

## **E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom**

The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near.  
Change the way you think and act, and believe the Good News.”

Mark 1:15 GW

- **TENSIONS BOIL AS ISRAEL OIL RICHES GROW**
- **PREPARING TO ENDURE TO THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION**
- **SO THAT'S WHAT GRACE LOOKS LIKE**
- **ISSUE OF THE TRINITY**
- **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU AND ME**
- **DID YOU MISS TISHA B'AV?**

**DEDICATED TO SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S COMING KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED WHEN CHRIST RETURNS**



## Editor's Note

Co-Editors: Kent H. Ross Wally Winner

### General Conference:

In July our churches from around the country gathered at their annual Conference. For many years it met at a church in northern Illinois. But then it moved to Christian camps in Indiana and Iowa before then transitioning to college campuses. Those have been from Virginia to Ohio, from Indiana to Illinois, to Minnesota and Michigan.

Most recently they have been again meeting at one of our larger churches, this year at the Lawrenceville Church of God, near Springfield, Ohio. It was again good to meet and greet old friends and new, and consider what we could do better together than we individually might accomplish.

This year's theme was focused on John 1:14 referring to Christ, coming from the Father, full of "grace and truth." The three convocations were excellent and excellently presented by Pastor Scott Millard of Omaha, Nebraska, Pastor Michael Cisler, of Rockford, Michigan, and Pastor Alan Cain, the host pastor. They all were strong presentations on "Grace, and one is actually featured in this issue of the E-Herald, but it was noted that there was almost no stress on the second part, that of "truth."

Now it isn't that anything false was presented, but the stress was on the issue of "grace" while little was said about "truth." Perhaps that is as it should be. For years it seems, "truth" has been over-stressed to the diminution of "grace." Certainly, truth cannot be excluded and both need to be part of the whole . . . maybe with truth being "what" is spoken, and grace the manner in "how" truth is spoken.

There seemed to be little business to be transacted. Of course a budget was established, and it was noted the year ended in "the black," though to do so, seemed to overlook the unpaid and owed tuition of the newly recruited community students there in Georgia. One committee asked for permission to expand its numbers, especially, it seems, so they could appoint their own members, some who have been on it for decades!

### Church Growth and Evangelism:

That may be why I was struck by the enthusiasm for the work, but the lack of evidence of church growth and evangelism happening. Numbers, as in most churches across all denominations, are down, as was the delegate representation at this year's conference. Of course numbers are only one measurement, but in my opinion it is a telling one.

Numbers represent people . . . people who are led to a saving relationship with God through His Son, Jesus. A perusal of the Book of Acts reveals an almost exponential growth reported by the New Testament church. That incredible growth finally slowed when persecution erupted, but not immediately. It continued for many years even with the intense persecution of men such as Nero and Diocletian. In those days, it was said that the church was "watered with the blood of the martyrs."

Church Growth has developed a bad name with almost no new church growth reported. Sadly the wonderful and unique message we hold to be Biblical truth is vastly unknown. While the Lord's Harvest International expanded itself, their focus is on foreign fields. It is wonderful the expansion of the work overseas, but attention needs to be paid to our Home Missions effort.

Sadly there presently is no such entity, nor is there a department of evangelism, much less church planting. In fairness, a recent effort is being made to revitalize our churches through the Natural Church Development. It is a hopeful sign, but it still does not address the need for evangelism. That is the stress of the Great Commission of Christ, as He, Himself, came proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God.

Several of these issues will be addressed at next month's Heritage Conference (September 20-22 at the North Hills Church of God). Hopefully, though such analysis can initially be painful, from such renewal can hopefully come.

### **Heritage Conference:**

This Conference meets that Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with outstanding presenters such as Dr. Joe Martin, present CAO of the Conference and President of Atlanta Bible College, plus David Krogh, former president and present Dean. Also Pastor Steve An, head of the exciting Korean-American section of Atlanta Bible College.

But there will be further presentations by names you might recognize: Dr. John Smead, Jim and Myra Hamilton, plus members of the Church of God History Committee. Also Dan and Sharon Gill, of Tennessee will be there as will Larry Rankin, missionary to the Philippines.

There will be special meals from foreign field – a luncheon of Korean delicacies, plus two evening Banquets one featuring a Philippine menu and the other featuring a Malawian cuisine. All will have authentic dishes for your pleasure . . . if you can come.

And the amazing fact is there is no fee to attend this outstanding event. You can see the entire program on another page.

### **Coming E-Heralds:**

In the next issues of this E-Herald, we will be featuring important and unique theological articles that will remind you of the great truths found in the Bible, some, even many of them being misunderstood by many churches and Christians. Hopefully, we will be able to make these more available for reprints.

These first issues will focus on Biblical theological positions, but in further issues we will be featuring the Biblical positions on moral issues that are compromising the integrity of many Christians and even of our nation and its leadership.

Be sure you are subscribed. Remember it is also free, but you need to ask for it to be sent to your computer.

### **This Issue:**

It features one of the sermons from this year's General Conference, but there is much more. An article that will help you to consider what can be done to prepare for the Great Tribulation that looms in the future. There is also a wonderful message on Kingdom preaching,

A report of a Midwest Family Camp, where there is great strengthening for entire families that attend, often for the entire week at Camp Alexander Mack. That annual camp continues to grow as more families want this kind of week for themselves and their families.

Check out the Heritage Conference program; the excellent help for rebutting the doctrine of the trinity, the curious information Wally Winner provides on July 29!

The issue is once again crowded with what you and your family need to be strong and of good courage especially in these last days. God bless you.

Kent H. Ross

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## BIBLE CHARACTERS

1. Of what king was it said, that while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David?

7. Who was the son of Haran and the nephew of Abraham?

2. What judge refused to become ruler of Israel saying, "The Lord shall rule over you"

8. What woman was admonished and cheered by an angel at a fountain in the wilderness?

3. What King had his life lengthened fifteen years in answer to prayer?

9. Who was let down by cords into a deep dungeon and left to nearly starve?

4. What king was humbled until he acknowledged the God of Daniel to be the Lord?

10. What woman was sole ruler of Judah for six years?

5. What woman left a land of idolatry and became the mother of a line of Jewish kings?

11. What disciple did Paul find at Lystra and take with him to help in preaching the gospel?

6. What Persian queen instituted the annual feast of Purim?

12. Who was the first king of the revolted ten tribes of Israel?

### Bible Characters Answers

1. Josiah (2 Chron. 34:1-3) 2. Gideon Judges (8:23) 3. Hezekiah (Isa. 38:1-5) 4. Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:3-4) 5. Ruth (Ruth 1:16;4:17) 6. Esther (Esther 9:32) 7. Lot (Gen. 11:31) 8. Hagar (Gen. 16:7-10) 9. Jeremiah (Jer. 38:6, 9-10) 10. Athaliah (2 Chron. 22:12) 11. Timothy (Acts 16:1-3) 12. Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:31)

## **HERITAGE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

### **“The Best Indicator of the Future is the Past”**

#### **Thursday, September 20**

- 1:00 Registration at North Hills**
- 1:30 Welcome – Kent Ross – A Broad Analysis of the CoG**
- 2:15 David Krogh - History of Church of God in Blair, Nebraska, the Ministry of Harvey U. Krogh, Jr.& and CoG Family Connections**
- 3:00 Break – Missionary Auction begins and Archival Display**
- 3:45 “Travels and Tales from Europe” Dan & Sharon Gill**
- 4:30 Larry Rankin & The Philippines Story**
- 5:15 Philippine Memorial Banquet**
- 7:00 “Radio Days” – John Smead**
- 8:00 Fellowship & “More On the Philippines Story” Larry Rankin**

#### **Friday, September 21**

- 8:30 Coffee & Gathering**
- 9:00 “What’s Gone Wrong With the Harvest?” Kent Ross**
- 9:45 Myra Hamilton – Church of God’s Educational Materials**
- 10:15 Break**
- 10:45 John Smead and Pastor Cecil Smead’s Story**
- 11:30 Steve An & the Korean Conf.**
- 12:15 Korean Lunch**
- 1:00 More on the Marsh Family Story**
- 1:45 Jan Stilson and Peter Hemmingray on the English Connections & the Age-to-Come**
- 2:30 Greg Demmitt – the History of the Ministerial Recognition Board**
- 3:15 Break**
- 3:30 Arlen Rankin – One Pioneer Family’s Story**
- 4:15 Joe Martin & Our Foreign Works**
- 5:00 African Malawian Memorial Banquet**
- 7:00 “Africa Calling 2012” Joe Martin**
- 8:00 Coffee & Conversation**

#### **Saturday, September 22**

- 8:30 Coffee & Gathering**
- 9:00 Joe Astolfi, Jim Hamilton & Frank Taylor & the Hedrick Story**
- 9:45 Kent Ross, Michael Hale & Alan Demmitt & Church Planting**
- 10:30 Jan Stilson, Arlen Rankin, Greg Demmitt, Jennifer Winner – Looking to 2013**

# Tensions Boil As Israeli Oil Riches Grow



Israel's once hidden oil riches are now certain to be so large its treasures could make it the richest oil country in the world. And, its neighbors are not only noticing, they're boiling mad.

It was just forty years ago when Golda Meir, the former prime minister of Israel once famously quipped, "Why did Moses lead us to the one place in the Middle East without oil?"

Well Prime Minister, Moses turned out to have a pretty good eye for what a promised land might look like.

Since oil was first discovered in the Middle East, Israel has been cut off from the world's exploration resources because of its Arab neighbors. No major oil company would dare explore there in fear of an Arab backlash. Over time technologies in oil exploration have improved and international experts have noticed Israel's potential.

In the past, oil-exploration adventurers would visit Israel, some of them reminiscent of Indiana Jones, arguing enthusiastically that there had to be legendary oil reserves in the promised land. The adventurers picked their drilling sites according to concealed hints in the Tanach, especially Yehezkel, but the drillings ended in disappointment. The legend of oil riches in Israel turned into a cruel joke. They simply didn't know what they were looking for and didn't have the proper technology to find it.

But, in the last three years Israel has discovered one mega-discovery after another. First, it discovered 1.5 billion barrels of oil onshore at Rosh Ha'Ayin, located about 10 miles inland from the Tel Aviv coastline. It was a small but important find that sparked a flurry of exploration activity.

Then, a big one followed by another – both are noteworthy, and rare, and are the largest finds anywhere in the last decade. US Geological Survey (USGS) estimates, the entire Leviathan Basin holds 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 700 billion cubic meters of recoverable gas.

Expert surveys for the Tamar field conducted by the U.S. petroleum consultants Netherland, Sewell & Associates indicate that the field contains proven reserves of 217 billion cubic meters of gas.

And then another find. It turns out that Israel has the second-biggest oil shale deposits in the world, outside the US:

"We estimate that there is the equivalent of 250 billion barrels of oil here. To put that in context, there are proven reserves of 260 billion barrels of oil in Saudi Arabia, says Dr. Harold Vinegar, the former chief scientist of Royal Dutch Shell."

Let's do the math. That's 250 billion in shale oil, 3.2 billion in conventional oil in estimated reserves, or enough oil to match that of Saudi-Arabia. Plus, that's 50 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, giving it about 10% of the entire world's gas reserves -- all while Israel's exploration activities are just beginning.

I'd say most rational people would say this is nothing short of a miracle. But one man's miracle is not a miracle to another. Economic miracles tend to upset a lot of sovereigns eager to get their share – whether they can legitimately claim it or not. The backlash has begun and the geopolitical crisis now playing out will be worthy of the most serious prophetic predictions.

Israel, whose exploration is the most advanced, is making plenty of new discoveries. Cyprus, too, is on the cusp of energy riches and (Iranian backed) Lebanon is anxious to launch exploration of its waters.

As would have it, all this excitement is exacerbating old rivalries between Israel and Lebanon and between Turkey and Greece, with Russia, Syria, Egypt and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip likely

to get drawn into some serious drama.

Worse yet, Russia is determined to rival Turkish ambitions for regional influence and cannot help being dragged into the conflict.

Unfortunately, Israel is seemingly giving Russia the cold shoulder. As late as last week, the Russian government-backed oil producer Rosneft held consultations on possible participation in the development of Israel's offshore natural gas fields, but emerged from the negotiations with no "effective offers." This geopolitical snub won't go unnoticed by Russia.

Last month, Turkey, a former strategic ally of Israel and now one of its most strongest critics, warned other major international companies seeking exploration licenses from the Greek Cypriot government, (Israel's new ally), to stay away. Predictably, Israel responded by dispatching military protection to the seas over its oil interests.

Turkey has now warned it will stop Israel from unilaterally exploiting gas resources in the eastern Mediterranean and suggests it is prepared to respond with force to make its point.

And that, according to geopolitical experts poses a direct challenge to U.S. policy. The U.S. has a strong interest in eastern Mediterranean with countries finding and exploiting offshore reserves. But the U.S. has its hands-full politically, and is ill-prepared financially to support any new conflict. It currently borrows every dollar it needs to run its military and the American people aren't going to favor any new conflict they have to pay for – even if it were necessary to protect Israel.

It is the long-running issue of war-divided Cyprus between Turkey and Greece that is the real key to understanding Turkey's squabbles with Israel.

Here's why.

Cyprus was split into Greek and Turkish zones when the Turks invaded in 1974 and seized the northern one-third of the Cyprus island.

Recent discoveries of natural gas are thus encouraging Turkey to renew its diplomatic campaign on behalf of "Turkish Cypriots" in the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Why? For the gas and oil it claims to own. Thus, Turkey is launching its own exploration in and around Cyprus and any major strikes it may make (and it will) will only fuel the crisis. So Turkey and Israel aren't seeing eye-to-eye and are willing to fight over it.

So, the next big boom (sorry for the pun) is firmly centered on Cyprus.

Tensions recently escalated when the Greek Cypriot government (the legitimate Cypriot government recognized by the U.N.) started pushing to open up its Aphrodite field off the southern coast. It's a whopper that's likely to match the Israelis' biggest field, the Leviathan. Worse yet, it's probably a geologic extension of the Israeli-owned Leviathan.

Aphrodite contains an estimated 22 trillion cubic feet of gas and sizeable oil deposits as well.

On May 19th, Turkey drew a line in the sand. "Turkey will not allow any activity in these fields," the Turkish Foreign Ministry declared.

But 15 companies and consortiums, including Russia's Novatec, Eni of Italy, France's Total and Petronas of Malaysia are all seeking licenses to drill in Aphrodite and 11 other exploration blocks

off (Israel friendly) southern Cyprus.

So get this picture into your mind. There's a crowd forming that could turn into an angry mob with everyone wanting to plunder Israel's newly found riches.

The Israeli's and Cyprus plan is to funnel their gas through a joint pipeline through Greece to Western Europe to reduce Europe's dependence on Russia for most of its gas. Mr. Putin, the Russian President, isn't happy about the possibilities of losing a big customer for its natural gas production.

On the other hand, Turkey is determined to restore its historical influence across the Middle East and Central Asia by applying pressure to transform its resource-poor country into the key energy hub between east and the west – a direct challenge to an Israel/Cyprus plan to pipe oil and gas through Greece on to Italy to fuel the rest of Europe.

That increases the stakes in the eastern Mediterranean, with Russia, one of the world's top oil and gas powers, trying to find a way to cash in on the boom.

Moscow is nervous about Turkey's ambitious regional plans. Russian President Putin also intends to restore Moscow's Cold War influence in the region.

That places Russia and Turkey on opposite sides, including in the Syrian civil war. Moscow backs the Damascus regime, a longtime client; Turkey supports the rebels. And, neither appreciates Israel's newly found oil power, which threatens the entire eastern Mediterranean's balance of power.



Moscow is not without some links to the riches. It has strong links with the Greek Cypriots but its offers to help Cyprus is motivated in part by the prospect of losing Russia's naval base at the Syrian port of Tartus, its only toehold in the Mediterranean. If the Syrian regime falls, Russia loses its military base in the region. So it's seeking an alternative base for its Black Sea Fleet in Cyprus – the epicenter of the oil discoveries.

Syria too, has great riches off its coast; a fact not lost on Russia. If the Syrian regime falls it is certain that Russia's desire to pick up the pieces (for its own) will be irresistible.

In summary, we have a newly enriched Israel powerful enough to completely change the geopolitics of the Middle East on one side. On the other, we have Turkey, determined to cash in – with force if necessary – to establish its own claim to riches while Russia, with its impoverished Muslim regional allies seeking attention. Then there's Persian-backed Lebanon, in need of development funding for its significant rich fields just offshore of its own border.

As the old saying goes, “the best way to get attention is to start a fight.”

And, that's exactly what will happen.



# PREPARING TO ENDURE TO THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

By Mark DeYoung

In approaching the discussion on preparing for the Great Tribulation, the first and foremost thing I think is important for any disciple of Jesus Christ and child of the Father, is that we must submit to follow the leading of God's Spirit. What each of us are to do to "endure to the end" may be completely different, because of our circumstances. But what I believe is most important is that we each take the time to make some sort of preparations. In Proverbs 22:3, Solomon, scholars point out as the wisest man that has ever lived, wrote, "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." ([NLT](#))



God told warned Noah of a flood and that he should build an ark and stock it with supplies. Genesis 6:17-22, <sup>17</sup> "Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. <sup>18</sup> But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>19</sup> Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. <sup>20</sup> Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup> And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals." <sup>22</sup> So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him."

God warned Joseph, Pharaoh and all Egypt about a coming seven year famine after seven years of plenty, we read this account in Genesis 41-47. Because Joseph lived a righteous and faithful life before God, he was able to explain to Pharaoh the meaning of the dreams and of blessing and tragedy that was to come to the Middle East. Pharaoh wisely solicited Joseph's help and saved Egypt, Israel and much of the Middle East at this time.

Why are these events significant? Because they give us an understanding, God has given us prophecies for a warning; a warning so that we can understand what is coming, and in obedience prepare for the danger that lies ahead.

We cannot think that God will care for us as He did Elijah during his time of tribulation, because Elijah's situation developed quickly and was not prophesied about for just about the entire period of time the Earth has been created. We have to understand that about the time we are bound to face. Ever since the fall of mankind in the garden, we have had the prophetic message that the Messiah will establish a kingdom and that the Father will dwell with man for all eternity; but before that can happen the Earth and everyone that makes up mankind will experience tribulation such as has not been seen by mankind up until that point in time. Matthew 24:21, "For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again." (NLT)

I have been encouraging people to prepare in many different ways, but that when possible, for it to be a church community effort, this goes along with the idea of bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). A lone wolf cannot survive long on his own, nor can we as humans survive long without help. Developing a church community effort where everyone works together in the areas they have strength in can improve everyone's preparedness and secure the peace of knowing that as a family of God we can work together for the common good of the local believers. Not only will this help in the future, but also help to bring down everyone's expenses now. Now I am not talking about a commune or an Acts church where all things were common. But working together for the common good then bartering when it comes to sharing and charity for the elderly and handicapped.

The ways that we are talking about basically fall under the categories of spiritual, mental and physical. Personally I feel the spiritual and mental are the two areas that are most important, and that they are strengthened even more as we prepare physically. I have compared this to basic training in the military, the young men and women are trained to the point that they respond to the sergeant's command without reservation and thought; once they are able to follow these commands the fear they would have faced in battle is greatly diminished. As we are preparing, the fear and trepidation about what we will be experiencing at the thought of being the "Endtime" or "Tribulation" saints; will be greatly diminished.

In the area of spiritual and mental preparation, studying the prophecies about what is going to take place leading up to and during the Tribulation is a good place to start. But not only that, we need to learn to practice being the disciples we need to be; showing our faith and love toward not only the Father and Son but to each other as well. We need to learn to share our lives openly, relying on each other to be accountability partners, but more than just accountability partners, partners in prayer, and partners in preparation. Which means we have to be a people that are trustworthy and not given to gossip. It is time to seriously be as Christ-like as is humanly possible; this is what we are called to be as Christians.

Now while I believe the physically preparation is the least important it is the most intense.

There is a reality that I have come to accept and that is storing seven years of food is pretty well impossible; so I wouldn't suggest everyone run down to the Safeway, Meijer's or Wal-Mart store and buy all the canned and dry goods your checking account and credit cards will allow. But based on your geological location, having enough food on hand to get you through and into the next growing season will prove to be very helpful and maybe extra to help you make it through a few winters.

I think it is important to realize that we are not going to necessarily need seven years; it is not until the Abomination of Desolation that the worship of the Antichrist and the acceptance of his mark and his religion will put all true Christians outside of accepted society. Granted, believing that the Antichrist's government and religion is going to be Islam, we may need to become self-reliant sooner than the final 3 1/2 years. Islam will destroy any Christians the Muslim's



find that refuse to convert. (To obtain good and solid teaching on the Muslim Antichrist refer to Wally Winner's many resources he has made available.) As we observe the world around us Islam slowly forces changes on the lands that they occupy.

Think about this, if someone burns the Koran here in the States, Middle East, Europe etc. the Muslim's declare great disdain, jihad, justice and even death of the infidel or infidels. But in the USA, in our great nation, if a young woman is killed by her family, because in some act she brought shame to her family, there are no convictions for murder. Let's take this even further, if a Muslim were to wrap an American flag around a Bible and in a public place, even in Washington D.C. and then burned it. There would not be an outcry for retribution, no one would ask for their death, no one would publicly express disdain, anger, or demand that some form of justice be served. Especially from within our government, because it would not be politically correct. But I digress from the subject.

In understanding this we need to plan for what lies ahead. Now once the system of the antichrist has started and we are no longer able to buy, sell, or work to support ourselves and our families we will need to become able to do things as our ancestors once did. They did not have luxuries that we have decided are necessities: electric, natural gas, gasoline, diesel, propane, cars, trucks, also heat and A/c at the touch of a button and this list can go on and on.

The truth is these are luxuries, and we do not need them to survive, let alone thrive. We have become spoiled as a people! What is even worse, many are convinced that they would not be able to live without these luxuries. Because if we are to endure to the end as Jesus has challenged each of us to do, we need to have a "can do" attitude.

Understanding these things we should consider what there is that we need to do be prepared to do and to have.

The first thing all of us must begin doing is networking with the people of our churches; our pastors should be taking the lead in this area. We then need to take our message of preparation to the streets; it is surprising to me how many people are out there outside of our churches that have realized that we are to live on this Earth throughout the Great Tribulation.



Another thing that goes along with this is that the Great Tribulation we will have the opportunity to further the message of the Kingdom of God by being observant and meeting the needs of people that for whatever reason rejects worshipping the antichrist and rejects accepting his mark, but is still outside the household of faith. There could be a great time of addition to the Church of God, IF, we are ready for that ministry opportunity.

Let's take time to look at some areas of preparation that we will have to address.

I think starting with prescriptions and medical necessities.

If we are on prescribed medicines we need to begin to get "ahead" with our prescriptions, so that when it comes down to the Great Tribulation will be able to keep our health relatively strong.

We should think on this even further, what allergy medicines and pain relievers.

There will be the need for Ace type bandages, the Salvation Army and Goodwill stores usually have an abundance of these items after some major high school or college sports season. There will be a need for braces for sprained and broken bones from the neck down to the ankles. Crutches and canes, maybe a few walkers could be made available for our seniors as the time of Great Tribulation goes on. Once again, Goodwill and the Salvation Army store is a good and affordable resource to exhaust.

There are other things that you may think of as necessary and you need to add that to your list and share that with the people that with the disciples of Christ with whom you are networking. Then also there are natural remedies available that we should consider. Take time to explore natural antibiotics and anti-inflammatory's, and other medicines that our ancestors used.



My great grandmother, as an example, swore by WD40 and brown paper sacks for arthritis, she would spray the WD40 on the inflamed area then wrap it with strips torn or cut from the brown paper sack. She lived to be active until she reached her 90's, so it must have worked. I can still smell her breads and pies cooking in the kitchen when we would come to visit her in Wilders, IN as a child. Nothing was better than that hot homemade bread slathered in fresh, home churned butter and apple butter on her front porch!

It would be good to look around; I do not doubt that there are other things that should be added to this list. Many of the things you think of maybe specific to you personally, some maybe something to share with the larger group of the Church of God, so others can be equally prepared.

The next suggestion is for those who are more mechanically minded. We have become very electric reliant as Americans, there are methods to generate electricity using the wind and solar, then battery storage until it is needed. It is not as easy as relying on the electric company to provide, but the materials necessary for wind turbines, and air foils are readily available. Still electricity is a luxury item, plain and simple, also, the solar and wind equipment will draw attention to the fact that you are probably off grid. In a nation that demands dependency on the system, (try and raise your children without electricity in your home today, and you will have DHS or DSS or whatever acronym your state uses for child protective services on your door step in a matter of weeks if not sooner!) and in a future system that will demand strict obedience to the religious/political system, this will draw all sorts of attention! We have to remember that Jesus warned that even family members will turn in family members. Sobering thought isn't it?

If you take time and look around you and you are lucky the Amish are very willing to share their lifestyle with the "English". They work hard from dawn to dark, and without the modern conveniences you and I enjoy today. This community does not only survive but they thrive!

There are alternatives that are available, but it takes time to research and recognize that we do not need everything we have become comfortable in today's world! A place that we are just travels in until Jesus returns! The alternatives that Sandy and I are working on for our home is kerosene lamps that we can hang from the ceiling for lighting, and we have begun living a vegan diet lifestyle, so refrigera-

tion won't be as necessary for us in the future. In the past I have encouraged folks that owning a rifle or shotgun for purposes of hunting for supplying meat is a good thing and a good idea. A few people are uncomfortable with that notion within the Church of God, so here is an alternative, begin a vegan lifestyle now, so it is not such a shock for you in the future, then put back food stores of fruits and vegetables, can and dried, rice, and various pastas according to your taste. Using this God given lifestyle will grant you life and health, even reversing heart disease in those with a history of heart attacks and by-passes, and can put most forms of diabetes into remission. (If you don't believe me that this is the God given diet read Genesis 1:29-30(KJV), "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (30) And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." The herbs were called meat for mankind, no animal saw death in the Garden!)



Those of you who plan to take the first steps toward preparing for emergencies may feel a bit overwhelmed at where to begin. After all, there is a lot of food to choose from at the grocery stores. I encourage families to start buying small amounts of food related preparedness items each time they go shopping. This way, your budget is not dramatically affected.

Food storage calculators are a great tool to incorporate in your preparedness planning, and can help you understand how much food your family will need for a given emergency. The food storage calculations can also be printed out and used as an inventory list to keep you on track in terms of what preparedness supplies you have and will need.

To make the most of your emergency food supply, keep these food purchasing rules in mind before buying anything. Caloric intake is an important factor in survival. In any disaster situation, you want to avoid malnutrition. Having foods stored to prevent this health issue will keep you at your optimum health. Stock up on foods that provide you with essential nutrients to maintain body functions, proteins and carbohydrates, fats for energy.

Consider buying multifunctional food items. Items that can serve more than one purpose will help your finances, as well as save precious space in the food storage pantry. Items such as oats, pasta, rice, wheat and beans are some great low-cost foods will serve a variety of uses.

Store high energy snacks to help boost energy levels. Eating snacks that are high in complex carbohydrates and protein will provide you with a guaranteed energy boost. High energy snacks such as nuts, peanut butter, crackers, granola bars and trail mix can be stored for up to 1 year and will help keep energy levels and spirits high in an emergency scenario.

Protein is an essential ingredient in our daily diets and cannot be omitted out of a survival diet. Beans are the best source of protein for your body, and when beans are accompanied with rice, it makes a complete protein which provides all the amino acids needed to survive. One serving of beans and rice provides 19.9 g, or 40 percent of your daily vitamins. Another source of protein is canned.

Meats such as tuna, ham, chicken and spam are great additions to the food pantry and are multifunctional. (Remember, the oil in canned meat can be used as an emergency candle.)

Don't forget the basics. Staples such as cooking oil, flour, cornmeal, salt, sugar, spices, baking soda, baking powder and vinegar should not be overlooked. If they are present in your kitchen, they should likewise be present in the emergency food supply.

Convenience helps in stressful situations. Many moms know that boxed dinners can be a lifesaver when you are in a time crunch. Having some pre-packaged dinners and meals-to-grab during emergency scenarios will help you begin acclimating yourself to cooking in a grid down scenario as well as can help provide some comfort at the same time.

Variety in your food pantry is important and can prevent the monotony of the same type of food. Having well-rounded food storage will cut down on culinary boredom, as well as balance your diet. Further, stocking up on a variety of spices will also enhance your food pantry. It is important to remember that there comes a point that if the meals are the same thing, day in and day out, people will stop eating and starve to death even with full cupboards.

Find comfort in the little things. Have some comfort food items that provide enjoyment to the family. Items such as popcorn, sweet cereals, hard candy, juice boxes, pickles, applesauce, pudding, cookies could be a great way to provide a bit of normalcy to the emergency situation you may face.

Any items bought for the food storage closet should be used, rotated and resupplied. This is the best way to have the freshest foods available in the event that a disaster occurs. When putting away food reserves place the item that has the earliest expiration date in the front so that it is used first. Use the "First In, First Out," in your food storage endeavors. Do inventories check every month to make sure that canned goods, preserves and other storage items are within their expiration dates.

The hardest subject for me to broach on the subject of being prepared for the Great Tribulation is the idea of the "Bug Out". I had noted earlier that even our family members will be willing to turn us in (Matthew 10:35), so if our families are willing, do you not think a neighbor might be willing as well? But with our Western mind set, that just doesn't seem like a possible scenario. It is time to face reality folks! If we are to be witnesses even through the Great Tribulation, it will require us to think outside of our luxury boxes! We are told that there will be many that will give their lives during this time, but the Great Commission hasn't been fulfilled as of yet, and in the Great Tribulation we are told to still be witnesses, so it seems that we are to be flexible in the plans that we are making. "Bugging Out" in an emergency situation, will give us the ability to continue our ministries, just on the run.



The idea of a "Bug Out" bag is that you will have the basic necessities of life on the run! There are many "prepackaged" "Bug Out" bags on the

market; these are a nice blue print for building our personal “Bug Out” bags. Backpacks are readily available at most Army surplus stores to try on, as well as to get a deep discount on them, but these are not the only sources for back packs, they are available online as well as at most discount retailers such as Wal-Mart, and Target. Then start packing!

Here are some types of gear you will want for your “Bug Out” bag:



1. Water - It should go without saying that water is a survival basic for any situation. In a survival situation water quickly becomes the most precious commodity. Half gallon per day per person is really the bare minimum.

A water filter is the best long term method for getting and purifying water. You can use a Collapsible Water Bottle for extra storage. Using a pre-filter to extend the life of your water filtration system is a good idea.

This is just a few suggestions to get you to thinking and researching this important facet of the “Bug Out” bag.

2. Food - Backpack Meals, for a “Bug Out” bag, ready-made backpack meals and energy bars can be sufficient in the short term. Backpack meals are freeze dried meals that you just add boiling water to. They are light weight and last a long time. But becoming familiar with what is available in the wild will give us the best chance for survival.



3. Clothing - Your “Bug Out” bag clothes should be similar to what you would pack for a weekend backpacking trip.

- (a.) A pair of sturdy boots or shoes
- (b.) A pair of long pants
- (c.) 2 Pairs of socks (preferably not cotton)
- (d.) 2 Shirts (Maybe 1 long sleeve and 1 short sleeve for layering)
- (e.) A Jacket that is both warm and protection from rain
- (f.) Warm long underwear of some kind
- (g.) A hat
- (h.) A bandana

This list could go on for a while and many people would never dream of leaving their “Bug Out” bag without twice that much, but in a pinch that set up could get you by.

4. Shelter - If you are going to survive, you are going to need protection from the elements and a warm dry place to sleep. Here are some suggestions:

- (a.) Some type of tent or tarp and a way to set it up
- (b.) A ground tarp for underneath your shelter to stay dry or a sleeping pad
- (c.) Some type of Bedroll, preferably a good sleeping bag.

5. First Aid Kit – I’m trying to cover some things you need in your “Bug Out” bag. First Aid Kit is another article entirely to itself, probably several more. I won’t try to cover it because I would surely leave something out.

What I will do is recommend that you build your own First Aid Kit instead of buying one of those prepackaged first aid kits that claim to have 1001 things to get you through any emergency.

Plus, building your own first aid kit gives you an intimate knowledge of what it contains and how to use it. How many people buy one of those prepackaged set ups and assumes they are prepared because there's so much in it, it must be what I need? Unfamiliarity with the items in a person's First Aid kit, in an emergency situation will be deadly!

6. Basic Gear - Basic Gear sounds repetitive (what have I been talking about?) but it is my category for the things you absolutely cannot live without but don't really fit well into another category. Many preppers will not like this list because it is not exhaustive by any stretch of the imagination, but, it will be enough to get you by for a couple of days.

- (a.) Rain Gear – at least 2 ways to stay dry in the rain. Poncho and rain coat are good, coupled with your Tent/Shelter
- (b.) Fire – A bare minimum of 3 different ways to make fire, water proof matches, a lighter and a magnesium stick with striker are the easiest methods of starting a fire.
- (c.) Cooking – Bare minimum here is a small pot/large cup to boil water in for both drinking and freeze dried meals. A small backpacking stove and fuel are better.
- (d.) Light – At least 2 dependable flashlights and a backup set of batteries for each.
- (e.) Survival Knife – The most used and most versatile tool in your “Bug Out” bag is your survival knife.



7. Your Bible – this is the sharpest of survival that we have available to us as Christians! Too often we leave home without it and never even give it a second thought!

The last thing I want to discuss, and briefly is to use these items you are getting for preparation for the Great Tribulation! Practice and practice often, not just by yourself, but it is important for the whole family to be prepared and practiced up. All of the items we could buy as preparations for the Great Tribulation without understanding and knowing how to use them is useless, many of them will wear out due to lack of use.

This article could go on for hundreds of pages; it is a never ending discussion.

The biggest problem facing the Church of God, in this area, is lack of motivation and desire.

I believe that there is an even deeper issue at hand here, in 2 Peter 3:3-4(MKJV), we read, “First, knowing this, that there will come in the last days scoffers walking according to their own lusts (4) and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” I believe that this, most likely without realizing it consciously, is the greatest reason that the Church of God will be caught unprepared. There will be many who will scoff at this article, others who will peruse this article and before reading it will dismiss it.

We are the “End Time” church, will you be ready?



# Midwest Family Camp 2012

By Alice Railton

Though many of you still call it Indiana Family Camp, it is no longer such. Other than taking place in Milford, Indiana at Camp Alexander Mack, and it being an Indiana State Conference event, campers this year also came from Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Ontario, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin. They represented 22 Church of God congregations and a number of isolated COG families. This was the biggest camp on record with 240 participants either spending the whole week or part of it.

As always we had a tremendous staff starting with our Camp Directors, Jason and Marcia Railton, and including so many adults/youth who were willing to fill a position whether it was teacher, cabin parent, activity leader, nursery worker or whatever was needed. We also had a fantastic group of musicians who willingly spent a lot of time leading us in worship and song during chapel, evening service and campfire.

With our varied age group (our youngest camper was 7 weeks old and our oldest was 91 years), we need a lot of age appropriate classes and activities. Classes for adults included "Family Matters" with Michael Cisler, "I Surrender All" with Angela Moore, "The Lie of Evolution and the Truth of Creation" with Greg Landry and "Offense-Rehearsing Past Hurts" with Andy Cisneros. Children/Youth were divided into eight age divisions. Paul Moore taught a quizzing class which was open to all ages. The participants then had a quizzing demonstration on their material and the kids did great.

Activities were too numerous to include all but swimming, boating, four-square, ping pong, basketball and the Noah's Ark playground were available every day. Other scheduled free time activities included a ladies zumba class, cake decorating, candle making, Sew Much Fun, crafts, softball game, euchre, couponing, a visit to Camp Mack's Nature Center, a hay wagon ride, campfires, Family Feud, quizzing with teams from three states who will compete at FUEL, a Michael Servetus presentation with Carlos Jimenez, and a roundtable discussion with Anthony Buzzard. On the last day Camp Mack had a giant inflatable slide installed in the lake which was a very popular site. Many of us thoroughly enjoy just sitting around visiting with so many precious people who have helped make us who we are or getting to know someone who is a first time camper.

"Our Family Tree" was our theme and each morning at chapel a different family or church family led the devotion time, zeroing in on the memory verse for the day. We were all encouraged to memorize Jeremiah 32:38-41, *"They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will*



inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.” The theme was further carried through with our evening services. Our speakers were: Michael & Melinda Cisler - “A Godly Man/A Godly Woman”, Mark Tschaenn - “Staying Attached to the Vine – You and Your Family”, Anthony Buzzard - “Leaving a Legacy – Teaching it to the Next Generation”, and Rebecca Dauksas - “The Tree of Life and the Forever Family”.

Our family tree takes a very interesting twist when we believe Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, when we believe his message of the coming Kingdom of God, when we repent of our sins, and when we are baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. Galatians 3:29 promises, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise!” One need only go back to Genesis 12 to read the beginnings of the promises God made to Abraham. Space doesn’t allow us to here review those promises, but suffice it to say that if we belong to Christ, our family tree is greatly affected. We’re actually grafted into Abraham’s family, and those great promises made

to him, are then applicable to us. As our Jeremiah 32:38 memory verse states, “They will be my people, and I will be their God.” We find that wording at least 10 times in the scriptures. God has always yearned for a people that would in fact be his people, and for whom he would in fact be their God. If you’re part of this family tree we see developed in scripture, then you too will be included as recipients of those promises!

Many of you are probably familiar with money guru Dave Ramsey. He has coined a few phrases like “gazelle intensity” and “changing your family tree”. He is talking about when you’re over your head in money problems, you need to work as hard to get out of debt as a gazelle works to run from a cheetah (Prov. 6:4-5). He also says we need to change the way our family handles money so our children and grandchildren will learn to live fiscally responsibly in the future. These lessons should be handed down to the next generation, for their own good. Likewise, more importantly, we as Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith families, need to teach our children and grandchildren with gazelle intensity, running with scripture in hand, to change our family tree into one that will leave a legacy of faith in Jesus Christ and hope in the Kingdom of God on earth.

As John and I taught a class of 21 awesome 6th-8<sup>th</sup> graders, we pointed out that decisions they make in the next several years will change their family tree. Will they enter high school and surround themselves with friends who influence them to take part in bad/harmful behavior or will they choose to make friends with Christians who have the same morals? Will college be the time they fall away from their faith and the values they have been taught or will those values now be their own in which they take pride? Will they seek a mate with little or no thought to being unequally yoked or pray for a mate



who is a believer, who shares their faith and will raise a godly family? We all have the ability to change our family tree – for the better or for the worse.

I always enjoy the quotes about camp I see when many get back on FaceBook. Angela Moore said, *‘Home from COGAF Family Camp. The things I love most - adults who tell me how many years they have been coming, since childhood..and who now bring their own children, raising their own godly families and leaving such a strong Christian heritage; Seeing godly men as spiritual leaders in their homes - which seems so rare today; Anthony Buzzard's 16 golden framework of Scriptures for Abrahamics to know, teach and share; Kids laughing, hugging, playing 4-square in the heat of the day; So many families pushing strollers, mommies pregnant with another precious life; Worship as a family of God, heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ Jesus to eternal life in a coming Kingdom. Priceless.’*

Casey Kizer Kiel responded to Angela, *“So glad your kids will grow up with warm memories of family camp like the ones I cherish... and that our children are making them together.”*

Chris Seiders said, *“Family Camp was incredible; it will be very easy to return after having such an enjoyable and uplifting week.”*

I asked Shelby Upton, an ABC student, to write something about her experience at camp. *“As a second year junior cabin mom, I had an even more wonderful experience this year in the MooMaw Yurt with my 4th to 6th grade girls. It was such a great experience mentoring, disciplining, and loving these girls even for just a few short days. They terrorized me often (including a very bad hairdo at their hands) as little girls do but they were such a blessing as well. They were eager to participate in camp events, help with whatever I asked, and become close friends with each other. I don't want to make myself sound better than I am but I really enjoyed being a present, open, young adult to them at camp. When I was growing up the teens and young adults seemed a bit distant from the elementary kids but I loved being part of a group of young people that invested and enjoyed time with the children at Family Camp. Being a Cabin mom at Family Camp was yet again a wonderful experience and I cannot wait to do it again next year.”*



We hope those who attended Midwest Family Camp found some of the the tools needed to work at keeping the importance of true biblical teaching, Christian friendship and support for one another, and moral living in our families. Please, take advantage of the COG camps, conferences, retreats, and seminars that are there to give you and your family a boost to your faith, something so much needed as we live in an evil world. We need each other as we see the day approaching. If you would like to know more about attending Midwest Family Camp next year, June 23-28, 2013, contact me at [alicerailton@gmail.com](mailto:alicerailton@gmail.com). May God bless you as you work on your family tree.





## “SO THAT’S WHAT GRACE LOOKS LIKE”

By Scott Millard

(Preached Wednesday night, July 11, 2012 at General Conference)

When Allen called me many, many months ago & invited me to speak tonight, I was excited to learn THAT “*THE THEME THIS YEAR*” was centered on “the grace of God”. And specifically, the focus was on John chapter 1, verse 14.

**“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of.....the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

I wrestled with what I could share with a group of people who have DEVOTED THEIR LIVES to understanding God’s Word. There is an unbelievable reservoir of Biblical knowledge in this group.

So I wondered “What....I could say” about God’s grace --that you didn’t already understand? I concluded, “probably not *a whole lot.*” Yet if you’re like me, you need to be reminded every now and then.....about what it is that we have been made stewards of.

I want you to listen carefully. As members of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith, it is probably easy FOR US to lose sight of the true focus of Faith in Christ. I don’t say this with condemnation.

Because we hold some “*distinctive doctrines*”, it’s only natural for us to *EMPHASIZE* “*these teachings*” because of their unique place in the Christian world. Personally, I don’t believe “*our distinctive teachings*” were *THE FOCUS* of the early church, to the same degree, AS THEY ARE in our churches today.

And the reason for this is very simple.....these teaching weren’t UNIQUE back then! They were the common beliefs shared by the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church. They were “a given.” Today however, this isn’t the case.....so we do have to devote some of our energies to these *DISTINCTIVES*.

But if we’re not careful, we can fall into the trap of becoming a Church centered “ON OUR *DISTINCTIVES*” rather than on the saving work of Jesus Christ. So we have to ask ourselves, “what was the primary message & emphasis of the early church?” And what was it about Christ, that *attracted people to Him as the Church began?*”

When WE first came to Christ, did we come to him because of:  
A belief in the “Oneness of God” or because of  
A knowledge of when man would be given immortality?”

I doubt if that was the case for most of us, these beliefs might have drawn us to this denomination.... but it was not what drew us to Christ.

We came to Him ---because of what He offered.  
 He offered us Hope.  
 He offered us the gift of eternal life.  
 He offered us.....GRACE.....undeserved forgiveness.  
 This is what attracted us to Him!  
 And it is this Good News of God's Grace, which was the *PRIMARY FOCUS* of the early Church. And it is this good news, that we have been made stewards of, that we must focus our ministries upon!

God's promise through Christ was ***"as far as the east is from the west, so far will I remove your sins from you."***

Psalms 130 is a Psalm of penitence. It is spoken by a man who knows he is guilty of his sin, and has deep remorse because of them. As he stands before God he has no intention of pleading "Not Guilty", of challenging "the charges" made against him. All this man wants to say is, "I AM GUILTY AS CHARGED".....allow me to throw myself on THE MERCY of the court.

Listen to his pleas:

**"Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, so that we can --with reverence, serve you. I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits. And in His word I put my hope."**

This is where *King David finds himself* as he writes this Psalm. We overhear him, as he "cries out to God" for the terrible sins he has committed.

STILL, troubled in spirit...STILL, deeply ashamed, he weeps:  
**"LORD, hear my cry for mercy."**

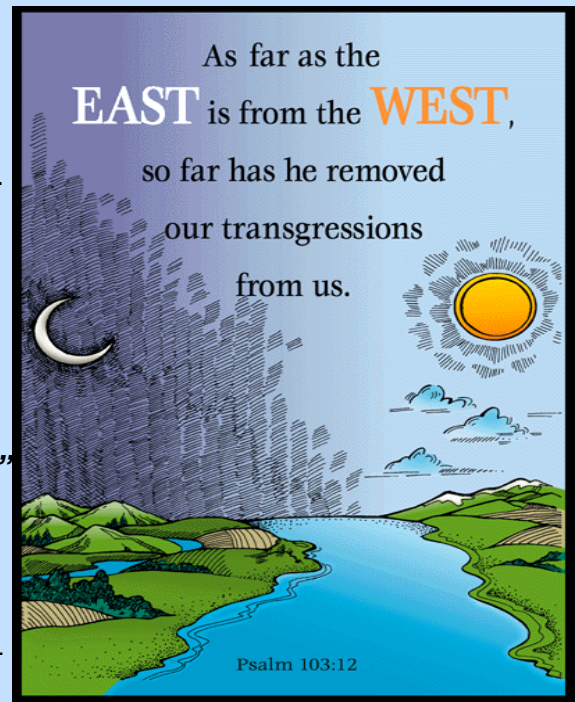
David understands that not even a king can escape the judgment of God.

We have ALL HAD these moments, haven't we? When we are keenly aware of *our sins* before God? It's only when we recognize GOD'S HOLINESS that we can "fully appreciate" that there is forgiveness in God.

Andy Stanley in his book, "The Grace of God" writes,  
**"To say someone DESERVES GRACE, is a contradiction in terms. "Grace", he says. "is birthed from hopeless inequity." "It is the knowledge of "what we do not deserve, that allows us to receive grace for what it is unmerited, unearned & undeserved."**

It is in *"the teachings & life of Jesus"* where we fully learn this truth. The revelation of this grace from God was fleshed out in the man Jesus. We FULLY SEE the glory of God's grace, in THIS WORD which became flesh.

John 1:18 provides a wonderful insight,  
**"It is true that no one "has ever seen God at any time". Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known." Phillips**



Jesus reveals the heart of God. While we have glimpses of God in the writings of the Old Testament, *they are* only glimpses. Jesus makes God FULLY known. And “THE GOD” Christ reveals, is A GOD OF AMAZING GRACE.

You know, Christ’s church is **MOST APPEALING** when the message of “*God’s grace*” is **MOST APPARENT**. When others see Jesus truly living in us, they are drawn to Him and experience the new life He offers. We are the stewards of “this grace”. The communicating of “this grace” is the primary purpose for which we exist as a church. We have been commissioned with the sharing of the Good News, the Good News which concerns the Kingdom of God, YES.....but it is the Good News based upon grace in Jesus Christ.

This undeserved mercy & forgiveness is what attracted us to Him and this message is what attracts others to him as well.

If there was one thing Jesus STOOD AGAINST during his earthly ministry, it was “**GRACELESS RELIGION**.” It is the one thing He could not tolerate! And yet grace is often the first casualty of a misguided Christianity. This “**GRACELESS RELIGION**” is “the point of contention” at which over & over again, Jesus collided with the scribes and the Pharisees.

They knew their scriptures backwards and forwards, they even “tithed of their mint, anise and cumin, YET, they omitted the “weightier matters” of the law –things like: fair handed judgment, mercy, and love.” (Matt 23:23)

One of the major gripes the “Pharisee types” had with Jesus, was his propensity to hang-out with “SINNERS”. For their liking, Jesus WAS JUST “way too comfortable” being in their presence.

While the Pharisees bristled at his willingness to break bread with tax-collectors, harlots and adulterers, Jesus unabashedly proclaimed that he had come to save “such lost ones”.

*It is when WE identify with this heart of Jesus for the lost, that we truly understand the meaning of the Gospel. It is when WE ourselves have been so profoundly touched by God’s grace & then are led to communicate this grace with others, that we are truly being faithful stewards of what has been entrusted to us.*



When some from the Pharisees came to Jesus one day & asked him to identify what He thought was the greatest of the Old Testament laws, Jesus referred back to the early lessons of his childhood, ‘**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, & with all your mind.**’ This is the 1st and great commandment! And the 2nd is like it: “**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**’ On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22

John adds this-- in his first epistle: “**We are able to love him, because he first loved us**, because He first showed us mercy & grace.” 1 John 4:19

Jesus summed up in a few sentences, everything he had come to know about the law of God & the writings of the prophets. I think He was identifying “the filter” He used to interpret the Scriptures. He was saying, “The way I understand Faith can be boiled down to this: faith is all about loving God, first and foremost, and 2nd, (not far behind) it’s about loving others.” If you do that, (Jesus

declares)...then all the rest of the “The commands of God” fall into place. If you honor these two commands **IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE** to break any others. All of the other commands HANG on these two.

All the writings of the Old Testament prophets find their rationale in the two great commandments of loving God & loving others.

While it is true, “that no one has ever seen God” –we discover what God is like through the Scriptures. And then John adds, “if you **REALLY....REALLY WANT TO KNOW** what God is like, then look at His Son Jesus, because He makes God’s glory fully known. “

In Jesus the Christ, we are able to comprehend who our God is. Grace and Truth are revealed in the person of Jesus. He declares Him, He perfectly reveals the nature of our LORD God.

John says, “**The WORD became flesh in Jesus**”. It took on A TANGIBLE expression.

So what is our God like? He says, “listen to Jesus. look at His life & you can find out!” To see truth & grace we only need to look into the eyes of Jesus. He communicates truth in every word and every action.

IN HIS teachings  
IN HIS interpretation of Scripture &  
IN HIS interactions with others we see, we experience God’s Grace.

Jesus is full of grace yes, but He is also full of truth. He perfectly reveals the truth about God. He embodies who God is & what God wants us to become. When we see Jesus, we see the Father.



What do I see in Jesus? I see a man of love, compassion, forgiveness, hope, truth & purity. I love the man Jesus. I love my savior, but maybe more importantly, I like Him! I like the kind of man He is! He has taught me about the *purpose* of life, (which He says).....“is to love the LORD God & to love my brothers and sisters. To love those who do not always act like my brothers & sisters.

He has taught me about the grace of god, of how my life is enriched *when I* forgive those who harm me, even my enemies. He has shown me & communicated to me that even though I don’t deserve it, I’m forgiven! Praise God! He has shown me *how I can become* a full human “made in God’s image” by being a lover instead of a hater.

I noticed I’m not alone in this realization. I saw, when I visited the Lawrenceville website that their “statement of purpose” references these verses from Matthew 22. This Church & I’m sure “many others” in our conference ---understand that *when we extend* God’s love & grace to others, it changes lives, it brings people into relationship with God & with one another.

I love how the Church of our Lord is **THE ONE PLACE** we can find “a spirit of love & grace”....in a world that seems bent on diminishing people made in God’s image.

I want to take a few minutes and look at how Jesus related to one woman. I will acknowledge up front that many scholars believe that this story **SHOULDN'T EVEN BE INCLUDED** in the canon of Scripture. It's the story of the "woman caught in adultery" found in John 8.

From everything I have gathered, this story wasn't included in the Gospels until around 500 AD. Before that time, the basic story was floating around in Christian circles, but it was never found in any manuscripts. The story is well loved & seems "to fit" the Biblical narrative. It sounds like the "Jesus we know" & most Bible scholars don't believe it contradicts the rest of the Scriptures, but the story is **NOT** found in the oldest manuscripts.

At worst, we should "TREAT IT" like "every one of the sermons, we preachers --preach every Sunday" where we expound on what we think the Scriptures are saying. If you do have an issue with this text, you could plug in any number of stories where Jesus encountered sinners and shows them God's grace, people like: the Samaritan woman or Matthew or Zacchaeus or even a murder like Paul.

John 8:2-11 NIV

**At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught IN THE ACT of adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone SUCH WOMEN. Now, what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."**

**Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away *one at a time*, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left with the woman still standing there.**

**Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I CONDEMN you." "Go now and leave your life of sin."**

Indeed, as John 3:17 proclaims,

**"For God sent not his Son into the world to CONDEMN the world; but that the world through him might be saved."**

The New King James Version reads, "she was caught in THE VERY ACT" of adultery. Now the last time I checked: THIS ACT TAKES "TWO TO TANGO." While we have no clue about what happened to the man, it would seem that if "this woman" was caught in the VERY act, then the man should *have been caught*, as well! So it's odd that only the woman was brought before Jesus. I guess, the man must have "ESCAPED".

The accusers of this woman are the Scribes and the Pharisees. *The Scribes* were the "legal experts" of the Jews, the lawyers. And like lawyers today, they were very good at using words to build a case.

John makes some editorial remarks in his Gospel account, and one of them is his observation that these Jewish leaders brought this woman before Jesus to "entrap" him. According to John chapter 7, on the day before, there was a huge confrontation between them and Jesus and they had decided that Jesus should be killed.





God's Law shows us our  
need for God's grace

Now, the scribes “were right”, the “Law of Moses” did command that adulterers be put to death, both men and woman. So this is how they thought they had trapped him:

If he pardoned her, then he would technically be in violation of the Law of Moses, which would put him cross-wise with the Jewish people and *would diminish* his credibility before them.

If, on the other hand, Jesus agreed that this woman should be stoned to death (*as the law of Moses demanded*) then he would be guilty of insurrection before the Romans. Either way, they figured, they had him. It was, in their minds, the perfect trap. They were forcing his hand.

What they didn't count on was Jesus “turning the tables” on them. He simply purposed that whoever was guiltless, sinless, could be the first one to cast a stone. “You want to stand in judgment of this woman and condemn her...GO AHEAD, but do so, ONLY IF you

yourselves are guiltless.” One by one, they dropped their stones and walked away. He was indeed A Master!!

What must have went through this woman's mind as she reflected on what just happened to her? Did she think, “Well, I got away with it, I'm going to go back and find my male friend?” For some reason, I just can't believe this was her response.

She had just experienced the “transforming power of Grace” through the touch of the most remarkable man to have ever lived. I have little doubt she went away, a changed woman, a new creation.

Isn't it amazing that those who were labeled the “WORST OF SOCIETY” felt so comfortable being with Jesus? They were comfortable because they came to understand through him, that God cared and forgave and accepted them, even while they were still sinners.

There is such A CONTRAST between the “Spiritual leadership of Jesus and the “Religious leadership of the Scribes & Pharisees. In this confrontation, Jesus gets to the heart of what faith is all about. Remember He said, “All of the other commandments hang on these two.” All the other laws of God find their rationale in the two great commandments of loving God & loving others.

Jesus understood this. But more importantly, Jesus practiced this. When this woman was brought before him, honoring God --by loving her was foremost in His mind.

But notice what the scribes and Pharisees were concerned with! They were using this woman as an object lesson to further their own ends. To these men, this woman was just “A TOOL” they could use to gain an advantage over Jesus. She was, “SO MUCH BAIT” for their trap. To them, she had no name, no personality, no feelings, no humanity, & no importance.

While they were arguing about theology and using it as a weapon to prove their point of view, Jesus was talking about her humanity. They had absolutely no concern for her spiritual well-being.

But look at Jesus. He modeled the Grace God offers. Rather than judge and condemn, He demonstrated what Paul would later counsel in Galatian 6:1, how those “**who are spiritual**” should **restore those who are weak.**”

This woman needed spiritual guidance from “these Jewish leaders”, not judgment. Listen, people today, need the same.

Notice the 2nd part of John 8:3, “**They made her STAND before the group.**” This woman was a sinner, no question about it. “But how,” Jesus asks, does humiliating her fulfill these two great commandments?

The short answer is, it doesn’t. It violates them, because it violates this woman. We live in a world where people love to tear others down, where people are more than eager to humiliate someone. Even in Christian circles --this is all too common.

That’s why I find Jesus such a breath of fresh air. I really value “the respect” Christ shows people. His KINDNESS and His GENTLE-NESS, are so apparent. Jesus focuses on how to develop and build relationships. He shuns anything & everything which creates stumbling blocks to THAT END.

You know, those old **WWJD** bracelets, “WHAT WOULD JESUS DO BRACLETS”, *they still say it about as well as anything.* What Would Jesus Do? How would He show God’s Grace in this situation? What would be His response? If we are going to live as a reflection of His Words....we must KNOW Him personally.

That’s why as people of faith, as leaders in the Church, we need to “immerse ourselves” in the Scriptures, **BECAUSE IN THEM.....we find life.**

DON’T JUST SEARCH the Scriptures to piece together material for a sermon or a Sunday School lesson.

DON’T JUST SEARCH THEM to build a theological argument.

DON’T JUST SEARCH THEM because you’re in a “year-long Bible reading program”.

NO, **SEARCH THEM** to discover “our savior”.....to learn of His ways.

Read your Bible for the express purpose of coming into a more meaningful relationship with the Father. You know:

We don’t worship AN IDEA about God.

Faith doesn’t point us to a “STATIC DOCTRINE” about God.



No.....Faith in Christ brings us into an ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP with the Creator God....who still wants to create new life within us. “TO BE at one with us”....AS HE IS with His Son.

God is a Great God! He is a God who has forgiven you....a God who seeks your well-being. Isn’t it a joy to serve such a loving Heavenly Father?!

As we continue with our conference this week, I ask now, for God to deepen your awareness of His Amazing Grace!

# **Issue of the Trinity**

## ***A Comparison of God, the Father with Jesus, God's Son***

### **God, the Father**

1. God is Everlasting (Psalm 90:1,2)
2. God is Immortal (I Tim. 1:17)
2. God Never Slumbers (Ps. 121:3,4)
4. God is Prayed to (John 17:1-3)
5. God is All-Knowing (Heb. 4:13)
6. God is One God (I Tim. 2:5)
7. God is Majesty o High (Heb. 1:3)
8. God is All-Powerful (Rev. 19:4-6)
9. God is the Sender (John 7:16-18)
10. God will be Seen by the Pure in Heart (Matt. 5:8)
11. Jesus is in Subsistence to the Father (I Cor. 15:24,28)
12. God comes at the End of the 1000 Years (Rev. 22)
13. Complete Authority is Returned to God (I Cor. 15)

### **Jesus, God's Son**

1. Jesus was Created (Gal. 4:4)
2. Jesus Died and Rose (John 19:30, Gal. 1:1)
2. Jesus Slept (Matt. 8:24)
4. Jesus Prayed to God (John 17:1-3)
5. Jesus did not Know (Mark 13:32)
6. Jesus was a Mediator Between God and Men (I Tim. 2:5)
7. Jesus is at God's Right Hand (Rom. 8:34)
8. Jesus' Power is Granted to Him (Matt. 28:18)
9. Jesus was Sent (John 3:16,17)
10. Jesus was Seen by All (Rev. 1:7)
11. Jesus Reigns for a Period and then Yields (I Cor. 15:23-27)
12. Jesus comes Before the 1000 Years (Rev. 20)
13. Jesus Returns Complete Authority to God (I Cor. 15)

# IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU AND ME

By Dave Hixon

A few weeks ago our Senior Youth Volunteered at Camp Dovetail. It is a camp for handicapped people strictly. Each Youth Group member was responsible for their handicapped camper from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. at night. During the night if the camper woke up, they would get their helper and they would attend to them. Needless to say it was a 24 hour a day job.



I want to bring up a point about the camp which then feeds into the sermon. It actually serves as a title. The volunteers come there, they get to do the activities with their campers, things like swimming, playing, movies, horseback riding – whatever it is that they are doing, they get to do it with them. But in training they are told over and over – to all of them – old, young– it doesn't matter – camp is not about us.

It's Not About Us.

They are told it's not about us. It's about the campers. They are here. It's a learning and fun time for the handicapped people that come. They get to do things that they normally would never get to do.

But the bottom line for the staff is that camp is not about them, it's about the campers - making sure that they are safe and that they are well cared for and having a great time. That's a good lesson, I think, for us in the church today. It's not about us.

Too often we get a sense of entitlement from this mixed up world around us especially in America. And we try not to let that affect us, but it does.

But it's so easy to get that entitled attitude. For us in the church, it's very easy to begin to think that the church is all about us. 'The church is here to serve me.' That's something we want to avoid. So it's easy for us to develop an inward viewpoint where we just think about us inside and we don't look out and see what our responsibility is before God and what He expects of us. So this week and next week we'll see how we can change our thinking to look outward and to renew our desire to serve others and to see that we are called, actually, to serve others rather than merely to be served.

The perfect example of 'it's not about me' is Jesus Christ. Turn with me this morning to Luke 22. Jesus THREE TIMES had to explain this principle to his disciples.

Luke 22:24 – “And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.”

The twelve apostles – they're supposed to be the epitome of human examples of virtue and they're arguing about which one of them should be considered the greatest above all the others. “I'm #1 and you're #2 and you're #3, etc., etc., etc.” “No, no, no. I'm #1 and you're #2.

Back and forth they must have gone. And Christ, I am always amazed by His patience. So Christ had wonderful patience in working this lesson through them and it's a great one for us.

So they were arguing about which of them should be the greatest.

V. 25-26 – “And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.”

Abraham Lincoln had this idea. Toward the end of the Gettysburg Address he spoke about government of the people, by the people and for the people. It was the preposition 'for'. In other words, the government was to serve the people, which when you read the Founding Fathers, you know that that was one of the fundamental ideas of the American constitution and American way of life.

Christ makes it very clear that in the government of God, the Kingdom of God, in the church of God as well. ...he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger... Usually the younger ones were considered less important and the older ones, they got served first.

V. 27 – “For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? ... You know, that's what most people think. The one sitting at the table, HE IS IMPORTANT... The lowly waiter??? Not so much. Here Christ pointed out a completely different viewpoint. ...But I am among you as the One who serves.”

He says... 'It's not about me.' It's about bringing along others. Christ was not into Himself in the way that we tend to use that term in our time. Christ was there to serve. Now, there's a perfect example when we stop and think about what our position is and how we should think of ourselves and what we do. It's not about us. There's a greater purpose than us. A greater purpose than me or you or anybody.

Now let's notice Christ and the work of ultimate service. Let's go to John chapter 5. It's pretty interesting to read. You can start at the beginning. It was during the Feast, and Christ went up – you know the story – to the pool of Siloam and the waters stirred and an angel went down and stirred the water, so that whoever stepped into the water first would be healed. So the sick were all there. So Christ went down and He was squatted down on one knee talking to somebody - a man who was obviously very crippled - and asked him how long he had been there.

Thirty-eight years he had had been crippled. He said, “The water was stirred and I'm right here, but I don't have anybody to carry me into the water.” He couldn't get himself in there. And so Christ asked him in V. 6 - "Do you wish to get well?"

And he explained that he had no one to put him in there, V. 8 - so Christ said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk!"

V. 9-10 – “Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.”

Bear in mind the Pharisees worshiped the day more than they worshiped the God who made the day. It was an idol to them. The Sabbath was an idol to them.

So they had this conversation and when they found out that it was Jesus who had healed him, then they were after Him. So now we come down to verse 16.

V. 16 – “For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.” So they were going to kill Him.

Now I wonder if it was still on the Sabbath when they were trying to do that. Would it have been legal for them to kill Him on the Sabbath? You know, they would have had to pick up stones to throw at Him. That's a good question isn't it?!

So because Jesus had done these things on the Sabbath they were upset. There were times when Christ knew when to give the soft answer. There were other times when He was almost confrontational. THIS was one of the confrontational times.

So in V. 17 Jesus says- "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." And then they were really angry and they wanted to kill Him because He claimed that He was the Son of God.

But the point is, God works. Jesus works. They serve others. They serve the entire creation. So even when we look at God's works, in that sense even God, the Father – it's not all about Him. It's about what He's doing and who He's bringing along and what the Kingdom of God is going to be. In the same way Jesus, our Savior works for the same reason. Therefore we work. Our Father works, our Savior works, we work. We do the work of God. We serve others with the one commodity that we have that the world doesn't understand yet, and that is the true gospel of the Coming Kingdom of God. Oh, we do other things too, but that is our main product, the main thing that we have to offer in very many ways.

We go on to read further just a little ways down.

V. 18-19 – "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

Well when we follow the logic of that, if the Father does it and the Son does it - Jesus does it – then we do it because we follow their example.

V. 20-21- "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes."

The Son does what the Father does. We want to do that, too. But what do the Father and the Son do or are they doing? Let's go to Hebrews chapter 2 for the answer to that. What is it that the Father and the Son are doing ultimately? Let's start in verse 9.

Heb 2:9 – "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Christ sacrificed His life for us and for everyone.

V. 10- "For it was fitting for Him... and this is the key, this is the key verse we are after, the target verse ... "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." To bring many sons and daughters to glory.

Jesus is bringing many sons to glory, that is, bringing humans through their human lifetimes and then ultimately through conversion, preparing them to be resurrected into the Kingdom of God. That's where they inherit their salvation and they come under their captain of their salvation, which is Jesus, Himself.

Now let's turn back to John again. Chapter 9 this time and let's look at how Christ focused on doing the work of God. We've got an inkling already from chapter 5, but in John chapter 9 we see another reference to it. John 9 starting in verse 1.

John 9:1-5 – "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

So Christ talked about the fact that His focus was to do the work that His Father sent Him to do. And He had to do it while the opportunity was there. He had to focus on getting that done and that living His human life wasn't about Him personally, it was about serving, doing what His Father, wanted Him to do.

Very close to the end of His life in John 17, Jesus prayed after the Passover service before He got to the garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. Chapter 17 and we'll pick it up in verse 1.

John 17:1-4 – “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Christ finished the work that the Father had given Him to do. So we might ask, so what is the work of God for us today? 1 Corinthians chapter 9.

Paul makes a startling statement. It's in the middle of a conversation that he is having in writing the letter with the brethren at Corinth addressing some issues that some of them had raised. But we'll jump into the middle of it because it carries another meaning all its own.

1 Corinthians 9:16 – “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of... what gospel is he talking about and in the church of God we know,— it is the gospel of the Kingdom of God that Christ brought.

The book of Mark makes that clear. Christ came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." So ...if I preach the gospel... Paul says, ..."I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"

Well, you know, that was true of Paul and it was also true of Peter. It was true of John, Bartholomew and Phillip and Andrew and all of the other apostles who were scattered around the Roman Empire.

They all could have made that same statement: woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! That was their duty. That was their calling. And in those days without mass communication they had to preach it loud enough that they could be heard without amplification like we have here today. So Paul recognized that he had no choice if he was going to follow God. He had to preach the gospel.

V. 17 – “For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.” Even if I didn't want to do it, I have to do it because it's my duty. I have to do it. You know, the church today carries on the work that Christ gave the apostles to do and so we have the duty to proclaim and preach the gospel in that sense.

V. 18 – “What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

But then we have something else to think about. When Paul said, “I have to preach the gospel, but woe is me if I don't do it”, there's an old saying that we use. 'Don't get the cart before the horse'.

Now, all the Amish people understand that. Today we don't understand that because some perverse automotive companies over the years have put the engines in the back of the car, you know, and then you would be the first to arrive at the scene of the accident rather than the engine. Volkswagen has changed their ways, however, and they have the engine out front nowadays. But, don't get the cart before the horse.

So in the role of us in the church and the gospel, you know, carrying on the work the apostles were given to do, which is the horse and which is the cart? If you stop to think about it, which came first, the proclaiming of the gospel or the church?

Jesus said, "You are Peter," to Peter "and upon this rock," meaning Himself, "I will build my church." But it hadn't been built yet, He was just preparing to.

The preaching of the gospel came first. So the gospel is the horse and the cart is the church. So we have to keep the horse in front of the cart, not the cart in front of the horse.

It's about doing God's work. Preaching the gospel is how the church originally was built, so it's the horse. The cart is the church. It comes behind, but the work doesn't stop just with the preaching the gospel, but we preach it internally as well as externally and we serve others.

Now let's stop and think about it from this point of view: the gospel of the kingdom is our cause. There are people in this world who join causes. They are looking for some meaning in life.

They don't have any clue what it is, because they don't have their roots in the scriptures and God hasn't opened their minds yet, but they are looking for meaning in their life. They know that they lack meaning and purpose in their life and they look for something that they can invest themselves –in.

And then they support that cause and some of them are the craziest causes you can imagine. Other ones are actually pretty sensible, it all depends. But the greatest cause of all is the cause of the gospel of the kingdom and then proclaiming that gospel is our mission.

Now how do you proclaim the gospel? There are many ways. We need to understand them because Paul is going to illustrate it in a moment. First of all, we proclaim it verbally whether it's on the internet or in person. We can do it through publications, through flyers etc.

Then there's another kind of proclaiming the gospel. We personally proclaim the gospel by our conversations with others. Somebody asks us, "Why do you believe this?"

Are we ready for that question? Do we even have an answer? Others might ask more detail and you have the opportunity. That happens to us.

You know, over the years, 50 to 70 percent of the people in the church came into the church because they knew somebody who already believed. Now that was either a parent, or a relative, or a co-worker, or a neighbor, but it was a personal relationship that introduced them to the truth.

So the impact that we can have by being able to personally relate through conversation with others, the gospel of God's kingdom, some element of it - you don't have to unload the whole wagon load, you unload only a little – is a very powerful tool.

The other way we do it is through our conduct, it is our example - conversation and conduct. Our example shows something about the Kingdom of God and that's why Paul went on to say after he said, woe is me if I don't preach the gospel. Let's pick back up in vs. 19.

1 Corinthians 9:19 – "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all... Paul says I know it's not all about me. It's about what I have to do, that God has given me to do. ... "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more".... that by my conversation and example others will want to come and learn God's truth, that God can call them through my efforts in some way.

V. 20 – "To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law"

You know I find it amazing that Paul who used to be a Pharisee, could relate so well to the Gentiles. You have to admit, he was a versatile tool in Christ's hands once He got him tamed.



V. 21 – “to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law”.. It's not about me. It's about helping them to understand the gospel of God's kingdom.

V. 22 – “to the weak I became as weak... and there are many weak people in the world. There are many in the church who were weak and through the process of conversion, they are in the process of growing strong.

They have a knack, they have a head start where they have a particular weakness that they had to overcome – whatever it might have been, alcoholism, a certain sin, whatever it might have been. They can talk the talk and help people understand. ...that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

V. 23 – “I do all things... for my sake? No! ...for the sake of the Gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

The proclaiming of the gospel must be accompanied by living the gospel. Paul knew it wasn't all about him. He looked outward and he's a wonderful example of that. Now, let's talk about sheep for a few minutes. Matthew, chapter 10.

In chapter 10 of Matthew, we have the listing of the twelve apostles who would be eleven of the apostles to come minus Judas of course. So Jesus is giving them their marching orders. Notice what they are.

Matthew 10:5 – “These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles... not then, at least. They were later, but not then. ... and do not enter any city of the Samaritans.”

V. 6-8 – “but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.”

If you haven't underlined that last line, please mark it in some way. ...Freely you have received, freely give. Christ sent His church by sending the apostles, He sent His church to the lost sheep of the world – the lost sheep of the Israelites first and then the lost sheep of all the other nations.

That's what 'Gentile' means. In Hebrew it is gôy (go'ee) which means 'the nations'. So that's who we are sent to reach – everybody – the lost sheep of the world.

Notice this, though, that last line that he had tagged on at the end of verse 8: Freely you have received, freely give. The apostle Paul quoted Jesus - it is a saying that we never read in the gospels, it's in Acts chapter 20, I believe, that He said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Well that principle is right here, freely you have received, freely give.

We have been given the knowledge of God's way. We have been given the understanding of the gospel of the kingdom. So few people in this world have the calling and the understanding of the depth of what we know.

You know, we have empty pews out here, we've got room to expand. Even before the building might have to be expanded, we have room to expand here today. There could be others that could be here with us and could be in every one of our congregations as God might call them.

And I don't know that there's a limit on how many God might call based on our yieldedness to Him and our striving to understand the principle is not about us, it's about God and it's about His Son and about what they're doing. The work we have been given is the proclaiming of the gospel not only through a preaching and publishing, but throughout our conversations and how we live.

We have been freely given this calling, this knowledge, this precious commodity that is a part of our heart and part of our lives. We are also to freely give. We have received it, we share it. It isn't just about us. We have it now, we treasure it, we treasure to be a part of the church of God, but we must focus outward, looking forward to our Father bringing Many Son's and Daughter's to glory!

# **EAST OREGON AND OREGON, ILLINOIS YOUTH**



**Spring Lock In**



**Gifts  
for Moms for  
Mother's Day**



**Game Time**



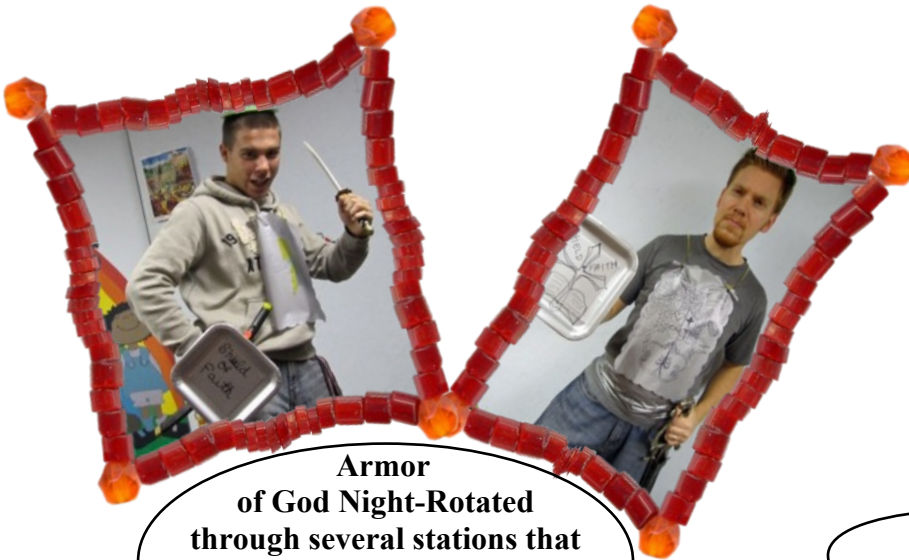
**Skit  
Performance**



**Youth Kick-off on August 24.**



Fall Lock-in For 2nd through 6th grades



Armor of God Night-Rotated through several stations that taught about the Armor of God from Ephesians 6.



Family Night Built "Cars", Showed Movie Cars2



Snacks



# DID YOU MISS "TISHA B'AV"?

BY WALLY WINNER

"Tisha B'Av", the saddest day on the Jewish calendar is the Ninth of Av (July 28, 29, 2012). It is the date when BOTH Holy Temples were destroyed, and exile, persecution and spiritual blackness began. Tisha B'Av started at sundown of the eighth of Av and continued till the following nightfall. It is a day spent in mourning.



The lights are dimmed in the synagogue and the Ark's curtain is removed. The book of Lamentations is read after the evening prayers. The prayer is that from the ashes of the destroyed Temple will raise an incomparably magnificent edifice. Jewish tradition says that the redeemer would be born on Tisha B'Av.

It is a day of anticipation and hope, for "One who mourns Jerusalem will merit seeing her happiness."

Not only is Tisha B'Av the day for the fall of the two Temples:

- \* According to Jewish tradition, this was the day the nation received the judgment that they would not get to set foot in the Promised Land
- \* The Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The city of Betar – the Jews' last stand against the Romans – was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered. (135 CE)
- \* The Temple area and its surroundings were plowed under by the Roman general Turnus Rufus. Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city – renamed Aelia Capitolina – and access was forbidden to Jews.
- \* The Spanish Inquisition culminated with the expulsion of Jews from Spain on Tisha B'Av in 1492.
- \* World War One broke out on the eve of Tisha B'Av in 1914 when Germany declared war on Russia. German resentment from the war set the stage for the Holocaust.
- \* On the eve of Tisha B'Av 1942, the mass deportation began of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, en route to Treblinka.

Some futurist prophecy students attach this day to the time the Antichrist desecrates a rebuilt Temple.

Some would say that having both Temples destroyed on the same day is quite a coincidence. The rabbis say there is no such thing as a coincidence. That is why it is important to stress God's Prophetic Calendar as displayed in the Feasts of Israel. The original Hebrew word that is translated as "convocation" is (pronounced) *mik-raw* means *a called assembly*. Another literal meaning of the original Hebrew word is *a rehearsal - a practice session for a later event*. Holy Days are prophetic in intent (they are *not* an end or purpose in themselves), until they are fulfilled, and are then memorials forever thereafter.

The events of Jesus' life like death (Passover), burial (Unleavened Bread) and resurrection (First Fruits) are all attached clearly in the New Testament to Israel's Feasts. The birth of church (Pentecost) arrives on another Jewish Feast day. Other events in Jesus' life such as his birth, baptism, temptations, etc. can be associated with the Jewish Feasts. The other Feasts' prophetic fulfillments are taught in the New Testament, but generally receive less emphasis because of less knowledge on the final three Feasts. However, if the first four Feasts were fulfilled, is there any reason to doubt that the last three will find fulfillment?

**Coming in  
September's E-Herald  
of the Coming Kingdom**

**THIS  
WE  
BELIEVE**

