which is assigned; as in custom, or usage." The purpose of Bible laws is to restrain evil in our fallen human nature.

This made me think of various systems by which we try to bring Christianity under law, and why that fails.



Let's say that we put Christians under the total law, along with its penalties. We would have nothing more than Judaism with a Christmas and no Honokah. This is a bad choice and no Savior.

Let us then place Christians under the moral law and its penalties. This would be moral legalism with all us resembling Don Knotts with his nervous twitches. We'd mull over some mistake we have made that might have to be paid in the future. Again, we'd have no Redeemer.

What if we place ourselves under the moral law without its proper penalties? This resembles what is going on today, knowing God or rather known by God and yet turning back to those weak and miserable principles, spoken of in Gal. 4:9. We'd have no down payment (Holy Spirit) guaranteeing the purchase price for our sins, 2 Cor. 1:22.

These choices not only dishonor God but they also dishonor the Law and the latter choice changes the Law into simply good advice. This is comparable to what the United Nations is doing: lip service. In addition to that it brings confusion to our view of

sin, of salvation, of the work of Christ and even the doctrine of God.

What is it about the simple truth that Jesus nailed the Law to the tree that is so hard to digest?

The Word of God condemns unsparingly all attempts to put the Christian "under the law." The Holy Spirit directed the Apostle Paul to write the Book of Galatians for the very purposes of dealing with this heresy. Reading this epistle we are struck with the fact that the whole is about the law, if it is for that purpose alone.

The error of the Galatians is not whole-sale legalism but rather saying that the Christian life, having begun by faith in Jesus Christ, must thereafter continue under the law or some part of it. Notice Paul's words, *"I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?"* (Gal. 3:2-3).

Paul knew well the danger of mixing law and grace and that moved him to write, *"I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my effort on you,"* 4:11 and adds, *"You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?"* 5:7. He even had a word for the one who introduced the heresy, *"The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be,"* verse 10.

We are not addressing mere theological hairsplitting, as some may say. By introducing law keeping, Paul tells us that is introducing another Gospel, 1:6. He then adds that it is "no gospel at all." The meaning of "gospel" is "good news" because it excludes works of law.

For someone to add a law to the Gospel, regardless of how worthy it may seem, actually destroys the grace involved in the Gospel.

It also makes the "law keeper" debtor to the whole law, not just a part of it.

This is one place that adding something subtracts from it. Grace plus law reduces grace to a mere word. Because of what and Who God is and what

OIL AND WATER, GRACE AND LAW

we are, there is no other way. If a sinner adds anything, he stands to lose everything. If he adds nothing, he gains everything.

That is why Paul wrote, *"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"* Gal. 1:8. This was his introduction into the subject of adding law to grace.

Grace, when fully understood, has more power to combat sin than does any law. Let me illustrate.

A story is told of a soldier who was overseas and received a love letter from his girlfriend. She wrote: "I know you will meet with temptations and I know you are human. But I want you to know that no matter what you do I will always love you and you have my forgiveness even now."

When he shared the letter with some of his buddies, they said, "Man, you can be unfaithful with no reprisals, why be faithful?" To which he replied, "No, how can I sin against such love as this?" Though not a perfect illustration, I'm sure you get the point. Obey is a joy when out of love, not law.

A full appreciation of God's grace will move one to surrender to His love. Laws, regardless of how many and well-intended, will not do that. Our dear departed brother, Don DeWelt, once said, "If you want someone to break a law, just make one." Do you know of a law that has not been broken? Do you know of a law that stopped sin?

I know that out of fear laws may deter violation, but when dealing with Christ we have to ask is that obedience out of fear or out of love? The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, as we know, but we are discussing salvation not wisdom.

As Christians we are to evidence the Spirit of God in our words, deeds, and attitudes. So the question is: "Can we evidence love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control while under the yoke of law or controlled by the Spirit. For Galatians 5:23-25 adds, *"Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

Adding water to the oil in the crankcase of your car will destroy the motor. Adding a watered down version of the oil of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel will destroy your peace, and make salvation a drudgery rather than a joy.

HOW CAN I BE SURE I'M SAVED?

By Denny Coburn

TEXT: 1 John 5:13

INTRO: We live in an age of fear and doubt. Wide-eyed teens go off to college and are told by the "intelligencia" that there are no absolutes. This means there are no certainties resulting in insecurity and Scriptural ignorance.

There should be few uncertainties with the Christian who knows what the Bible reveals about matters those things God wants us to know. Hebrews 6:18 states "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged."

We should not be arrogant, but confident of our salvation. This can be accomplished by understanding this small epistle of First John.

I. TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN

A. TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE (5:13)

1. All Christians
2. Young, old, fathers, mothers, etc.
3. Not to the unbeliever and doubters

B. TO THOSE WHO TRUST (4:1)

1. Not believe every spirit
2. Who acknowledge Jesus came (4:2)
3. Who acknowledge Jesus was from God (4:3)
4. Who are not mere listeners but doers of the word (Jas. 1:22)

II. HOW ASSURANCE IS GIVEN

A. BEING HONEST WITH GOD

1. Honest about our sin (1:6, 9-11)
 - a. Not a hypocrite
 - b. Not pretending we are perfect
2. Honestly obeying the word (2:3-4)
 - a. Doing "religious things" is not enough
 - b. "My sheep hear my voice"
 - c. Trust and obey
3. Honestly loving others (2:9-11)
 - a. Can't love God and hate others
 - b. Closer to Christ, closer to people

B. HAVING GODLY LOVE

1. It is a discerning love, not worldly (2:15-17)
 - a. Can't love world and God both
 - b. Cravings, lust, etc. are not from God
2. It is an enduring love (2:28)
 - a. It continues in Him
 - b. Lasts until He comes
3. It is a purifying love (3:1-6)
 - a. Making us like Him
 - b. Hope in Christ purifies

C. BEING TOTALLY SURRENDERED

1. Having a clear conscience (3:21-23)
 - a. The Lord know all things, don't hid
 - b. A guilty conscious causes fear
2. Having a searching spirit (4:1-6)
 - a. Read the Bible
 - b. Meditate on what it says
3. Having a trusting heart (4:15-16)
 - a. Believe what God says in His Word
 - b. Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17

CONCLUSION: How can we be sure we are saved by being honest with God and ourselves about our sin, by honestly obeying the Word, by honestly loving others. We can be sure we are saved if we do not love the world system because we have an enduring love for Him that lasts our whole life or until He comes. We can be sure if we have the purifying love that gives us a clear conscience, a searching spirit and a trusting heart. John said, "I write these things...that you might know that you have eternal life.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in His excellent Word."

- .DOTS AND DASHES FROM DANNY. -

Something lighthearted:

What do you call a woman who sets fire to all her bills? Bernadette!

GOD, WHERE ARE YOU!

Are you concerned about all that is happening in the world today? The cost of everything is up and the supply of items is down. Filling a car or truck with fuel today may cause you to stop a moment and consider a second mortgage. The battle in the Ukraine makes us wonder what the next concern will be for those who live overseas and for us here in the U.S. Then there is the heartbreaking situation where young children and teachers were killed by a young man with some very serious mental concerns.

So much is going on and many people of the world ask this question, "If there is a God, why is He allowing all this to happen and why isn't He doing something?" It is even more alarming when we hear people of the Body of Christ ask similar questions or at least make comments of that same nature.

We all face storms in our lives and we have to be reminded God is still close. I am reminded of [Mark 4:35-41](#). In this passage Jesus is looking for a break from the crowds that were following Him. Jesus takes a boat and some of His disciples and they are drifting for some rest and relaxation. However, conditions were not calm for long because an intense storm came along. In that area storms happen because of the lay of the land, the hills and the condition of the air will cause a sudden storm. In that intense storm Jesus did certain things that we can use to help us understand that He is still around and He still cares.

Storms happen quickly:

Vs. 37 "And a fierce gale of wind developed"... One misunderstanding I believe we face today is that if a person is a faithful follower of Christ they are protected from all of life's storms. Everything will be roses in their daily life. We forget that there are many people in scripture that were faithful to the Lord but went through serious difficulties. Consider Paul. He had a condition that caused him

problems all of his life. Our storms may come and often they come with no time to plan for them. But Jesus said, **"I am with you" (Matthew 28:20)**

Our faith is challenged:

Satan wants us to replace our faith with fear. Where is God? Why doesn't He do something? God are you really concerned about us? In our passage once Jesus saw the weather condition He sprang into action. He calmed the waves and the wind died down. Then He asked the disciples, "Why are you so afraid?" Do we trust God or not? Is He in charge of the things that happen? There are times when we allow fear to seep into our lives and faith is pushed out. Questions we have to answer are, "How is our faith?" Do we believe God? Is He our protector and provider?

Storms do pass by:

Thunder storms happen quickly but usually they pass by quickly also. Yes, there may be an aftermath but the storm is gone and clean up can begin. There may be pain in our storms but the intense power is softened when they are gone!

Sudden storms should drive us closer to the Lord:

Vs. 38 when the storm came they immediately went to the Lord. Is that not a lesson for us? We probably ask the same question "Lord don't you care about us?" We forget all that God does for us each day and we allow our daily lives to diminish our relationship with the Lord. But when a problem arises we remember where God is and we call on Him for help. God is always there, He is as close as we will allow Him to be.

God is still in control:

Vs. 41" They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" When the storm comes suddenly and it appears everything is out of control, God is still in charge.

Where is God? He is in the same place He has always been. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and He and the Father are still watching over us.

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LEARNING with Larry

Is worship a part-time duty? Let us examine the biblical word “worship.” In doing so I hope to answer the: who; what; when; where and how. The Greek verb for worship is PROSKUNEO which is to show reverence or worship. The Greek noun for worship is SEBASMA which is the object of our worship.

Many Christians seem to have the mindset that worship is just what we do on Sunday. We hear “How was worship today? We most certainly come together as the Church to worship our great God and remember Christ’s sacrifice. However, worship was never intended to be confined to our time together in a building. We don’t leave God at the building so our worship shouldn’t be left there either. He is always in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit and our worship of Him should never cease. When Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well in John 4:21-24 He said to her *“Woman...believe me a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has not come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

Who we should worship is obvious, God the Father and God the Son. Just like Joshua said to the gods they worshiped in Joshua 24:14-15, *“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day who you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

We choose everyday whom we will worship and serve... When Jesus began His earthy ministry He

was led into the desert to be tempted by the Devil and after three unsuccessful attempts Jesus told Satan in Matthew 4:10 “Away from me, Satan! For it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

God allows us to choose whom we will worship and serve and choose we must for we cannot serve two masters. We must choose to worship and serve God everyday all day! If you are like me you are challenged every day. Like when we have a family disagreement, or when we get cut off in traffic.

While the Apostle Paul was in Athens he noticed they worshipped many gods. In Acts 17:23 Paul wrote, *“For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship. I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘to an unknown god’. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. The people of Athens didn’t want to leave any god offended so they worship an unknown god.”*

To be truthful as I travel from Sunday to Sunday my mind wonders from the living God and if not careful images of “things” overshadow my worship of God.

So to answer the when of worship it is ALWAYS. The where is EVERYWHERE, and the how is IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. Worship is not just about praise on Sunday but should be every part of my life. It takes concentration but we can do it, until the next time.

-Larry.

SUPPORT IN MEMORY OF ROY SPRAGUE

Eldon and Barbara Howard

Leo and Millie Kuhn

MIND SETS

Getting something for nothing can breed irresponsibility.

Irresponsibility creates a careless attitude.

A careless attitude leads to a loss of standards.

A loss of standards prompts insecurity.

Insecurity creates fear.

Fear is Concorde by love

“Perfect love casts our fear”

So, don’t expect something for nothing.

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

A series of studies in encouragement by Denny Coburn Study Number One Hundred Twenty-two – Depression and the Christian

Depression is, according to the medical journals, the most common mental condition among patients seeking treatment for non-physical problems at counseling centers in the U.S. Their symptoms usually include at least four of the following:

- Increased irritability
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt (or hopelessness and helplessness)
- Agitation or restlessness
- Fatigue and loss of energy (or loss of interest in life's activities)
- Trouble thinking, making decision or concentrating
- Disturbed sleep, such as insomnia
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Overwhelming sadness (or self-loathing)

One article had this to say: Depending on your age, personality and gender, the symptoms of depression can vary greatly. Whenever depression lasts more than 90 days, it is considered major depression. Some periods of sadness are typical in one's life, but prolonged sadness and listlessness may be a sign of manic depression symptoms.

Clinical Depression can be a debilitating mental disorder (the journals and some psychologists call it a "disease"). It can afflict persons of all races, ages, and does not distinguish between men and women. It might be well to mention at this point that some journals list as many as fifteen different kinds of depression ranging from "Depression during College" and "Postpartum Depression," to "Manic Depression." It seems that a new name for depression is given to every symptom.

Quite often physical symptoms can be observed in those suffering from kind of depression. Some of the signs are: muscle aches, digestive problems, flu-like symptoms, crying for no obvious reason, and other emotional behavior with no explanation given or even known.

There is no doubt one going through such difficulties needs treatment. I am not going to prescribe any medication because I am not a doctor and I haven't played one on TV. However I believe that Christians have the upper hand in dealing with depression, unless it is from a chemical malfunction or deficiency within the brain. I will also state that it is my opinion (and opinions are free and worth every cent) that the secular world may be working on the wrong end of the problem.

That is, does a mental attitude create a physical problem for an individual or does the physical problem create the observable symptoms, as the journals seem to endorse? With the immediate prescribing of medicine for whatever emotional disorder one would get the impression again that psych and med industry always opts for the physical (brain) being corrected to produce an cure for the emotional. After observing, reading and having dealt with those in depression, I disagree. However, I am coming from strictly a Christian counseling perspective.

I do not deny that we can learn much from the purely physical, medical, and psychological disciplines and I appreciate their advances in many areas. However, if they always address an emotional problem with the bias that "it must be something physical causing it," they may miss something. This, of course is true of any bias, mine included.

Having said all of this, I'd like to address the problem of depression from a Christian perspective. Depression is a fact of life that can't be denied. It is serious, and should be addressed as soon as possible. It is also true that one suffering from depression did not choose to be in that condition.

As I have stated, I believe the other disciplines have approached the problem from the wrong and, treating the symptoms rather than the cause of the symptoms. If that be the case then we should address the mental attitude perspective of depression. We can see this in King David's approach to depression and discouragement. In every case he presented the cause of his difficulties, his fears, his doubts, but also his hope to the Lord. He didn't look inward for the protection from discouragement but he looked upward.

In Psalm 27 we see David's fearless trust in God. He presented those things that haunted him unto the Lord. He spoke of fear, enemies, over-whelming odds against him, troubles, false witnesses against him, and violence he faced. However, in the end he stated, ***"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord,"*** verses 13-14. In verse three David made his choice, ***"Though an army besieges me, my heart will not fear though war break out against me, even then will I be confident."***

When they are in a state of depression they often feel as low as they can get, and seem to be "looking up through the bottom," and it is not easy to dig out from that position. David felt that way also, as seen in Psalm 40. He cried out ***"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord"*** verses 1-3. He was in a desperate situation. But notice what he did, he ***"cried out to the Lord and waited patiently."***

God rewarded that trust by doing these six things: (1) He heard David, (2) lifted him out, (3) set his feet on the rock, (4) gave him a place to stand on his own, (5) put a new song in his mouth and (6) made David a witness so others would trust the Lord as well. A new mental attitude changed David's position, his attitude, and his standing among the people.

I'm sure I don't have to tell the reader that we are told "Laughter does good, like medicine." This statement in the Bible acknowledges medicine does good, and I have no doubt at times it is needed so the body can heal itself. I have been blessed by the availability of medicine all my life and probably you have as well. However, a physician once told me that nearly 75% of those who came to him for physical problems actually were suffering from psychosomatic ailments. In other words he was treating symptoms from problems that were created mentally.

For example, hatred can cause headaches, upset stomachs, loss of sleep, and loss of appetite. Anger can cause these and more. It is obvious that how one thinks contributes to body function. Many are those who have a medical doctor suggest a quiet vacation on the beach in order to treat physical problems. It just makes good sense with good results.

Depression is not a joy; in fact it, robs us of our joy. Depression is not easy to overcome, it takes effort, much effort, but right thinking is the place to start. A good prescription for overcoming it might be Psalm 121, ***"I lift up my eyes to the hills where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip, he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you, the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forever more."***

If you need medication, by all means see the doctor who knows how your body functions and how to prescribe that which is needed. However, if you need help with depression, first go to the Great Physician who knows how the body, mind, and soul functions and interrelate to each other. Depression can be one of Satan's best tools to short-circuit the effective witness and work of a Christian. Don't be discouraged by his tactics and don't be depressed. Look to the Lord. You may find something in your mental attitude that needs adjusted and He will help you make the necessary changes.

EXCUSES

Read the following and see if it sounds familiar. It is titled, "The Stop Sign."

The sign said "Stop," but I did not stop so I told the Judge:

1. Everyone has the right to choose his own interpretation of this word "Stop."
2. My parents did not believe they had to stop. I would be condemning them if I stopped.
3. I have gone so long without stopping I just do not think I can start stopping at this time.
4. My preacher says I do not have to stop.
5. My parents made me stop when I was younger, so I just do not stop now.
6. I believe that only going is essential. Stopping is optional.
7. How do you know the word really means today what it did when it was written?
8. I will stop after I get my life straightened out.
9. I will stop when my wife decides to stop. It would mean more if we did it together.
10. It is nobody's business whether I stop or not.
11. I feel that as long as we are sincere, Your Honor, that you will accept us no matter if we stop or not.

-From The Relator

PERFECT JUDGMENT

When the Day of Judgment has come, and all of mankind has been judged, no one will doubt the wisdom of God's judgment in one way or another. God is perfect, and likewise His judgments will be perfect and beyond question as to why one is lost or saved.

Those who say they are perfect (sinless, living above sin) by that very statement declare that they are imperfect, 1 John 1:8.

INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE

Christianity is an inclusive and exclusive faith; it includes "whosoever will" and excludes "whosoever won't."

MAYBE THE ROCK ISN'T THAT BIG

A farmer plowed around a rock in his fields for five years. He had lost the use of the ground where it lay and had even broken a mowing knife against it. He assumed without investigating, that it was a big rock buried deep. Then, after all that delay and trouble, he took his crowbar and was surprised to find that the rock was only about two feet long and was so light that it could be lifted on a wagon without help.

The trouble you are facing may exist only in your mind.

OLD AGE

Old age is a privilege.

You can't buy it.

You can't sell it.

You can't earn it.

You can't inherit it.

You can't merit it.

If you are fortunate enough to have it,

For heaven's sake enjoy it;

And don't complain about it.

Remember, if you were not old, you'd be dead.

-Edna Long

DAFFY NITIONS

CONCERT - Breath mint for convicts.

INFANTILE - Ceramic floor for nursery.

NITROGEN - A soldier from Troy marching in the dark.

UNSATISFIED

Nero, conqueror of the world sat on his throne in all its pomp and glory. The porticoes of his palace were a mile long, the walls were mother-of-pearl and ivory. The ceilings were arranged to shower perfume upon his guests. His crown was worth \$100,000, his mules were shod with silver, he fished with hooks of gold and a thousand carriages accompanied him when he traveled. His wardrobe contained clothing in such abundance that he never wore a garment the second time; affluence and opulence were manifest, yet he was not satisfied, because he was not a saved man. His army had conquered, but his heart was unsatisfied.

Now we behold the Apostle Paul as he lies in the lonely dungeon, "the prisoner of the Lord." The chains bound him to a Roman soldier, the scars on his back speak of "five times forty stripes, save one." The furrows on his brow tell of perils unparalleled. The executioner had prepared the axe - the end of his life was in view. But he was kept in perfect peace, for he was saved and satisfied. He had believed on "*the Son of God who loved him, and gave himself for him,*" Gal. 2:20. He obeyed when Ananias said, "*Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his (Jesus) name,*" Acts 22:16.

He can say: "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want," Phil. 4:12.

Would you rather die a Nero or a Paul? If a Paul, look to Jesus now, obey the Gospel and be saved and satisfied.

VICARIOUS SUFFERING

It would seem to me that a doctor would know, first hand, about suffering. The physician Luke tells us what Jesus told him in Luke 14:27, "*Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple*" (NASB). He also quotes Jesus in Luke 9:23, "*if anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me*" (NASB). We see clearly from these two passages that we are to carry our own cross and it is a daily event. The cross is not one imposed upon us such as cancer or heart trouble, but is one selected by us, one we personally choose to carry.

G. Campbell Morgan in his "Studies in the Four Gospels," says, "We never touch the realm of the cross until we are suffering vicariously." A passage that immediately comes to mind is: "*...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness: for by His wounds you are healed,*" 1 Peter 2:24.

I was reading one day about the Apostle Paul in Phil. 3:10 "*...that I may know Him...and the fellowship of His suffering.*" This section of the verse threw me for a loop. The word "fellowship" is from the Greek "koinonia," meaning "in common." I wondered, "Did I want to know the sufferings of Christ? Was I usually belly-aching about myself? Was all of my suffering self-inflicted or at least self-centered?"

Jim Pearson woke us all up in the heat of the day at Hillsboro Family Camp when he preached that most of us were afraid of those challenged with disabilities when they come into our presence. I, of course, denied this immediately until...until I was in revival at Logan, OH with Tom Postle. I was in my hotel room and ran out of ink for my printer. Arriving at the local Walmart I was confronted by a young man (the welcome committee) in a wheelchair zooming towards me. I tried to sidestep him but he busted me right in the chins and down I went on my knees as he said, "Welcome to Walmart, how are you? I'm Fred." As I took his crooked hand in mine and squeezed it I replied, "I'm Saint Dick, I'm here to get ink, I'll be fine I think and how are you?"

Fred spoke again, his voice was different now, muffled and broken, "You are the first one to ever ask me how I am doing." I looked gently into his glowing face noticing a straw cowboy hat, Aussie style, atop his head and realized that for the first time I really suffered vicariously with someone created in the image of God. There I was,

spiritually, in that wheelchair with Fred recognizing him as a fellow member of the human race, suffering with him. What a moment for the both of us!

By God's Grace, I am - Dick Chambers, Evangelist

THE FAR LOOK

I have read that an English publisher and editor, Lord Northcliffe of the London Times, was threatened with complete blindness. Specialist who examined him could not find anything essentially wrong with his eyes and they came to the conclusion that what he needed was the "far look." The constant reading of fine print and the need for close observation had imposed too great a strain on his eyesight. He was told to take days in the country, away from the printed page, and to look at big things, far things.

What a parable! How many people there are who allow their vision to become dim, their courage to wither away, their faith to fail, because they lack the far look. Good and godly people may become so absorbed with the near, so influenced by the immediate problems, so weakened by the present disadvantage that they surrender before the fight has really begun.

Sometimes we forget or don't see mentally the "sweet by and by," because we are too caught-up in the "nasty now and now." That is spiritual myopia.

eParaklete

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WRITE IT AGAIN: _____

(Be careful to make upper and lower case letters clear to us.)

REALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL

A man was taking census in a rural mountain neighborhood. A little boy came to the door and the man asked, "May I see your mother?" The boy said, "Oh, she is in the asylum" "Well asked the man, may I see your father?" The boy replied, "Oh, he's in jail." The man then asked, "Well, how about a brother and sister?" The lad answered, "I have one of each, my sister is in the Reform School...and my brother is in Harvard." "That's strange," the man said, "What's he studying?" The boy answered, "He ain't studying nothing Mister, They're studying him."