

BIBLE MONITOR

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JANUARY, 2018

NO. 1

"For the faith once delivered unto the saints"

OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and Scriptural in practice.	OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all the world and preach the gospel.
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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

JESUS, I MY CROSS HAVE TAKEN

Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou, from hence, my all shalt be;
Perish ev'ry fond ambition, All I've sought, and hoped and known,
Yet how rich is my condition, God and heav'n are still my own!

Let the world despise and leave me, They have left my Savior, too:
Human hearts and looks deceive me; Thou art not, like them, untrue;
And while thou shalt smile upon me, God of wisdom, love and might,
Foes may hate and friends may shun me, Show thy face and all is bright

Go then, earthly fame and treasure! Come, disaster, scorn and pain!
In thy service pain is pleasure; With thy favor loss is gain.
I have called thee, Abba, Father; I have stayed my heart on thee;
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather, All must work for good to me.

Man may trouble and distress me, 'Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me, Heav'n will bring me sweeter rest.
O 'tis not in grief to harm me, While thy love is left to me;
O 'twere not in joy to charm me, Were that joy unmixed with thee.

— H. F. Lyte

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

We consider the beginning of the New Year as an opportunity for change and advancement. As the old year ends and the new one begins we consider how we might be able to change the direction of our lives. Whether those changes concern the physical, social, or spiritual areas of our lives, we are willing to initiate the necessary changes. If we are successful in making the needed changes we will consider the effort expended to be worthwhile.

When we consider making these changes, we may decide that we should employ some new year's resolutions as a help in affecting a change. These resolutions are basically promises that we make to

ourselves stating that we will pursue new behaviors that will affect certain areas of our lives. If our resolutions turn out to be just words, whether written or spoken, it is unlikely that we will experience the changes that we wish for. Deeper commitment and planning are needed to be effective.

Detailed, accountable plans will be needed to accomplish our desired goals. Without a determination to follow that plan there will be no change. Sometimes resolutions are implemented for a few days or weeks, and then become forgotten amongst the usual patterns of life. It usually seems easier to abandon the plan than to make the effort necessary to make the plan succeed. Our

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minds and our bodies do not like to be inconvenienced by the effort needed to accomplish the desired plan.

Our bodies, minds, and personalities are a lot like an antique steam locomotive. We must “get up steam” and at first move very slowly. If the locomotive begins to inch forward slowly, it eventually will be able to go as fast as it is designed to run over great distances and over difficult obstacles, even with a great number of heavily loaded cars connected to it. Every journey in life begins with the first step, so every change we hope to engineer begins with a plan and an uncomfortable effort, which when consistently applied will bring the needed change.

We know that accomplishing physical, social and economic changes can be very difficult. Spiritual changes may be even harder to make than any other changes. Not only do we not desire change, but there is also the active opposition of the enemy of our souls. He prefers that we would not make any needed spiritual changes. He wants us to remain at rest spiritually so we do not escape his clutches. He prefers that

we make physical, social, or economic changes, but not changes that would dissolve our partnership with him. He wants us to be asleep spiritually rather than be active in improving our relationship with God. He will continue to lull with assurances that we are doing well enough and we should not become interested in spiritual change.

Being imperfect human beings, we have many failings. While these faults may not be sins themselves, they do limit our service to the God we should glorify in all ways possible. The general public may be limited in their ability to effect those needed changes, as Christians we have the power of the Holy Spirit available to lead us in our efforts to control and eliminate the faults that plague us.

Resolutions may be the only way the unsaved can deal with their failings. Generally these resolutions end up being ineffective because they are based on each person's human resources. Human, worldly resources are unable to meet spiritual needs and challenges. What is based on human effort and talent will ultimately fail.

The Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity is God.

Having the the power of God, He is able to move through our weaknesses to overcome our human failings that affect our relationship with God and our service toward Him. Our weaknesses become His workshop as we allow Him to lead us through the direction of the inspired Word of God.

This new year we need more than human resolutions to better our lives and our service to Him. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to move within us. It is worthwhile for us to continually

examine ourselves to ascertain how we stand according to God's will. Once we have found where there is need to improve, we need to allow His Spirit to work within our hearts, minds, and bodies to produce the fruit He desires.

Honestly, at the beginning of this year, do you realize you have some faults that need to be corrected? Let that change be the work of the Holy Spirit, not just a human resolution.

M. C. Cook

MUSINGS OF A YOUNG MAN

Accountability

If I were to choose a word that might make people uncomfortable, ACCOUNTABILITY just might be a word to use. Why does *accountability* cause people to squirm? What does *accountability* in the Christian's life imply (if anything)? Should *accountability* be a part of the Christian lifestyle? And if *accountability* is to be a part of the Christian walk, what does it look like?

Recently I found a use of accountability that I would preferably not deal with – balancing my checkbook. The

numbers simply would not add up correctly, and in my frustration I simply wanted to give up on continued attempts to reconcile my checkbook with the bank statement. Merely ignoring the situation and moving on with my usual life and financial transactions would have been the easy solution. Hoping to always have enough funds in the account to get me by, would be one way of addressing the dilemma. Perhaps making transactions on that account would even be successful for a while! But using my account in that manner

would cause me to be more prone to making mistakes, causing over-drafts to occur, and other financially unstable situations to develop. My once stable financial understanding could rapidly deteriorate to the point where I would find myself in a deep financial bind – simply because I did not devote the time or the effort to gain an accurate accounting of my financial standing. However, if I provide regular and consistent accountability in keeping my checkbook register up to date, I can quickly assess my financial standing, and determine how to best proceed in addressing my expenditures and income.

According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, accountability is "The state of being liable to answer for one's conduct; liability to give account, and to receive reward or punishment for actions." Perhaps this definition provides us a reason that the word *accountability* causes people to become uncomfortable – accountability requires us to take responsibility for our own actions, regardless if we like those actions or not. My checkbook register asks me to review and take responsibility for the expenditures and

income reflected on the bank statement. Often I do not like what my checkbook register or bank statement says about my cash flow, but without proper accountability of my account, I would be a miserable financial failure. In order to function well financially then, I need to be able to be "liable to give account, and to receive reward or punishment for my (checking account) actions."

If our financial status is so important to keep account of, I have to wonder how much more important our spiritual status should be to keep track of? I will be the first to admit that my distaste for spiritual accountability is usually even greater than my dislike of financial accountability. I would rather not deal with all of the times that pride, selfishness, bitterness, and the myriad other sins that regularly attempt to creep into my life. It seems like it would be easier to just ignore the misalignments in my spiritual "checkbook" and walk blindly on my way, trusting that I have enough goodness, righteousness, and love to overcome those deductions from my account. It soon becomes evident however that

spiritual bankruptcy is wrapping its tenacious black tentacles around my life. Then what?

As Christians we know Christ has covered our shortfalls, and the only way to escape spiritual bankruptcy is to rest in the saving grace and power of All-Mighty God through the gift of salvation and redemption found in His Son, Jesus Christ. Only Christ can wipe clean the negative expenditures of my spiritual checkbook, and replace them with the bountiful fruits of His peace, love and joy. Accountability with God asks us to confess our shortcomings moment by moment, and to replace those times of evil with His righteousness. The only way to maintain this level of accountability with God is to spend time with Him – prayer, Bible reading, Bible meditation, worship in song and praise, among other ways. How do we make time with God a priority in our lives? One avenue God has used in my life – yes, that word again – accountability with those around me. My spiritual brothers and sisters have encouraged me through Bible Study groups, one-on-one conversations, times of corporate prayers, and encouragement when the path seems desolate and difficult.

In its most basic form, accountability is uncomfortable to us because it reveals who we really are as human beings: sinful creatures in need of a Savior. Yet, there are positives to accountability. By regularly updating my financial checkbook, I have the freedom to confidently write checks and make deposits and expenditures as needed to maintain an adequate account balance. In this way I can efficiently determine the best financial choices to make based on an accurate understanding of my bank account.

Likewise, by maintaining close accountability with God and my Christian brothers and sisters, I can evaluate how to become more like my Lord. That accountability may be an initial struggle, but by protecting our relationships with God and others, I am learning that I can experience the freedom and joy of having a spiritual life filled to overflowing with His love, peace, and hope. In my personal experiences, a life held accountable allows for discrepancies and errors to be corrected quickly, and the goodness of the Lord to shine forth in our individual lives. Accountability will look

different in each of our lives, but may our aim always be to rely on God and His infinite righteousness as we seek to be shaped into His image. What better way to share the satisfaction and contentment found in Jesus Christ, than to

share the joy of His sacrifice with others and help them “balance” their lives!

Humbly submitted,

Brother Will Clark

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DEAR DIARY, YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS

I am not much for diaries and reading them except if it is an important person I am interested in or maybe they were part of some important event in history. When I look at this passage in Luke, I am sure I would love to have read the diary of one of the disciples that was there.

Nothing is more important than listening to someone trying to explain something that he really does not know that much about. The disciples, although they were followers of Jesus, did not understand much of what He had to do and what He was saying. Only with the coming of the Holy Spirit were they able to truly understand the work that Jesus did.

If I am reading a diary, the most important thing I want to know is, is this true.

Many people write things and exaggerate them or write it

out of context. I want to know if what a person is writing about is really true.

Many things have happened in this world of ours because someone did not really tell the truth. Numerous people were swindled out of money because they really were not told all the truth.

Reading through a diary from one of the disciples at this time, I would love to have seen how they explained and described what Jesus was doing with this demon-possessed man. (Luke 8:26-39) What kind of truth did they see in this situation?

Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth impacts the whole person. How these disciples were impacted by truth as they experienced it, even though they did not understand it, is quite the entry to be read in someone's diary.

They have proven that if you get several people together who have witnessed the same event and separate them they will all come up with different accounts. Everything that they saw, they saw but usually each person saw what they saw from a different perspective. They were not telling a lie they were only telling the truth, as they could comprehend it from their perspective.

There is also the danger in reading someone's diary that they may be explaining one event and you are understanding it from a different perspective and not really getting what they are talking about. It is easy to read something that someone wrote and not understand what they are trying to explain.

We sometimes have emotional trauma that helps us to see a situation from a completely different perspective. What we write may make sense to us but it does not make sense to someone who is reading it from a different perspective.

We live in an imperfect world and this imperfect world is full of imperfect people, especially the one in the mirror. And sometimes when we are trying to do something or explain something

we leave out important aspects we did not consider at the time. Or sometimes, people leave out a certain fact because they do not think it is important. Or they assume that people do not understand what they are talking about.

What these disciples were witnessing as Jesus encounters this demon-possessed man is something beyond our comprehension. There are demon-possessed people today, I am quite sure. But I am quite sure that these disciples as they watched Jesus interact with this demon-possessed person were quite baffled by what was happening. The change they saw in this demon-possessed person had no logical, reasonable explanation to it. What Jesus did, He did outside the context of their rational thinking.

When we come to understand that God has no limit to what He can do we begin to trust Him in every aspect of our life. I do not have to explain how God did something just as those disciples could not explain how Jesus delivered that demon-possessed person. I do not have to explain it or try to explain it away if I am confident in the person doing the explaining.

If I have confidence in Christ, He can do whatever He wants to do and even though I do not understand it, I will accept it and praise God for it.

It would have been interesting to gather around a campfire with those disciples that night after Jesus dealt with that demon-possessed man. What was the conversation like? What were some of the questions that were going through their minds? How did they really explain it from their perspective?

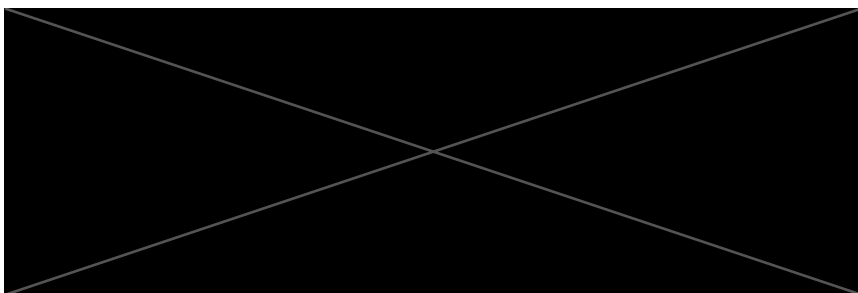
Just when you think you have it all figured out, God does something that is beyond our ability to rationalize. I think that is what happened with these disciples and the demon possessed man. They were getting comfortable with Jesus and His teaching and in His performance of miracles but this took them beyond their ability to really comprehend.

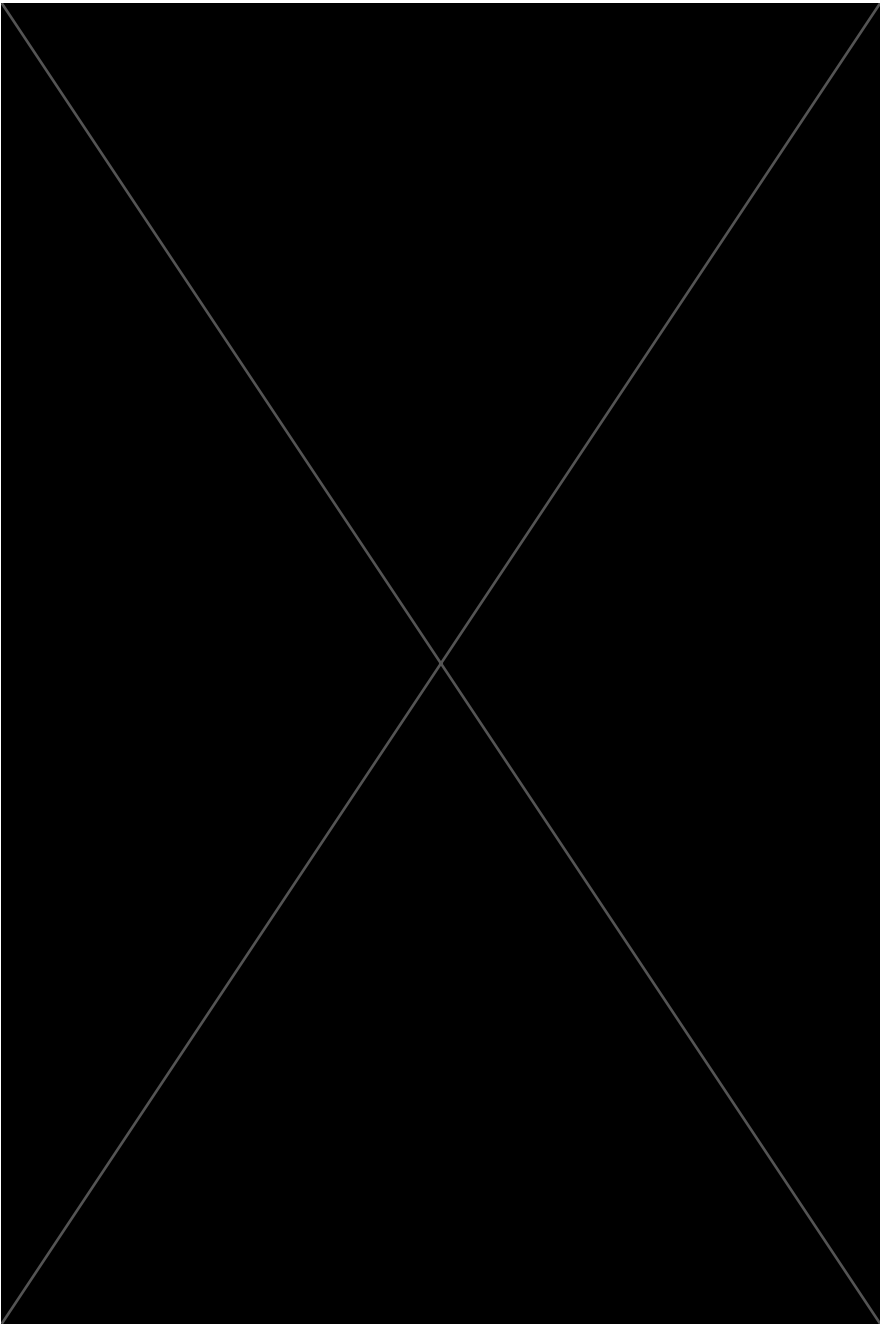
God knows how to do whatever needs to be done and He never asks our permission to do it. Another thing, God never tries to explain Himself after He has done something.

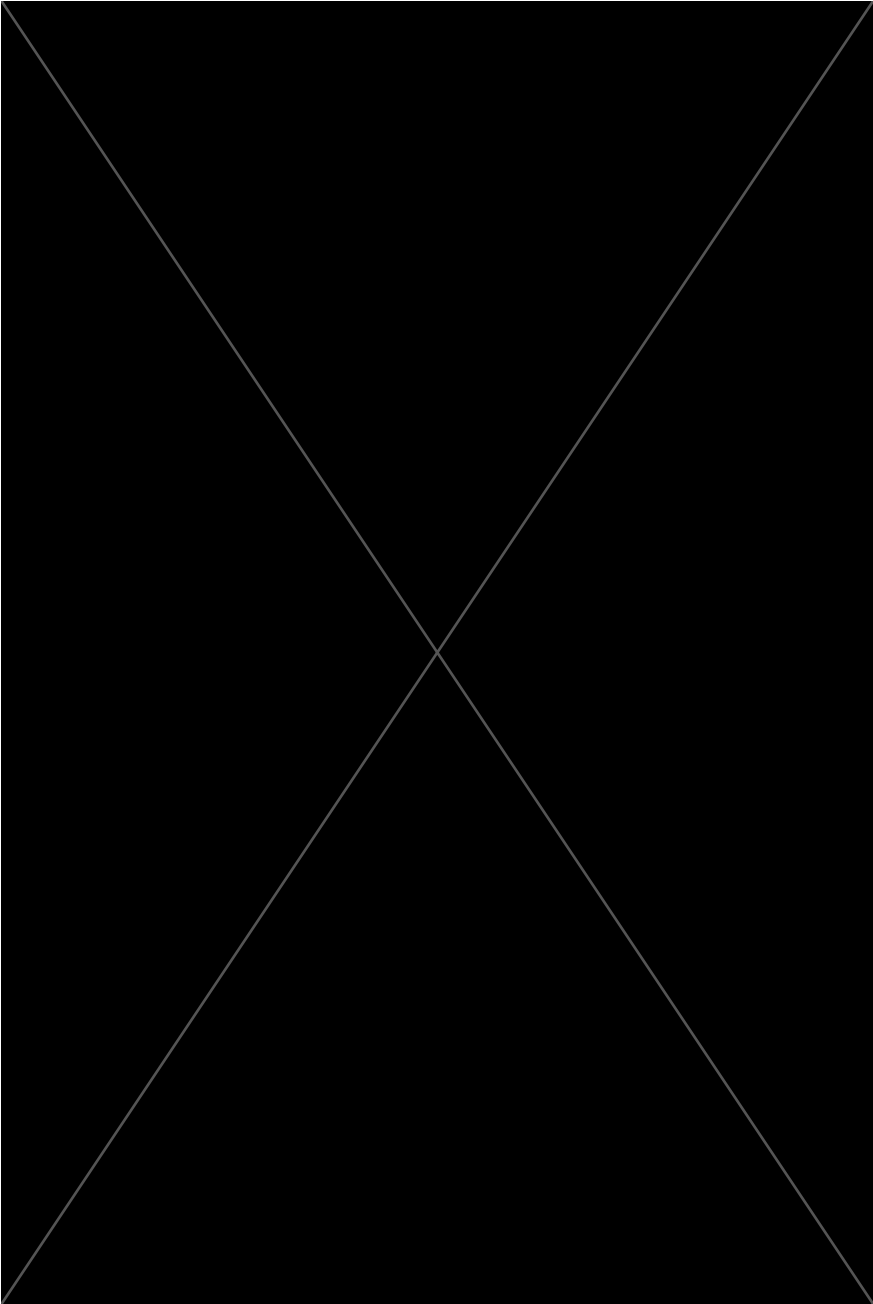
My faith in God means that I accept God for what He is, I accept what He does, and I believe that God is really in control of my life. I may not be able to explain everything but I trust Him.

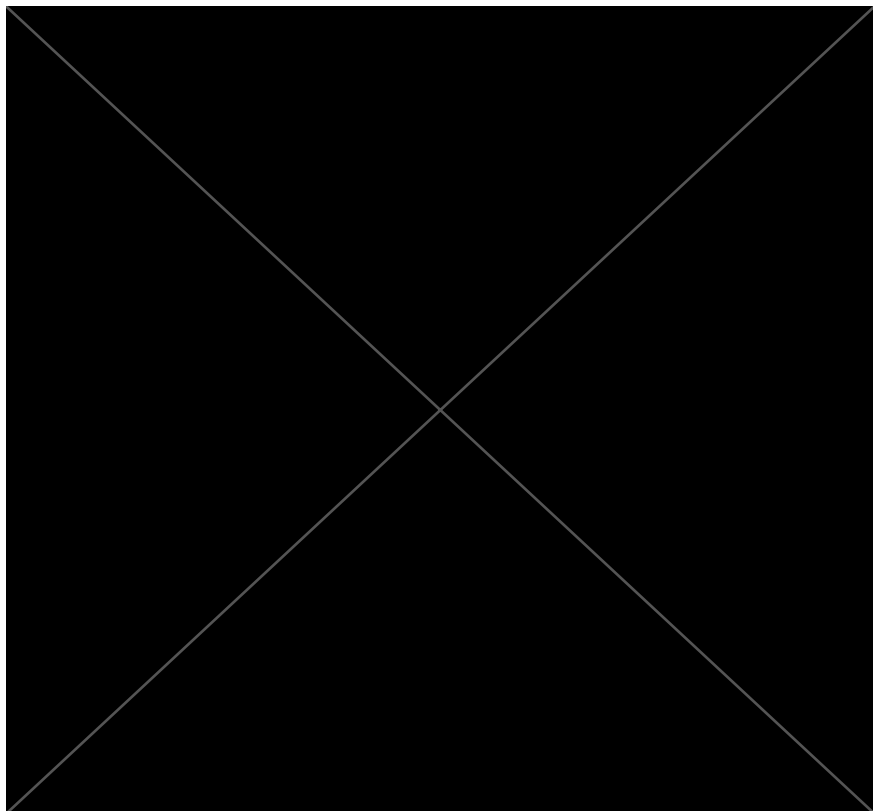
If I had to explain everything that God does or ever has done, I will never ever make it. My faith in God rests in the fact that I trust Him to the extent that He does not have to ask my permission about anything nor does He have to explain what He is doing. I rest firmly in the confidence that I have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

James L. Snyder
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REACHING INTO THE FISH'S MOUTH

Matthew 17:27, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

The Queen of England, along with the princes and princesses, pay no taxes to the

government. God never told Jesus that He had to pay taxes to an earthly government. After all, the children of the King are free. But Jesus was also a man and His salvation was for mankind so He became a citizen of the earthly by paying taxes to mankind. "Lest we cause them to stumble." Just as Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to give the gospel to

Caesar, so Jesus paid taxes to show Himself a citizen so that the gospel would not be hid to them. Jesus ended up giving His life, which was His ultimate purpose, and so did Paul.

Yet it all began with a simple miracle. It was "for me and thee." What He did was not just for Himself, but for us also. Herein is the melding of servant and Lord. In the person of Christ, we see Love going farther than duty. In this case, God will always provide.

We are just passing through this world. May we continue to be pilgrims and strangers, as Abraham was. But we must pay our way, as Jesus did, even though it is only temporary.

To get involved in government would indicate that the world interests us as much, if not more, than the people in it. To save souls is to bring each one individually to Christ. They then become pilgrims as we are. Acts 4:32 and 33 says, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." The Grace of God is upon them that follow Jesus.

"Great is thy faithfulness" O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness,
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!"

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided-
"Great is thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me.

—T. O. (#48 Chisholm Hymns To Be Remembered)

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

HAPPINESS IS LIVING FOR GOD

Rudy Cover
Matthew 5:1-12

Are you happy? If you are a Christian you should be. Jesus has promised you so many things. Sometime, if you are faithful, Jesus will take you to that most beautiful place, where nobody will ever die, or get sick, or feel bad ever.

Many people came to hear the wonderful words of Jesus. One time when Jesus saw the multitude of people He went up into a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him and Jesus taught them. I think the multitude heard Him too. What Jesus said to them is called the "Sermon on the Mount." The first part of this sermon is called, "The Beatitudes" which means, "declarations of happiness."

Jesus began by saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Blessed, means "happy." Even though we are depressed and do not have much material wealth, Jesus says we can be happy. This doesn't seem possible, does it? If we have Jesus in our hearts, that is the greatest thing and we can rejoice down deep in our souls, even when we feel bad.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Have you lost a loved one – a brother, a sister, a mother or a father? This causes us to mourn and feel bad. Jesus was talking to His disciples – those who trusted Him. Jesus says that if we mourn we will be happy because we shall be comforted. Jesus loves you so much He can change your sorrow into joy.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." A meek person is gentle and

patient – one that would not seek his own way if it would be harmful to another. I don't think the meek will inherit much of this earth where we live now. Jesus says there will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Surely this is something to be happy about.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." A Christian should always want to be righteous – to be like Jesus. Jesus was always good. He never did anything wrong. If we want to be like Jesus, we will be happy. Jesus says so.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Are you a kind, forgiving and helpful person to those around you? Jesus wants you to be and He will bless you for it.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Keep thyself pure." That means to do what is right and not sin. To be pure in heart means that we desire to always do what is right. Jesus says, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." We would want to be the kind of a person that Jesus wants us to be. That should be our greatest desire.

That will make you happy.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." How wonderful it would be if everyone was a peacemaker! Then there would be no trouble, or wars, or selfishness, or greed, or hate, or jealousy. Only when you know Jesus can you be a peacemaker. Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

"Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Have you ever been teased or made fun of because you are a Christian? Some people have had severe persecution – many died for their faith. Jesus says if you are treated badly because you are righteous – because you are trying to be like Jesus – you will be happy!

Do you think it is worthwhile to be a Christian? It most certainly is. It is the most rewarding way to live there is. Jesus wants you to be happy. Just to think about Heaven – a place to live where we will never die and can be with Jesus, should make you happy. Happiness is living for God.

Selected from the
June 1, 1979
issue of the Bible Monitor

WHAT I LIVE FOR

Maxine E. Surbey

I live for those who love me,
When hearts are kind and true;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit, too.
For all human ties that bind me,
For the bright hopes left behind me;
And the good that I can do.

I live to learn the story,
Who suffered for my sake,
To emulate their glory,
And follow in their wake.
Bards, patriots, martyrs, sages,
The noble of all ages,
Whose deeds crown history pages,
And time great volume make.

I live to hail that season,
By gifted minds foretold,
When man shall live by reason
And not alone by gold.
When man to man united,
And every wrong thing righted;
The whole world shall be lighted,
As Eden was of old.

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too;
For the cause that needs assistance
For the wrong that needs resistance
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do.

— Selected by Shirley Frick

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

Elta K. Blythe

Generation after generation has been taught this simple commandment. How difficult humanity makes its practice. It is the subject most often taught during a lifetime, it is the least, most easily acquired emotion known to man; yet how we reject it, how we fight against it, how we subdue the natural love innate in us, how we misconstrue the Christian meaning of Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself!

In Matt. 22:35-40 Jesus told the lawyer the first and great commandment was, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

That commandment of love is the easiest; yet we all make it the hardest and last to obey. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" seems to be the first importance to us. Perhaps it is because it involves our personal lives. We have a sense of possession of our bodies of flesh and are jealous of intrusion of what we

deem our own in the marriage state and tend to neglect God's spiritual love. If we guarded God's spiritual gift of love as fiercely as we do our own bodies, our personal loves would never be in jeopardy.

What happens to the marriage of a young couple who so sacredly and solemnly give themselves to each other and shortly find themselves in hopeless discord? The common saying is, "Love is blind." I say infatuation is blind and only love is all seeing and endures under all stress and strain. Love lasts through revelation of one's faults, infatuation dies. We expect our mates to be perfect after marriage, as they appeared before marriage and are disappointed and disillusioned when we find they are not. So we scold and fuss, unconsciously trying to make them as they ought to be, rather than accept them as they are.

We are all too inflexible. We think our loved ones should adjust to us and our way of thinking. That doesn't work as we all well know. Our pride makes us unwilling to bend so

we go about, each blaming the other for our unhappiness.

I remember a story from early school years that I liked very much. The sun and the wind were watching a man, walking along a lane, who was wearing a heavy coat. They resolved to see which could make the man remove his coat, force or gentleness. The wind sure that he could do it, blew and blew. The harder he blew the tighter the man drew his coat to him. The sun said, "Let me try." He shone warmly and gently. The man relaxed and unbuttoned his coat. The sun kept shining warmer and warmer till the man removed his coat and said, "How pleasant the day had become." The moral of the story was that kind gentle treatment brings happy results, while force and unkindness merely builds higher walls of defiance.

I Cor. 13:13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity." The dictionary says charity is Christian love for our fellowmen. We love our fellowman, but do we like him? It is popular these days to go abroad to foreign countries to learn their customs and languages in

order to understand and live peaceably with them. That is a fine ideal, but until we learn to understand and live peaceably with husband, wife, parents, brothers and sisters we will not gain peace in foreign lands. Humans are at once cruel and tender to one another. How can such a thing be? We are cruel when we are indifferent to the pain and distress we cause others. We are tender when we are sympathetic and understanding of another's plight. Our best friends and worst enemies are our own thoughts. If we think noble thoughts we will have a better attitude toward life and our physical health will be improved. It is a proven fact that those who practice the happiness habit are healthier than those who do not. Proverbs 17:22 says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

Our attitudes are more important than facts. The fact is: humans are fallible. The attitude is the way we choose to live, whether with acceptance of God's creation of humanity or try to reform others to suit our own ideas, which brings us no end of troubles because we all have different ideas of reform.

Our attitudes toward loved ones are strangers in many times less than polite. We seem to think it "sissy" to show love for those with whom we are in daily contact, yet when some stranger appears, of whom we know nothing, we have only the best regard and gentleness for him.

Why are we so afraid to show our love for those nearest us and so quick to criticize and show our ugliest behavior? It is not easier to be quick with the unkind word we have merely cultivated it more than kindness. Compare love and its influence with the flower garden. Sharp impatient words are weeds. Smiles are fragrant flowers. We can readily see the need for more smiles.

Love covers a multitude of sins. But strange beings that we are, we want others to cover our sins with their love for us. We want happiness but we expect it to be given us rather than be made by us. We expect everyone to like us, though it has never been known to work until we have made an effort to like someone else first. Frowning and being unpleasant is a habit. We all want attention and are reluctant to give any. If we were not so stingy in giving attention

we would receive more. It is difficult to receive spiritual love without first giving spiritual love.

I heard it said that human nature is treacherous. Why? Did not God create all of us and our personalities? God says, Become as a little child to enter Heaven. What kind of state or situation is that? The first thing a baby learns after it becomes aware of others is to smile. We know love of children is tender and sweet. If we are told to become as a little child in order to enter Heaven then surely we must relax our stiff attitude toward others.

Matt. 5:22, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca shall be in danger of the council: But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Truly the love of one's neighbor is of great importance to impart such a grave warning as this.

I believe the real meaning of Christianity is the two commandments Love the Lord Thy God and Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself. What a great world this would be if we practiced the art of liking everyone. Nothing

costs less and is of more value than a charitable feeling toward others.

I John 4:20-21, "If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him that he who loveth

God love his brother also." Love is God's greatest gift to mankind.

My prayer for the New Year is that we ask God's help in understanding the power of this wonderful gift.

Selected from the
January 15, 1958
issue of the Bible Monitor

DEBTORS

Roscoe Reed

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Rom. 1:14. These words were written by the apostle Paul, in his introductory chapter to the Roman brethren. In this chapter we have the apostle expressing several reasons, why he wished to visit the brethren at Rome.

It is a fact that Paul was filled with joy, that the faith of the Roman brethren was spoken about "throughout the whole world" and it gave him a great deal of satisfaction. No doubt that the brethren at Rome had proved to be faithful to their calling and he could thank God for them, V. 8, and remember them continually in his prayers.

How true, I believe that is with us in our own experience, when we can hear of the faithfulness of the Brethren and Sisters in some congregation, where "brotherly love" is shown by individuals; and when we visit these congregations and see the spirit of the Christ flowing from breast to breast. It truly is an uplifting experience that will always linger with us.

Of the several reasons why he wished to visit Rome, the outstanding reason was that he was "debtor" to them and to the world of mankind. We usually think of the word debtor in the commercial sense. We think of it in terms of owing someone something for value received. If I buy something from you I

am indebted to you. If I employ someone to work for me or call a physician or an Attorney to do professional service for me, I am indebted to them. But the apostle did not use the word to say, he owed anyone money as a debt. He had bought nothing to make himself a debtor in any way. He owed them nothing for any service of kindness which they had rendered to him, for he had supported himself by making tents. He was often mistreated and abused during his ministry and was to be again in his experience at Rome, where he was imprisoned and finally died a martyr's death. So in a commercial sense he was not indebted to anyone.

But the apostle felt a sense of obligation to the world and for that reason he became the greatest missionary of all time. The Lord had laid upon him a great responsibility and that responsibility was, to deliver or preach the gospel to the world who knew not God. We hear him saying, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." I Cor. 9:16. This charge is given, we believe to every "called" minister of the

gospel for many false teachers have come that teach not the true gospel of Christ.

The apostle felt that he was debtor, first, because of his experience at the time of his conversion. Before his conversion Paul had been a self-righteous Pharisee. He had persecuted the church and witnessed the death of many Christian martyrs. He boasted of his superiority and his own personal achievements and was so narrow-minded, that he could not see beyond his own prejudices. But one day on his way to Damascus, something happened to Saul of Tarsus that made a complete change in his life. He became a new man, another kind of man. Old things passed away, all things became new. Old prejudices, self-righteousness, boasting of his attainments and superiority, and his pride: all vanished. His mind, his heart, and his eyes, all were opened to the purpose of God, for the salvation of humanity, through a crucified Saviour. Then we hear him say, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." This changed the whole purpose and attitude in his life. He had become a "Christian".

Every Christian should have this same experience and I truly

believe if a man or woman is a “born again” Christian he will have this experience and it will show in his life: old things will pass away and all things will become new. I believe that they will be transformed by the renewing of their minds. No one ever returns from Calvary out of debt. Paul had been to Calvary, thus we hear him say, “I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians”. His vision of God included a realization of his responsibility to share with his fellowmen. Not only did he feel his own responsibility, but he believed that every Christian was equally bound.

Paul felt his sense of obligation because of the commission from Christ to preach the gospel. “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,

and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Acts 26:16-18. This same obligation rests upon all Christians. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Matt. 16:15. He has commissioned us to carry on the work for which He suffered and died. We should be “ambassadors for Christ” representing Christ’s interests, persuading men and women to be reconciled unto God.

The apostle Paul faithfully performed his duty saying, “Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” Acts 26:19. The Lord told Ananias that Paul was a “chosen vessel” to bear His name to the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, for this reason he felt he was debtor to all, regardless of race, color or creed. He said, “The love of Christ constraineth us.” II Cor. 5:14. He felt he was debtor to kings and princes, to philosophers and poets, to the Barbarians and the abundantly blessed Jews, to the enslaved Onesimus and free men like Philemon, to the learned and cultured, to the ignorant and underprivileged and to the prisoners on the storm-tossed

ship he became all things to all men, that he might win some to Christ.

We are all "debtors." Paul's life should be a challenge to every one of us. We live in a land of religious liberty. We owe so much to our fore-fathers, for their struggle to bring the true Gospel to America. To those of our church, some of which suffered death because of their Christian faith. To those that have given their lives in service of the cause of Christ. To the martyrs who suffered such cruel deaths, during the reformation.

Prosperity many times causes us to neglect our

obligations. Our Nation is called a Christian nation. We have been prosperous beyond measure. It has been the case, when nations prosper and their power increases that their prayerfulness decreases. We trust in our own strength and forget we are debtors and owe all unto God. The severest testing time is not in times of depression, but in the time of prosperity. How well are we meeting our obligations today?

Selected from the
January 15, 1958
issue of the Bible Monitor

WHERE ARE WE?

L. W. Beery

As we begin our labors in this New Year it is well that we get our bearings in order that we can proceed with our work in an intelligent manner. Unless we do this, much of our time may be wasted and the efforts which we put forth be in vain and at the close of the year we would look back with regret and be disappointed in not having attained desired ends or results. Each individual should take time

for this important investigation. As a church organization it is important that we ascertain the position we occupy in this world, the direction in which we are going and the progress that is being made, from time to time. With all the confusion that exists, it would be wise for us as a nation to pause for a time and make some calm and deliberate calculations along this line in order that we might

be able to avoid some of the dark storm clouds that appear so ominous on the horizon at the beginning of this year. Surely much sorrow and trouble could be avoided if the human family the world over would just stop and in the light of Divine Truth discover their plight and act intelligently. It is apparent that people do not realize the grave danger in which we are living in these perilous days. The great problem is, to get folks to see themselves as God sees them.

Those who have control of the ships that cross the great oceans have a means of determining at all times their position on the body of water over which they are traveling. With the help of certain instruments they can make calculations that reveal to them this important matter. Thus they can tell what progress they are making and if they are keeping on the proper course that will land them safely at the desired destination. Without this help, traveling over the great ocean depths would indeed be a hazardous undertaking. These ships encounter many storms that blow them far from their course but with the use of their instruments they can again

find the prescribed way and thus make their journeys with a minimum of danger. Foolish indeed would be one in charge of a ship who did not make frequent use of his instruments and thus keep within the bounds of safety. He would be inviting certain disaster. It is said that this was the cause of the great Titanic disaster some years ago which carried so many to a watery grave unprepared to meet their God.

We are all traveling over the great sea of life. It is our hope someday to enter the harbor of safety on the other shore. On this sea there are great storms, many hidden reefs, swift channels, treacherous undercurrents and shallow waters which make traveling exceedingly dangerous. However, there is a channel of safety across this sea and an all wise Creator has made it possible for every faithful traveler to ascertain his position at all times and thus make his journey safely in spite of all the dangers. This safe channel has been charted by Jesus the Christ and instruments have been provided for the use of all who wish to travel in safety. The "Holy Scriptures" and the "Holy Spirit" are the instruments which

have been provided for our use and the safe route is the "Way of Holiness." "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His holy Spirit." (1 Thess. 4:7-8) These instruments are accurate and naturally must be used continually if we would keep in the safe channel.

There is no other safe passage over this troubled

sea. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) His instruction to us is, "follow thou Me," and we can travel His way with safety, "for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5)

Selected from the
January 15, 1938
issue of the Bible Monitor

IS THE NEW YEAR HAPPY?

Last night the old year died. The rest were all asleep,
Yet slumber wooed me not; I saw the white moon peep
With solemn face within my chamber, and the wail
And sob of winds rehearsed the old impressive tale.

A reaping, choking moan about the gables swept,
And gloom and tears around the old year's bedside crept;
A dying look stole o'er the ripe old veteran's face,
He shivered once, and then – his spirit left the place.

Ah, me! Old year, thy life was charged with many a joy
And sorrow, too; for mortal gladness with alloy
Is ever mixed; yet has thy sojourn not been vain
If we have learned a lesson in the school of pain.

"A Happy New Year!" With the morning's crispy dawn
The rooms were swept and ordered, and the grave-clothes gone;-
Around a little crib we pressed a happy while,
To catch the primal light of baby New Year's smile.

And is it happy? Does it bring us all delight?
Surely, the morning's fresh, the broad old sun is bright;
The only cloud I saw was at the break of day,
But ere the streets woke up, I saw it melt away.

Yet was it not suggestive? Other New Year's days
Have beamed as rosy, and diffused as happy rays,
But shadows followed after; love, grief, hope and fear,
Close-ranked, filed by, in the procession of the year.

But can we not be happy always? 'Tis to me
A sweet and constant song, untuned to minor key,
To do my loving, faithful utmost; for my guide,
A gracious sky gives pledge that God is satisfied.

— Adaline Hohf Beery

SIXTH BRETHERN WORLD ASSEMBLY SET FOR AUGUST IN INDIANA

Plans are now being finalized for the Sixth Brethren World Assembly, to be held August 9-12, 2018, in Winona Lake, Indiana. This gathering happens every five years for Brethren groups descended from Alexander Mack in 1708 and it is sponsored by Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc.

“Brethren Intersections: History, Identity, Crosscurrents” is the working theme for the four-day assembly, which will be hosted by the Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church in Winona Lake, Indiana. The event is open to all, and will feature lectures, panel discussions, historical tours, worship services, and much more.

The first day of the Assembly will be Thursday, August 9, with several plenary sessions focusing on historical and religious intersections for the Brethren and it will conclude with a worship service and ice cream social. The second day, Friday, August 10, will include sessions that focus on the Brethren-

evangelical relationship in the eras of Charles G. Finney, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham. Afternoon panels and sessions will include a bus tour of sites in and around historic Winona Lake, once home of the world's largest Bible conference, and a central conference point for Brethren groups since the 1880's.

The third day Saturday, August 11, will focus on themes of social justice, relationship with the military, gender questions, and will include a bus tour of historic Brethren sites at Arnold's Grove in Milford, Indiana and Camp Alexander Mack on Lake Waubee. On Sunday attendees are encouraged to worship with local Brethren congregations not of their own groups.

A modest registration fee will include meals, admittance to all sessions, ice cream socials, a follow-up book containing all proceedings, and more. Attendees will be responsible for finding their own lodging in the Warsaw/Winona Lake area. Complete registration information will be available shortly after the first of the year. Those interested in attending are encouraged now to save the dates of August 9-12, 2018.

Brethren Encyclopedia publishes encyclopedias and monographs of Brethren interest. The group is comprised of representatives of the seven groups descended from Alexander Mack, which include Church of the Brethren, The Brethren Church, Dunkard Brethren Church, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International, and two groups from the Old Order German Baptist Brethren heritage. For more information log onto: www.brethrenencyclopedia.org.

MARRIAGE

Brock – Cordrey

On October 28, 2017, Sister Madeline Brock, daughter of Brother Ken and Sister Melissa Brock of West Unity, Ohio, was united in marriage with Brother Mark Cordrey, son of Brother Mark and Sister Beth Cordrey, of Modesto, California. The marriage site was the Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio. The couple's address is 3825 Missionwood Court, Ceres, CA 95307.

NEWS ITEMS

PINE GROVE, PENNSYLVANIA

Lord willing, the Pine Grove Congregation is planning for Love-feast, Sunday, January 28, 2018. Morning service will be at 9:30 and Communion at 2:00 P.M.

Remember us in prayer and come spend the day with us.

Sister Maxine Wilkerson, Cor.

THANK YOU

Thank you and God bless my brothers and sisters as you remembered us in prayer and with correspondence of encouragement during our year of trial.

From the beginning: our last three weeks in Kenya, through four hospital occasions your faithfulness has inspired us. The surgeon released me in October (again) declaring the last surgery successful. Prognosis for recovery is up to a year. We trust our Creator and Sustainer to accomplish His will in all of us. Again we appreciate your prayers in our behalf.

Also the support of family, extended family, and church family in keeping the business work going during this time. Again, Thank you, God reward you according to His riches in glory.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Ron Marks and family

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Editor and his wife, Marilyn, appreciate the various greetings we have received throughout this holiday season. We are blessed by your remembrance of us not only during this season but throughout the year.

May your lives be blessed and enriched by the celebration of these holidays as we enter a new year.

Brother Milton and Sister Marilyn Cook

THANK YOU

The Editor takes this opportunity to thank all the readers of the Bible Monitor for their subscriptions, articles, selections, and

notices. We are especially thankful for the prayers offered in our behalf as we attempt to convey the message of the Word of God through the Bible Monitor. We are thankful for the people who print and distribute the Bible Monitor. They are very competent in their service to the Editor and the Publication Board. It has been a joy to work with Haines Printing the past twenty years.

Brother Milton Cook

BOOK AVAILABILITY

“The Wisdom of God” a book by A. W. Tozer, compiled and edited by James L. Snyder, is available from Bethany House publishers. (Bakerpublishinggroup.com/BethanyHouse) This is one of a series of Tozer books that are available from them. The books have been compiled from his sermons and papers, so they are new material.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY 2018

Feb. 4 – Beware of Hardened Hearts – Heb. 3:7-19

1. How can we keep from hardening our hearts?

2. Why is it so hard to trust God?

Feb. 11 – Labor to Enter God’s Rest – Heb. 4:1-9

1. What “rest” did Israel not enter?

2. Why didn't they enter "rest"?

3. Who will enter "rest"?

Feb. 18 – The Word of God is Alive – Heb. 4:10-16

1. In what sense is God's word like a sword?

2. What power does it have?

3. How can we know that Jesus can sympathize with us?

Feb. 25 – The Priesthood of Jesus Christ – Heb. 5:1-14

1. What characteristics does one need to be a high priest according to verse 2?

2. For whom does He offer sacrifice?

3. Why must He offer for Himself too?

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