

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Oct. 9, 2011



Choose to Be a Winner

(Part 2)

by Eugene C. Perry

Follow Through!

The challenge is for us, with a view of eternity, to live as Paul lived. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil.1:21). Faith in eternity gives us strength, peace and courage, because working, playing and living, we know that, come what may, there is a life, infinitely better than what we know now, waiting for us. We thus have "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding," guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil.4:7).

How do we live with this in view? Although he preferred "to be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (II Cor.5:8), Paul had decided (made it his goal) to please the Lord, "whether we are at home in the body or away from it." Anticipating the judgement, he stated, "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men." Again, although he confidently stated that "to die is gain", and that his desire was to "depart and be with Christ" which is "far better", Paul was ready to continue in the flesh - to do God's will. His hope was that he would "in no way be ashamed" and that "Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil.1:20). He was willing to abide, which would mean "fruitful labor" for him and which was "more necessary" for the Christians.

As with Paul, as long as we live, we have a useful purpose in life, we are vessels for God's use. This is not meant to be an unwilling but a voluntary service, "faith expressing itself through love" (Gal.5:6). We love Him and want to please Him who loves us so much that He gave his Son to restore our relationship and is so patient with us.

Realizing the fate of those who fail to decide for God, we persuade men out of love and concern rather than out of duty. Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, we work for their well-being, especially the eternal well-being resulting from continued faithfulness. *(continued on next page...)*

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.

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Jim Jackson

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown
Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell
Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

Involved in all of these matters is the necessity of making decisions regarding both the general trend of our lives and the myriad of lesser choices which present themselves to us each day. In Galatians 5, Paul lists the "acts of the sinful nature" which prevent participants from inheriting the kingdom of God, and by way of contrast, "the fruit of the Spirit", which, by implication make it ours. In the next chapter, he used the sowing and reaping analogy to emphasize the same truth.

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Gal.6:7,8).

"By the 'sowing' the apostle appears to be referring to the whole pattern of our thoughts and habits, our life-style, life direction and life-discipline. It includes the company we keep, the friendships we cultivate, the literature we read and the films we watch..., the kind of pursuits with which we occupy our leisure and everything which engrosses our interest, absorbs our energy and dominates our mind... For by these things we are sowing, sowing, sowing all the time; and according to what and where we sow, this shall we reap" (John R. Stott, Baptism and Fullness, pp. 81,82).

These all involve decisions. By sowing to the Spirit we reap eternal life. Stott describes this life as "a deepening fellowship with the living God now (to know whom is eternal life, John 17:3); together with that fullness of fellowship with him which defies imagination and which awaits us in the last day."

Because we have eternity in mind, we set our "minds on things above, not on earthly things." And, "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col.3:1-4).

"All through the inspired word the prize set before us, the goal to attain, the motivation to service is always eternal life. Not a phenomenon to be feared but a paradise to be desired" (Gary Beauchamp). If this goal becomes or is unreal or secondary in our thinking, we will tend to make the wrong decisions and consequently fail to glorify God in our lives.

We have been deeply touched by stories or scenes of the emotional welcoming home of POW's or hostages, long separated from their families. This cannot be compared to the reunion with our heavenly Father when we go home. Yet, with many, there remains a dread of this transition instead of it being viewed with anticipation.

We are God's family. He cares for us. We can't lose. In 1990, sister Joan Smith who had patiently endured a valiant but losing 10 year battle with cancer, wrote a series of articles for the Women's Page of this paper (The Gospel Herald). She tells in detail of the way she came to look at and face this affliction. During the time of her battle, including operations, chemotherapy, much suffering and the accompanying mental stress, she was a faithful wife and mother and served with dedication and efficiency at Great Lakes Christian College and in the church. She began the series by quoting, "My help comes from the Lord" (Ps.121:2). She explained her positive attitude, and continuing and dedicated service beyond "the call of duty" in the following statement: "I am a survivor. I am not a loser. God is allowing me to stay here a while longer. I can be with my family and still work for Christ. If I don't survive, I am still not a loser. I have a home in heaven waiting for me. Sister Smith has since gone on to that eternal home.

All Christians should think of this life as the journey, the preparation for eternal life. We are sojourning here. Like the faithful of old, we must confess by life and word that we are "aliens and strangers on earth. People who ... show that they are looking for a country of their own ... longing for a better country a heavenly one." God is not ashamed to be the God of such. He "has prepared a city for them" (Heb.11:13-16).

(continued on next page...)

Those who become sick and are in hospital look forward to going home. Sometimes it means going home to the joys of reunion with a loving family; sometimes going home to a loving Father in heaven. In either case, they are winners.

The crown of righteousness is, according to II Timothy 4:8, "to all who have longed for his appearing" We long for his appearing only if we are confidently prepared and in the process of fighting "the good fight", finishing "the race" and keeping "the faith".

As the Jews journeyed from their various villages on their pilgrimages to Jerusalem, trudging on foot through unfamiliar places, they would sing songs of encouragement. As they approached Jerusalem, the men would sing:

"I lift up my eyes to the hills, Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, The Maker of heaven and earth."

The women and children would then reply:

"He will not let your foot slip, He who watches over you will not slumber; Indeed, he who watches over Israel, Will neither slumber nor sleep."

Then the men would sing:

"The Lord watches over you, The Lord is your shade at your right hand;"

The women and children would reply:

"The sun will not harm you by day, Nor the moon by night."

The men would sing:

"The Lord will keep you from all harm - he will watch over your life:"

Then everyone would join to affirm:

"The Lord will watch over your coming and going, Both now and forevermore" Psalm 121.

As these people "went out" from their familiar villages and "came in" to a city in which things were strange to them, they moved from one world to another. Heartened by the lines, "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore," they pushed on. Surely, these lines have a similar application for us as we journey to our Holy City.

Having in mind a beautiful view of eternity, let us live each day in anticipation, hope and faith, repeating to ourselves the powerful words of Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

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

Sermon Review

RUNNING THE FAITHFUL RACE

(Hebrews 12:1-2)

- I. **Let Us Lay Aside**
- II. **Let Us Run**
- III. **Let Us Look to Jesus**

GOD HATES THEY THAT SOWETH DISCORD AMONG THE BRETHREN

(Proverbs 6:16-19)

- I. A Brief Definition of Discord.
- II. Some Common Causes of Discord.
- III. Some Common Ways to Prevent Discord.

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Abby & Layla -- home sick with sore throats Wednesday
Wiley & Betty Tuggle -- Wiley is scheduled to have some tests done for his back on October 13.

Tim II, Rachel, & Titus Wilkes are in the Philippines and plan to be back in a couple of weeks. Let us remember them and the OpenDoor team in our prayers.

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

Family & Friends

Wes, brother of Deb Peeler (Nicci Leonard's mom), has been diagnosed with cancer.

Norman & Brenda Mahan, tragic motorcycle accident. They are from Southaven but are in a NC hospital.

Linda Lentz, recovering from double bypass surgery.

Charles Easley, Molly's grandfather, is in the hospital with multiple health problems.

Allen Beech's daughter, (Allen is a friend to Andy, and a few of us have met him also), she tried to commit suicide. She has children and definitely needs our prayers.

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

Carl Hounshell -- One of the elders at Independence has some serious health problems, is improving & back in MS.

Virginia Mayfield -- friend of Bren, has leukemia.

Ray Maples -- undergoing chemo-therapy for leukemia.

Carla Carlson -- has received excellent news that her cancer is in remission!

Janie Brister -- has multiple health problems.

Cathy Thompson -- has lupus.

James Angel; Steve Angel; Gloria Angel; Bob Spurlin;

David Bragg; Kelly Ann Cooper; Allen Family.

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

"About Me" sheets are due by October 16, 2011. Please give them to Elizabeth Baker.

Get Involved!

Gospel Meeting at Nesbit

Oct. 9-12; Preacher -- Wayne Rodgers

Providence Place Devo -- Today -- 1PM

E3 Sunday Fellowship Meal and Early Service

October 16 -- PM Service at 1PM

Zoo Boo -- Oct. 21 -- 6:30 PM

Sign up sheet in the foyer!

Deadline is Oct. 16 in order to get discounted prices.

Coldwater Work Day -- Oct. 22

Beginning at 9AM. We need the help of all!

Fishers of Men Class at Coldwater

So far, we have recorded **9 studies** with **10 people** for the first week of study reports!

Please pray for the teachers and students!

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, October 9

Morning

Prayer Before Class

Johnny Bayless

Announcements

Jason Bayless

Song Leader

Caleb Baker

Lord's Supper:

Preside

Jared Brown

Assist

Jeffrey Ferrell

Shane Staten

Opening Prayer

Payton Jackson

Sermon

Billy Bland

Closing Prayer

Clifton Angel

Jerry Davis

Evening

Song Leader

Caleb Baker

Opening Prayer

Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

Sermon

Clifton Angel

Lord's Supper

Jeffrey Ferrell

Payton Jackson

Closing Prayer

Jim Jackson

Wednesday, October 12

Song Leader

Caleb Baker

Prayer

Jeffrey Ferrell

Invitation

Clifton Angel

Prayer

Jason Bayless