



THE TRUMPET

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Hope for a Tree

Withered and dying. Doubt, fear, and unbelief cover the heart and mind like a shroud of death. Tears, sighing, crying, questions, anger, frustration, no promise of a happy ending, no way out, no way to win. Life can cause us to feel this way at times. But as a born again believer there is something alive inside of us that we sometimes fail to acknowledge. Something that can rise up against the present stifling darkness. Something that refuses to give in, to lie down, to quit. It is the precious presence of God's Spirit. Just one moment in His presence is all you will need to revive your heart again, to get the fire rekindled, to enable you to stir up the gift that now lies dormant. Just one moment in the soothing, calming, reassuring presence of Christ as He moves upon you through a human vessel, through the written word, or through the melodious strains of an anointed gospel song. Just one move of the Holy Ghost is all you will need. And then, no matter how low in life that you as a believer may have been brought to, hope springs upward giving strength and energy, bringing forth faith, reassuring with supernatural grace and power. Oh, Lord touch me again, one more time, today!

Job 14:7 & 9 - For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

Pastor Loren Larson

Men's Hearts Failing Them For Fear

Precious ones, it's been a while since I've been in touch. So many of God's people are asking for prayer because depression and discouragement is weighing them down. Have you been feeling this way? The devil wants you to lose faith. Remember in the Bible it speaks of "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth..." I used to think it was speaking of heart attacks, but it doesn't mean this old heart in our body. It is speaking of depression, discouragement, and fear. I know in my own life I must keep my mind on Jesus, my Savior, and His promise. We're going to be tested to the limit! We must walk by faith. I received a letter from a sweet saint today. She said, "Sister Betty Jean, I was walking in victory, and I let myself descend into awful depression. Please pray for me." An old song I recorded says, "I got up with Heaven on my mind this morning, on Jesus who heals the sick and blind. Let the sea billows roll, I've got glory in my soul. I got up with Heaven on my mind." I first heard an old blind coal miner singing this song. He had the victory. Honey, singing praise to our Lord will run that old devil off. Count your blessings. Remember what God has done. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Glory to Jesus! Please keep in touch with me. Lord willing, I will be ministering in a special way with you all here soon.

You are precious to Jesus and to me!

Love, Sister Betty Jean Robinson

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Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. John 14:1

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27



Church of the Covered Dish



Cousin Leroy

Leroy's Granny Gert and her friend Mabel were out driving in Granny's car. Both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red but they went on through it. Mabel, who was in the passenger seat thought to herself, "I must be losing my mind. I thought that was a red light we just we went through!" After a few more minutes, they came to another intersection and the light was red again. Again she went right through it. This time Mabel was almost sure that the light had been red, but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous and decided to pay very close attention to the road and the next intersection to see what was going on. At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was definitely red and right through it they went!! This time Mabel turned to Granny and said, "Gert! Did you know we just went through three red lights in a row? You could have killed us!" Ole Granny Gert turned to Mabel and said, "Oh dear, am I driving??"

School Picture

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture. "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, he's a doctor.'" A small voice, Johnny's, at the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher... she's dead."

Faith In Action

The temporary Sunday School teacher was struggling to open a combination lock on the supply cabinet. She had been told the combination, but couldn't quite remember it. Finally she went to the pastor's study and asked for help. The pastor came into the room and began to turn the dial. After the first two numbers he paused and stared blankly for a moment. Finally he looked serenely heavenward and his lips moved silently. Then he looked back at the lock, and quickly turned to the final number, and opened the lock. The teacher was amazed. "I'm in awe at your faith, pastor," she said. "It's really nothing," he answered. "The number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling."

How I Feel Inside

An artist has a show at the local gallery. One huge canvas is black with yellow blobs splattered all over it; the next is a murky gray with streaky drips of purple. A viewer walks over to the artist and says, "I don't understand your paintings." "I paint what I feel inside me," explains the artist. "...Have you ever tried Alka-Seltzer?"

Excuse Me, Pardon Me

"Pardon me, lady," said the man trying to get back to his seat in the darkened movie theater, "but did I step on your toes a few minutes ago?" "You certainly did!" said the woman in the aisle seat. "Good, then I'm in the right row," the man said as he went back to his seat.



VOTL
Voice of the LORD

From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Billy R. Douglas

Does The Devil Like Hanging Out With You?

And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Mark 5:10

In Mark the 5th chapter we find the story of a man that was possessed with demons. The Bible says that this man “dwelt among the tombs”, and that men had tried to bind him and control him but he was so wild that he would break the chains and fetters. He was completely controlled by demonic forces! It goes on to say that “neither could any man tame him”....BUT he was about to meet his match! If you will read the chapter you will find that as soon as he saw Jesus he ran and fell at his feet. Jesus did not call for the man...Jesus didn't go running after him YET this demon possessed man ran to him and cried out “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God”. We could stop right there and preach for a moment on the very fact that this man who was full of the devil knew who Jesus was yet most of Israel did not! Sadly much of the “church” world does not know who He is either! We see here that because Jesus was in the same area as this man it caused these demons to be uncomfortable...I wonder how many Christians make the devil uncomfortable? It goes on to say when Jesus spoke to the demons to command them to come out of the man they asked Jesus not to send them away *out of that country*... now, why did it matter so much to these demons whether they were commanded to leave that part of the country or not? There was something about this place that they enjoyed...something that caused them to desire to stay. The rest of the story reveals the answer to that very question. As the story continues we find that Jesus cast the demons out of the man and into *a* great herd of swine, and the swine went mad and ran down the mountain and into the sea and they all drowned! When the people there saw this they ran into the city and told what had happened and of course the people of the city came out to see for themselves what was going on. When they arrived they saw this man that had been so wild and so tormented sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed **and in his right mind!** What happens next tells us a lot about the people and why the demons loved it there so much. Were these people excited to see this man set free and delivered? NO, as a matter of fact they were afraid and asked Jesus to leave their country! You see most of these people made a living by raising swine and they were more disturbed about the fact that they had lost some hogs than they were excited about the fact that this man had been set free. These people had no desire for revival! It is sad to say but most churches across America do not want revival....oh they say that they do.. BUT real revival stirs the heart, changes things, AND changes people! Most today are content with the form and routine that they already have. Even worse most of the church is content with leaving the demon oppressed and the demon possessed in the same condition that they are in!! That is why these demons loved living in this place...these folks were *their kind of people*...they didn't want revival, they didn't want deliverance...they were content to stay just the way they were. It is sad to say but these demons would feel right at home in most churches today! I will close with this question for you to ponder...Do you make the devil uncomfortable or does he like hanging out with you? Until next time may the LORD bless and keep you in my prayer. Pastor Billy R Douglas

Special Issue of The Trumpet

“The Occult in America”

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**“Spiritual Reflection” (conclusion)**

Evangelist Mike Heltsley

Psalms 46:10-11 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

A. The call for Salvation Matthew 11:28 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Does the word "weary" ever describe your life? After a busy period we can become weary. When we get to this place it can render us ineffective for the Lord. In verse 28 can see that there is an invitation for men to come to Jesus. In Him alone can one find salvation for the soul. There is no other place to find true saving grace than in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 - Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Notice also that He called out to those who laboured and were heavy laden. The word "labour" refers to those who are absolutely worn out from effort, while the word "heavy laden" calls to mind those who have been pressed down by a great weight. The reference here is to those who are struggling with sin and to those who are labouring under the bondage of religion and vain attempts at self-righteousness. Jesus promised all those who came to Him that He would give them "rest". This word speaks of "quietness, calmness and refreshment." He promises to allow them to rest from their labours and their attempts at self-righteousness. He promises to save them fully and freely by grace alone without any works whatsoever. B. The Call for Service 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Three words sum up the call for service; "take," "learn," and "find." "Take my yoke upon you" Jesus said. Once we are saved, we are called to be harnessed to Him, to work alongside Him. He doesn't force His yoke on us. The Lord invites us to come and share in His great work in this needy world. It is apparent that Jesus expects us to get into the "yoke". The yoke was a wooden instrument that was placed around the neck of the ox and was then attached to the plough, the wagon, or whatever burden needed to be moved. Jesus says that His yoke is easy. What does He mean? Is He saying that life lived under His will is a life of ease and perfection? No! You see, each yoke was carved in such a way that it perfectly fit the shoulders of the ox for which it was designed. Each yoke was as different from every other yoke as were the oxen who wore them. What Jesus is saying is that "His yoke fits." When we surrender to the Lord and to His will for our lives, we can be confident that He has perfectly and individually designed your yoke just for you. He has made your life to be a perfect fit. That is why He can also say that His burden is light! When we are surrendered to the Lord's yoke and are pulling the burden He has designed for us, there will be satisfaction, even in the midst of trials and afflictions. When a yoke is first placed on the shoulders of the ox, the ox will rebel against the yoke. It doesn't quite feel right. However, when he surrenders to the yoke and puts his shoulders to the task of pulling his burden, he finds that the yoke makes the job of pulling the burden much easier than it would have been. There is a lesson here for you and me! We should all strive to yield to the yoke Jesus has designed for us to wear. It may not feel right when we are first exposed to it and we may want to buck and kick against it, but if we will surrender to it, we will find that it may actually make our lives easier than they would have been otherwise. There are a bunch of the Lord's oxen who try their best to wear another yoke. Some people who are saved try to wear the yoke of worldliness, but they will find that it doesn't fit. Some try to wear the yoke that has been designed for someone else by trying to do things that Lord hasn't called or gifted them to do, they, too, will find that the yoke doesn't fit. When we wear the wrong yoke, we will find ourselves exposed to unnecessary pain and bruising that could have been avoided by merely surrendering to our own individual yoke of service. "Learn of Me" The Jews rejected Jesus because He was meek and lowly. They didn't want a meek King, they wanted a King that would destroy the Roman Empire and make Jerusalem the capital of a new world governed by the Jews. They wanted a King who would humble their enemies in the dust and plant His feet on the neck of Israel's foes. They didn't know who Christ was. During this time of reflection, we need to heed the words of Christ as He says, "Learn of me..." We need to learn to be like Him. Our development should be characterised by an ever growing grasp of the eternal. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls..." Rest is the true service for the King. True service does not involve anxiety, restless activity, constant pressure, endless deadlines, and exhausting haste. True, there is work to be done; there are things to be accomplished for God, but all acceptable service results from our rest in Him. I love the lyrics to this song: "Be Still And Know" Be still and know that He is God Be still and know that He is holy Be still Oh restless heart of mine Bow before the Prince of Peace Let the noise and clamor cease Be still and know that He is God Be still and know that He is faithful Consider all that He has done Stand in awe and be amazed And know that He will never change Be still Be still and know that He is God Be still and know that He is God Be still and know that He is God Be still Be speechless Be still and know that He is God Be still and know that He is our Father Come and rest your head upon His breast Listen to the rhythm of His unfailing heart of love Beating for his little ones Calling each of us to come Be still Be still



God Does the Telling! (and don't you forget it!)

Pastor Steven Huston

"Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak."
Jeremiah 1:6-7 KJV

If you'll read the first 10 verses of Jeremiah chapter one, you'll be ready for this devotional. When God calls us to something, our response ought to immediately be, "Speak Lord, for Thy obedient servant heareth; send me and I'll go." How often is our initial response that of Jeremiah's? "Lord, I can't because..." In the previous verse to Jeremiah's objection, God says, "I formed you; and even before I formed you I knew you, I sanctified you, and I ordained you for this task." Even with all this, Jeremiah tried telling God, "I can't." What did God say to that? He said, "Don't give me any excuses. Don't tell me how you see yourself. It's not about you; it's about me!" God went on to tell Jeremiah that He would tell Jeremiah where to go and what to say. God would be with him all the way; He would deliver Jeremiah. It was not about the servant; it's about the Master. Then in verse 9--get ready to be blessed--God did what He ALWAYS does; He provided what Jeremiah would need to do the task he had been assigned. If God calls us to it—He provides the finances, the people, the energy, the way...He provides EVERYTHING for the task He calls you to! Jeremiah was without excuse. God knew him, was with him, and provided for him. How could he--how can we--say no to Him? Friends, how about you? What is God calling you to? NO EXCUSES! He made you! He knows you! He's with you! He will provide ALL you need for the task and the good works He's called you to and has foreordained you to walk in. It's not about you! It's about Him. It's not about the servant; it's about the Master. It's not about the task; it's about His call, His provision, His glory, and His Word. Some may object: I have not heard from God; I know not His urgings. My response is three-fold: 1) Have you tuned out the static of the world that you might hear from and pay heed to the Master? Are you looking ONLY unto Jesus (Heb. 12:2), setting your affection on things above, not on the things of the earth (Col. 3:2)? If not, how can you rightfully say that you haven't heard from Him when you haven't truly and tirelessly listened for Him? 2) Are you walking in obedience to that which you do know Scripture tells you is His will? Let me share only four with you: A) He desires your salvation--He would that none should perish. (II Peter 3:9) B) He desires your sanctification (completely separate from the world and separated unto Him) (I Thes. 4:3) C) He desires you to share the gospel with others. (Mark 16:15) D) He desires you to give thanks in ALL things, even persecution, for even persecution may be His perfect will for you. (I Thes. 5:18; I Peter 3:17, 4:19) 3) Are you obeying the Bible as a whole. When you find yourself in any situation, are you living with the Bible as your authority? If not obedient to the general truth, why should God entrust you with some specific task? Remember that it takes the power of God to live out each day in holiness and faithfulness. Remember that He provides what you need for that faithful, holy walk. Remember that He made you and calls you to both the ordinary everyday tasks and the specialized ordained tasks. He calls and leads; ours is but to obey. Simply press on in obedience today.

Pastor Steve Huston 103 N. Division Ave. Fremont, Michigan 49412

Preach The Gospel

Preach the Gospel, sound it forth, Tell of free and full salvation; Spread the tidings o'er the earth,
Go to every tribe and nation.

Preach the Gospel, full of joy, While on grace and mercy dwelling; Heart and soul in full employ,
As the story you are telling.

Preach the Gospel, make it clear, By the blood of Christ remission; Give the message, make them hear,
This alone is our commission.

Preach the Gospel full of love, Christ's compassion fully knowing; Seek the power from above,
While His great compassion showing.

Preach the Gospel as if God Sinners lost through you were seeking; His salvation through the Word
Speak as if the Lord were speaking.

~Daniel Webster Whittle~



REESIE'S RECIPES

French Toast Sausage Breakfast Casserole

1 loaf cinnamon bread
 12 eggs
 1 cup whole milk
 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
 3/4 cup sugar
 2 Tbsp vanilla
 6 sausage patties crumbled, browned, drained

Topping

1/2 cup flour
 1/2 cup brown sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
 1 stick butter

Cut bread into cubes and place in a well buttered 9x13 baking pan. In a bowl mix together eggs, milk, cream, sugar, and vanilla. Put crumbled sausage over bread then pour egg mixture evenly over bread and sausage. Cover with saran wrap and let set 20 to 30 minutes. Topping - Mix together flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Spread evenly over bread and egg mixtures. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar. Drizzle with pancake syrup if desired.

Crispy Parmesan Chicken

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (6 oz each)
 1/2 cup Alfredo pasta sauce (from 15-oz jar)
 2/3 cup Italian style panko crispy bread crumbs
 2/3 cup finely shredded Parmesan

Heat oven to 400°F. Line cookie sheet with foil, and generously spray with cooking spray. Pound chicken breasts smooth side down, gently between pieces of plastic wrap, with flat side of meat mallet or rolling pin until 1/2 inch thick. In shallow dish, place pasta sauce; in another shallow dish, mix bread crumbs and cheese. Dip chicken into sauce, then dip into bread crumb mixture to coat. Place chicken on cookie sheet. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink in center and coating is golden brown.

Root Beer Float Cake

1 package white cake mix (18.25 ounces)
 1 cup root beer
 1/4 cup water
 1/2 cup canola oil
 3 eggs
 1 tsp. root beer extract (McCormicks)
 4 cups powdered sugar
 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
 1 tsp. root beer extract (McCormicks)
 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, root beer, water, oil, extract, and eggs. Beat on low speed for 2 minutes or stir by hand for 3 minutes. Pour into a greased 13x9-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes, or until toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool completely on a wire rack. In a small bowl, beat the cream cheese, butter, and extracts. Gradually fold in the powdered sugar. Beat until soft peaks form. Frost the cooled cake. Store in a refrigerator before serving.

Butter Pecan Fudge

1 cup Unsalted Butter
 1 cup Granulated Sugar
 1 cup Light Brown Sugar, Packed
 1 cup Heavy Whipping Cream
 1/4 teaspoon Kosher Salt
 1 tablespoon Pure Vanilla Extract
 3 cups Powdered Sugar
 2 cups Chopped Pecans

Line an 8- by 8-inch baking dish with parchment paper. Set aside. In a large saucepan over medium high heat, combine sugars, cream, butter and salt. Bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, boil for a full 4 minutes (ROLLING BOIL). Remove from heat. Pour hot mixture into a mixing bowl and add in the vanilla and powdered sugar. Beat until smooth (several minutes). Fold in chopped pecans and pour into prepared baking dish. Refrigerate for 3-4 hours until firm. Before cutting into pieces, allow to come to room temperature.



It's Never As Bad As It Seems!

George Whitten - www.worthydevotions.com

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Psalms 27:4-5

The world these days is full of bad news, with tensions growing in the Middle East, tensions with North Korea, and nature constantly adding to the chaos with one disaster after another. It's a time of trouble all right, and for us believers, it may sometimes be hard to believe – but it never is as bad as it seems. Let me illustrate with a joke I like to share with my messages. Way out west (in America, of course), a cowboy is driving down a road, his dog riding in the back of his pickup truck, his faithful horse in the trailer behind. As he takes a curve on the highway he suddenly loses control of the vehicle and has a terrible accident. Sometime later, a State Police officer comes on the scene. A great lover of animals, the officer's attention is first drawn to the horse. Realizing the serious nature of its injuries, he draws his service revolver and puts the animal out of its misery. Then walking around the accident he finds the dog, also critically wounded, and whining miserably in pain. This grips his heart and he quickly ends the dog's suffering as well. Finally, the police officer locates the cowboy, who has suffered multiple fractures and can barely breathe. "Hey, are you okay?", he says. The cowboy takes one look at the smoking gun in the trooper's hand and quickly replies, with unexpected energy, "Never felt better!" We are pilgrims in this dangerous world, which will wound us at times so badly it will seem unbearable – yet we have this promise from God, "in the time of trouble He will hide me". It's because my real life, my true life is in Him and with Him no matter what happens to me here. So when the world approaches me with a smoking gun, ready to put me out of my misery, I can find a supernatural strength, and simply say, "I never felt better!"

Changing America – One Word, One Statue, One Prayer at a Time

American Decency Association

To rewrite a nation's history is to unloose it from its moorings, allowing it to drift chaotically to destinations unknown. President Woodrow Wilson said, "A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we don't know where we have come from, or what we have been about." An intentional, systematic changing of America began in the early 1900s with one word. From around 1630 until 1900 history was taught from a providential view. However, men who would remove God from education and the public square began teaching and rewriting our textbooks from an economic view. Columbus sailed to share the gospel of Jesus in other lands; now we only learn that he was looking for a better trade route. Our forefathers fought England for many political, military, judicial, and moral abuses. Today we focus on #17 (taxation without representation) of the 27 grievances and ignore the moral and religious foundations upon which our founders stood. God exhorts us to remember the former days and to set stones of remembrance; yet we remove the Ten Commandments from our schools and courts, allow sports heroes and others to disrespect our flag and national anthem, and watch our national statues be torn down one by one. Recently, the 9th Circuit Court ruled that high school football coaches cannot pray in public at football games. We were a nation founded on prayer and Biblical principles. Our government and its leaders called us to prayer and fasting, beseeching the help of Almighty God; but today it's been deemed illegal for a citizen to pray silently after a football game - even as NFL football players refuse to stand for the National Anthem. They can take a knee to disrespect our country, but we can't take a knee to respect the God upon Whom our nation was founded. Congress is strictly forbidden by the Constitution to make any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The federal courts—again—illegally legislate from the bench, showing how America continues to be changed one word, one statue, and one prayer at a time. Author: Steven Huston

American Decency Association (ADA), PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412



Honoring God With Fog Machines and Blue Jeans

By. Dr. Richard Lee

To begin this article I have to go back a few years to the question I was asked by a young man who was the lead singer in one of America's most well-known "Christian Rock" bands. His group was making their rounds to various churches in the area and wanted to sing in one of our church services. Coming to visit me he asked, "Pastor, do you like our style of music or what kind of music are you in to?" I simply answered, "the only music worthy to be done in a worship service is that which is worthy to be done before the Throne of God." I don't think he really understood my meaning. It's evident that Christian America has forgotten that GOD is the central figure of our worship services. A classic example was a recent Sunday when Judy and I drove a good distance to worship at a First Baptist church. I have known the pastor for several years and was looking forward to hearing him preach and – Boy, was I surprised. Disappointed is a better way to put it. Somehow this church had morphed into a silly show of smoke machines, blue lights, a bad band and silly songs. When the pastor came to preach (communicate as they called it), here was this man in his late 50's in blue jeans, untucked plaid shirt with sleeves rolled up and needing a shave. Come-on I thought. Act your age – everybody knows you're not cool! After his silly attempt to "communicate" about the books he had recently read, a few positive-living comments and a warm story about his family, he finally finished with a kind smile, a warm goodbye and we'll see you next time. How sweet and nice. No gospel challenge. No point of personal decision. No public invitation. Nothing! I went away thinking, what was that hour I spent all about? Why did I bother to come? I have often told others that I fully understand why some people don't go to church these days. After my 52 years of pastoring some of America's great churches, it breaks my heart to see what's become of the church in America. Personally, I belong to the Southern Baptist Convention. I have served on numerous committees and boards of the Convention. I was the President of the Pastors Conference of the S.B.C. and have spoken at countless Conventions and Churches through the years. I love Southern Baptists. But last year the Southern Baptist Convention lost 200,000 members, baptisms were down for another year and church attendance across the board has dropped as well for another year.* Across the broad spectrum of denominational churches in America almost 340,000 have either plateaued or are in decline.* But is there an answer to reverse the fall, to stop the leak and revive the church again? Indeed there is. Why not return to the basics that built the American church to begin with. Why not preach the Word of God, bring sinners face-to-face with their sins and tell them of the blood of Jesus Christ who can forgive them and wash them clean. How about challenging the church members and training them to be soul-winners so their families and neighbors can find Christ. Why not preach with authority about Heaven and Hell and challenge the listeners to "come to Christ" now! Why not try to return dignity, respect and honor to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Evidently the statistics seem to prove that the Seeker Sensitive guests are not seeking what some folks think they are. Some of my fellow preachers and their churches better wake up to the truth. Fog machines, blue jeans, blue lights and other flimsy tricks will never take the place of preaching the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the answer. Always has been, always will be. Just take time to look around and you will see it clearly – the declining churches are proving it.

Learning to Serve

Pastor Don Ragsdale

What we have is not ours to do as we please. What I mean is this, our life has been purchased by God through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and We are to seek the Lord as to What He would have us to Do, concerning His perfect will, and if we're having a problem hearing His voice, then we need to repent and start asking Him how He wants us to give and how much, but not of just money but of our time also in seeking Him and serving Him. For Every believer is not only called out to be Saved but we also called to Serve, yet we cannot Serve someone Whom we don't Seek. For Jesus said in John 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. While the devil will entangle many into the yoke of bondage by getting them to trust in their works, we must not omit the Grace of God as the source of Good Works. Phil.2:13 / Eph. 2:10 which Titus said, it was Good and Profitable that we should Maintain, Titus 3:8 & 14. The devil ain't gonna tell you to give more of yourself to the work of God, or more of your money but he will tell you to hold back, and to keep back what you have and that my friend is the Sin Nature at work. For whenever there is no Daily Denial of Self, Self always seeks to overthrow Christ from the Throne of our hearts, whereby our focus becomes, me, myself and I. Only as we daily submit ourselves to God, by faith in Christ and Him Crucified can we become dead to this world, Gal.6:14 and dead to Self, Lk.9:23 otherwise we can't nor will ever know the perfect will of God, Romans 12:1-2. There are many who want to be Served, but very few who learn to Serve because only a few are willing to die to themselves, which always causes them to Serve Willingly, not as a means of Righteousness but as a Result! 7134 Church Rd. Walls, MS 38680 P.O. Box 449 Southaven, MS 38671 - www.wordofthecrossministries.com



A Word for TODAY!



By Sister Michelle Deuling

Verse for Today: 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Additional passages for Today: Matthew 5:19; Matthew 20:1-16

Thought for Today: Labor for man only lasts a little while; Labor for the Lord has an eternal value

Story for Today: "A wretched, poor, and helpless worm. On Thy kind arms I fall." These words were inscribed on the headstone of a man that was a well-loved legend in the Bengal region. As Roger continued his study of the "father of modern missions" William Carey, his admiration grew. It was amazing the hours and hours of labor this godly man put into working for the Lord. The sacrifice of time, money, family, modern conveniences; all was more than Roger could even fathom. Roger had grown up in a family that had never known want. As a boy he had the best of everything money could buy and a blessing of a godly heritage that he never quite understood. Attending private schools and having the best tutors around, he was blessed with an education many only dreamed about. Roger's grandfather, Harley Morton had made his fortune as a young man in the salt mine industry before coming to know the Lord as His Savior. Harley had an excellent work ethic that he passed on to his children and even now was being taught to young Roger. But, more importantly, were the lessons that he had learned about working for the Lord and the meaning of a godly character. More than once temptation had come knocking at the door in the form of an underhanded scheme and Harley would go to his knees in prayer seeking strength to do right. Or the time that all the workers plotted to overthrow and take over the business and Harley spent hours seeking God's safety, wisdom and help to not only protect his family, the crew leaders but the workers themselves and then the strength to forgive and restore relationships needed to continue on. Harley never regretted his choice to do things God's way. Sometimes others mocked him or told how foolish he was for not taking advantage of some loop hole. But, every night, when he laid his head on his pillow, he was grateful that he had once again been given the strength to do things God's way. Harley didn't make a big production and seek accolades for doing right. He knew that his reward was in Heaven and he was willing to wait for it. One thing he may never have realized was the impact on his family, that his prayer time and his willingness to do the right thing was making. He was never to meet Roger as he died before his birth. But, Roger was reaping the benefits of being raised by a father that was trained by the example of that man, Harley Morton. Harley's middle son had known little of his dad before his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, but, he did recall that things in their family was different and the model of a man kneeling in prayer over every decision was not lost on the son. And giving his life to Christ as a young man, he sought to follow the savior even closer than the example he had been given. And now young Roger was not only blessed to follow in this wonderful heritage, but, he was being blessed beyond measure as he felt the call of God to go into missions and live a life of complete sacrifice whatever that would mean. Roger was sure that whatever material gain he could accomplish in this life, nothing would ever compare to the eternal gain of even one soul finding their heavenly reward. And like he saw modeled in the life of William Carey, we may never know the extent that a life, lived out for the Lord will impact generations for centuries to come.

Questions for Today: What have you done today? How much is of earthly value that will vanish and be remembered no more, and how much was done with eternity in mind that will last forever? What do you hope future generations will remember about you, how rich you were in worldly things or how rich you were in the love of God?

Song for Today: Jesus is all the World to Me

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, We praise your Holy Name. Thank you for the work done on Calvary that is able to save all mankind. Please give us the desire to strive to do your will and the strength to be faithful servants. Help us to focus our lives in living for the eternal rewards and to be a godly example to as many as we can. In Jesus' name, AMEN!



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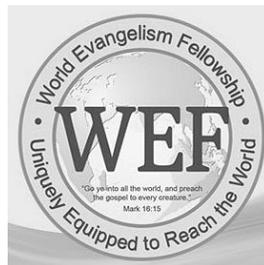
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