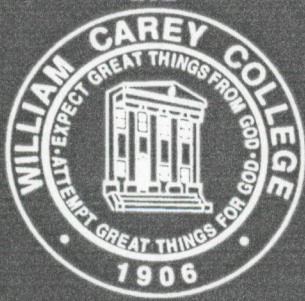


The Carey Pulpit

*I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ...
preach the word (2 Timothy 4:1-2a).*



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“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!’”

—Romans 10: 13-15

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**SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE
WITH THE WORLD**

Ephesians 3:1-13

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul described the mystery of Christ as the truth that "Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (vs. 7). The call to share Christ's love with the world changed forever the life of the great apostle. This truth also changes us. How does the sharing of His love with the world change us?

I. The Sharing of Christ's Love with the World Identifies Us.

- A. This responsibility identifies us as stewards (vs. 2). Paul's "dispensation or stewardship" of the gospel was from God. In the first century, the steward was the person responsible for the nobleman's estate. As Christian stewards, we are responsible for sharing the gospel with the world.
- B. This responsibility identifies us as ministers (vs. 7). Paul described himself as a "minister or servant" of the gospel.
- C. This responsibility identifies us as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" (vs. 1). Paul did not identify himself as a prisoner of Nero or Rome. He had been captured by the grace of Christ to share that grace with the world.

II. The Sharing of Christ's Love with the World Humbles Us.

- A. Paul described himself as "less than least of all the saints" (vs. 8a). Paul understood that his calling from God to share Christ with the world was because of grace not human merit. His calling humbled him.
- B. As servants of the gospel of Christ, we understand that this privilege is ours because of His grace.

III. The Sharing of Christ's Love with the World Encourages Us.

- A. Paul told the Ephesian Christians not to be discouraged about his imprisonment (vs. 13). Paul saw his "tribulations" as simply another means whereby Christ was revealing His grace to the world.
- B. Several years ago Dr. K. Dorman Laird (professor of religion at William Carey College) taught at the Baptist Academy in Budapest, Hungary. Most of his students had been at one time imprisoned by the Communists. These students were men and women of great faith. Dr. Laird described the experience of working with the students "as one of the great encouragements of my life. I saw clearly how God is able to work in dark places."

IV. The Sharing of Christ's Love with the World Affirms Us.

- A. The sharing of Christ's love affirms our understanding of God. The Lord is seeking to bring all men into the sphere of his love and grace (vs. 6).
- B. The sharing of Christ's love affirms our understanding of man. God has created man in His image, and all men can live in fellowship with Him (vs. 9).
- C. The sharing of Christ's love affirms our role in His Kingdom. He is seeking to use us as a means of sharing His love with the world. We are a part of the divine purpose (vss. 8-11).

Conclusion:

Albert Schweitzer gave his life to sharing God's love with the people of Africa. He described his commitment to this task with the following statement:

*To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge.
To suffer the will of God is the greatest heroism.
To do the will of God is the greatest achievement.
To have the approval of God on your work is the greatest happiness.*

HOW TO COPE WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING

Genesis 50:1-14

Introduction:

Grief is the emotion that we feel when we have experienced a significant loss. In Genesis 50:1-14 we see a picture of a grieving family. How do you cope when you are grieving?

I. When You Are Grieving, You Need to Weep Over Your Loss.

- A. Joseph and his brothers wept over the death of their father. It is not a sin to cry. Tears are a gift of God that enables us to walk through the dark moments of life.
- B. A pastor tells of that time when he buried his mother. During the funeral, he did not weep. He returned home in a deep sadness. Shortly after the funeral, he awakened one night with an overwhelming desire to see his mother. Immediately, he dressed and drove all night to the place where his mother was buried. At the gravesite, he fell to his knees and wept. It was the beginning of the healing process.

II. When You Are Grieving, You Need to Worship the Lord.

- A. Joseph was a man who knew the meaning of grief, but he never stopped worshipping the Lord.
- B. When a person is grieving, he doesn't "feel" like worshipping. The temptation is to shut the door and give up on life. This is the time that the Christian reminds himself that he doesn't live by faith in the realm of feelings. Rather, he lives by faith in the realm of the will.

III. When You Are Grieving, You Need to Work at Helping Others.

- A. Joseph is an example of a person who worked through his grief by helping others. As you seek to help others who are hurting, God will use your service to bring healing to your own heart.

- B. The man was in a deep depression. He couldn't get out of the bed. Friends came to his bedside with all kinds of advice. Nothing seemed to help. One day a friend asked, "Can you think of someone who really blessed your life? If you can, write them a note and thank them for their kindness." In his sadness, he thought of a high school English teacher who had given him a great love for literature. He wrote her a simple note expressing his appreciation for all that she had meant to him. A few days later, he received her reply. She said, "Thank you for your letter. You will never know how much that letter meant to me. I will cherish this letter forever." The man said that between that letter and the other 499 letters he wrote, he came out of his depression.

IV. When You Are Grieving, You Need to Wait Upon God.

- A. Joseph understood the words of Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..."
- B. There is no quick fix when you are grieving. It takes time to experience healing.

Conclusion:

Luther Bridges was a great evangelistic singer and hymn writer. One night after a revival meeting, he was informed that his wife and children had been killed in a tragic accident. He was engulfed in grief; however, Luther Bridges refused to give up. There were moments of intense weeping. He continued to worship and sing the great hymns even when he didn't "feel" like it. He sought out others who were hurting and ministered to them. The day came when Bridges remarried and started a new family. One day as he reflected on all that he had been through, he sat down and wrote a poem. Eventually the poem was put into our hymn books. He wrote, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know, fills my every longing, keeps me singing as I go."

**ABSOLUTES IN A WORLD
OF RELATIVITY**
Philippians 2:10-11

Introduction:

Albert Einstein set forth the theory of relativity and asserted that the relativity principle was true of all phenomena, mechanical or electromagnetic. It now appears that many would like to bring all things under the umbrella of relativity. There are things relative, and there are things absolute. We must not be guilty of making relative what the Bible makes absolute. This text presents five absolutes concerning the Lordship of Christ in a world of relativity. Here we are faced with the final and total fact "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (vss. 10-11).

I. The Lordship of Christ Involves Absolute Circumscription — "Every."

- A. The periphery is determined by God Himself.
- B. The periphery includes every person.

Illustration: The man said, "I don't want to have anything to do with God." A friend responded, "You are acting unwise because God will have a lot to do with you!"

II. The Lordship of Christ Involves Absolute Concession — "Knee Shall Bow."

- A. To bow the knees is an act of acknowledgement and yielding.
- B. Willingly or unwillingly, every knee will bow to the Lordship of Christ.

III. The Lordship of Christ Involves Absolute Circumference — "Heaven, Earth, Under the Earth."

- A. Circumference has to do with external boundaries.
- B. There is an absolute circumference that is unchanging and never relative. The circumference includes all people and all locations!

IV. The Lordship of Christ Involves Absolute Confession — "Jesus Christ is Lord."

- A. The confession must be absolute. Jesus Christ is Lord of all!

Illustration: Consider how critical this principle is to our salvation. "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

- B. There is no room for relativity.

Illustration: What have you said to God lately? Consider the Psalmist: "I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord'" (Psalm 16:2).

V. The Lordship of Christ Involves Absolute Consummation — "The Glory of God."

- A. God is the sole possessor of all things by creation and redemption.
- B. All things will be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Illustration: "And He made known to us the mystery of His Will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Ephesians 1:9-10).

Conclusion:

"By the year 2000, Americans will be even less interested in absolutes, preferring those perspectives which allow for relative values to gain credence. Casting issues in a black and white mode will disgust many people, since they will cling to the notion that there is no absolute truth, no absolute reality and no absolute force. Even our understanding of God is in the process of being reshaped due to this acceptance of conditional truth." (From *The Frog in the Kettle*, by George Barna, page 121).

May we not forget the words of the Apostle Paul, "As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me..." (Ro. 14:11-12). This is an absolute concerning the Lordship of Christ.

POWER FOR LIVING

Acts 8:9-24

Introduction:

There is a need in our lives as Christians to recognize the Holy Spirit as our source of power for living in this world. We need that power to face temptations, bear burdens, be an effective witness, and live the Christian life each day. As Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria, he encountered a magician named Simon, who wanted the power of the Holy Spirit. Simon wanted to know how he could receive this power (vs. 19). Simon's request for power was not granted. How can our request for the power of the Holy Spirit be granted?

I. The Power of the Holy Spirit Comes by Exalting Christ.

- A. Simon wanted to exalt himself. Power will not come if we are seeking to exalt ourselves (vss. 9-11).
- B. The mark of a Christian who is controlled by the Holy Spirit is one who is supremely concerned about exalting Christ, not himself. We are to be like a spotlight which does not draw attention to itself but to the one on whom it is focused.

II. The Power of the Holy Spirit Comes by Wanting the Spirit for Ministry (vss. 18-21).

- A. Simon seemed to want the power of the Holy Spirit as a person wants a new possession. He wanted to use it as he desired.
- B. The Holy Spirit is not given just for the personal amusement of Christians but to empower them to minister to others.
- C. A man went to his boyhood farm in New Hampshire. One of his fondest memories was the cool water of the old well. Even in times of drought, they had water. Upon arrival he found the well boarded up and no longer in use. He removed the boards on the well but discovered the well was dry. A well of this kind was fed by hundreds of tiny underground rivulets that supplied a constant stream of water. As water was drawn from the well, more

and more water moved in along the rivulets, keeping those tiny channels open and clear. When such a well was not used and the water was not regularly drawn, the tiny rivulets closed up. The well went dry, not because there was no water, but because it had not been used. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, but do we use Him for ministry?

III. The Power of the Holy Spirit Comes by Submitting to God (vss. 20-24).

- A. Simon was accustomed to using certain formulas to manipulate the forces of nature and to produce the desired effect. He seemed to want to manipulate the Holy Spirit in the same way.
- B. The Holy Spirit cannot be bought as Simon thought (vss. 19-20). There is a persistent feeling in society today that everything has its price. A gentleman from Kentucky was explaining to a Texan that there was enough gold in Fort Knox to build a fence around Texas. The Texan replied, "Why don't you go ahead and build that fence, and if we like it we will buy it." Power for living cannot be purchased through giving to the church, being a good person, or attending church.
- C. The Holy Spirit comes as we get our hearts right with God (vss. 21-22). Simon needed to repent of the sin in his life to receive the Spirit.
- D. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God. He comes as a result of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. The power of the Holy Spirit for living in this world is available to anyone who will accept Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives.

HOW TO SURVIVE THE LION'S DEN

Daniel 6:1-28

Introduction:

There are difficulties we have experienced that seemed impossible to survive. We may have felt like we were in a lion's den. Daniel did experience the lion's den and survived. We can learn from Daniel some helpful qualities which can aid us as we face our lion's den.

I. Daniel Survived the Lion's Den Because He Possessed an Extraordinary Spirit (vs. 3).

- A. The extraordinary spirit which Daniel possessed was God's Spirit. It was not so much that Daniel possessed God's Spirit, but that Daniel allowed God's Spirit to possess him.
- B. About a decade after his expedition, Christopher Columbus wrote: "It was the Lord who put into my mind...to sail to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures..." (Christopher Columbus, *The Book of Prophecies*, New Leaf Press, 1992).
- C. In order to survive the lion's den, we must have God's Spirit within us.

II. Daniel Survived the Lion's Den Because He Had an Honest Lifestyle (vs. 4).

- A. As the commissioners and satraps became jealous of Daniel, they began to do a background check on Daniel to see if they could find anything they could use against him. They found "no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption."
- B. It seems that in our society today some people want to abolish honesty. One noted physician appeared on a network talk show and proclaimed, "Lying is an important part of social life, and children who are unable to do it are children who may have developmental problems."

A *USA Today* poll found that only 56 percent of Americans teach honesty to their children. And a Louis Harris poll revealed the distressing fact that 65 percent of high school students cheat on exams.

III. Daniel Survived the Lion's Den Because He Made a Commitment to Follow God No Matter What the Cost (vs. 10).

- A. Once Daniel heard the decree that no one should bow their knee to anyone except King Darius, Daniel entered his house and began to pray to the Lord. Daniel made a commitment to follow God no matter what the cost.
- B. Polycarp, an early church leader, had served God for 86 years. The authorities came to burn him at the stake for his belief in God. Someone told him that if he would curse God his life would be spared. Polycarp said, "For 86 years God has cared for me and I have served him. He has never done me any harm—why should I forsake Him now?"

IV. Daniel Survived the Lion's Den Because He Trusted in God (vs. 23).

- A. Daniel explained that God sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions.
- B. In his book *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, Brennan Manning tells about an incident which took place when a two-story house caught on fire. The family was making its way out of the house when the smallest boy became terrified and ran back upstairs. Suddenly, he appeared at a smoke-filled window crying hysterically. Standing outside, his father shouted, "Jump, son, jump! I will catch you." The boy cried, "But daddy, I can't see you." "I know," his father called. "But I can see you." That's really all that matters in threatening situations, isn't it? To know that our heavenly Father can see us.

Conclusion:

Through faith and trust in God, we too can survive the lion's dens that may come into our lives.

GOD HAS SPOKEN

Hebrews 1:1-4

Introduction:

In his play, "Sweet Bird of Youth," Tennessee Williams has a scene in which a character says: "I believe that the silence of God, the absolute speechlessness of Him, is a long, long and awful thing that the world is lost because of."

The Lord God is not silent, however. The book of Hebrews begins with an affirmation about God speaking. It not only states that God has spoken, but tells us how He does.

I. God Has Spoken Progressively.

- A. The Bible is a book of progressive revelation.
 1. The writer of Hebrews stated that the Lord spoke in "many parts" and in "many ways" (vs. 1a).
 2. Progressive revelation means that God began speaking to man on the level of his understanding and added to that. Thus God moved from elementary truth to full truth.
- B. In His progressive revelation, God spoke finally in Jesus Christ.
 1. The writer said that finally God "Son spoke" (vs. 2). Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation (John 1:1, 14).
 2. The final word has not yet been spoken or written in so many areas of human investigation and research. However, the Lord God has spoken finally in His Son. We have not understood all He has said, but the Lord adds nothing new to what He has spoken. God continues to speak, but what He now says comes out of what He has already said.

II. God Has Spoken Powerfully.

- A. The spoken word has great power. To speak a word is to release energy, for it prompts action.
- B. The word the Lord God has spoken is powerful.

1. First, His word is powerful because of the One who declared it. It is the word of the Sovereign God of the universe (vs. 3a).
 2. Second, His word is described as a powerful word (Hebrews 4:12). God's word is powerful because it is alive and active.
- C. The power of God's word is proven in human experience.

A man who had secretly embezzled funds from his employers was shaving with a long blade in a Chicago hotel room. Needing something to wipe the lather from the blade, he casually tore a page from a Gideon Bible. As he wiped, his eyes focused on words on the page. They were Romans 6:23. Like a silver arrow from heaven's bow, those words struck his heart with convicting power. He knelt and committed his life to Christ, then returned home to make restitution.

III. God Has Spoken Personally.

- A. God spoke to "the fathers" and "to us." The writer of Hebrews emphasized the personal dimension in the word the Lord has spoken (vss. 1-2).
- B. Because the Lord has spoken personally, we all have a responsibility. This is one of the emphases in the book of Hebrews. It is a "word of exhortation" (vs. 13:22); thus we have the responsibility to hear (vs. 2:1) and to heed (vs. 12:25) the word God has spoken to us.

Conclusion:

The character in Williams' play was wrong when he spoke of the silence of God. The Lord God has spoken, and He continues to speak through the word He has spoken.

In George Bernard Shaw's play, "St. Joan," King Charles says to Joan of Arc during her trial, "Your voices! Your voices! I'm sick of your voices! Why don't they come to me? I'm the king, not you!" Joan responds by saying that they do come, but he does not hear them for he has not sat, listening to them. And, what about you?

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IT CAN BE BAD TO BE GOOD

Luke 18:9-14

Introduction:

The prayers of children are simple and to the point. One little girl prayed: "Dear God, make all the bad people good, and all the good people nice." Sometimes good people are not very nice.

This was true of a Pharisee. He was a good man. His prayer was a self-eulogy. He saw himself as the best man in town, and he was proud of it.

With all his goodness, however, the man was not very nice. This man, and his kind, teach us that it can be bad to be good.

I. Goodness Should Be Commended.

- A. There were some commendable things about this Pharisee.
 1. First, he was moral. He had a concept of right and wrong, and he lived by it. This is refreshing in a day of relative morality and situational ethics.
 2. Second, he was religious. In the practice of his religion, he didn't do just what was required, but did more.
- B. There is nothing wrong with praising excellence in others. One of our greatest failures is withholding words of praise until those it would have blessed can't hear them.

II. Goodness Can Be Condemnable.

- A. First, when it is spoken.
 1. The Pharisee's prayer was nothing but bragging about his goodness.
 2. If you are good, you don't need to say so. If you feel the need to say so, there's some doubt about it. James Richardson said, "I never met a man who said he was good who really was."
- B. Second, when it is superficial.
 1. The Pharisee's goodness was only skin deep. It was moral and religious cosmetic that covered up a bad character.

2. Jesus condemned the righteousness of the Pharisees because of its superficiality (Matthew 5:20).
 3. Anyone can do good when the situation demands it. Real goodness comes from heart.
- C. Third, when it is superior.
1. The Pharisee thought he was better than others because he did better.
 2. Self-worth is not related to behavior but being. To be sure, the person who lives right is worth more to society than one who doesn't. But the sinner is as precious to God as the saint.
 3. One of the most despicable character of all is the one who thinks he's better than anyone else.
- D. Fourth, when it is self-centered.
1. The Pharisee's goodness was selfish. He was good in order to make himself look good and be acceptable to God. He said nothing about doing good to others.
 2. Jesus taught that true goodness is not strict adherence to laws but the service of love. It is not being good for personal reasons but doing good for the sake of others. Paul contrasted the badness of the sinful nature with the nature Christ gives (Gal. 5:19-23).

Conclusion:

The experience of the Pharisee teaches that it's possible to be good and still be bad. It also teaches that you can be good and still go to hell.

There are three lessons to be learned. First, all people need to be saved, even good people. Second, goodness can never save a person. That also means that badness can never send a person to hell. Third, a person can be lost and not know it.

The basic question is not how good or bad are you. The basic question is whether you have accepted Christ as your Savior or not.

THE MISSING MEMBER

John 20:19-29

Introduction:

The First Day Absentists is the largest religious group in the U. S. Its membership is made up of church members who are absent on Sunday.

Thomas was the founding father of the First Day Absentists. He was absent the first time the resurrected Christ met with His disciples.

I. Thomas Was Expected to Be Present.

- A. The other disciples expected him to be present.
 1. He was one of the twelve—they had a right to expect him to attend.
 2. Church members have the right to expect other members to be present. One of the purposes for coming together is to encourage one another (Heb. 10:25). When a member is absent, it discourages.
- B. The Lord Jesus expected him to be present.
 1. Jesus came and met with the disciples. He had promised to meet them in Galilee, but He surprised them.
 2. The Lord's purpose in coming was two-fold: first to comfort (vs. 19); second, to commission (vs. 21).

II. Thomas Failed to See the Reasons to Be Present.

- A. He thought the Lord was dead. Christ was alive and had been seen by Mary and the two on the Emmaus Road. However, the disciples didn't believe this at first (Luke 24:11).
- B. It is obvious that many people today fail to see the importance of church attendance.
 1. Every church today has an absenteeism problem.
 2. This absenteeism speaks volumes—not so much about the failure of churches to provide what people need, but

about the spiritual condition of the people.

3. When a church member puts other things before church attendance, he is saying that church isn't important, or at least not as important as something else.

C. There are good reasons to be present.

1. The Bible commands attendance (Heb. 7:25).
2. The Lord is alive, and worship is a celebration of our faith.

III. Thomas Lost Because He Wasn't Present.

- A. His own needs went unmet because he didn't attend.
 1. Thomas needed to know that Jesus was alive. He lived in his doubt and grief for a week (John 20:26).
 2. We all have needs to which God can minister in worship. If we are not present, those needs go unmet.
- B. The Bible shows what Thomas missed because he wasn't present that evening.
 1. He missed God (vs. 19, 24). A person called the church Franklin D. Roosevelt attended and asked, "Will the president be present today?" The response was, "I don't know, but the Lord will be there."
 2. He missed gladness (vs. 20).
 3. He missed a gift (vs. 22).

Conclusion:

The bulletin board of a church listed the sermon topics for Sunday. It read:

A.M. "The Church"

P.M. "Playing Second Fiddle"

Are you a member of the First Day Absentist? What does your record of church attendance say about your devotion to the church and the Lord of the church?

A SUCCESSFUL SERVICE

Acts 10:24-35; 44-48

Introduction:

A family of four had just returned from the Sunday morning worship service and were eating their noon meal. They were talking about the service. The mother criticized the choir, the teenage daughter the instrumentalists, and the father the preacher. The small son said, "I thought it was a pretty good show for a quarter." How do you judge a service to be successful or not?

The text is a record of a successful service. It was successful because of:

I. The Participation in the Service.

- A. The house was filled with people.
 - 1. Peter was greeted by a large gathering of people (vs. 27).
 - 2. That's the way it should be (Hebrews 7:25). God is honored by His people being present for worship.
- B. Consider two facts about the participants.
 - 1. First, the people were invited. Cornelius was the host, and the people present had been invited by him (vs. 24). Vance Havner said, "The preacher is to fill the pulpit, and the people are to fill the pews."
 - 2. Second, the people were interested (vs. 33). Notice, they were "in the sight of God to listen to what God commanded."

II. The Proclamation in the Service.

- A. The proclamation began with a vision.
 - 1. Peter's experience in Joppa was his preparation (vss. 1-23).
 - 2. The preacher must "see" the word he preaches (Amos 1:1).
- B. The proclamation involved a venture.
 - 1. Peter not only went to Caesarea, but ventured to speak for God (vs. 34).

- 2. Consider three facts about his venture. First, preaching is a venture. Second, God calls and sends the preacher. Third, the message must be God's word.

- C. The proclamation anticipated a victory. The Jews with Peter "were astonished" (vs. 45), but Peter wasn't! He had to be told what to do (vs. 29), but he anticipated victory when he did.

III. The Professions in the Service.

- A. The people believed the gospel and were saved.
 - 1. They were waiting to hear how to be saved (vs. 43). When they heard, they believed and were saved. Peter didn't have to give an invitation.
 - 2. This is what can happen when lost people are under the Spirit-led preaching of the gospel.
- B. Consider two facts about the professions.
 - 1. First, the eagerness with which the professions were made. These people were looking for answers; they were waiting to hear what to do. When they heard how to be saved, they were so eager that they didn't wait to be invited to respond.
 - 2. Second, the excitement with which the professions were made (vs. 46). The speaking in tongues was the result of the Holy Spirit, and the tongues were probably their native tongue (Latin) or simply an excited shout of praise. Notice that the tongues were unsought, unexpected, and undemanded.

Conclusion:

How do you judge a service to be successful? We have the report of this service to serve as a standard. The threefold standard is:

- 1. The people were present.
- 2. The word of God was proclaimed.
- 3. The Holy Spirit performed.

RELIGION THAT IS REAL

Matthew 16:13-20

Introduction:

In his book, *Making Religion Real*, Nels Ferré said, "If religion does not seem real to us, the problem is we are not real ourselves. To feel ourselves real is incomparably satisfying." Although Ferré developed his thesis in his own unique way, these statements address an important concern for all believers.

Real religion involves the way we view God, ourselves, and others.

- I. **We Need to See God Through Our Own Eyes.** (The tendency is to see God as others view Him. This leads to uncertainty.)
 - A. Baptists affirm the autonomy of the soul. This means we believe that people can see God for themselves.
 - B. Jesus asked the question, "But whom do you say I am?" Christ wanted to know how the disciples saw Him.
 - C. We have many sources by which we can learn about God: family, church, and the Bible.
 - D. Only when we experience God for ourselves can there be any reality to our religion.
 - E. Only when we see God through our own eyes can there be any certainty about our faith.
 - F. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12). He had seen God through his own eyes.
- II. **We Need to See Ourselves Through the Eyes of Others.** (The tendency is to see ourselves through our own eyes. This leads to hypocrisy.)
 - A. Jesus asked the question, "Whom do men say I am?"
 - B. A line in a poem states, "Oh that God would give us the gift to see ourselves as others see us."

- C. This gift would remind us of our humanity, our weaknesses, and our own dependence upon God.
- D. This view would save us from false piety and hypocrisy.
- E. This view would help us guard our influence.
- F. This view reminds us not to think too highly of ourselves (Romans 12:3).

III. We Need to See Others Through the Eyes of Christ.

(The tendency is to see others through the eyes of others. This leads to prejudice.)

- A. We are all susceptible to peer pressure. We are prone to favor whom our group favors and to dislike whom our group dislikes.
- B. Jesus said to his disciples, "Tell no man that I am Christ" because He knew how they would react.
- C. Jesus saw worth in people like Zaccheus, and the woman caught in the act of adultery.
- D. Jesus saw people in need of redemption, like fields white for the harvest.
 1. Through the eyes of Christ, we will see people as persons whom Christ loves.
 2. Through the eyes of Christ, we will see value in all people.

Conclusion:

A dentist told of a congregation whose pastor always accompanied his members to the dentist's office because they didn't believe in anesthetics or pain-killers. The pastor would have prayer with the patient before the dentist started the dental work. However, according to the dentist, as soon as the pastor would leave, the patient would usually say, "Wait a minute, doc. You have to give me something to kill the pain!"

We can relate to the hollowness one feels when he doubts his own religion. On the other hand, to feel ourselves and our religion as being real is incomparably satisfying.

SEEING LIFE IN A NEW LIGHT

Acts 9:1-9

Introduction:

The spiritual awakening of Paul ironically included a period of three days when he was unable to see. Only one other space of three days duration was of equal importance in the history of Christianity. As Jesus was in the grave for three days, Paul was in physical darkness for three days. In the grave, Jesus' body went through a change, so that on the third day He was resurrected with a spiritual body. By analogy Paul was transformed in a spiritual sense. Although Paul was temporarily blinded, he gained new insight. It appears Paul saw legalistic religion, Jesus, and Gentiles in a new light while he was blinded three days.

I. Paul Saw Legalistic Religion in a New Light.

- A. Paul had outstanding credentials in his religion (Phil. 3:4-6).
- B. Paul had fanatical zeal in defending his religion (Acts 9:1-2).
- C. Paul's religion taught "Thou shalt not kill," but Paul had murder in his heart.
- D. Paul's defense of his religion had turned him into a jealous rage.
- E. Paul saw legalism as a little tinsel for window-dressing of the soul, but the gospel of grace as a means of changing the soul. Christianity is a religion of conscious, not dull conformity.

II. Paul Saw Jesus in a New Light.

- A. Paul perceived Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 17:3).
- B. Paul perceived the words of Jesus as revelation from God (Romans 3:21-22).
- C. Paul perceived the death of Jesus as propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:24-25).
- D. Paul perceived the resurrection of Jesus as the foundation of our hope (I Cor. 15:13-19).
- E. Paul perceived Jesus as the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15).

- F. Paul perceived the name of Jesus as the name above every name (Phil. 2:9-10).
- G. The name of Jesus once so bitter on Paul's tongue was now the sweetener of his spirit.

III. Paul Saw Gentiles in a New Light.

- A. Paul was appointed an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).
- B. Paul understood God's covenant with Abraham as a promise to the Gentiles (Gal. 3:14).
- C. Paul saw Gentiles as people whom God loves (Rom. 10:12).
- D. Paul valued Gentiles as Christian brothers (Philemon 16).
- E. Gentiles, formerly rejected as unclean strangers, were now the objects of Paul's own sacrificial love.

Conclusion:

When one loses his gift of sight, the other senses are enhanced in order to compensate for the loss. In the spiritual realm, thankfully, we don't have to lose our sight to gain insight. Jesus provides corrective lenses. We can develop better perceptions of our faith, our Lord, and others by allowing the spirit of Christ to permeate our being. A song comes to mind that was popular a few years ago:

*I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
I can see clearly now the pain is gone
It's gonna be a bright, bright, sunshiny day.*

HOW TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE CHURCH

Titus 1:5-16, NIV

Introduction:

Unfortunately, Baptist churches are often known for church splits. Once there was a church that was divided into four factions; members were taking other members to court, they were tolerating a man who was married to his father's wife, they were getting drunk at the Lord's Supper, and they were disrupting the church services with controversies over speaking in tongues. Where was this church? It was the church at Corinth in the New Testament! The apostle Paul had a church troubleshooter. His name was Titus. Paul used him in Corinth (2 Cor. 7:6-13) and again in Crete to "straighten out the church."

How do you straighten out the church? Let's look at the problem and then the solution.

I. The Problem: Deceptive Leadership (vss. 10-16).

- A. **Greedy** (vs. 11b). The leaders in Crete desired dishonest gain (KJV "filthy lucre").
- B. **Disobedient** (vs. 16). Paul lists numerous examples of this disobedience in vss. 10-16.
 1. "Rebellious people, mere talkers" (vs. 10).
 2. Paul quoted the Cretan poet Epimenides who said that Cretans were liars, evil, and lazy. Apparently some of their church leaders fit the words of their own poet!
 3. "Minds and consciences corrupted" (vs. 15).
 4. "Detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good" (vs. 16).
- C. **Teaching "works salvation"** (vss. 10-15). There are several clues which reveal that these leaders were teaching a Jewish legalism, a salvation by works:
 1. Reference to the "circumcision group" in v. 10, who believed circumcision

was necessary for salvation (see Acts 15:1).

2. They needed rebuke to be "sound in the faith" (vs. 13).
3. They taught "Jewish myths" (vs. 14). Jesus condemned the Jewish "traditions of men" which burdened people with a fruitless effort to be made right with God by keeping the law.

II. The Solution: Blameless Leadership (vss. 5-9).

- A. **Blameless with his own household** (vs. 6). Literally the Greek says the leader is to be a "one woman man." "Faithful children" (KJV) is literally "Children having faith."
- B. **Blameless with God's household** (vss. 7-8). The bishop or overseer is God's "steward." Paul moves from talking about the home (*oikos*) to stewardship of God's household (*oikomonon*). "If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:5).
 1. Negative traits to avoid (vs. 7).
 2. Positive traits to acquire (vs. 8).
- C. **Blameless with God's Word** (vs. 9). "Sound doctrine" is translated literally by NASB and NRSV: "in accordance with the teaching." The correct teaching is salvation by grace through faith. Their sound doctrine must encourage the church and must refute and silence (vs. 11) the false teachers.

Conclusion:

How do you straighten out a church? With Bible-believing, praying, obedient, faithful, humble leaders who teach sound doctrine and lead sound lives. This includes the pastor, church staff, deacons, teachers, mission leaders, and all who hold positions of responsibility in the church.

Let's pray for, support, and be the kind of leaders who keep the church straight on the path to the will of God.

BEHAVIOR FOR BELIEVERS

Titus 2:1-10, NIV

Introduction:

Recently a 27-year-old man in Vermont wrote the following letter to Billy Graham: "I was saved in 1982. I shot out of the gates like a champion racehorse after my salvation, but some time later I began to backslide. I tried to be the ruler of my own life and forced Christ off the throne in my life. For the past 10 years things have gotten progressively worse. I have sunk into a pit of alcoholic binges, violent mood swings, vulgarities and sexual perversion. Last night I saw a broadcast of one of your Crusades. By the end of your message I had collapsed onto my hands and knees. In tears I asked God to be the ruler of my life" ("Thank You for Writing," *Decision*, May 1993, 24).

Christians should live godly lives, and Titus 2:1-10 describes behavior that is right for believers. The key word is "self-control."

I. We Are to Live Self-Controlled Lives.

- A. At every stage of life (vss. 2-6):
 - 1. Older men self-controlled in soberness, dignity, and patient endurance (vs. 2).
 - 2. Older women self-controlled over lifestyle, speech, and addictions (v. 3).
 - 3. Younger women self-controlled over relationships with their own husbands and children, over sexual desires, and over their own homes (vss. 4-5).
 - 4. Younger men self-controlled over deeds, speech, and enthusiasm (vs. 6).
- B. In every circumstance in life (vss. 9-10).
 - 1. Slaves could have rationalized their disrespect or stealing; but even in such unfair circumstances, Christian slaves had to exhibit self-control.
 - 2. Today Christians must show self-control in the face of intolerable circumstances: an unreasonable boss, an unloving spouse, wild kids, and mounting hospital bills

- C. Learned from every good example (vss. 3-4, 6-7). Our nation is crying out for decent role models. We have basketball heroes who boast about going to bed with 2000 women, and politicians who say they only sniffed a little marijuana. We need Christian mentors!
 - 1. Older women teach the younger (vss. 3-4).
 - 2. Older men (Titus) teach the younger (vss. 6-7).

II. We Are to Live Self-Controlled Lives in Order That God Might Be Glorified.

- A. God glorified through His Word (vs. 5). Live self-controlled lives "so that no one will malign the word of God." When we obey the Bible, it reaffirms the truth and power of the Bible and the God who wrote it.
- B. God glorified through His people (vs. 8). Live self-controlled lives "so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us." In the New Testament and today, when people respected the church, they respected God (see Acts 5:13-14).
- C. God glorified through His gospel (vs. 10). Live self-controlled lives "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive." Godly living attracts people to faith in Jesus.

Conclusion:

The cartoon character Ziggy never can win for losing. Once he drove up behind a car at a stoplight and noticed a bumper sticker on the car which said, "Honk if you love Jesus." Ziggy honked and honked. The driver of the car in front got out and smashed his fist through Ziggy's windshield. It seems he forgot he had the bumper sticker.

Whether or not we put it on our bumpers, Christians wear a sticker that proclaims "Jesus is Lord." We are inviting the world to see if we really mean what we say. Let's live up to our bumper stickers so that Jesus will get the glory.

Scholarships and Grants for Mississippi Baptist Church-Related Vocational Students

William Carey College

1995 - 1996

1. **William Carey Baptist Student Scholarships** which range from \$150 to \$300 per year for eligible students who are active members of a Mississippi Baptist church.
2. **William Carey Ministerial and Youth Leadership Grants** which range from \$300 to \$900 per year based on a nomination from a church pastor or minister of a Southern Baptist church. Students must have demonstrated Christ-centered leadership activities in local churches or community-service organizations.
3. **William Carey CRV Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$600 per year for church-related vocation students who enroll at the College.
4. **William Carey Baptist Association CRV Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$700 per year based on a nomination from the Director of Missions in local Mississippi Baptist associations.
5. **William Carey General Studies Scholarships** range from \$300 to \$600 per year for CRV adult students, age 25 or older, who enroll in a CRV concentration area in the Bachelor of General Studies degree program.
6. **William Carey Chorale/Ensemble Scholarships** which total \$450 each year. These awards are based on auditions for church music students conducted by the Dean of the Winters School of Music.
7. **William Carey CRV Dependent Scholarships** are available totaling \$600 each year for sons, daughters, and spouses of pastors, missionaries, ministers, and other full-time employees of local Baptist churches, Baptist Associations, or other Mississippi Baptist or Southern Baptist agencies.
8. **William Carey College Alumni Dependent Scholarships** are available totaling \$300 each year for sons, daughters, brothers or sisters, and spouses of alumni.
9. **William Carey Baptist Association Student Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$700 each year based on a nomination from the Director of Missions in local Mississippi Baptist associations. These scholarships are available to students who are active members of a Mississippi Baptist church.

Southern Baptist CRV students may apply to the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for additional financial aid. The aid supplied by this Board to qualified CRV students comes directly to the students in a monthly check. This aid is applied for in a separate process through the office of the Director of CRV Programs at William Carey College.



Study Where Costs are Lower
and
Scholarships are Higher
at

William Carey College

Comparative Educational Costs at Selected Colleges and Universities — Fall 1994

<u>Institutions</u>	<u>Tuition & Fees</u>	<u>Room & Board</u>	<u>1-Year* Totals</u>	<u>4-Year Totals</u>
1. Spring Hill College	\$12,098	\$4,788	\$16,886	\$67,544
2. Millsaps College	11,904	4,501	16,405	65,620
3. Samford University	8,236	3,566	11,802	47,208
4. Belhaven College	7,620	2,900	10,520	42,080
5. Ouachita University	6,730	3,000	9,730	38,920
6. University of Mobile	5,850	3,480	9,330	37,320
7. Union University	5,780	2,840	8,620	34,480
8. Mississippi College	5,734	2,830	8,564	34,256
9. Tougaloo College	5,925	2,500	8,425	33,700
10. Louisiana College	5,190	2,984	8,174	32,696
11. William Carey College (WCC)	\$4,950	\$2,385	\$7,335	\$29,340
12. Mississippi Comprehensive Universities	\$2,440	\$2,470	\$4,910	\$19,640
13. Mississippi Community Colleges (MCC)	864	1,538	2,402	
14. 2 + CAREY Plan (WCC and MCC)				\$19,474

*Survey of Institutional Financial Aid and Business Offices

- WCC costs are **lower than at 10 other private church-related colleges** in our region.
 - No extra tuition for out-of-state students.
 - Low student to faculty ratio — 16 to 1.
- WCC scholarships, Pell and work service **grants are often higher** than at state universities.
 - Scholarships average over **\$2,000** annually for many students.
 - Pell grants average over **\$1,600** annually for eligible students.
 - Work service grants average **\$1,000** annually.
- Students and parents are learning that enrolling at a Mississippi community college for 2 years before **transferring to Carey for their final 2 years** can result in slightly lower costs than would be incurred at major Mississippi universities over a 4-year period.
- Enroll as a freshman or transfer and try the **2 + CAREY Plan** - you'll like it.

For Admissions, Transfer Credit, and Financial Aid Information Call
Hattiesburg (601) 582-6103 **Gulfport (601) 865-1514**

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

—1 Cor. 1:18

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

—1 Cor. 1:21

“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!

—1 Cor. 9:16

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”

—2 Cor. 4:5