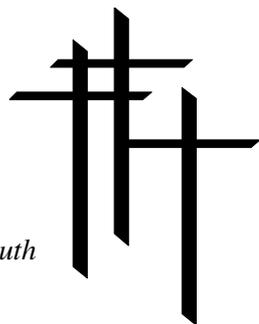


Timely Messenger



*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*

Volume 71 No. 3

May-Jun 2011

ETERNAL LIFE

By Charles Wages

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

God’s existence spans all the ages—in fact, He is the designer of all the ages. John wrote earlier: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

We accept the tremendous truth that God is and that He is eternal, in spite of the fact that

the human mind cannot grasp or contain its magnitude. Yet, it becomes so wonderful and so personal when coupled with the truth that He has given this eternal life, through the Lord Jesus Christ, to all who believe the divine record of His Son.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

It was in God’s eternal purpose to give eternal life to those who believe. The Lord Jesus in His prayer to the Father, in John 17:1-3, said,

“Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many

as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

Another remarkable thing about God giving man eternal life is that eternal life is a present reality not just a future dream or wish. That is the reason why a person really begins to "live" when they receive the Lord Jesus as personal Saviour. One of the most assuring and heart-warming verses in the Bible is the one recorded in John 5:24 where Jesus said,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Another comforting truth to embrace is that God has prepared an eternal home for those who trust Him. Paul, under inspiration, wrote to believers of this present age or dispensation,

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor, 5:1)

Notice that this "house" is specified as being "eternal in the heavens." Also, we notice that the Scripture emphasized, "we have a building." M. R. Vincent states in his book, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, that, "the building from God is an actual possession in virtue of the believers union with Christ. It is just as we say of a minor, before he comes into possession of his property, that he has so much."

In view of the above truths, we, as believers, should "lay hold" on this wonderful eternal life. In other words, to grasp it in order to use it for God's glory. There are many believers who, of course, have eternal life, but they have never taken hold of this fact and used this abundant life for God's glory and their good. This word "lay hold" is used of those who "laid hold" of Simon who was to carry the cross of Jesus. He was divinely ordained to do this work of God. We should fully recognize and acknowledge the eternal life that God has given us. How different we would be, and how more fully we would live if we all would "lay hold" of eternal life!

We must see that it is “Christ in us” that makes us eternal. It is His life, not ours. It is He who enables us to live “abundantly” (John 10:10). It is the Lord Jesus that makes heaven, home. A little boy was asked, “What makes your house a home?” Quickly the little boy answered, as he put his arms around his mother, “It’s my mom!” Well, we all should know, that it is the blessed Saviour who has given us eternal life and the “home” in heaven will be blessed and eternal because He is there.

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TIMELY MESSENGER

Published bi-monthly by:

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

1450 Oak Hill Road
Fort Worth, TX 76112-3017
(817) 451-0937

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Gregg Bing — Editor

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10:00 AM	Sunday School
11:00 AM	Morning Worship
6:00 PM	Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

Tues. 10:00 AM	Ladies Class
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*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

WALK BY THE SAME RULE

By Gregg Bing

(Continued from last issue)

In our last issue, we looked at Paul's admonition in Philippians 3:15-16 that we "order" our Christian walk according to a certain "rule," a rule based on having the right mindset. Paul describes this proper mindset in the preceding verses of Philippians 3. Its essence is found in the words of verse 8. "... that I may gain Christ." This is the mindset of a mature believer, the mindset that will bring a believer to maturity.

Paul follows this admonition with some examples of this type of ordered walk, some positive, some negative.

Positive Examples

"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern." (Phil. 3:17)

Paul directs us to become "imitators" of him. The expression "join in following my example" is in the imperative mood, meaning it is a com-

mand. The Greek word consists of two parts: (1) the word "mimeomai," from which we get our English words "mimic" and "mimeograph, means to imitate or to follow exactly and (2) the preposition "sun" which means "together with." All believers are to be of the same mind and walk by the same rule; all believers are to be imitators of Paul.

This does not mean that we are to become "Paulites" or worshippers of Paul, but, as Paul told the Corinthians, "to follow Paul as he followed Christ." Paul was quite humble; he never magnified himself, but he did magnify his office (Rom. 11:13) as an apostle of Jesus Christ, called of God to a unique apostleship to the Gentiles. We are to follow Paul in his doctrine, as the steward of the dispensation of the grace of God. We are to follow Paul in his attitude in faithfully serving the Lord Jesus Christ, the very attitude we find in Philippians 3:7-14.

Paul also directs us to "note those who so walk as you have us for a pattern." Paul's life was a pattern (type or example) for us to follow, but his was not the only one. There were others who labored with Paul in the ministry, both men and women,

whose lives we should give special consideration to as well. Timothy was a young man whom Paul described as “likeminded,” a man who sincerely cared for others (Phil. 2:20). Silas and Barnabas were fellow apostles who faithfully travelled and served alongside Paul even through times of great persecution. Aquila and Priscilla were a husband and wife team who “risked their own necks” for Paul (Rom. 16:4). We also need to take note of brothers and sisters in Christ that we know personally who “so walk” and learn from their example.

Negative Examples

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” (Phil. 3:18-19)

Paul warns that there are many whose walk is not ordered according to the right rule or standard. Their walk is so far off that they have become “enemies of the cross of

Christ.” This was not the first time Paul had warned the Philippians about these people. He had often reminded them in the past, and now he felt they needed to hear it again. Paul did not hesitate to repeat himself, especially in warning the saints about spiritual dangers (Phil. 3:1), even when the reminder brought him grief. Just thinking about those who walked this way caused Paul to weep. Paul had a genuine love and concern for others, and his heart was stirred when he encountered those who did not know the Lord (Acts 17:16).

Those who are “enemies” are filled with hatred and hostility. Paul warned about those who were not just “enemies of Christ,” but “enemies of the cross of Christ.” There are many religious groups who claim to follow Christ, especially in the areas of His teaching and His life, but they deny His finished work on the cross. The message of the cross is the gospel for this present age, the basis for our salvation, but the majority of religious people in the world hate this truth. Many are like the Jews of Jesus’ day. They are religious; they have “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). They are offended at the simple

teaching that salvation is “by grace through faith” and that we are “complete in Christ” (Col. 2:10) without any religious works. To them, the “cross of Christ” is a stumbling block. Others are like the Greeks of that same generation. They are humanists; proud and self-sufficient. They consider foolish the teaching that man is, by nature, a sinner and in need of a Savior, and that man’s salvation is only possible through the death of God’s Son on the cross of Calvary. To them, the “cross of Christ” is foolishness.

Some have questioned if these “enemies of the cross of Christ” could include believers? It doesn’t seem likely that a true believer could be an enemy of the cross, but believers can walk like these “enemies of the cross of Christ.” That is why they are held up as a negative example, to warn us against walking as they do.

Four things characterize the walk of these “enemies of the cross.”

1) “Whose end is destruction.” The word “end” can mean their ultimate end, or it can refer to the result of such a walk. The word “destruction” can mean destruction, ruin, loss or waste. An unbeliever who remains an enemy of the cross of Christ

throughout their life will perish. They will be separated from God and reside in the lake of fire for all eternity. A believer who walks like an enemy of the cross of Christ will not perish, but they will lose rewards, and such a walk will result in a wasted, ruined life.

Believers should seek to walk in such a way that our lives bring forth fruit, works that will stand the fires of the judgment seat of Christ and will endure to the glory of God.

2) “Whose god is their belly.” The word “god” implies what they worship, serve, honor or value most in life. Rather than worshipping their God and Creator, their focus is on their own belly, satisfying the needs/wants of their own bodies, the desires of the flesh.

A believer’s walk should reflect a desire to be “well-pleasing” to the Lord, a life more concerned with our spiritual life and relationship with Him rather than our mere physical existence.

3) “Whose glory is in their shame.” They glory, boast, and rejoice in things they should be ashamed of; things that are not fitting, proper, or suitable. They have “debased minds,” leading them to do things “which are not fitting” (Rom. 1:28).

Believers should have nothing to do with these “unfruitful works of darkness.” It is shameful even to speak about such sinful acts (Eph. 5:12). These types of deeds are not proper or suitable for those whom God has called “saints,” meaning “holy ones” who are set apart for Him.

4) “Who mind earthly things.” Here is the fundamental problem with those who walk as “enemies of the cross of Christ”: their minds. Their thinking, their reasoning, their value system is centered on earthly things instead of on heavenly things. They have not counted the things of this life as “loss” that they “may gain Christ.”

Since we have been “raised with Christ” we are to “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” We are to set our minds and hearts “on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2). We have been “crucified with Christ” to the things of this world. Our life is “hidden with Christ in God.” Christ is our life! Our walk should reflect this wonderful spiritual reality.

This earth is not our home. Like Abraham in the land of Canaan, we are merely pilgrims,

sojourners here on earth.

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Phil. 3:20-21)

Our citizenship is in heaven. The King James Version reads, “Our conversation (conduct, manner of life) is in heaven.” Both ideas are present in the original Greek word. We need to remember that we are heavenly citizens, and we need to think like heavenly citizens, even while living here on earth. What’s more, we need to conduct ourselves like heavenly citizens. Our walk should be worthy of heaven and worthy of our glorious Lord who dwells there (Col. 1:10).

One of the things that helps us maintain such a worthy walk is to keep our focus on the future, on eternity. As we live and serve the Lord, day by day, we are to “eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Our hope, our expectation for the future is in Him. One day soon

He will appear, and when He appears, we will appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). He will change our lowly bodies of flesh, and they will be conformed to His wonderful body of glory. We shall be “like Him” and we shall be “with Him” forever in our heavenly home.

Until that day comes, Paul encourages each and every believer to live a life ordered by the same rule, a rule I believe is summed up in this simple statement in Philippians 1:21: “to me, to live is Christ.”

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

The Holy Spirit led Paul to write the letter to the Colossians to correct false teaching that was circulating at that time about Jesus Christ. Paul’s response to these heresies is as timely today as it was in the first century. Paul didn’t identify these heretical groups by name. Instead, he responded to their false doctrines with positive teaching about the fullness found in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul’s letter primarily addresses two key truths about Jesus Christ which the false teachers denied: 1) The superiority of His person; they refused to acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ. 2) The sufficiency of His finished work on Calvary to save men from their sins; they rejected the idea that salvation is “by grace through faith” in Christ alone.

In the center of this book, we find the theme of Colossians summed up in two short, but powerful verses of Scripture:

*“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are **complete** in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power.”*

—Colossians 2:9-10

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Howdy, Partner!

Grab your bandana, dust off your boots, and get ready to mine for true gold. We're headed to the Old West in Gold Rush: Discovering the Rock of Ages (from Answers in Genesis).

Our children must decide among many "gods" every day. In media, in school, and in books, they're taught that all roads lead to heaven. They're told to "believe what you want and it will be true for you." These dangerous lies are drawing our kids away from the truth—that Jesus, the Rock of Ages, is the way, the truth, and the life! Salvation is found in Jesus alone!

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- What was unique about Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection?
- What is salvation, and how can I be saved?
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Gold Rush provides fun songs, daily games, snacks, crafts, and Bible time, all focused on teaching children about the one and only Rock of Ages!

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My Prayer

By Dennis Blankenship

Sometimes I find I'm saddened
When I think back o'er my life,
About some of my relationships
That ended in pain and strife.

Friends with whom I once laughed,
We no longer communicate,
Each one has gone his own way,
And some chose to retaliate.

How have we failed, what have we done,
That things came out this way?
I'm afraid that pride and selfishness
Have had a lot to say.

Concerning love and wisdom,
In these I've found a lack,
If I could only make a choice again,
But choices don't come back.

God, make me now Your instrument,
In meekness may I be led,
Put love in me to be set forth
In all things, done and said.

Grant wisdom, too, as I go on
And live my life each day,
That my choices are good and pleasing,
As I walk the Christian way.

Please take my mind and take my heart,
Set my spirit free ...
That all may know the love of God
As You life Your life in me.

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye,
being rooted and grounded in love." —Ephesians 3:17*

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS



The following Bible study materials are available free of charge for your personal use or for use in teaching a Bible class.

by Charles Wages

- Written for Our Learning
- Stepping Stones to Truth
- Past Pentecost to Paul
- Points to Ponder
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- Saved by Grace
- Ministry of the Church
- The Perfect Will of God
- Once in a Lifetime
- Fellowship in Christ
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- The Lord has Spoken
- Why is Heaven Silent?

Study to shew
thyself approved
unto God, a workman
that needeth not to
be ashamed, rightly
dividing the Word
of truth.

—2 Timothy 2:15