



# Foundation of Faith

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THE NEW TESTAMENT PASTOR

GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS

MISSION WORK

THE CONGREGATION (AND THE PASTOR)

YOUR PLACE IN THE CHURCH

## The Pastor and the Church

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## *Editorial*

*Dear Reader,*

*For this month we have chosen an important theme which urges us to pray more. The following Scripture became very important to me as I thought about “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).*

*How great is our God! Often, we don’t understand the big picture right away, but later we see how wonderful His counsel is and how gloriously He brings it about. All of us see only what is before our eyes, but God sees the heart, especially the hearts of the servants He seeks to work in His kingdom.*

*God’s Word tells us, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chronicles 16:9). Throughout the whole earth, God seeks such people to call, equip, and then use in His kingdom.*

*Think of Moses. The Lord sought faithful, devout parents, Amram and God-fearing Jochebed, who surely laid their son in the hands of God in prayer. This is one of many examples of how God in His wisdom seeks, finds, equips, and prepares a chosen instrument.*

*The Son of God also asked for and chose His disciples, and we read, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16).*

*Oh, may the Lord still give us chosen and faithful servants for His church today! It is our duty and responsibility to recognize this need and to obey Jesus’ command: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).*

*H. D. Nimz*

# The Pioneer

**W**illiam Carey (1761-1834) was a simple shoemaker in England. He loved to read, and travel documentaries were his favorite, particularly those about Columbus or Cook. With great effort, he had been able to draft a copy of a world map. It wasn't exceptional, but the young man had done the best he could. Now he nailed it to the wall directly across from his cobbler's stool so he could periodically glance at it throughout the long hours of his work.

When he learned to love and serve his Savior at the age of eighteen, his heart was burdened for the salvation of all the people of the world. William didn't know them, and knew very little about them, but he still loved them. He made it a habit to kneel in front of the world map daily to pray for them.

He continued this practice even after he began his seminary studies. At age 21, he began to preach. His income was so meager he had to continue to repair boots.

Now he especially prayed for the heathens in those unknown corners of the world! How could everyone just go about their daily business without working for the Lord, without considering that the whole world must be saved? William wrestled daily with these questions. They forced him to his knees in front of the crudely-drawn map. He could spend hours praying for one country after another, petitioning God: "Oh God, please allow Your kingdom to reach them as well!"

Eventually, Carey felt he must not speak only to God about his heart's great burden but also to other people. He was unsympathetically dismissed everywhere he went. He was told, "If God in His omnipotence has determined to convert the heathen, He will do it without our help."

Who can perceive what Carey felt? With his head bowed low, but not his spirit, he went his way, determined to continue pleading with God. And that he did. What did it matter if he was laughed at? He persevered,

without regard for flesh and blood. If he could've had his way, he would have started on the journey himself to find the heathens, to love them and preach the gospel to them. However, he was bereft of the necessary resources. The meager funds his handicraft earned him would not even get him to London.

For years, he waited patiently and faithfully. Finally, the day arrived when to his great surprise, he was asked to preach a missions-themed sermon. It seemed the best day of his life had arrived! How he wanted to do his very best and put his whole heart, his longing, his desire, and his love into that sermon!

He sat with his Bible, paging back and forth with shaking hands, all the while searching for the most fitting text. He came to Isaiah 54:2-3: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited."

He divided this text into two topics: Expect great things from God, and take great action for God. What a sermon it was! The audience listened with bated breath and stared at the speaker.

Was that truly William Carey who stood on that podium, or was that an angel of God speaking to them? They didn't know for sure, but they suspected the latter. Understanding slowly dawned on them that the Lord was speaking to them and had great things planned.

A missionary society was immediately founded (1792), and subsequently sent its first missionary, William Carey, to India one year later. For forty blessed years, he worked in Bengal not only as a missionary but also as a Bible translator and scholar. There are no less than five grammar books written by him for the local languages.

Indeed, God kept His promises. If there is any story on earth about miracles, it would have to be the story of missions.

# *I Cannot Remain Silent*

**K**ing Henry VIII of England was a cruel and immoral man with much blood on his hands. Though he knew the Word of God very well, he did not follow it. He died on January 28, 1547.

He did not need to die this way. He had a faithful court preacher, Hugh Latimer. One day, he preached such a mighty sermon against carnal sin that the king demanded he recant this sermon the following Sunday. When Sunday came, Latimer stood in the pulpit and said,

“Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king’s most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest: therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest—upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and might God, who is all-present and who beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverst thy message faithfully.”

He did so, and God protected His servant from the wrath of the king. Humanly speaking, this faithful man risked his head. But he could say like Elijah, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand” (1 Kings 17:1). How could he have remained silent?

What do you risk when you confess Jesus to your co-workers, your friends, and your relatives? Nothing but a little mockery and hate. Let them scoff! Look to Jesus. He looks on you. The true fear of God drives out fear of man. Looking towards eternity enables the believing Christian to proclaim the truth. Or would you prefer to remain silent?

Although the world usually rejects the open testimony of Jesus and the gravity of eternity, they do know believers should witness about their faith. They actually expect you to testify about Jesus.

A young officer was on a business trip with an older, devout officer. Later, he told his relatives, “I was waiting the entire time for him to tell me something about Jesus. But he never said anything.” Wasn’t that shameful for the older Christian? The prince of this world whispers into the ears of Christians, “Be silent, don’t witness!” But do not obey this voice.

There are occasions when we might become traitors, if we remain silent or hesitate to confess. The psalmist David exclaims, “I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O Lord, You Yourself know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly” (Psalm 40:9-10).

If we are honest, our reason for not confessing Christ is because we would rather honor people than honor God. Jesus says in Mark 8:38, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

In a city apartment building, two men lived side by side for almost ten years. From time to time, they briefly talked together. One was a believer who knew the way to eternal life; the other contented himself with being “an honest man.” On one occasion, the believer tried to speak of his faith. But when the other man rejected him, the believer was so discouraged that from then on, he avoided any serious conversation.

One day, the believer noticed he had not seen his neighbor for some time. When he inquired, he learned he was hopelessly ill. He visited him and began to speak of the love of Jesus for sinners and the blessed death of a child of God.

Suddenly, the dying man put his hand on his neighbor’s arm and asked in a harsh voice, “How long did you know of this?” “Some twenty years,” was the answer. “And never told me of it!” exclaimed the patient with a heart-rending voice, “not a word, although we lived side by side for years and saw each other almost every day and spoke many times! Get out!”

The patient died the following night. “Never,” said the believer later, “never can I forget that painful look he gave me as he spoke that last word. How could I have remained silent just because I was rejected once?”

Dear reader, you might honestly say, “I have no assurance of forgiveness for my sin!” Well, I can testify that in Jesus, there is peace with God and eternal life. Come to Jesus before it is too late! How terrible it would be if in eternity you must forever lament, “Now I have lost everything! My life, my soul, everything is lost forever!”

# *The New Testament Pastor*



*“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.” 1 Timothy 3:1-4*

**T**he New Testament speaks of elders and deacons of the church in various ways, primarily as shepherd, overseer, or bishop. These names all refer to the same position.

A pastor may have special abilities, similar to an apostle who plants churches, or those of an evangelist who is especially gifted to lead souls to repentance. He may have the gift of a shepherd who is espe-

cially skilled in leading a congregation. He may have the gift of a teacher who can lead believers deeper into godly truths.

In Ephesians 4:11–16, Paul tells us why God organized it this way: “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure

of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”

From these words of the apostle, we see what a calling it is to be a messenger of God and how much responsibility such a position entails. If we look back to the beginning of Christianity, then we see how seriously the position of pastor was taken. Only those who were called by God and who were specially equipped and gifted for this position were approved. As long as these requirements were fulfilled, Christianity bloomed. But when pastors were no longer upholding what God required them to, Christianity declined. Over time, no difference could be seen between those who confessed Christ and those who didn't.

An old proverb says, “Like the shepherd, so the sheep.” This is generally how it is in the spiritual domain. If the shepherd is not the person God's Word requires him to be, how can the congregation live according to the standard in God's Word? God's Word gives us clear instruction how the shepherd should live and how the sheep should follow. What are these requirements for an elder or a New Testament pastor?

The Lord Himself calls His pastors. When He calls someone and equips him with His Holy Spirit, then we can be certain that he lives and works according to divine specifications. God is good and trustworthy, and faithful to keep His promises. But He doesn't allow Himself to be deterred from His requirements. He has yet to make a mistake, even though some called by God have been found unfaithful. However, the Lord is not at fault for this, since the errant person is solely responsible for it. God gives enough grace to everyone who walks before Him with a humble heart.

Let's study the requirements with which God charges a pastor, as they are described in 1 Timothy 3:2-6. I am convinced Timothy carefully and precisely observed these instructions. If they aren't observed, only disorder and ruin can follow. Such an important position with sobering responsibilities should be undertaken with caution, prudence, and care.

The world teaches us well how its administration is to be deployed. Only the most skilled are chosen for positions requiring responsibility. The government chooses only the best people to be ambassadors to other countries, in order to represent their country in a worthy manner. Why should God call someone as an ambassador of His

Son who does not have vital and specific abilities, according to God's wisdom?

A pastor should represent his own house well and raise his children to be obedient. Paul says, “For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Timothy 3:5).

The right pastor will be above reproach. Nothing evil will be shown of him. He has grace before God and man to walk honestly, righteously, and faithfully. He will be sober and will act carefully toward those of the opposite sex so that his name cannot be tarnished. A lust-filled pastor is a disgrace to God and the church.

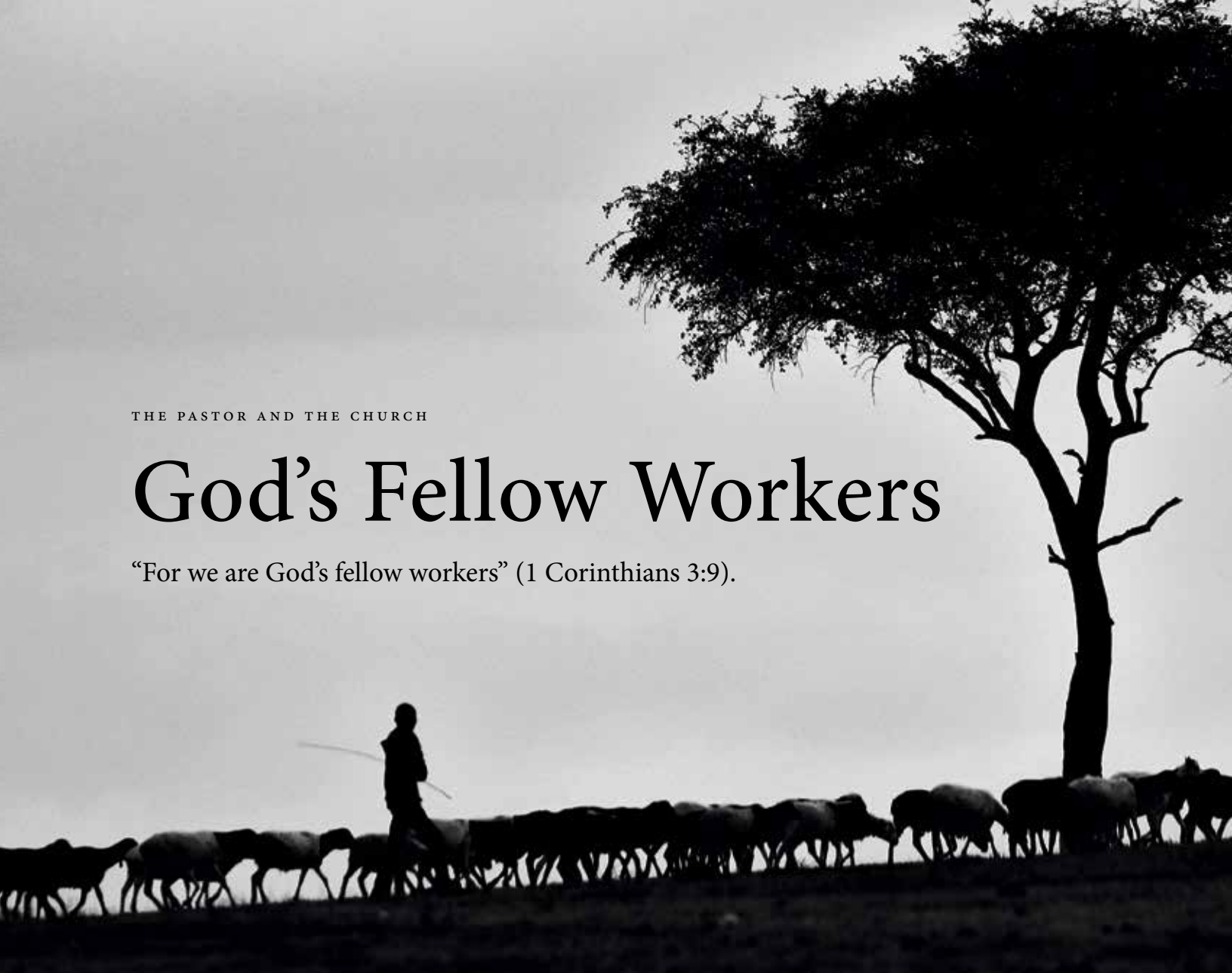
A bishop or overseer is a faithful steward of God. Practically speaking, who would make a disloyal steward the head of his affairs? No one would do that, and neither does God. A spiritual congregation should not allow a pastor to take up that position if he is not what God's Word says he should be. However, because many congregations are not in right standing with God and His Word, they employ pastors and require them to preach what they want them to preach. This is why Christianity in general looks so sad today.

If we look at the beginning of Christianity, we find a great difference between then and today. What is the reason? If a pastor doesn't live his life as required by God's Word, then he cannot preach with authority, he won't be taken seriously, and he will need to overlook some truths. He won't be able to accurately set a dividing line between a life with God and a life in sin. The result will be the world gradually creeping into the church, as the congregation becomes more liberal, and leans more towards modernism because it doesn't want to be viewed as old-fashioned.

If the pastor is not patient himself and willing to accept correction, then he cannot admonish others to be patient and teachable. Paul knew well what he wrote. His words still have the same value today.

If a pastor speaks evil about his brothers, how can he tell a congregation to ignore gossip? Someone once told me that a certain brother was not building up his congregation but was tearing it down by speaking all kinds of evil behind his brothers' backs, sowing distrust. If that truly can be said of a pastor, then he is on the wrong path and is not the pastor he should be in accordance with God's Word. May we live in reverence before God, as righteous ambassadors for Christ.

Karl Arbeiter



THE PASTOR AND THE CHURCH

# God's Fellow Workers

“For we are God's fellow workers” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

**T**o be God's fellow worker is to have a great occupation. The thought of serving as co-workers of the almighty, holy God whose many works are full of love, should fill us with deep reverence and awe.

God's field of work is very large. Jesus commanded His disciples to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). And in John 4:35 the Lord says: “lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

The whole world is a mission field for God's children. The Lord compared the field to a vineyard. He compared the kingdom of heaven to “a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius

a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and . . . [a]gain he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise” (See Matthew 20:1-16).

Without any doubt, the Lord of this vineyard has already come to you and invited you to work for Him. Have you ever looked around God's vineyard to see what there is for you to do? The work is multi-faceted and no one is superfluous. There is much to do for every child of God. The Lord is deeply interested in getting you involved. But you can't just jump in and do whatever pleases you. You must work in unity with God's Word and His Holy Spirit. God will only bless the work done through Him.

Maybe you have your own opinion about what you'd like to do, jobs of convenience or comfort. But this kind



of work is not pleasing to God. Certainly, at some point you felt God was calling you to do a certain task. You can't withstand His voice. A complete surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading will protect us and help us to submit to His will.

The wonderful thing in God's kingdom is that the Holy Spirit Himself distributes gifts to His children. "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills" (1 Corinthians 12:11). It does not concern our own intentions or wishes. But it involves the wise provision of our great God who sees beyond what we can see. He places His workers where He wants them to be and equips them with His gifts.

Are we willing as fellow workers to submit to His orders or do we want to work alone? If it is the latter case, then God's blessing is not upon us. Oh, may we learn to work together with God as He intended and not hide our light under a bushel! Remember that we are responsible for the talents our loving God has entrusted to us.

Every child of God should work for the Lord as long as it is still day and as long as God gives life and necessary health. When time on earth has ended, nothing more can be done. In John 11:9 it says, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Which hour is it for you at this very moment? Are you still in the morning of your life, in your youthful strength? Then you are blessed. You can still do much for your Lord. He asks you to "go and work in [His] vineyard." God willing, you still have a whole day of work ahead of you. Make use of the time for it passes by so quickly. Therefore, allow yourself to be equipped for work in the school of the Holy Spirit. My dear young Christians, the Holy Spirit calls you specifically to begin working. You are called to continue building His work and to tell others about His love. Come, you have an especially great privilege. He calls you in the first hour!

And you, the ones who are called about the third hour, you also have a blessed privilege to serve God. Listen to what the landowner says: "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right" (Matthew 20:4).

At the end of the day, around the eleventh hour, the landowner went out and found others standing idle. Then He said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" (Matthew 20:6). Don't we hear the sound of astonishment in the voice of the landowner, when He asks why they have not found work this whole day? How much work the landowner must have that He is willing to

send everyone into His vineyard? They answer Him, "Because no one has hired us" (Matthew 20:7). But, see, the landowner would not allow them to stand around simply because the day was almost over. Instead, He invites them by saying, "You also go into the vineyard" (Matthew 20:7).

Yes, dear friend, even if the eleventh hour has come for you, there is still something for you to do. But get to work quickly, for the end will soon come for you. O come, so you won't stand before the Lord empty-handed. You also will receive your reward.

This passage goes on to say, "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'" (Matthew 20:8-15).

The landowner establishes a seemingly unusual standard here. But if we carefully consider His answer, we realize it is the right one. "Did you not agree with me for a denarius?" Doesn't His statement "or do you begrudge my generosity?" point to the danger of us having similar temptations or doubts?

What does the standard look like with which God rewards His children? In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul writes, "For the love of Christ compels us . . ." This is the blessed secret of those who fulfill their duties out of love for the Lord. This love was also the motivation in the life of the apostle in all of his efforts, battles, and sufferings. It made his work comfortable and worthwhile.

God's fellow worker—these few words contain so much. They should cause us to ponder and reflect. May we be found worthy of this calling! "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5-6).

# God's Scrutiny

“These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ‘I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.’”

Revelation 2:1-2

**W**hen we consider Who is speaking and what He is saying, we realize this is a fear-inducing message. It is the Son of God, the King of all kings, and the Head of the church. When the Lord in His majesty and glory appeared before the disciple John, whom He loved, John fell down on his knees as if dead before the feet of Christ, whose head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow; whose eyes were like a flame of fire; whose feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace; whose voice as the sound of many waters; and out of whose mouth went a sharp two-edged sword (see Revelation 1:14-16)—the Word of God, the message from Jesus Christ to His church.

Let us recall that after the Lord's transfiguration and ascension to Heaven, He personally came to speak to His people to tell them what was lying heavily upon His heart. This is what He shares with John: “To the angel [pastor or overseer] of the church of Ephesus write: . . . I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil” (Revelation 2:1-2). He continued listing the good things they were doing. But then He said, “Nevertheless I have this against you.” How appalling it is when He, Who has all power over heaven and earth, has something to say against us or against our local congregation!

One would think if the Ephesian church had so many good characteristics, wouldn't that be sufficient? After all, aren't we only human? But we see here that it doesn't depend on what people think. The Lord is speaking, He Who holds the seven stars in His hand, He who is the First and the Last: “I have this against you, that you have left your first love. . . . [R]epent . . . or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place” (verses 4-5). What does this mean? It means they will have to sit in spiritual darkness. Christ wants a holy and blemish-free church. This is why He shed His blood. He

wants a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle or any blemish (Ephesians 5:27). This is the reason He will not tolerate a congregation that has left its first love.

We should also ask ourselves this question: Does the Lord have anything against us? If this should indeed be the case, may God reveal the truth. If the local congregations in former times had issues that Christ, the Head of the church, couldn't tolerate, would it be a surprise if the Lord would have to say to one of us or to our local congregation, “I have this against you”?

How often we see only smoldering coals, where love and purity have been lost, and spiritual blessings have become fewer and fewer, until the Lord must finally say, “I have this against you.” Only when a revival takes place, when souls repent and God's favor returns, can the spiritual blessings flow freshly and freely once again.

We should seriously search our hearts in the presence of our Lord and pray as David did, “Search me, o God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139: 23-24). Let's quickly draw near to the Lord so we don't experience what the church in Sardis did: in name it was alive, but it was truly dead.

We could also say, like the church of the Laodiceans did, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). However, God's verdict is, “And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” In Scripture, we read of the five foolish virgins whose lamps extinguished while waiting for the bridegroom. What was the end result? They stood before a locked door.

But thanks be to our God, it is not too late for us! The Master speaks once again: “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire” (verse 18). If we lack something, the Lord will reveal to us what we need, and He will also give it to us. He does not want us to be standing naked

when He appears. This is the reason why John was directed to write the seven churches; he was to show them what was lacking in their spiritual lives.

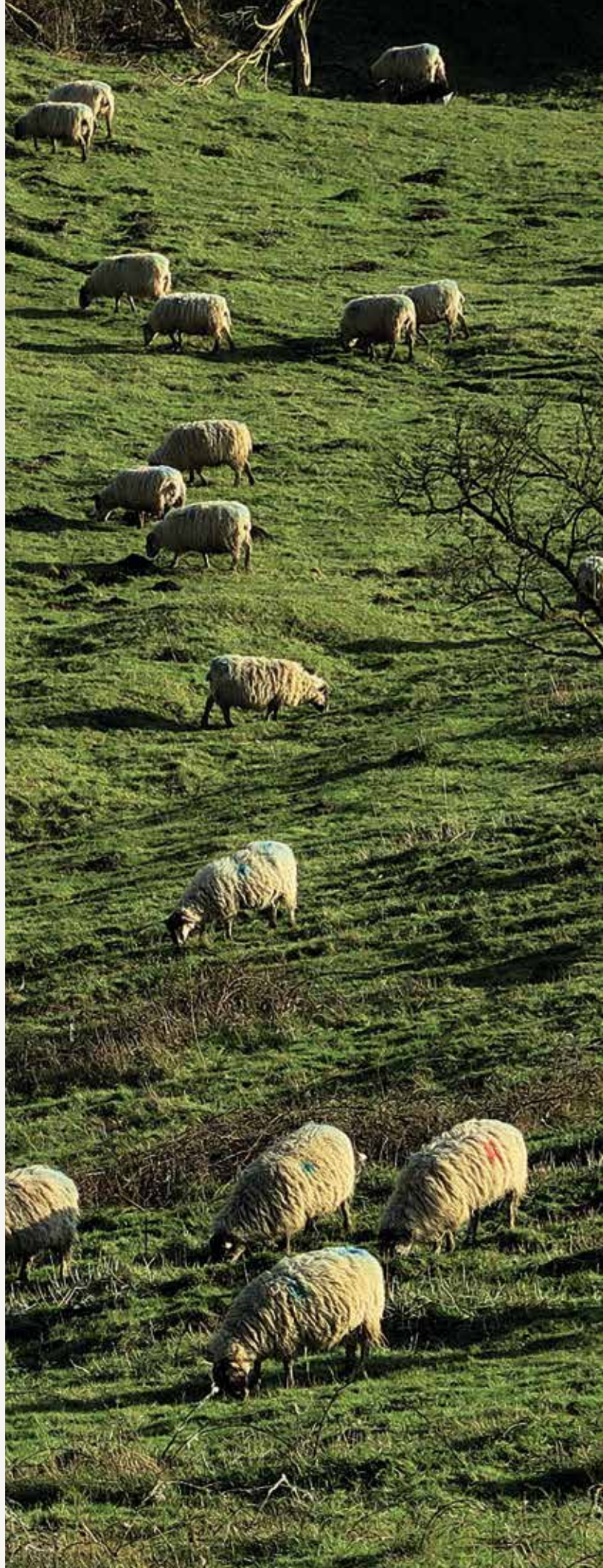
Ephesus had left its first love. Pergamos tolerated false doctrines. Thyatira allowed a false prophetess to teach. Perhaps she had a great influence, and the pastor of the congregation was afraid to prohibit her from teaching. Several were led astray, and God spoke, “I have this against you”!

What report would Jesus give our local churches? Can He testify the same of us as He did of the church in Smyrna, “I know your . . . poverty (but you are rich)” —in grace, in love, and more. The Lord did not admonish this congregation but rather praised and encouraged them to continue.

Oh, how wonderful it is when Jesus, the Son of God, can testify of us, as He did of several individuals in Sardis, saying that they did not defile their garments. May there also be many children of God today who have not defiled their garments! The firm foundation of God still exists, and it still bears the same seal: “The Lord knows those who are His; and let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19). May the Lord protect us all from becoming shallow.

How is our purity, love, and doctrine? Many began with an earnest commitment in serving the Lord, then slackened off and experienced spiritual death. May the Lord give all His servants of the Word the spirit of the Apostle Paul: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. . . that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2). May this inspire us. May God make His servants like flames of fire so that in this corrupt time many sinners may yet be saved. May the Bride, clothed in the garment of salvation, be ready and waiting to greet the Bridegroom. “Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Revelation 3:11).

F. Jeeninga



# The Blessing of Sunday School Work

## **Sunday School Work Blesses the Teacher**

Sunday School work may bring some disappointments and discouragements. “Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain . . . .’” (Isaiah 49:4). As teachers, we may sometimes feel like echoing that verse. But let’s be strengthened in, “knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). In addition to the blessing of the seeds sown into young hearts, which God has promised will not return empty, a quiet stream of blessing flows into the heart and life of the Sunday school teacher. What we do for others comes back to us as a blessing.

## **The Word of God**

True children of God read their Bibles. Those who teach Sunday school need to regularly read and study their Bibles. If every child of God should be eager for the pure milk of the Word of God, how much more the Sunday school teacher, who should take time every day to meditate on the lesson and let its message stir his heart. One day, we will realize the immense blessings of daily contemplation of God’s Word, and of applying it to our hearts and lives in order to become proficient at impressing it on children’s hearts. Yes, “the hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops” (2 Timothy 2:6).

## **Persistent Prayer**

Scripture study in itself makes us realize how much we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot penetrate the depths of the Word. Even more so, work with children cannot be fruitful without

prayer. Woe to us if we come to Sunday school without adequate preparation in prayer! It is the misbehaving children who will need this ministration the most. They should not be neglected in favor of the others. Someone once said, “There is an important piece of pastoral work that can only be done on your knees.” After all, there is still a spark that can be kindled. What joy if this work succeeds, and for the teacher, what encouragement are such experiences of answered prayer!

## **A Faithful Daily Walk with God**

We cannot lose our self-control, although sometimes the children try us sorely. We must watch over our words and attitudes and remain composed. We should never promise anything we can’t fulfill. Our children don’t just want to hear something about Jesus; they want to see something about Jesus. The greatest power of teaching is not in our speech but in the influence of our lives. The children see us as role models. Woe to us if we are a source of offense to them through an improper walk! What a blessing if our example is an incentive for good, even after our words have long since died away. “You are an epistle of Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). What an important reminder to keep before us!

## **Faithfulness in the Small Things**

This includes punctuality, regular attendance, diligent preparation, and persistent intercession for the children.

## **Fellowship with Teachers, Parents, and Children**

Serving together provides a wonderful opportunity for unity, fellowship, and even friendship. We serve and

bless one another. It's also a great privilege to get to know the parents of our Sunday school children, and will give us greater insight into meeting the needs of these children. Sunday school provides an opportunity for children to enter and grow in the Kingdom of God. Working with children is a great blessing. It helps us

to stay youthful and hold onto a childlike faith in God. Jesus Himself encourages us to learn from the children and to imitate their example of faith.

In serving and instructing our children, we ourselves receive the greatest blessing and increase in wisdom.

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## A Pastor According to the Heart of God

**A** pastor according to the heart of God is a person who has received a calling into the ministry and whose abilities and assignment have been given by God. His spiritual value qualifies him to oversee every member in the congregation and to care for their spiritual life. He is aware of threatening dangers creeping in and can therefore help or give a warning through a sermon or personal conversation.

The right pastor is not a self-sufficient ruler but is instead a humble, God-fearing leader and teacher. He has been called by God to be a shepherd and is subordinate to the instructions of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. He abhors striving to be the greatest, and even though God has called him to be an "overseer," he takes great care that the congregation would not sense this is his charge.

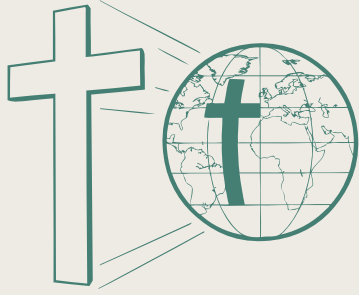
A pastor according to the heart of God also needs to be a studious, faithful, and praying minister of the gospel. He dare not tolerate sin or sinning. He has put to death and buried all pride and fleshly desire in his heart. He loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength. He is also helpful to his fellow workers. He loves the truth, and would rather give his life than to bring shame to the great, precious calling he represents. He loves humble, self-sacrificing children of God who support him and make sure his personal needs have been met. He is well aware this is often a

great sacrifice and therefore appreciates them and loves them even more.

He must be ruthless, unyielding, and firm against any form of falsehood. He only loves the fruit of a sincere heart.

He strives never to be inconsiderate or annoyed when he is confronted with problems. He must be too forward-looking to dwell on narrow-minded things; too noble to lower himself to anything common or degrading; he must be manly and Christ-like instead of weak. He is modest and meek and is respected by all godly people. He takes a stand against gossip and slander within the congregation. He does not have "chosen" people, "favorites," or "trusted acquaintances" who listen everywhere to inform him of gossip. Should the pastor be called to another church to minister, blessings and compliments from the congregation, even those who knew him best, will accompany him. However, should he pass away, he would be missed by all as a friend and brother in Christ, as a good and truly noble man who cannot be so easily replaced.

May God grant us many of these pastors. May He give such pastors long life so that they can be a huge blessing and greatly rewarded in heaven. After a pastor passes on, it is a wonderful blessing when people can say, "God took him home, but the godly life he left behind is still speaking to us!"



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

## The Godly Sermon

*There is a difference between human speech and a godly sermon. People may have tremendous abilities to speak and inspire others. But only God-inspired preaching awakens sinners and leads them to salvation in Christ. In doing so, God uses simple people who are weak in themselves, but in whom His power is manifested.*

**O**n his second missionary journey, after much suffering and many harrowing experiences, Paul finally arrived in the Greek city of Corinth. Corinth was a modern trading city. Its inhabitants, however, had the reputation of leading evil, reckless, and self-indulgent lives.

We don't know what compelled Paul to go to Corinth. He later wrote to the church in Corinth that he was not one to run headlong into the unknown but that the love of Christ compelled him. This is the most likely explanation for his journey to Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, we read with what purpose and in what state of mind he had come to Corinth: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. . . . I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.” This is how the chosen apostle of God appears before us.

### **Jesus Christ, the Purpose and Substance of the Sermon**

“For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). From this passage, we conclude that the apostle primarily preached of the crucifixion of Jesus and clarified the purpose and profound meaning of His sacrificial death. The whole message of Jesus was unquestionably

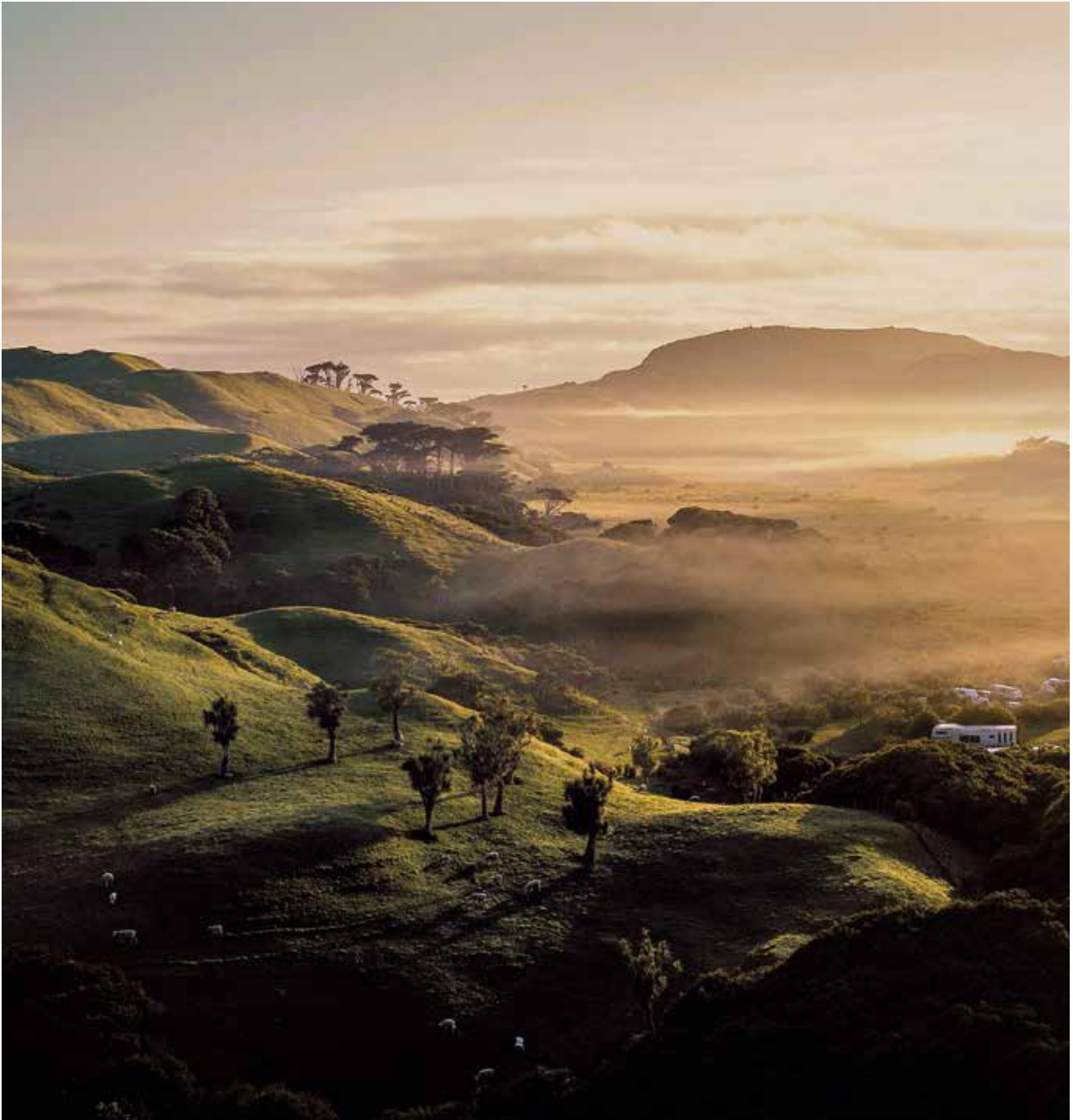
included in this sermon. Paul would have preached of His eternal deity, His incarnation, His wisdom, teaching, and power, His life and ministry, His obedience, grace and glory, His convictions, His holy life, and of His being scorned and rejected, His suffering and the cross, and His death and resurrection.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?” (Galatians 3:1). The atoning death of Christ was particularly stressed and emphasized everywhere because it forms the basis of divine salvation.

Only Christ was able to bring salvation and offer it to mankind. For this reason, He is the very content of the godly sermon, which doesn't consist of lofty words and great human wisdom, but is the clear witness from God of Jesus Christ and of what He accomplished through Christ for the salvation of the world.

### **The Godly Sermon must be Proclaimed**

Corinth needed this message, and it's still necessary all over the world. Paul writes, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). God uses His chosen people to preach Christ's message.



Where it happens in the right spirit, it is preached with much fear and great trembling but also in the Spirit and with power.

The church at Corinth owed its salvation to this preaching. Genuine, biblical, saving faith cannot be awakened by human wisdom and philosophy, but by divine power, by inspired preaching.

#### **The Godly Sermon was Effective**

Luke testified according to Acts 18:8, “And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were bap-

tized.” Though not all were transformed, there were still many. While some believed, others resisted and blasphemed. This demonstrates that the attitude of each individual towards the message of God remains a crucial and decisive factor. Undoubtedly, no one will receive salvation if he remains closed to this message and rejects it.

Have you ever really thought about the high value and benefit of this divine sermon? Dear Reader, take this message to heart and let it guide you to the salvation of your soul.

# Service at the Altar

*Prayer and time in conversation with souls who are seeking salvation are very special moments in the service of a pastor.*

When people have been awakened by the Holy Spirit to the state of their lost souls, and are praying and seeking the saving power and grace of God, we often refer to the place where they are kneeling as an “altar,” where someone can pray with them and help them find salvation through Jesus. What a blessed hour it is, when God’s peace and a deep joy fill the heart, where before there was deep sadness and a troubled soul.

However, it is not the altar that brings salvation, but the encounter of the soul with its Redeemer. The pastor is an encouraging companion at this time, showing the way to the cross. In simple words He may show the way to salvation, point out obstacles, and encourage the soul to believe. But the work of rebirth and salvation can only be completed by God. The pastor can be compared to a midwife who accompanies the birthing process and rejoices at the newborn.

God Himself touches a person. The Holy Spirit awakens his innermost being, his soul, from the self-satisfied stupor of sin. Suddenly the numbness vanishes and is replaced by regret for the sins that have been committed and the bondage he’s found himself in. Like a drunk who wakes up in the light of the morning sun and finds himself in a pool of vomit, someone who is spiritually awakened is disgusted with his godless life. Touched by the rays of the divine sun of grace, a cry escapes from the tormented soul, “O God, have mercy on me!”

This godly sorrow creates repentance, brokenness, and deep regret over the guilt and sin against God and man. In the presence of God, this person dies to sin and the world, is prepared to make right any sins committed against others, and begins traveling on the pathway

to heaven. Gazing in faith at the Lamb of God, Who also took away my guilt and sin, brings grace and new life. Suddenly the sun of hope rises, and a previously unknown love for God and others fills the heart. What a wonderful hour!

Unfortunately, this special place at the altar is also a place where many have experienced spiritual harm. Not infrequently, the distress begins with the invitation to repent. A revival service may be designed to create a strong emotional response in the listeners. Perhaps a comfortable road to all the benefits associated with Christianity is promised. In any case, human-induced emotions will not be able to create new spiritual life. People may come forward to the altar as sinners, and still leave the room as sinners.

It is very different when the Holy Spirit awakens the hearts. God’s work does not depend on how much a person knows about the Bible and about the path to salvation. But even then, spiritual counseling requires divine wisdom and guidance, since only the Holy Spirit can see into the heart. He can reveal hidden obstacles to salvation, such as unforgiveness or other hidden difficulties that have not yet been brought under the cross. Here it is necessary to encourage the seeker to continue praying and confessing every need to God.

Frequently it will happen that souls are so broken about their great sin that they don’t dare to ask God’s forgiveness in childlike faith. Here, the pastor can help by pointing out the sacrifice Christ made for us, and encouraging him to put all his trust in the love of God. In these cases, the Word of God is an incredible storehouse of precious promises and encouraging invitations from God.



An experienced pastor will guard against encouraging the soul to believe until the Holy Spirit has been able to make a full breakthrough, as long as there are still obstacles between God and man. Unfortunately, many souls have been deceived in this particular point. They were asked to believe in God's forgiveness where God had not yet forgiven.

The Bible says, "He who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). The question may be justified, how long must we call out to God?" His Word

gives the answer in Jeremiah 29:13, "You will seek and find me. For if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord."

In seeking salvation much earnest and victorious prayer is necessary. However, the seeking soul should not be praying alone—the church should help carry this burden and surround the seekers in prayer. In this way children are born into the family of God, and sinners are redeemed and added as members of the Lord's church.

Hermann Vogt

## Mission Work

**M**issionary service was begun by Christ and must be continued by the church. Will Christ recognize the local church if it does not share the gospel with the rest of the world? God's message is meant for the whole world, and the church has the responsibility to see that it gets there.

We cannot fulfill our responsibility to perform missionary work by only praying for the world; we also need to help in a practical way. If everyone were only to pray and not do anything else, not a lot of missionary work would get done. So let's apply the motto, "Work and pray!"

True missionary work means winning souls and leading them to Christ, but the mission field is not limited to far-away countries. God's vineyard is everywhere, and we must all see ourselves as missionaries and do whatever we can for God.

If the whole church were to view disseminating God's message as their responsibility, the gospel would soon spread across the globe like wildfire. The fault for the slow progress of missionary work lies not with God withholding His support, but with the church for not fulfilling its role. The church can't have the Spirit of Christ without also possessing a missionary spirit. May God jolt awake the church to fulfill its duty and wake up souls before they drown in death and darkness.

Christ lives only in the hearts of loyal workers for His kingdom. He must enter our hearts to make us real, true missionaries. Our hearts cannot be on fire for God if they are cold toward missionary work.

Many congregations have died because they wasted their money, talents, skills, and time on unnecessary and unwise projects and were not ready to take up missionary work.

The Trinity (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) wants the message of God to be brought to all people. God and the world are waiting for the church to wake up and do its duty rather than wasting its resources on unnecessary things.

People will never be able to recognize the light of the true gospel if the church remains idle. It must let its light shine; a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. May God make us all torchbearers for His wonderful light.

If we bring our "bread and fish" to the Lord, He can bless them wonderfully so that everyone who is hungry may be satisfied. However, if we are selfish and use up everything for ourselves, then others leave empty-handed, and we lose out on a great and wonderful blessing.

If all who are born again into the church of God are truly consecrated to the Lord, they will find ways and means to be a light to the world, setting an example and being an encouragement on the path to eternal life.

M. Montag

# The Congregation . . . (and the Pastor)



*It is often said proverbially, “Like the preacher, so the church,” and consequently, high expectations are placed on the preacher. But unfortunately we forget that the preacher is also dependent on the church and needs its support, its prayers. Therefore, as parishhioner it’s good to think about how we can be helpful and encouraging to the pastor.*

**T**he subject concerning the relationship of a congregation with its pastor is very timely. Usually when this topic is mentioned, the focus is on the pastor. The prerequisites, qualifications, character, and duties of a pastor are outlined. This is important and no doubt biblical. Yet if the discussion ends there, it is one-sided. To be a successful congregation upon whom the blessing of God rests, both the pastor and parishioners must work together. Both play a vital role.

In this edition, you will also find articles concerning the role of the pastor. However, I have been asked to focus on the role of the congregation in supporting its pastor. I have been on both sides of the fence, so to speak. I have spent time both as a pastor and as a member of several congregations. As a child, youth, and young adult, I was part of three different congregations: Herford, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. As a child, it was a passive role. Later on, I was involved in a more active way, and in 1980, the Lord called my wife and me into the ministry. Over the years, I have served in five different congregations. We have learned a lot over time. Together with the brothers and sisters in our congregations, we were able to mature spiritually.

Perhaps you want to know how you, as a member of a congregation, can support and encourage your pastor. Within my role as a pastor, I want to mention a number of points which demonstrate how I have been helped and encouraged, trusting this may be helpful to you too.

A pastor is expected to be a man (or woman) of prayer. He prays on his knees, he prays while travelling, he prays while making visits, and also in many other situations. It is appreciated when the pastor calls or comes by before a surgery and says, “I am praying for you.” He prays for the families, the marriages, the children, the youth, the seniors, the sick, the jobless, those needing encouragement, and so on. How encouraging and uplifting it is for the pastor to hear the same words from the parishioners, “Pastor, I am praying for you!” How good it is when people pray for him openly as well. ***Pray for your pastor.***

A pastor is acutely aware of his responsibilities before God. I know he serves the congregation and works together with the trustee board, and his needs are looked after by the congregation—but still he is foremost in the service of the Lord. For his decisions, his duty, and his service, he is responsible to God. He gets his mandate and his assignments from above, some of which may surprise him, but they are always binding. Therefore, he will make some decisions that not everybody will necessarily understand or agree with. And he certainly can’t please everyone. His role as pastor, standing between God and his listeners, is often a lonely role. I was always encouraged by the respect and confirmation given to me by my congregation. ***Respect your pastor.***

It is love that is supposed to motivate a pastor. It is love that seeks the best for each individual and yet, at the same time, keeps the well-being of the whole congregation in mind. Since people differ greatly, this is no easy task. Love motivates the pastor to point out different areas of

concern in his sermons or to carefully mention certain things in private conversation. This may not always be interpreted as love, yet it is concern for the well-being of the soul that is the reason behind it all. If this love is acknowledged and accepted, both congregation and pastor will benefit. ***Love your pastor.***

Can a pastor be mistaken? I wish I could say that I always get things right. Unfortunately, I cannot make that claim. I spoke too soon, did not say it in the right tone of voice, judged incorrectly, waited too long to intervene, overlooked somebody, misunderstood the situation, did not visit the person in the hospital soon enough, and the list goes on. We are human, and these things are not done intentionally. What a great thing it is when one realizes that the people in the congregation “think no evil” but still treat their pastor with respect and love. Holding grudges and being unforgiving is very detrimental to the individual who harbors the bitterness. It may be our right to tell others how we have been wronged, but it only makes people unhappy, and it can end up having a negative effect on the whole congregation. ***Forgive your pastor.***

Wherever a group of people live in proximity to another, rules and conventions are a matter of fact. When our children were little, we made certain things clear to them so they knew how to act and knew what was expected of them. Sometimes it may be only about minor things, but not everybody can just do whatever they please. The same is true for a congregation. A certain order must exist. Worship services begin on time, there are people who sit in certain pews, and we are respectful in the house of the Lord. Because we tend to forget, it may be advantageous to be reminded from time to time. There are usually more people sitting in the back pews than at the front. It is more difficult to preach in a building where there are a lot of empty spaces at the front. During one service, I asked the congregation if each one of them would please move one row further up for the next Sunday. When the next Sunday came, everyone sat accordingly. How encouraging! ***Submit to your pastor.***

Wherever humans live together, communication is vital. Communication is an art that must be learned; it is not something to be taken for granted. Through open and honest interaction, it is possible to assess difficulties correctly and clear them up. It is extremely easy for misunderstandings to appear. Something is misunderstood, one supposes that there is more to it, ulterior motives are imagined, and soon the situation is beyond control. It's

easier to share your thoughts with others than to go to the source. It may be simple to write an anonymous note or letter, but such an action helps no one, and is cowardly. This only raises suspicion, assumptions, and mistrust. If you have something to say, have the courage to stand behind your words. ***Speak to your pastor.***

Most people I have gotten to know over the years like to be encouraged. Some are hungry for encouragement. People love to hear uplifting sermons. Whether you encourage someone verbally through a phone call, by writing an e-mail, or just by shaking their hand in a loving manner, it is appreciated. People expect their pastor to encourage them. Yet in the congregation, there are also others who encourage. And that includes encouraging your pastor. I was often encouraged; sometimes it was through a note in my mailbox, through an invitation, by getting flowers or baked goods, or by someone saying, “We are praying for you!” When somebody says, “Thank you for that sermon; it was a blessing,” these words are encouraging. Don't think that it will go to your pastor's head; there are enough things that will ensure he remains humble. ***Encourage your pastor.***

A pastor's day is often filled with much to do. There is more to a pastor's job description than just to prepare for sermons: visitations, funerals, weddings, letters, e-mails, spiritual counseling, answering questions, comforting, and making sure things run smoothly in the congregation and during worship services. Most pastors also have a family, a spouse, and children who need time. Yes, there should even be time to play with the children. It is also nice to have an uninterrupted meal with the family. Before you pick up the telephone to give your pastor a call, think about what time it is. Can the phone call wait until after supper? Or if you want to speak to him about a church problem that needs to be solved, should you really be calling at a time when the pastor should perhaps be getting some much-needed sleep? Sure, your pastor is there to help. Your pastor loves to help, but let us not burden him needlessly. ***Be considerate of your pastor.***

As congregations, we wish to help our pastors. We wish to encourage them and support them. The advice given above is not exhaustive. Much more could be added to it. Love is creative. Perhaps you, as a member of your congregation, can give some more thought to how you can make your pastor's job easier and how you can help, encourage, and support him. Let your thoughts be put into action so that in the end, the whole congregation will benefit.

Harry Semenjuk

# Jump!

Every year in June, an extraordinary natural phenomenon takes place on the German deep-sea island of Helgoland: the guillemot plunge. The island is known for the many bird colonies that come here year after year to hatch their eggs and then raise their young. This includes the guillemots.

They are inconspicuous birds, with black and white plumage, a bit plump, and about the size of a duck. Around March, the birds arrive on the island and, along with other birds, populate entire rocks of the coastal cliffs. A rocky outcrop, which offers an area of approximately 10 by 10 centimeters (4 by 4 in), is sufficient for the birds as a breeding spot. They hatch a single egg, which they lay on the bare rock. And so thousands of guillemot pairs crowd close to one another.

Once the chicks have hatched, they are faced with a major challenge: the guillemot plunge. It is the leap into life, because they cannot survive on the rock; they must go into the water. This is their territory where they live optimally and can fully exploit their strengths, swimming and diving. However, the jump is daring, because the chicks cannot fly yet. The only way to get into the water is a jump from a height of about 40 meters (130 ft), a huge challenge for the young birds. Some birds waddle for days and days to the edge of the cliff and back to their safe niche. Down below in the water, seagulls are waiting, hoping for a quick bite.

What is remarkable though, are the guillemot parents who are also on the water, calling their young. Despite the thousands of birds, parents and chicks recognize one another's calls. The chicks hear the tireless call—they just have to jump. At some point, under the

protection of dusk, you can observe it. Again and again, a young one daringly makes its way onto a rocky protrusion, and takes the plunge. It falls helplessly, flapping its small wings, in a short arc 40 meters down. Downy feathers and fat cushion the impact. Through their distinctive sounds, the guillemots on the water quickly find each other. Immediately after the jump, the chicks swim along with one parent bird into the wintering areas, into the waters of the Norwegian coast. In March, they will come back to Helgoland, and the spectacle will start again.

The leap into life—doesn't it often require much overcoming for us as well? Jesus tells us in Scripture that He is life (John 14:6); He is the way in which we come to the Father and thereby obtain eternal life. In John 10:10, Jesus lets us know that He came to earth so that we should have abundant life. He is life, and it is He calling us tirelessly to Himself, to this life, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Staying in sin is sure death for us. To be saved, we have to jump, figuratively speaking. Nobody will force us to; it's a voluntary decision we can only make ourselves. It isn't a leap into "nothing," since Jesus is waiting for us. Then we can unite immediately with Him, holding His hand, through all our earthly life.

You are young; your life is still ahead of you. You have plans you want to realize and goals you want to achieve. Undoubtedly, you will accomplish many things. You can choose to stay on the rock; but as long as the burden of sin weighs you down, eternal death is waiting for you. To escape it, you must take the plunge into life. Dare to jump!

Niko Ernst  
Herford, Germany

## Lessons From School (2)

Once again we were attending a few weeks of business classes. In this class, we were to study jurisprudence to teach us all about legal concerns. It was taught by a lawyer whose favorite line was that “lying is not a punishable offense.” According to the law, this is correct because lying is only punished when it occurs under oath, for example with fraud. Nevertheless, I was appalled that from this he concluded it was okay to lie. During our classes, there was no occasion to discuss this until the day he spoke excitedly about the preamble to the Basic Law. Stated right at the beginning, it says, “Conscious of their responsibility before God and man . . .” The lawyer said this reference to God was superfluous because what was there that wouldn’t be covered under the basic legislation? This was to be a rhetorical question, but I quickly said, “Lying—you say it is not a punishable offense, but the Bible says it is sin.” He now expended much energy justifying to me why lying is necessary: to tell your wife she looks good in a certain dress is the duty of a man, even if it isn’t true. I explained to him that he would not have done his wife a favor but would have shown himself an unreliable adviser. The discussion continued with other examples, but more colleagues agreed with me that lying was not justifiable. I reminded him each time he talked about doubtful occurrences or gave advice about half truths “that lying is not a punishable offense,” until one day, he said to me with outrage, “So do you believe I would lie to you?” “Yes. I believe that,” I answered. How could it be different? Jesus said, “he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10). Furthermore, some of my professor’s lies had come to light through unfortunate circumstances. He was stunned, probably because no one had ever accused him of lying before. However, he stopped saying that lying was not a punishable offense.

Corinna Kowalski  
Hamm, Germany

### VERSE OF THE MONTH

“Whoever loves instruction  
loves knowledge, but he who  
hates correction is stupid.”  
(Proverbs 12:1)

**It wouldn’t make any sense for a blind person to stubbornly insist on going his way without allowing a seeing person to help point out missteps, obstacles, or dangers. It is equally unwise for us to insist on going our own way in life. In many cases, dealing with criticism and correction is a skill that needs to be learned, especially when we are young. Criticism can be unpleasant and hurtful, but correction is instructional, serving to protect us from missteps, poor decisions, and worse in our lives. When you are corrected by people—and especially by the Word of God—do not give way to discouragement and despair, even if that seems hard to do in the moment, and do not let yourself get angry. Instead, accept the correction quietly and patiently, reflect on it in silence, and try to understand it. Ask God for grace to deal well with criticism in life, to focus on what is good in each situation, and to let yourself be led down the right path.**

# Be An Example

*“Be an example to those who believe, in word, in your way of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12*

“Be an example.” These words, spoken by the apostle Paul to Timothy, made a big impression on me.

Timothy was a young man resolved to do God’s will. Paul had entrusted the church in Ephesus to him. It had a sizable congregation, and like any other congregation, was in great danger of being infiltrated by false teachings. However in this case, the threat was particularly acute because the congregants had only recently turned away from their pagan idolatry to serve the living God. Many of them were unfamiliar with the true beauties and virtues of the Christian life and still had much to learn. Satan, who is always at the ready, was prepared to take advantage of this opportunity by sending the new converts false teachers to lead them astray. Paul entrusted this task to Timothy despite his youth and all of these challenges.

It was a holy task, and Timothy was undoubtedly aware of his responsibility to the believers in Ephesus. He knew many people were watching how he lived his life, observing his deeds, his words, and his dedication to God. Timothy was in a position of great responsibility, so it comes as no surprise that Paul encouraged him to be an example.

However, it may come as a surprise to us that Paul wanted him to be an example to the believers. We know all of us who profess to be children of God are called to set an example for unbelievers. We’re expected to lead a life free of sin and in accordance with the image of Christ, as the children of God in Ephesus presumably did; yet now Timothy is being admonished to serve as an example to the ones who themselves were to be an example to the world.

If we profess to be children of God, we are also called to be an example for believers. Let’s examine ourselves to see if we’re setting the right example in various areas:

In word:

- Is our conversation productive and edifying?
- Is it seasoned with grace, serving to build up and bless the listeners?
- Do our words really align themselves with biblical principles?

- Can people who don’t claim to be Christians and with whom we have daily contact see a difference between our conduct and theirs?

In deed:

- Is our lifestyle fitting for a true Christian?
- Is our conduct Christ-like?
- Does our attitude toward our brothers and sisters convince them we have brotherly love in our hearts?
- As God’s children, let’s be careful not to bring any shame to the name of Christ.

In love:

- Do we demonstrate God’s love in our daily lives?
- Do we have true love for others?
- Do we have a deep, yearning love in our hearts for the souls of people who are lost in sin and darkness?
- Let’s open our hearts to God and let His love fill us to reach people who don’t know Him, an area we all need to grow in.

In faith:


- Do we possess the simple belief in God that a young child has toward his earthly parents?
- Do we honor the Lord as we should by believing His Word?
- Do we honor Him by claiming His unbreakable promises for ourselves?
- God’s Word tells us, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6a).

In purity:

- Is our life an example of Christian purity and chastity?
- Does it correspond to biblical guidelines in this regard?
- Are our words, our thoughts, and our hearts as pure as God wants them to be? They can and should be so we can enjoy God’s approval and praise.

Let’s ask ourselves, “Am I an example to believers? Do my words, my deeds, my life and my love fulfill the commands of Christ?”

E. E. Egermeier



CHILDREN'S CORNER

# *Little Jobs for the Lord*

**A** little boy once heard that even children could work for God's kingdom, if they only loved the Lord Jesus with all their heart.

The boy was crippled. He knew he wasn't able to go from house to house to hand out tracts or gospel literature. He meditated on this and came up with an idea. "I've got it! I know what I can do."

His parents had several leaflets containing Christian short stories. The little boy pulled these out of their cubbyhole, cut out the short stories, and tossed them out the window onto the street below. Then he cut out some paper slips and wrote Bible verses on them. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He also tossed these notes onto the street.

After a few days, a gentleman knocked on the door where the boy lived with his parents. He asked if

someone there had written a note and then thrown it out the window. The boy admitted he had.

Then the man said, "Without knowing it, you have become my life-saver. I have been so sad since the death of my wife. I was wandering aimlessly and without purpose through the streets. I wanted to take my life. My wandering led me under this window. I picked up this note and read, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). This word encouraged me again. Then I also remembered the passage out of the Bible that I learned many years ago: 'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose' (Romans 8:28)."

How happy and thankful the boy was that his little job had brought such good fruit for his Savior!

# Your Place in the Church

**A** congregation is composed of a diversity of people. Paul tried to show this by describing the human body and all of its parts. Every part is different, but each carries out important functions in the body and is therefore needed. All parts together make up one body, the church. We understand what Paul wanted to say with this comparison: we should not wish to be like others but fulfill the place God has assigned us. This concept is outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, and is useful to read.

The above example could be applied to the local church. We are not just different because of our talents but also because of differing age groups—children and youth on one end and seniors on the other. The passing of time has brought us each where we belong and have our place to fill. Truly. Even seniors have a place to fill and a role to play in the overall view of the church. Let's take some time to contemplate our mission, and to take ownership of our responsibilities.

In Titus 2, the apostle Paul describes a healthy local church that includes “older men” in verse 2 and “older women” in verse 3, thereby securing them an important place within the church body. But it's not just about belonging, but also about the work they are to do. The idea of being superfluous or not being useful should be ignored. These types of thoughts may hinder us and let us sink into negativity.

Most of the older brothers and sisters look back on a blessed life. They have traveled with the Lord for many decades. Many experiences and answered prayers happened during this time. Unfortunately, not every occurrence was recorded. They can definitely testify that “God was good to us.”

God's mercy, faithfulness, and compassion are active throughout our season of growth. Our walk with God taught us much. From the outset as a spiritual child to the mature man, it was a blessed time in God's school. We should just remember our developing ability to trust God throughout the years. In past times of spiritual immaturi-

ty, we would often panic and think God needed our help. Today, we can patiently watch as God safely and slowly leads us to His goal. We know we are safe in His hands. Additionally, our ability to discern has grown. Through constant reading in the Scriptures, walking with God, and from personal experiences, we can discern good from bad (Hebrews 5:14), but also decide what is the best (Philippians 1:9-11). Recognizing and avoiding dangers depends on our personal maturity. Certainly, there are other reasons that could be mentioned. By summarizing everything as Paul did, we could say “I have learned” (Philippians 4:11).

Does all this have anything to do with the life in a church? Yes. God gives us the opportunity through our knowledge of God and our walk with Him, to become a “foundation” in the church. We can become a guiding influence on future generations. Opportunities are not in short supply. We just need to recognize them and take full advantage of them.

Encouraged by Paul, Titus said to the older men that they were to “be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in patience.” These are significant words, and each one needs to be studied carefully. Future generations are to be influenced and led by a healthy faith. These characteristics are vitally important during times of crises. Is my behavior honorable? Do I evaluate interactions with self-control and from a neutral perspective? Is my faith visible in my behavior? Am I motivated by love, and do people around me perceive this love? Have I been patient in my dealings with others throughout my life? These are serious questions that place a burden of responsibility on each of us.

In the verses that follow, Paul describes the characteristics of older women. God's holiness should be visible in their behavior. Then a list follows that defines this life. Firstly he mentions slandering or gossiping about others. Strange that he should mention this attribute first. Do I talk too much, and is what I say true? Maybe I'm passing along mere assumptions. There is probably nothing as damaging to a church as spreading gossip or slander.



Also, older women are not to be given to much wine but are to be “teachers of good things.” This teaching refers to the next generation of young women, and includes a number of points. Teaching is only possible if a relationship exists. Teaching without this relationship is often viewed as criticism and doesn’t work. How much damage has resulted from this “teaching.” First, establish a relationship. You ask how that is done. For example, a younger sister may find your perogies or cheesecake tasty. This provides an ideal opportunity to say, “I could show you how to make them.” After several warm and sincere encounters that build a genuine friendship, your potential influence now holds credibility and weight. While having a cup of coffee or tea, you may tell her about your experiences in life. You “teach,” though she may not necessarily notice you are now her “teacher.” However, you have genuinely influenced her with lasting value.

The more we think and pray about these ideas, the more we realize how extensive our responsibilities are as seniors. We may almost come to the conclusion that “there is so much to do and so little time.” A composer once wrote, “Let us do what we are able, for few days remain.” Timely words.

Now we consider the children and youth. Young fathers and mothers are also watching us. The Bible describes the world in which we live as lying “under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Values we grew up with are no longer valued. Questions and worries about the future are a reality. And here, most certainly, we older brothers and sisters are obligated to live out our faith and to magnify God. The next time you meet a young person, remember you have a job to do. Step into the world of that young person, reach out your hand, speak words of joyful encouragement, and put in a word for the Lord.

Do not respond by saying “this is all fine, but it’s not for me.” With this attitude, you would miss opportunities you should have taken advantage of. Let me encourage you to live daily with a joyful heart to recognize and fulfill your purpose. These ideas I’ve given could also become prayer concerns. We can pray for wisdom. The Holy Spirit can teach us in this area; He can open doors and give open hearts, and can bless these words.

Start by reading Titus 2:1-5 with a prayerful heart, meditate on this, maybe even write down the important points, and then study them further. I am pleased to see you are willing to try this. I wish you a blessed time participating in the work of the church.

Harry Semenjuk

## Announcements

### *Easter Conference in Hamm, Germany*

April 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Further Information:

[www.gghamm.de](http://www.gghamm.de)

### *Fest in Winnipeg, Manitoba*

May 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Pentecost in Herford, Germany*

June 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Fest in Aylmer, Ontario*

### *50th Anniversary of the Congregation*

June 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Bible Course in Neustädt, Mexico*

July 22<sup>nd</sup>-August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

### *Youth Seminar in Tuningen, Germany*

July 28<sup>th</sup>-August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

### *Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany*

August 17<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

# Journey to Salvation

Part 2 The Lamb of God

Ron Taron



*“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. . . . And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.” Exodus 12:5-11*

**H**ow this night must have impressed itself on the minds of the Israelites! There they stood, everything packed, dressed to travel, and an innocent, pure lamb was killed in front of them. The children watched with huge eyes as the head of the household covered the doorposts and crossbeam with the blood of the lamb. “Father, why are you doing that?” a child would have asked here and there. “Children, remember the plagues that the Lord, our God, already sent over the Egyptians. He will send one more terrible plague, and all the firstborn in the land shall die. If we fail to cover our house door with the blood of the lamb, our eldest will die this night! This lamb had to die, so we would be spared from the avenging angel and from the slavery of Egypt. During this night God will save us!”

And so they partook of the flesh of the lamb. It was completely consumed, and any leftovers burned, for it needed to be a whole sacrifice. Then every one of God’s people went through their bloodstained doorway to find safety behind it. Were they asleep at midnight when the terrible wailing of the Egyptians began? They must have been overwhelmed with reverence before such a holy God! How they must have thanked and praised Him for sparing them! The picture of that innocent lamb may have filled their thoughts once again as they realized it had died and shed its blood in their stead, for this lamb had saved them from certain death.

## **Behold, the Lamb of God!**

We look ahead approximately 1,500 years. John the Baptist sees Jesus of Nazareth coming, and suddenly the

Holy Spirit moves within him and he cries, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Here we see the fulfilment; this was the true Lamb of God, which would take the sins of all the world onto Himself!

What a glorious thought, to know He is my sacrificial Lamb! He died in my stead! How fitting that Jesus brought His infinitely great sacrifice precisely at the Passover Feast there in Jerusalem. It is very clear the Old Testament Paschal Lamb was just a type of the true Lamb of God. How overwhelming is the thought that God Himself became that sacrifice! The Creator, the Source of all life, humbles Himself to be scorned, scourged, tortured, and to shed His holy blood for the redemption of a depraved, corrupted, and lost world!

### **No Cleansing without Blood**

“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). God is a God of infinite love, yet His perfect righteousness demands punishment for sin. He cannot just ignore sin! Blood must flow to cleanse from sin and to enable redemption. Only by the blood of the Lamb of God can guilt be expunged and hearts be cleansed. And, praise God, there is a cleansing of the heart as part of redemption. It is not only a covering of sin so that God will no longer see it, but a cleansing of the heart. “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). According to God’s Word, unclean hearts will never enter heaven.

When Jesus instituted Communion during the Passover celebration we read, “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’” (Matthew 26:27-28). He was acutely aware that His blood must be spilled if even one soul was to be saved from his sins. Long ago in Egypt a lamb was slain to spare every Israelite from death, but a little animal could not cleanse their hearts. It was just an allusion to the true Lamb of God, who on Calvary, should by His blood pay the ransom for all people of all time.

But not only does Jesus’ blood cleanse our heart of sin, it also saves or redeems from the bondage of sin. Our sin can only be forgiven by the blood of Jesus, but how sad it would be if we were destined to just remain in our

sinfulness. But no, Jesus’ blood frees us from sin. There is power in the blood, power to be victorious over sin. Power to be freed from sinning. Power to break the greatest bondage, vice, or depravity. Be it alcoholism, addictions such as gambling or pornography, greed and covetousness, gossip, or whatever may hold us in bondage, the blood of the Lamb of God has the power to enable an upright, earnest seeker to be freed of it. Praise God!

### **The Lamb of God and You**

Have you experienced the transforming power of the blood of Jesus in your life? Have you confessed your failure and sin to Him and prayed for forgiveness and cleansing? Could the Savior free you from every bondage and sin? Salvation and eternal life are found only in Him. We can enter heaven only on the basis of His redeeming sacrifice on the cross. Without the Lamb of God, we are hopelessly lost! All our own efforts and all our righteousness are woefully insufficient. Only in Jesus, the Lamb of God, can we find salvation and life. And not just any life, but more abundant life, eternal life. Have you seen Him, your Creator, in the beauty of His sacrificial love, as He, blood streaming down, became the Lamb of God to save you from your sin? Do you know Him as your personal Lord and Savior? Or have you coldly and unfeelingly rejected His sacrifice?

### **The Lamb of God in Eternity**

This concept of God’s Lamb is so important to Him that we will yet find this symbol in eternity. When John had his vision about the glory at the throne of God, he saw something very special there. “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain . . . Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!’ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’ Then the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever” (Revelation 5:6, 11-14).

### *Consecration to the Lord*

*Lord, here I am, for I have heard You calling;  
Your mighty Word has pierced my heart and soul.  
Before Your throne on bended knee I'm falling,  
Pursuing love that draws me to its goal.  
Lord, thank You for Your shepherd-like compassion,  
And for Your Spirit who convicts of sin;  
How I regret my wrong and sinful actions!  
What great remorse I feel so deep within!*

*Lord, here I am, I make a full surrender;  
I give You all my heart, my life, and soul.  
I feel Your Spirit draw me, kind and tender;  
Forevermore I'm Yours, oh make me whole!  
Through joy and sorrow faithfully I'll follow,  
On sunny days or when the storms blow cold.  
I'll keep my feet upon the path that's narrow  
Until eternal glory I behold.*

*Lord, here I am, please use me for Your glory  
To spread salvation, lend a helping hand,  
Comfort the sick, proclaim the gospel story,  
And do whatever Your Word will command.  
Oh fill me with Your loving Holy Spirit,  
For He will give me strength to persevere,  
So that when crisis comes I will not fear it.  
Yes, speak, dear Lord; behold Your servant hears.*

*Franz Friedrich*