



THE VINE & BRANCHES

The Newsletter of Workers Together With Him

MARCH 2007

The blessings of our Lord Jesus be with you today.

Since the first presentation of the Weapons of Our Warfare class in Kaub, Germany, in 1999, this seminar has been presented (in varying formats) 51 times. The 50th and 51st presentations were held this February in the country of Kenya, in the towns of Kakamega and Mumias.

My Austrian friend Rudi Illavský used to laugh that every time I reported on a class, I said it was the “best ever.” I can understand his point. In the words from a Gilbert & Sullivan opera, “When every one is somebody, Then no one’s anybody!” If everything is called successful, then the term has no meaning.

In our mission to Kenya, we faced the same hardships we have come to expect. The journey was tiresome; two days on a plane to get to Nairobi were followed by a day of rough road travel to the class locations. It often feels like we’ve run a marathon before the real race even begins!

In light of the effort expended, and the financial cost of the mission, it is disappointing to report that for all intents and purposes, our mission to Kenya was a failure. We did not accomplish the things that make a mission successful. We did not finish what the Lord sent us to do.

Certainly there were isolated areas of success. I felt my presentation of the class in Mumias was effective; I believe Evan would say the same about the presentation in Kakamega. The Kenyans were wonderfully hospitable, and we formed some true friendships that I pray will be lasting.

The realization of our failure came upon me as the class was coming to an end. Some of the students had asked me to return to teach next year. Usually I count this as a sign of success, but the Holy Spirit prompted me to inquire how many people had attended every session of this class. Only one person could raise his hand – me! My heart sank with the weight of my failure, and I felt the chastisement of the Lord. What a waste of time, money and effort! We were not sent all the way to Africa to teach a partial message. Incomplete messages on the spiritual gifts are what created the confusion already out there!

In inviting me to teach, one pastor wrote, “Many of us in Kenya are going into leadership positions without having a sustainable growth in the Holy Spirit. The church here is lacking power, true doctrine, piety and practices. We have many

emerging leaders [who are lacking] a spiritual outlook. Kenya needs to sit and be taught before it goes to other Nations.” When I read this letter, I couldn’t wait to begin the mission! But somehow, this vision was not sustained. In some cases, it was forgotten altogether.

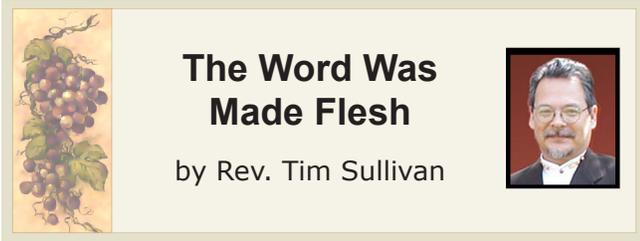
Two years ago, on my first mission to Kenya, the Lord directed me to make a written agreement between WTWH and future class hosts, clarifying what we would do for them, and what we expected from them in return. Two years have passed, and this task remains undone. In the end, we left behind in Kenya a group of people who were scarcely more equipped than before we’d arrived. The mission failed because we did not first clarify and then hold fast to the purpose and intent of our mission. There was a breakdown in preparation for the class, and the blame for that failure rests entirely upon me.

Let me clarify this now: all missionaries do not have the same mission. The missionaries of WTWH do not build churches, hospitals or schools. We are neither fund-raisers nor sponsors. Our mission is to teach what the Lord has given us to teach: sound, practical instruction on the spiritual gifts and how they are used. We are sent to teach “faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Truly the Word does not return void, but that doesn’t mean we always run a good race. Thankfully, we can make changes to prevent the same errors from being repeated.

In May I am returning to Tanzania with Evan for our 7th and 8th presentations of the Weapons of Our Warfare class in Maasai villages. Rev. Ans Mwambepo has gathered those people who have already heard this class and want to learn it well enough to teach others. In September, I expect to return to Uganda to teach again, and for the ordination of our coworker, Henry Musana. I’ve also been invited to teach in Nairobi, Kenya in 2008. This is an invitation I will be happy to accept, if the Lord wills.

I am very pleased to send you this issue of the V&B. I told Evan that his message on “The Cost of Worship” is like sticking your arm elbow-deep into a treasure chest and pulling out a great prize. Especially during this Easter season, let us remember to give to Him in light of what He’s given to us.



The Gospel of Mark recalls a fascinating encounter between Jesus and His disciples. Jesus asked, “Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?” (Mark 8:27-28).

Almost 2000 years have passed since Jesus posed this question, yet the church still cannot agree on the correct response. Christians – whose very name designates them as followers of Jesus – are hopelessly divided over the nature of their leader. There is no issue that sends Christians scurrying into their isolated camps more than the issue of the identity of Jesus. But how can one pledge allegiance to a leader he cannot identify? Could there be a more important issue to a Christian than to know who Christ is?

Not long ago, the Holy Spirit confronted me with this question, stated somewhat differently. Could Jesus have failed in His mission? I realized my response would reveal my true opinion of Christ. To be honest, my immediate answer was, “Yes, Jesus could have failed, just like Adam.” But this answer troubled my spirit, and I knew God wanted to lead me to a higher understanding. Now I believe differently, and I want to show you why Jesus could not have failed, and why this revelation is so important to our faith.

The Personification of God

Romans 11:33 says, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” The word of the Lord in Isaiah 55:9 agrees with this testimony, declaring, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” In depth and height, God’s wisdom lies beyond our reach. He cannot show Himself to us as He is, for as He told Moses, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exo. 33:20). God dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. 6:16). Furthermore, we have nothing in our frame of reference with which to favorably compare Him. As Isaiah 40:18 asks, “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?”

As sinful creatures living in a sinful world, we have no idea what purity is. But we do know what freshly-fallen

snow looks like; therefore we understand when God says, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18). The lesser makes known the greater.

God condescends to make Himself known to us in terms we can recognize from the world around us. That is why He speaks to us from behind a human mask. In literary terms, He uses “personification” – the application of human qualities to something that is not human.

God is not physical; He is Spirit (John 4:24). He does not have eyes as you and I; He has no pupils, no retina, no iris. Still, “the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth” (2 Chron. 16:9). This is *personification*. He has no arms or hands, but Psalm 98:1 says, “his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.” He has no body with which to sit, but Psalm 47:8 says, “God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.” He has no physical attributes that make Him male or a father in the way that you and I understand gender. Nevertheless, in order to make Himself knowable, God expresses Himself in terms that human beings – even in their simplicity and idiocy – can grasp. He laughs; He stands; He bares His right arm. None of these things are *literally* true; they are *figuratively* true. **In the Old Testament, God expressed Himself figuratively as a human being. With the birth of Jesus, the personification became literal.**

The Word was made flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-2, 14)

In the Bible, God tells His story using many voices. Remarkably, the Word of God is not limited to the words that God speaks to man. We also read the words of people holy and unholy. Even the words of Satan are part of the Holy Scriptures.

In Exodus 20:2-3 we read, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Clearly, this is the voice of God, speaking to His creation. But in Psalm 119:11 we read, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Here the creature speaks to his Creator. Both passages of scripture are equally divine, “given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16), purified “as silver tried in a furnace of earth” (Psa. 12:6). How remarkable this is!

Jesus, the Word made flesh, embodies both perspectives at the same time. He is God speaking to man, and man speaking to God. Whenever Jesus spoke, it was the Word

speaking. **Jesus was not a man speaking the Word. He was the Word speaking through a man.**

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). This has been a stumblingblock to people since the day Jesus was born. People reason that Jesus cannot be God because God is Spirit, and Jesus came in the flesh. But Jesus also said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). If the same reasoning is applied, the Bible cannot be the Word of God, because Jesus' words were spirit and the Bible is in print!

The Word of God has been made manifest both in writing and in the flesh. Holy Scripture is the Word of God expressed in writing. Jesus is the Word of God expressed in the flesh. He is "the brightness of [God's] glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. 1:3). He is God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus is the figurative expression of God made literal.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (John 1:18)

For unto you is born this day a Saviour

The Gospel of Luke records the triumphant message of the angel to the "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8).

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)

Who was born that day? Not a man auditioning for the job of Saviour. Not a man who would try his best to save us by always choosing to say and do the right thing at the right time. No, on that glorious day, our Saviour was born. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." As Psalm 107:20 says, "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." God sent His Word when He sent His Son.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:17)

The Last Adam

Some people have suggested that God sent Jesus to avenge Satan's defeat of Adam in the Garden of Eden. According to this reasoning, Jesus had to have the same potential for failure as did Adam. This argument is invalidated by the fact that it was Eve, not Adam, who was tempted by Satan. There is no evidence that the serpent ever spoke to Adam. Why then is Jesus called "the last Adam"?

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

Jesus is the "last Adam" because like Adam, He heralded

a new generation. Speaking of Adam, Acts 17:26 says, God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." By his sinful blood, Adam gave death as an inheritance to all generations that followed him. By His sinless blood, Jesus has given everlasting life as an inheritance to all that believe. His generation is "the generation of the righteous" (Psa. 14:5); the "generation of Jesus Christ" (Matt. 1:1).

The Temptation in the Wilderness

Matthew 4:1 reads, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." In the past, whenever I read this passage of scripture, I only saw a man being tested. Then my eyes were opened and I saw beyond the superficial reality. This was not a man being tested. This was the Word being tested. That is why Jesus answered every challenge with "It is written."

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. (Luke 4:3-4)

The devil tried to make it personal. "If thou be the Son of God," he said. The devil always tries to make it a personal battle between you and him. That is because he wants you to try to oppose him in your own strength, for then you will most certainly fail. Make your stand on the Word, for "the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8).

Psalm 18:30 says, "the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him." The Word of the Lord has been tested. It has been tried and proven in every situation and circumstance. Jesus, the Word made flesh, was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He could not be broken, because, as He Himself said, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). His Word will not, indeed it cannot, fail you!

Has there ever been one to whom this verse of Scripture more applied?

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)

Yes, Jesus was tempted. He was tested. But He *did* not sin because He *could* not sin. As the Scripture says, "He cannot sin, because he is born of God." This puts Jesus in a different category than you and me. You and I are not born of God. We are born *again* of God. We are sinless in spirit, but not in flesh and blood. Jesus was sinless through and through.

In the story of David and Bathsheba, the king stood upon his rooftop "and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon" (2 Sam 11:2). Soon he was looking upon her from a much closer vantage point. But in the eyes of God, the sin had

already been committed. Do you remember what Jesus said?

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

(Matthew 5:27-28)

You and I think that we've done a good thing when we only *consider* doing evil, but do not go through with it. We count it a victory when we cast down our evil imaginations, and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Jesus, on the other hand, never even *considered* doing the wrong thing! The obedience of Christ was *perfect*. That is why He is the *standard* of obedience. As He said in John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Jesus did not even think of refusing His Father's will. The closest He came was when three times He expressed a desire for a *different way* to accomplish our salvation.

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... 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 left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (Matthew 26:39,42, 44)

My God! Can you not see the heart of the Father pouring out through His Son? Can you not see God's heart breaking, as He looked high and low for *any other way* to secure our salvation rather than watch His only-begotten Son mocked, tortured and crucified by the enemy of righteousness? If there ever was a time when God anguished over His own plan of salvation, when He required all of His power to restrain *Himself* from interfering with the necessary sequence of events, this was it.

Jesus could not fail because the Word cannot fail

The Word of God cannot fail. That is the testimony of God Himself.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he prom-

ised by the hand of Moses his servant. (1 Kings 8:56)

If Jesus could fail, He was not who He said He was. But Jesus was the Word made flesh. He could not fail because the Word cannot fail.

In the end, what other people say about Jesus will not affect your life. It is *your* answer to the question "whom say ye that I am?" that makes the difference in your life. You will never commit your way to the Lord until you trust in Him, and you will never trust in Him until you realize that, as the song says, "God can do anything but fail."

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. (Psalm 37:5-6)



The Cost of Worship

by Rev. Evan B. Pyle



... neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing...
(2 Samuel 24:24)

The great King David refused a gift of property offered to him for use in making sacrifices to the Lord. The owner of the property was a heathen Jebusite who had seen the great power of the God of Israel. He willingly offered his property, animals and tools. Yet David refused to accept these gifts without price. David's attitude concerning the cost of worship is a lesson the Church needs today.

Prior to this, David had sinned in ordering a census of his populace and fighting men. He persisted in this prideful folly even though Joab, the head of Israel's military forces, advised him against this plan.

And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. (2 Samuel 24:3-4)

After Joab carried out this task, verse 10 says that David's heart "smote him" and he confessed to the Lord that he had sinned greatly. One of the traits that made David a "man after God's own heart" was his repentant character. David,

like others before and after him, was a great leader, warrior and statesman. But the quality that most distinguished him in the eyes of the Lord was the condition of his heart. He proved himself to be of a humble and repentant attitude before God. David, despite his faults, truly walked in the fear of the Lord. Nevertheless, David's sin resulted in dire consequences which fell on his people in the form of a grievous plague. When David interceded for his people, God sent the prophet Gad with instructions for David to rear up an altar to the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (2 Samuel 24:18-24)

How about you? What has worshipping God cost you? If you were in David's place would you accept the "gift" and worship the Lord without cost? I fear that much of the church is worshipping without cost. Sunday worship often looks more like a party than a serious seeking to do the will of God. While many are offering the convenient, easy and fun, the Lord is calling on His people to offer the best, the highest and the purest. In true worship there is no holding back.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

Our minimum response to God's grace, called here our "reasonable service," is nothing less than a living sacrifice. There is no holding back for God's elect. God's minimum is no less than our all.

The children of Israel had a worship problem in the days of Malachi. The root of the problem was their failure to

both properly honor and fear the Lord, as pointed out in Malachi 1:6. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" The prophet, by the word of the Lord, confronted the condition of their hearts as revealed by their second-rate offerings. God demanded their best and purest but they offered the polluted, the blind and the lame. When confronted they offered excuses rather than repenting. "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick" (vs. 13).

If we find worship a "weariness" we too should examine the condition of our own hearts. The priests' poor offerings revealed their lack of honor and fear of the Lord. Malachi declared that, in contrast to Israel's contempt, the Lord's name would be great among the heathen. "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts" (vs. 11). The Gentiles' offering would be pure because God would remove their hard, worldly hearts and replace them with a "new spirit."

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: (Ezekiel 11:19)

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts... (Romans 2:14-15)

These two scriptures point to a day, which now is, when the true worshippers will worship God in spirit and in truth. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

New forms of more exuberant and expressive public worship have been introduced into the Church. Proponents often refer to this kind of worship as "Davidic," referring to King David's unbridled joy and spontaneity when he "danced before the Lord with all his might." However, the reason for his all-out worship has been misunderstood. David was leading the procession that brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. His previous attempt to move the ark had been disastrous. David's exuberance was not simply evidence of intense joy, but was also borne of a holy fear of God and respect for His holy presence.

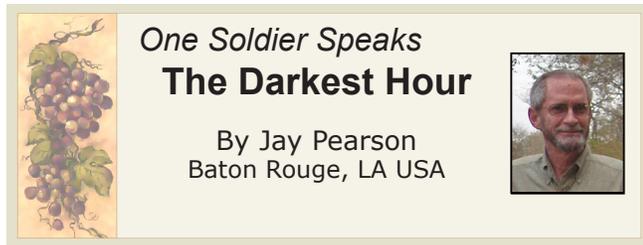
The honest question we should ask ourselves is whether we really want to give the Lord our utmost and best in wor-

ship? If so, the only reasonable response is to “do a Romans 12:1,” meaning to offer ourselves a living sacrifice. The Lord will not receive our second-rate offerings but commands we “honor him with the firstfruits of our increase.” This applies to all the ways God increases us, whether it be in our harvest of grain or in spiritual gifts. Offering to God our blessed and redeemed lives as a living sacrifice is our holy act of worship. No longer are we satisfied to offer the Lord a mere token or afterthought as worship, for we will not offer Him that which costs us nothing. Let us determine to offer nothing less than our lives as a living sacrifice.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.
(Matthew 16:25)

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:38)

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. (Hebrews 13:15)



One Soldier Speaks
The Darkest Hour

By Jay Pearson
Baton Rouge, LA USA

“It is finished.” These are the words spoken by our Lord as He died on the cross. Some rejoiced, some cried, and some feared and were scattered. Soon the dark hour would be pierced by the bright and morning Star.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. (Luke 23:44-45)

Darkness covered the whole earth when the Word in the flesh died for our sins. Man’s sin was paid for by a perfect sacrifice and pure blood. Jesus Christ was that sacrifice and it was His blood that was shed for the remission of our sins. This payment for us was made not when we were beginning to do the right thing, not even when we were thinking about doing the right thing. It was when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Yes, the Son of God died for you and me.

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (Heb. 10:12)

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. (Mark 15:39)

Joseph of Arimathaea went boldly to Pilate and pleaded for the body of Jesus for burial. After Pilate had inquired of the centurion whether Jesus was so soon dead, he then gave the body to Joseph.

And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. (Mark 15:45-46)

This would not be the end, but the beginning. God chose this time to reveal part of a mystery. The darkest hour would soon be the beginning of the brightest day.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:7-8)

Truly the resurrection of the Lord of Glory Jesus Christ was spectacular. One would expect royalty to be the first to behold Him. Kings, Queens, or even His twelve disciples would be the ones to behold His resurrected self.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (Matthew 28:1-2)

No such royalty or person of authority would behold the first appearance of Jesus Christ. Who was the first to behold His birth on this earth? Was it kings, queens, or even the wise men? No, it was shepherds in the fields. Who would behold His resurrection first? A certain woman who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, one who had devils cast out of her body, and was thankful; she was the first to behold Jesus Christ risen.

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (Mark 16:9)

God is so gracious and His mercy endureth forever. He doesn’t often choose the wise or prominent, but the foolish and weak.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which

are mighty; (1 Corinthians 1:26-27)

Read in Romans 6 of your identity in Christ. Surely we should walk in the newness of life. We can't walk perfectly, but we can walk toward perfection. Let's not look back, but look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Let's see ourselves risen in Christ and be thankful, and glorify His name all the days of our life.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

God bless and keep you this Easter and all the days of your life. AMEN.



What Is It Then?

By Beatrice Mantock
Schüpfen, Switzerland



My burden is to remind us all of some Scriptural truths about speaking in tongues.

First of all, in case you are not sure whether this gift is for every Christian, look at this verse: "I would that ye all spake with tongues" (1 Corin. 14:5).

As Paul wrote down the will of God in his epistle to the Corinthian church, so it is God's will for the church today. Would Paul write something that is not God's will? Would God exhort us all to do something that isn't important, let alone possible?

Maybe you have heard or even used the argument of "love is more important than speaking in tongues," seemingly based on some verses in 1 Corinthians 13.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

For logic's sake, if speaking in tongues were meant to be replaced by charity, so should be knowledge, faith, and giving to the poor. It is not "instead of" but rather "as well as."

For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*;

howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

(1 Corinthians 14:2)

So, speaking in tongues equals speaking unto God equals praying in the spirit. Since no man understands, it is for our private prayer life. Surely you agree that there is no need to explain the importance of prayer in general. Whether it is praying with the understanding or praying with the spirit, it is important. The same goes for singing!

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

(1 Corinthians 14:15)

The Bible also tells us that by speaking in tongues we edify ourselves. To use the argument that this is selfish would just be silly. How important is it to be edified, built up, if we want to give our life in service to the Lord and to the people? I am sure you know the answer.

He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; (1 Corinthians 14:4a)

God knew what He was doing when He invented those gifts and gave them to His children!

One day, when I was thinking about this gift and wondering why some Christians can't be convinced that it is a good thing, the following thought struck me: Usually, what is interesting for man either appeals to his emotions or to his intelligence. But speaking in tongues does neither of the two. As it says in 1 Corinthians 14:14: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." That is probably why it just seems silly or unprofitable to some people, even Christians.

I believe it is one of those challenges that God puts in front of us, and I think it is just beautiful. I almost want to say, "It's so cool." Do we believe that His Word is the truth, even if we don't understand everything? Then, will we show Him that we trust Him by obeying His commandments, even if it doesn't make sense to our senses?

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

And so, as we desire to serve and obey our Lord in everything, we need our spiritual eyes to be opened.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. (Psalm 119:18)

Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)

This is also my prayer for us all. So please, let us "desire spiritual gifts" (1 Corin. 14:1) and "forbid not to speak with tongues" (1 Corin. 14:39).

GOD GRANT

God grant me the sight to see
The rock in the road up ahead.
Also, the might to carry
The load that I dread.

God grant me the insight to learn
By the mistakes I've left behind,
Also the foresight to turn
Before breaking the fragile I find.

God grant me the class to bypass
Life's temptations of the flesh,
Also the expectation to start
And pass each day afresh.

God grant me the wisdom I need
To plead my cause to You.
Also, the grace to face life
With its flaws, not a few.

God grant me the sight that I might give
Jesus the respect that He's due,
Also the armor to resist Satan
'Til the battle is through.

God grant me a constant talk and a daily walk
With You through life's proving game;
Then, also my last breath that I may use
To bless Your Holy Name. Amen.

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