

#1. VANITY by Buddy Cobb

When we are born into this world, it doesn't take long before we begin to realize that we are in a hostile place. Babies are attacked by disease and often times are mistreated and forsaken by their parents.

There are all kinds of things trying to get a hold of you to bring you into captivity - many voices counseling you, leading you, directing you, trying to take you into all kinds of corruption. Advertisements, radio broadcasts, television programs are all trying to get you hooked on something. We need to recognize and confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth and that this is not our home. This is a temporary dwelling place. We had no control over when we came here, nor do we have control over our time to leave. What is this life all about? What is it for?

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter One.

Ecc 1:1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity. 3 What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? 4 *One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever. 5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. 6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. 7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. 8 All things *are* full of labor; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. 9 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. 10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. 11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after. 12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

We see that Solomon in all of his wisdom, though he was king over Israel and had the blessing of wisdom given to him by God, came to the conclusion that all, in this life, is vanity and vexation of spirit. Do you know why he came to this conclusion? Notice the term he uses in verse fourteen "all the works that are done under the sun" s-u-n. He goes on in chapter two speaking about the same thing in verse eleven.

11. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

Why would Solomon come to such a conclusion? The term "under the sun" puts it in the realm of the natural or the temporal?

There are two basic realms the Bible would have us to consider. One is the natural - the temporal - the now. The other is the spiritual - the eternal - the life to come. (1 Tim.4:8) Now, what is the characteristic of that which is natural? It is temporal, limited, it has a beginning time and an end. (Ecc. 3:2) How about the eternal? It is spiritual and it has no beginning and no ending. No matter how much you learn, no matter how much good you accomplish, no matter how great you are, if you have a beginning and an end, what is your conclusion? All is vanity. Since there is coming the time when you and everything that you have is going to pass away, then your life is like a vapor (Js. 4:14) or like a smoke. You come, people can see your presence for a while, and then suddenly you are gone. What profit is there? You invest everything-your life, your time, your talents. You may even accomplish a certain amount. You might get the whole world under your control while you are here. We have had kings in history and civilizations where this has happened. Men have come to greatness of power, but because they were temporal, created beings, when they approached their end and could see that there it was, right there in front of them, they knew they were about to depart into a place where there would be no more remembrance of them or what they had accomplished. (see Ecc. 2:11-19) The Bible teaches us (Isa. 65:17, Rev. 21:1) that there is coming the time when the former things will pass away and be remembered no more.

Included in God's purpose and plan is a provision to keep natural man from finding out what God is doing. It says in Ecc. 3:1 1 that He has set the world in man's heart, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end. Now, with the world in his heart, which way will man go? Is it not the way of the world? Matthew 6:21 reveals to us that where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You see, as long as that is your condition (your heart and treasures in the world) there is no way for you to find out what God is doing. You won't understand why you're here, you won't understand the purpose of it all, you'll think that it is to gain some advantage for yourself. But, as you continue in this life, you will, like Solomon, realize that no matter how much you have gained, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. This is the conclusion God would have us reach so that we may know that our way, as contrasted with His way, is vanity.

In Ecc. 3:10, Solomon speaks of the travail in which God exercised the sons of men. Why does He give it to the sons of men? Is there a difference between the sons of men and the sons of God? Romans 9:8 says that those of the flesh are not the children of God. In 1 Cor. 15:45, 46, we read, 45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.

Jesus speaking to Nicodemus in John 3:6 said, That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Let us realize the difference . . . as long as we are in the natural we are limited sons of men until we do what John 1: 12, 13 tells:

12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Until we have been Born of God, we are not the sons of God, but the sons of men. God has put the sons of men, natural men, in an environment and a situation where he can discover the futility of life apart from God.

These two scriptures in Jeremiah and Proverbs give us the understanding that the problem with natural man is internal and not external and that God himself is responsible for it. Jer. 10:23 says:

23. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Proverbs 20:24 tells us: Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

God ordains it to be this way for a purpose. God has not put it in man to be able to direct his own way in a way that will profit him, for no matter how much we gain for ourselves, we still lose it all at the end. (See Mark 8:36, Proverbs 13:7, 1 Timothy 6:7) It is all vanity and vexation of spirit as long as we are under the sun."

This term "under the sun" is repeated many times in the Book of Ecclesiastes to draw our attention to the source of natural man's light or understanding. There are several kinds of light the Bible speaks of. Consider Matthew 6:23 compared with John 1:9. Matthew 6:23 says: But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! John 1:9 says: That (Jesus) was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. There is a false light which is darkness, and there is the true light. Until we receive Him who is the true light and have Him abiding in us (John 14:20, 15:4,5) we are under the influence of the false.

Eph. 2:2, 3, Eph. 4:17, 18) In I Cor. 1: 19, 20, Paul calls the false light the wisdom of this world and he tells us that God has made it foolishness. In I Cor. 1:21, he says that by the wisdom of the world, the world has never known God. 2 Cor. 2:6 tells us that the wisdom of this world comes to naught. I Cor. 1: 19 refers to the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent. "We recognize similar terms in Isaiah 5:20, 2 1: Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

The wise and prudent in Isaiah 5 are mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 11: 2 5 when He says: I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven, and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

We see then that the truth of God (the true light) is hid from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto the babes. Until we have been born again, and realize that we are babes in the sight of God, knowing nothing as we ought to know it, but needing to be taught of God (John 6:45), and do as Peter instructs in I Peter 2:1, 2, as newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby, we shall continue to abide in the false light which is darkness and not light. No matter how much we accomplish by that false light, it will come to naught and prove to be vanity... our deeds will be evil by God's standards, and not good. We will be wise in our own eyes and prudent in our own sight, but fools in the sight of God, and it is God who is the judge of all, as it tells us in Hebrews 12:23. Let us develop the strange truth that we find in Romans 8:20: For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope

Why has God made us, this creature, subject to vanity? God certainly had a definite reason for doing it that way. We read that God made us subject to this vain way of living, not by willingness on our part, but by His reasoning, who (He) subjected us in hope. Consequently, we come forth in this natural life with the world in our hearts. In that condition we walk according to the course of this world (Eph. 2:23), without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, etc. (Eph. 2:12) Now, as long as we are going the way of the world our life is directed along the course of the world. We cannot discover what God is doing. In other words, we cannot, while being in the way the world teaches, come to the knowledge of God. We are abiding only under the light of the sun. We are only subject to natural light or understanding, by which we cannot receive or know the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14)

1 John 2:15, 16, 17 sums up for us what our attitude should be concerning the world, what is in the world and where it is going. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Since we are not to love the world -and there is no profit in going the way the world teaches, we need to be saved from the course that can only lead us to destruction. It is vanity! But, our hope is kindled in verse 17 where we read in contrast that "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever". We have to be delivered from the way we are going through this life if we are going to end up in a certain place . . . eternal life.

We cannot wander aimlessly, allowing our attitudes and our desires and the lusts of our flesh to lead our course. It is paramount that we remember that we are sojourning through here.

Look at I Peter 1: 13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; 18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers:

19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Now, when Peter speaks of our vain conversation, he is referring to our vain way of living. Therefore, what were you redeemed from? Vanity. Way back there, Solomon did not know about this condition, the redemption information was not available to him. It was not opened up or revealed to him. In I Peter I : 10, Peter related how the prophets of old inquired of and sought diligently for this salvation, and though they prophesied of that which should come, they did not understand nor did they know the time or unto whom they were applicable. So, we discover that God has given unto us the understanding that these things are applicable now to us and that they are spoken concerning us. Therefore, we are admonished to gird up the loins of our minds and to be sober and hope unto the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us.

As Peter continues, he speaks of our being redeemed. From what are we redeemed? Our vain way of living. What makes this life vanity? What is the vanity he is talking about that you have been redeemed from? He is speaking of the vanity of our own way. He says that in times past we were fashioning

ourselves according to our own desires and lusts. Let us consider the motivating factors in our lives, their source and influence. Who do these factors have us serving?

Don't we go around with our course determined by what I want for self next? Our considerations are for the great ambitions and desires that we have for self. But, God has set us in an environment and in circumstances so that one day we are going to wake up to the fact that even if we got everything we wanted, what is it? It is all vanity.

Jesus died for us that we might be redeemed from this vain way of living. This vain way of living is a death ... the dead living. Why? Because of what we are living in. The scripture says in 1 Tim. 5:6 that she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. Yet, we find it pretty comfortable living in this death--this death that consists of the pursuits of our pleasures. (See Isa. 58:13) We worship the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). We seek the pleasures, and if we succeed in that seeking, then it is done--you're dead while you live. But, if you will seek living at his right hand (Ps. 16:1 1) what will you discover? Pleasures forevermore! And, by definition, these are not temporary.

God has a purpose in redeeming us. Jesus had a purpose in dying and shedding his blood for us. He wants to save us from our living a life that ends up in vanity. If you don't let God have control of your life and direct it, that is exactly where it is going to end up. If you let God have and direct your life, will you lose it? Are you going to lose it anyway? That is what the preacher concluded, that all is vanity under the sun, because if you yield to God or if you don't yield to God, what happens? Every moment of the day you are losing your life, either in vanity, or you're losing it and finding it unto life eternal.

What is this life that we have right now? What is this something that I call my life? Our life does not consist of the abundance of our possessions, but our true life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).

This life is not our life. This is what God is actually asking us to lose (Matt. 16:25,26). This that we call life was never ours to begin with. This life is a temporary thing. You did not ask for it and you cannot keep it. How could you say it is yours? At the moment God requires it, how are you going to hang on to it? If it is not yours, do you have a right to do with it what you want? No. This life is another man's (Lk. 16:12). And yet, how convinced are we that that is true. We still fashion this life according to our former lusts in our ignorance. But, what is God calling us to do?

The point that we want to see is that God sent His Son to die on the cross so that we might have opened up to us a recovery from the way we were living. We see that Jesus' death on the cross and the shedding of His blood was for our redemption, but we have thought of it in the terms of being our salvation, like He purchased for us our salvation and so now if we accept that redeeming work eventually we'll be saved. But, we've got to come to a more realistic understanding of what God is after and we can come to that understanding 1 Peter 1:18: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; Why does he talk about being redeemed with corruptible things? The value of the corruptible decreased, but there is no way for the value of the blood to decrease. It is able to purchase for you an eternal redemption from the vain way of living that you received from your fathers. We were living in a way that no matter what we did, good, bad, or indifferent, it was vanity. God wants us to enter into the way that will guarantee our life not being in vain. Before yielding to God, if you suffered, you suffered in vain. If you lived in pleasure, you lived in pleasure in vain. Now, whether you are in pleasure or in suffering, as a result of your life being in the hands of the Father, it is no longer in vain. Look at I Peter 4: 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Jesus came and he lived and he suffered in the flesh and he died, but He did it for a purpose. What was the purpose? That you might be saved? Ultimately, yes, that you might be saved, but what is the purpose that he died in the flesh, that is laid out here in I Peter 4:2?

It is that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. This is our time in the flesh, but while we live in the flesh, we are not to walk after the flesh.

(See Romans 8:5-8, 12-13)

In this redemption process, one thing God wants us to redeem is the time. Why? Because the days are evil. In the evil day, all is vanity. Now, however, we have a way to redeem the time. Are you wasting

time or are you redeeming time? What makes the difference? Well, whose will are you doing? Whose will are you serving? This is what Peter talks about in I Peter 4:2-6. Jesus suffered in the flesh for us on the cross for a purpose, that we should no longer spend the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

When is God our God? He is only our God when we are living unto Him. If we're looking to God to be our Saviour and Redeemer, then when is He going to be that to us? When we are living how? When we are doing His will instead of our pleasure.

The thing that I have had a burden for is that we all come to see the living truth, the living reality that what God has done for our benefit is to open up a way for us to change the way we are living now, so that our time that is spent here is not spent to the lusts of the flesh, and to the desires of the mind, but that it is spent under the control of God so that we are not fashioning ourselves according to our own appetites, but that we might be fashioned by His hands.

For whatsoever the Lord doeth, it has an eternal value to it. (Ecc. 3:14) And this is what I want us to see clearly. Man says, "I'll meet with you Lord tomorrow, but right now I have my creature comforts to look after, I have my own will that I want to do, I've got my own thing I want to accomplish. " It grieves the heart of the Father and was expressed through Jesus when he said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you, but you would not."

There is a time for gathering (Ecc. 3:5) and I think we are at that time. God is gathering those that are His and He wants to get that hold upon our life, He wants to get the reins in His hands, not by force, not by might, not by power, but by His Spirit. We recognize that the only way of profit is to be living unto God, and now is the only time we can redeem this present time.

Look at Romans 6:1 1: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Most of the people in the world-'are absolutely dead unto God. They are not alive unto the will of God. Many in the Christian walk are still dead unto God. They have great hopes for what God is going to do for them one day. But, they are still spending their life in vain. Do you see this? How much of our lives is spent in vain? And can you see that every way that you would design yourself, even if you are successful in it, is vanity. Go ahead and get your own way, but what is it going to profit. We deceive ourselves if we think we are getting away with something by getting our own way. If you see the truth you'll know that it profits nothing. Go ahead and do your own thing. What is it going to profit. Go ahead and show yourself to be something or somebody. We have got to wake up out of the sleep/death we have.

been in and out of our dream world and establish ourselves in reality.

Let us look at 2 Cor. 5:14. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new. 18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: 19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

We want to recognize that we are all dead, that He died for us, and because of that we should live unto Him. Notice that the emphasis in the scriptures we have been looking at is the change in the way you live. Before, you lived unto yourself, but now you live unto God. Before, when living unto yourself, all was vanity. Now, as you live unto God, you have as a reward eternal life. No longer is anything in vain. As you live in the natural, going your own way, though you accomplish much, it is all for naught. And as you live unto God, although you accomplish little, it is not in vain. This is the thing we must allow God to do-to recover us from our vain way of living as we begin to live unto God. And, although we may suffer the loss of all things, at least it won't be in vain. In the portion of scripture just quoted, we can see what this word reconciled means. It means to be recovered from the vain way of living, that you might

henceforth no longer live your life pleasing yourself, but that you might begin to live your life pleasing God. For if you do the will of God you will have not lived in vain.

In Galatians, chapter two, Paul is talking about those who try to show themselves to be righteous. In verse nineteen it says: 19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

So we see that the whole stress is to change our way of living so that we no longer live our life to the satisfying of ourselves and in pleasures, not that there is not pleasure in doing the will of God, but you cannot live in pleasure. It is not that you are going to suffer any worse consequences as a result of doing God's will than that of doing your own will, but you are going to stop being deceived into thinking that if you can have your way in the matter that that will be the best way. And this is, I believe, what Jesus went to the cross and died for, this is what He suffered for. It is not just, as we have thought in times past, that we might be saved, but it is that our way of living right now be changed, so that we are no longer serving self, no longer serving the creature, but we are now serving the Creator. And the reason He wants us to serve the Creator is not so that the Creator can be served, but so that the Creator can serve the creature. God knows that so long as the creature is working in his own behalf and trying to better himself, that he is actually failing. There is nothing possible that he can do for himself. He must be brought into that relationship with God where God himself is the one who serves him. (Ps. 127: 1)

Do you know that in going your own way you are cheating yourself? The more I try to save my life, the more I am losing it. (Matt. 16:25) The more I try to enjoy my life, and build something and make something out of my life, the further away I am getting from reality, and truth. Though I accomplish all my objectives, what is it in the end? Vanity. God sent his Son to die on the cross for us so that we might be recovered from that vain way of life. There is only one profit, and it is not under the sun, it is under God. We have got to come out from under the sun and get under God and when you do that you cease moving in the way of no profit, and start moving in the way of profit. There are some that think that gain is godliness, but God is teaching us that godliness with contentment is great gain. (I Tim. 6:6-7) All else is vanity and vexation of spirit.

First Corinthians 15, verse 58 reads: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Amen

THE LAW OF FAITH By Sam Fife

In this study we are going to share with you one of the greatest teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ on faith that is found in all the Bible. We will read from Mark 11: 12-24, then go back as the Spirit of God leads us and search out each wonderful truth.

Mark 11:12-24 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: [13] And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. [14] And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. [15] And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; [16] And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. [17] And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. [18] And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. [19] And when even was come, he went out of the city. [20] And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. [21] And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. [22] And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. [23] For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. [24] Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (the translation here does not make the past tense thought as clear as the original Greek. The original Greek reads, "Therefore I say unto you, ALL things whatsoever you desire when you pray, believe that you HAVE RECEIVED them and you shall have them.")

Now we are going to go back in order that we may lay a foundation and tell the story in our own words. One afternoon more than 1900 years ago, Jesus and his disciples were walking into the city of Jerusalem from the hills outside of Jerusalem to teach in the Temple.

Jesus was hungry. He saw the fig tree and He thought perhaps there might be figs on it. But then the time of figs was not yet. Jesus cursed the fig tree. He said to it, "You'll die, no man will ever eat fruit of you hereafter forever."

Then He walked on by it, into the city of Jerusalem. He cast the evil moneychangers out of the Temple and taught. there, Then that evening they came back out and spent the night in the hills outside of Jerusalem.

Then the next morning as they were passing by going back into the city, Peter saw that the fig tree Jesus cursed had really died. He said, "Look Master, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. "Then Jesus said, "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain be moved and doubt not in his heart that which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, ALL things whatsoever you desire when you pray, believe that you have received them and you shall have them."

The first thing that we want to see is the reason Jesus cursed the fig tree. It certainly was not because he was angry with it, because there were no figs on it. Our Lord never foolishly lost His temper like that. Besides, the Bible says the time of figs was not yet.

When I was a young seminarian, I was presented another view of why Jesus cursed this fig tree, a view that seemed very plausible and almost for some years made me miss the real truth that is here. That was the view that the fig tree was barren, therefore, a type of barren Israel. Jesus put the curse on it as a prophecy that Israel would be cursed by God.

I accepted this at that time. But I went back and studied the context of this Scripture. We find Jesus cursing the fig tree certainly had something to do with His teachings to His disciples on having faith in God, as it was used as an example, as a springboard from which He taught them to have faith in God.

This brings us to the real truth of why Jesus cursed the fig tree. He did it to show His disciples what

faith can do. He knew that it would be recorded in the Holy Word of God for every generation. He did it as the Spirit of God led Him, TO SHOW US ALSO what faith can do. He did it in order that He might show His disciples, by example, that there is a power that operates through faith that can cause a fig tree to die simply by one who has the faith, speaking the word of faith. It was for this reason he demonstrated to them what He was going to teach them the next day with words - the power that is ours through faith.

The second thing that we want to see is the way Jesus cursed this fig tree. He said to it, no man will eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever, Now the fig tree did not die as soon as Jesus put the curse on it. If it had, Peter would have seen that it was dead right then. But Peter did not notice that it was dead until the next morning when they were passing by. It died sometime during the night. When Jesus walked away from that fig tree, the leaves on it were just as green as they were before He spoke the words which put the curse on it. Nevertheless, it was a dead fig tree because Jesus had believed it was done in His heart. Because Jesus had done what He taught His disciples the next day to do. He had believed He had received it, and therefore, it was done. This is God's definition of faith: believing that you have received something BEFORE you have received it. It does not take faith to believe you have received it after you have received it. We will have more to say about that in a moment.

Thirdly, I would like for you to see the simplicity in the faith of Jesus. He looked at the fig tree, and He talked to it just like He might be talking to a person. He spoke to the fig tree, He said, "You will die." In simple faith, He spoke the WORD OF FAITH. So we see the childlike simplicity of the faith of Jesus, and we begin to learn a little bit of the secret as to the power of Jesus and the reason for it. We begin to learn a little bit of what He meant when He said to us, "Except ye become converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

Now if someone were to see me talking to a fig tree today, right away they would want to call the paddy wagon to come with a straight jacket and haul me away. That is because a thing called "Simplicity - childlikeness" has come into disrepute in our sophisticated world today, and a thing called sophistication has become the god of humanity today. It is when we come back to the simple childlike faith that enabled Jesus to look at that fig tree, and in simple faith speak to it, talk to it, speak the word of faith as He said to it, "You'll die. No man will ever eat fruit of you hereafter forever," that we too will begin once again to see the power of God. It will be when we become converted and become like little children, with that simple childlike, unsophisticated faith that He had in His Father, that we'll begin to see the power and the glory of God again in the world.

So Jesus cursed the fig tree. He walked away as the leaves were still green; it died sometime during the night. He went on into the city of Jerusalem. He taught in the temple after casting out the moneychangers. Then they went back and spent the night in the hills outside Jerusalem.

The next morning as they came by, Peter saw that fig tree had really died. Like most people when they see a miracle, Peter was astonished. He cried, "Look Master, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

Then Jesus carried out the rest of His plan. He began to teach them with words what He had already shown them by example - the power of faith. He said, "Yes Peter, have faith in God." In other words, He said, "Peter, I did this to teach you, to show you what faith in God can do." Then He tells us in His next words what faith can do, the kind of faith God wants us to have.

In His next words He says, "For verily I say unto you," that word "verily," beloved, means truly or of a truth. It emphasizes to us the fact that Jesus was about to reveal something that is absolutely true. "For truly I say unto you, whosoever shall say unto this mountain be moved, and doubt not in his heart it shall come to pass." Now that word "whosoever" means YOU, dear friend. That word "whosoever" includes you sick person. No matter how little you are, no matter how sick you are, no matter how the enemy has beat you down, Jesus is speaking to you when He says whosoever. Whosoever does not just mean the apostles. Whosoever does not mean the first century Christians. Whosoever does not just mean the priest or the preacher. Whosoever means YOU.

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain." Now He was talking about a literal rock and dirt mountain. Sometimes we try to spiritualize this verse, but Jesus was talking about a literal rock and dirt

mountain, because He was standing on the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem. He did not say "Whosoever shall say unto a mountain;" He said, "Whosoever shall say unto THIS mountain be moved, and doubt not in his heart, it shall be done unto him."

If I were to say to YOU that it is possible for YOU to speak to a mountain, and command it to be moved and rise up and float into the sea, and if you did not doubt in your heart that it will come to pass and see it done, everything within you would probably cry out, "Oh no, not me!" But you would be wrong, because Jesus Christ the Son of God said, "Whosoever." You see, Jesus took the biggest thing that He could think of, a mountain, and He stuck it before us and He said, this is what faith can do. Then in His next words He gives the key, when He says: "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain be moved, and doubt not in his heart that that which He saith shall come to pass." THE KEY IS DOUBTING NOT IN YOUR HEART, in our inner being, in that part of our being which our psychiatrists call our subconscious mind. When we speak the word of faith, whether it be for the moving of a mountain or whether it be for the moving of the mountains that stand in our way in our lives, and doubt not in our heart, Jesus said, "IT SHALL COME TO PASS."

Now, "shall come to pass" does not necessarily denote right now. This is the problem with so many people. They pray, and if their prayer is not answered immediately then they begin to doubt in their heart. Then they get discouraged, and then they give up. They are defeated and when they do not get the answer to their prayer they think there is something wrong with God or God's word. But you see, "shall come to pass" can denote one minute from now, one hour from now or one week from now. We leave the time element in God's hands. The believing element is in our hands.

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say unto the mountain be moved, and doubt not in his heart that that which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." Notice the last words of this verse, "He shall have whatsoever he saith." This is the Son of God speaking. It is not maybe, not possibly, but HE SHALL HAVE WHATSOEVER HE SAITH.

In Jesus' taking the biggest thing that He could think of, a mountain, He has set it before us as our potential, our goal. He said, "This is what the power of faith can do." Beloved, we only have to believe there is a power that emanates forth from the nature of God that operates when we believe.

We do not have to do anything, all we have to do is believe and doubt not in our heart. When we do, the power that comes forth from the nature of God will move the mountain, will bring the answer. Now possibly you do not have the faith to move a mountain right now. That is well and good because there is no value in moving mountains anyway, for the sake of moving mountains. Jesus did not give us this great truth just so that we would go around moving mountains.

I remember well some years ago as I was pastoring in the city of New Orleans. One of the deacons of the church called me one night from the Charity Hospital in that city. He was standing at the bedside of his niece, she was a young girl of about 20 years old. The doctors had just told her mother that they must give her up, there was nothing more that they could do for her. She would be dead before morning. It was about midnight then. He asked if I would come down to the hospital and pray for her. Of course, I said I would. This young woman lived about 100 miles from the city of New Orleans.

Her story was that she had been going with a young man and had gotten with child out of wedlock. Filled with fear she had gone to an abortionist to have an abortion performed. The abortionist had botched the job, gangrene had set in by the time her mother had finally discovered the case and brought her to the hospital in New Orleans. It was too late for the doctors to do anything for her. She had been in a coma for some time when I was called. The doctors had said she would be dead before morning.

I drove to the hospital, and I walked to the emergency room where the young woman was laying in a coma with her mother standing by her side, and walked in. There was also a minister there from the town in which the young woman lived. (The pastor of the church her mother attended.) I walked up to the young woman's bedside, and I laid my Bible on her head as an act of faith. I looked up to my Father in Heaven and said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, she is healed from this moment forth. I believe that I have received it." And I turned around and walked out of the room.

The minister that was there followed me out of the room quite visibly upset. He said to me, "You should not pray like that. You should not give that mother false hope. You should pray for God to heal her if it be Thy will." I said, "God did not tell me to pray if it be Thy will. Jesus told me when I pray, believe I

have received it." I went on to explain to him that Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be moved, and doubt not in his heart that that which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." Then he said to me very wisely, "Oh, but you are not moving any mountains." I said, "No, that's true. I'm not moving any mountains, neither did Jesus go around moving mountains but He got a lot of sick people healed. He got a lot of blind eyes opened. He got a lot of deaf ears unstopped."

You see, there is no value in moving mountains, beloved. Jesus did not give us this teaching so we would go around trying to move mountains. He did it to show us what faith can do. Though you may not have the faith to move a mountain right now, if you will make that your goal, and strive toward that kind of faith, you'll move a lot of little mountains out of your life on the way up to that goal. Three days after I prayed for this young woman that night, she was sitting up in a wheel chair in the hospital. Three weeks later I was called to go to the hospital to bid her good-bye. She stood beside her bed and bid me good-bye, she was completely healed and on her way home.

There is no sickness that is so great that the same power with which Jesus killed that fig tree, by the speaking of the word of faith cannot heal it. There is no person who is so sick or so small that they cannot believe and take authority over that sickness, through the word of faith as Jesus spoke it, and see it healed. He said, "ALL things whatsoever ye desire when you pray at the time that you pray, believe that you have received them." Do not believe that you will receive them or hope that you might receive them later on, or think that you might receive them. Jesus said that when you get done praying, believe it is done, even though it does not appear to be done because you see, that is God's definition of faith – believing you've got something when you haven't got it yet. If you have it already, it does not take faith to believe you have it. If you can see it coming to you, it does not take real faith to believe it is coming. But to believe you have it before you have it, to believe that you have received it when you get done praying is God's definition of faith. This is what Jesus did with the fig tree. He spoke the word of faith. When He walked away from the fig tree, the leaves were just as green as before He spoke the word, but the thing was done. The fig tree was dead because Jesus had believed, He had received it.

I shall never forget when God taught me this great truth. As a minister up until a few years ago, I had had stomach ulcers for 15 years. Every night of my life for those 15 years, I had to walk the floor in tremendous pain for two and sometimes three or four hours a night. Sometimes I would lay down and roll on the floor to try to get relief. Many people have stomach ulcers where they can eat light foods and get along. Mine were much worse than that. I could not eat any kind of food or drink a glass of milk even without it throwing me into tremendous pain. The doctors had long since given up hope of "healing" me. They told me I would just have to learn to live with it.

As a minister, I had prayed many times over the years for God to heal my stomach ulcers - if it be His will - to no result. Then one morning several years ago, I was sitting in the sanctuary of my church studying the Bible, I came to this verse of Scripture where Jesus said, "All things whatsoever ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them."

Suddenly the Lord spoke two things to me from that verse.

First, He said "all" things certainly included the healing of my stomach ulcers. Then He showed me the key to prayer that I had never seen before that Jesus taught, "When you pray, when you finish praying, believe you have received it." When I saw that, I knelt in the sanctuary of the church, I laid my hand on my stomach and I prayed, "Lord, from this moment forth I believe these stomach ulcers are healed". I rose up believing that it was done.

It certainly did not appear to be done for I still had the same pains every night after that for the next month. They even got worse, but the worse they got, the more I realized the devil was only trying to make me doubt in my heart. The more the Spirit of God reminded me of the words of Jesus, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and shall not doubt in his heart," the more I believed. One month later I went to bed and slept all night without a pain for the first time in 15 years. I was healed of those stomach ulcers, and I have never had a pain from them since,

Healing by the power of God in the name of Jesus through the prayer of faith is just as scientific as any science that we have in the earth today. For you see, when Jesus said, "That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith," He was not

revealing any promise that originated with Him. He was simply revealing and unveiling God's great LAW OF FAITH which has been in the world since time began waiting for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to come and unveil it for mankind.

The reason doctors can help people to get healed is not because they have any power of their own, but because they have discovered certain divine laws which God set in the earth when He instituted the earth. There is a law that says if one kidney stops functioning the doctor can operate and take it out, the other kidney will take up its function beginning to do its work. The person can go on living normally. The doctors did not make this true, they only discovered that it was true. It had been true, a law of God since time began.

There is another law that says if you inject a certain drug into the blood stream, your nervous system will react in a certain way and pain will stop. Again the doctors did not make it true, they only discovered that it was true.

When Mr. Wright flew the airplane some 60 years ago, he did it because he discovered a law that said when the propeller turned up at the right amount of revolutions, the plane would stay in the air. Mr. Wright did not make it true. He only discovered that it was true. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and doubt not in his heart that which he saith shall come to pass," He did not make it true. He was only revealing to us God's highest law - the law of faith. This is God's highest law. The law of faith is the highest law of God because its supersedes and overrules and makes all the lesser laws obsolete.

The kidney law can only make the kidney functions The drug law can only stop pain. The airplane law can only fly the airplane. But, the law of faith is all-inclusive. It can heal the kidney, stop the pain, and fly the airplane. Of this law Jesus said, "ALL things unto the moving of a mountain, whatsoever ye desire when you pray, believe that ye have receive them and ye shall have them."

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible unto you". The, simple truth is, when God made this world He instituted it on many divine laws. There are many different kinds of God's laws. There are physical laws, technical laws, scientific laws, spiritual laws, medicinal laws, etc.

All of you have read the story in the Bible of Peter walking upon the water that night long ago. Few have seen just how'he did it. Peter walked upon the water that night because he met the condition of God's highest law, the law of faith. As Jesus stood upon the water, He inspired Peter to meet the condition of God's highest law, the law of faith. The story goes that Peter saw Jesus standing on the water. He said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee." Jesus said, "Peter, come, you can do it too." Peter stepped out on the water, and began to walk.

Now there were lesser laws of God that said Peter was supposed, to sink when he stepped on that water, the law of gravity, the law of density, all the scientific laws which are merely laws of God. But, inspired by Jesus, Peter appealed to the supreme court which overruled and superseded the law of gravity and all the lesser laws and enabled Peter to walk upon that water. But only as long as he was meeting the condition of the law of faith, because you will remember the record reads that he was walking on top of the water, but then it says when he saw the wind boisterous, he became afraid. He began to sink, When fear replaced faith in his heart, the condition of God's law of faith was no longer met, therefore, Peter began to sink.

So we see that Jesus came to reveal to us God's great law of faith by which we can receive the power and the blessing of God. Jesus comes into our hearts today to teach us, to reveal to us, God's great law of faith - how to meet its conditions with the words, "When you pray, believe that you have received them and ye shall have them."

The reason Jesus died on Calvary's cross was to shed His blood to cleanse us of our sins so that the Holy Spirit could enter into us. The Bible says, "When the other comforter comes, he will lead you into all truths", or reveal to us God's great laws of faith inspiring us to meet their conditions that we can believe we have received it and receive it unto the moving of a mountain.

Now when Mr. Wright flew the airplane for the first time some sixty years ago, the record tells us that he was only able to fly it about 1100 feet and only got it about 4 feet off the ground the first time. This was because his knowledge of the law which caused the airplane to fly and his confidence in that law was very small at that time. But as men's understanding and knowledge of the laws by which the airplane can fly

increased, their confidence in those laws have increased. They have placed bigger and bigger planes higher and higher in the air until now they are sending space ships into outerspace.

Even so, the reason we see so few miracles in the Christians and in the church today is because the knowledge of the people of God concerning God's great law of faith and their confidence in that law is very small. But as the Spirit of God is poured out, and as the truth of God is poured out, God's people's knowledge of the divine law of faith and their confidence in that law increases, you will see greater and bigger and more powerful miracles. You will then see people when they pray not begging God to answer their prayer, not pleading with God but doing what Jesus said, speaking the word of faith and believing they have received it, doubting not in their heart that it will come to pass, and they shall have it.

No matter what your sickness is, dear, no matter how serious it is, the law of faith is all sufficient to get you healed. All you have to do is pray the prayer of faith and believe that you have received it doubting not in your heart that it shall come to pass day by day until it manifests itself, and **YOU SHALL RECEIVE IT.**

I will never forget some years ago, I was preaching on the radio in New Orleans from this passage of scripture. I closed my sermon saying to the people in the radio audience, "I should like to pray with you the prayer of faith for your healing. As we bow our heads and pray together, I'm going to believe I have received it, and if **YOU** believe you have received it and you did not get healed, then the stars would fall out of Heaven because Jesus Christ would have told a lie. "A week or so after that a young cab driver stopped by my home in his taxi. He told me he had been driving down the road in his taxi cab listening to my radio broadcast. He had been suffering with diabetes for years. He said. "As you spoke those words- if you believe you have received it and you do not get healed then the stars would fall out of Heaven because Jesus Christ would have told a lie- those words gave me the faith to believe God for my healing. "God was healing him and so He will you, dear friend. Believe you have received it, and you shall have it. May God help each one of you who are sick, who read this, no matter how serious your sickness is, to start today and speak to the mountain, speak the word of faith, believe you have received it and doubt not in your heart day by day until it come to pass, you shall receive what you have asked for

Do not consider that because your sickness is very serious that God's law of faith is not sufficient to meet your need. Sometimes we think to ourselves, well God could heal a headache, and would heal a headache but I have cancer or I have Leukemia, we doubt that God can heal that. But you see, beloved, God is omnipotent and all powerful, a cancer is no bigger to Him than a pain in your big toe. It is only in our consciousness and in our minds that one of these things is more serious and bigger than another; it is not so in the mind of God. God can heal your cancer just as easily as He can heal your headache or the pain in your big toe because in His mind one is no bigger than the other. A flick of the finger of God can heal one as He can the other. So do not say in your heart, "My sickness is too serious, or I am too crippled, or I am too afflicted." You can start believing today, and doubt not in your heart that it shall come to pass no matter how long it takes, believing God daily will move that mountain, and your sickness will be healed.

May God help each one of you to take your faith that is in the name of Jesus and through the operation of God's great law of faith, rise up against whatever particular sickness or whatever burden you have, command the mountain to be moved, and then begin your day by day battle. You see, the fight begins **AFTER** you have spoken the word of faith. Jesus said to command the mountain to be moved and then doubt not in your heart until it comes to pass. **THEN** is when you really begin to believe. **THEN** is when you begin to battle the powers of the enemy, daily affirming and doubting not in your heart that it is done until it comes to pass. Your sickness will be healed, and your need shall be met.

May God help you to rise up and claim it, in Jesus name. Amen

The next study "HOW TO GROW IN FAITH" is of great importance as the following step in this study.

HOW TO GROW IN FAITH By Sam Fife

This study is given for those who at the time they enter into a faith battle perhaps do not quite have enough faith to win the victory right away. As they learn there scriptural the teachings on how to increase their faith day by day, they can hasten victory in the particular faith battle that they are in.

Our scripture text is found in Luke 17:

5- And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. [6]And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. [7] But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? [8] And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? [9] Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. [10] So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

There are certain divine principles that are revealed to us in scripture which are principles through which we can increase our faith daily. We are going to talk about five of them in this message

RIGHT ATTITUDE

The first one has to do with our attitude. Our attitude with which we go about seeking an increase in faith, this is the foundation upon which we must build.

Too many people do not have great faith because of their wrong attitude. You will notice in our scripture text that the apostles came to Jesus and said, " Lord, increase our faith."

They had recognized their need for more faith. This is one of the most important steps as far as attitude is concerned in order to grow in faith. We must recognize that we do not have all we need and that we do need more

You see, when the apostles met Jesus, they thought they had about as much Faith as any other man, all that was necessary. They had no desire for an increase. But when they walked with Jesus, they saw what He did, through prayer. The blind eye were opened, the deaf ears, were unstopped, the lame walked. They suddenly began to realize that they needed to pray with more faith. They had a change of attitude and so they began to desire more faith.

Then on their second step they made a mistake. The same mistake that most people make today. These apostles came to Jesus and said, "Lord, you increase our faith. We do not want to have to do anything. We do not want you to do anything in us. We just want you to give us more faith." This is the way most Christians feel today. "Lord, YOU give us more faith." They want God to hand them more faith, and therefore, more power on a silver platter so that they can have more blessings. They want to come to Jesus but they do not want to do anything themselves. They just want to say, "Jesus, you give me more faith, Lord, you increase my faith. Lord, you do it all". This was the attitude of the apostles and, this is the attitude of most Christians. It is something that must be dealt with severely, in order for us to grow in faith. And Jesus dealt with this attitude severely. He answered them with a parable

He said "Which one of you who has a servant, when he comes home from the field after plowing all day, tired, will say to him, You have done enough for one day. You do not have to work anymore. Sit down and rest. I'll gird myself and feed you." Jesus said, "No, you do not say that to him. On the contrary, you say 'You still have not done enough, your day's work is not finished. There is more yet for you to do. Gird yourself and let me sit down, and you feed me supper.' " Jesus said to his disciples, "Even so if you have even more faith when you have done all that is commanded you, still say, I am an unprofitable servant."

What Jesus was saying is if you want more faith, do not take this attitude that you have done enough, that you need not do anymore. Jesus was saying, these who would have great faith are those who will take the attitude, will always have the attitude, "I am still an unprofitable servant. I need to become more profitable for my God." That person, Jesus says, will grow in faith. This is very true.

Most of us when we have kept a certain little set of moral rules take the attitude, "Well, I have done enough." We swell up and puff up in pride. We take the attitude we are very profitable servants of God. Then when we do not have great faith and see the power of God in our lives, we fail to recognize that it is because we are yet unprofitable servants. We think there is something wrong with God or with His Word.

In order to grow in faith, we need to deal with this attitude of spiritual laziness that most have. This is the attitude that says, "Well, I'm a good Christian. I'm a profitable servant. Surely God ought to do this for me if He is going to do anything for anybody." "We need to deal with this attitude that says, "Lord, you increase our faith," then wanting God to do something for us, not wanting Him to work anything in us. This will never produce great faith. We must come to God with the attitude of recognition that we need Him to work in us, to build faith, and we must seek God more. We must pray more. We must commune more with God. As we do these things, we will grow in faith. No one who comes to God with the attitude in which the apostle came, ("Lord, give me more faith, I don't want you to work anything in me, just hand it to me on a silver platter.") will grow in faith. But let us rather see our need to seek God more, to pray more, to read God's Word more, to commune more with God. Let us always have that attitude, for it is that person, Jesus says, who will grow in faith.

FEED UPON THE WORD OF GOD

When we have dealt with the wrong attitude and turned ourselves to the right attitude concerning this matter, there are certain principles that are revealed in the scriptures which can help us grow in faith.

The first one is found in Romans 10:17. "So then faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the Word of God." We grow in faith by feeding upon the Word of God. Whether it be by hearing it while it is being preached by someone else, whether it be by reading it ourselves, whether it be by discussing it with others, makes no difference. However, the Word of God enters into our hearts, it becomes food for our soul and for our spirit. And we grow strong as a result of it.

Jesus said to Satan during the great temptation in the wilderness, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth out of the mouth of God." Here Jesus was saying that man can not have life by the material bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth out of the mouth of God. Jesus was quoting to Satan a verse from Deuteronomy 8:2 in the Old Testament. God was speaking through Moses to the children of Israel in the wilderness and said, "I humbled you and suffered you to hunger, and tested you, that I might make you to know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth from the mouth of God."

Bread as it was used by Moses and by Jesus was symbolic of everything that is material. God was saying that man must come to know that life does not come by the material bread, the material things alone. Man also must have the Word of God in order to live and have life. This is because man is not just a material physical being. Man is also a spiritual being. Material bread can suffice for the physical part of man's being. But a man must also have spiritual bread, the Word of God, in order for the spiritual part of man's being, man's spirit, to be strong in faith.

Through the eating of physical bread, man can grow stronger physically, and his body can grow stronger. But he must also feed upon the spiritual bread in order to be strong spiritually or strong in faith. The two parts of man's nature must be satisfied, the two needs must be met. The physical bread cannot meet the needs of the spirit, only the spiritual bread can do that.

We know what would happen if we stopped eating physical bread. Our physical body would become so weak it would not be able to stand. If you do not eat your dinner tonight, your physical body would be much weaker than it would have been if you had eaten it. If you miss your breakfast the next morning, it will be much weaker. If you go on this way, your physical body become so weak it could not stand.

Even so, every spiritual meal a Christian misses, causes him to grow weaker spiritually. This is why so many are so spiritually weak and so weak in faith.

They have not fed their spirits on the Word of God. We can only be spiritually strong if we are fed on the spiritual food, the Word of God. Only then can we have life, peace, joy, happiness, faith and power.

It is a sad commentary that every Christian eats 3 meals a day because he knows that he must do so in order to keep his body strong physically, but they eat only one spiritual meal a week when they go to church on Sunday morning

Many Christians do not even get that. No wonder they are soon spiritually weak. No wonder they do not have faith. No wonder they get sick and cannot get healed. It is because they do not hear, read and feed upon the Word of God.

If you would be strong in faith, eat 3 spiritual meals a day. Read your Bible 3 times everyday. It does not matter if you do not understand it all. The Spirit of God will make it food for your soul. Hear as many sermons as possible preached by those who are anointed of God and called to feed God's people. Go to church as many times as you can when the Word of God is being ministered so that you can be fed. Read as much good faith literature as possible, coming from the Word of God. In doing so, you will be feeding your spirit on the Bread of Life and your faith will automatically increase as a result of it. If you pour positive truth from God's Word and from good literature written by anointed servants of God who speak and preach positive truths into your hearts, and your subconscious, faith will automatically grow so that you will begin to see the power of God in your life. It is an absolute, scientific principle that if you don't hear the Word of God or read it, if you don't feed your spirit on the Word of God, you will be spiritually weak, comparable to the person who ceases to eat physical food to the point where their physical bodies drop over and are not longer able to stand.

ASSOCIATE WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

A third principle that is of extreme value in growing in faith is to be particular concerning our associations. If we are seeking to grow in faith, and all or the majority of our associations are with people who have no faith, who do not believe in the Lord Jesus, who do not believe God's Word, who do not talk faith, whose conversation is always worldly, it will be twice, yea, ten times as hard for us to grow in faith as it will be if we associate only with those who have, know and talk faith, who believe the truth, who are positive in their attitude toward God, toward His Word, toward the power that is in the name of Jesus.

The Bible says, "No man liveth unto himself." It is impossible for us to live unto ourselves. It is impossible for us to keep other people from affecting us either positively or negatively. We as human beings in our associations with one another, without ever trying, will affect one another by lifting one another or dragging one another down. We will either be lifted up or drug down negatively.

"No man liveth unto himself."

We are affected by our associations with others, by their conversation, by their actions whether we like it or not, whether we want to be or not. We will be affected unless we put forth an effort to see that we are affected positively.

Otherwise, we will certainly be affected negatively, and our faith will be dragged down.

Let me give you a little illustration. The wife wakes up early in the morning feeling full of joy, but then the husband comes to the breakfast table and sticks his face out from behind the newspaper and looks sour upon the whole world. Immediately she is drug down in her spirit. He has affected her negatively. He doesn't have to say a word, he just has to be there. Unless she is prepared to resist his negative attitude, to recognize it, and turn herself away from it, it will affect her negatively and drag her down.

As a minister, often I have seen the church congregation come in on Sunday morning. Many people will be filled with joy, faith, and peace with God. But then four or five people come in whom the devil has been deceiving, and a husband and a wife had been arguing. Their faces would be all sour and so would their attitude. Before you know it, the spiritual atmosphere in the whole congregation would be drug down to the point where every one felt it and every body is affected.

Let me repeat: In our associations, we will either be lifted up in faith or be drug down in faith. Therefore, when we are seeking to grow in faith, we should separate ourselves when possible from all people who are negative in their attitude toward God and separate ourselves unto those who are positive in their attitude toward God. If we do, we will increase in faith.

If we have not become strong enough ourselves to associate with those negative-minded people yet, separate ourselves in the spirit so that their negativism does not affect us as some of us who are stronger Christians can do, then we should try to separate ourselves from them physically when possible. We should try to have no associations with them whatsoever. This is very important particularly for someone in a faith battle to receive healing or to win a victory in faith.

ASSOCIATE WITH POSITIVE THINGS

If we are seeking to grow in faith, we should be careful of our associations with our so-called pleasures and amusements. So few people know that reading magazines, or having an unhealthy interest in the daily newspaper and most certainly television are adverse negative forces in the world that can drag our faith down and keep us from growing in faith.

Most of what is presented in the newspapers is negativism. Most of what is presented on television is negativism. Most of what is presented in most magazines of our world today is negative thoughts and ideas. We pick up the newspaper and read of wars, murders and strife. There is continual strife between individuals, nations, politicians. There is nothing but negativism, and more negativism. So it presents to our subconsciousness nothing but the idea that the world is in a hopeless condition and that there is nothing that even God or anyone else can do about it. It is a drag upon our faith. When we subject ourselves to this day after day, it will definitely hinder greatly our growth in faith. If we shut out those things, if we allow only those that are positive to enter into our subconsciousness, only the literature that is positive, if we can even separate ourselves from reading the daily paper, from the great amount of negativism that it contains, we will increase in faith. If we do not do these things we will not be able to increase in faith.

Dear Christian friends, all the devil wants from you is YOUR TIME. He does not particularly care whether he has you engrossed in deep sin or not. He does not particularly care whether you spend your time in the bar room or not. He does not even particularly care whether you engage in adultery, murder, thievery, etc. if he can just get your time, doing seemingly harmless things which are not positive, which are not faith building, which are not feeding your spirit (reading negative magazines, watching television day after day, wasting your time in things that do not edify or build you up spiritually) he does not care if you ever commit terrible sin or not. He has you exactly where he wants you. He can make you sick and keep you sick. He can make you suffer and keep your body suffering. He can rob you of all faith let alone from growing in faith.

If you want to grow in faith, you must learn to redeem your time. You must learn to spend more time in those things and those activities which are positive, which build you up spiritually. You must separate yourself from those negative activities which tear down.

Idle conversation with friends is one of the devil's greatest weapons to rob Christians of their power and to keep them from growing in faith. Jesus said in His Word that we will give an account of every idle word. He did not mean to imply that someday, way out in the future in some far off heaven, God will say, you spoke so many idle words, give an account of it."

Jesus meant that every hour that could be spent in positive activities which build faith in us and therefore build the power of God in our life we will have to give an account for. Every one of these idle words through suffering by lack of faith, through lack of power, through pain and sickness, through all those things which we suffer here in the earth as a result of having no faith and no power with God.

So if we would have great faith, we must pour into our consciousness, only that which is positive and shut out all that is negative. A wise man once said, "I consider my mind a store house, and if I put in it that only which is good, then when I need that which is good I can go to it and draw out only that which is good." Indeed this is a wise man.

EXERCISE THAT WHICH YOU HAVE

The next and last great principle we'll consider on how to grow in faith is the divine law of using what you have, and it will bring more. This law is expressed to us in many ways in the scriptures.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:29, "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The more we have and the more we use, the more it will bring to us. Invest what you have, and it will bring you more.

There is a divine law revealed to us in nature. A great key to truth is given to us in Romans 1:20. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." The invisible truths of God have been before us since the foundation of the world being seen in things that are visible. Here the Bible tells us that the hidden things of God, the truths of God have always been visible before us since the world began. They are visible in things that are made, in things that we call nature.

God in His wisdom before the world was, foreknowing all things, made visible things of nature symbols of the great spiritual truths of God. This is why the Bible uses water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and a serpent a symbol of the devil and a seed for the Word of God. This is not because the Spirit who inspired and authored the scriptures simply decided to use these as symbols, but because the Spirit of God who knows and searches the deep things of God knew that God made natural laws symbols of spiritual laws. God made all visible things symbolic of spiritual truths. This is why Jesus was always drawing upon nature to teach truth. He did this not because He just wanted to use these things of nature as parables or illustrations. He knew the principles in nature were divine, irrevocable principles which reveal divine, irrevocable spiritual laws.

There is one principle in the natural physical realm which reveals a great spiritual law. This is the principle of exercise. The more we exercise our physical muscles, the stronger they get. The less we use them, the weaker they become. We all know this.

Let anyone of us lay down in bed and not move for three weeks Our physical muscles would become so weak that we would not be able to stand at the end of that time. This is because we did not use them, and they have grown weak. On the other hand, those young men who use the barbell and lifting weights continually exercising their physical muscles day by day, grow stronger physically. Their physical muscles grow stronger and stronger. It is a divine principle in the realm of the spiritual. The more we exercise our spiritual senses, the more we use what we have, the stronger they become. Use what you have, and you will receive more. The less we exercise our spiritual senses (those senses by which we believe) the weaker they become.

This is why so many Christians in the world today are so weak spiritually. They have not exercised their spiritual senses. They have not gotten in the battle for God. This is one of the greatest ways to get spiritual exercise. These Christians have not read the Word, have not prayed, have not communed with God. They have become so weak through plain lack of exercise that they have no faith, no strength, and no power.

The Bible makes It clear that spiritual exercise is very profitable. The apostle Paul wrote to his young son in the faith Timothy, "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that is now, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." (1 Tim. 4:7-9)"

In the book of Hebrews the 5th chapter, the last verse says 'But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'

So it is absolute divine principle that if we start using the faith that we have it will grow stronger. It makes no difference how weak a person has become in the physical. If he starts exercising his muscles, they will grow stronger. As we pointed out earlier, we can lay on a bed three weeks and not use our physical muscles. They will become so weak that we can not move. But, as soon as we rise up and start exercising, no matter how weak they have become, they will begin to grow stronger. Even so with our spiritual senses, no matter how weak they have become, the day that we start to use them and exercise them, they will grow stronger. The more we use the faith that we have, the stronger it will get.

Some time ago a man came to me with a serious need for healing. At the point where he came to me, he belonged to a church that did not believe God heals today. They did not preach or emphasize healing through faith. Therefore, he did not have the faith he needed to be healed. He had a disc that had dissolved in his back. His doctor said there was no way to replace it. He was in tremendous pain continually. The doctor told him he would have to learn to live with it.

I took him to the Bible and showed him that God's law of faith was sufficient to replace the disc in his back, and give him a new one. Knowing that he did not have the required amount of faith to perform this miracle, I challenged him. I said, "If you will kneel by your bedside one hour every day or night whenever you have time, just kneel there believing that because you are kneeling there believing, God will heal your back. Do this until the healing comes. I will guarantee and stake my life that the healing will come. You do not have to say a word, just kneel there believing that you have received it. Start with the faith that you have right now. Kneel there one hour every day believing by faith that because you are kneeling there and believing, God will give you a new disc in your back, and do it until it comes. I will guarantee you, it will come."

You see, I was working upon God's divine law. I know that this man did not have the required amount of faith for the healing at this time. But, I knew that if he exercised his spiritual senses one hour every day and if he took the faith that he did have and began to use it, exercising his power to believe one hour every day, his power would increase, and he would reach the required amount of faith needed for healing. Then the healing would come.

It is God's divine law, and it cannot be broken. Exercise your spiritual senses, and they will grow. There is no person who is so sick that he cannot be healed through faith. There is none anywhere so crippled that their healing cannot come. There is no affliction so serious it cannot be healed. There is no person who does not have enough faith at any point to begin their faith battle, and use the faith that they have. If they do, the more they use it the more their faith will increase until healing comes.

Romans 12:3 says, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith".

Every one has a measure of faith. If he takes what he has and begins using it daily (let me speak very plainly to you, dear friend) no matter how afflicted you are, no matter how handicapped you are, no matter if you sit in a wheelchair and cannot stand, if you will spend one hour every day believing that because you are believing, God will heal you, and that God is healing you, that the work is done, then every hour that you spend exercising your spiritual ability to believe this way, your faith will increase day by day, hour by hour until the healing comes. Remember to follow the other principles that we have revealed here: **THE RIGHT ATTITUDE, FEED UPON GOD'S WORD, associate yourself with POSITIVE PEOPLE AND POSITIVE THINGS.** Especially if you do these things you shall be healed, in Jesus name. Amen.

THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING by SAM FIFE

In this study we will share with you one of the greatest truths in the Bible, and the revelation of one of the mighty laws of the kingdom of God, spiritual laws of the kingdom of God. If you will turn with us in your bible to the sixth chapter of Galatians and beginning with the seventh verse. The Spirit speaks through the Apostle Paul and says;

Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

One of the first things we would like to show you about this statement of the apostle Paul is that here Paul was speaking to Christians, not to the lost people. Paul says to Christians; "You will reap what you sow." The Spirit says to Christians, be not deceived into thinking that just because you are saved and have accepted Jesus Christ as your saviour, and because Christ died to pay for your sins, that we can escape the reaping of what we sow.

Jesus did not die on the cross to enable us to escape the responsibility of keeping God's laws. He died on the cross, and shed His blood to atone for our sins, to enable us to escape the penalty of God's law and make us clean vessels so that the Holy Spirit could enter into us and give us the power to keep God's law. Jesus did not die on the cross to enable us to escape the results of our sowing, He died to enable us to sow aright and fulfill the law of God.

Paul says to Christians here, "Be not deceived." Be not deceived into thinking that just because you are Christians you can escape the results of your sowing. Many Christians today are deceived into thinking that because Christ kept the law of God perfectly for us and shed His blood to enable us to escape the penalty of our sins, they are deceived into thinking that they can go on sowing wrongly and escape the result of their wrong sowing.

Paul pleaded with the Christians of his day, not to be deceived into this kind of thinking. He made it very clear to Christians, "Whatsoever you sow, so shall you also reap." He made it very clear in his own church that if you sow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption.

It does not make any difference if you are a Christian, or any difference if you are saved, or that you are cleansed of past, present or future sins in the eyes of God through the blood of Jesus, still Paul says, "If you sow to the flesh, you shall still reap the results of your sowing".

There is a theology in the earth, and that is that since Christ atoned for our sins, then it does not matter very much whether we sow aright or not. That since God will forgive all our sins that we don't have to be too concerned about this matter of right sowing.

The simple truth is that even though it is true that Jesus' shed blood enables us to escape any condemnation from God and any penalty of our sins, nevertheless, we will still reap the results of our sowing, right here on earth, if we go on sowing wrongly.

This is why Christians still suffer, and are still sick, confused, defeated in their lives. Simply because they have failed to see that though we have accepted the shed blood of Jesus to enable us to escape the penalty of sin, still we will reap the results of our wrong sowing, if we go on sowing wrongly. Sowing to the flesh, we will yet of the flesh reap corruption, and that is exactly what is happening in the Christian church today.

The Apostle Paul says by the Spirit: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." How foolish we are! How deceived we are! To think that just because we are Christians we can go on breaking God's divine laws, ignoring God's divine laws, failing to keep God's divine laws, and not reap the results of the sowing. God's Word is His law. Because God is perfection, His law is perfect and does not break at any point.

When God speaks a word it becomes absolute law, it emanates forth from His nature as a divine law. Though God Himself will always forgive us, and never hold sin against us, through the blood of Jesus, yet it is still true that we can only come to our heaven, and we can only experience the blessing of God's kingdom fully, by rising to the point in the Spirit where we are fulfilling those laws perfectly.

When the law of God says that the condition of God's law of faith must be met, that one must believe that it is done before he is going to receive a healing from God, before a lame leg is going to be made to walk, or a

cancer is going to be put away, or before anything else is going to be healed, one is very foolish to imagine that God's law is going to be mocked and that God is going to make some special arrangement by which they can receive God's blessing without meeting the condition of the law.

When the laws of God's kingdom say that one can only attain to the law of faith and walk in the law of faith by first keeping the lesser laws, by being full of faith and faithful in the little things, such as walking in love, turning the other cheek, being meek in the Spirit. One is very foolish to imagine that God is going to be mocked and is going to make some special arrangement for them, so that they can attain to the blessings of the law of faith without walking in and living in and meeting the conditions of all of God's lesser laws.

One would be deceived to imagine that when God's law requires that we feed upon God's Word in order to be spiritually strong, to have peace, joy, happiness, that God is going to make some special arrangement for them just because they are Christians and have been cleansed by the blood. One would be deceived to believe that they can have all these things and be living in the laws of the Kingdom and the laws of God without fulfilling its conditions.

It is true that God will forgive our stumblings and our failures to keep His law perfectly. Nevertheless it is yet true that in order for us to come to our heaven that He has prepared for us, we must yet come to the place where we are walking and fulfilling God's law perfectly. Jesus said, "Not one jot or tittle of God's law shall pass away until all be fulfilled in us." If we at anytime imagine that God is going to do away with His law or make some special arrangement for us, we are deceived.

This would be mocking God's law, and it cannot be mocked, it must be met. It is truth that through the name of Jesus we can ask in faith in that name and God will answer every prayer. But it is also the truth, that it is only as we walk in, live in the laws of the Spirit, that Jesus taught and the instructions and commandments of God, that we can come to that kind of faith in that name which will enable God's law of faith to work for us and bring the answer to every prayer.

This is why Christians pray and they do not receive the answers. This is why they seek to experience the blessings of the higher laws of God. "They shall heal the sick, they shall cast out devils, they shall speak in new tongues" and yet they do not experience these blessings because they skip over the other laws.

The lesser laws of the Kingdom of God which must be walked in, in order to attain to the higher things. They imagine that they can be made ruler over many things without being faithful in the few things.

They imagine that they can be made rulers over the big promises and the higher things of God without being full of faith in the lesser laws. It cannot be

I see a church full of people who are not faithful or full of faith enough to even give their tithes to God.

In this beginning of the walk of faith where God calls upon us to give of our material means as an act of faith, trusting God to provide for our every need and give us back more than we give Him. In that very first step of faith, they cannot be faithful or full of faith, Yet they hope to experience the blessings of the higher laws. The miracles, healings, all those things, and when they do not they wonder why. Simply because they are not sowing aright. They cannot expect to reap aright without sowing aright.

This brings us to the next point in our text. Scripture continues by saying: "Whatsoever you sow so shall ye also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life."

First let us consider this statement in the broad sense. The truth is that when God made us, He gave us two sides to our beings. There are two parts to our nature. One, we are spirit, the other we are flesh. But the part which is spirit is the "real you." The flesh is just the body in which the spirit dwells. The flesh is just the house in which the spirit dwells.

God made provision for our spirit and He also made provision for our flesh. He gave us physical food to feed the physical flesh part of our being. He gave us spiritual food to feed the spiritual part of our being. His plan was for the spirit to rule over the flesh. His plan was for us to feed our spirit with every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. As He spoke by His Son: "Man cannot live or have life, by the material bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God."

He intended for us to sow first to the spirit and as a result of our sowing to the spirit the flesh would reap its own blessings. As a result of our sowing to the spirit and to the spiritual things, the power and the glory

and the blessings in the life of God would be manifested in the physical, in the flesh. But through the workings of the devil and through the fall, this plan of God was reversed and instead of the spirit ruling over the flesh, now the flesh man rules over the spirit.

Instead of first seeking the Kingdom of God, then having all the fleshly, material things come as a result of that being added unto us, man seeks first the fleshly things and neglects his spirit. He sows to the flesh and ignores the spirit, and the result of that is corruption.

So we human beings spend all of our time and all of our efforts here on earth sowing to our flesh. Building the things pleasing to the flesh, satisfying its fleshly desires and cravings. We work our lives away to build the most beautiful houses for it to dwell in, to furnish them with the most lovely furniture to sit down on, to put upon our tables the choicest foods and material bread that this world has to offer, to satisfy all of its fleshly cravings. We sell out our souls most of the time to satisfy the lustful desires of our flesh.

And how does our flesh repay us? As the years roll by it betrays us, It becomes sick, diseased, wrinkled, old, rotten, corrupted and after a certain number of years of this kind of sowing have passed by, it becomes so corrupted that it is no longer a fit place for our spirits to dwell in and the spirit must leave it to what is called physical death and move into another realm, either heaven or hell, which ever it has prepared for itself.

This is what happens because men sow to the flesh. They reap corruption. But the Bible also says that if we place the emphasis on sowing to the spirit instead of spending all our time running around providing for the flesh, if we put the greater emphasis on providing for our spirit, feeding upon God's Word, communing with God in the Spirit, praying, communing with our Heavenly Father, feeding upon Him, strengthening our spirit, having union with His Spirit, hearing His precious voice of the Holy Spirit giving us the precious revelation of God's Word. Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God which Jesus says is our life.

Then we reap joy, healing, health, and ultimately as we continue to sow to the spirit we reap victory over death so that we come to the place of our glorious translation from this mortal body into the immortal. From this corruptible into the incorruptible. Then we can cry out: "Oh! death where is thy sting? Oh! grief what happened to your victory? You no longer have victory over us!"

This is what the Bible is saying to us as Christians, not as lost people, but as Christians. If you sow to the flesh, no matter if you are born again, no matter if you have been converted, no matter if you have accepted the forgiveness of God through the blood, still the Bible says to you, Christians, just as long as you go on sowing to your flesh, you shall just that long, go on reaping corruption.

There is going to be no marvelous escaping the result of the sowing. Only when you turn and cease to sow in the flesh and begin to sow to your spirit then will you begin to reap faith, peace, joy, love, healing, health and ultimately eternal victory over the physical corruption of death. In a broad sense this is what the Spirit of God says when He says: "If you sow to the spirit you shall of the spirit reap life." Not existence! So many Christians yet are thinking that when the Bible says that Jesus came to give us eternal life, He came to give us eternal existence. This is not what it means, beloved. Everybody has eternal existence, whether they ever turn to Jesus and follow Him or not. Every being that God created is going to exist eternally some place.

Whether on the physical plane or in the spiritual realm, whether he turns to Christ or not. All will exist eternally either in heaven or in hell, whether they get saved or not. So when the Bible says that Jesus came to give us eternal life, it does not mean eternal existence. Jesus came to give us life, peace, joy, health (not even just healing) but eternal health, victory over sickness, suffering, death and all those things which make up a part of death.

So he that soweth to the spirit reaps life. He that soweth to the flesh will go on reaping corruption. Let us look at this great law of the Kingdom in the specific sense. Notice Paul took a natural law or what is called a law of nature to illustrate the great spiritual truth that he wants to get over to us.

Paul did not just do this by accident. He chose the natural law of sowing and reaping to illustrate the great truth to us, because Paul knew that God made natural laws and natural truths as a perfect type of spiritual laws and truths. Scripture says in Romans 1:20:

"The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen being understood by things that are made.

Here we are told that the invisible truths of God have been before us and visible for us since the foundation of the world, because they are seen in the things that are made. Invisible truths are seen in visible things. Or invisible, spiritual truths or laws of God are set before us in the natural visible laws.

When God created this world, he made everything that is visible a symbol of spiritual truth. Everything that is natural, a type of that which is spiritual. This is why the Bible uses seed as a symbol of the Word of God, water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, serpent as a symbol of the devil and sowing as a symbol of preaching the Word of God. Not just because the Holy Spirit decided at that time that they would make good symbols, but because the Holy Spirit knew that God created them as symbols of spiritual truths about God and about His Kingdom. Even this law of sowing and reaping which God placed in the earth.

The natural law of God is a perfect type of God's spiritual law. It will not break down at any point. It proclaims the truth to us perfectly and exactly. So when we let the Holy Spirit reveal to us the spiritual truths, the invisible truths which the visible things proclaim, then we see the spiritual laws of God. Just as the natural law of God is irrevocable so is the spiritual law of God irrevocable.

Let us specifically examine this law of sowing and reaping given to us by the Spirit through Paul. He makes it very clear; one can only reap what they sow. It is not possible to sow one thing and reap something else. It is against the law of God. No one ever saw a farmer sowing cabbage and reaping corn. It is absolutely impossible. If he sows cabbage seed, he must reap cabbage. If he sows wheat, he must reap wheat. No one ever saw a farmer reaping something different from that which he had sown. No one is ever going to see a Christian reap something different from that which he has sown.

If he sows only the things of this world, he shall reap only the things of this world. If he spends all of his time sowing efforts to make money, he shall make money, but money will be the only thing he will have. He will not have faith, peace, joy, health nor communion with God. He will have money and that is all,

He will have the things that money can buy. He will not have victory over sin, victory over sickness or demons or over fear. He will not have victory over wrinkled diseased corrupted flesh. He will never have victory over death,

He sowed for money and he reaped money. If he spends all his time sowing to build a big beautiful mansion, he will reap a big beautiful, physical mansion. But he will never have the reaping of a spiritual mansion. If he spends all his time sowing to feed his flesh on the things it desires and craves then he will fill his belly with food, he will grow fat and ugly. He will be ruled over by his fleshy appetite instead of ruling over his flesh. He will be miserable and unhappy. He will reap these fleshly things that he has sown for, but he will not reap strength, beauty, faith, power and peace, joy and eternal life. He will reap exactly what he sows.

If he sows to his spirit, if he spends much of his time feeding upon God's precious Word, his spirit will be fed and he will reap joy in his inner being. He will reap peace, faith, power, supernatural power to overcome every obstacle, every problem, every mountain, every sickness, ultimately it will overcome death itself.

If he sows and spends the greater portion of his time feeding his spirit, and the spirit of others, he will be seeking to build himself a spiritual mansion. In sowing for a spiritual mansion, he will reap a spiritual mansion. He will reap a glorious spiritual house, he will reap beauty in the spirit and all of the things which are the result of spiritual sowing.

Now we have impressed that God's divine irrevocable law is that one will reap exactly that which he sows. And he will reap to the exact degree of his sowing. To the proportion of the time that we spend sowing to the flesh, we will reap of the flesh corruption. Some people spend a little bit of their time sowing to the spirit and a greater time sowing to the flesh. So they reap more corruption than they do life of the Spirit,

The law is perfect and it will not break down at any point. The reaping is exactly to the degree of the sowing. This is why you see Christians who reap a little bit of blessings of the Kingdom of God, but only a little bit. That is because they only sow a little bit to the spirit and a great portion to the flesh and to the world. He that will save his life shall lose it, but he that will lose his life of this world shall gain the life of the spirit, eternal life. To the exact degree that he loses the life of the world, the fleshy, he will gain the spiritual.

The next point of this divine law of God that we want to see is that one must sow in order to reap. No one ever saw a farmer go out into the field and harvest corn where he had not sown the seed. This is the great problem with Christianity today. They would like to reap but they don't want to do any sowing. The church would like to reap a harvest of souls, but they don't want to labour in the sowing of seed of God's Word. Christians would like to see their churches filled with souls that they have won to Christ, but they don't want to sow their prayers, their witnessing and their teaching of God's Word. They like to reap without sowing.

Christians would like to reap healing for their bodies, but they don't want to sow the studying of God's Word. The feeding upon the Word of God. The Word who alone can make them strong so that they can have the faith to bring forth the victory. They don't want to sow the time that is needed in prayer and in communion with God, sending out spiritual faith which calls forth the power of God. That which builds them up to the point of faith where they can receive their healing.

They would like to reap miracles, but they don't want to sow prayer and faith and communion with God and the effort of feeding upon God's Word that can build them up and enable them to grow to the point of faith where they can bring forth miracles. They simply want to run to some preacher or some evangelist whom they think has some kind of special power and they want to reap a healing without any sowing whatsoever.

Tragedy, tragedy, it shall never be. When one goes to the evangelistic tent and they see one or two miracles in a two week campaign, they have not seen those one or two miracles because the evangelist has some special power or because some special power was there. They saw one or two miracles because someone happened to come in who had been sowing. Sowing faith, seeking God's truth and as that person's sowing and the evangelist's sowing were joined together the power of God came forth and there was a reaping of a miracle.

There is no reaping without sowing, beloved. This is God's divine law and you can settle upon it. If we want to reap faith we must sow feeding upon God's Word. If we want to reap peace we must sow feeding upon God's Word. If we want to reap spiritual power then we must eat of that which is given to us to make our spirit strong and to give us spiritual strength. The Word of God must be eaten as the minister feeds it to us. We must eat it as the Bible is set before us and as we pour over God's Word. We must eat it when on our knees before God and the Spirit speaks to us those precious words which feed our souls.

We must sow those things if we would reap a harvest of victory. There cannot be reaping, beloved, without first a sowing. It is frustration, a treadmill of foolishness for Christians to go on imagining that they are going to reap revival in the earth or a great harvest of souls, harvest of healing, of health, of victory over death, of the Kingdom of God coming in, to imagine that Jesus is going to come and bring forth some great and mighty harvest without the sowing of the Body of Christ in the earth, without us sowing, that is never going to be.

The next point that we want to see is that after the seeds are sown, after a farmer goes out and sows his seeds, the seeds must be watered, must be cultivated in order to bring forth a harvest. Because there are thorns and thistles in the earth, because through the fall a curse came upon the earth, there are weeds and those things which would come up around the farmer's plants and choke them out. The farmer must water and cultivate his seeds in order for the harvest to come.

Beloved, when we sow seeds of prayer for healing, those seeds must be watered after we have prayed the prayer of faith. They must be watered by our communion with the Spirit of God. The divine river of life which flows into our beings, so that faith remains high. Because there is a curse upon the earth, there are thorns and thistles. There are demons and devils of the demoniac kingdom which try to move in seeking always to destroy our faith. Seeking to make us doubt in our hearts. Jesus said: "Whosoever will say to the mountain be moved, and doubt not in his heart that which he said shall come to pass. "

Because of the curse of the earth and the demons that will be sweeping in to make us doubt in our hearts we must continue to water the seed with the prayer of faith that we have planted. By drinking of the divine river of life, communing with God and keeping faith strong. We must cultivate that seed by keeping all the thorns and weeds out. By not allowing ourselves to be influenced by many voices around us. To the

unbelieving, skeptics and religious teachers who would turn us away from our faith and the thorns and thistles that would rise up around us and choke out our harvest.

We must weed out all those things in our lives. We must separate ourselves unto the Spirit of God. We must water, cultivate until the harvest is brought forth or the prayer answered. When we sow the seed of the Word of God in a lost person's heart, we must pray for them, seek to watch over them, water that seed that we have planted with our prayers, love, fellowship, seeking always to overcome the lies that the demons would plant in their minds and hearts. The lies that even other people would plant in their minds and hearts. We must seek to feed that young babe in Christ, to water that which we have done, teaching them more of the Word of God and helping them to grow up into a harvest of a mature Christian, a son of God, a mature son of God.

As we sow our seeds in prayer and faith and witnessing, we must water and cultivate those seeds to be sure the harvest comes forth. Then also we must be willing to allow a period of time for the harvest to come forth. No farmer ever planted corn today and expected to reap the harvest today or tomorrow. He knows that there must be a period of time for the seed to germinate, for life to come forth. Time for the young plant to spring out of the ground and grow up and bring forth its fruit. This is the problem with so many Christians today.

They expect to reap a harvest today. They are not willing to go on believing God. To continue to water the seed until the healing comes forth and the reaping of the harvest of answered prayer comes.

When we witness to others we don't understand sometimes, that when we plant seed in somebody's heart just because we don't lead that person to Christ right away does not mean that the seed has not been planted. Just because we don't reap the harvest right then does not mean that the seed won't germinate and come forth in the harvest of a soul. So we should be continually sowing, knowing that in God's time, God will I bring forth the harvest.

We should sow seeds of prayer and faith for our healings and our needs. We should sow with absolute confidence that in God's time, God will bring forth the harvest. The scriptures make it very clear that God is able to supersede and overrule even His own laws, both physical and spiritual and that at times He will bring forth a miracle in an instant. It is true and it is revealed to us that if the Spirit of God leads, one is able to sow the seed of prayer and in a moment God overrules the law of growth which He has planted in the natural and in the Spirit and supersedes these laws and performs a miracle. He did this for Peter when Peter walked on the water or when He brought forth countless miracles of healing.

If God does not choose to bring forth the harvest of our plantings instantly and miraculously by superseding His own laws of sowing and reaping and of growth, yet we can be absolutely certain that the harvest will come if we sow the seed of prayer and faith and continue to water and cultivate that seed until the harvest comes.

Then we would like to point out this glorious fact to you. It is God that giveth the increase. The farmer can plant the seed, water, cultivate, keep the weeds out, and he can walk in all of God's laws of sowing and reaping but the one thing he cannot do is give life to the plant. The one thing he cannot do is bring forth the fruit. God alone can create the fruit miraculously. Science has been trying to study how a plant has life and produces fruit, but they can never discover the secret of life. They will discover many secrets of the laws of God by which life is given, but they will never discover the secret of life itself.

The power of creating life remains in our God. We can sow and plant, cultivate, but God will give the healing, God will give the miracle, the answered prayer, the life.

The last great point is that God is unchangeable. His law is unchangeable. He says: "I am the Lord, I change not." If we sow the seed, water it, cultivate it we can with absolute assurance and we must with absolute assurance know that the harvest will come forth. The problem with us today is that too much of the time we are concerned about the harvest rather than being about sowing, planting, watering, cultivating. We just want to reap the harvest. We feel that it is up to us to bring the harvest.

We look at ourselves and sometimes the devil convinces us that since it is up to us we could not ever possibly reap the harvest of the healing of a cancer, or of a deliverance from demons, or of blind eyes

opened, or deaf ears unstopped, yea even of a limb restored. A harvest of death completely overcome. Only because we have not yet seen the glorious truth that the harvest depends upon God. It comes from God.

Our business is the sowing, watering, cultivating. If we sow, we don't have to be concerned about the harvest. The harvest will come forth of itself by the supernatural power of God.

When I was young in the ministry of Jesus Christ, I carried the heavy burden on my shoulders continually of feeling that I had to bring forth, the harvest. Then when I was called into the healing ministry I carried the heavy burden of feeling that I had to bring forth the healing. I was weighed down so much under the burden most of the time that I spent more time trying to harvest than I did sowing, watering, cultivating. Until God made real to me that the harvest would come forth of itself. That He would give the increase. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and these things shall be added unto you."

"He that goeth forth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing." Doubtless come again rejoicing. "Blessed are those that sow beside all waters." My job is to sow the word, to sow prayer, to sow faith and water it with communion with the Spirit of God. Then the harvest is bound to come forth of itself.

The harvest of your healing, the harvest of your deliverance is bound to come forth.

We close this study by saying, dear Christians, the great need in the church today is for men to stop running around trying to reap the harvest of souls and of healing and of deliverance with the carnal efforts of works all the time. The great need for Christians is to get down on their knees and begin to sow the spiritual seed of prayer and faith toward God.

The great need is to pray that God sends forth labourers into the harvest. To send forth healing power, His healing into the church of Jesus Christ. When enough prayers mount up to God, enough of that seed is sown and watered, then there will come a great outpouring of the Spirit of God in all the earth. That great last day outpouring that the prophets have prophesied about since time began. That mighty latter rain which the scripture says must come forth.

What God is seeking to do in the church is not to bring forth a bunch of runners, but some pray-ers. Not to put men in high positions of organizations, but to put them in a low position, on their knees. To break a bunch of Christians until they believe in the spiritual power of God.

God is looking for Christians who can stay in the Spirit and sow the seed of prayer and faith toward God until the mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God does come upon the earth. Until the "perfect body of Christ" defeats sickness, suffering, and even death. Until death has no more sting and grave has no more victory.

May God make it real to our hearts. In Jesus Name. Amen.

YOUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD by Sam Fife

Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. 2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

Those that are hearing from heaven in this hour, know that this is God's great hour of restoration. They know that it is the hour in which He is fulfilling the prophecies that came through the prophet, Joel, long ago. Wherein God spoke and said, "Behold, I will restore that which the cankerworm hath eaten." They know it is the hour in which He is fulfilling the scripture in Acts 3, where He spoke through Peter and said, "Jesus must remain in the heavens till the time of restitution, or restoration of all things, that God has spoken through the mouths of the holy prophets since time began."

They know that this is the hour in which He is fulfilling all the great truths in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, which we call the restoration books in the Bible. These books are called the restoration books in the Word of God, because they contain the record of the restoration of Old Testament Israel from their captivity to Babylon. And not only that, but they contain the record of the restoration and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. And not only that, but they contain the record of the restoration and the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord.

What makes these restoration books so important to us today, is because the restoration of Old Testament Israel's captivity from Babylon, is only a type and a revelation and a prophecy, of the restoration of New Testament Israel, from that eighteen hundred years of captivity they have been in to Babylon. Since eighteen hundred years ago after the first century of Christianity, when because, like Old Testament Israel, the people of the New Testament church turned away from their God, and from the word of their God, and from that divine order that Jesus had brought. And because they did so, they lost the anointing and the power of God. Thus the demons of hell swept in. And when they took the gifts of the Spirit out of the church, they tore down the walls of Jerusalem, its gates were burned by the fire of God's judgment.

That divine order that Jesus was setting His New Testament Temple in was scattered and separated into a thousand sects and schisms, until you can not find two lively stones to lay one on top of the other and make them stay there.

Then God's people were taken down into eighteen hundred years of Babylonish captivity. Captivity to a naturalistic Babylonish system of Christianity, that says, let us build a million dollar hospital, and hire a bunch of atheistic, unborn again doctors to minister to the sick of Israel, and say we are having a great healing ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. Captivity to a naturalistic, Babylonish, Baalistic system of Christianity which says, let us send the demon possessed off to the secular psychiatrist, who does not even know our God and our Jesus, and proclaim that we are fulfilling the great commission of Him who said, "Go, and preach the gospel to every nation. These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out the devils, themselves, they shall speak in new tongues, they shall have authority over every deadly thing, and they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

The restoration and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem were only a type of, and a prophecy of, that great restoration movement today, in which God is restoring and rebuilding the walls of the New Jerusalem.

In order to understand that fully, God's people need to know and understand what the New Jerusalem is. Today most of God's people are so carnal and fleshy in their understanding of the Word of God, that they think the New Jerusalem is some physical city out beyond space somewhere. But the Bible reveals that we, the church, are God's New Jerusalem. For twice in Revelation, chapter 21, which is that great chapter that describes the New Jerusalem, twice there the New Jerusalem is called the Bride of Christ. In verse 2, John said, "I saw the New Jerusalem descending down from heaven adorned as a bride prepared for her husband." Then in verses 9 and 10, the angel said to John, "come up hither and let me show you the Lamb's bride." And in verse 10, John says, "he carried me away in the spirit into a high mountain and showed me the New Jerusalem."

Therefore, we see that twice in Revelation chapter 21, the Bible calls the New Jerusalem the Bride of Christ. If we know anything at all about the Bible, we know that many other places in the New Testament, the Bible also calls us who are the church the Bride of Christ. Well, dear friends, there are not two brides of Christ revealed in the Scripture. The Bible does not make Christ a bigamist. If the Bible says the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ, and it also says that we the church are the Bride of Christ, then the simple truth is that the two are synonymous. The church is the New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem is the church, having been brought to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that the nature of Christ, which is the nature of God, is in us in the fullness, and God will be dwelling in His Holy City.

Not only do we need to know that the church is the New Jerusalem, we also need to understand that the walls of the New Jerusalem are the Gifts of the Spirit. For we are also told in Revelation, chapter 21, that the walls are garnished with all manner of precious stones. Those who know the symbolism of Scripture, in the mystery of Jesus Christ, know that precious stones are symbolic of the supernatural Gifts and Operations of the Spirit of God. In the symbolism of Scripture, gold is symbolic of the nature of God. Since gold is the perfect metal and cannot be tarnished, so God's nature is perfect and cannot be tarnished.

Silver is symbolic of the redemptive works of Christ. Silver is the metal that is second in value unto gold, so Christ is the second person of the God-head. Precious stones when you find them in the Scripture, are symbolic of the Gifts of the Spirit, supernatural Gifts and Operations of the Spirit of God. Those twelve precious stones that garnish the walls of the New Jerusalem are listed in Revelation, chapter 21, the sardius, the amethyst, the emerald, the topaz, etc. When you look back, in the book of Numbers in the Scripture, you will find those same twelve precious stones were placed in two places on the High Priests garment. First, they were placed on the head, and then they were placed on the breastplate of righteousness, upon the High Priests garment.

Now we were told all of our orthodox life, that the Old Testament High Priest was a type of Jesus, who is the head of the Body of Christ, but the body of that Old Testament High Priest was a type of you and I, who are the Body of Christ. The reason that those twelve precious stones were placed on the head of that High Priest, was to typically proclaim that all the supernatural Gifts and Operations of the Spirit of God, would be working in Jesus, the head of the Body of Christ, while He was here in the flesh, nineteen hundred years ago. But the reason those same twelve precious stones are placed on the breastplate of righteousness, on the body of the High Priest, was to proclaim to us today that it is through the operation of the supernatural Gifts and Operations of the Spirit of God, that we are going to come to that perfect righteousness of which the breastplate of righteousness was a type.

Now let me give it to you another way. Old Testament Israel had a wall around their city, the old Jerusalem, also. And it was a physical wall, great and high. What was it for? It was to protect them from the enemy. Old Testament Israel needed a physical wall around their city, for their enemies were physical enemies, the Philistines, the Jebusites, the Amorites, etc. But you see, in this New Testament age, the age of the Spirit, we who are New Testament Israel according to the Spirit, do not need a physical wall around us, because our enemies are not physical enemies, but spiritual enemies, demon

spirits. For Ephesians 3:12 in the New Testament says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Therefore, a physical wall around our city would not do us any good. For our enemy is not a physical enemy, but a spiritual enemy, demon spirits. A physical wall around a physical city would not keep our enemy out, because demon spirits are spirit and they do not care about the walls. They can go right through them. But when God has restored the Gifts of the Spirit to the church, yea, when He has perfected the Word of Knowledge so that we will have knowledge of our enemy, supernaturally through the Spirit, when He has perfected the Word of Wisdom, by which we will have the wisdom to use that knowledge effectively. Yea, and perfected the Gifts of Healing, and Gifts of Miracles to deal with the afflicting work of demons, and then go on to perfect Prophecy, Tongues and Interpretation, which is given to build up our faith, so that we will have the power of God to defeat our enemy. And then perfect the Gift of Discerning of Spirits, and bring them all to an orderly operation in the church of Jesus Christ, then we will throw up a wall against the demons of hell, wherein no demon, no sickness, no suffering, no sorrow, can ever get to us again.

For you see, we are in the hour of God's great restoration, the hour in which He's restoring New Testament Israel from our captivity to Babylon. The hour in which He is restoring and building up again the walls of Jerusalem. The hour in which He is relaying the foundation of the Temple of the Lord, and restoring the Davidic ministry of apostles and prophets. The hour in which He is rebuilding again the true Temple of the Lord, which temple we are. For you see, that Old Testament physical Temple and Tabernacle which old Israel built, was only a type and a shadow, and a prophecy of God's Holy Spiritual Temple today. That is why the apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 3, that in this New Testament age that we are the Temple of God. That is also why Ephesians 2:19-22 says we are being built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone, into a Holy Temple of the Lord.

And just as surely as God brought a remnant up out of captivity to Babylon, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and restored and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and restored and rebuilt the Temple of the Lord, so just that surely all across the world today, God is calling by His Spirit, a remnant out of Babylon. Bringing them back to the New Jerusalem, a spiritual Jerusalem. As He restores the Gifts of the Spirit He is restoring and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. And as He purges all the division and sectarianism that is in us, also denominationalism, and step by step restores us to that divine order, that Jesus was setting His Temple in, in the first century, He is rebuilding the Temple of the Lord today.

But as we continue to study the restoration move of God, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we see that the restoration and rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was not the most important aspect of God's restoration move. For the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was not the purpose of God for Israel, it was just something that needed to be done in order that they might have protection from their enemies, while God was fulfilling His purpose in them. Even so, the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord was not the purpose of God for Israel, for the Temple only needed to be rebuilt, that God might restore its furniture to it, and restore that divine order of worship, that had been there in the beginning, so God could go on and fulfil His purpose in Israel. For God's purpose for Israel was not just to have an empty temple built in the city of Jerusalem, to His glory or not even just to have some beautiful pieces of furniture in it, neither just have the Shekinah Glory of God fill it, when it was completely built. For that Shekinah Glory that filled old Israel's Temple was only a type and a prophecy of the true Glory and Life of God that shall fill the true Temple today when God has finished building it. Therefore, God's purpose for Israel in restoring and rebuilding the Temple, and filling it with the Shekinah Glory of God was just to use them to set before the world a great type, and shadow and prophecy, of the day in this New Testament age when God would rebuild the walls of the true Jerusalem, draw us together and make us one body in Christ, and rebuild the true Temple of the Lord. Then fill this Temple today with the very life of God Himself.

Even so, we see today that the purpose of God for us is not to just bring us out of Babylon, out of the Babylonish organization.

Neither is it the purpose of God for us just to restore the walls of Jerusalem and Gifts of the Spirit and stop there, as many Pentecostal brethren have done. Neither is the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord the most important aspect of restoration for us today. For it is not just the purpose of God to draw us together and make us one body, one church, nay, for then all we would have would be an empty temple. Neither is it the purpose of God to set us back into that divine order alone, that the furniture was set in, in the Old Testament Temple. These are only the things that must be done so God can take us on to His true purpose for us. For the true purpose of God for us, is to fill this Temple today with the pure, perfect, holy, powerful, life of Jesus Christ, which is the life of God Himself.

Therefore, after the walls were rebuilt in Jerusalem, and the work of the Temple was progressing well, the children of the remnant of Israel began to move into the more important aspects of the restoration. The first of which was to call upon all the priests and the princes, and the people of Israel, to put away their strange wives that they had married while they were in captivity. For you see, while they were down in captivity, many of the men of Israel had committed abomination, that abominable thing that God had said that Israel must not do when He placed them in their promised land. And that is that they had taken themselves wives from the women of the nations about them. Therefore, when the remnant came back into the land it was not the pure seed of Israel that came back, but it was a mixture, and God can never fulfil His eternal purpose with a mixture. So the anointed ministries that were leading the remnant sent out word to all the priests and the princes of Israel, and all the men of Israel, that they must put away their strange wives that Israel might be purified. That only the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, might live before God.

And as the Spirit of God continues to lead us into the more important aspects of restoration today, you are going to find the Spirit of God calling upon us to put away all our strange wives that we married while we were down in captivity to Babylon. Of course I'm not speaking in the literal, and in the letter, because I do not believe those great types that we have in the Old Testament are to be fulfilled in us in the New Testament age in the literal, and in the letter, but in the Spirit. And therefore, I'm not saying that if a child of Israel today, man or woman, has married one who is not a Christian, a born again child of Israel, that in order to be in this glorious remnant they have to divorce their companion. But what God is calling us to by His Spirit is to put away our strange wives spiritually. For what the children of the remnant of Israel need to realize today is that when God speaks a word, he speaks a Spirit word. And when you find the term marriage in the Scripture it is speaking only of a union. And with God it doesn't matter whether that union is with a person, or with a thing or with an idea, it is still a marriage to God.

Many of us who are coming up out of Babylon today, while we were there in captivity have joined ourselves to many things, and many purposes instead of just our true husband Jesus Christ and the eternal purpose that God has for us. Therefore, let me say to the children of the remnant today, that whatever you find yourself joined to, that interferes with your bride-bridegroom relationship with your true husband Jesus Christ, whether it be your business, or your church, or your home, or many other things which you find taking a piece of your heart and your life, it is a strange wife to you, and it is time to put it away.

Many a preacher today is married to his ministry. Joined in union with only his ministry. His ministry fills his life, and he is more concerned about what is going to happen to his ministry, than his relationship with his true husband. When his true husband, Jesus, speaks true revelation to him, by the Spirit of God, he doesn't judge on the basis of whether it is truth or not, or whether it is a revelation of the Holy Ghost or not, but the first thought that comes to his mind, is, if I preach this how will it affect my ministry? If I preach this how will it hinder my ministry? If I preach this will it separate me from my ministry? Preachers, receive a word of wisdom. You had better realize that in this New Testament age you don't have a ministry, and I don't have a ministry, Christ has a ministry. Christ alone has a ministry through His body in this New Testament age. And your ministry has become a strange wife to you. It is separating you from your true husband, and the voice of your true husband, and you had better put it away. Many a

woman today, her natural husband has become a strange wife to her spiritually, for she set him before her true husband, Jesus Christ. She cannot walk in Jesus as He calls her to, or follow the calling He has upon her life, because her natural husband stands in the way. If this be so, he has become a strange wife, and though we don't mean put him away literally and physically nevertheless, he had better be put in the place behind Jesus, the true husband, where he is supposed to be, if she would continue to dwell in Israel. Otherwise the anointing of God will depart from her and the leadership of the Spirit of God would depart from her, and she will be separated from this holy remnant that God is purifying in the land today.

Many a man, his natural wife has become a strange wife to him, in as much as he has put her before his true husband Jesus, for he is a part of that holy Bride that is waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom. Yea, and if he doesn't put her in her place behind Jesus, then the anointing will also depart from him, the leadership of the Spirit of God will depart from him, and he also will find himself separated from the holy remnant in the land that God is purifying today.

There is many a preacher that has put his natural wife between him and his true husband, Jesus, and she has become a strange wife to him in the spirit. And unless he places her in her true position the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord will depart from him also and he will find himself separated from the pure seed of Israel that God has brought back into the land and is purifying in this hour. Homes, businesses, cars, bank accounts, relationship with denominations that are still held on to, many of these things are strange wives that the remnant of Israel have become married to while they were down in Babylon. And in this hour when God is purifying His remnant and bringing forth the holy seed in the land to fulfil His eternal purpose through, again it is time to put away our strange wives.

Then the children of Israel began to move into the next most important aspect of restoration. The anointed restoration ministries began to go back, and search out the genealogy of all those that had come up in the remnant, to see who had been born of a marriage between an Israelitish man, and an Israelitish maiden, or who was the child of an abominable marriage between an Israelitish man, and a woman of one of the nations round about. Even so, beloved, in these last days we are going to find the Spirit of God, with the word of truth, searching deep into our genealogies, and going back into our spiritual ancestry, right back to the day of our birth, to see who is a pure seed of Israel, born of a union between a ministry that Christ has been moving through in the anointing, and a church congregation, a bride, a woman who is moving in the anointing, or who has just been run through the baptismal waters, in an unholy union between a preacher who is just seeking converts. A preacher who is just seeking spiritual scalps to hang on his spiritual belt. A preacher who is just seeking to mark up the number of people that he baptized, and a church congregation, a woman who is not anointed, but who is only seeking to get members for its church, and more tithe in the tithing plate. And therefore, the Spirit of God with the word of truth in these last days, is going to search out everyone's genealogy. And everyone who has not been born a pure seed of Israel, with a supernatural new birth, come forth as a result of the union between a ministry moving in the anointing of Christ, and a congregation that is anointed so that a true soul is born into the kingdom, all those who are not the child of such a marriage are going to be separated from the great move of God, and from the remnant of Israel.

For if they are not a pure seed of Israel, brought forth through such a marriage, the message, Let Us Go On To Perfection, will not be received by them. There will be no Spirit of Christ and no anointing, to witness to them that it can be done and they will be separated and go their way. Only those that are the pure seed of Israel will remain in that pure remnant, that God has brought back into the land.

Then after the genealogies have been searched out, the children of Israel began to move into the most important aspect of the restoration move of God, and that was the renewing of their covenant with their God. Because, not only did God raise up a Zerubbabel to lead the remnant out of Babylon, not only did He raise up anointed leaders to lead them into the restoring of the walls of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple, but the Bible tells us that God also brought up out of Babylon ready scribes, who were

learned in the law of their God, Ezra and Nehemiah, to gather the children of Israel before the Lord in Jerusalem, and to re-teach them their covenant, that they might renew their covenant with their God.

For you see, the children of the remnant that came up out of Babylon, did not even know that they were a covenant people, in covenant relationship with God. And the reason that they did not know this was because they had been born down in Babylon. Their parents that bore them had been too busy trying to get along with their Babylonish slave masters and trying to make themselves attractive to their Babylonish lovers, that they did not have time to teach their children that they were people that were separated from all the people of the earth, and a people that had been brought under a covenant relationship with their God.

Now the children of Israel, the children of the remnant, had been in captivity to Babylon for 70 years. Therefore except for a few ancient gray heads, just about all the children of the remnant who had come up out of Babylon, had been born there. And their mothers that bore them were spending all their time trying to get along with their Babylonish slave masters, and making themselves attractive to their Babylonish lovers. Therefore they were too busy with this to sit down and teach the children that they had birthed, that they the people of Israel were a separate people, that they were a covenant people, that they were a people in covenant relationship with their God. Therefore, the remnant came up out of Babylon and never even knew that they had a covenant with their God. And if they had they wouldn't have known what the covenant was. What its terms and conditions were, neither what it meant to them.

And so one of the most important necessities of the restoration movement was for God to anoint ready scribes who were learned in the covenant of their God. Ezra and Nehemiah, who gathered the children of Israel to Jerusalem day after day, began to re-teach them their covenant, that they might renew their covenant with their God. For you see it was because their fathers had not walked in their covenant with their God, and had not kept their covenant, that they had gone down into captivity to Babylon in the first place. Therefore, the most important aspect of the restoration was that the children of Israel might renew their covenant with their God, and walk in their covenant again. Because even if they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and even if they rebuilt the Temple of God, laid every stone in its place and set each piece of furniture back in, and restored the divine order of worship, still if they did not walk in their covenant, the anointing of God would depart from them. The leadership of God would depart from them, and the power of God would depart from them, and their enemies would take them back into captivity again.

And even so it is today dear friends, with the remnant of God's people that are coming up out of Babylon today. It is important that we come back into the land. And most important that the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt, that the Gifts of the Spirit are restored. And it is important that we be drawn together as one body once again and the Temple of the Lord be rebuilt. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of the restoration move of God today is that we renew our covenant with our God. And therefore God today also is anointing ready scribes, apostolic ministries, who have been alone with God and who are learned in the covenant of our God, who can gather the people of God before the New Jerusalem and re-teach them again their covenant with their God.

They will go back into the covenant that God gave through Moses, and uncover that spiritual reality behind every type, and every shadow, that is in the Old Testament covenant. For you see the Old Testament age was the age of the flesh, the age of the literal and the letter. And therefore every literal letter, type, and shadow, that was given by God through Moses in that Old Testament covenant, when we let the Holy Spirit show us the spiritual substance, the reality, of which the types and shadows are but prophecies and symbols, then we will have a revelation of the New Testament covenant in this age of the Spirit. For the spiritual fulfilments of all the types and shadows in that Old Testament covenant are the revelation of our New Testament covenant with God.

So it is today that the children of New Testament Israel, who are coming up out of Babylon, even as the children of old Israel, have no knowledge of their covenant with their God. They are not even

consciously aware that they are a covenant people, in covenant relationship with their God. Neither do they know the terms of the covenant. Neither do they know what it means to be under covenant relationship to God. Like the children of Old Testament Israel, we have been born when our old mother, the church, was down in Babylon. And again like the children of Old Testament Israel, our old mother that bore us and birthed our souls down in Babylon, was too busy trying to get along with her Babylonish slave masters of this world and the political systems of this world, and the church organizations of this world. Too busy painting up her face with stained glass windows and million dollar buildings and robed choirs, to make herself more attractive to her fleshy Babylonish lovers, her promoters of a naturalistic religion, to take time out to teach her children that were birthed in her womb supernaturally, that they are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which seed is Christ. And that they are a covenant people, under a covenant relationship with God, and just what it means to be under covenant relationship with God.

Therefore, they are like the remnant of Israel of old who needed to be gathered again before the Lord at Jerusalem, and re-taught the covenant. Therefore in chapter 8 of Nehemiah, verse 1, we read; "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate."

Notice that statement, "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man." We find that this was a mark of the restoration move of God in Ezra's day. Everything the children of Israel did they did as one man in these restoration books. When you study the other books of the Old Testament, you find that the children of Israel were always divided and striving against one another. Benjamin was divided from Ephraim, and Ephraim was divided from Judah. Always divided and fighting against one another, but then when you come over into the restoration books you find that everything they did they did as one man.

The reason was, they had been down in Babylon through many years of captivity. There in Babylon their Babylonish slave masters had divided and separated them from one another, and sent them off to different sections of Babylon to be slaves. Mother had been separated from daughter, son had been separated from father, brother had been separated from brother, sister had been separated from sister, and sister from brother, and the Babylonish slave masters had cut them up and divided them up and sent them off into different sections of Babylon.

They had spent seventy years in division and therefore when they came back to the land, they were sick of division, they were weary of division, and they were tired of being separated brother from brother, and sister from sister. Therefore it is recorded that everything that they did in the restoration movement they did as one man.

In Ezra 3, as they began to re-gather back to Jerusalem to start to work on the walls, it says they gathered as one to Jerusalem, to begin the work on the walls. Here, as they gathered together again to Jerusalem to restudy their covenant, it is recorded again, as one man to Jerusalem. So it is with God's people who are coming up out of Babylon today, glory to God. The watchword we find, and a mark of the restoration movement today is God's people are seeking once again to do what they do as one man.

Like the Israel of old we have been down in Babylon for many hundreds of years in captivity, and there in Babylon, the Babylonish slave masters who led the organizations of Babylon cut us up and divided us. They separated brother from sister, and sister from brother, unto different segments of the Babylonish system, the Baptist segment, the Presbyterian segment, the Methodist segment, the Episcopalian segment, and the Pentecostal segment. There each section of Babylon kept its slaves in bondage and if anyone dared break free and try to visit their brother and sister in another section of Babylon, they are just liable to be turned out of the church organization. Baptist were not allowed to visit their Pentecostal brothers and sisters, Pentecostal brothers and sisters aren't allowed to visit the Baptist brothers and sisters. For each Babylonish slave organization are scared they will lose their members if they let them visit around from brother to brother, and sister to sister. Often in my own meetings across the country, I have seen the Baptist preacher sneak into the Spirit-filled meetings scared to death that

some members of his organization are liable to see him and he is liable to be in trouble with his slave masters. Or some member of one of the other denominational systems slip into the Spirit-filled meeting, cautiously look around to be sure that no members of his Babylonish organization are present, lest he get in trouble with his slave masters.

Now God's remnant is coming up out of Babylon and no matter what section of Babylon that we come from, we recognize one another in the Spirit as brother and sisters. We are being restored to all our brothers and sisters, and the name tags that were given to us in Babylon, Baptist, Methodists, Pentecostal, Episcopalian, etc., are passing away, and we are being restored to oneness again. The mark of the restoration move of God today is God is moving us into that oneness that whatever we do, we are going to do it as one body, one man.

Then you will notice that the Bible says, it was before the water gate that the children of Israel gathered to re-study their covenant. I like that also. Because the water gate was the gate through which water was brought into Jerusalem, and water is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. Certainly if we want to re-gather today to re-study our covenant, and study the Word of God we need to gather before the gate through which the water is brought in.

Then the Bible says, Ezra the priest, brought the law before the congregation both the men and women and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month, and he read therein before the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until the midday. How do you like that? Here was a service that lasted four hours and nobody got up and walked out. Nobody fell asleep and nobody went away and said, Brother so-and-so preaches too long. The people stood faithfully as the Word of God was read and ministered for four long hours, and they didn't even have plush-covered pews to sit on, that Christians that can't stand more than thirty minute sermons have today. But this was a people who were hungry for the Word of God. The reason was they had been down in seventy years captivity to Babylon and they recognized that the reason that they had been in captivity was because they had not had the Word of their God inside them, and had not known their covenant. Therefore, when they came up out of captivity there was one thing that their heart hungered for, one thing that they could not get enough of, and that was the Word of God, the Word of their covenant.

So it is with us the remnant that is coming up out of Babylon today. The mark of those who are in the restoration move of God today is that they are hungry for the Word of their God. They aren't interested in any little thirty minute sermonettes. In our end-time conventions, we start at ten o'clock in the morning with thirty or forty end-time ministries present, until one-thirty, two, or three o'clock in the afternoon. One ministry after the other rises up under the anointing and lays line upon line, and precept upon precept of the Word of God. The people sit for four, five, six hours, four or five hundred of them, nobody moving, devouring every word, and for a good reason, too. They are a people who have been down in captivity to Babylon and we recognize that the reason that we could be taken into Babylonish captivity, held there and bound there, and kept there by the demons of hell who deceived us, was because we did not have in us the Word of our God and the word of our covenant.

Therefore, those that are coming up out of Babylon are hungry for the word of their God. They are not interested in any thirty minute sermonettes, neither in preachers who preach only thirty minute sermonettes. But they are hungry to sit at the feet of the anointed ministry receiving the revelation of God, the revelation of their covenant with God in this hour. That they may be taught again the word of their covenant, that they might know how to walk with their God.

In verse 5 it says, "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands." Surely this was not a Baptist Church, neither a Presbyterian or a Methodist, nor any of the other denominational churches and systems for had it been they would not have been allowed to answer, amen, amen, and with lifting up of their hands. Nay,

but this was an anointed remnant of overcomers who had come up out of Babylon and the Spirit of their God was alive within them again. Therefore, when the Word of God was ministered they could not help but respond.

In verse 8 says, "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This was another mark of the restoration movement, in that the anointed ministry that was re-teaching the people their covenant didn't, as they dealt with the scriptures, just take a text for a pretext and then ramble on with a bunch of philosophical garbage that means nothing to the people of God. But the Bible says they gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading. So is this a mark of the restoration movement of God today. God's anointed apostolic ministries, who have been alone with God in the desert and have come out to re-teach God's people their covenant, you won't find them taking a text for a pretext and offering to God's people a bunch of philosophical garbage that comes from the modernistic minds of this world. But you will find God's apostolic ministries who are anointed of God, to go back behind every type and uncover and unveil that spiritual reality behind every shadow and symbol in the Old Testament covenant, so that God's people can understand the reading and be given the sense of it.

Verse 9 says; "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, "This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." Then he said unto them, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." You see, as all the children of Israel were given the sense of the covenant with their God again, and began to understand it, they began to realize that their fathers had not walked in the covenant of their God. That they themselves had not walked in the covenant of their God, and that this was the reason that their God had allowed them to go down into captivity. Therefore, a deep sense of conviction suddenly seized them, which soon turned into condemnation, and they began to groan and mourn and weep. But the anointed ministries, Ezra and Nehemiah also knew that it was because they had not walked in the covenant of their God that God had allowed them to go into captivity. But at the same time, they knew the fact that God had brought them back into the land, and relaying the foundation of the house of the Lord, meant that the Lord had put away their sin, and that His countenance was smiling upon them once again, and His blessed hand was upon them once again. Therefore, they called to the people, stop you're weeping and stop you're mourning, this day is a holy day unto your Lord your God, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

So it often is today. As God's people begin to truly understand their covenant, they begin to know that the reason we have been in captivity to Babylon, is because our fathers did not walk in their covenant with their God. Neither have we walked in our covenant with our God. Therefore, it would be very easy for God's people today to begin to weep and mourn. Too often do we have ministers today who are more interested in getting God's people weeping and groaning and mourning over their sins than in seeing the Temple of the Lord built. Many times your ministries will begin to beat the people with God's Word, and show them the legal aspects of God's Word, revealing to them only how sinful they are, and beating them down until they get people mourning and groaning, confessing their sins at the altars of God.

Then of course, this builds up the ego of the minister and he can go out and say, "My what a great service we had last night. How the Spirit of God did move. There were such and such a number of people at the altar weeping, mourning, and confessing their sins before God." But God's anointed ministries who are hearing from God today are not interested in the sound of God's people weeping, groaning, and confessing their sins. They are listening for the sound of joy. For they also know that because we have not walked in the covenant of our God, neither have our fathers, God allowed us to go down into captivity. But they are also aware that our God is bringing us back into the land, relaying the foundation ministries of apostles and prophets, and thereby relaying the foundation for the Temple of the Lord, means that our God has put away our sins and that His countenance is smiling upon us once again, and

that He is ready to lead us on into that ultimate fulfilment of His eternal purpose. Therefore, they are calling to the people that this day is a holy day unto your Lord. Mourn not, neither weep, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. They have no desire to get God's people under condemnation, neither at the altars confessing, groaning, moaning, and weeping. Not so long ago, down in a South American city, in what was supposed to be an open meeting where the Spirit of God could use whomsoever He would, a young South American minister got up to preach one night. He was one of those who was out to build a reputation for himself, by being able to get many people to the altar moaning, groaning, and weeping, through beating them with the Word of God. He began to beat the sheep of God. To tell them how no good they were, how sinful they were, and how God was going to punish them terribly for their sins. He continued this until the people of God began to be pressed down more and more, so then they all began to weep, groan, moan, under the condemnation. When this began, then he gave an altar call and said, "Everybody come down to the altar now and confess your sins." About a hundred of God's people poured out to the altar and fell on their knees with crying, weepings, and mournings. This young minister began to feel that he was a great preacher, that there was a great move of the Spirit of God because of all these goings on. He looked out and saw this present writer refusing to participate and said "There is someone here tonight who refuses to humble themselves before their God."

But you can be sure I was having no part of that thing. I confessed my sins once, for all, and forever fifteen years ago when I came to Christ and put them under the blood of Jesus. Now I am too busy trying to grow strong enough in God to overcome them to have time for any weeping, mourning and confessing. Like the apostle Paul, forgetting those things which are behind, looking forward to those things which are before I press on to the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

The next night it came my turn to preach. I ministered from Ezra, chapter 3 where the remnant came up out of Babylon. There in the third chapter it tells us that where the foundation of the Lord's house was relayed some of the old ancient gray heads in Israel, who had seen the glory of the former house, when they saw the foundation of this house relayed, began to shout with such a great shout of joy, that they were heard for miles off. I came down to this part of my message, I said to the people, for fifteen years, ever since I have been saved I have been down in Babylon with God's people. I have heard their cryings, their groaning, their moaning, and their condemnation over the fact that they couldn't overcome their sins, and their sufferings and their sicknesses. I have heard the groanings and moanings of Baptist people in the denomination I belong to, as week after week they would get under condemnation after the preacher preached against sin, and run down to the altar and rededicate their lives. Then because the preacher didn't know where to take them from there, and gave them nothing with which to overcome the weaknesses in their flesh that caused them to commit the sin, they went right back out again the next week and did the same things over again. Then when they heard a sermon preached, got under condemnation again, over and over, year after year.

There in Babylon with God's people, I've heard this weeping and moaning over their weaknesses until my soul is weary of it, and the soul of God is weary of it. Therefore, the sound that my ear is listening for today, the sound that rejoices my heart, is not the weepings, groanings and moanings of God's people in condemnation over their sins. The sound that my heart is listening for today is the shout of joy that the foundation of the Lord's house has been relayed again, in Israel.

Then Nehemiah, the anointed leader, told them what it was a day for. He said it is a time for you to go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. That is what it is a time for today, beloved. It's a time to go our way. And our way is on to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Not only that but Nehemiah said it is a time to eat the fat. The fat was that portion of the lamb that was sacrificed from which the oil came. So it is for us today, beloved. It is time to eat the fat. For this is the hour when God is pouring out for us line upon line, precept upon precept and truth upon truth. Giving us that portion of our lamb Jesus that was sacrificed, the truth which brings forth the holy oil. Therefore, it is time for us to eat this fat that God is bringing forth in this hour. Not only that, he said go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet. The sweet of course, was the wine.

The wine wherever you find it in the great mystery of God in the scriptures, is symbolic of the supernatural life of Christ, which is the life of God. Jesus said, I am the vine, ye are the branches. The fruit that comes forth from the vine is grapes. But the ultimate fruit that comes forth from the grapevine is not the grapes but the wine that comes after the grapes are crushed. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Glory to God, the ultimate fruit that we see coming forth from that vine today is the life of Christ, which is the life of God, which is coming forth in God's people. Therefore, this is a time for drinking the sweet. As I drink of the life of God that is coming forth in you, you drink of the life of God that is coming forth in me.

Last of all, Nehemiah said, it is time to go your way eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. Above all in this hour, beloved, as God brings forth these great, glorious end-time truths, we must not forget to send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared. God help his people, who, like other moves of God, sit and eat the glorious fat of God's truths that God brings forth and drink of the glorious wine of God, and just sit and feed and eat themselves, and get fat, and don't send out portion of that word to many in the world for whom nothing is prepared. God doesn't need anymore churches on the corner, but He needs anointed, moving, end-time bodies in which ministries are coming in at the bottom, being called by the Spirit and being trained in their ministries in the local bodies, and sent forth out at the top, as apostles of God, to go forth into the world. Sent out to carry portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.

Recently this writer returned from the jungles of South America. Down there on the jungle rivers, many, many converts who had already been won to Christ by missionary evangelists of old, are hungry for the truth of God's Word that God is bringing forth today. Truths that Christians in the United States have long since taken for granted, and won't even go to church to hear anymore; down there they are like little birds with their mouths open. But the trouble is that they don't have anointed ministries, teachers to carry portions to them. God help us in this move of God. If like all other moves we just sat in our own churches and got fat on the Word of God, so fat that were not able to move, that it weakens us instead of strengthening us, that we don't even move in the life of God. God help us to send portions, yea, send forth ministries to carry portions to those in lands where nothing has been prepared.

Many of the people of God, in moves across the land today, and in end-time bodies, where God has raised up anointed ministries to feed them, are not aware of how fortunate they are. If they knew how many letters we get in our office in Miami, from people across the United States, who have gotten a glimpse of the glorious thing that God is doing in this end-time, and they write us, "Brother Fife, can you send us a publication, can you send us a tape, send us something so that we can feed on this word too." Sometimes they write and say, "Brother Fife, there are only four or five of us in our town who are moving in God's move of the Spirit. And there is just a few of us, we can't give much offering, but do you ever come and hold a meeting for just four or five?" You can bet your boots, that if God can make the way for us to get to them, we'll fly a thousand miles to go and teach them whether they can give an offering or not.

For this is not just the hour for eating the fat and drinking the sweet, but this is the hour for sending portions to God's children everywhere who don't have an anointed ministry raised up in their midst, for whom nothing is prepared. God help us not to forget to send portions as we eat this fat and drink this sweet.

Then the rest of this chapter and chapter 9 tells how that as they heard their covenant explained and understood the sense of it, they began to go back through their minds over the hundreds of years. They began to confess to their God at which points their fathers had turned away from Him and begun to walk out of His covenant, and they themselves had turned away from Him.

Then in verse 34 of chapter 9, when they came down toward the end of their confession, they said, "Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor fathers kept thy law, or hearkened unto thy

commandments and thy testimonies." Certainly this is our testimony today beloved. Our kings, our princes, our rulers, have not kept the law of our God. Neither have they hearkened unto His commandments. Our priest, our spiritual leaders, in past years, and decades and centuries, have not kept the law of our God. Neither have they hearkened unto His commandments and His testimony. That's why you and I were born in a church that was in Babylonish captivity, and in exile away from the presence of our God. That is why we haven't seen the power and the glory of God in our lives and in our churches.

In verse 35, they went on to say, "For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works." Surely this is our testimony today too. For our civil leaders and our spiritual leaders, have not served God in the kingdoms that He has given them. In this large and fat land which our God has given to us. Certainly America is the largest and the fattest land in all the world today. Our civil rulers and our spiritual leaders, our kings and our priests, have not served our God in this large and fat land which our God gave us. They have taken prayer out of the schools. They have taken the name of Jesus out of our government. Today the leading governmental policy-making tribunal in this country is the United Nations. The President of the United Nations is a Buddhist, and Buddhist priests run up and down the halls of the United Nations Building offering incense to their devil God. Our priests and our leaders, our kings and our rulers, have turned away from our God and worshipped false gods.

Ezra went on to say, "Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings that thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." This again is our testimony today. The great land that God gave to our fathers, he didn't give it to the politicians and the governmental systems of this world. He gave it to the pilgrim church fathers, the people who came to this land looking for a place to worship God in freedom. But it has been taken away from us, and today it belongs to the devil's people, and it yields its increase to the kings which God has allowed to come into dominion over us, because of our sins. Today they have dominion over our bodies, and at their pleasure we are in great distress.

The hour is soon coming when we are not any longer going to be allowed to meet in public meetings to worship our God. We are very fast heading for bondage through our governmental system. One brother, who is in the move of God, was recently sent by his company to a computer school in New York City. There he learned that plans are under way in this country to computerize our whole life. Soon we will be living in a check less society, where when we work all week we won't even draw our own pay check, but it will just be sent to a central center, and we will be given a number in order to draw upon it, when we want to buy something.

At their pleasure we are in great distress. The children of Israel said because of all this we make a sure covenant and write it and our princes and Levites and priests seal unto it. Here was where the children of Israel renewed their covenant with their God. And this is the next great step that the Spirit of God wants to lead us into in restoration. That we renew our covenant with our God.

But the problem is most of the children of God today know nothing about their covenant with God. They were birthed in the Spirit from the womb of an old mother church that was down in captivity to Babylon. Captivity to the Babylonish system, the Babylonish organizations of this world, and Babylonish religious organizations, that have no supernatural headship of Jesus through the Spirit, no five-fold spirit ministry, no nine spirit gifts, and above all no nine spirit fruits. No divine order of worship in the service toward God, but the church filled with disorder and confusion. And that is what the word Babylon means, as it is used in the scripture, confusion.

Therefore the remnant that is coming up out of Babylon in this hour, their need also is to be gathered before the Lord at Jerusalem. Gathered at the New Jerusalem, at the spiritual Jerusalem, and there be taught their covenant through anointed apostolic ministries that God is raising up. Ready scribes whom God is taking back into the Old Testament and unveiling for them every type and every shadow that was in the covenant that God gave through Moses. So that they might set before God's people today that spiritual fulfillment of every type, and every shadow which God purposes to be fulfilled. That they might know their covenant with their God. That they might renew their covenant with their God. That they might walk in it again.

For it is not enough just to come out of Babylon or to come out of the organization. It is not even enough for us to come back into God's spiritual promised land, or to walk and live in the Spirit, in order that great spiritual gifts come forth from us, and the walls of New Jerusalem are built up again. For that is not the purpose of God for us, it's only something that needs to be done, so that we can be protected from our enemies, the demon spirits, while God is fulfilling His purpose in us. It's not even enough for us just to rebuild the Temple of the Lord, come together as one body. It's not even enough for us to restore the divine order of worship to that Temple, but these are all things that must be done so that God's purpose might be fulfilled in us. They are not themselves the purpose of God. But only when we once again know our covenant, and walk in our covenant with our God will we then continue to have this power, blessing, and leadership so that we can never be taken into captivity again. Therefore, in the closing points of this message, we would like to reveal to all of God's people just what it means to be in covenant relationship with God. And explain to them that they are a covenant people separated from all the people of the world. And make them to understand their covenant that they have with their God. In the first place, God's people need to be made to know that God is dealing with them through a covenant. A covenant is a contract, a binding legal contract. And most of God's people are not aware that God is dealing with them legally. One might say, Brother Fife, I thought we were not under the law. This is true. We're not under the law. God is no longer dealing with us through a covenant of law, but He is still dealing with us through a legal covenant of grace.

Therefore, He is still dealing with us legally. What most of God's people do not understand, is that the very essence of God's nature is justice. Which entails both law and grace during this age in which God is dealing with humanity. And what God's people don't understand is that though grace and mercy are the front parts of God's nature, nevertheless, behind God's ability to dispense mercy and grace, is His ability to deal and mete out justice through the law to all those who reject mercy and His covenant of grace. Therefore, God is still a God of law.

Most of God's people do not know that even the court systems, and the legislative systems, that are in our secular government and the laws upon which they are based, came out of the very nature of God Himself. For every lawyer knows that all the laws that we have in our land have their root in the Law of Moses. When I was a young man I thought once that I wanted to study law and become a lawyer.

So I began taking a correspondence course in law. One of the first truths that I was taught was that all laws had their root in the Law of Moses, that was given by God. Because before the Law of Moses was given there was no law in the earth. Therefore, we see that law comes from the very nature of God Himself, and though God is not dealing with us through a legal covenant of law as He did in the Old Testament age, nevertheless, He is still dealing with us through a legal covenant, a legal contract of grace. He is still dealing with us legally. Most of God's people don't even understand their covenant of grace.

Talk to them of experiences, the born again experience, or perhaps the baptism of the Holy Spirit experience, of Gifts of healing experience, or other Gifts of the Spirit experiences and they can talk to you, but speak to them of their covenant with their God and they can no longer converse with you intelligently. Therefore, we would like to share with God's children everywhere, the true meaning of their covenant.

First, they need to realize that God is dealing with mankind through two covenants. They are called in the Bible the old covenant and the new covenant. They are also called the Old Testament and the New Testament. But many of God's people are in such ignorance concerning the real truth of God's Word that they think the Old and New Testaments are just the first and second half of the Bible. That is the extent of their knowledge, understanding, of the Old and New Testament and the Old and new covenant. But this is far from the whole truth. You see, the word testament, needs to be fully understood. For a testament is a revelation of someone's will concerning the dispensation of their goods. When a man dies here upon the earth, and has acquired much goods while he was here, we say that he leaves behind his last will and testament. That is, he leaves behind a written revelation of what his will is concerning the dispensation of his goods that he left behind here on the earth, what he desires to be done with his goods. That is what a testament is, and that is what the Old and New Testaments that we have in the Bible are. They are a written revelation sent down to us from God, to give us a revelation of what His will is concerning the dispensation of His goods here upon the earth, which goods we are. It is a written revelation of what God wills to be done with His goods here upon the earth, which goods we are. And not only us, but all other things that have been created here on the earth which are His goods.

These two testaments are also called the old covenant and the new covenant. Now, a covenant is a contract between two parties. A legal binding agreement by which two parties come into covenant relationship with one another. What God's people are not consciously aware of today is that they are a people who are under a covenant relationship with God. And when one is related to another party through a covenant or a contract, they are no longer free to do anything they want to do, anyway they want to do it. No longer free to move anyway they want to when they want to, but they are only free to move in relationship to the other party and in relationship to their contract. Before one signs a contract with another party, they are free. They are their own to do what they want to do, when they want to do it, anyway they want to do it. But once they sign a contract with another party, and for mutual benefit and assistance enter into covenant relationship with another party, then this is no longer so.

I learned that great truth real well many years ago when as a young man of seventeen, I signed a contract with Uncle Sam and joined the United States Navy. Before I signed that piece of paper in the recruiting officer's office, I was free to do what I wanted to do when I wanted to do it, for I hadn't entered into a covenant relationship with Uncle Sam. But the recruiting officer began to tell me all the romantic adventures of joining the Navy and seeing the world, and therefore even though my dear mother tried to warn me against it, he talked me into signing that paper. Suddenly the instant that I signed that paper, I was no longer free to move anyway that I wanted to.

They quickly took me up and put me on a train, and sent me away to a boot training camp. There in this boot training camp, along with some other recruits, the training officer put me on an obstacle course that looked like a race track, about a half a mile around. He commanded us boys to run around it for about three hours, until our breath was short, and our tongues were hanging out, and our feet felt as heavy as lead. Then he who had not been running got in the race. He had a big thick paddle in his hand. Every time he would pass one of us he would whack us across our back ends with that paddle. He could get away with it too because I was no longer on my own. For I had entered into covenant relationship, contract relationship with Uncle Sam. I recite this to make God's people aware of the great truth that since they have entered into this covenant relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, that they are no longer free to do what they want to do when they want to do it, the way they want to do it, as they have been doing. But they are in covenant relationship with God. They are under contract to God, and therefore only free to move in relationship to their contract with that other party.

The Bible makes it very clear that God was very legal in His entering into a covenant with us, and that He is dealing with us legally. Because there are certain legal steps that must be fulfilled when two parties enter into a covenant relationship with one another. When we study the Bible we find that God diligently and specifically fulfilled each one of these legal steps, in drawing us into a contract relationship with Him. The first of these legal steps, in two parties entering into a covenant with one another, is that the

covenant or contract must be ordained in the hands of a mediator. Now the mediator is the go-between, who draws the two parties together into covenant relationship with one another. And here on the earth, when two parties enter into contract relationship with one another, the mediator is always a lawyer, an attorney who draws the two parties into his office. And there, he is the mediator, the go-between who draws both parties into a contract relationship with one another. A covenant to be legal must be ordained in the hands of a mediator. And the book of Hebrews tells us that both of these covenants that God has entered into with humanity were ordained in the hands of a mediator. The mediator of the old covenant was Moses, the mediator of the new covenant was Jesus. When God gave to Old Testament Israel the old covenant, He ordained it in the hands of a mediator. The mediator was Moses. God called Moses up into the mount, and there in the mount He gave Moses the terms and conditions of the contract, the covenant. And then Moses went down to the people to act as mediator, go-between, between God and the people.

The second legal step that must be taken, when two parties enter into a covenant relationship with one another is that the terms and conditions of the contract have to be written up. Again we see that the Bible reveals that God fulfilled this legal step too. He called Moses, the mediator, up into the mountain, and there in the mountain He gave Moses the terms and conditions of the contract. Yea, the Bible says that some of those terms and conditions were written on tables of stone, by the very finger of God Himself. Then Moses wrote up the rest of the statutes and the laws which were a part of the conditions and terms of the contract. Then, the third step, that must be fulfilled in order for two parties to enter into a contract together is that the mediator must read off, and present to both parties, all the terms and conditions of their contract. When we study the Scriptures further, we find that this is exactly what Moses, the mediator did.

The Bible says he came down from the mount of God and he gathered the children of Israel before Mount Sinai and there he read off for them all the terms and conditions of the contract, every statute and every judgment. We have them all recorded and written for us in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in the Scriptures.

Then the next legal step that must be taken, for two parties to enter into a contract with one another is that both parties must accept the contract. And the Bible makes it very clear that this legal step was fulfilled too. For we read that after Moses presented the covenant to the people, the people said, "All that the Lord sayeth, we will do." They accepted the contract. And when they did so, they bound themselves in a legal, binding, covenant relationship with God. From that hour forth Israel was under contract to God.

Israel was thereby responsible according to the great law of the universe, the highest law that exists, to fulfil the covenant and walk in the covenant. Therefore, when they broke the covenant after that, and they did break it continually, God had the perfect right to bring them to justice and allow them to go down into exile and into captivity to their enemies. But then there is one more legal step that is necessary to take when two people enter into a covenant with one another, and that is that both parties must sign the covenant,

Even this legal procedure was fulfilled by God to the letter. For when God gave the covenant through Moses He signed the covenant also. He had Moses kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the two tables of the law, on all the statutes, and all the judgments. And this was God's sign, God's signature, God's sign-a-ture to all the world that He was binding Himself in a legal binding contract covenant relationship with the people of Israel, out of all the people of the world. And that He was binding Himself to do and to fulfil all the terms and conditions of the contract.

What were the terms and conditions of the contract? God had said to Israel if you walk in my statutes and keep my judgments, then I will be your God and you shall be my people. I will bless your corn and your wine and I will take sickness away from the midst of you. If the people of Israel had walked in their covenant with their God, God would have done just this. They would have always had material plenty and the sicknesses that came upon the people in the nations roundabout them would never have come

upon them. But Israel did not walk in their covenant with their God. They continually broke it. And thereby God was just when He judged them and allowed them to go into captivity to their enemies.

Now nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ came from heaven with a new covenant, a new contract, with God. And once again, God step by step fulfilled each one of these legal procedures that was necessary to draw us into covenant relationship with Him. In the first place, the covenant must be ordained in the hands of a mediator. And Jesus was the mediator of the new covenant. God did not have to call Him up in the mount as He did Moses, in order to give Him the terms and the conditions of the covenant, for Jesus was already in the mount, in the heavenlies with God.

All God had to do was send Him down with the terms and the conditions of the new contract, the new covenant. Secondly, the terms and the conditions of the contract must be presented to both parties. God of course already knew them, but Jesus spent the three and a half years that He was here on the earth, preaching and teaching the terms and conditions of this covenant. Then God had them recorded for us in the New Testament, and new covenant that we have in our Bible, so that there would be no mistake in our minds concerning the terms and conditions of our covenant, both its rights and privileges and responsibilities.

Then the third step that must be taken in order for two parties to be legally bound together in a covenant is that both parties must accept the covenant. God, of course, accepted it when He sent it forth, but when you came to Jesus and when you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, that was when you accepted the covenant. This brings us to the great truth that most of God's people are completely ignorant of. That is, that when they accepted Jesus as their Saviour, it was not just Jesus that they accepted. It was not just the person of Jesus that they accepted. But what they accepted was the covenant that Jesus brought down from God. Just as Old Testament Israel, when Moses brought down the covenant to them and they said, "All that the Lord sayeth we will do," and thereby accepted the covenant, that's exactly, dear reader, what you did when you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. You were accepting the covenant that He brought down from heaven and you were saying, all that the Lord sayeth we will do. When you accepted that covenant you bound yourself in legal contract covenant relationship with God to walk in it and to fulfil it.

The great tragedy among God's people today is that they are so ignorant of their covenant, that they think that they are going to be saved by the person of Jesus alone. The person of Jesus is never going to save anyone. It is through your covenant with God that you are going to full salvation. The total purpose of the person Jesus coming, was to act as the mediator, and bring you the covenant, and then shed His blood to propitiate the justice of God and fulfil His mediatorial work, in drawing you and God together in contract, covenant relationship with one another. And that is what He did when He hung on the cross as your mediator. He hung between heaven and earth and stretched one hand toward God, and one hand toward the earth, and drew you and God together in a covenant contract relationship with one another. Then He said, "It is finished." Now what He meant was that His mediatorial work was finished. He had brought the covenant, presented the covenant, shed His blood to cleanse you of your sin, so that as a part of the contract His Spirit could be sent back to indwell you, and give you both the teaching and the leadership of the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit to walk in the covenant and to fulfil it. Now it is up to you, for you are under contract to God, and I am under contract to God, and it is not just through the person of Jesus that we are going to have full salvation but it is through the fulfilling of our covenant with Him. For God is not just dealing with us through the person of Jesus, He is dealing with us through our covenant, our contract with God.

Like Israel of old, we have broken the covenant. We have broken the contract, many times. And if it were not a covenant of grace, if Jesus had not suffered to propitiate the justice of God, so that God could overlook our breaking it, we would long since have been called before the judgment bar of God. But Jesus shed His blood to propitiate the justice of God, so that God could overlook our breaking of the covenant during this period of grace that He has given us. Therefore, we are not called to justice yet. But

if we waste away this period of two thousand years of grace that He has given us, in order that we might grow to the fullness of Christ, and be able to fulfil the covenant, then the day is going to come when the two thousand year period of grace is going to be over, and the judgment day is going to begin. The people of the world are going to be called before the judgment bar of God, but the peoples of the church, the Christians, are going to face the judgment seat of Christ. To face judgment and present cause why they have not used that period of grace to grow to the point where they could fulfil their covenant with God. That judgment seat of Christ is not going to be one literal day of judgment where Jesus sits behind a courtroom desk, and tries everybody.

But that judgment seat of Christ is going to be a period of time called the great tribulation, in which great tribulations are going to come on all the earth. All the Christians who have wasted away their period of grace and not allowed the Holy Spirit which has indwelled them, to teach them in all things and lead them into all truth, and bring them to the measure and the stature and the fullness of Christ, will then not have the power and leadership of the Spirit to go through that tribulation, without being terribly hurt. Therefore, they will bear their judgment for wasting away their period of grace, and not walking in their covenant. For most Christians do not even know the terms and conditions of their contract. And the reason is because they have never bothered to study the New Testament, under the tutorship of the great Spirit of God, and be taught and have read off for them the terms and conditions of their contract.

Therefore, they don't even know what their rights and privileges are under the covenant, neither how they can claim them through the Word of Faith. Neither do they know their responsibilities toward the other party, God, and the conditions of His contract. Because they have never bothered to study their covenant, and its terms and conditions, which are written up for us in the New Testament.

God's people are so foolish that they signed the contract with God, and they have never bothered to study it to see what their rights and privileges, and their responsibilities under the contract are. I wonder what we would think of a businessman here upon the earth, who signed a contract with another businessman, and entered into covenant contract relationship with him, without ever reading the terms of his contract. We would think this businessman was the most stupid and the most foolish businessman on the face of the earth, to sign a contract without ever reading it. And yet that is what God's people have done. They have signed a contract and entered into contract covenant relationship with God, and they have never bothered to study the terms and the conditions of their contract, what their rights and privileges are under their contract, how they can claim them, and what their responsibilities are.

This is why God's people are not receiving from God all those things that God has provided for them in their contract, the covenant through Jesus. It is because they are not even aware of what their rights and privileges are under the contract, and how to claim them. The reason for this is because they have never bothered to study the contract. Oh, if God's people could have this great truth burned into their hearts, you wouldn't have to have Sunday School visitation programs to get people to come to church to study the New Testament, you would have to build the doors bigger in order to get them in. If God's people became aware of this great truth, you wouldn't have to beg people to come and sit at the feet of God's anointed ministries, through whom the Holy Ghost is teaching God's children their contract, but again you would have to build a building bigger to get them in. But God's people are in such ignorance of the fact that they are under covenant with God, that they don't bother to study their contract.

No businessman would do so. When a businessman signs a contract with another party, he carefully studies every clause in that contract. Not only the big print but the fine print, for it is in the fine print of the contract that you have the true spirit of it. Even so, if God's people would turn their hearts, and their minds, away from the television and the movie houses, and seeking after the systems and pleasures of this world, and turn their hearts and minds to the New Testament, yea, and to God's anointed ministries who are uncovering for them the spiritual fulfilment that is in the types and shadows of that old covenant, then they would know their covenant with their God. Then they would know all the rights and privileges that are given to them in their covenant, through the work of Jesus Christ at Calvary. Then they would know

how to claim them. Also they would know the responsibilities to God, the other party in this contract, and be able to fulfil them. For this contract not only contains rights and privileges for us, but it also contains responsibilities to God, the other party, with whom we are in covenant relationship.

Our responsibilities under this covenant are to do everything that Jesus says do in the New Testament. Love our brother, turn the other cheek, go the second mile, if any man have two coats and his brother has none, let him give his brother one. And if we would say this is too much, I cannot fulfil such responsibility, then if you knew your covenant you would know that it is also in the covenant that if you just believe, God will then give you the power and the wisdom and the revelation and the anointing even, to fulfil your responsibility. Hallelujah!

Therefore, if God's people realized the seriousness of their covenant with their God, they would study not only the big print, the letter of the Word, but they would study the fine print, the Spirit of the Word also. For it is in the fine print, the Spirit of the Word, that you find the true Spirit and purpose of the covenant. Then no longer would they go about sick and suffering. No longer would they go about wearing their glasses on their eyes. No longer would they go about having to look to the world to place machines in their bodies to keep their heart ticking. Hallelujah. But they would know that in their covenant with God provision is made for all these things, and they would know how to claim it, and in walking in that covenant with their God they would have life.

God has provided in this covenant all the revelation, the anointing, the strength, the power that we need to have victory over sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow, yea, even power over death, that we might come to incorruptibility. All these things are in our covenant. Even as the old apostle Paul, who had the revelation said "Christ is made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

If God's people would only study their covenant they would know all their rights and privileges that are given unto them, by their contract with God, and how to claim them. Then no longer would they be at the mercy of the hucksters, and the so-called healers, who have proclaimed to them that through all kinds of little tricks they can get God to answer their prayer. One healer was bouncing a golf ball, and said to the congregation, "Catch the golf ball and believe God and God will heal you." Another so-called healer says to God's people, run down the aisle and jump up in the air and click your heels and shout hallelujah three times, and God will heal you. Another healer says go back and bang on the back wall three times and shout hallelujah, and God will heal you.

Dear friends, when we grow up, and know our contract, our covenant with our God, we don't need to go through all these little tricks to try to persuade God to answer our prayers. Neither do we need to cry, moan, groan, and weep as we have done like children in the past. All we need to do is take our contract, and walk into the presence of the just God who is under contract to us also, and point out those things that are provided in our contract, that we need.

Then stand up in the face of God, and say, God it is in my contract, and therefore in perfect confidence in the justice and integrity of your just nature, I stand in faith waiting for it to come to me.

Too long have God's people dealt with God as little children, coming to Him as if they had to cry, weep, moan and groan to get God to answer our prayer. We do not have to do any of those things. For God has bound Himself in a legal binding contract to provide for us everything that we need to have life, which includes healing, health, faith, revelation, power, anointing, and on and on until corruptible puts on incorruptible and mortality puts on immortality. We do not need to come into His presence, crying, moaning, and begging, like a little baby, neither do we need to play tricks on Him, and bounce golf balls, and bang on walls and click our heels in the air. All we need to do is walk into the presence of God, the great just judge of all the earth, with the sickness or the need and point out to Him, God it is here in my contract and it's my just right before the just God of all the universe, therefore, in faith in the justice and the integrity of your nature, I am going to wait in faith until it comes to me.

It is time that we stop dealing with our God as little children, and deal with Him according to our covenant. You can be sure that our father, Abraham, when he stood in the presence of God, dealt with Him according to the covenant that he had with God. You can be sure that Moses when he stood in the presence of God was not weeping, groaning and moaning, but he dealt with God according to the just integrity of His nature. When God said to Moses, "Get out of my way, I am going to destroy the children of Israel," Moses looked in the face of God and dealt with Him according to his knowledge of the just integrity of His nature. He said, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right." When we study the prayers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers in the faith, we don't find any crying, and groaning and moaning, like their children. One of the first things we see, as we study their prayers, we hear them saying, "God we know that you are a covenant-keeping God, and therefore we desire that you do this, and thus, and thus." They dealt with God according to His covenant and according to their contract that they had with Him. According to the just integrity of His nature.

In order that you might know that we can do so too, I would like to point out in closing, that God fulfilled that last legal step that must be fulfilled in order for two people to enter into contract with one another, when He gave us this new covenant, and that is, He signed the contract. For the last legal step that must be taken for two parties to enter into a contract with one another, is that both parties must sign the contract. And therefore, when God sent Jesus, the mediator, from heaven with the new contract, and when He presented the contract to us, God also signed the contract. Only in this New Testament age He did not sign it with the blood of an animal, as He did the old contract given through Moses. Nay, this contract God signed with the blood of His own Son, Jesus. For when Jesus hung upon Calvary's cross, before the whole world on Golgotha's Hill, and shed His blood, and sprinkled it all over the earth, this was God's sign, this was God's signature. This was God's signature to the whole world that God was binding Himself in a legal covenant, contract, agreement, with everyone in every generation who came to Jesus, and through accepting Jesus as mediator, accepts this covenant, this contract with God.

And even though you and I were not there that day, when God signed the contract, it became legal before God that day. Because you see, sometimes when a lawyer, a mediator, draws two people into a contract with one another, when it is time for the contract to be signed, both parties can't be in his office at the same time. And so he will have one party sign the contract in his office and have the other party come in later and sign the contract. This is exactly what God did, that day long ago on Golgotha's Hill when He entered into contract with us. Hallelujah, Jesus was the mediator.

God was there, but you and I were not there at that time. We had not accepted the covenant at that time. But nevertheless, Jesus the mediator was there and God was there. God signed the contract with the blood of His own son and it became legal that day.

In every generation after that, whosoever comes to Jesus and accepts Him as mediator, and in the presence of Jesus, accepts the covenant and then puts their signature to the covenant, then that contract becomes legal and binding in their lives also. For you see, not only did God sign the contract, but we also had to sign the contract. When we signed it, it was not with circumcision, as it was in the days of the old covenant. But our signature to the contract was water baptism.

When we accepted water baptism, and allowed ourselves to be baptized in water, that was our sign, our signature, our sign-a-ture to all the world, that we had accepted Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and accepted the covenant that He had brought. In signing that contract with water baptism, we are binding ourselves in a legal binding relationship with God, who has bound Himself in a legal binding contract covenant with us, to do all that that contract says.

Therefore, you see dear friends, we do not need to deal with God as little children, and we do not need to deal with Him with golf ball bouncings, wall soundings, heel clickings, weepings, cryings, and groanings as little babies. For God has already bound Himself to give us everything that is provided in

the provisions of that contract. All we need to do is to study our contract, and to know our rights and privileges are under the contract, and what our responsibilities are.

Then when we have a need, simply go into the presence of a just God in prayer, and in faith, yea, the great judge of all the universe. Whether our need be healing, health, provision, financial, material, spiritual, hallelujah, whatever it is all that we need to do is stand in the presence of the just God of all the earth. Then say, God it is in my contract, and therefore I am going to stand in faith, in the just integrity of your nature, to keep your part of the contract until it comes to me. Therefore, there is going to rise up a many-membered company of Sons of God in this last hour, and they are no longer going to be as children weeping, groaning, and crying like a bunch of little babies, neither are they going to be fooled by the golf ball bouncings, and the heel clickings of the religious charlatans of our world, who call themselves ministry. Hallelujah!

But they are going to study their contract with their God. They are going to know what their rights and their privileges are under that contract and one by one, they are going to start claiming in faith all things that are provided in their contract.

They are not going to let a carnal fleshy Babylonish church tell them that God won't do this, and God won't do that, and God won't do this over here, and nobody can be perfect. But they are going to study the provisions of their contract and they are going to know how to claim those provisions by standing in the face of a just God, and with the word of faith claiming it. One by one they are going to claim that which is provided in their contract. They are going to claim revelation. They are going to claim anointing. They are going to claim faith. They are going to claim healing. They are going to claim divine health, and then the day is going to come when they are going to be fully aware that power over death itself is provided for them in their contract. And they are going to walk into the presence of the judge over all the earth, of angels, of demons, of death, of life, and they are going to claim victory over death itself. And corruptible is going to put on incorruptible and mortality is going to put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass that saying, "Oh death where is your sting, Oh grave where is your victory." And the world shall see a manifestation of the Sons of God. The earth shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The whole creation, which has groaned and travailed until now, waiting for the manifestation of those Sons of God, shall be set free.

God help us even in this hour, as we hear this message to lift up our hands and renew our covenant with our God even as old Israel did. And deal with Him no longer through tricks and childish weepings and crying, but deal with Him according to our contract. Those of you who read this message right now who have been fighting to get your healing for your body and some sickness that you haven't been able to overcome. Stop your weeping, stop your groaning, stop your moaning, stop running to the charlatans for this trick and that trick, Hallelujah, go into the New Testament. See there in your contract and your covenant with God, where healing is promised to you in your contract. If you only meet the condition of believing in the just integrity of God's nature. Then lift your hands before your God right now, and say, God, no more weepings, no more groanings, no more cryings, Hallelujah! But like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, my father I simply say that I know that you are a covenant-keeping God. And I have seen that the healing of this sickness is in my contract. Therefore, I receive it right now. I am going to stand in faith in the just integrity of your just nature until it comes to pass for me. In Jesus name, Amen!

Renew your covenant with your God thou child of Israel. Walk in it, Hallelujah, and God, like Israel of old, will bless your corn, your spiritual corn, the Word of God, and He will bless your wine, your spiritual wine, the supernatural life of God that He will pour in you. And He will take sickness and death away from the midst of US. Hallelujah to His precious Name. Amen.

WHY ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD SAM FIFE

In this study I would like to share with you one of the greatest truths in all of the New Testament, one that has meant more to my life and given me more strength, more faith and enabled me to stand without being moved, sometimes when all around me was being moved, more than any other truth in the New Testament. This truth is found in the 8th Chapter of the book of Romans verses 28 thru 30.

Here we hear the Apostle Paul say by the Spirit: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Now I would like to remind you, as we begin this study, that here in the book of Romans we have a view of God, and his purpose, and his plan for us that is given to us, not by some young novice preacher who thinks he knows God, who thinks he knows the truth of God and who thinks he knows the plan and purpose of God for His people, but by the great Apostle Paul.

Here we have a view of God given to us not by someone who is just starting out in the ministry of Christ, but by the great apostle who has spent his life in communion with Christ. A view of God given to us not by some theologian who is seeking to build a place for himself in the world, and in the denominational worlds of our day, but by the old man of God who was called out by Jesus Himself, personally, and taken out in the Arabian desert for three years, after Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road, and given the revelation of God which Peter could not receive. The revelation which James or John, or none of the rest of the apostles could receive, but he who must be called out to be the 13th Apostle.

Because he alone was able to see above and beyond the workings of Judaism and the religious systems of that day, and see the great revelation which Jesus Christ wanted to give to this world.

I cannot impress to your minds enough that here in Romans 8 we have a view of God given to us by one who has seen God and Christ as no other man has seen them. We have a view of God by one who was chosen to be the instrument through whom God would give the world the revelation which no other man has received. A view of God by the one who was chosen to write 13 books of the New Testament Bible that is given to us, and to unveil for us, and to point out to us, how the workings of God in New Testament history are the fulfilling of the types and the prophecies of the Old Testament revelation.

So when you come to Romans 8:28 and 29, you should expect to be given a picture of God, and of God's plan and of God's purpose, for your life that you cannot receive from Your minister, that you cannot receive from any of the organizations of our day. A higher view of God, which the old man of God gives to us, when he is an old man, after he has crossed the world on his mighty missionary journeys, after he has walked with Jesus all his life.

We should then expect to receive a view and a picture of God and His purpose, and His plan for our lives which we have not hitherto received and which we have not hitherto seen. And that's just what we will receive if we come to understand what is taught here, when we hear the Apostle Paul say: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified: them he also glorified."

I would like to make the first point that Paul makes here. As we hear him say, 'and we know that all things work together for good for them that love God,' when you hear the Apostle Paul say it, you hear him say it with a ringing certainty, with no doubt in his mind, with a perfect assurance rolling forth from him. Paul knew this thing, he who was thrown upon a garbage heap after being beaten half to death, knew that all things work together for good to them that love God. He who was cast down in the Philippian prison after his back had been beaten raw and bloody with 39 stripes knew that all things work together for them that love God.

No matter what happened to him, Paul knew that it was working together for his good. He did not just think it, he did not just hope that it might, he did not wander in a fog of confusion and discouragement, like so many Christians do today. They want to cling to the idea that that which was happening to them was for their good, but not being absolutely certain of it, because they could not possibly understand how that which was happening to them in their trial and test they were going through could possibly be for their good. Paul knew it, Paul was certain of it.

He was certain of it not simply because he had found a verse of scripture in the Bible that someone else had written beforehand which said: "All things work together for good for them that love God." Paul was not certain of it for that reason, he was certain of it because he knew the great truth that he announces to us after he says all things work together for good. Paul was certain of it because he knew why all things work together for his good because he knew whom God foreknew, He had predestinated to be conformed to the image of His son, and whom He had predestinated, them He had called and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

Most Christians today, when they are going through tribulation and trouble and they need comfort, they come to this verse of scripture in the Bible and they read, "All things work together . . ." They read it and they cling to it, and they draw a measure of comfort from it, but even so they cannot say with the Apostle Paul, I know that this thing is working for my good. They want to believe that it is, and they believe that it is to the best of their ability, because the Bible says so, but they do not have the understanding of just why and how this thing they are going through is working for their good. Therefore they cannot say with the Apostle Paul, I know that it works for my good.

They can say, "I believe it," because the Bible says so but Paul says, "I know it," and he knew it with an absolute certainty. And of course you know when one is going through a trial or a test, when we are going through a tribulation which sometimes seems so serious that we cannot hardly bear it, there will be always some good brother, who will come around and open the Bible to the scripture and will say to us: "Now you know brother, all things work together for good to them who love God." Half the time that thing has become so serious, and we have become so pressed down, we are so burdened under it, that we think deep down in ourselves, "that's fine for you brother to say that to us but you are not the one who has the trouble."

Oh, beloved, when we come to the understanding of the precious truth that Paul taught here, when we come to understand why all things work together for good and just how everything that happens to us is working together for our good, I think you will see after this study. Then with the Apostle Paul we will be able to say: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." But you see, the problem is, most Christians when they get into trouble, they come to this verse of scripture and they read only verse 28 - we know all things work together for good for them that love God, and they don't go on to verses 29 and 30 and let the Holy Spirit show them how and why all things work together for good to them that love God.

In verse 29 we read, "for," and this little word "for" thrown in here means "because," so when we read the two together, we read "all things work together for good for them that love God, because whom He did

foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." That's why all things work together for good to them that love God, because those whom God foreknew, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Now let us say in the beginning of this study: most people, when you mention the doctrine of predestination, they immediately get frightened of the doctrine, because the only predestination they have heard of in the past is Calvinistic predestination. Many years ago, in fact hundreds of years ago, John Calvin, who is the founder of the Presbyterian faith, came up with a theory of predestination, because he saw the Bible teaches predestination. He came up with a theory of predestination which is called Calvinistic predestination, in which he taught that before the world was, God in essence, the Spirit of God chose this one and this one over here and predestined them to eternal salvation, and then he stopped there. Since that time the other half of Christianity who followed the Armenian theology rejected predestination entirely. Turned away because they know that Calvin's theory as far as it went presents the idea that if God arbitrarily chose this one or that one over there to be saved, it implies that He at the same time predestined that all others be doomed and lost. And this implies an unjust God, and this seems to take away our own free will responsibility to believe on Jesus as our Saviour and follow God.

Therefore so many cannot accept the Calvinistic theory of predestination. But the problem is they do not understand that Calvinistic predestination is not Biblical predestination. There is a distinct difference between Biblical predestination and Calvinistic predestination. Let me say this first beloved what we want to do is, not to simply run away from the doctrine simply because Calvin did not go far enough. But what we want to do is come to the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to show us the truth that we might understand Biblical predestination.

Here the simple truth is, if we don't accept the doctrine of predestination, then we have to throw away about one third of the New Testament. We have to do what like so many others do, when they do not want to accept other truths that are presented in the Bible, bury our heads in the sand and turn away and sweep a great portion of the New Testament under our theological rug and hide it there.

Because in just about every one of the Apostle Paul's epistles he brings forth the truth that we are chosen and predestinated of God before the foundation of the world. But when we come here to Romans 8 and we simply open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit, very quickly he can show us the truth, the glorious truth, the truth when it is clearly seen can give us an anchor to hold on to which will be a solid rock from which no tempest or winds can ever cause us to fall.

Because you see, what the scripture says is, "whom God did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." And so we see that God's predestination is based upon His foreknowledge of what man would do of his own free will.

The simple truth is, God does not dwell in time as we do. Time is a part of our earthly experience. God dwells in eternity, there is no time with Him. Therefore, at any given moment, with His foreknowledge, He can see a million years into the future. And in any given moment He can foresee every event of the future. The simple truth is, before the world was, God could look down in an instant through the telescope of time and He could foresee, in fact He did foresee everyone, who would of their own' free will accept Jesus as their Saviour, and because He foresaw they would of their own free will accept Jesus as their Saviour, He predestinated them to become conformed to the image of His Son.

Therefore we read, "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." And so we see that there is no schism between man's free will and God's predestination. God

predestinated man to be conformed to the image of Christ on the basis of His foreknowledge that we would of our own free will accept Jesus as Our Saviour. Thus we see that there is no schism between the two, but the two work in perfect conjunction with one another to produce our eternal salvation.

Those whom God looked upon down through the telescope of time and foresaw would of their own free will accept Jesus as their Saviour, because he foreknew they would of their own free will accept Jesus as their Saviour, lest the enemy somehow would get in and keep them from hearing and believing, He predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son. But then the question arises: what about those who would be lost? Did God at the same time through predestinating certain ones to be saved predestine the others to be doomed throughout eternity?

No! At the same time God foreknew and foresaw all those who would accept Jesus as their Saviour, He also foreknew and foresaw all those who would never want to follow Jesus, but who would walk of their own will to follow the devil, and the world, and the pleasures of this world. Because He foresaw that they would of their own free will want to follow the devil and never turn to Jesus, He simply left them alone to do what He foreknew they would want to do of their own will. He did nothing for or against them, but left them to do what they would want to do of their own free will which was follow Satan to eternal doom and destruction, and the world to eternal doom and destruction, and therefore He did not do them any injustice whatsoever.

Since He foreknew they would never desire of their own free will to turn to Christ, the only possible way He could have done anything for them was to make provision to force them against their will to turn to Christ. And this is the one thing God can never do, overrule our free will. And if that is the only way that He could do anything for them at all, He must needs do nothing but leave them to follow the way of their own will, and that is exactly what He did.

Some years back, God gave us an illustration to illustrate this. Suppose you plan to give a party, let us say a wedding feast, because the scriptures tell us of God's wedding feast for the Lamb, And suppose you had 100 persons that you planned to invite to this party. Suppose you foreknew beforehand that 10 of these people would answer your invitation, perhaps some of them would have to be sent 2 or 3 invitations, but at last they would answer and come.

You foreknew they would at last come, you would make absolutely certain that they received enough invitations to at last persuade them to come. You would make all plans and make all provisions beforehand to be absolutely certain that they received enough invitations to at last persuade them to come. But if you foreknew that 90 of these persons would never accept your invitations, even if you would send them 1000 invitations, then you would be very foolish to make all kinds of plans to send them invitation. If you were wise, foreknowing they would not accept, you would not waste your time at all, but you would just leave them alone to go the way they wanted to go. And that is the way that our precious God has done. Because He foreknew a certain number of the persons who would receive the invitation to His wedding feast would answer the invitations and would come even though some might need to receive many invitations. He made plans and He provided, and He predestinated that they should receive as many invitations as are necessary in order to at last persuade them to come.

But those whom He foreknew would never come to His wedding feast, no matter how many invitations they received, He simply must leave them alone, because God is not a purposeless God. He cannot make all kinds of plans to bring them that He foreknew would never come; He must leave them alone to go their own way. And so we understand what the scriptures mean when they say, whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. Hallelujah!

Now I want to point out something to you, dear friend. The scripture does not say: whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be converted. It does not say: whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to get saved and join the church and be baptized, to make the profession of faith. No, no. May God make it real to your hearts that the scripture says: those whom God foreknew would accept Jesus of their own free will, and would follow Jesus of their own free will, He predestinated to become conformed to the image of His Son. That is to become exactly like Jesus! To become conformed to the image of something is not to be just like something. When we say of Johnny is like Jimmie, we might mean there are some similarities there. But when we say: Johnny is the image of Jimmie, then we mean that they are exactly alike.

The scripture says: "Whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son" this means that we were not predestined just to get saved. If that were so, then it would imply that something possibly might happen to us, between the time we accepted Christ and the time that we are conformed to His image, to prevent us from reaching that point and keep us from reaching that place. But when the scripture says: "Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," then it means to tell us that those that God foreknew would of their own free will accept Christ as their Saviour have been predestinated to go all the way to conformation to the image of Christ.

Nothing can prevent you from coming to that point! The enemy may lead you down many side trails, and he may trick you out of the way for a while, and he may cause you to fall for a while, but God in His sovereign wisdom and in His sovereign grace has made provision for the very fall itself to work together for your good, to drive you back into the way and to take you on to conformation to the image of Christ, to bring you to that glorious place that he has purposed and predestined for you.

Though the enemy may lead you down many side trails, God in His sovereign wisdom and grace has made even the side trail, pathways to the point that He has purposed for you to come to and you must ultimately come to that point. Because the thing has been done before the foundation of the world, and not only you, but every one of the foreknown elect members of the Body of Christ, whom God foreknew before the world was would turn to Jesus, have been predestined to become conformed to His image.

Therefore, no matter what side trails the enemy may lead them down, Oh Hallelujah, God had made even the side trails themselves to be instruments, which will take us to that place, that point of glorious conformation to His image that He has provided for us.

No wonder the great apostle could say: "All things work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose." No wonder he could say: "And we know that all things work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose." They work together for good because those that God foreknew, who are the elect of God have been predestined to come to the point, and nothing can keep them from it.

Then the great apostle goes on to point out to us, that not only our calling and acceptance of Christ is predestinated, but our justification is predestinated, and also our glorification is predestinated. Not only our salvation experience is predestinated, but every step of the way unto our glorification has already been accomplished before the foundation of the world. For he goes on to say in verse 30, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called," past tense. It was done before the foundation of the world. Your calling was accomplished and completed and provided for in the mind and heart of God, and proclaimed and done by God before the foundation of the world.

Some years ago when I was called into Christ, I thought it just happened that way. It did not just happen that way. And so someday along the line, when someone came to you and witnessed to you, the Spirit spoke through them and called you to Christ, or the Spirit spoke to you Himself and called you to Christ.

You thought it was just happenstance that those circumstances just happened that led you to Christ as your Saviour. Dear friend, it did not just happen that way. It was done before the foundation of the world. What happened was just the working out in your experience of that which was already done and provided for by God, before the foundation of the world. Hallelujah!

The Spirit goes on to say through Paul, "also whom he called, them he also justified." Do you know what the word justified means? Ask any theologian, consult any theological dictionary, and they will tell you that to be justified means, to be declared by God to be completely just, or completely without sin, or completely sinless in the eyes of God. Someone put it this way; justification means, just-as-if-I-had-not-sinned. And that is what it means. The scripture says, whom he called them he also justified, past tense. He did it before the foundation of the world, because He foreknew you would believe on Jesus as your Saviour of your own free will before the world was. God declared you to be perfectly just, He declared you to be perfectly without sin, to be completely sinless before the foundation of the world, because He foreknew you would believe on Jesus as your Saviour. Hallelujah!

Therefore you were justified and saved before the foundation of the world. All the time you were wandering through the world, you were thinking you were a horrible sinner. In the eyes of your heavenly Father, you were His justified child of God. Back yonder, when I accepted Christ as my Saviour, I thought that was when I was saved. I had been saved all along before I was born. Hallelujah! When I accepted Christ as my Saviour back there, what happened was not that I got saved, but only that that which was already true, became true in my experience as I accepted Christ as my Saviour and became conscious that I was saved. It was done before the foundation of the world.

Now you begin to understand why God could say to Ezekiel or one of the other prophets, 'before you came forth from the womb, I chose you.' Of course He did. Because of His foreknowledge of what they would be and what they would do of their own free will, He had chosen them before they came forth from the womb.

And we go on to see the next, and the last step in our journey toward our salvation, that our heavenly Father had provided for us, We see that this is predestinated too, for Paul goes on to say: "Moreover whom he justified, them he also glorified." You know what your glorification is, beloved? In order to understand what your glorification is, you first need to understand what Jesus' glorification is.

In Ephesians 1:20 we read that Jesus has been raised up to sit down at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. Now we have already learned in our previous studies, since God does not exist in a physical form, that God is omnipresent Spirit which fills the whole universe and cannot be bottled up in some physical form somewhere, neither does He sit on a physical throne. Therefore we have learned that this expression, that Jesus was raised to sit at the right hand of God, is not given to present the idea that Jesus was raised up to sit down and has been sitting there the last 1900 years. This doesn't denote His physical position, but His spiritual position. The idea of God sitting on a throne and Jesus sitting on a throne beside Him, ruling with Him denotes to us the truth of Jesus going through His passion, having been raised up to co-rulership and co-equality with God over the universe; that's Jesus' glorification.

Romans 6:5 tells us: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Ephesians 2:6 states that God has raised us up together with him, past tense, has raised us up together with him and made us to sit together with him in the heavenly places .

This tells us that God has raised us up in Him and with Him to the same place of co-rulership and co-equality with God, or to become exactly like Him and that is our glorification, and the scripture says, it is

done, it is finished, it was accomplished before the foundation of the world, and all that is needed is for us to let it unfold in our experience day by day, and grow up into that which God has already provided and predestined for us.

You see, God is not like man. Man decides he is going to build a building and he makes his plans and draws up his blueprints, but then he must take his hammer and saw and go out and begin to build the building. Because man is imperfect he might get halfway through with building and something happens to prevent him from finishing the building, and he never finishes it.

This is not so with our God. In His omnipotence, His omniscience and His omnipresence, when He purposes to do a thing with His people, He makes His plans and He provides for every point to be carried out. He then speaks the almighty Word of God and says: "Let it be done," and it is done from that moment forth. Then He sits back and waits for the power that emanates from His nature to bring it into being.

That is exactly the mighty view of God that the Apostle Paul saw. He saw Him as He is and as He does. He saw that this is exactly what God did. He purposed to do a thing with His people, and He made His plans and he made provisions for every point and then He said it is finished and it is done, and beloved, it is done. Nothing can keep it from coming into being. God will not get the building half way built and then something happens to prevent Him from finishing it. No, every brick shall go into its place, every bit of mortar shall go into its place, and the building shall be completed.

Therefore, all things truly do work together for good for them that love God, because whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate to become conformed to the image of his Son, moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, past tense, and whom he called, them he also justified, past tense, and whom he called, them he also glorified, past tense!

Dear friend, the thing is done right up to your glorification, right up to your conformation to the image of Christ, the thing is done, it is completed. Nothing can prevent you from arriving at that point. Let Satan rage, let him pull all of his tricks, let him drag you off on to this side road, or that side road. He does not know that the foreknowledge and the mighty power of our God, who in His sovereign grace and wisdom and power, has made even the side roads pathways to that point of perfection which He has purposed and predestined for us. Let the enemy come against us with all kind of trials and all kinds of testing, and all kinds of tribulations. Our God in His wisdom has made the tribulations and testings themselves instruments of purifying fire, which will drive us closer and closer to Him. This will purge all the dross out of us and refine us as silver that we might come forth as gold, that we might at last arrive at the point which God has provided for us.

This is why the Apostle Paul could say: "Therefore I glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, more hope or more faith, and hope or faith maketh not ashamed." Romans 5:3, 4, 5.

What Paul meant was when trouble comes his way and tribulation comes his way he says: I rejoice in it, I get happy about it. Because it teaches me to pray my prayer of deliverance and then patiently wait for God to deliver, and when I patiently wait for God to deliver, then God does deliver, and this deliverance gives me the experience of knowing that my God gives the victory. The tribulation works the patience, the patience works the experience, and then when I have had the experience of seeing my God give the victory, this works more hope, more faith for the next testing that the devil is going to put upon me. And then Paul says, that faith will never make me ashamed, for I will never be embarrassed by believing in my God, because He will always come through.

One of the men in my church used to put it this way: God will never let you be embarrassed when you believe Him, He will always come through. Beloved, when you let that cycle work, tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience more hope, knowing that all things work together for good for those that love God, to take you to the place that God has for you, it becomes a beautiful cycle. Which when you let the wheel roll will become an instrument whereby your God will use everything the devil throws at you, as a stepping stone to greater and higher faith. This will enable you to overcome him and be completely victorious in the end.

The Lord uses everything the enemy throws against us simply as an instrument in us to defeat him in the end. No wonder Paul could say, I glory in tribulation, because he knew this great truth that all of it, God has provided us instruments to take us on to conformation to the image of Christ.

I am teaching the people in my church, and some of them have come to that point, where I am looking forward to the day when they call me on the phone not to say: Oh brother Fife, I am sick, or my child is sick, pray for me, but they call me on the phone and they say: "Praise the Lord, brother Fife. Here is another wonderful opportunity to glory in tribulation until the tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience more faith, to defeat the devil and move onward towards another step, and towards the glorious goal that God has set for me. And I have some who call me on the phone when they get sick, and instead of groaning and moaning they say: "Praise the Lord, brother Fife, here is another chance to grow in faith. You believe God with me and let's go up another step in faith.' Why, because they have come to understand this great truth, and now they can say with the Apostle Paul, I know that all things work together for good for them that love God. I know that whatever testing comes to me, whatever tribulation comes to me, whatever battle I am in, no matter how bad it gets, or how bad it seems, I know that it is an instrument of testing, of purifying fire, which will take me on that place, which my father has provided for me. Hallelujah!

When we see Christians falling all around us and we see the Church struggling in the throes of weakness, confusion and discouragement and we see the fire coming upon Christians all around us, we don't get excited, we don't get upset, we don't begin to wonder if the Kingdom is going to fall apart or not. We don't get the least bit discouraged. We know that God is simply taking His people through the purifying fires and that everything that is happening, is happening for the good of those to whom it is happening. For their Father is taking them to that point that He has predestined them for, conformation into the image of Christ. Our faith does not waver when we see this one fall, or that one fall, or this one deceived, or that one deceived. We know that God is on the throne and Jesus is yet victorious and that all things have been done and have been accomplished in God's foreknown elect. We understand that those who are outside of that elect Body must go to their place they have chosen of their own free will, and nothing can prevent it.

As we let the Spirit of God lead us on day by day, praying: "Lord, keep me in the fire," and when tribulation and testing come upon us, we understand its purpose fully, we rejoice in it, we glory in it, because we know and now we understand how and why, all things work together for good for those who love God.

I was teaching this truth in a Bible College Seminar not so long ago, just a few weeks ago, and just last night one of the young women in the seminar said to me: "Bro. Fife, you don't know what this truth has done for me. As a Christian I have never been able to glory in tribulation before. I have always wept over it and been confused over it, and felt that perhaps God was not treating me fairly and rightly. Now I have seen the glorious truth." She said, "I have just gone through a test that a year ago, I wouldn't possibly have been able to stand up under it; but now, all through it I could glory in tribulation knowing that my God was refining me as silver and bringing me forth as gold. With no fear in my heart any longer that I will at last reach that goal,

for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, whom He did predestinate them He also called, whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified."

The thing is done, it's complete, it is finished before the foundation of the world. Our God shall bring it to pass in us. No wonder the Apostle Paul in verse 3 1, after teaching this great truth, could then say: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who call be against us?"

The conclusion Paul drew after he had taught this great truth is since God has done all that for us, who can hinder us, who can prevent us from coming to that place that God has prepared for us. "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Verse 32), even unto our glorification. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, let people say what they may. God has justified us and will take us through. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Verse 34)

Then notice this; these are conclusions that Paul is drawing after he had seen this great truth: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ. Not our love for Christ, but Christ's love for us. Who shall break us loose from it? Shall tribulation or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword? Look at verse 27. He said, "nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Not we will be more than conquerors, but we are more than conquerors. And not that we are just conquerors over tribulation, distress, sickness and sufferings, and the deceit of the devil. Nay, he says, because of this great truth we are more than conquerors. Then Paul takes every life experience that is possible to know, good and bad, and he lumps them all together. And he says to you dear Christian friend, that because this great truth he enunciated is true, not one of them can keep you from coming to the place God has prepared for you.

For Paul states: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers (the devil and his kingdom of demons) nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Verses 3 8-39) Since the days some years ago, that God showed me this precious truth, there has been no wavering in my faith. There has been no fear, and no concern that, or anybody that I minister to, will not ultimately come to that place God has prepared for them. And when I see them going through testings, I can teach them, I can believe with them, and I can help to lead them through that purifying fire. But at the same time I can do it without getting upset.

I can know that the hand of their Father is upon them, that He is working something in them. For all things work together for their good. I can simply help them on the way, yet I can glory in even the test itself.

I can say, not what I used to say in my heart; "Well, I hope this great trial that I've got is working for my good, but I sure can't see how it does," but I can say with the Apostle Paul, "I know that it is working for my good, and I can see perfectly how it does," and go on to the place God has prepared for me. Oh, the riches of the glory of the wisdom and the power of our glorious God. May God make it real and bless it in your life. In Jesus name. Amen.

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS by SAM FIFE

I CORINTHIANS 3, verse 21, Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours: 22, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's

Here in I Corinthians 3:21, we have one of the most astounding statements in all the Bible. So astounding that, unless it is properly understood, it is almost impossible for one to believe. The Apostle Paul is speaking to the Christians in the Corinthian Church. And yet, since the Corinthian Church was only a part of God's whole church in every age, and since the words spoken to the Corinthians in the Corinthians Church was spoken to all Christians of every age, the spirit in Paul was speaking not only to them, but unto all of us, when he makes this astounding statement, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS".

I wonder if my readers have ever stopped to meditate on the largeness of the scope of this statement of God, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS". Now if I were to ask most of my readers if they believed this statement, because they are Christians and because they have respect for the Bible, they would probably immediately answer yes. But what they would probably mean is not that they really believed this astounding statement, that each one of them all things belong to him, but they would probably mean that they agreed with it as a true statement because it is in the Bible, which they respect as God's Word. But not that they fully understood the statement or that they fully understood how and why all things belong to them, and therefore, believed each within his own being that all things in this universe was actually his.

In order that you may see what I mean, let us stop for a moment and meditate on the broad range of the scope of the statement, when God says, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS".

This takes in every tree, every ocean, every mountain, every sea, every man, every woman, all the houses, money, cars, children, land and goods that everyone around us has, the sun, the moon, all the planets, the stars. The statement reaches out into God's great universe where our scientists tell us that there are more than a billion suns, and each one has worlds revolving around it, like our world.

When God speaks through the Apostle Paul and makes this astounding statement to each one of us, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS", God takes all the things in the whole creation, wraps them up in one package, one phrase, and says to each one of us, they are all yours.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians in order to try to get over to them the largeness of the scope of what he was saying, gives an impressive list as he says to them in vers,2 22, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world". Let me pause right here, and point out that when Paul says, or the world, in this one all encompassing phrase; he lumps mountains, seas, oceans, trees, corn, peas, cattle, sheep, oxen, people and everything around us that constitutes the world around us that we live in. The Spirit of God, in the Apostle Paul, amazingly says to each one of us, it is all yours. Then Paul goes on to say, or life. When we pause a moment and look into this two word phrase, we realize that it encompasses perfect health, perfect peace, perfect joy, perfect happiness, victory over sickness, suffering, sin, and death. All these are lumped up into this little two word phrase, "or life".

Then in the next item on the list, God goes on to say through Paul, "or death". Pause a moment with me dear reader, and meditate on this one. God is saying to us that death itself belongs to me and it belongs to you. This thing called death, our chief enemy, the last enemy, the word of God says, shall be defeated. The great ogre that we have so long feared and bowed down before, the Spirit of God, through the Apostle Paul, says to us that it is only one of our possessions, it is subject to us.

A few years ago, someone asked me the question; "Brother Fife, who do you think has power over death, God or the Devil?" At that time, because my revelation was limited, my answer to them was that the devil

has power over death. God in this dispensation has allowed the devil to use it as his instrument. Then I quoted them the scripture in the Book of Job, where the Bible says, God allowed the devil to kill Job's sons and daughters by causing a great tornado to hit the house they were in. And though God Himself, uses death as the instrument by which he releases His people to enter into the higher heavenly life; I told them that it was still the devil that had power to bring death upon people and to kill people. Therefore, it was the devil that had the power over death.

But now my revelations in the mysteries of God has increased. My understanding of who I am, in Christ, and in God's great plan, has given me a deeper understanding of the answer to this question. When someone asks me that question now, who has power over death, my answer is not, God or the devil, but I answer them, I have power over death. For the Word of God says clearly, in I Corinthians 3, that death belongs to me. But Paul in his impressive list of the things that belong to us, does not stop there, lest there be something in all the scope of God's universe that is missed, in this great revelation, that all things are ours.

He goes on to say, or things present, or things to come; all are yours. Here is the little phrase, or things to come, this astounding statement reaches out into all the endless ages of the future that are to come, and everything that shall be and everything that shall happen during those endless ages. The Spirit of God says to you and me, the sons of God, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Now, up until some months ago, I had read this statement many times in the Bible, I knew it was there, but it had not really registered with me, because I had no understanding of its meaning. Therefore, it was practically impossible for me to believe that all things belong to me. I live in a world where even the title deed to the little two bedroom one bath house that I live in, is not in my own hands, but in the hands of the mortgage company to whom I make monthly payments. Therefore, in the context of the world I live in, I can't even say my home is mine.

In my ministry, in which I travel across the country, I fly an airplane. But the title to the airplane is also in the hands of the finance company, to whom I make monthly payments. Therefore, I cannot say that it is mine. About the only thing that I have in my possession, to which the title is not in the hands of the mortgage company, or the finance company, are the clothes I wear on my back, and the shoes I wear on my feet. Therefore, in the context of the world I live in, the only things that belong to me are my clothes and shoes. Yet the Word of God says to me that all things are mine.

Considering these things, one can easily see why it was so hard for me to believe this statement, until I began to understand it a few months ago. I was sitting on a convention platform, behind Brother Buddy Benton, who was ministering under a heavy anointing, some of the deeper mysteries of God. Suddenly, the spirit of revelation began to cause lights to flash in my soul. I began to realize, that in the context of this Babylonish world system in which we live, in this age, the spirit of Babylon and Lucifer who rules over it, has separated God from us, and separated all of us from one another, has divided us up into nations and denominations and races and colours, and convinced us all that God is an individual, separate and distinct from us. That Jesus is an individual, separate and distinct from us. That we are all individuals, separate and distinct from one another. That everything that each one of us has in his hands, or his possession is his alone, that everything that God is, and everything that God has is His alone. And that He keeps Himself and it off in some far off heavenly city far from us.

In the Babylonish context and system that Lucifer has established and that we live in during this age, the spirit of Babylon has taken its Babylonish names and divided us up into many families; the Joneses, the Smiths, the Browns, and the Fifes. Every man sweats his life away to get himself a title deed to a little handful of God's goods here in this earth that he has in his possession. Then he says, I and these belong to me and me alone. Therefore, in the context of this Babylonish world system, that we live in today, the statement of the Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul here, could never be true.

But that night on the convention platform, I began to realize that the Apostle Paul was not speaking to citizens of this world system, or citizens of the kingdom of this age, or this earthly creation, but he was speaking to Christians who have been translated into the Kingdom of God, and born into a new creation. He was speaking to citizens of an age that is to come in this world, a few years from now. When Babylon will have fallen and God by His judgment day, during the great tribulation will have destroyed all the world systems of this present age off the face of the earth. Then we will live together as one body in a new age, where no man will count anything he has his own, but where all will belong to all. Therefore, every member of that new age will be able to say without qualification or fear of contradiction, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE".

The Apostle Paul could make this astounding statement to the Corinthian Christians, all things are yours, because he considered not the Babylonish context of the world system we live in. But he saw that which was actually true from God's standpoint. God is not an individual, separate from us; Jesus is not an individual, separate from us; we are not individuals, separate from one another. But Jesus the head, and all we the members of His body are all one many membered man, members one of another. Since, Jesus is in God and we are in Him, we all are members of God also, of His body. Therefore, all things that God is, and all things that God has in this world and in this universe do not belong to any one of us, as an individual, or anyone else as an individual, for we are not individuals, but all belongs to all. Therefore, every member of that body, when he is walking in the spirit and in the truth, and in that which is true in God and not in the false context of this world Babylonish system can say at any time, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE."

In the fourteenth chapter of John, it is written, that Jesus, just before He left, said to the disciples, when the Holy Spirit shall come, ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye are in me and I am in you. He was revealing to them that when the Holy Spirit came they would come to know that we are not all a bunch of individuals. But that Jesus is in the Father, and we are in Him, and He is in us.

For that is the purpose that Jesus came and shed His blood, so that the Holy Spirit, the great teacher might come and dwell in us. It was in order that He might deliver us from the false idea the spirit of Babylon has instilled in our consciousness; that Jesus, God, and we, are a bunch of individuals separate from one another. Also, to make us to know that when God created us, He created us in Him and in one another, as one many membered whole.

The idea that we are individuals, or individual families, Browns, Smiths, and Jones, or individual nations or denominations, is a Babylonish lie that has been instilled in our consciousness by the false world system that the spirit of Babylon has set up. Therefore, Jesus revealed to his disciples the purpose for His coming and dying was so that the Holy Spirit could come and reveal to us the great truth that, He is in the Father, and we are in Him, and that He is in us, and that we are not a bunch of individuals. That in truth and reality and in God's eyes, His world and the goods in it and the universe, is not cut up into 150 foot lots, belonging to each one of us as individuals. But it all belongs to all of us and we belong to Jesus, and Jesus belongs to God, and God belongs to us, for we are all in one another. Therefore, anyone of us at anytime, when we are walking and living in truth, can say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE."

Jesus did not say to the disciples in John 14, just when the Holy Spirit comes it shall suddenly come true, that I am in the Father and ye are in me and I am in you. It was already true, it has been true since the foundation of the world.

For, God created us in one another. What Jesus said was when the Holy Spirit comes ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye are in me and I am in you. For that is what the Holy Spirit comes to teach us, to deliver us from the Babylonish concept, that we are a bunch of individuals, with our individual holdings and individual positions. The Holy Spirit teaches us the truth that we are all one many membered body, we who are in the new creation. The Body of Christ, who is the Body of God. And that all God is and all that He has belongs to that whole body, and to no one of us as an individual. So it is literally true that each one of us who is a member of that body can say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE."

In the Babylonish context in which we live, even God's people, Christians who have been born and brought up in this Babylonish system, and in this Babylonish church system, work and sweat and slave all their lives to get themselves a title deed to a little 75 by 150 foot lot, and a three bedroom 2 bath house, or 10 acres of land or 20 acres of land, or 200 acres of land or even 2,000 acres of land, and a few thousand dollars in the bank, and in their ignorance they say to themselves, "This is mine. I have a title deed to it, it is my possession. It belongs to me as an individual." It is their own little kingdom. They do not realize that they are giving themselves over to a Babylonish context, which separates them from all that God is, and all that God has. Their little paper sack full of possessions and two bit kingdom are peanuts compared to what will belong to those in the Body of Christ, who in bringing in a new age, will take all that they are and all that they have, and give up their individual claim to it, and give it in to the Body of Christ, and into the whole.

So that no man will count anything that he has his own, but all will belong to all, and all will be available for the use of all when it is needed. So, that any member of that body, at any time, can truthfully say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE."

Recognizing the idea that anything in this creation belongs to anyone of us as an individual, was a Babylonish lie. For no one of us created one tree, or one stone, or one speck of the land, the dirt that men cherish the title to so, but that our God created it all and that therefore, it all belongs to Him. And since Jesus is in Him, as He said, I am in the Father, it all belongs to Jesus. Since we are in Jesus, just as Jesus said, I am in the Father and you are in me and I am in you, therefore, all that God is and all that God has belongs to us, all as one body. No part of it belongs to anyone of us as an individual, but all of it belongs to all of us, as one body. Therefore, any one of us at any given time, could truthfully say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE."

It was this beautiful truth that Paul was trying to get over to the Corinthians, when he said all are yours; ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. The apostrophe s ('s) on the end of yours, Christ's, and God's, in this statement reveals that in the glorious context of the Body of Christ, each one of us who are members of that Body, do not even belong to our selves. But, we and all that we are, belong to the other members. Since this is true to all the other members, they do not belong to themselves, in that body, but they belong to each one of us. In giving up the little bit we have and the little bit we are, as an individual, we gain all that all the other members of the body are, and all that they have.

Therefore, we are fools to go on in the Babylonish context, trying to hang on to our own individual life, trying to hang on to our little 75 by 100 foot lot, and three bedroom two bath house. For, if we try to hang on to it, in the Babylonish context, that is all we will ever have. But, by turning it in to the whole and counting ourselves and it as no longer our own, but belonging to the whole Body of Christ, because all the other members of the Body of Christ, will be doing the same, in giving up the little individual bit that we have, we will gain all that God is, and all that God has, and all that every other member of the Body of Christ is, and all that he has, to be made available for us any time that we have the need. So we will be able to say gloriously, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE".

So in Paul's beautiful statement, all things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's, we discover that in this beautiful context of Christ's body, as soon as we discover that everything belongs to us, by being told all things are yours, we suddenly have to give it all up, not take it unto ourselves individually, yea, lose it all, so to speak. For the next statement says, and ye are Christ's. That apostrophe ('s) on the end of Christ denotes that we, therefore, and all that we are, and all that we have are His full possession. So, we see that as soon as we get everything, we must give it up. We must say to ourselves, even my own life is not my own, but it is the full possession of Christ. And of course, when the Bible says, we are Christ's, in the full possession of Christ, it means the full possession of Christ in His body. Therefore, no one of us belongs to ourselves but we belong to the Body of Christ.

Though the Bible tells us All Things Are Yours, we discover by the spirit of revelation that all that is ours from God, our revelation, our anointing, our goods, our time, our gifts, our money, all is not given to

us for ourselves. Not even our own being is for us, but it is given to us for the benefit of all the rest of the Body of Christ. This agrees with the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said, the manifestations of the Spirit are given to every man to profit withal. Nothing that is given to us by God, not even our very life itself, was given to us for ourselves, but for the profit of all the rest of the Body of Christ.

Thus, in a context where every member of the Body of Christ, of his own free will, knows that all that God has placed in his hands is not for him, but for the body. Since all the rest of the members of the body have the revelation of giving up the little that is placed in his hands, for the benefit and blessing of the body, he gains the all that is placed in the hands of the rest of the members of the Body of Christ. So that he can truly say, all things are mine.

Therefore, in this beautiful plan of God, as soon as we discover that all things are ours, we immediately discover that we are Christ's. So we have to give them all up. Then in the great progression of God that is revealed here, Christ, as soon as He gets everything, discovers that it is not His. For the Bible goes on to say, and Christ is God's. And so, as soon as Christ gets everything, He discovers that it is not His, for Himself. But we and all that we are, which is His, and He, Himself, is God's. But the Apostle Paul did not do so, because the people were not matured enough to be able to see it, if he had carried this progression on to its end, he would have gone on to say, and God is yours.

I assure you, God would not call us to participate in a cycle which He, Himself, refused to participate in. For God Himself was the instigator of this great plan. For He Himself first came in Jesus, and gave to us all that He was, all that He has, His very life, to redeem us and bring us into the great plan. Then He makes all that He is and all that He has available to us. So that we will not take it unto ourselves, but will give that portion which we have unto the Body of Christ, that it might belong to Christ; that Christ might be God's and that God and all that He is, and all that He has might be ours. In giving up all that He had to us, His very life and His fullness to be poured into us, God gained the one thing in this universe that He did not have, us. For you see, though He owned everything in this universe, when He came in Jesus, there was one thing that was yet not His possession, not His, outside of Him, and that was us. We were separated from Him, not surrendered to Him, not willingly giving ourselves to Him. Therefore, we were the one thing that He desired above all the other things that He could not say were His. Therefore, He conceived this great plan of one body, which every member in it, including Himself, gave up his individual claim to what he had, so that all would belong to all. So that every member in it could therefore say that all the other members and all that they were and all that they had did not belong to themselves, but all belongs to all. Therefore, God in putting all that He had into this great context, gained the one thing that He did not have, us. So, that He too, could truly say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE".

What a tragedy it is that our world is full of people and Christians, who are straining and striving their very life away trying to gather together for themselves, a little portion of this world's goods, money, houses, lands or what have you. So that in the Babylonish context, they can take their title deed to it and say this is mine. They do not realize, that no matter how much they gathered or gained a title deed to, it is but a pittance and a paupers portion to what could be theirs, and what will belong to each one who turns from this Babylonish context, and puts all that he is and all that he had into the beautiful, mysterious context of the Body of Christ. Where in a new age, all will belong to all. God will have purged the earth of all who cling to the Babylonish context. So that all who are here, each one can say "ALL THINGS ARE MINE".

The Corinthians themselves, to whom Paul was writing, were such spiritual babes, and so limited in their understanding of the real purpose for Christ's coming and of God's plan, that they have foolishly imagined that God would pour all that He is and all that He has, and all of His power, and all of His truth into one individual. Therefore, they had divided themselves into groups. One of them had imagined that Apollos had it all. They said, we are going to be followers of Apollos, we want what Apollos has. Another imagined that Cephas had it all. They said, we will follow Cephas, we want what Cephas has. Another imagined that Paul had it all. They said, we will follow Paul, we want what Paul has. Paul, who saw the beauty of the whole master plan of God, said to them, why do you glory in men, as if a man has it

all. What he was really saying is that it is foolish to glory in men, because God will never pour His fullness and His all into one individual. But, only when there has come forth a corporate body, where in every member in it no longer takes that which God gives him unto himself. But willingly gives it into the whole, so that all belongs to all. Into that corporate body will God pour His fullness. and every member in that body will be able to say, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE".

Therefore, the Apostle Paul sought to get this over to the Corinthians saying, don't you know that Paul or Cephas or Apollos doesn't have anymore than anyone of you. For, all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Since in the context of that body, that which every member has is not his own, or for his own benefit or profit, but for the benefit and profit of the other members of the body. What Paul was really saying to them was, why in the world should you want what Paul's got, when you have Paul for ever. All that Paul is and all that he has will be available to you forever when you need it. Why in the world should you want what Apollos has, when you forever have Apollos. Why in the world should you want what Cephas has, when you forever have Cephas .

So often in our world today, Christians will see an anointed ministry who has much revelation and much anointing, and much faith, and much power with God, and they, deep in their heart will desire what that ministry has. God's word to them is, why in the world should you desire to have what brother so and so has when you forever have brother so and so, and all that he is and all that he has available for your use when you need it, if you, yourself, walk in the pure revelation of God's body.

Therefore it is time to cease glorying in men. It is time for us to start glorying in the whole body of Christ. It is time for us to glorying in the beautiful perfect plan of God, in which every member in that body, in giving up that little bit that he has in his hands, and in his possession, willingly into the whole, comes into a context where all belongs to all. And all that all the other members of that body are and have are not for their benefit, but for his. So that he can truly say from the depths of his heart, "ALL THINGS ARE MINE", and I am Christ's, and Christ is God's; and God is mine.

Then shall we all come to experience what Jesus said, the other Comforter ' the Holy Spirit, is come to teach us, when He said, when he comes you shall know that I am in the Father and you are in me and I am in you. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth.

SEEING THE KINGDOM By Sam Fife

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

This man Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. He was a good man. The Bible says he was a ruler of the Jews. That means that he was a priest, a preacher, a teacher in the church of God, Israel was the only church God had at that time.

This Nicodemus was not like some of the other priests in Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees. He did not ridicule Jesus. He was not following just a formalistic brand of religion. He was sincere in his heart. He recognized that Jesus was sent by God by the miracles He did, He believed in the Bible, God's word and was teaching it to the best of his ability. He was living up to the revelation God had given at that time. The only problem was, although he recognized Jesus was sent from God, he could not see the real purpose for which Jesus had come. Jesus was continually speaking in the spiritual, and Nicodemus being yet carnal, yet walking the fleshly way and literal letter of the word, could not see the kingdom of God Jesus was setting up.

Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In our day the church has put great stress on the first few words of Jesus' statement, the fact that you must be born again. However, this is not the important truth that Jesus was trying to get over here. Jesus was not placing the emphasis on being born again although that is necessary. He was placing the emphasis on seeing the kingdom of God. The important thing is to see the kingdom of God. Being born again is a step toward the primary purpose of seeing the kingdom of God, and entering into the kingdom of God.

The first thing we need to understand is that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Heaven is the same thing. Matthew called it the kingdom of Heaven when writing to the Jews. Luke and John called it the kingdom of God. This kingdom is not the place Heaven. Ninety per cent of the Christians today who have read this phrase think that it is referring to some far off place called Heaven where they will go when they die or when Jesus comes back. This is far from the truth. The kingdom of God Jesus was speaking about is the invisible spiritual kingdom which God is setting up right here on earth. This is the kingdom Jesus was speaking about in the Lord's prayer when He said for us to pray for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done here on earth as it is in the heavenly realm

In the book of Daniel God prophesied of the kingdom He would set up. Daniel 2 tells us that once King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire had a dream. When he woke the next morning he could not remember the dream and was troubled. He called his wise men together and asked them to tell him what he had dreamed and the interpretation. Of course, none could do it. They proclaimed the thing to be impossible. The king said that if they did not tell him the dream and interpretation, all the wise men in the kingdom would be put to death.

Because Daniel was listed as one of the wise men in the kingdom, soldiers came to arrest him. When he asked what the trouble was, the officer told him. Daniel told the officer to go back to the king and tell them to wait a little while, and he would tell the dream and the interpretation.

That night Daniel prayed to God, and He gave Daniel a vision of the dream and the interpretation. The next day Daniel told the king the dream. He said that in the dream the king had seen a great image in the form of a man. The head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the thighs and belly of brass, the legs of iron and his feet part of it was iron and part of clay. He said that as the king watched in the, dream, a

stone cut out of a mountain without hands smote the image and it crumbled into pieces. The stone cut out without hands became a great mountain which filled the whole earth. Then Daniel interpreted the king's dream.

Daniel said that this great image represented four great world empires or governments that would rule over the world. The Babylonian Empire was the head of gold as it was the richest and most powerful of any risen kingdom. The breast and arms of silver represented another kingdom that would rise up and overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Just as silver is inferior to gold so this next kingdom would be inferior to King Nebuchadnezzar's.

Sometime after Daniel's prophecy, the Medes and the Persians joined forces and the Media-Persia Empire ruled for awhile. The thighs and belly of brass represented a third kingdom which would overthrow the Media-Persia Empire and rule for awhile. This was fulfilled as after the Media-Persia Empire, Alexander the Great gained control over the people of Greece. He rose up with his armies and swept across the world conquering the other kingdoms.

The iron and clay kingdom represented a kingdom that would overthrow the brass kingdom. It would be very strong as of iron. The kingdom of Alexander the Great was overthrown by the Roman Empire. So the fourth part of the image was fulfilled by the Roman Empire which ruled the world.

The Roman Empire was the strongest that had ever risen. The fact that this kingdom, was of iron and clay was for a very definite reason. When the Romans conquered the world, they did not do it as Alexander had by sweeping with his armies crushing every opposing nation. The Romans were more democratic. They would say we are going to conquer and win. If you join us, you will be a part of the Roman Empire. If you refuse to do so, we will crush you anyway, and you will become a slave nation. Therefore, they joined them. The Roman Empire was not made up of one people like the Greeks but of many nations symbolizing iron and clay mixed.

The important thing in our study is that Daniel told the king in the dream that there was a stone cut without hands that would smite the image, and it would crumble. The stone cut without hands would become a great mountain and would fill all the earth. When interpreting this part of the dream, Daniel said and that in the days of the iron and clay kingdom, the Roman Empire, the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom in the earth which would stand forever. He said this kingdom would not be left in the hands of others, but would be ruled over by God. This kingdom would break all the other kingdoms in pieces and would stand forever. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to the other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2:44.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands was Jesus, born of a virgin without an earthly father. Jesus is the chief cornerstone in God's great kingdom that He is building. It was 'cut out without hands' in the sense that earthly human hands had nothing to do with His birth, with His coming into the world. Jesus Christ came. The fact that the stone cut out without hands smote the image and it crumbled signifies that Jesus, with His coming, would completely destroy the system of one world empire ruling over the world.

Jesus came in the days of the iron-clay kingdom. History makes it very clear that it was Jesus and the Christianity that He established in the world that caused the Roman Empire to crumble. The Romans gained great power and rulership over the world by the fact that they were so cruel and unmerciful.

Wherever they found resistance in any manner, they quickly stamped it out. As the Spirit of God began to move in the earth, the apostles went forth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christianity began to leaven the Roman Empire, and not many years after that the Roman Empire became Christian. The gospel of love and peace has overruled the gospel of cruelty and power. The Roman Empire lost its strength and crumbled, smitten by Jesus the Son of God, just as Nebuchadnezzar saw Him smite the image. The whole system of world empires crumbled.

Since that time no world empire has ever ruled the world. Napoleon tried, and he failed. Hitler tried, and he failed. Every other government that seeks to overrule the world, every other instrument that Satan gets hold of and tries to rule the world is going to fail as Jesus Christ, the stone cut without hands, has smitten the image. In doing so Jesus Christ set up the kingdom which was spoken by Daniel, the kingdom that would not be left to other people but would be ruled over by God Himself, the kingdom that would become a great mountain and rule the world. The kingdom spoken of by Daniel is the kingdom of

God or kingdom of Heaven which Jesus set up when He came. This is the same kingdom of God Jesus was speaking of to Nicodemus when He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That was Nicodemus' real problem. He could not see the kingdom of God. He believed in the Bible, God's Word. He believed in the prophets, and like every other good Jew, he was waiting for the kingdom spoken by Daniel. He believed the stone cut out of the mountain without hands was a prophecy of the Messiah. The Jews had been waiting for centuries for the words of the prophet to be fulfilled. They were expecting the Messiah to come and smite all the world's enemies and for God to set up a kingdom that would stand forever.

The kingdom had come as Nicodemus stood talking to Jesus that night, but he could not see it and for a very good reason as we brought out early in this study. Nicodemus and every other Jew was expecting a carnal, literal, visible, physical, political kingdom and the kingdom that Jesus set up was a spiritual kingdom.

Therefore, they could not see it. Let me emphasize again, the Jews were all waiting and longing for the Messiah to come. They were expecting Him to set up a kingdom on earth, but they did not expect Him to do it as He did. They were expecting the Messiah to come down with great flashing power and literally and physically smite the ruling world government as the stone smote the image. They expected Him to gather a great army and with great supernatural power overthrow the Roman Empire then set up a visible political kingdom here on earth with the Messiah sitting on a visible literal throne and rule with the Jews beside Him.

The reason the Jews expected the Messiah to set up a carnal, fleshly, physical kingdom is because they were carnal, fleshly people. The carnal, literal and fleshly terms are the only terms in which they could think. Now Jesus had come, and the kingdom had come. It was not a carnal, visible, physical kingdom operating on carnal, visible, physical laws. It was an invisible spiritual kingdom operating on spiritual laws. Jesus set up this kingdom by spending three years of His ministry teaching the people the spiritual laws of the kingdom. Then He died on Calvary's cross, shed His blood to atone for our sins to make us clean vessels so that the Holy Spirit could enter into us and dwell in us. He could rule over each of us sitting on the throne of our hearts as our king. As each one accepts Jesus and his atoning blood, His Holy Spirit enters us, dwells within us and rules within our hearts and each one with our king ruling invisible are welded together into one body, making up the kingdom of God on earth.

For over 1900 years people have been accepting Jesus as their Saviour. He enters into their hearts, and they become citizens of the kingdom of God with our King ruling over us. Not from the outside on a visible throne but on the inside. We have on earth an invisible spiritual kingdom of God.

A political kingdom on earth operates on political laws made by the government. These are laws which all men can see. They were written for all to see. The kingdom of God being spiritual operates on invisible spiritual laws which can only be seen with the spiritual eye and when they are revealed by the Spirit of God. The kingdom as Jesus made clear to Nicodemus can only be seen when the Spirit of God births us again from a carnal being into a spiritual being so that he can reveal to us the kingdom.

When Jesus spent His three year ministry on earth, He was teaching spiritual laws by which the kingdom blessings come to us. Jesus said, "That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be cast into the sea: and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." He was not revealing a promise which originated with Jesus Himself. He was revealing and unveiling God's law of faith which has been since the foundation of the world. God created the earth and instituted many divine laws. There are physical laws, technical laws, medicinal laws and spiritual laws.

The reason doctors can help to get people well is simply because they have discovered divine laws of God which were since time began. There is a law which says if one kidney stops working, the doctor can remove it. The other kidney will take up the function, and the person can live normally. The doctors did not make this true, but only discovered that it was true. It is a law of God. Another kind of law says if you inject a certain drug in the blood stream, the nervous system will react in a certain way and pain will stop. Again the doctors did not make this true, but only discovered that it was true and has been true. It is another law of God and has been since time began. Sixty years ago the Wright brothers flew a plane over the Carolinas. They did it because they discovered a law of God which says if a propeller turns a

certain number of revolutions the plane will stay in the air. They did not make this true, it was a law of God since the foundation of the world.

God's highest law is the law that Jesus revealed. The law of faith says whatever you believe and pray to God doubting not that it will come to pass, even to the moving of a mountain, it shall be done. Jesus did not make this true but only revealed that it was true and had been true since the time began waiting for the Son of God to come to earth and reveal it.

The law of faith is God's highest law because it is all inclusive. Mark 11:24 "What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." The drug law can only stop pain. The kidney law can only stop kidney trouble. The law of faith can stop the pain, heal the kidney, and make airplanes fly. God's law of faith supersedes and overrules all the lesser ones.

Remember the story of Peter walking on the water to Jesus. The reason Peter could walk upon that water is because Jesus had taught him faith. As he saw Jesus walking on the water, he was inspired to meet the conditions of God's highest law, the law of faith. There was another law of God that said he would sink when he stepped on the water. This is a lesser law, the law of gravity. The law of faith superseded all of God's lesser laws just as the Supreme Court in our land can overrule our lesser courts. Peter walked on the water. When he saw the wind boisterous he became afraid, and fear replaced faith in his heart. No longer was he meeting God's condition for His law of faith, and he began to sink.

So here we have an illustrated example of Jesus teaching the spiritual laws by which the kingdom was to operate. His highest teaching was the law of faith. All the other teachings He gave were simply the revelation of the lesser laws of God.

When we walk and live in them meeting their conditions they enable us to attain to God's law of faith and experience the blessings of the kingdom, healing, miracles, even the moving of mountains.

When He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3) He was teaching the lesser laws of the kingdom. They are step ladders to the law of faith. When He said to walk in love, and turn the other cheek, He was revealing the lesser laws. All of His other teachings or commandments are simply the revelation of the spiritual laws by which the kingdom of God operates leading up to attaining the law of faith. Just as you have to walk up every rung of a stepladder to get to the top so we must begin with the lesser laws not overlooking the teachings of Jesus to attain to the law of faith which brings victory, blessings, etc.

Jesus said, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." This means that he who is full of faith in the little things shall be ruler of the bigger things in the kingdom. However, we do not want to be full of faith in the little things. We like to skip over what we call the lesser teachings of Jesus. When someone speaks of turning the other cheek after being smitten, we say it is not practical. We like to revel in the great promises of Jesus like moving the mountain, casting out devils, speaking in new tongues, hearing the sick. Dear friend, until we are full of faith in the little things, and these spiritual laws leading up to the great promises of Jesus, we will never experience their blessings. That is why there is no power in the church of Jesus Christ today.

So we see that Nicodemus' problem was that he was expecting a visible political kingdom, not the spiritual kingdom that Jesus set up. The simple truth is that as he spoke to Jesus, the Kingdom of God was around him, but Nicodemus could not see it. Jesus had been teaching the spiritual laws by which the kingdom operated. The little people who believed and met the conditions with Jesus in the spiritual laws were reaping blessings. The lame were walking, the blind were seeing, lepers were cleansed, and the dumb were speaking. The kingdom of God was flowing all around Nicodemus, but he could not see it. Jesus said we must be born again of the Spirit of God. We have to be transformed from a carnal, physical, fleshly being into a spiritual being by the Spirit then we can see the spiritual kingdom,

Jesus also said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." When I was in theological seminary, I was told that the proper interpretation of this verse was that being born of water signified the first natural birth, because there is the bursting of the water when a child is born in the womb of the mother. As there is much water connected with the birth of a baby, they said being born of the water was the natural birth.

The second part of the statement was to represent the spiritual birth. This interpretation was given to me, because those who taught me were yet carnal Christians. They came to the scriptures with their carnal intellect and got a carnal interpretation of being born of water. If they had waited, as spiritual

beings must, on the revelation of the Spirit of God, He would have revealed the true meaning of being born of water.

In the symbolism of scripture, water is often a type of the word of God which washes all the false ideas out of our heart replacing them with truth. So the scripture is speaking of being regenerated by the washing of the water of the word. So we can hear Jesus saying to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. The word is the washing agent.

In the process of being born again, the Spirit of God uses the word of God to get in our heart and drive out all the false ideas. When we accept the truth through the word, the Spirit Himself enters our hearts and changes us from a carnal being into the spiritual. Henceforth, we are born of the water and of the Spirit.

Next we need to understand what it means to enter into the kingdom of God. It does not mean to go to a far off Heaven some day. It means partaking of the blessings of the kingdom through meeting the conditions of the spiritual laws. As the Holy Spirit, who is given to us through Christ's atonement to dwell in us to lead us into all truth, reveals to us all truth and more and more of the laws of God's kingdom, then we enter deeper and deeper into the experiences of the Kingdom of God. This is entering into the kingdom.

It is one thing to see the kingdom and another to enter into it. There are many Christians today who have been born again of the Spirit, and they see the kingdom. They see that it is a spiritual kingdom and that it operates upon spiritual laws. But they do not want to let go of the old carnal, physical worldly life they are living to become spiritual beings and live a spiritual life according to the laws of the spiritual kingdom. Therefore, they do not enter into the kingdom and partake of its blessings. That is why you see the carnal fleshly church powerless today.

In the church today, we have ministers who do not believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kind of tongues, interpretation of tongues ... I Cor. 12:8-10) that is given to us in the law of faith today. The only thing they believe is the literal truth that Christ died for our sins. This is all they preach. They have been born again but have not fully yielded to the Spirit and have not seen the kingdom in all its glory. They are yet carnal, and we speak this without criticism but as a matter of absolute truth. Therefore, these are the only terms they can speak in. Like Nicodemus, they are good men, but they just have not seen the kingdom. Like Nicodemus they believe the Bible and are sincere, but yet carnal and fleshly.

They do not know what the kingdom is all about and that it is all about them today. They have placed it far out in the future. They say when the millennium begins, the kingdom will have come. They speak of the millennium as the kingdom age. They say some day when the kingdom begins we can have perfect health, perfect peace, perfect joy, and the miracle working power of God and victory. They do not know that the kingdom began over 1900 years ago even as Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to see the kingdom.

There are millions of people across the earth who are being taught the laws of the kingdom. They are believing them just as they believe in Jesus. Because of this, spiritual and physical eyes are being opened, spiritual and physical deaf ears are hearing, etc. However, there are still those who do not see anything but say, "Someday the kingdom will come."

A great portion of the Church today is making the same mistake Nicodemus and the Jews made. They are expecting a literal, physical, political kingdom. They expect Jesus to come flashing back at any moment and with supernatural power overthrow all the world's governments by Himself, then sit on a visible throne and rule the earth and they with Him. They expect that when Jesus comes back, He will instantaneously perform a miracle and all the lazy, unspiritual unconcerned Christians will become just like Him. It sounds like a beautiful idea, but that is not what the Bible teaches.

Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." We are to grow up in faith, holiness, revelation, power, etc. so as I John 3:2 says, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." It does not say that we shall be made like him after He comes, but we shall be like Him when He appears,

When Christ rules the earth during the millennium, Jesus is not going to be sitting on a visible throne ruling over us. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. He will not be ruling over us but He'll be one of us. We shall be ruling with Him. The Christ that shall rule in the millennium will be the Body of Christ, a many membered body. Jesus is Lord over us now, but He does not want to Lord over us then. He wants to make us like Him. He became Lord over us that He might lift us up to His level so that the Father might rule through all of us as the Body of Christ. He is our Lord now, but then He will be our Brother. This is why in Hebrews 2: 11 it says, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all in one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

So the kingdom of God is not going to come in the future, it came over 1900 years ago. It is not and never will be a physical, political kingdom with one man sitting on a throne ruling over other men. It is going to be a spiritual kingdom with the Spirit of Christ ruling through all the members of the Body of Christ from within their hearts. This is why Jesus tried through His teachings to get men to see the kingdom of God. He tried to turn them from the idea that it was a physical kingdom. This is why He said the kingdom was like a grain of mustard seed which is planted.

The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds but grows into a giant tree where the fowls of the air can come and rest in its branches. That is the way the kingdom of God is. It started off through Jesus, His disciples, then 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, 5,000 with the lame man getting healed at the gate of the temple. The laws of the kingdom were operating just as powerful in Peter's day as they will be in the millennium. They were operating so powerful that Peter just passed by people who believed and met the conditions of the spiritual laws of faith, and as his shadow passed over them they were healed.

The final step in God's plan is to set up the kingdom in the earth. He wants to cleanse us and make us holy vessels to enter into and lead us in all truth and reveal all the laws of the kingdom so that we can walk and live in them.

"Yea so the Lord would say unto my people. Lift up thine eye. Look above. Turn thine eye away from the visible to the invisible. Even as my servant Paul said, while we look not on the things seen but the unseen things. There thou shalt see me in all my glory my people, for I have set Myself in the earth in my kingdom that thou mightest see me with the eye of the Spirit." (word of prophecy)

So the problem with much of Christianity today is that they cannot see the kingdom in all its glory. They are not entering into it in all its glory, because they will not let the Spirit of God lead them out of their carnality, their fleshliness, their worldliness and enable them to become spiritual beings and see the kingdom and enter into it.

Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Never the twain shall meet. The kingdom of God shall never be a visible carnal kingdom operating on political laws. It will always be a spiritual kingdom. You can never partake of its blessings through carnal means, through the use of fleshly powers, promotions, organizations and the spending of a lot of money. That which is of the flesh is flesh, and it begets flesh. Only when one has been transformed by the Spirit of God to a spiritual being and is led by the Spirit and filled by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit by the use of the spiritual instruments of prayer and faith, can we overcome the spiritual enemy. Only then will the spiritual kingdom of God stand in the earth in all its glory.

There is not going to be an overthrowing of the world by a mighty flash of Jesus' power. Whatever Jesus does He is going to do through His Body, through the Spirit of God that dwells within us. The kingdom is here, but it is not here in its fullness yet. It is going to be here in its fullness when carnal fleshly Christians become spiritual and see and enter into the kingdom by growing up into Jesus and His likeness in all things. Then each member of the Body of Christ will be like Jesus, and it shall be manifested in the earth.

May God hasten that day. In Jesus name, Amen.