

Definite

SIGN POSTS

Of The End

Paul N. Smith

"I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Know ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

- Romans 11:1-5.

The children of Israel survived 430 years in slavery, 40 years wandering in the desert, hundreds of years facing dangers from surrounding countries, and they still exist. Why? Because they are God's special people, chosen through the patriarch Abraham, who believed God's promise to him and to his seed, and counted those things that be not as though they were. God sovereignly chose Abraham while he dwelt in Ur, the land of the Chaldees. His father, Terah took Abraham and Sarah, and Lot, his grandson, out of the land of idolatry to go into the land of Canaan. They dwelt there until Terah's death.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). All of God's promises are

yea and amen; that is, what He states becomes a fact and is sure to be fulfilled. Go back and read those verses again. Note how positive they are, and how all-encompassing. Nothing is left for conjecture, or argument. Some of the promises have already come to pass - Abraham's name is great; his descendants did

dwell in the land of Canaan; they have become a great nation; they have been a blessing to the world. Think of the nations that have cursed Israel - what happened to them? God will bless the nation and people who bless Israel; that's a known fact. There is still one point of God's promises to Abraham that has not been fulfilled- "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed " This will be fulfilled after the Church has all been taken out of the world.

ISRAEL'S ENEMIES ARE REAL, AND THEY ARE DETERMINED TO DESTROY THAT NATION. Syria and Iran have vowed to "wipe them off the map," and Israel's next-door neighbor, the Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and eastern sections, are of the same mind and purpose. The recent struggle with Hamas has ceased for the time, but the hatred is still as strong as ever. Hamas is now willing to accept a temporary Palestinian state in the West bank, Gaza Strip and eastern sections of Jerusalem in exchange for a 10-year truce with Israel. But top Hamas officials for the terror group said that the truce was meant to show some flexibility to the international community. They said that Hamas' goal of destroying Israel had not changed and that the terror group has a 10-year plan to build a large army and defeat the Jewish state. These comments came as the U. S. is set to mediate a meeting within the next few weeks between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to begin discussions on establishing a Palestinian state.

Any kind of peace agreement will come at a great price to Israel. A recent development has the Israeli army "up in arms," regarding an order to remove some of the West Bank security checkpoints. Olmert promised Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during a summit recently to remove 49 West Bank roadblocks and checkpoints. Twenty-seven were to be removed immediately, and the rest within a week. Olmert also instructed IDF soldiers to not thoroughly examine every vehicle at 16 of the West Banks' largest roadblocks. Vehicle examinations usually cause long delays. The Palestinians say these checkpoints are degrading.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS REGARDING THESE ROADBLOCKS? According to IDF statistics, upwards of 60 percent of all attempted suicide bombings are stopped

at the checkpoints. Israeli soldiers routinely catch Palestinians en route to central Israel with explosives or suicide belts. Many terrorists are caught during vehicle inspections. "My hope is that by the Id al-Adha holiday, the Palestinians will feel a significant improvement in the fabric of their lives," Olmert said at the meeting.

The Israeli security establishment largely opposes the roadblock removals, saying that this will likely lead to an increase in terror attacks. "These are risks that we cannot allow ourselves," said Yair Naveh, head of the IDF's central command, which protects access to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Military officials say that the removal of roadblocks in the past directly resulted in an increase in terrorism. The removals are just the latest Olmert directive that is damaging Israel's security, say IDF officials. Olmert has rejected a plan by military leaders to allow the IDF to take out Palestinian militants it catches in the process of launching rockets from the Gaza Strip into nearby Jewish cities. Since the truce went into effect, November 26, more than 60 rockets were fired from Gaza. A month later five rockets landed in Jewish areas near the Gaza Strip, one landed in Ashkelon, a strategic port city, home to important gas lines and one of Israel's largest generators. There have been many other accounts of militants seen in the process of launching rockets, but the military was unable to take any action. Olmert's government changed the

rules of engagement following the cease-fire. Now if Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are caught launching rockets at Jewish cities, the Israeli military is forbidden to respond.

Olmert said his policy of restraint in the face of Palestinian cease fire violations would continue to "give peace a chance."

PEACE AT ANY PRICE SEEMS TO BE ISRAELI THINKING AT THIS POINT. This mind-set echoes what the Scriptures say about events in the end-time. The nations well know that something must be done to insure peace on earth and good will toward each other. The Middle East is the most volatile region in the world. It has far more serious implications than those in Iraq. Israel has drawn up secret plans to destroy Iran's uranium enrichment facilities with tactical nuclear weapons. This has been of great concern to Israel for some time and

they have voiced these fears to the U.S. and other nations. So far, nothing has been forthcoming from them.

Two Israeli air force squadrons are training to blow up an Iranian facility, using low-yield nuclear "bunker-busters," according to several Israeli military sources. The attack would be the first with nuclear weapons since 1945, when the United States dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Israeli weapons would have a force equivalent to one-fifteenth of the Hiroshima bomb.

SECRETARY OF STATE RICE SEEKS FRESH START FOR MIDEAST PEACE. Condoleeza Rice recently visited with Israeli leaders, exploring opportunities for a fresh start in the stalled effort at a political compromise between Israel and the Palestinians. At the start of a weeklong trip to the region, she warned that an enduring peace cannot be stamped, "Made in America." Rice said she did not carry a specific plan, and she tried to lower expectations for quick changes. ' The Secretary of State commented, "This is a very important and challenging time in the Middle East, but a time that I believe does have promise if we exercise our responsibilities with creativity and with resolve

ALL OF THE PRESENT-DAY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PEACE ECHO THE SCRIPTURES. Paul wrote, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" - (I Thessalonians 5:1-3). The nations' leaders are looking in the wrong direction in seeking peace for the world. The answer is found in a birth of a special Baby some 2000 years ago, and announced to some lowly shepherds herding their sheep. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, A savior, which is Christ the Lord ... and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:8-14). Peace will only come when that Savior becomes King of kings and Lord of lords.

Psalms clearly describes the latter days: "Why do the heathen rage (or, tumultuously assemble), and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set

themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. All the efforts of mankind will fail, and their rejection of Christ as Ruler, will have no affect on God's plans for the world. He boldly declares: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." These mighty earthly rulers will be forced to bow their knees before God's Son, and to "kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."

**WE CAN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP OUR HEADS
BECAUSE OUR LORD AND SAVIOR WILL SOON
APPEAR FROM THE CLOUDS.** "For the Lord Himself

shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thessalonians 4:16-18) We may think our reply to people who are in a trial, becomes trite with continual use, but we are instructed to do so. What better solace can we give to suffering ones than, "The Lord is coming soon; your trial will be over then!" Let's keep our eyes on the goal, which is that first place - the Bride of Christ. There are a lot of distractions around us, but our Lord is the focus of our attention. I'll close with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrew Christians: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **LOOKING UNTO JESUS**, the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2). Jesus is waiting at the finish line for us to arrive, praying for us and encouraging us with the fact that our rapture could occur at any time. "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you."

Jesus' coming draweth near; soon the trumpet we shall hear;
Then we'll rise to meet our Savior in the air.

When the sting of death is past,
Vict'ry will be ours at last -
In the glories of His Kingdom we shall share
Soon His coming we'll see,
Changed into His changeless glory we shall be;
We sill praise Him for His grace, when we meet Him face to fact,
In that city where the saints shall never die.

(S.O.Sheldon)

THE WRITING ON THE WALL:

"THOU ART WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING"

Ray Quintana

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

— Romans 5:15.

Man was created in the image of God and had continual access to Him, enjoying communion with Him. Through disobedience, that fellowship was broken; but the ruin was not permanent. What was lost through Adam, has been restored through Christ, and much more! The blood of Christ redeemed us from bondage, and through the Gospel we learn of our spiritual inheritance. When man sinned, he joined league with the enemy, robbing God of the obedience due Him, and the glory due His Name. It doesn't matter if one is a youth or an old man; it is the same in the haughty prince, and the humble peasant. It is the same in the strongest giant, or the most feeble invalid. The deluge of sin has swept through the world. Mene! Tekel! Wanting! Is written on every human heart.

This statement is found in Daniel 5, the story of Belshazzar's great feast. Belshazzar cared nothing for the past; he was only interested in the present, and his own enjoyment of life. He disregarded his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar's failure. He had also been proud for a time, and did not heed God's warning to him. He later acknowledged his sin, after he had been humbled for seven years, and lived with wild beasts. He testified to the power and sovereignty of God, and acknowledged Him as the one and Divine Sovereign. But, Belshazzar went on feasting and drinking from the temple's holy vessels, until a hand appeared, writing on the wall.

The king, being alarmed, called for all his wise men to interpret the writing, but none of them were able to do it. The queen, Nebuchadnezzar's widow remembered that there was a man in the kingdom, "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and in the days of thy father (grandfather), light and understanding and wisdom, was found in him." Daniel was brought before the king, who praised him for his wisdom and understanding, and promised him many gifts and rewards. "Then Daniel answered and said before the king. Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor; and for the majesty that He gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his minded hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him . . . And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this: but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven.

"And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene: God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting (lacking). Peres: thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." (5:25-28). Belshazzar had refused to humble himself before the Lord, and more, he profaned the holy vessels of the temple, defying the Lord God of Heaven. He didn't listen when his grandfather having been humbled by living seven years as a beast, acknowledged that There was a true and living God, who put up rulers and brought them down.

The "writing on the wall" is facing nations today. They have been found lacking in true rulership. They will be ignoring God. and yet say, "Peace and safety." We've accomplished it all by ourselves. We also know that when they declare their accomplishment of apparent peace, "sudden destruction will come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape" (I Thessalonians 5:3). Who is it today who can read the handwriting on the wall? It is the one who is walking with the Lord, dwelling in the presence of His Light.

Is there no mercy? Yes. There is a voice saying, "Much more the Grace of God, and the gift of Grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Waters deluged the world and destroyed all that was in it, but could not wash away the dreadful stain of sin. Fire fell from heaven, but could not erase the plague. Sin at its boldest and strongest pitched its tent on Calvary, and poured its judgment upon our Lord. But, in that conflict, sin received a mortal wound. The Victim became the Victor. Where sin abounded, to condemn and crucify, Grace did much more abound to justify. Where sin abounded to corrupt. Grace did much more abound to purify. Where sin abounded to harden men's hearts. Grace did much more abound to soften hearts, and subdue them. Where sin abounded to imprison mankind. Grace did much more abound to proclaim liberty to the captives. Grace has abounded! Grace has established its throne on the merit of the Redeemer's suffering and death. He has put on the crown, laid hold of the golden scepter, and spoiled the dominion of the prince of darkness. But Christ has not only dethroned Satan, but far more, Christ brings life in the place of death. He crowns believers with life, and has raised us up and placed us in the glorious realm of righteousness and truth.

There is not only an abundance, but a super-abundance of Grace provided for a full vindication from all guilt, and much more. This much more is available because it is to be found in the abounding mercy and goodness of God. How much is much more? "The half has never been told." There are many examples of God's children that were never left wanting. For example, David says in Psalm 23:1: "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want." If we have the Lord with us continually, what else could we want?

There is a thirst that the devil can tempt you with; it can never be satisfied. He may trick us into "wanting" things that are not good for us, that in the end will leave us "wanting" (lacking) in our spiritual life. There are some things we may want that are not bad in themselves; i.e., a job, education, things for our grandchildren, etc., but if they control our lives, then the enemy will use this to hinder our walk. The enemy will lie to us, and make us feel worthless, or cause us to put all our attention and energy trying to accomplish things that are not good for our spiritual welfare. They could hinder our place on the race course; which will leave us wanting.

Let's look at Moses as an example. According to Acts 7:22, "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians

and was mighty in words and in deeds." However, when God called him to leave Egypt and lead the children of Israel into the land of promise, he said, "Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Moses was reluctant to obey God's command. He was relying on his education, and wanted God to make him an eloquent speaker. His faith wasn't in God at this point, and the task which God gave him was beyond his capabilities' He had to learn to rely upon the Lord. At 40 years of age, Moses thought he was the deliverer, but he was not The Deliverer. At 80 years of age, he learned to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking God's words to him. At 80 years old, he learned that it is God who will do the work, but his eloquence.

In Revelation 7:9-17, we have the story of the innumerable multitude arriving in heaven from the Tribulation Period. These are not the full overcomers of Chapters 4 & 5. They come out of judgments being poured upon the earth. They are glad that they are not destroyed, and happy that they made it within the "Pearly Gates." There are many believers today who have this kind of hope -just to make it into heaven They are "wanting"! The Lamb must feed them and lead them into living fountains of waters. He will wipe away all tears (of suffering) from their eyes. The full overcoming saints are feeding on the written and living Word today. They are drinking of the living waters now. Why is it that so many in the Church are wanting for spiritual food and drink? It is because they haven't been told what is available for them by simply taking it.

Isaiah said, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). Jesus said "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He on the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:37-39). As we eat of the Word and drink of the Spirit's rivers of water, we learn about complete salvation, about the Bride of Christ. There is no wanting; but the innumerable company failed to partake of all this when they had the opportunity.

This thirst is different from the thirst of the woman at the well. Her thirst was for salvation; this is the thirst for deep fellowship with the Lord, which only the Holy Spirit can satisfy. We must glorify Jesus in our hearts and lives, then there is no limit for growth of all things in Christ. We will be wanting. At the very end of Revelation, we read: "The Spirit

and the bride say. Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Why is this invitation necessary? Because there will be those that are still thirsty and wanting. Our time to find satisfaction is now! It is the Grace Message which the Lord gave to Paul to share to the Church, that will give us the satisfaction we need. This Message is not popular because it takes all glory away from man and gives it to the Lord where it belongs. Through his message, we learn the Lord in the deepest sense. The Bride Company will be the five senses to the rest of the Body of Christ. Nothing more is said of the innumerable company until Revelation 19, where they are called "servants."

The Apostle Paul warns us in Ephesians 6:13: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." We are all living in these days, and each one of us has his "own evil day." Someone may have a cancer, another without a job; others troubled in mind and body; others depressed apparently without any cause. Have you ever felt so low that you had to reach up just to touch rock bottom? Life becomes indescribable at times, your mind won't work and you feel the enemy's pressure. But, remember that Jesus is always interceding for us.

Remember, the Lord is in charge. He is the "Potter" and we are the "clay." There was a man whose heart was breaking. God told him to go down to the potter's house and there he watched as the potter took a piece of clay and lay it on the wheel. The potter shaped it; it rose beneath his hand into a fair and lovely shape. Just as it seemed to be complete it crumbled beneath his hand and fell; some of it upon the wheel and some upon the ground. This man thought that the potter would take another piece of clay and try again, but instead he stooped to the ground and gathered the broken clay in his hand. He placed it once again on the wheel, and as he spun the wheel a vessel as fair to the eye as the previous one, stood complete' ready to be taken to kiln to be made permanent.

You see, way back in your life. God took you and placed you upon the wheel, where for many years, God sought to make of us what was in His mind. But, there are flaws that appear; now what shall He do? God had already put you on the wheel and had a special purpose for you. Shall He take another person and give him your place, or make another vessel? No. Instead, He comes seeking you from throughout the world and when He finds you. He perfects that which concerns you and much more! He completes His masterpiece, by making it what it should be, and what He planned years ago. You may have

been trying to complete the job through your own efforts, but they all come up wanting.

See that mother bending over the cradle where her firstborn lies. See the smile that lights up her face, as she dreams of the coming years. But no mother ever cherished her baby half so much as God cherishes you. He does not hate anything He has made, and His love wants to complete the work in you. When we fail, is it His mistake? Do you think it would have been better if you had been rich instead of a poor man; if you had become great instead of tied to an office stool? Do you think you would have been of a sweeter spirit? I want you to remember that God chose for you, your lot in life, our of myriads that were open to Him. He chose you for just who you are, not what you think you should be. He knows how best to nurture you; He chose your lot with its irritations, its trials and difficulties, all the agony that eats at your nature. Your soul born into His own, is a matter of care and thought to Him. He can take you, just as you are, and if you let Him, will bring fulfillment to your life. I take you to the Lord, to whom I went myself, and He took a spoiled and marred life, and is making it His masterpiece. Have you discovered that He is everything to you? All other things are merely shadows made by His Light. He is my sufficiency in all things. He is all that I desire.

Yes, our "wanting" is the handwriting on the wall, but we have the much more of God's Grace!

Redemption's Glory

How my heart longs to mount higher,
Far above this world of care;
Where forever in Thy Presence
I'll with Thee, Thy glory share!

Hush, my soul, the morning cometh;
See, the night is almost gone.
Look, behold my Bridegroom cometh,
Coming to receive His own.

Then will be the Marriage Supper;
Oh, the glories that await!
As with our own heavenly Bridegroom
We will of the Feast partake.

We will share His eternal glory,
Which to us has been our goal;

And we will sing Redemption's Story
While the endless ages roll.

Yes, we'll tell Redemptions' Story,
How He saved us through His blood;
Purchased for us eternal Glory.
This, the Purpose of our God!

— Minnie M. MacFarlane

GOD SOMETIMES USES SPIT

"When Jesus had spoken. He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him. Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation. Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

- John 9:6-7

God still heals today, and healing will not abate until "that which is perfect will come." God can heal in miraculous ways, but He uses unorthodox means sometimes, as noted in these verses. Some believers have criticized some tools used, such as 12-step meetings, and various support groups that God has allowed, and claim that is not the way of faith. They will say, "All you need is to ask God to heal you and nothing else is necessary." While it is true that faith can move mountains; sometimes, God uses "spit."

I believe in instantaneous healing, but I also know that God uses other means to bring about a greater glory to Himself, "that the works of God should be made manifest in Him" (9:3). In this account of the blind man being healed, we see 12 steps taken in the healing process, which gives great glory to God. (1) He spoke - Verse 6. (2) He spat. (3) He made clay. (4) He anointed. (5) He said, "Go" - Verse 7. (6) He went. (7) He washed. (8) He came seeing. (9) He acknowledged. (10) He answered - Verse 11. (11) He gave witness of Jesus. (12) He gave testimony of God's healing-Verse 15.

The 12-Step Program, which I believe is a God-given tool, does more than just to appreciate the act of healing; it takes necessary steps to clean house, that God may have His way in the healing of the whole person - spirit, soul, and body. All of the steps have a spiritual application. The first three deal with God; the need for; belief in; and faith necessary for healing. Steps four through nine deal with house cleaning and the need for addressing debts owed to others. They start

inwardly first, and then reach out to others in the healing process. The last three steps put in place, a means of maintaining what one has gained. This is done by a daily self-introspection, prayer, and meditation with God.

The first and last steps are paradoxes: Step One says, to have victory in Christ, I must acknowledge my complete powerlessness (II Corinthians 11:10). Step 12 says that in order to keep what I have, I must give it away (Hebrews 10:25). While it is true that the 12-Step Program doesn't save anyone; it does keep one sober enough to make that decision for Christ. The working of these steps has enabled many people to a deeper appreciation of God's Grace, and to enjoy a more abundant life. You don't have to be an alcoholic to work these steps, as they are valuable in any issues that beset you, or concern you - Psalm 37:23.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ,
The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;
Who comforted us in all our tribulation (problems),
That we may be able to comfort them which are in any
trouble,
By the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted
Of God. " (II Corinthians 1:3-4)

— David E. Bradley

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Jesus Heals All Today
Have you not heard one say: "Jesus can heal today"?
Driving out ev'ry pain, if in His Name we pray?
He will dispel all gloom, crowning with life and bloom;
Vigor and health you gain; trust Him, I pray.

Trust in the Lord; trust Him today.
Jesus heals all, none sent away.
Rest in His Word, trust and obey;
E'en tho' you cannot see,
Sickness will flee.

- Grace & Glory Carols, Page 142

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS:

"O LORD, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest
_ Thou compasses ... art acquainted . . . Thou hast beset me behind and
before . . . Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from
Thy Presence? . . . Thou hast possessed my reins (all of me) How
precious are Thy thoughts unto me ..."

If you ever feel depressed, unloved, not appreciated, lonely, or any of the other negative emotions we experience, just read this Psalm again and again. Read it slowly and let the many different thoughts sink into your heart and soul. God's Word cannot be appreciated fully by just reading it casually. We must take every word and phrase, meditate upon it, eat it as we would some really excellent food. It doesn't do us any good to "bolt down" our physical food; in fact, it often results in heartburn and indigestion; so in the spiritual realm. When we try to take in too much of the Word in too short a time, we often get spiritual discomfort. We may attend a few Bible Studies, that are really deep, and then we become discouraged and disappointed that we are not immediately more spiritual than we were. We judge ourselves by others, and imagine that the rest of the class is far ahead of us in this spiritual race.

Psalm 139 is a personal experience between the Lord and us. We don't see any plurals as to other people involved. It is "Just Jesus and me." We are to recognize the fact that all believers are constituted into one body, and we are members one of another, but never, never, never neglect our personal relationship with the Father, with Jesus, and with the Holy Spirit. I often commune with the Godhead, but with each one personally.

This Psalm is a definite reminder that the Lord knows all about us, and is working in our lives daily. You say, "Oh, but I failed last week; I hope the Lord didn't notice." It is much safer to share your failure with the Lord immediately, than with the person sitting next to you in the same pew! Fellow believers don't always understand why we would do wrong, or even could do such a thing, and they have a tendency to judge. And what is worse, they not only judge you, but eagerly share with others your failure. God never does that!! Do you remember the story of Noah after the flood? He grew wonderful grapes, and learned how to make wine out of them. Of course, his human nature being what it was, he liked his fermented grape juice so much, he drank too much and became intoxicated, lying in his tent naked. His son Ham saw him in this condition, and instead of covering him, he ran as fast as he could and told his two brothers. They went and covered their father, and told no one. Who was judged for this "failure"? Not Noah; neither Shem nor Japheth, but Ham because he revealed to others his father's state of drunkenness.

Psalm 139 is filled with God's grace and mercy, and also His power in our lives. Let's live in this Psalm for awhile

and soak up all its grace and beauty. Maybe some of it will rub off on us and in us. Praise the Lord!

PRESIDENTS' DAY WEEKEND BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
CONVENTION - FEBRUARY 16-18.
HOSTED BY LIVING WATERS TABERNACLE
DENVER, COLORADO

We expect this to be three days filled with God's Love in sermons, fellowship, and song. The meetings will begin Friday at 7 P.M., and continue Saturday with three services, culminating with a Sunday service beginning at 9:45 A.M. Meals will be served, the gym will be open, and we welcome all who are able to attend. We would appreciate your fellowship, and are confident that hearts will be in tune and benefit from this blessed event.

If you plan to attend, please contact Lynn Pawelka, 303-935-3614, (lynnpfgicomcast.net). or Shelli Coe 303-791-5567

— Pastor Jesse O'Doriso

GOD NEVER LEAVES A VOID

Gene Hawkins

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light."

-Genesis 1:1-3

Although it is emphatically stated that the earth was "without form and void," God certainly did not create it that way. Isaiah informs us that God "created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited" (48:18). This void undoubtedly occurred with the fall of Lucifer. The recreation beginning in Verse 3 is just one example of a pattern we see in the Scriptures that may be defined as God's Doctrine of Replacement. He replaced darkness with light; the waters with dry land, and the vast emptiness of space with heavenly luminaries.

This concept is vitally important to our spiritual growth, for He never leaves a void in our lives either. All

men were left without form and void, because all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. As with the natural creation, God replaced spiritual darkness with the Light of the New Birth. The "Light" seen in Verse 3 was not the sun, for the sun was not created until day four. So, also the Light of the New Birth is the Life of Christ implanted within us. The full radiance of the Sun is revealed in us, as God continues His work of creation.

We Christians must realize that the void in our lives does not cease with the New Birth, and we must learn that one common source of that void is actually the Law. It is a fact that many born-again believers turn to the Law for fruitfulness. However, the very nature of the Law is to produce a void. Paul says it thus in Romans 7: "I had not known sin but by the Law," (Verse 7). "When the commandment (law) came, sin revived and I died" (Verse 9). He affirms in Verse 18, "I know that in me that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," and concluding with "O wretched man that I am" (Verse 24).

All these statements are from a Christian who had come face to face with the reality of the Law. It accuses and shows up sin as "exceeding sinful," but can in no wise correct the problem, thus leaving a void. The ten commandments are merely a summation of the Law, and teach this same lesson. Out of the ten, there are only two which can be considered anywhere near being "positive builders." There is a faint positive in the statement, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Paul quotes this in Ephesians 6:2, as he writes, Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise." All the other commandments loudly proclaim: "THOU SHALT NOT," leaving nothing but a void. So often, the lives of Christians are built around abstinence rather than the positive building through the Truth of Grace. God's way is to replace negatives. Yes, He does say, "Thou shalt not steal," but the void is replaced with "give unto him that needeth." Also, "thou shalt not bear false witness," but reading further, "let every man speak truth." Numerous other traits of the flesh are replaced by the fruit of the Spirit in this chapter.

This same pattern is true for the entire Law. We not only read that Christ "nailed it to His cross taking it out of the way," (Colossians 1:14). Paul informed the Hebrew Christians that "He taketh away the first

(covenant of the Law) that He may establish the second (Grace). The entire covenant of the law must be replaced, or superseded in our experience, with the glorious victories and liberties of Divine Grace. Make no mistake! The Law did absolutely everything God intended it to do. The problem is that men have assumed God gave it to make men righteous. That is not the case! If the law could make anyone righteous, there would have been no reason to send Jesus into the world to die. God gave the Law to show up sin, as exceeding sinful, a job it did very well. The Law still performs the mission of showing men, even believers, that only Christ can bring forth righteousness, but in itself, it can only leave a void.

There is a parable in Matthew 12:43-45 illustrating this truth. However, many have used this portion to try to prove that a Christian can lose his salvation. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." If this parable refers to individuals, it means that all men, before they come to the Lord are demon possessed. And, that is not the case. The enemy can oppress all men, including Jesus, but not all sinners are automatically possessed. Jesus' words in Verse 45 show that He was referring to a collective generation that was under the Law and trying to find justification through it.

Note some other facts: The one in question was never saved. Verse 44 says that the demon refers to it as "my house." Never is it stated that the house belonged to God, for He would never surrender His house to devils. Secondly, we read that the unclean spirit returned to an "empty" house. God never leaves a void. Had His presence been there, no emptiness could have prevailed. Third, we read that it was "swept." This is never God's way of cleansing. It is a common practice of the Law to sweep away that which is unsightly, but God's way of cleansing is to be "washed in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). Jesus declared that "Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Next, we read that the house was

"garnished," or decorated, and is again typical of the works of the Law desperately trying to put forth only a facade of righteousness. Jesus assailed the Pharisees because "ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within it is full of extortion and excess . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." It is quite apparent that God never did own, nor cleanse this house, and leave it void to be inhabited by another.

It is imperative that we understand God's WAY of Replacement. We would love for Him to speak the word and we would be magically and utterly transformed in a moment of time, but according to Paul, such a change is dependent on our faith. The first ten verses of Romans Six establish a number of things that are facts with God. He says that we are dead to sin, so how shall we live any longer therein? We are buried with Him, and also raised with Him. Our old man was crucified with Him, that sin might be destroyed and therefore we should not serve sin. Also, being raised from the dead, death hath no more dominion over Christ and therefore has no dominion over us. All these statements are established facts with God. They are not held up for argument or debate. Thus, Verse 11 declares: "Likewise reckon ye also your selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." "Likewise" tells us that we must reckon, or count, or believe these facts, even as God does.

Another fact is, that what we believe of the Word, will be implanted in our lives, regardless of what it is. It is so important that we believe what God says, in order that all these facts be incorporated into our own experiences. This is the path of faith, and just as sure as imputed righteousness comes to us the moment we believe, just so does practical righteousness come as we dare to reach out and believe what God says of us to be true. As we believe and reckon, we realize what it means to "be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." When the light comes into any area of our lives, it dispels, or replaces, the darkness. Ephesians 5:8 declares: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." After the Fall, God did not place Adam and Eve

back in the garden to try "it all over again." He replaced the fig leaf aprons of self-righteousness with the impenetrable skins of Christ's righteousness. He has, in fact, given us "much more" than Adam and Satan took away.

Just as He replaced our "sinful rags" with Christ's righteousness, so also the headship of Adam must be replaced. Jesus is the Head over the entire new creation, however, not all Christians experience the practical reality of that great blessing. Romans 7:2 says, "the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Paul did not suddenly depart from the spiritual truth covered in Chapter 6, to give a discourse on natural marriage. Rather, He is showing how that we were married, or "joined" by our natural birth to the first Adam. Jesus took Adam's place as head of the Old Creation, and took him down into death. When He arose, He came forth as the Head of a New Creation, and thus we are loosed from the law of life that bound us to Adam, and are now free to "be married to another," even to Christ. As we experience the practical reality of being joined unto Christ, we also become living witnesses of the works of the flesh being practically replaced with the fruit of righteousness. There are many specific problems that men experience today, wherein the answer is not just "cease and desist." Rather than leave a void, God replaces undesirable and destructive desires and actions with the motivations of Divine Love, that stem only from Christ Himself!

Are you on the Right Frequency?

Recently I was walking with my toy poodle, Benny, and noticed that he kept his head to the ground, as usual, sniffing every possible scent. He was oblivious to the beauty

around him - of snow-capped mountains, majestic fir trees, and the beautiful blue sky. He does not perceive a glorious sunrise or sunset, or brightly-colored leaves. He is content to reside in a "doggie universe"!

What about us? Our world is cluttered with dirt and grime, including the din of many voices, while in a crowd, but we cannot perceive the sound of spiritual realities. STUFF dominates our lives as we build up earthly treasures, seeking for satisfaction on earth. Most of us do not seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. God would have us to be still and listen and learn the language He is speaking to each of us on a daily basis.

I heard a story recently of a man who applied for a job during the Depression, when jobs were at a premium. The simple address in the ad gave the local Telegraph Office. As he entered the building, he immediately noticed the extreme noises that would be present only in such an office. It was full of applicants filling out applications for the position. Along with a high air of anticipation, he sat down and started filling out his paperwork. All of a sudden, he jumped up, and rather excitedly walked right into the personnel manager's office before anyone else and closed the door.

Moments later, the boss opened the door and announced to the waiting crowd, "The job has been filled." The waiting people were irate and yelled, "Why did this man get the job when we were here before him?"

The manager's reply was simple: "This man heard and understood the Morse Code message on the telegraph machine: 'If you can read this message, come into my office and the job is yours.'"

Are we listening on God's Frequency His Message to our hearts?

- Alice Nieman, Morton, Washington

SITTIN' ON THE FENCE

Lois Kusmaul

"And unto the angel (messenger) of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

— Revelation 3:14

Jesus is speaking to this assembly, warning them that He is well aware of their lukewarm condition, just as so many Christians are today. As individuals, we really need to ask the Lord to make us hot. Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." He wanted this assembly to be "hot" for Him, to be zealous for Him and His Word; then when they realized that, they would come to repentance. That attitude of this assembly was indifference.

"So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue (or, vomit) thee out of my mouth" (3:16). The reason that the human body vomits, is to rid itself of something rotten, or that which contains bacteria. This is how Jesus felt toward this particular group of believers. He cannot stand lukewarmness. He does not want us to be fence-sitters. These people always have doubts, because they cannot make up their minds about the Truth; they are neither hot nor cold.

In I Kings 18:17-21, there is an historical account that illustrates this truth. "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him. Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow Him. And the people answered him not a word."

The word "halt" means to "hop, to skip over, to hesitate, to limp, or become lame." This describes many believers today. They "halt between two opinions," and cannot make a definite decision. Many believers want to walk with the Lord so long as it does not bother their flesh; in other words, they want to walk also in the world. The words, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" mean they were divided in their thinking. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). Being "double-minded," means one is not rooted or grounded in the Word. It also means he is "double-spirited," or vacillating between two opinions.

In our pasture, it is necessary to have fences separating the different fields. Many believers are sitting on fences today.

They do not realize that sitting on such a fence of double-mindedness, will bring devastation. Let's consider such fences. The fence belongs to the devil; he owns it. In Genesis 3:1, Satan introduced the first doubt in Eve's mind. "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" He projected the thought of doubt, and that maybe God didn't really mean that they shouldn't eat of that tree. Thus, sin entered into that Paradise.

Adam's reaction was that he jumped right on top of Satan's fence. "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 amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him. Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid . . . And He said. Who told thee that thou wast naked; hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said. The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (3:8-13). Adam is on that fence, blaming God and Eve instead of standing on his own two feet, taking responsibility for what he had done. Satan had done his work, and they were blaming God; thus they had to pay the consequence. "And no marvel; Satan himself is transformed

into an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). He can be very deceptive when he puts doubts into our minds.

In I Samuel 15, we have the account of Samuel instructing King Saul to utterly destroy Agag and everything associated with him. This included "both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Later, Samuel came to Saul, and Saul declared that he had performed all that was commanded of the Lord. Samuel answered, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ear, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, they have brought them from the Amelekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Samuel answered him: "When thou wast little in thine sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said. Go and utterly destroy the sinner the Amalekite, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?"

Saul is sittin' on the fence. He blamed the people rather than taking responsibility for what the Lord had instructed him to do. It takes strength to stand for what the Word instructs us

to do, rather than sit and rest on Satan's fence, and as Saul was doing, even dangling his feet. Natural man would have taken the same path that Saul did, when instructed to kill everyone, even cute little babies, and all animals. Saul didn't have this strength, nor dedication to obey the Lord.

Paul says, "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." We cannot make a positive stand in ourselves; we must be girt about with the Word of God.

Let's now consider where this fence of Satan's is built. A good fence has corner posts and a brace across it. The corner posts must be set in the ground 2 to 3 feet deep. Those posts become established when the dirt is tamped down around them. The posts become a part of the ground, the earth. When a surveyor measures property, that fence would become a part of the whole of the real estate. The Lord spoke to the Pergamos church, and in Revelation 2:12-17, He said among other things, "I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou boldest fast my name and hast not denied the faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth." So, we learn that Satan had, and has, a seat in Pergamos, and that he is the god of this earth. Pergamos means "much married" (joined to the world). When a person sits on the fence, they are identifying with the world, where Satan is god.

In Romans 12:1-2, Paul writes: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world." We cannot be fence-sitters and do this. If we are fence-sitters, we will slowly become conformed to this world, where Satan dwells. Instead, we are "to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." As saints, we cannot allow ourselves to become like the world and sit on that fence. We will lose out, as this Pergamos church and the Laodiceans.

This is our place! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3). "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (2:6). We are to stay where we have been placed, seated in the heavenlies with Christ. We view every circumstance on earth from that lofty viewpoint. We are Spiritual Representatives, and we must look through the Lord's eyes, and agree with all that He allows on earth.

A fence does not become an actual barrier until the posts are connected. They are either connected by barbed wire or perhaps an electric wire. The wire is clipped to the posts that have been pounded into the ground. A natural fence is interesting to watch, being built, with the posts established in the ground. They actually become a part of the earth, but we do not want to be established here in a spiritual sense.

Let's consider different types offences: A barbed wire fence will inflict pain to the one who attempts to sit on it, to which I can attest to. If a person sits on such a fence, his flesh will be cut and torn, and can cause infection. When building a fence, the builder should wear long sleeves and a good pair of leather gloves. When dealing with someone of this world, we had better have our "leather gloves" and "long sleeves" of the Word, or we will be injured. Many believers have taken a seat on the fence, have been injured, and have fallen away. We are warned in II Thessalonians 2:1-7 that many believers will fall away before the coming of the Lord. He says, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." Many believers are taking their place on the fence because they are not willing to endure the fiery trials.

Electric Fence. We built one of these around our corn field and maintained it. Such a fence is not to be fooled with, as a shock from it can render a person senseless. It literally bites whatever it touches as long as it is grounded, or touching the earth. When a believer is connected with earthly things, his conscience becomes seared and rendered insensitive to the voice of the Lord. "Now the Holy Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron"—II Timothy 4:1-2. The conscience would be rendered insensitive by the constant biting effect of this particular type of the devil's fence. This is what would happen literally if a person sat on an electric fence.

Bramble Fence. These are bushes with thorns on them, which can entangle the victim who is curious. A believer can allow himself to become dissatisfied in the place the Lord has put him, if he allows the enemy to get his eyes on worldly things, including churches. Paul states: "Stand fast

therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled (or, ensnared) with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). This happens when one turns from the Truth; they become trapped by error.

Fences set boundaries, such as pastures from cropland.

They are also used for protection, keeping flocks from dangers. They are not built to sit on. This is illustrated in the life of Job. Read 1:6-12. The Lord spoke to Satan: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side?" God had put a hedge around Job, not because of his many possessions, but because of his Godly life. A hedge means "shut in." This was a fence of protection. He was a God-fearing man. Notice his words after he had lost all his possessions and children and families: "Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped, and said. Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed by the Name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (1:20). Job was looking through God's eyes, and he was accepting everything from His Hand.

The last fact we want to note is that fences separate. God has done this from the very beginning of creation - Genesis 1. He first separated light from darkness, and when He separates. He does not intend for that separation to become mixed. Jesus spoke of a definite separation in John 3:3-6. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jesus separated flesh from spirit, and they can never be mixed.

There is another kind of separation in Romans 1:1. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God." This means to "set off by a boundary, to determine a limit." Paul was permanently separated unto the Gospel of Grace, and he never went back to the Law. The word, "sanctified," also means separated. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (or, separated)" (Acts 20:32).

As we walk with the Lord in obedience to His Word

we are set apart. We cannot be like the world, as much as we may try to be at times. We are a part of God's Family. He has set boundaries, and as we walk with the Lord, we stay within those boundaries, a fence for our protection. It is when we begin to look through that fence at what's on the other side that we fail to obey His Word. We begin to fail when we sit on the fence, because inevitably we will soon be on the other side. Cattle may have plenty of grass in the pasture where they are confined, but they always try to reach through the fence for what's on the other side.

By God's Grace, let us never allow the enemy to say "Oh, it's O.K. to sit on the fence." The Lord wants us on one side or the other. Satan is an all-out loser, and we don't want to be identified with him. We are kings and priests unto God. As with the Laodicean church, who is going to have preeminence in our lives, the Spirit of the flesh. We need to ask ourselves which side of the fence we want to be?

- Christian Grace Chapel, Alien, Kansas

A REMINDER, AND A CORRECTION

Lessons on Hosea, given by Faith Evans Vieta are now in book form. Write to her for a copy at:

3031 Road"L"

Alien, KS 66833-9321

* Satan is the "father of lies," and as such he will always condemn and accuse, indicting and plundering the children of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth; He will always convict and encourage, commending us to the loving care and correction of our Heavenly Father.

Lord, may our hands always open to the poor; our arms reach out to embrace the brokenhearted, and may our hearts never cease to cry out with compassion for the lost.

-- David Albrecht

COFFEE CUPS

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work, and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went into the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite, and told them the help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice-looking, expensive cups were taken, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal to want only the best for ourselves, that is the source of our problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases, it is just more expensive, and in some cases, even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups, and then you began eyeing each other's cup.

Now, consider this. Life is the coffee - the jobs, money, and position in society are the cups. They are just receptacles that hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided for us. God brews the 'coffee,' not the cups. Enjoy your coffee! The happiest people don't have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest with God. You are the miracle, my friend. Your life either shines a light, or casts a shadow. Have a wonderful day!!"

- * God's love can seem harsh until we view it from hindsight.
- * Only Christ the Living Bread can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

CHURCH HYMNS

Dentist's hymn Crown Him with Many Crowns
Weatherman's hymn There shall be showers of blessing
Contractor's hymn The Church's one foundation
Tailor's hymn. Holy, Holy, Holy
Golfer's hymn There is a green hill far away
Politician's hymn Standing on the Promises
Optometrist's hymn Open my eyes that I might see
IRS Agent's hymn I surrender all
Gossip's hymn Pass it on
Electrician's hymn Send the Light
Shopper's hymn Sweet by and by
Realtor's hymn I've got a mansion just over the hilltop
Baker's hymn I need thee every hour

FOR THOSE WHO SPEED ON THE HIGHWAY

45 mph God will take care of you

55 mph Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
65 mph Nearer my God to Thee
75 mph Nearer, still nearer
85 mph This world is not my home
95 mph Lord, I'm coming home
100 mph & over Precious memories

Seeking Happiness

Do you ever find in the channels of your mind
That life seems full of gloom; no happiness you find?

Do you know the answer, how to be content?

God gave us the answer; His only Son He sent,

But you must accept Him, believe on God's Son.

He'll bring peace and joy to all who will come.

— Amy Jump

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit that's always in season.

Our love for God can be seen in our love for others.