

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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How to be Happy in a Miserable World

by Ted J. Clarke

Frequently in this life smiles are wiped from our faces and happiness fades due to some tragedy. The loss of a loved one, serious personal illness or a sick family member, money problems, car troubles, difficulties with other people, the loss of a job, marital problems or divorce, or a thousand and one other things can bring us to tears and sorrow. Why? Because we living in a sin cursed world and all of us are sinners. In Genesis 3:16-19 God cursed the earth and mankind because of Adam and Eve bringing sin into the world. In Romans 3:10, 23 the apostle Paul reminds us that there is none who are righteous, all have sinned. Every difficulty we face in this life comes from consequences of the curse in Genesis, or from our sins or the sins of others about us. Since "it is appointed unto men once to die," something is going to happen to bring this about (Hebrews 9:27). Either illness, old age with our bodies just wearing out, or an accident or disaster will one day take our lives. Often we suffer due to our own sins: such as drinking alcoholic beverages and becoming addicted or injuring ourselves in a drunken accident; or we may contract cancer through the use of tobacco products which are also addictive; or we may ruin a marriage by getting involved in an adulterous relationship. Many also suffer because of the sins of others: such as being raped or robbed by criminals; or one may be a family member of one who does those things we have mentioned above. In many ways we are helpless and suffer greatly because of what others do.

If we dwell on our troubles and worry about what might happen, we can soon be overwhelmed with despair. Some people will commit suicide because they see no way out of their problems, but there are solutions. Others will try to forget their problems with alcohol, other drugs, or pleasure, or some other type of diversion. This usually ends in bringing even more problems upon those who seek escape in these ways. Still others

try to act as if there were no problems or troubles, or push them off on somebody else to handle. This is not realistic. You will have troubles in your life, so be a responsible person and learn how to deal with them. You don't have to do this alone. There is help to show you how to do this and there are people to help you bear the load of your burdens. The Bible is your resource guide on how to live your life and the Lord's church is a community of people who will assist you in handling life's problems.

First, learn to have a servant's attitude. While self-esteem is important, the best way to feel good about yourself is to serve God and your fellowman (Matthew 22:37-39). Jesus, our Master, after He had shown this servant's attitude by washing His disciples' feet, said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that a servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them**" (John 13:15-17). The example of course is not literal feet washing, but humble service to others, regardless of how lowly the act of service may be. Following the example of Jesus' life in service to God and man brings happiness! When you are tempted to dwell on your problems, get up and do something for God and others. You will be surprised how things suddenly look better.

Second, realize that you are not the only one going through the types of problems you are suffering. Regarding our temptation to sin, Paul says, "There hath no temptation [over] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [permit] you to be tempted above that which ye are able [to bear]; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). James 1:2-4 also reminds us that our trials can be opportunities for the increasing of our faith and patience. God is faithful and will

never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5-6) and your brothers and sisters in Christ will help you bear your burdens (Galatians 6:2)

Third, remember that if you are a child of God you have the privilege to go to Him in prayer. Regarding the power of God to work on our behalf through prayer, consider what Paul says. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). Although the times of God's working miracles through men are past (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:8-14), God's ability to work providentially on man's behalf is marvelously seen in the lives of His children such as Joseph (Genesis 37-50) and Esther (book of Esther). First John 5:14-15 assures us that "if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." Do not try to go through life without the power of prayer to God working for you!

Fourth, live the best possible life by doing the Lord's will. The apostle Peter said, "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile [deceit]; Let him eschew [turn from] evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue [pursue] it. **For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil**" (1 Peter 3:10-12). Living the active, dedicated Christian life is absolutely the best possible way to live in this sin-cursed world! In addition to finding solutions to life's problems through a study of God's word and prayer to Him, we minimize the troubles in our lives when we stay away from personal sins which bring much heartache and grief. Christianity is not all "pie in the sky in the sweet by and by." Paul said, "**godliness is profitable**

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unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Fifth, remember that this life is temporary. Some troubles pass quickly, while others may plague us an entire lifetime. But this lifetime is short when compared to eternity, and nothing that made us miserable in this life will follow the faithful Christian beyond the grave. Again, the great apostle Paul reminds us, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal [temporary]; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). This same servant of God states, "**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us**" (Romans 8:18). In heaven there will be no sin, sorrow, pain, tears, death, or any such thing (Revelation 21:4). An eternity of joy and bliss awaits those who abide faithful in this life (2 Timothy 4:6-8). As a song we sing says, "**Won't It Be Wonderful There?**" Amen!

Sixth, accept the fact that as long as we are in this sin-cursed world we will be subject to trials and tribulations. Jesus said to his disciples, "In this world ye

shall have tribulation," but He also said, "**but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world**" (John 16:33). He also said in that same passage that "in" Him we can have peace! While we are promised the ability to endure and overcome in Christ, and while Jesus provides us with an easier life compared to a life of sin, total and complete rest will come in heaven, where we are freed from all trials and difficulties of this life (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). The beloved apostle John recorded, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, **Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them**" (Revelation 14:13).

If we keep these things in mind and strive to practice them, we can live a happy life in Christ, even though the whole world may do its best to make us miserable. As Christians we are called to "**Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!**" (Philippians 4:4). There is no other way to be truly happy in this miserable world. If you are not a Christian, seek out a faithful gospel preacher in a Church of Christ near you, or write to us. We will help you learn how to become a Christian. If you are an unfaithful Christian, seek to be restored and apply these principles to your life. Then you may truly rejoice in Christ.

COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

"I do not want to be **ANY WHERE**, at **ANY TIME**, with **ANY ONE**, doing **ANY THING**, that would in **ANY WAY** detract from my influence for the master."

Just think!

ANY WHERE includes: any area or place in our world.

ANY TIME includes: week days or Lord's Day, day or night.

ANY ONE includes: parents, children, friends, relatives, guests, etc.

ANY THING includes: social, recreational, political, educational, etc.

ANY WAY includes: directly, or indirectly, omission or commission.

- Goebel Music

The Bible's Greatest Word

(Part 2)

by Allen Webster

The Bible's best word is love.

(Matthew 22:37,38)

How does love behave?

LOVE IS UNSELFISH

(1 Corinthians 13)

Love is unselfish (13:5b). Christians are not so concerned with their "rights" (Mark 8: 34-37; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33). "My rights end where your rights begin." We should look more to giving than getting (Acts 20:35) and to helping than being helped (Romans 5:1, 2). The first law of the animal world is *self-preservation*, but the first law of the spiritual world is *self-sacrifice* (Matthew 6:24; Luke 9:23).

The eagle mother builds her nest in the crags of the mountain peaks to protect her young from predators. Sometimes, though, forest fires sweep up the side of the mountain. Smoke engulfs the nest and the young are terrified. She soars away and frantically tries to get them to follow. But when they cannot, and the greedy blazes leap near, she comes back, spreads her wings over the nest and burns to death with them.

LOVE IS GOOD TEMPERED, PURE, AND SINCERE

Love is good tempered (13.5c). It is "not easily provoked." It restrains as Christ did when He was beaten, spat upon, scourged, and crucified as a criminal (1 Peter 2:23). He even prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what to do" (Luke 23:34). Nikita Krushchev, a former Russian ruler, said, "We Communists have many things in common with the teachings of Jesus Christ. But," he continued, "my sole difference with Christ is that when someone hits me on the right cheek, I hit him on the left so hard that his head falls off" (cf. Matthew 5:38, 39).

Love is pure (13:5d). It "thinketh no evil." *Think* is an accountant's word meaning to "reckon; calculate; enter an item in a ledger so it will not be forgotten." There are a lot of people who hold grudges and wait for a chance to get even. "Revenge" is not supposed to be in our vocabularies (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30) and is unacceptable behavior for a Christian. To overcome evil thinking one must fill his mind with the truth.

Love does not keep score. If someone does us wrong, we need to forgive them and

try to forget it (cf. Hebrews 8:12; Psalms 51:1, 2; 103:12; Micah 7:18). We try to get them to repent. The New Testament word for forgiveness means "letting go; forgetting, as though it never happened; loosing from a debt" (Mark 11:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 14:20; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). Consider this beautiful definition: "Forgiveness is the fragrance a flower gives the foot that crushes it."

Sometimes we are not forgiving because we do not try to put ourselves in the place of the other person. A man once sat down in a shoe-shine boy's chair on a large city street. It took the boy a long time to finish the first shoe, and even longer the second. Then the man looked and the shoes were smeared with polish and looked worse than when he sat down. He lashed out at the boy with angry words. The boy stared at the ground and finally looked up with tears running down his face. "I'm sorry, sir. I guess my mind was not on my work, for, you see, my mother died yesterday and I'm trying to get enough money to buy some flowers for her funeral." If the man had only known!

Love is sincere (13:6a). It "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." *Rejoice* means "to be glad."

When we hear about the sins of others, does it make us sad or glad? Do we enjoy hearing the latest gossip? Our answer will show whether we love God or the world. Love has no pleasure in sinners or sin (Romans 1:32; 2 Thessalonians 2:12).

LOVE IS STRONG AND TRUSTWORTHY

Love is strong (13:7a). *Beareth* means "to cover or provide a roof." It covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8) by trying to hide the fault of others. A Christian tries to get them to repent of sins and thus get them covered in God's sight. We sometimes sing a song called, "Blest Be The Tie That Binds." A part of it says: "When each can feel his brother's sigh, And with him *bear a part*; When sorrow flows from eye to eye, and joy from heart to heart."

This means that we should "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Someone once met a lad going to school before the days when transportation was provided. He was carrying a smaller, crippled boy on his back. The stranger said to the older boy, "Do you carry him to school every day?" "Yes," he said with a smile. "That's a heavy burden for you to carry."

The boy looked surprised and then answered, "He's not heavy, he's my brother." Love turns burdens into blessings.

Love is trustworthy (13:7b). It "believeth all things," that is, love is not suspicious of others. It wants to believe the best and refuses to be a "rumor-monger." We need to be the kind of people who can be trusted with the deepest secrets of our friends without them having to fear that we will embarrass them.

LOVE IS OPTIMISTIC AND DURABLE

Love is optimistic (13:7c). It "hopeth all things," that is, it believes that all will turn out well. Christians are positive people. They know that God answers prayers and keeps promises Romans 8:28; James 1:17; 5:16). Love believes that sinners can change and be saved. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the Father waited and watched for His wayward son to return (Luke 15). When we go astray, God has the same attitude toward us. He is right now waiting on some to change and be faithful Christians. Are you keeping God waiting?

Love is durable (13:7d-13). Love "endureth all things." Christians are soldiers in the Lord's army. A soldier's life is difficult. They have to "endure hardness" (2 Timothy 2:3). Love stands after everything else has fallen. It has a spirit which never knows defeat and is not deterred by disappointment. Love does not allow afflictions to crush it (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Let's learn and live the Bible's best word.
P.O. Box 512
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"Because He Believed In His God"

by Tracy Dugger

These words were spoken of Daniel after being delivered from the hungry den of lions. Our God is able to carry us through life's trials when we trust in Him with all our being. Daniel did this - he trusted in God and was delivered.

We live in a world where the righteous are often persecuted. Daniel is a prime example. Let us consider how inspiration describes his character and dedication. In Daniel 6:4: **"Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none**

occasion or fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." The jealousy of the Babylonian officials raged against Daniel. These prominent officials undoubtedly took a fine toothed comb to the character of Daniel but could find nothing in which to charge him. Why? **"Forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him"** (6:4c). He was faithful in carrying out his duty not only in the religious realm but in the secular realm. In 6:22, we read, **"also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."** Daniel was righteous, honest, true and of "excellent spirit." Friends, this was a good man. Yet, there were those who despised him and wanted his destruction! This has always been the case for our world. The innocent and righteous always are persecuted for their righteousness. Daniel is proof of such!

In response, did Daniel blame God, become pessimistic, or become unfaithful? No! Why not? *Because he believed in his God!* Daniel did not give up! He remained true to God throughout his entire life - a life that included much trial and anxiety.

In chapter 11:12, we find a little more that sheds light on Daniel's ability to endure trials. Inspiration says that he

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chastened (disciplined) himself before God. This tells us that he was a deeply religious man. His mind was so focused on God that religious matters took precedence in his life (Matthew 6:33). Earlier in this verse, it was said that he set his heart to know and do. We too must realize that the Christian life is to be a deliberate and calculated one, not just an occasional interest.

The church needs more people who will overcome when faced with crisis, temptation, persecution, and discouragement. In short, we need more Daniels!

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Just A Little Drink Never...

by Mark Simons

The following is a poem whose author is unknown. It describes why some people drink alcoholic beverages and what the result of it was.

*We drank for happiness,
and became unhappy.
We drank for joy,
and became miserable.
We drank for sociability, and
became argumentative and unsocial.
We drank for friendship
and made enemies.
We drank for sleep
and awakened without rest.
We drank for strength and felt weak.
We drank "medicinally"
and acquired health problems.
We drank for relaxation
and got the shakes.
We drank for bravery
and became doubtful and cowardly.
We drank to make conversation easier
and slurred our speech.
We drank to forget
and were forever haunted.
We drank to erase problems
and saw them multiply.
We drank to cope with life
and invited death.*

The attitude of many people is changing concerning social drinking. Social drinking is becoming acceptable not only in our society but also in the church. If the attitude of acceptability is debated at all by many people, then they use the argument, "it hurts the Christian influence," not that drinking "just to drink" is in and of itself biblically wrong. But social drinking, drinking just to drink, is biblically wrong. What about direct and

pointed scriptures of the Bible that proclaim the evils of drinking? In the Bible there are more than 70 pointed references to the evils of drinking, with a total of more than 160 verses of scripture.

Consider these passages. Isaiah 28:7 reads, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." Notice in this passage that they erred because of the effects of wine, that the prophets and priests could not walk the straight and narrow directly because of wine. Proverbs 23:29-32 is often quoted to emphasize the evil of drinking for pleasure, but some in defense note that this section is referring to "tarrying long at the wine." This defense misses the latter part of verse 30 which says don't even go looking for it. One might still argue, "Yes, but I'm just going to have a friend over in the privacy of my own home and have just a sip while watching the ball game." Habakkuk 2:15 warns, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink..." Howard Winters once wrote concerning one who might be deceived concerning drinking, "He is a fool, say the Scriptures. He is a fool because he has been deceived into thinking that wrong is right, as long as it is done in moderation, but wrong is not right... in any degree. Strong drink in any amount is either an evil or else it is not an evil at all; but if it is not an evil, the Bible is wrong in condemning it as such. But the Bible is right."

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*If you have fallen into a hole, remember,
the only way out is up.*

*Some folks grow older with birthdays,
it's true;*

*but others grow nicer as years widen
their view.*

*No one will notice a few little wrinkles,
When a kind, loving heart fills the eyes
full of twinkles.*

- Helen Steiner Rice

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-23).

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