

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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September, 1993

No. 9

"BE OF GOOD COURAGE"

by Allen Webster

Christianity is no place for weaklings! A sign was seen in a small restaurant, saying, "If our steak is too tough for you, get out; this is no place for weaklings!" Our faith will be tested.

Five volunteers were needed to undertake a dangerous mission, so the general lined up his men and asked volunteers to take one step forward, while he turned his back. When he again faced them, the line was still intact. He expressed disappointment that not a man was brave enough to volunteer, until a corporal interrupted and said, "We have all stepped forward, sir!"

Those in the Lord's army need courage. Christians have many great battles to face, and without courage, they will never outlast the enemy.

A REVIEW OF FEAR IN THE BIBLE

Man has always been a fearing creature. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve feared God and hid in the Garden (Gen. 3:8); Abram had to be told not to fear God (Gen. 15:1); the children of Israel feared God's voice at Sinai (Ex. 19:16); the ten spies spread fear throughout the ranks of God's people (Num. 13:1-16); Israel's army feared the Philistines (1 Sam. 17:11, 24); and Hezekiah feared Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:8-19). The thing that Job greatly feared came upon him (3:25) and the man who grows old without God learns to fear everything (Ecc. 12:5).

In the New Testament, the disciples feared a storm (Mt. 8:26), what they thought was a ghost (Mt. 14:26) and a mob in Gethsemane's Garden (Mt. 26:56). The one talent man hid his talent because he was afraid (Mt. 25:25). The grave watchers fainted in fear when the angels rolled away the stone (Mt. 28:4). Nicodemus came to Jesus by night (Jn. 3:1) and Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple (Jn. 19:38). Peter followed afar off (Lk. 22:54). Apparently, John Mark lost his courage when crossing the mountains of Perga as he turned back on the

first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). The apostle John was afraid when he had seen a vision (Rev. 1:17).

THE RESULTS OF FEAR IN OUR LIVES

Fear can cause indecisiveness. Some would not confess Christ for fear of public opinion (Jn. 12:42; cf. Psa. 3:6). To decide not to decide, is to choose to fail (2 Thess. 1:6-9). "He who walks in another's tracks leaves no footprints" (Reader's Digest). Others refuse to confess sins for fear that others will talk about them (cf. Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:16).

Fear can cripple good works. Many good things never get off the planning table because Christians are afraid of failure (Mt. 25:24-30). The "grasshopper complex" inflicts many congregations (Num. 13:1-16). As a rabbit caught in the headlights is paralyzed by fear, many churches get overrun by evil because leaders are too paralyzed to take a stand.

F. D. Roosevelt told America, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He knew the cost and the risks involved in battling the Axis powers in World War II. But he understood that our greatest enemy was our own fear, for fear is the enemy of success. There is an Eastern legend which says that a pilgrim met the Plague and asked, "Where are you going?" The Plague replied, "I am going to Bagdad to kill five thousand people." A few days later the pilgrim met the Plague again and charged him with killing fifty thousand instead of five. "Oh, no!" said the Plague, "I killed only five thousand; the others died of fear." Seneca's statement is true: "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."

Fear can cause one to be ashamed of the Gospel (Rm. 1:16; Gal. 4:16). One retorted, "Silence is golden, but sometimes it is just plain yellow." T. B. Larimore used to say, "I would be afraid to be ashamed and ashamed to be afraid." Fear can cause one to "flee to Egypt" as it did

Urijah (Jer. 26:21). It causes Christians to remain quiet when a brother is deserving of a rebuke (cf. Jer. 1:8; Ezek. 2:6; Gal. 2:11) or needs to be made aware of a personal offense (Mt. 18:15-18). Paul said that Timothy had not been given the spirit of fear or cowardice (2 Tim. 2:7), and neither have God's people today.

Fear causes some to fail to develop their talents. How many might now be qualified to be elders, deacons, teachers, soul winners, or song leaders if they did not fear failure (Mt. 25:24-30; Jas. 4:17)?

Fear causes some to lie (Jos. 9:24). How many lies have been told because one feared the consequences of telling the truth? One lie leads to another and they all lead to hell (Rev. 21:8).

THE REMEDY FOR FEAR IS FAITH

Courage has always been attributed to faith. The old Caleb was ready to face giants because he knew the Lord would be with him (Jos. 14:12). The young David's courage waxed strong as he said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:32).

The three Hebrew youths resolved to burn rather than turn (if God chose not to save them) (Dan. 3:17, 18). Daniel decided prayer was worth a night in the lion's den, and opened his windows to pray as he always had (Dan. 6:10, 11). A Bible school teacher asked her students why Daniel was not eaten by the lions. One little boy replied, "Because he was all backbone!"

Vashti and Esther demonstrated that women can manifest courage (Esther 1:1-22; 4:8, 16). Ezra's faith in God enabled him to lead in rebuilding the temple in the face of Tatnai, Shetharboznai and Apharsachites, who vigorously opposed him (Ezra 5:6-11).

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus showed a change of heart by boldly craving the body of Jesus that it might be given a decent burial (Mk. 15:43; Jn. 19:38, 39). The apostles were ready to

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Ted J. Clarke EDITOR
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be imprisoned and die rather than disobey God (Acts 4:18-21, 29, 31; 5:29, 33). Paul showed courage in rebuking a fellow apostle who had fallen into sin (Gal. 2:11-14).

As with the fearful disciples on Galilee, Christ wants us to be brave when facing the storms of life (Mt. 8:26). It may be the storm of temptation when we feel we just cannot go on (1 Cor. 10:13). It may be the storm of loneliness (Mt. 28:20). It may be a storm of pain as our bodies face disease, injury, or old age (Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 11:22-28; Phile. 9; Ezek. 18:26). It may be the storm of financial reverses (Rev. 2:9). It may be a storm of persecution for righteousness sake (Mt. 5:10, 11; 10:28; 2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 2:9, 10, 24). It may be a storm of marital trouble or parental problems (1 Sam. 25:3-35; Lev. 10:1-3).

Fear is a serious problem, because it indicates a "little faith." It can be soul-damning, for the "fearful" are among those listed in "Hell's Hall of Fame" (Rev. 21:8). Let each Christian summon his courage and wage a winning warfare!

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Tiptersville, MS 38674

If we do not watch and pray, we will be led into temptation before we know where we are.

~~~~~  
*Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.*

~~~~~  
*The brook would lose its song if the
rocks were removed.*

"PAST FEELING"

by Ted J. Clarke

One of the ever present dangers for Christians is that we become indifferent to the sinful ways of the world. First John 2:15-17 warns us of the peril of loving the world. James 4:4 teaches that we cannot be friends with the world and God at the same time. To do so is to commit spiritual adultery!

Constant exposure to sin without reacting against it will cause one to become numb to its effects. Eventually, one may become hardened and insensitive to hearing profanity, looking at nudity or a thousand and one other sins. It is possible that one will begin the practice of such things, especially since one is exposed to it so frequently and it seems that everyone is doing it. Paul told the church in Ephesus,

"Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: **who being past feeling** have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ..." (Ephesians 4:17-20).

Exposure to sin can make us numb and participation in it can carry us past the point of even "feeling" the shame of such activity! Elsewhere Paul speaks of those who depart from the faith as those who have "their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). Such are those who are hardened and calloused in sin, so that the sword of the Spirit cannot find a nerve to prick the heart to repentance (Acts 2:37; Hebrews 4:12).

Everyone supposes himself or herself to be the exception. "Aaaaww, that cussin' don't bother me none," someone says. If it doesn't bother us, that is a sign we are already starting to harden. We are to "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). A deacon in one church, who subscribed to *Playboy* said, "I can look at nude women and not be bothered by it. I guess I'm not as oversexed as some preachers." His problem was that his "love of art," as he called it, stemmed from the "vanity of his mind and darkened understanding," just as the Gentiles above (Eph. 4:17-20). No godly man should want to look at nude women in *Playboy* or any other such publication. Such pictures are pornographic and obscene, whether one is bothered by them or not.

Let's keep ourselves pure and sensitive to sin and its numbing effects. We should be repulsed by sin, not drawn to it, whether in real life, on TV or in the movies. Ephesians 5:11 says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

LENT TO THE LORD

by Marvin Rickett

Hannah was barren. She could not have children. This saddened her and her husband, Elkanah. So badly did she desire a child that she promised that if God would give her a child she would lend him back to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:11). The Lord hearkened unto her plea and caused her to conceive and bear a son, Samuel. As soon as the child passed weaning age, Hannah brought him to Eli, the priest at the tabernacle in Shiloh, and left him there to be trained in all of the Lord's ways. This was a sacrifice on her part - to leave her little boy with someone else. She said, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord" (1 Sam.1:28).

We should "lend" our children to the Lord. Our greatest desire should be for our children to be saved from sin and eternal death and to obtain eternal life. If we are to accomplish this, we must take positive action and unselfishly lend them to the Lord. We must teach them diligently of God's ways, from their days of infancy until they day the leave home. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut.6:6, 7).

We should train them in the Lord's ways, teach them God's way of salvation, instill in them the desire for right things and the abhorrence of wrong things. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). And they need discipline - all ranges of discipline, from simply teaching them right from wrong to persuading them to embrace the right by not sparing the rod. A very important aspect in directing them in God's way is setting the right example before them. Parents should conduct themselves in a way that is consistent

with what they are trying to instruct their children. They should lead their children to Bible study and church.

We should be willing to "lend" our children to the Lord in His service. Some parents hesitate to encourage their children to be preachers or to marry preachers. They want their children to have "the good life": to have a good-paying and prestigious job; to have a nice house, fine car, plenty of money, and financial security; to have prominence and prestige in the community. They know that a preacher has very little of these things. Many do not want their sons to be elders because they know that elders face difficulties and weighty responsibilities in their often thankless task. They would rather their children be just "ordinary Christians."

What we fail to consider are the rewards received from lending our children to the Lord. The Lord rewarded Hannah and Elkanah by giving three more sons and two daughters to her who had been barren. But the greater reward must have been that her son became a powerful and influential and righteous spiritual giant in Israel. He was a priest and a prophet. Most of the heroes of the Bible have recorded some flaw or some mistake that they made. But nothing amiss is recorded about Samuel's life. What could be better than this? We need to think of the rewards of our lending our children to the Lord:

(1) A clear conscience. We have done the very best for them, our conscience is clear. They have obeyed the gospel and live a faithful and righteous life, their consciences are clear.

(2) Eternal life. When we lend our children to the Lord, they obtain eternal life. We obtain eternal life, too, because we proved to be good stewards of those souls that the Lord placed in our trust. We get to spend eternity together in heaven.

(3) Pleasing the Lord. There is a great satisfaction from the knowledge that we have done that which is pleasing to the Lord. It is pleasing to the Lord to rear gospel children.

(4) The Lord's care. We are promised the Lord's care if we seek first His Kingdom (Matt. 6:33). I know of no clearer way of putting His Kingdom first than in rearing our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Have you lent your child to the Lord?

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BLESSED ARE THE MEEK...

by M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

"Now the Man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3).

Moses can be considered to have been one of the meekest men of all times. Yet his life testifies to the fact that he was a fearless and great leader. Moses is a giant of ancient history. Notice his accomplishments.

1. Through inspiration he was privileged to write more than one-fourth of the Old Testament.
2. He stood before the king of Egypt as God's representative (Exodus 3:13).
3. He led more than 600,000 people around in the wilderness for four decades.

These events and many others show that Moses was not timid and cowardly, and yet the Bible says he was meek.

Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms defines Christian meekness as "consistent mildness and gentleness of temper." When Jesus declared, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5), He was revealing that those who are exalted are those who are humble in attitude, gentle in spirit, and mild in their treatment of others. Meekness does not take away strength and courage (Deut. 31:7). It gives guidelines for it. Meekness does not take away an earnest defense of the faith, it gives credence to it. (Philippians 1:17).

Meekness has been defined as "power under control." When we read about the lives of David, Abraham, Solomon, Elijah, Paul, Peter and others, we find that they all strove for and attained a meekness that indeed gave them the victory. Let us all "seek meekness" (Zeph. 2:3), knowing that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Salem, VA

*The best thing to do with the Bible is to
Know it in the head,
Stow it in the heart,
Sow it in the world,
And show it in the life.*

~~~~~

*If we do not love, we will find an excuse.  
If we do love, we will find a way.*

## CREATOR OR CREATION?

by David Macy

"Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8, 9). "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:25). It is inherent in man's nature that he will worship someone or something. The majority of our people are worshipping the creation of God rather than the Creator. The worship of things has become a national epidemic and there seems to be no end in sight.

The Lord does bless His children with the material things they need, but when we worship these things and put them first in our lives we are displeasing to our gracious heavenly Father. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names" (Psa. 49:11). Pride and a life based on material wealth alone gives people a false sense of security, because they get the idea that their

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

### CHURCHES

|                                             |         |
|---------------------------------------------|---------|
| Jeff Church of Christ, Thayer, Mo. ....     | \$25.00 |
| Dellhalf Church of Christ, Myrtle, Mo. .... | 20.00   |
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| Viola Church of Christ, Viola, Ar. ....     | 10.00   |
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| Pauline Lewis, Mtn. Home, Ar. ....           | \$20.00 |
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| Jewell V. & Helen Boler, Mishawaka, In. .... | 5.00    |
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affluence is a permanent condition. They deceive themselves into thinking their "mansions" and "castles" will stand indefinitely, and be dwelling places for all their future generations. The proud try to insure the fulfillment of their fantasies by adorning their lands and houses with their own elite names. "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his wickedness" (Psalms 52:7). The proud depend on an abundance of riches to give them perfect peace and joy, but they are always disappointed sooner or later. An abundance of riches never has made people truly happy and it never will.

Some of the most miserable people on earth are also the richest. A life founded on pride and erected with riches usually has a spacious room within named misery and an even more spacious one called bitter disappointment. Precious reader, is this really the way you want to spend your brief time here on earth?

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## The Bible Man

by Carl Bates\*

He stands to preach, a sacred task,  
A Book held in his hand;  
And as he speaks his brethren know,  
He is a Bible man.

Upon the Scriptures, right and truth  
He ever takes a stand;  
To make the Gospel clear and plain,  
He is a Bible man.

He loves that grand old Book divine,  
He loves to preach the plan;  
He loves the lost its message saves,  
He is a Bible man.

Let skeptics doubt and heathen rage,  
And build their hopes on sand;  
He loves, and lives, and teaches God's  
Book,  
He is a Bible man.

When worlds shall end and stars shall  
fall,  
And at the Throne we stand;  
How sweet to hear the Kings's command,  
"Come home, you Bible man."

\*(edited slightly - TJC)

*We don't have much right to complain  
about mistakes made by people who are  
doing the work we should be doing.*

## BURIED ALIVE!

by Garry Stanton

Many articles in newspapers and magazines over the years have appeared with the headline, "Buried Alive." The thought of being buried alive puts fear into the hearts of most people. The horror of being buried alive contributed to the great amount of attention that was directed toward little Jessica McClure who was literally buried alive in that abandoned well in West Texas a few years ago.

A spiritual application of this is that sin causes man's soul to die spiritually (Rom. 6:23). Jesus came to earth and was killed and was then raised on the third day so that man would be able to be alive again (born anew). A major teaching today says that man is made alive again by faith alone. Furthermore, it is taught that the person who is made alive by faith only is to be baptized in order to show his faith and become a part of a denominational body. We read in Romans 6:4 that baptism is a burial. If man is saved by faith only without baptism then those who practice "faith only" are actually burying people who are alive! It is a terrible thing to be buried alive physically, but it is even more terrible to be buried alive spiritually. Why? Because you cannot be baptized for the remission of sins believing that you already have remission of sins! This results in people who are not scripturally baptized when they thought they were!

Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from death to a new life. Romans 6:3-4 says we are buried like as was Christ and we are raised to a new life also as was Christ. Where does the burial stand in relationship to Christ's death and His new life? Christ was not buried before He died, nor was He buried after He was made alive again! Burial stood between His death and being alive again! Where does our burial (baptism) stand in relation to spiritual death and being born again? We are not to be buried before we die, nor are we to be buried after we are alive again. The truth is, baptism stands between spiritual death and being born again! Baptism is essential to salvation!

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*Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer  
except what lies outside the will of God.*

## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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