

THE BLESSED HOPE

What marvelous lessons are to be found in the following words from Paul to Titus! The great apostle speaks by inspiration, saying, *“For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:11-13). Let us learn from these eternal principles that have been recorded in Holy Writ.

God’s wonderful grace is a reality! The grace of God is seen in His choosing us *“in him before the foundation of the world”* (Eph. 1:4). It is by His grace that we who *“once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ”* (Eph. 2:13). Only by God’s grace can we be *“saved through faith”* (Eph. 2:8). The grace of God has appeared, and this means that all people have the opportunity to appropriate God’s grace through obedience to the gospel.

God’s grace, however, must not be taken for granted or abused (Rom. 6:1). Those who choose to *“know not God”* and *“obey not the gospel”* will *“suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord ...”* (2 Thess. 1:8-9). One is either a servant of *“sin unto death”* or *“obedience unto righteousness”* (Rom. 6:16). The giant “umbrella of grace” concept that many believe will **cover** a person regardless of his faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the Lord and His church is false. The disobedient will not be recipients of God’s grace!

Salvation is attainable by all! It is God’s desire that all men be saved *“and come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:4). Jesus said, *“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”*

(Matt. 11:28). Salvation is attainable but conditional. The writer of Hebrews succinctly states that Christ *“became unto all them that **obey him** the author of eternal salvation”* (Heb. 5:9, emph. MLW). Obedience always has been and always will be a prerequisite to being named among the righteous.

To be saved one must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Sinful living and holiness are on opposite ends of the spectrum. The apostle Peter gets to the heart of the matter when he says, *“but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living”* (1 Pet. 1:15).

Some Christians are determined that they will not deny self. Jesus knew this would be a stumbling-block for many. No matter what one thinks, he cannot follow in the steps of the Master and refuse to practice self-denial. Jesus drove home this point in saying, *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”* (Luke 9:23).

While in this world, a Christian must live soberly, righteously and godly. Such a life is what sets the child of God apart from those of the world. A Christian must decide whether he is going to love the world or love the Heavenly Father (1 John 2:15). One cannot do both! The blessed hope is not attained by yielding to the *“lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life”* (1 John 2:16).

A Christian’s mind will be set *“on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth”* (Col. 3:2). A child of God must live **in** this present world, but he is not to be **of** the world. This means that followers of Christ will be willing to **forego anything** that is known to associate or identify them with worldly people. A Christian only fools himself when he thinks he can **dress**

like the world, **talk** like the world, and **act** like the world without being considered worldly. God’s people must not see how far they can wade out into the world without bogging down! The Scriptures warn us to *“abstain from every form of evil”* (1 Thess. 5:22). Let us make every effort to **not** be identified with the unclean things of the world so that God will welcome us as sons and daughters (cf. 2 Cor. 6:17-18).

The Savior is coming again as the judge of all mankind. Only those who have that *“blessed hope”* will be thrilled at the Lord’s appearance in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:13). One who fights the good fight, finishes the course, and keeps the faith (2 Tim. 4:7) can say with Paul, *“henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing”* (2 Tim. 4:8). Man does not know the day or the hour of the Lord’s coming. He will come as a thief in the night (Matt. 24:43; 2 Pet. 3:10). It is our job to watch (Matt. 24:42) and be prepared so we can enter into that Heavenly city (Matt. 25:1-12).

Let us make sure that we always **live** in such a manner so as to have *“the blessed hope.”* The Scriptures assure us that the coming of Christ will bring the *“crown of righteousness”* that Christians long for (2 Tim. 4:8).

Marvin Weir from Bonham St. Beacon

**26th Annual Mid-West Lectures
“We See Jesus”
September 21-25, 2008
39th Street Church of Christ**

BIRTHDAYS

Millie Robertson, 09-02; Lynda Cole, 09-06.

ILL

Sunday: Dee Adams; Kathleen Camp; Joy Parish; Millie Robertson (PM); Allen Scott.

Wednesday: Millie Robertson.

Allen Scott is in the rehab section of Villa St. Francis in room number 803-1. Dee Adams continues to recover at home from her surgery.

Those battling cancer: David Cole, Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Remember these in your prayers along with: Millie Robertson and Allen Scott.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Chris Edwards was in Virginia on business last week. Debra Gragg is in Augusta, KS this weekend. Trent Thrasher and Leah Hempelmann are in Owensville, MO.

POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held next Sunday, September 7 following our AM worship. All are invited to come and enjoy the great food and company!

BRIDAL SHOWER

The ladies are invited to a Bridal Shower for Leah Hempelmann, wife-to-be of Trent Thrasher, on Saturday September 13th at 1 PM at the home of Wilba Hopkins.

MID-WEST LECTURES

There is a sign-up list in the foyer for help with the Mid-West Lectures on "Olathe Day" Tuesday, September 23. If you can provide a dessert, greet guests or help in the kitchen, please sign the list.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 47; Sunday PM, 41; Wednesday PM, 32.

Those To Serve

August 31, 2008

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Parish

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER John Cody Carter
PRESIDE..... Trent Thrasher
ASSIST..... John Dodson
ASSIST..... John James
CLOSING PRAYER..... Chris Edwards

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Steve Brown
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jared Nelson
LORD'S SUPPER..... Trent Thrasher

WEDNESDAY Sept. 3rd

SONG LEADER..... John Cody Carter
INVITATION Steve Brown

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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