

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Oct. 2, 2011



Choose to Be a Winner

(Part 1)

by Eugene C. Perry

Participate!

Personal experience and observation show that there are many losers and few winners, even among those who are frequent participants. Take for example raffles, sweepstakes, or even races and other athletic contests. The prizes go to only a few. There may be thousands of entrants, but there are very few winners, sometimes only one.

Like us, you likely receive an abundance of junk mail offering fabulous prizes in various forms of sweepstakes almost every day. We are encouraged to participate, often at little or no cost other than a postage stamp. Although it is claimed that there are winners, such seem to be very rare. The odds are discouraging. Why bother to enter?

Even in the case of races and athletic contests, where formal entry requirements are met and much effort is spent in preparatory practice, the prize goes to the few. In each case, we must decide whether or not to participate, to make the necessary preparations and meet the other required conditions.

There is a race in which we cannot lose and each person is encouraged to make a decision to enter it - a race in which all who complete the course are winners. The Christian life is frequently compared to a contest, a fight or a race, but there is a great difference. Unlike these other contests, in it, all are potential winners.

We face opportunities to make choices or decisions in many areas of life. Some are small and inconsequential whereas others are very important and have profound and far reaching consequences. These are decisions that no one else makes for us. There will be people and circumstances that encourage or discourage the right and beneficial decision, but in the final analysis, we must, personally, decide. If we make the wrong decision we can only blame ourselves. We, and likely others influenced by us, will pay the price in this life and the future life.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

VISITORS, WELCOME!

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class

10:30 a.m. WORSHIP

5:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for
all ages & Pew Packers
on 1st & 3rd Sundays at
4:15 p.m.

P.O. Box 321

2008 Hwy. 306

(1.2 miles east of I-55)

Coldwater, MS 38618

(662) 622-7951

emailus@coldwatercofc.com

ELDERS

Billy Bland

W. Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

Jim Jackson

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown

Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell

Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

In contrast, if we make the right decisions, we thank God for the benefits to ourselves and the many others who benefit. This is because God provides the blessings resulting from the right decisions. God is the prize-giver.

Decisions we make in regard to vocation, location, companionships and relationships contribute to us not being losers in respect to the eternal prize. Basic to all of this, of course, is the decision to accept God's gift of salvation in Christ by deciding to obey the terms of the "good news". In doing this, we enter the race, we confess our faith in the divinity of Christ, we acknowledge Him as Lord and we commit ourselves to serve Him.

Having thus become a participant in this race, one must realize that faithfulness and fruitfulness are the expected results. This involves following a spiritual leader while living in a physical body in a material world and making appropriate decisions along the way, We are in the world but not of it. Jesus prayed for his followers saying, "they are still in the world . . . they are not of the world any more than I am not of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:11, 14, 15-17).

Loyalty to this Lord will mean decisions resulting in self-denial, hardship, sacrifice, service and growth into His likeness. We make those decisions because we love our Lord, but also, like Moses of old, because we look ahead to the "reward". "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the other people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward" (Heb.11:24-26).

The decisions we face regarding resisting temptation, being steadfast in our labour for the Lord (I Cor.15:58), a proper and permanent marriage, responsible parenting and loving and caring relationships with others - all of these should result from our first choice, to enter the "narrow way". Jesus encouraged this decision. He said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate, and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Mt.7:13,14).

An elderly African lady was dying. Friends and loved ones from the entire community had gathered to her home and were quietly comforting one another with prayers, handclasps and tears. Maude had been an inspiration to all who knew her, having raised five children, cared for her neighbours and steadily worked for her church. She would be gravely missed. A handful of her closest family stood now above her bed, whispering all the appropriate epitaphs, when Maude spoke up with her typical wit and wisdom, "Why's everyone cryin'? I'm not lookin' for the undertaker, I'm lookin' for the uppertaker!"

How do we look at death or at the coming of the Lord? Do we have the undertaker or the uppertaker view of death? Are we among those like Paul who "desire to depart and be with Christ" (Phil.1:23); those who "have longed for his appearing" (II Tim.4:8)? Do we welcome this event as Jehovah does, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15)?

Although many believe in and sometimes talk about eternal life, most people, even Christians, look on the transition to such with fear and uncertainty. Why? In general the pain involved in death does not appear to be that dreadful! Do we fear change? Do we fear the loss of associations and possessions here on the earth? Truly, we have many meaningful and precious relationships and, in our culture, an over-abundance of material possessions, and the security provided by them in a stable society. But how dependable and durable are these things that we can feel and touch? "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt.6:19-21).

We must be careful that our treasure is not in the wrong place, if we would be winners. In one place it is secure while in the other it is insecure.

Note the contrasts. "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling ... For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (II Cor.5:1,2,4). "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev.21:3,4).

How real is this better life? Would that we all had the confidence of G. C. Brewer who once said, "Someday you will read in the newspaper that G. C. Brewer is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now."

Published in The Old Paths Archive
(<http://www.oldpaths.com>)

Sermon Review

GOD HATES A FALSE WITNESS THAT SPEAKETH LIES

(Proverbs 6:16-19)

A False Witness that Speaketh Lies...

- I. DEFIES GOD'S NATURE
- II. DEVASTATES THE LIFE and REPUTATION
of ANOTHER
- III. DESTROYS THE SOUL OF ANOTHER
- IV. DEMOLISHES THE SOUL OF SELF

DEVELOPING THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE

(1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Let us develop our...

- I. **Joyful** Attitudes (Rejoice Always).
- II. **Prayerful** Attitudes (Pray without ceasing).
- III. **Thankful** Attitudes (In everything, give thanks).

*Sermon not original with me.

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Abby & Layla -- home sick with sore throats Wednesday
Wiley & Betty Tuggle -- Wiley is now having more back pains. His voice seems to be doing better.

Tim II, Rachel, & Titus Wilkes will be departing for the Philippines on Wednesday, October 5.

Family & Friends

Allen Family -- in the loss of Pat Allen.

Jeff Nichols -- on breathing machine, not doing well.

Carl Hounshell -- One of the elders at Independence has some serious health problems. Hopes to come back to Mississippi this week as he has improved a good bit and has been released for travel.

Virginia Mayfield -- friend of Bren, has leukemia.

Ray Maples -- undergoing chemo-therapy for leukemia.

Carla Carlson -- undergoing chemo-therapy and doing well with her treatments.

Janie Brister -- has multiple health problems.

Cathy Thompson -- has lupus.

James Angel; Steve Angel; Gloria Angel; Bob Spurlin; David Bragg; Kelly Ann Cooper.

Let us not forget to pray for the works being done through Fishers of Men, Far East Missions, and the Open Door Ministry.

October Birthdays

Mischel Jackson -- 10/03

Lynn Wilkes -- 10/05

Georgia Bayless -- 10/15

Jared Brown -- 10/16

Abby Kate Haynes -- 10/17

Sarah Norris -- 10/20

Billy Bland -- 10/31

See **Elizabeth Baker** to get your picture taken for the upcoming church directory.

Also, fill out an "About Me" sheet and give to Elizabeth.

Get Involved!

Sunday Night For the Savior -- Tonight!

Bring Contacts and Finger Foods!

Gospel Meeting at Looxahoma

Oct. 2-6; Preacher -- Keith Mosher, Sr.

Coldwater Trade Days -- Oct. 8

Sign up to help!

Bible Bowl -- Oct. 8 -- 5PM -- Looxahoma

Acts 5, 6, 7 -- We are hosting -- Sign up to help

Providence Place Devo -- Oct. 9 -- 1PM

Coldwater Work Day -- Oct. 22

More details to come!

Zoo Boo -- Oct. 22 PM

More details to come!

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, October 2

Morning

Prayer Before Class

Billy Bland

Announcements

Caleb Baker

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Lord's Supper:

Preside

Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

Jim Jackson

Assist

Jerry Davis

Jeremy Moore

Opening Prayer

Jeffrey Ferrell

Sermon

Clifton Angel

Closing Prayer

Johnny Bayless

Evening

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Opening Prayer

Jared Brown

Sermon

Clifton Angel

Lord's Supper

Jim Jackson

Jerry Davis

Closing Prayer

Ron Johnson

Wednesday, October 5

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Prayer

Shane Staten

Invitation

Clifton Angel

Prayer

Jerry Davis