

THE

HARVESTER

"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]

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LOOKING BEYOND

(Editor's Note: The following was taken from a message delivered at West Broad Street Church in Wetlowee, AL.)

Tonight I would like to speak on looking beyond the cares and troubles of our earthly lives unto the life that we can hope to enjoy in eternity. Paul suffered many trials in his lifetime for Christ's sake. (Read Hebrews 12:1-2). We should always look to Christ as the perfect example of one who looked beyond the suffering He knew that He would endure on the cross unto the end result which was the joy of man's salvation and returning to sit on the right hand of God.

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Looking beyond the pleasures of the world is one of the first steps we take in the road to salvation. When we hear the word preached and we believe, we repent and in repenting we look beyond our old ways and many of the things we have thought right in the past. The world teaches us that we are to do whatever it takes to obtain happiness. Happiness as defined by the world is doing whatever we want. The ways of man are usually opposed to the ways of God. In order to please God, we have to give up or sacrifice some earthly pleasures. Some early Christians were required to give up their lives.

There is the example of Stephen who looked beyond earthly suffering when he was martyred for Christ's sake. In Acts chapter 7 we read of how the Jews rose up against Stephen when he preached of Christ (Acts 7:54-58). Stephen endured this terrible death while looking beyond to eternity in Heaven. In our lives we must also look beyond trials we endure as Christians. We are not put to death anymore for standing for the truth, but most people still do not like to hear the truth. Many times they will ridicule the stand we take or try to persuade us that we do not have the truth or that we misunderstand what is contained in the scriptures. This is the accepted way of most so-called religious groups these days, and as Christians we are to stand against these liberal ideas that are inspired by the Devil. We will not be popular with these people and they may discriminate against us. But while this may be unpleasant, it is nothing to the sufferings endured by early Christians.

Often the challenge to our faith will not come from without, but from within ourselves. After becoming Christians we will find many occasions in our lives when we will need to look beyond our own cares unto the reward

that we will receive if we live faithful lives in Christ. Sometimes we may find ourselves not wanting to attend worship service because we are tired or have had a rough day. We should look beyond this momentary physical weakness to spiritual rewards we receive when we assemble together. I myself have at times not really felt like attending the assembly, but I went anyway and I would be glad that I attended afterwards because I heard a message that I could really apply to my life. I would then realize that I felt better physically also. We can apply this to any situation in which our bodies and minds might urge one course of action while our spiritual self urges another. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 9:27, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* We should always look beyond our actions to the effect that they might have on others. Sometimes if we participate in some recreation or some line of action that seems harmless to us, it may be offensive to others and cause us to lose our influence with these people. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 we are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil. In Romans chapter 14:15-21 the Christians at Rome were told not to engage in actions that would cause a brother to stumble. Paul told them not to scoff at the belief of weaker brethren that meat that had been offered to idols was unclean. He told them that the kingdom of Heaven was not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In verse 21 he states, *"It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, or any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak."* They were told in verse 20, *"For meat, destroy not the work of God"*. If we stubbornly insist on doing things that are offensive to brethren, whether there is anything wrong with what we are doing or not, we risk destroying their faith.

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Do we give to the work of the Church as we are commanded with a cheerful heart looking beyond the things that the money could buy for us in this life to the good that it could bring? The giving of money for the furtherance of the Gospel and the aid of brethren less materially blessed than ourselves should be a spiritual reward rather than a grudging necessity.

It is easy for us to look beyond to goals that we have set in this life. Often we spend most of our working years preparing for retirement. I pay a portion of my salary into a retirement fund, that if it is not destroyed by economic conditions will provide a monthly payment to me after I retire. Most of the people I work with make active plans for retirement. It isn't enough for them to pay into the retirement plan, they must also participate in supplemental plans that will provide additional benefits. It is easy for us to plan for these things. Often people that I talk to will pay the bulk of their incomes into these plans. They will sacrifice today for what they think will be theirs tomorrow. But we are not promised tomorrow. Money paid to a retirement plan will never benefit us if we don't live to collect it. Let us read what Christ tells us in Matthew 6 beginning with verse 19 through 24. If our eyes are single or clear, we will be able to look beyond, when we are disappointed or discouraged about something that has happened

in our lives. Let us read further in Hebrews 12 verses 3 through 15. Here we are told that God will allow us to suffer some afflictions in this life. They are to serve as chastisements that we may, by enduring them, be strengthened. We must pray for the strength to endure that we might win eternal life which is the reward of those who can look beyond.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who gave Joseph of Arimathaea permission to bury Jesus?
2. The river Pison flowed from Eden and through the land of Havilah where there was a precious metal. Name that metal.
3. How did God show His approval of Stephen?
4. What were the leaders of Israel called before they had a king?
5. What did Eli think when he saw Hannah praying?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who took some bread, some water, and her son and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba? HAGAR (Gen. 21:14)
2. What country was the power of the seas, in Ezekiel? TYRE (Eze. 26:17)
3. According to John 15, what happens to branches that are thrown away and wither? THEY ARE PICKED UP AND BURNED (Jn. 15:6)

4. With what was the woman in Revelation 17 drunk? THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS AND WITNESSES OF JESUS (Rev. 17:6)

5. What kind of bird did Noah send out that came back to the ark? DOVE (Gen. 8:9)

JUDGING OURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE

(Editor's Note: The following article is the second in a series of four bulletins. The text is Acts 13:42-46)

In our first study on this subject we saw how the rich young ruler judged himself unworthy of everlasting life. By refusing the answer to his question, "*Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*", he was like the Jews in our text who refused life eternal and chose the opposite course (Matt. 7:13-14).

Our present study will be about another famous character of neglect, The Prosperous Farmer (Luke 12:15-21). In this context Jesus was addressing an innumerable multitude of people (Lk. 12:1). In verse 15 He begins to focus in on an age old problem of mankind, the spiritual disease of covetousness (Col. 3:5). The Master gave two stern warnings:

1. Take Heed
2. Beware of Covetousness

and He made it crystal clear that a man's life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth". (Also Matt. 6:19-21 and Matt. 16:26)

He was blessed so richly he took it for granted that it would always be this way. He had his existing barns full and built greater barns to contain his great abundance (a bumper crop).

I can see him now through my imagination. His life is almost complete and fulfilled but he couldn't see the forest for the trees. His rocking chair is on the porch and he is just waiting for his golden years of retirement, to enjoy the blissful winter of life in all its splendor, with the rest of his days on the bed of ease, with frolic and fun as he now could eat, drink, and be merry knowing he had much goods laid up for many years. (We don't miss the water till the well goes dry!)

But he had forgotten God. While he was busy sowing, reaping and harvesting, he forgot about the Grim Reaper and how he was soon to travel to the silent city of the dead. God called him a Fool, and rightly so, and concluded, *"So is he (anyone) that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God?"* Will we be like the Prosperous Farmer and judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life? (Eph. 5:15-16; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Tim. 6:7)

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ARE YOU IN CHRIST OR OUTSIDE?

Salvation is IN Christ (2 Tim. 2:10)

All spiritual blessings are IN Christ (Eph. 1:3)

One becomes a new creature IN Christ (2 Cor. 5:17;
Col. 2:10)

One is baptized:

INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3-4)

INTO His death (Gal. 3:26-27)

INTO His body (1 Cor. 12:13)

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
July 4 - 9	Temple Hill, MS	Miles Crouch (Dadeville, AL)
July 5 - 13	Cloud Nine Church Sierra Vista, AZ	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 9 - 11	Owens Road Church Prattville, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
July 9 - 11 (F - Su)	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL 7:00pm / 10:30 & 8:00 Sun	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
July 11 - 16	Claud Church Eclectic, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 11 - 16	Oak Valley Church Colquitt, GA	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)
July 11 - 24	Marrowbone, KY	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
July 18 - 23	Oak Grove Church Woodland, AL	(Unknown at print time)
July 25 - 30	Napolean Church Woodland, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)

TWO DAY GATHERING

of brethren from across the nation for a period of fellowship,
study, and discussion on Thurs. & Fri., AUGUST 5-6, 1993.

Jim Oliver's Smokehouse Lodge in Monteagle, Tennessee
about 80 miles southeast of Nashville on I-24

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