

# 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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## “HEARING THEY HEAR NOT”

by Lee Moses

Jesus said of His fellow Jews, “[T]hey seeing see not; and hearing they hear not” (Matthew 13:13). One could translate this, “While they see, they do not see; and while they hear, they do not hear.” How can this be? One either sees or does not see; one either hears or does not hear. But so many people with good perceptive abilities fail to use those abilities as God has given them. Thus, it can truly be said of such people that “hearing they hear not.”

**Many hear there is a God, but they do not hear.** There are those who hear the word of God, or at least hear enough portions of the word to have testimony to God’s existence. They have heard “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1), which remains the best and only viable explanation. They have seen with their eyes evidence of God’s existence:

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world . . .* (Psalm 19:1-4).

People have the ability to hear and see these things, they surely **do** see

and hear these things—yet it as if they never do. They pay no attention, as a deaf man will pay no attention to the sounding horn of an automobile rapidly approaching him. They do not live as though they are aware that there is a God who is aware of their every move and every thought.

**Many hear there will be a Judgment Day, but they do not hear.**

There are those who claim to believe in God, but continue to stroll leisurely down the pernicious paths of immorality, selfishness, and manmade religion. They see that all accounts are not settled on earth. Job asked, “*Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*” (Job 21:7). The wicked often remain unpunished throughout their lives, and are certainly not punished to the degree they deserve (compare with Romans 6:23). But will a just God allow all such wrongs to go unpunished? He most certainly will not. “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (Genesis 18:25). He most certainly will. And the Lord has revealed that He will and how He will: “*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds*” (Romans 2:5-6). Revelation’s depiction of the Judgment Day should serve as a sobering reminder to forsake the paths of wickedness:

*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (20:11-15).*

Who can hear such things and not turn from their wicked ways?

**Many hear there is salvation, but they do not hear.** Some wallow in self-loathing, believing they could never be saved. Others assault what they believe to be a tyrannical God. But do they not hear what God says? God has offered salvation to all: “*And [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:1). To receive a Presidential pardon, one must usually be a personal friend of the President. However, God offers salvation to His worst human enemies:

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died*

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*for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Romans 5:8-10).*

Tyrannical? Not remotely. *“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).* Anyone can be saved from his sins and become an heir of eternal life, if one will hear what God calls him to do.

The Lord has blessed mankind with the capability to see and hear (compare with Psalm 94:9). He has blessed mankind with faculties capable of discerning and acting upon the greatest spiritual truths. Yet too often, *“hearing they hear not.”* When God has revealed to us crucial

spiritual truths, yet we fail to discern and act upon them, the failure lies with the hearers themselves: *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:15).* Let us not close our ears to the most important things we will ever hear.

**THE LORD’S  
ARMY**

by Leland L. Reed

We sing a song in Bible school, *“I’m in the Lord’s army.”* I can only find reference to the army of the Lord in Revelation 19; however, 2 Timothy 2:3 calls us soldiers of Jesus Christ. Being a soldier of Christ therefore puts us in His army.

For those that have served in the military you know you have to follow orders. The military is not a democracy. You don’t get to vote to take that hill or bypass it—if the order is given you take the hill.

If we are in the Lord’s army then we must follow the orders or commands of our commander, Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus gave the order to his apostles to go and teach then followed that command to teach them, those that obeyed the teaching of the apostles, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Therefore a direct command to each and every one of us to teach God’s word. Paul told Timothy *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” 2 Tim. 2:2*

It seems every time we get in a discussion about evangelism

someone brings up the point that when we support a missionary that we are partakers in that work. That is a true statement when we consider Romans 10:15: *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”* The question that must be asked is this all we are required to do?

During the civil war of our country it was permissible to pay some one to take your place in the army. Again a question that must be asked and answered, is it permissible to pay someone to take our place in the Lord’s army, to go and teach so we don’t have to? The command was and is to follow all the commands whatsoever our Lord gave (Matthew 28:20). Some will say, *“I can’t teach; I don’t know enough.”* I am sure there are some that are not able to teach, however they can assist those that can and will teach. Most every one of us has friends, neighbors, relatives or co-workers. If we are not comfortable in leading in a Bible study set up the study and take someone that is capable and you can be the silent partner, take notes, help by babysitting or whatever needs to be done to help with the study. I just read about an eighty year old lady that was teaching a friend also eighty and she teamed up with a younger lady and they taught God’s word to her friend and she obeyed the gospel. We must remember that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16); it is not you or I, or how eloquent we are—teach the gospel and let it work on the hearts of men.

Peter gave the command of God in First Peter 3:15 to be ready always to give an answer for the hope that is within us. This was not a request—it was a command. We cannot ignore the command of our commander Jesus Christ if one is to be a good

soldier of Christ (2 Timothy 2:2-3). Then Jude gave the command to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Again, this is not a request but a command. The Lord has given us several commands to teach (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 9:60; 1 Timothy 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2:24); to ignore them is to rebel against our commander. Those that have been in the military know that if you rebel against your commanding officer, you will pay the price for disobedience. That price could be anything from loss of rank to time in prison—or even death. However if we rebel against our spiritual commander, the price, unless we repent, is eternal death in hell: *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished”* (2 Peter 2:9).

There are many aids available to teach alien sinners—make use of them. It is amazing how easy it is to teach using these methods. Just to name a few: Jule Miller films, Search for Truth, Open Bible Study, and there are many more.

Another part of teaching that needs to be dealt with is teaching new converts. New converts need to be grounded in the truth so they can become teachers and can discern between right and wrong: *“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Hebrews 5:14). How can they reach this point unless an older (mature) Christian teaches them?

We must consider that the church will not grow unless we follow the command of our Lord and Savior to go teach. Christ said, *“If you love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). If we want to abide in his love we must obey Him. *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love”* (John 15:10).

God demonstrated his love for man by sending his only begotten Son to die for us. Is it too much to ask that we teach God’s word so others can have the blessing of salvation also? Remember what Ezekiel was told by God:

*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul”* (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

This principal still holds fast today and we are required to warn the sinner of his condition. *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”* (Acts 20:26-27).

*“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Timothy 4:16).

Christ came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). We are His instruments to save the lost. *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”* (1 Corinthians 1:21).

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## MISAPPLIED SCRIPTURE

by Roelf L. Ruffner

*“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another”* (Galatians 5:15).

What is the apostle Paul referring to in this verse? Paul was writing to the churches of Christ in Galatia. The Galatians were a high strung, Celtic people. False teachers (commonly referred to as “Judaizers”) had inflamed these Gentile brethren claiming that one needed to keep the Law of Moses as well as the Law of Christ—the gospel. This “leaven” had infected the church and caused the brethren to forget brotherly love and to be bitter against one another. He was afraid that their mistreatment of each other would destroy the church.

For over a generation religious liberals within the church have misused this verse to castigate conservatives who **scripturally** point out their error. *“The witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith”* (Titus 1:13). In return, liberals often resort to “ad hominem” attacks or attacks against one’s character or person. As the old saying goes, “attack the messenger rather than the message”. The Lord’s critics in His day resorted to such name calling when they could not refute His arguments, calling Him *“a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!”* (Luke 7:34).

Lately some brethren who like to think of themselves as “sound” have resorted to such tactics as well. If a brother rebukes them for **fellowshipping** marked false teachers or fellowshipping those who do they pull out Galatians 5:15 and accuse them of being “mean spirited” and “divisive”. They seem to desire to compromise the truth of the gospel for the sake of “friendship” or old school ties or family ties or even, God forbid filthy lucre’s sake.

Sometimes we must get a bit rough with God's children to get their attention and perhaps save their souls. I am reminded of Nehemiah the governor of post-exile Jerusalem in the 6th Century B.C. When he discovered that some of his Jewish brethren had married foreign women and had families by them contrary to the Law, he did not hold back in his rebuke. *"And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves"* (Nehemiah 13:25).

I am not suggesting we should use hair pulling or physical force with brethren. Yet, was Nehemiah "unloving" in his rebuke? Did he seek to "bite and devour" his brethren? No! He manifested a **zealous love** for God and his nation. I imagine he lost quite a few friends but gained favor with God. *"Remember me, O my God, for good"* (Neh.13:31).

Was Jesus "mean spirited" when he called His fellow Jews "hypocrites" (Matthew 23:15) and a "generation of vipers" (verse 33)? Was He being overly aggressive when he TWICE drove the money changers out of the temple? **No!**

When the apostle Paul confronted Barnabas, the Jewish brethren, and Peter at Antioch for not eating with the Gentile brethren and "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11), was he seeking to "bite and devour" them? **Of course not!** He knew that the "truth of the gospel" (verse 14) was at stake.

**Brethren, we must treat each other respectfully and with brotherly kindness.** But we must not presume that our brother/sister should be allowed to proceed down the road to Hell in a good humor. The bond of fellowship between brethren is a most precious thing. It was made possible by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). It should be fought for

and defended with all the "tough love" and courage we can muster. It is far preferable to upset them in this life, where they have an opportunity to repent, than to have them upset on the Day of Judgment with no chance of repentance. *"Open rebuke is better than secret love"* (Proverbs 27:5).

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**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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