

THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

June 2013

No. 330

Editor's note: Last June, Brother Dwight Thomas lost his fight with cancer. Those who were not able to be at his funeral, and even some who were there, have requested that we print his eulogy in the paper. Due to the nature of his illness, he was able to write the eulogy himself. It has been slightly edited to read as an article, but these are his words.

MY GRADUATION

Good morning. Thank you for coming to my graduation. Yes, you heard correctly. I have now graduated to the next level. I reached it before you did, and I now know the full secret. I

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love the Lord Jesus and trust that his blood will cover my sins.

Today I want to tell you some special things that are on my mind. I am especially glad that Jeanette and I chose Randolph County for our retirement. Yes, we both continued to work, but living in this county and among all of you has been the highlight of our time on this earth.

Every one of you are special whether you sent me a card, food, called, or just said a prayer. We feel specially blessed. Your support through the fight with cancer made the fight worth it. Of course the disease won in the end, but only because it was God's will. You must remember that God knows all things. He knew from the beginning the date of my birth, the date of my marriage and length which was 46 years in April, and the date of death. So today to make my graduation ceremony complete I want you to sing these songs like we do during our services with joy and love in our hearts for each other. One of the first songs I learned to sing was "Jesus Loves Me". No, I did not learn to sing very well because no one taught me at an early age. Mostly we were drowned out by the piano. So only a few of the voices were heard. Know what I have learned, God wants to hear my voice -- Sarah, who sits right in front of me in church, will tell you that I do sing and Jeanette and I go singing down the road. Yes, it is a poor effort to what it could have been if I had taken seriously God's desire to hear our voice.

Today to help Tommy lead I have asked Bryce Whiddon, who is already leading in our Sunday night services, Harrison & Hayden Prince, and Kolton Messer to help lead this song. You must prepare your children to be the leaders in the church. They are never too young to instruct and to sing. Let's stand. [Song: Jesus Loves Me]

During my military time, thirties and forties, I was busy in pursuit of career, leisure time and other such activities. God was not in first place. As you know, I love all sports and one of my favorite interviews was the one given by Emmett Smith (for Allan and others, he was in football). Emmett said that his grandmother drilled in him Psalms 37:4, *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* Emmett didn't get asked to play by any of the big time colleges. His grandmother said remember the verse, and he quotes it to this day. All the wonderful things that happened to him was not in any way like he envisioned but all turned out better than he ever dreamed. That's why you must begin teaching your children and grandchildren Bible verses that will keep them. So they too will know that God has a plan and if you trust him, His plan will lead you the sweetest way possible. I want you to stand and sing the first verse of "Anywhere with Jesus". Do not spend your time wandering in the wilderness as I did. I want you to be able at your graduation to say it was a sweet ride because I followed Jesus everyday. [Song: Anywhere with Jesus]

During my lifetime I developed quite a collection of caps, and as most of you know until I had chemo I never wore caps. Well, when it came time for me to wear caps, everyone was offering. I told Brad about my collection of caps and how Jeanette had sold them in a garage sale. I remember distinctly asking Jeanette one day in Tampa where my caps were and she said that she put them in a garage sale. I know Brad probably felt sorry for me and felt a little put out at Jeanette. Suppose he told Nikole, who told someone else, who told someone else, and so on. I tell you this because I want you to know that the things that we know are the truth are not necessarily the truth. Many bad things have hap-

pened because of what is told in truth. Lots of times information grows as it is exchanged from person to person and sometimes it grows in our mind so that what really happened is completely lost. In my case, Jeanette had not put the caps in the garage sale and she pulled them out for me to use. What do I want you to learn from this? I want you to do what we are suppose to be doing: Live just for today. Get up each morning. It's a new day. Do not dwell on anything but today. Make today what God had planned it to be, no thinking of yesterday or tomorrow. Today is a new day; I will let Jesus make it right. Let's stand and sing "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" first and last verse. [Song: Just a Little Talk with Jesus]

Thank you for coming. I have two summary statements: First, Jesus loves me and if we let him lead, we will have the sweetest journey as we go anywhere with him.

Second, live only in today -- no thinking about anything but today -- every time you catch yourself thinking about something/someone who did you or a member of your family wrong or worrying about tomorrow say, "Lord help me". God will lead your thoughts back to today. It works. Try it.

Let us pray.

Father, bless these friends of mine and help each one of them to grow in their understanding of your love and power. Help them to see no wrong in anything that is done or said knowing that you will take care of the matter and that you allowed it to happen for a reason. Help them to see the opportunity for growth that every problem has to help us or others to grow.

Help them to see the need to study your word so that they will feel your nearness and know that

you are GOD. Keep Jeanette in your care and bless all these friends who will be looking over her. Bless and help her to know you as I do. Keep us safe in our journey to the cemetery.

In Jesus' Holy name, Amen.

DWIGHT THOMAS
(Deceased June 2012)

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: What is meant by "Pray the sinner's prayer"? Is this in the scriptures?

ANSWER: Through various avenues of religious teaching we often hear the admonition to "Pray the sinner's prayer." As to Biblical statement, example, or principle, such words are not to be found.

In several instances the Bible records a sinner asking what he must do to be saved and the answer is clearly given - but never was that answer, "Pray the sinner's prayer." One is made to wonder then, from where did this idea come?

Upon being questioned by the Pharisees, the blind man who in John 9 had been healed answered, *"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth"* (verse 31). This true statement was likely the blind man's understanding of Proverbs 28:9 which stated, *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."* The sinner is alienated by sin from God and does not have the privilege of effective prayer as does one who worships Him.

The Bible, therefore, does not provide us with a "sinner's prayer," nor does it promise salvation to a sinner simply by means of prayer.

Upon realizing their lost condition, the sinners in Acts 2 and those in Acts 10 were not told to "pray the sinner's prayer." They were told to "*repent and be baptized*" (Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:48). Salvation is not attained through prayer, but by a sinner repenting and being baptized - precisely the procedure recorded in Biblical examples.

It is quite evident that Cornelius in Acts 10:4 was praying to God, but even though he "*prayed to God always*" (v. 2), he had not been granted salvation. Salvation did not then, nor does it now, come through prayer. God provided for "Cornelius...his kinsmen and near friends" to hear and respond to the teaching of Peter. It was upon their repentance and baptism that salvation came and not through the sincere prayer of Cornelius.

It is certainly reasonable that a sinner who seeks the Lord may pray that he might know the will of God - but forgiveness does not result until that sinner knows and obeys God's will. This is precisely what happened in the situation with Cornelius and those on Pentecost. Salvation was not realized until baptism had symbolically washed away their sins. Jesus' shed blood is the forgiving source, as stated in Romans 6:3-4,

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like

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as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

In the situation with Saul, he was told by Ananias whom God sent to inform him, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

"The sinner's prayer" is an unauthorized design of man, contrary to the Scriptures, and has no promise of granting forgiveness to the sinner.

HARRY COBB
(Wedowee, AL)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was the first thing Noah built when he came out of the ark?
2. Which son did Jacob not send to Egypt for grain during the famine?
3. Who brought Elijah bread and meat to eat during the drought?
4. Who wanted to kill Jesus when he was a baby?
5. Towards what city was Saul travelling when he encountered a light from Heaven?

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What did Joseph's brothers do to cover up that they sold Joseph into slavery? DIPPED HIS COAT IN THE BLOOD OF A GOAT (Genesis 37:31)
2. Who was the fourth person in the fiery furnace along with Daniel's friends? AN ANGEL (Daniel 3:28)

Gospel Meetings

| DATES | PLACE | SPEAKER |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|
| June 2 - 7 | Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL | Donald Thompson (Wedowee, AL) |
| June 8 - 9 | New Bethel Cullman, AL | Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) |
| June 9 - 14 | Mount Carmel Woodland, AL | Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL) |
| June 10 - 14 | Freefield Stateline, MS | Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) |
| June 14 - 16 | Dowell Hill Columbus, IN | Mike Daniel (Winston, GA) |
| June 16 - 21 | Ephesus Ephesus, GA | J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| June 20 - 21 | Annual Fellowship Conference Jim Oliver's Smokehouse Monteagle, TN | Various Speakers |
| June 21 - 23 | Estesburg Eubank, KY | Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) |
| June 21 - 23 | Antioch Douglasville, GA | Ron Scott (Bloomington, IN) |
| June 28 - 30 | Verona Verona, KY | Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) |

3. What was Jonah found doing on the ship while the storm was raging? SLEEPING (Jonah 1:5)
4. What animals did Jesus cause to run into the water and drown? PIGS (Matthew 8:32)
5. What does James say we should do if we lack wisdom? ASK GOD FOR WISDOM, IN FAITH (James 1:5-6)