

The VINE & BRANCHES

The Newsletter of WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM, inc.

Incorporated September 28, 1999

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Jesus said, "For without Me, ye can do nothing."

The blessedness of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and yours,

Eastertide is upon us, and we are brought into remembrance of the sacrifice that was made on our behalf at Calvary by our Savior Jesus Christ and the new life we have because of Him.

Because I live, ye shall live also. (John 14:19b)

As Rev. Pekel sets forth in his study *The House of God*, it is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ that is the foundation of Christian living. And it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that places Him as the Head of the Church. (These and other truths are laid out in this highly-recommended publication. See our Book Shop page for information on how to obtain a copy of this book for yourself.)

The Weapons of our Warfare seminar was presented in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico in March. Here in Brownsville, it is an everyday experience to leave the comforts of your home and within 30 minutes find yourself in another country where there is an entirely different standard of living. It is a sure cure for complacency.

This class was held over two weeks, taught on week-ends and evenings only. This is not my preferred schedule, but sometimes you have to work with what you are given. Because this class was within driving distance of our house, Nelly and I could do this schedule. Otherwise, it would have been too great a strain on us and our children. Nelly and I would like to thank our friend Monica Fuentes once again for her help in translating this class, the fourth presentation in Spanish in fourteen months.

Fifteen students graduated from this class. They went forth with enthusiasm born of spiritual awakening, tempered with sobriety, ready to do the Lord's bidding. One of my most successful students was a young man without a home, estranged from his family, who had only recently accepted Christ as his Savior. To see him moving forward in the things of God was exciting beyond words.

Already, I am looking forward to my next class in Matamoros.

Well, now it looks like my new book *The Weapons of our Warfare* will be available this month after all. My publisher told me to expect shipment in late April. The retail price of each 432-page book when ordered through Winepress Publishing will be \$14.95 plus \$5.95 shipping and handling (USPS 1st class). When you order a book through Workers Together With Him, we are going to simply ask that you make a reasonable donation to our work effort. I am going to ship books to key people in Europe and Australia to help with distribution there, and to minimize postage expenses. Now that Workers Together With Him can accept credit card payments, this should help reduce money-exchange costs as well.

This year I will be spending Easter in Greece before we begin the class there. Todd will be accompanying me on this trip to his adopted homeland. He has marked out a sightseeing itinerary based on a portion of Paul's second missionary trip that we plan to capture on film with the intent that he can make a multi-media presentation to various churches and Bible-study groups. After the presentation of the class in Greece, I will be going directly to London to teach my seminar there. All in all, it should be an exciting spring for the furtherance of the Gospel. I'd love for you to join us in person, but if you cannot, please join us in prayer.

Once again, I want to thank our faithful supporters. In these days of ministries as big business and ministers as celebrities, we appreciate that you stand behind our simple effort to further the message of the Kingdom of God. Your support helps make possible our continued effort to preach the Gospel without charge.

Rev. Tim Sullivan



"The Life Which I Now Live"

by Rev. Tim Sullivan

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Christianity is not about the Christian's love for Christ. I know that is the tendency amongst the people of God, to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, to boast of their efforts for the Kingdom. But no man, not even the man who gives his life for the furtherance of the Gospel, will ever make a greater sacrifice for Christ than He made for him.

Christianity is about Christ's love for us. By the testimony of God's Holy Word, the Son of God laid down His life for us.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

It takes the letters of Paul to put the sacrifice of Christ into proper perspective. For you and I were *not* the friends of Christ when He gave His life for us.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Roman 5:6-8)
Christ died for us when we were His *enemies*.

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.
(Roman 5:9-10)

Only for the sake of perfect love would a man die for the ungodly, for sinners, for the enemies of God.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love,

not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

(1 John 4:9-10)

It is only perfect love that compels a man to love his enemies.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you....

(Matthew 5:43-44)

It was by this perfect love that Christ gave Himself on the cross. It was *His* love, *His* faith and not ours, that sent Him to Calvary's cross.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

(Galatians 2:20)

Why did He do it? For the joy that was set before Him.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(Hebrews 12:2)

What was the joy that was set before Him? Eternal life? Fellowship with God? Jesus had these already. Christ gained nothing for Himself by His sacrifice. Everything He endured was on our behalf.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Corinthians 5:21)

In that dreadful moment just prior to His death, Jesus Christ became sin for us. He didn't just take all our sins. He was made sin for us. All that was true, all that was honest, all that was just, all that was pure, all that lovely and of good report, all that was of virtue and praise fled from Him. No longer was He the fleshly tabernacle of the Living God. His was a temple of darkness, corruption and fear. Now can you see why He prayed three times that this cup might pass from Him?

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is will-

ing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (Matthew 26:39-44)

By all rights, it should have been you and me on that tree. Christ was not the one who needed healing. But He was wounded and bruised for *our* transgressions and *our* iniquities.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

It wasn't His sins that He bore on the Cross. Those belonged to you and me.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:6)

It wasn't for His sake that He died and was buried and rose again. He endured the suffering so that you and I could be risen *with* Him.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

He did it for us, that we could be made righteous before God.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

No one gets anywhere being told how much he should love the Lord. Your life is changed when you understand how much *He loves you*. It is the goodness of God that leads a man to repentance. Because of His great love, we are entirely indebted to live for Him. He died for you, that you might live for Him.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (Romans 8:12)

The life I now live is the life that God has given to me. I live in and by the name of the resurrected Son of God. He did it for the joy that was set before Him. By our new life in Him, we can fulfill His joy.

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 John 1:4)



Yesterday, Today & For Ever

"Christ the Firstfruits"

By Rev. Todd Pikel

In the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, God initiated and ordained seven feasts that were to be kept by the Israelites. They were to be holy convocations unto God. These feasts, while in themselves a reality, pointed to or pictured an even greater truth concerning our Lord, Jesus Christ.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. (Leviticus 23:1,2)

One of these feasts, the third, was known as the Feast of Firstfruits. This feast was held on the Sunday after the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:10,11)

The *firstfruits* of the harvest were given to the priests and raised above their heads and waved back and forth. This was done "on the morrow after the Sabbath," (the first day of the week) for a wave offering to the Lord.

And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. (Leviticus 23:20)

As the priest waved the bread of the firstfruits and portion of lamb before God, he was in fact symbolizing the resurrection of that very sacrifice. Thus, he was symbolizing the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ. As we have read, the Feast of the Firstfruits was held on the first day after the Sabbath. Christ was raised on the first day (the morrow after the Sabbath) of the week.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint

him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week.... (Mark 16:1-6,9a)

What triumphant words were spoken by the angel! *He is risen!* In the gospel of Luke, we again read of this incident.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.... (Luke 24:1-6a)

How can you not get excited about those words? Jesus Christ is risen. He is alive! We have a *living* Lord and Savior. Christianity is not about a dead, man-made religion or philosophy. Christianity is about a living reality Who is Christ Jesus the Lord. Jesus Christ was raised on the Feast of Firstfruits because *He is the firstfruits*.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

What's more, because of and by Christ's resurrection, them that sleep in Christ and those who are alive and remain at the coming of our Lord, are guaranteed a part in the resurrection of the just.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Corinthians 15:22,23)

Christ the firstfruits *is* the resurrection! He said so!

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (John 11:25)

This is the great truth portrayed in the Feast of Firstfruits. Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the

life. By *Him*, shall we be raised up also.

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. (2 Corinthians 4:14)

We show forth our faith in Christ's resurrection, even as partaking in the wine and bread makes manifest our faith in His sacrifice, when we give to God *our* firstfruits. In other words, we honor God and show our faith in our Lord's resurrection when we *tithe*. God has ordained that the "first of the firstfruits" be brought into His house.

Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits... (Exodus 22:29a)

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God...

(Exodus 23:19a)

We honor God when we bring our *firstfruits* into His house.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase... (Proverbs 3:9)

This is to be done on the first day of the week because of what it *represents*.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corin. 16:2)

When we give the firstfruits of our increase unto God, we proclaim our faith in the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. We *witness* to the fact that He lives!

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. (Hebrews 7:8)

What marvelous realities are pictured in the feasts of the Lord. The Feast of the Firstfruits witnessed to the resurrection of Christ and the subsequent resurrection of the Church. These are truly "the feasts of the Lord."

These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. (Leviticus 23:4)

Glory unto God in the Highest. Christ lives! *Now* is the season to proclaim it!

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

(1 Corinthians 15:20)

Christ the Firstfruits!

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Hebrews 13:8)



"Buried Treasure"

BY Rev. Evan B. Pyle

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

(Matthew 13:44)

When I read this parable I have always had a meaning in mind. How about you? When you read this verse, what interpretation springs to mind? To my thinking this parable spoke of the value of Christ to the lost soul. When I "found" Christ I recognized His treasure as so great that I turned away from all of my other interests so I might have this great treasure in my life. This always seemed a reasonable, if not totally satisfying, interpretation to me. The problem is, I never "found" Christ. He "found" me and revealed Himself to me. And did I then turn away from all else to follow Him? Well, not quite!

The parable that follows received a similar interpretation:

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Matthew 13:45-46)

Again, what does this mean? Am I the merchant? Is Christ the pearl of great price? In a word, no. Does that surprise you? See what the following verse has to say.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.... (Exodus 19:5)

God's people are referred to, by Him, as a peculiar (meaning unique) treasure. Is this possible...that we are God's treasure?

For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure. (Psalm 135:4)

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love

upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

Do you see what the Lord is telling those of us who are Israelites by faith? (Gal. 3:28, 29) That we are God's unique treasure. According to the parable we, the Church, are like a unique and valuable treasure hidden buried in a field. If you think like me you will find this difficult to take in. The Lord considered me a unique and valuable treasure before I even knew Him. He saw me this way when I blasphemed His holy name and was completely sinful in all my ways...when I was by nature a child of wrath.

This treasure was deemed by God to be of such value that He "for joy went and sold all that He had in order to buy the whole field. But why did He buy the entire field? Just so He could have that one unique treasure buried there. Yes, He gave all that He had...His only begotten Son.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

God gave Jesus for the sins of the whole world, not just the Church.

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.... (1 Peter 1:18-19)

This is a love that is beyond my human comprehension. It causes me to want to bow before Him in weeping thankfulness for His unsurpassed Love and the agonizing pain God endured in offering up His only begotten.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

What about the interpretation of Matthew's next parable?

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant

man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Matthew 13:45-46)

This parable is a restatement of the preceding one. We, the Church, are the pearl of great price. God's price He paid for this gem? All that He had, His Only-Begotten.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. (Malachi 3:17)

This still begs the question, how can God consider me a treasure, a precious pearl? Doesn't He have everything? How could He possibly need us, and for what purpose?

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.... (1 Peter 2:9)

As God's peculiar and unique treasure we are to show forth His praises. God even calls us, the Church, His inheritance. (Imagine God needing an inheritance!)

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints... (Ephesians 1:18)

The Father did not place these truths in His Word so we could puff up with self-importance. Rather, they engender in us humility, thankfulness and an utter dependence on Him to grow us into Christ's likeness...to put a "polish" on the Church so that She is indeed a "unique treasure" and a "pearl of great price."

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Amen.

The VINE & BRANCHES is published six times a year and is distributed free of charge, paid for with donations received by Workers Together With Him. If you would like your name added or deleted from our mailing list, please let us know. Written contributions are encouraged and may be submitted to our office for publication upon approval.



The Book Shop

By Rev. Tim Sullivan

The Weapons of our Warfare

Forty-four chapters of Biblical teaching on the Weapons of our Warfare, the nine spiritual gifts given by God to the Church today. (Available April 2001. 432 pages)

Suggested Donation \$20.00.

Walking On The King's Highway

Including: *A Time of War; The Prosperity of the Lord's Servant; Discretion Shall Preserve Thee; The Generation of Jesus Christ; Disappointed in God; Holistic Christianity* and *Walking on the King's Highway*. (110 pages, published 1999) Suggested Donation \$10.00

Auf Der Strasse Des Königs Gehen

The German version of *Walking On The King's Highway* translated by Beatrice Mantock. (84 pages, published 2000. Available in Europe only). Suggested Donation \$10.00

If Ye Do These Things, Ye Shall Never Fall

Lessons on: *Faith; Virtue; Knowledge; Temperance; Patience; Godliness; Brotherly Kindness and Charity*. (120 pages, published 1998) Suggested Donation \$10.00

By The Grace of God I Am What I Am

Featuring: *Precepts and Premises; A Fountain of Life; The Evidence of Things Not Seen; But Ye Say* and *By the Grace of God I Am What I Am*. (100 pages, published 1996). Suggested Donation \$10.00

By Rev. Todd Pekel

The House Of God

Chapters entitled: *Christ The Spiritual Rock, Christ The Foundation, Christ The Chief-Cornerstone, Christ The Head, Christ The Temple* and *Christ The Door*. (58 pages, published 2000). Suggested Donation \$10.00

The policy of Workers Together With Him is to freely distribute our classes and materials, that we might "make the gospel without charge." The suggested donation is intended to help us recover our printing and shipping expenses. Please make checks payable to Workers Together With Him. VISA, Mastercard, American Express accepted.

Testimonies from the workplace

Seeing GOD At Work

This incident happened during my internship in a children's hospital in Cologne, Germany. It was a long time before I was led into the gifts of the Spirit. I had not yet learned the true meaning of walking in the gifts of the Spirit.

I was "on call" and had been working for about 20 hours. Finally I was able to go to bed. Shortly afterwards my pager went off and called me to a ward that was outside of the building. In fact you had to ride a bicycle through the night to get to the other building due to major constructions going on. I was not happy.

When I got there I was cold, tired and scared. The reason why I was called was to my great relief a minor problem, easily resolved. So about 10 minutes later I was on my way out with only one aim in my mind, namely to go back to bed.

I had almost reached the exit when I heard a clear (a very clear!) voice in my mind: "Go into that room and check that child!" I had just passed the door of the last patient's room. It stopped me immediately. I stood there wondering if I was already asleep and dreaming. Then I reasoned that it was pure imagination and continued to walk. I was not able to make the second step before I heard that voice again. It was as clear as crystal and now very determined. I just stood there and didn't believe what was happening. I turned around, but then again reasoned that it just could not be! So turning again, I heading for the exit. It was 4.00 a.m. and all I wanted was sleep. This time it was a command, like I know from military reports. I froze in my tracks. Altogether I must have walked back and forth in front of that door for about 5 minutes.

Looking back, I was really thankful that the nurse didn't see me. She would have thought I was out of my mind!

By that time, I was kind of guessing that God wanted something from me. Finally I gave in and very reluctantly opened the door to that room. There were three cribs in that room with newly born babies. Immediately, without a doubt, I knew which child I was to go to. So I went up to the crib. The child had, a

photo therapy with a special kind of light for the treatment of jaundice. This light damages the yet immature eyes of the newborn. This child was missing the eyecover, which can lead to blindness. I cannot tell you how relieved I was. Today I know, that God also wanted to show me something else, but in that moment I just turned around and went to the nurse and told her. She did not ask me why in the world I had entered that room. I didn't tell her either.

I didn't leave the ward, I fled! The bicycle was just fine.

I will never forget this as long as I live.

Today my job gives me much greater challenges than that one. Sometimes I think that this job doesn't bring out the best in me, it brings out the worst. The pressure sometimes is so high that you think you have to give up everything you are, every right (that you think) you have and sacrifice your life for the work. Who takes care of me? Where will my needs come in? Who has the right to demand this of me? What about the many extra hours, unpaid, and no one to acknowledge you? I become impatient with patients, growl at them and become rude. Whatever happened to the woman of God I wanted to be? She is gone, I cannot find her, when I dwell in thoughts of bitterness and self pity.

The bottom line will always be: Do I trust God and serve, or do I not trust Him and complain? In a way I feel that God teaches me what it really means to serve. Yes, you do lose yourself. I have to let go of rights that the world might have given to me. But God never did! It is to die to self and it is pretty radical.

But that is what I want. I do not want to settle for less, for the love God has shown to me constrains me. He deserves it and I owe it to Him. So I see God at work, working in me, to do and will of His good pleasure.

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THE WEAPONS *Of Our* WARFARE

The Weapons Of Our Warfare Seminar is scheduled for the following dates:

April 16 to 21, 2001 Thasos, Greece

April 28 to May 6, 2001 London, England

June 9 to 17, 2001 Ponchatoola, Louisiana

June 30 to July 8, 2001 Rosenau, Austria (English/German)

The seminar **"If Ye Do These Things, Ye Shall Never Fall"**

will be presented November 2001

in Mexico City, Mexico (English/Spanish)

*For additional information, or to request a class in your area,
please write or call our office.*

Happy Easter 2001

Workers Together With Him is an international Christian ministry dedicated to the furtherance of the message of Salvation and the education of Christians to the end that they be a living testimony of God's love, power and glory. Teachings are distributed via congregational meetings, seminars and various publications. This ministry is financed entirely by the tithes and offerings of its supporters.

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