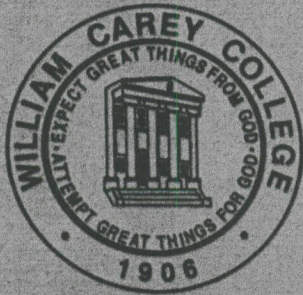


The Carey Pulpit

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



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William Carey College
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**Winter Bible Study Preview
for 1996 Study
of**

AMOS

The Prophet Who Couldn't Be Silenced

Monday, November 27, 1995

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Kresge Room
Thomas Business Building
William Carey College

Led by

Hardy R. Denham, Jr.

Director of Church and Denominational Relations
William Carey College

**For more information or to register,
call (601) 582-6115.**

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ILLUSTRATING THE SERMON

It was in the year 1872 that the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Webster County, Mississippi, called James P. Wofford to be the pastor. Brother Wofford was a "hell-fire and damnation preacher," and when he preached, the congregation trembled.

In the fall of that year, the men of the church harvested their cotton crops and proceeded to take the cotton to West Point, Mississippi, to be sold. The trip by wagon took about two days. Upon arriving in West Point, the farmers sold the cotton. Some of the men suggested that they should reward themselves with a "toddy." Unfortunately, one toddy led to several toddies, and within a few hours, all of the men were drunk.

When the men failed to return on time to the Mt. Pleasant community, a messenger was sent to West Point to find the farmers. To his dismay, the messenger found "sick farmers with horrible hangovers." He quickly returned home and told the tragic news. The wives of the farmers were greatly distressed, and many of them turned to Brother Wofford for counsel and advice. Brother Wofford was appalled at the news, and it grieved him greatly that many of the farmers were deacons in his church. He reassured the weeping wives and told them to make sure their husbands were in church the following Sunday. He promised, "when I get through with them, they will never again drink a drop of liquor."

The word quickly spread about Brother Wofford's promise, and when Sunday arrived, the church was packed to capacity. People were sitting in the windows, and others were standing outside near the doors and windows. The wives were also there with their "sorrowful husbands."

True to his word, Brother Wofford blistered the men with his preaching. He enumerated the evils of alcohol and contended that hell was overflowing with drunkards. As he preached, the men sank deeper into the pews. Imaginations ran rampant, and many of them saw themselves in eternal damnation.

Right in the middle of the sermon, Charles Ewing started to cry. Big tears were seen rolling down his cheeks. His contrition really surprised the congregation because Brother Ewing had not participated in the drinking episode in West Point. Without warning, Charles leaped to his feet, pointed his bony finger at Brother Wofford, and shouted, "Brother Wofford, don't you ever send me to West Point anymore to get your whiskey!"

Brother Wofford would later claim that the liquor was medicine for his wife, Peggy. But the church rejected his claims, and he was dismissed as pastor of the church. Brother Wofford was not known for the doctrine of grace, and he certainly produced a church that was not gracious.

How do we respond as Christians when others have failed? The Apostle Paul offered this wise counsel: "Brothers, if a man is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself; you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). Bible scholars tell us that the word "restore" means "to mend, as a net, or to restore a broken bone." The legalist will condemn the fallen brother, but the Christian will seek to restore. Someone has said, "only church folk shoot their wounded." In some churches that is certainly the prevailing attitude.

My pastor, Dr. Randy Turner, teaches that Galatians 6:1-2 suggests three ways in which to restore the fallen:

1. We restore the fallen gently.
2. We restore the fallen humbly.
3. We restore the fallen sympathetically.

Let's not shoot the wounded, but with God's help, let's restore them. The Biblical record reveals that Jesus took that approach. And I think most of us want to be like Jesus.

THE SAVIOR AND SATAN

Luke 4:1-13

Introduction:

Charles G. Finney was once asked if he believed in a literal devil. He responded that he did and said that he did so for two reasons. One, the Bible says Satan is real, and two, Finney said he had done business with him.

Satan came to Jesus in the wilderness and sought to do business with Him. The Lord Christ rebuffed him. In this encounter, one learns truths about Satan's strategy.

I. Satan's Presence (vss. 1-2a).

- A. Satan was present in the wilderness. Ancient people believed that desert places were the special habitat of demonic spirits. Thus, in a sense, the Lord's encounter with Satan in the wilderness took place on the devil's "home field."
- B. Satan is present and active in the world today. Hal Lindsey wrote the book, *Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth*. I question how well he is, but he is certainly active in the world. Peter described him as a prowling lion seeking prey (1 Peter 5:7).

II. Satan's Purpose (vss. 3-12).

- A. Satan tempted the Lord Jesus. The Greek verb, *peirazo*, means to test. The verb is present tense suggesting continuous tempting. There are two facts about these temptations.
 1. The temptations were real (Hebrews 4:15). This means that Jesus could have yielded to them. He had the power to sin, but He also had the power not to sin. Christ shared man's experience in that he was tempted, and He became man's example in not yielding to temptation.
 2. The temptations appealed to the physical appetite (vs. 3), spiritual ambition (vss. 5-7) and aesthetic nature (vss. 9-10).

B. Satan's purpose in the temptations was to thwart the will of God.

1. The temptations in the wilderness were designed to divert Jesus from doing the will of God. This purpose related to the selfish use of His power, the offer of a political kingdom instead of a spiritual one, and doing the spectacular thing in order to win followers.
2. Satan's purpose regarding people is to keep them from doing what God wills in accepting Christ and being obedient to Him in service.

C. Satan will do anything to achieve his purpose.

1. He takes unfair advantage of a person.
2. He misquotes the Scripture.
3. He creates a sense of doubt.

III. Satan's Persistence (vs. 13).

- A. Satan was rebuffed by Christ. In the encounter with the devil, Christ won and Satan lost. But Jesus did not have any more power or provisions with which to defeat Satan than any believer has. The Lord was empowered by the Holy Spirit and used the Scripture. The same power and "sword of the Spirit" works for us today (Ephesians 6:17).
- B. Satan, though rebuffed, didn't give up. He departed from Christ, but only "for a season." Jesus won the battle, but the war continued. Satan is continuously active today, but his final defeat has already become a matter of record.

Conclusion:

Finney said he did business with the devil. The Lord Jesus also faced him, and He was triumphant.

Satan confronts believers today, but we too can resist him and win.

THE WOMAN WHO GAVE HER BEST

Luke 7:36-50

Introduction:

Malachi censored the people of his time for giving less than their best to the Lord (Malachi 1:7-8). Some people today are content with giving leftovers.

In the text we meet a woman who gave her best to the Lord. Consider:

I. The Basis of the Gift.

- A. The woman gave the ointment because of her love for Jesus. She was "a woman of the city—a sinner" (vs. 37). But she met Christ and experienced the grace of His forgiveness (vss. 41-43). As a result, the woman's heart was filled with love and gratitude, and out of that she gave for Jesus.
- B. Love always motivates a person to give. There are other factors which can motivate one to give, but love is the greatest and most powerful. William Barclay wrote: "Love gives it all and love's only regret is that it has not still more to give" (*The Gospel of John, Vol. II, p. 127*).

II. The Bestowal of the Gift.

- A. The gift was given for Christ. The woman came into the house and washed Jesus' feet with her tears, then used the best she had to anoint the Lord. It was for Him. She did for Him what the host had failed to do (vss. 44-46).
- B. Christian giving is to be for Christ. Many people often think of religious giving in terms of supporting programs and budgets. But when these involve Christian ministries and people who Christ loves, it is for Him (Matthew 25:34-40; Mark 9:41).
- C. The best way to give for Christ is to give through the church. This is true because:
 - 1. First, the church belongs to Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18).

- 2. Second, the Bible commands giving through the church. Paul told the saints in Corinth to give when they met on the Lord's Day (1 Corinthians 16:2).
- 3. Third, the gift is accounted for and properly used when given through the church. The "Electronic Church" receives millions in gifts from TV viewers but never accounts to them about the use of those gifts.

III. The Blessings from the Gift.

- A. The gift resulted in a dual blessing.
 - 1. First, the gift was a blessing for Christ. As noted, the woman did for Jesus what the host had not done (vss. 44-46).
 - 2. Second, the gift resulted in a blessing for the woman. The Lord took note of her act and the love which prompted it (vss. 47-48).
- B. A blessing comes from gifts given for Jesus Christ. The Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The blessing for us is twofold.
 - 1. First, others are blessed through Christian giving. Among other things, giving through the church enables the church to not only minister to a variety of needs where it is located but also makes possible the proclamation of the gospel around the world.
 - 2. Second, the giver is also blessed (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-12).

Conclusion:

The Lord has given His best for us in Christ. Having responded to that Gift, we are to give our best to Him.

DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?

John 5: 1-9

Introduction:

The Lord Jesus asked a sick man a question which, on the surface, seems to be rather stupid. He asked, "Do you want to be healed?" The question brings into focus three truths inherent in any situation needing change. Notice that the question Jesus asked:

I. Admitted a Problem.

- A. The man had a physical infirmity, but he had a problem more serious than his physical affliction. He had an attitude problem.
1. He had an attitude of defeat which produced the spirit of self-pity.
 2. This attitude problem finally caused him to cease trying to get into the pool when the water was stirred.
- B. The biggest problem with most people relates to their attitude. Certainly what happens to a person is a major factor in life. But the most important factor is how the person responds to what happens or the attitude about it. Many situations become impossible because of the attitude people have regarding them.

II. Acknowledged a Possibility.

- A. Healing was possible for the afflicted man. The man had ceased to believe in this possibility. He had given up all hope, having lived with this affliction for 38 years. But Jesus' question implied the possibility of change for him.
- B. Our possibilities are greater than our problems.
1. It is possible for a person to be so focused on his problems that he fails to see any possibility of change.
 2. People are often quick to judge their situations as impossible when they are not. The Lord Jesus, in another situation, affirmed the possibility of change (Mark 9:23).

- C. People need to be aware of the possibilities and not just the problems.
1. First, the awareness of possibilities keeps hope alive.
 2. Second, the awareness of possibilities keeps a person trying, even in the face of failure.

III. Addressed a Person.

- A. The man was the key to the situation. The Lord Jesus was the only One who could heal the infirmed man, but was that what he really wanted? Jesus did not ask him, "Can you be healed?" for that was not the issue. He asked, "Do you *want* to be healed?"
- B. The person involved in a situation is the key to every problem.
1. A popular cliché states, "If it is to be, it is up to me."
 2. Like the infirmed man by the pool, many people today are content to simply wait for someone else to do something for them. Jesus Christ has the power to make a difference, but we must be willing for change to take place.

Conclusion:

Christ confronts people today at the point of their need. He asks, "Do you want to be healed?" His question brings into focus the need and says something can be done about it. But, more than that, it says to the person that the choice about change is ours to make.

FACING THE GREAT NOT YET

John 11:1-12

Introduction:

Everyone faces the great not yet—the future which is yet to come with the factors wrapped up in that future which are now unseen and unknown. The question is, how do we face the great not yet?

In the text, Christ and His disciples faced the uncertainty involved in going to Bethany at the time of Lazarus' death. This episode reveals two negative ways to face the great not yet.

I. We Can Face the Future Presumptuously.

- A. Thomas presumed the outcome of a mission before the mission began.
 1. Jesus had received a message about the illness of Lazarus, with the implied request that He come immediately (vss. 1-3).
 2. There was a two-fold response from the disciples when Jesus finally announced His intention to go to Bethany (vs. 7).
 - a. First, the disciples expressed alarm because of the animosity of the Jews (vs. 8).
 - b. Second, Thomas agreed to go but presumed how that mission would end for them (vs. 16).
- B. People often presume about what the future will be.
 1. Because of the past, we can often predict with some degree of accuracy how the future will be. However, all of us have found that our presumptions about some future event have been wrong.
 2. The Bible warns about being presumptuous about the future (Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-15).
 3. B.O. Plenty in the Dick Tracy comic strip would often say, "I take it for granite." There are things about the great not yet which cannot be taken for granted.

II. We Can Face the Future Pessimistically.

- A. In presuming what the future would be, Thomas expected the worst (vs. 16b). Obviously, some risk was involved in Jesus and His men going to Bethany, so close to the center of Jewish opposition in Jerusalem. Further, the miracle of raising Lazarus was the beginning of the end for Jesus (John 11:47-53). But Thomas was pessimistic about the outcome of the mission before it began.
- B. People have the tendency to be pessimistic about the future. John Powell, in his book *Fully Human, Fully Alive*, wrote: "Sometimes it seems to me that there are two kinds of people. There are those who feel obligated to tell us all the things that can go wrong as we set out over the uncharted waters of our unique lives. Then there are those who stand at the end of the pier cheering us on." What kind of person are you—pessimistic or optimistic?
- C. The posture of pessimism often sets in motion the circumstances which make a reality out of the worst we can imagine. A mother asked her little girl what kind of day she had. The girl responded, "Oh, it was much better than yesterday." When asked why, the girl said, "Yesterday, I let my thoughts push me around, but today I didn't let them—I pushed my thoughts around instead."

Conclusion:

We are facing the great not yet of our futures. Are you a Thomas, presuming the outcome in advance, and then pessimistically expecting the worst?

CONSEQUENCES AND CURE FOR IMPATIENCE

Numbers 21:4-9

Introduction:

In August of 1982, Harry Douglas Seigler stood trial for the murder and robbery of a Richmond, Virginia, insurance agent. Seigler pleaded innocent to the charge. The jury deliberated for hours. Seigler began fearing the worst. Finally, he grew so impatient that he could wait no longer. In order to avoid possible sentencing to the electric chair, he accepted the state's plea bargain and confessed to the crime. While he and his lawyers were informing the judge of his decision to change his plea, the jurors found him innocent. Although Seigler did not know it in advance, he would have benefitted by waiting on the jury. We often become impatient just as verse four says that the children of Israel became impatient.

I. The Consequences of Impatience (vss. 4-6).

- A. Impatience can lead to grumbling and complaining (vs. 5). The children of Israel were grumbling and complaining about the place they were traveling through, the lack of water, and inadequate food. We may begin to feel that other people have more than we do, and we begin to complain. Maybe we should begin to count the ways God has blessed us.

A mother was very critical of all family members. Her grandson came to visit. As soon as she started her usual criticizing, he said, "Now Grandma, you have 20 minutes to say nasty things about all the people I love, and then we're going to talk about pleasant things." She never used her 20 minutes to badmouth anyone.

- B. Impatience can cause us to say things we may regret (vs. 5). The children of Israel began to say negative things about God and Moses. When we get impatient, we may say things we wish we could take back.

A sign seen in a hotel in Athens, Greece read, "Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11

a.m. daily." Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop a sign read, "Ladies may have a fit upstairs!"

- C. Impatience can lead to both physical and spiritual death (vs. 6). As our hearts become angry, discouraged, and impatient, we are in danger of falling prey to deadly sins which war against the soul. Because the children of Israel ceased to trust God, He allowed them to be delivered over to one of the dangers on the way.

II. The Cure for Impatience (vss. 7-9).

- A. The first step in the cure for impatience is confession of our impatience (vs. 7a). It is never too late to confess our sin to the Lord.
- B. The second step is to look to the Lord for help with our impatience (v. 7b). The Lord is the only one who can help with a sin problem.
- C. The third step is to follow the instructions of the Lord (v. 8). In order for the children of Israel to be healed from the bite of the fiery serpent, they had to follow the instructions of the Lord. What would have happened to Noah and his family if he had not followed the Lord's instructions?
- D. The fourth step is that we must have faith that the Lord can and will cure us (vs. 9). The serpent on the pole did not cure the people. It was only a reminder of the one who stood behind the image. To look at the serpent on the pole was a look of faith to God for healing.

III. Conclusion.

Jesus stated in John 3:14-15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believes may in Him have eternal life" (NASV). The cure for all sin problems is found in Jesus. During those times of impatience, may we look to the Lord for help.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

Jeremiah 13:1-11

Introduction:

God has created us for a purpose. The example of the linen waistcloth illustrates that if something is not used for its created purpose, then it begins to deteriorate and becomes worthless. We can become unusable if we are not fulfilling the purpose for which we were created.

A house that is unoccupied tends to deteriorate faster than one which is occupied. If we are not occupied as Christians with the Lord and His purpose for our lives, then our Christian lives may deteriorate.

I. God Created His People for a Purpose (vs. 11).

- A. We are created to cling to God (vs. 11a).
God seeks to draw us near to himself just as this waistcloth clung to the body. We must voluntarily bind ourselves to him in love, devotion, submission, and obedience.
- B. We are created to be his people (vs. 11b).
We are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9-10).
- C. We are created for renown (vs. 11c).
The word translated "renown" literally means "name." Until the year 1100, most people in Europe had only one name. But with an increase in the population, surnames were added so people could be more easily identified. These came from four primary sources: an occupation, such as Cook or Miller; a location, such as Overhill or Brook; an ancestor, such as John's son (Johnson); and personal characteristics, such as Small, Short, or Longfellow. When God named His people, He looked past occupations, locations, and ancestors and based the new name on the character of one man: Jacob. One day in a wrestling match with God Himself, Jacob insisted that the Lord bless

him. So God changed his name from Jacob (trickster) to Israel, which means "he fights or prevails with God."

- D. We are created for praise (vs. 11d).
- E. We are created for God's glory (v. 11e).

II. Sometimes His People Reject His Purpose (vs. 10).

- A. Israel refused to listen to God's words (vs. 10a). Many people have neglected the will of God for their lives.
- B. Israel walked in the stubbornness of their hearts (vs. 10b). The idea is that they willfully resisted God.
- C. Israel went after other gods (vs. 10c).

III. There Are Consequences for Rejecting His Purpose.

- A. When we are not fulfilling His purpose, we have essentially placed an "out of order" sign on our lives.
- B. When we are not fulfilling His purpose, we become useless in His kingdom.

IV. His Purpose Can Be Rediscovered.

- A. The way to usefulness involves confession of our sinfulness, repentance of our sinfulness, listening to God, walking in His way, and serving Him alone.
- B. A number of years ago, Corrie ten Boom spoke at a college. She illustrated her address with various common articles. One of these was a worn-out leather glove. She held it up to show how limp it was, and then she put her hand in it. With her gloved hand, she picked up a Bible and performed all sorts of actions. The point was simple. If Christ is in us, He can do all things through us. Without Him we are as helpless as the limp glove.

Conclusion:

It is exciting to know that we can experience God's purpose for our lives. Let us trust Him today and allow His purpose to control us.

PRINCIPLES OF A GROWING CHURCH

Acts 2:36-42

Introduction:

The late Sam Walton became a giant in the retail market because he applied the right principles in his business. If churches are going to grow today, the right principles must also be applied. I believe we find these principles within our text. Consider with me three principles of a growing church.

I. The First Principle for a Growing Church Is A Clear Rendering of God's Word (vss. 36-40).

- A. The first Christian church in the New Testament had a clear rendering of God's word (vss. 38-40).
 1. Peter preached repentance (vs. 38). He called the people to a change of mind that would lead to a change in action.
 2. Peter urged the lost to be saved (vs. 40). There was a sense of urgency in Peter's preaching of the Word.
 3. Peter gave the people the opportunity to respond to God's word. He was not ashamed to extend an invitation to receive Christ as Lord of life.
- B. If our churches are going to be growing churches, they must present a clear rendering of God's word.
 1. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."
 2. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).
 3. When the Word is presented in a clear and concise manner, the people will respond.

II. The Second Principle of a Growing Church is the Proper Reception of God's Word (vs. 41).

- A. The people gladly received the word of God from Peter (vs. 41).
 1. The people were baptized. These folks expressed their faith in Christ through believers' baptism.
 2. The church grew. The book of Acts says that 3,000 people received the living word into their lives.
 3. The time is coming when people will not receive God's word (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Therefore, we must be steadfast in the sharing God's word.
- B. If our churches are going to be growing churches (physically and spiritually), our churches must receive the word of God with the right spirit (James 1:21-25).

III. The Third Principle of a Growing Church Is a Continued Response to God's Word (vs. 42).

- A. The people in Acts 2 continued to respond to the word of God (vs. 42).
 1. They continued in the apostles' doctrine. These folks wanted to grow in their faith.
 2. They continued in fellowship with other believers. The people wanted to help each other as they sought to grow in God's will.
 3. They continued in prayer.
- B. If our churches are going to grow, they must continue to grow in the word of God.

Conclusion:

Without the proper rendering of God's word, the proper reception of God's word, and the proper response to God's word, our churches will not experience the right kind of growth.

A GOD WHO RESPONDS

Exodus 3:1-8

Introduction:

A volunteer fireman was called to a home that was burning. He responded by saying, "I'm too busy to come right now." I'm glad that as Christians we serve a God who is never too busy to respond to His people's needs. God is in the business of responding to His people. How does God respond to His people?

I. God Responds to His People by Being Attentive to Their Needs (vs. 7).

A. God was attentive to the Israelites' needs (v. 7a).

1. God saw the affliction of the Israelites.
2. God heard the cry of the Israelites.
3. God knew the sorrow of the Israelites.

B. God is also attentive to our needs.

1. He sees our affliction
2. He hears our cries.
3. He knows our sorrows The psalmist said, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry....The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them our of their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Ps. 34:15, 17-18).

II. God Responds to His People by Rescuing Them from Their Troubles (vs. 8a).

A. God rescued the children of Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians.

1. God said, "I am come down to deliver them" (vs. 8a).
2. God used His servant Moses to rescue the children of Israel (vs. 10).

B. God can rescue us.

1. He can rescue us from our enemies (2 Timothy 4:18).
2. He can rescue us from temptation (2 Peter 2:9).

3. He can rescue us from a den of lions (Daniel 6:16-22).
4. We should always remember that we serve a God who can rescue us from any trial. The Apostle Paul said, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

C. We must be patient as we wait upon God to rescue us (Romans 8:25).

III. God Responds to His People by Guiding Them in the Right Direction (vs. 8b).

A. God wanted to guide the children of Israel into a land flowing with milk and honey (vs. 8b).

1. This was a land of blessing rather than curse.
2. This was a land filled with plenty.

B. God also wants to guide us in the right direction.

1. He wants to guide us in the way of peace (Luke 1:79).
2. He wants to guide us in the truth (John 16:13).
3. He wants to guide us to safety (Psalm 23:2).

Conclusion:

Unlike the fireman who wouldn't respond to the house fire, our God will respond to His people by being attentive to their needs, by rescuing them from their troubles, and by guiding them in the right direction.

TURNING TRIALS INTO BLESSINGS

2 Kings 4:1-7

Introduction:

It is evident that the "certain woman" in our text was in deep distress, facing a great trial in her life. Her circumstances weighed heavy upon her mind. Not only was her husband dead, she was deeply in debt, and the creditor was coming to take away her sons as slaves. She had nowhere to turn but to the Lord. God turned this woman's trial into a blessing. You may be going through trials in your life. God can turn your trials into blessings. How can your trials be turned into blessings?

I. God Can Turn Your Trials into Blessings when You Express to Him Your Present Situation (vs. 1b; 2b).

- A. The woman expressed her present situation to Elisha.
 1. She didn't make excuses.
 2. She told him of her exact situation.
- B. You must express your present situation to God.
 1. Don't make excuses.
 2. Tell God exactly what you are going through.

II. God Can Turn Your Trials into Blessings When You Listen for His Instructions (vss. 3-4).

- A. Elisha informed the woman what she must do in response to her situation (vs. 3).
 1. He told her to go to "all" of her neighbors.
 2. He told her to go and borrow "every" empty vessel she could get.
- B. In His word, God informs you what you must do in response to your situations.
- C. When God informs you as to what you must do, you must trust Him for the results!

III. God Can Turn Your Trials into Blessings when You Obey His Instructions (vss. 5-7).

- A. The woman obeyed Elisha's instructions (vs. 5b).
 1. She began pouring the oil.
 2. She filled vessel after vessel until all were filled, and yet her first pot remained full.
- B. She was blessed as a result of her obedience to Elisha's instructions.
 1. She had enough oil to sell and pay her debt (vs. 7b).
 2. She had enough money left over for her and her sons to live on (vs. 7b).
- C. If your trials are to be turned into blessings, you must obey God's instructions
 1. God often uses our trials as a means of proving our faith, and He uses this genuine faith to bring Him praise, honor, and glory (2 Peter 1:6-7).
 2. God also uses the trials of life to develop within us "perseverance" or "patience." This "patience" leads to Christian maturity (James 1:2-3).
 3. Since trials have the potential to honor God and mature the believer, we can better understand James' admonition "consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2).

Conclusion:

God turned this woman's trial into a blessing, and He can turn your trials into blessings. You may say, "I can't afford to do everything God says!" But I say to you, "Can you afford not to?"

LEADING LOST SOULS TO THE LORD

Acts 8:26-40

Introduction:

Several years ago, a major pipeline company that I worked for had a job opening for a maintenance worker. It did not take long for this position to be filled. We immediately noticed something about this new worker. He was polite and didn't drink, smoke, curse, or talk dirty. We soon discovered that he was a Christian.

During break one morning, I asked him what he did in his leisure time. He responded by saying that he liked to fish for trout and for men. Being an avid fisherman, I knew about trout fishing. But what did he mean by "fish for men"? It was then that he told me he was a "soul winner."

Philip was a soul winner. We need to be soul winners. How can we lead lost souls to the Lord?

I. We Can Lead Lost Souls to the Lord by Looking for Opportunities to Witness.

A. Philip was a soul winner who looked for opportunities to witness.

1. He witnessed in Samaria to many people.
2. He witnessed in the desert to the Ethiopian eunuch.

B. We need to go beyond the confines of the church to tell others about Jesus.

1. If we are sincere about the lost, we will look for opportunities to win them to Christ.
2. In Matthew 28:16 Jesus gave us the "Great Commission," not the "Great Omission."

II. We Can Lead Lost Souls to the Lord by Demonstrating Concern for Them (vs. 30).

A. Philip demonstrated his concern for the Ethiopian eunuch by asking him if he understood what he was reading from the book of Isaiah.

B. Philip did not assume that the eunuch was a Christian because he was reading the Word of God.

1. He asked the man a question and was then invited to explain the passage of Scripture.
2. Philip was led by the Holy Spirit as he explained the Scripture passage.

C. We must not assume that everyone who carries a Bible or goes to church is a born-again believer.

III. We Can Lead Lost Souls to the Lord by Preaching Jesus (vss. 35-38).

A. The Scripture says that Philip "opened his mouth and preached Jesus." He explained the Isaiah passage to the eunuch by proclaiming Jesus.

B. He preached to the eunuch the same message he had preached to the Samaritans. He preached Jesus and Him crucified (see Acts 4:12).

C. Today, we don't see many souls won to Christ.

1. Many Christians are more concerned with *denomination* than *salvation*!
2. Many Christians are more concerned with Bible *versions* than *conversions*!

D. We need to preach Jesus to a lost world.

Conclusion:

Philip led the eunuch to the Lord. You and I can lead lost souls to the Lord. How? By looking for opportunities to witness, demonstrating concern for the lost, and by preaching Jesus.

By the way, I came to know Jesus as my Savior because of the new worker we hired. He told me about Jesus!

WHAT CHILDREN REALLY WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Matthew 2:1-11

Introduction:

What are your children getting for Christmas? If you are like the average person, you will devote a lot of time searching for the *perfect* gift for your child. We need to consider what our children *really* want for Christmas.

Our text presents the familiar story of the three wise men traveling from the East to worship the baby Jesus. Upon arrival, these men presented the baby Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was the gift for a king. Frankincense was symbolic of prayer. Myrrh was used to embalm the bodies of the dead and was a symbol of suffering. With these gifts, the wise men recognized Jesus as their King, God, and Savior.

What kind of gifts will you give your children this Christmas? There are some gifts that will cost us nothing, but our children will appreciate them greatly.

I. The Gift of Time.

- A. Ephesians 5:16 says, "Make the most of your time, because the days are evil." Time is precious. Parents need to consider giving their children the gift of time for Christmas. Before long, they will be grown and gone.
- B. Soon after the birth of my daughter, one of our deacons said to me, "Pastor, enjoy that baby girl while she's young. She won't be that way for long." He had a daughter, and he knew just how quickly they grow up. For this reason, we need to consider giving our children the gift of time for Christmas.

II. The Gift of Love.

- A. I Corinthians 13:13 says, "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Love is the greatest thing on earth. That is why it is so sad that many children are reared with very little love.

- B. Many children grow up feeling inferior because they were never told they were loved. A few years ago during the Christmas season, our family had a family night. We popped popcorn and watched "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer." I have heard the song and watched the show numerous times, but it touched me more this time. There is a scene where Rudolph is told he can no longer participate in any reindeer games because he has a funny nose. With all the other reindeer laughing, you see agony all over Rudolph. You really feel for him. Even his parents were ashamed of him.

Many children grow up like Rudolph. They feel inferior, left out, and worthless. Their parents never accepted them, and they never told them they loved them. We think that our actions speak for us. For instance, we feel if we provide for our children, we are expressing love. Or, if we buy them nice gifts, it will make up for the time we didn't spend with them; however, nothing speaks as well as the words, "I love you."

III. The Gift of Jesus.

- A. It is a pity that we have taken our Lord's birthday and turned it into a great party where He is all but forgotten. We devote so much time to shopping, eating, and going that we fail to tell our children about the true meaning of Christmas.
- B. The greatest gift you can give your children this Christmas is the gift of Christ. Dedicate your home to Christ and live for Him.

Conclusion

Christmas is a time for giving. Yet, there are some gifts we can give our children that cost nothing—the gift of time, the gift of love, and the gift of Christ. Your children want and need these gifts.

HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Romans 12:3-8

Introduction:

1995 is coming to a close. We will soon put up the new 1996 calendars. As we do, we will wish many people a "Happy New Year." In so doing, we are hoping they are healthy and enjoy happiness during the coming 12 months.

What makes one happy? It is not necessarily found in getting a promotion, buying a new automobile, moving into a new home, etc. Happiness involves becoming a better Christian person.

In our text, the Apostle Paul compared the church of Christ to the human body. In making this comparison, he gave us three steps to happiness. For a few moments, consider these steps to happiness.

I. Know Yourself (vs. 3).

- A. Know your limitations. The Apostle Paul said, "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think." In other words, don't think you are more important than you really are! Some people have an inflated opinion of themselves.
- B. Know your expectations. Most people do not realize their potential. When God saved you, he gave you a gift. He expects you to use that gift in His service. If you are going to be happy in the Lord, you must know who you are and be who you are. Vance Havner said, "If you try to be everything to everybody, you end up being nothing to anybody."

II. Accept Yourself (vss. 4-5).

- A. Paul goes on to add, "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function." Paul is saying that everyone is not alike! We are different. Not everyone is an arm or a leg or some other part of the human body. A key to happiness is accepting yourself as you are. Don't worry about fitting in with the crowd.
- B. I love to be around happy, optimistic, positive people—people who are

satisfied and content with life. I was talking with one such man about his impending retirement from an active ministry in small churches. I asked him if he regretted never pastoring any larger churches. He replied, "A long time ago I made a decision that I knew could limit me in my ministry. I know that very few large churches would be interested in me. However, I also knew someone had to pastor these smaller churches."

III. Involve Yourself (vs. 6).

- A. Paul adds in verse six, "Let each exercise them accordingly." Paul has just said that everyone has different gifts. He goes on to list eight gifts of the Spirit that are given to God's people to be used in His service. The point is that we should get involved in God's work. Get involved in the work of this church community. Don't complain because you feel you've been dealt a bad hand. Help someone.
- B. Some are like a lady I read about:
*Here lie the bones of Nancy Jones.
For her, life held no terror.
She lived an old maid.
She died an old maid.
No hits, no runs, no errors!*
- C. Albert Schweitzer spoke to the graduating class at an English boys' school in 1935. His words are still fresh and relevant after almost 60 years:
*I do not know what your destiny will be.
Some of you will perhaps occupy remarkable positions. Perhaps some of you will become famous by your pen or as artists. But I know one thing: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."*

Conclusion:

Everyone wants to be happy. To do so, follow three simple steps: Know yourself, accept yourself, and involve yourself.

Scholarships and Grants for Church Related Students William Carey College 1996-1997

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION (MBC) students may apply for William Carey College tuition and leadership scholarships ranging from \$750 to \$2,000 per academic year (1, 2, and 8 below).

CHURCH RELATED VOCATION (CRV) students may apply for William Carey College scholarships ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per academic year (1, 3 or 4, 5 and 8).

CHURCH RELATED VOCATION DEPENDENT (CRVD) students may apply for William Carey College scholarships ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per academic year (1, 6, 7, and 8 below).

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1. **Baptist Student Tuition Scholarships** range from \$250 to \$500 per year for students who are recommended by a pastor of a Mississippi Baptist church.
 2. **Baptist Association Student Scholarships** range from \$250 to \$500 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.
 3. **CRV Tuition Scholarships** range from \$500 to \$1,000 per year for church-related vocation students who enroll at the College.
 4. **CRV General Studies Tuition Scholarships** range from \$500 to \$1,000 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.
 5. **Baptist Association CRV Student Scholarships** range from \$500 to \$1,000 per year based on a nomination from the Director of Missions in local Mississippi Baptist associations.
 6. **CRV Dependent Student Tuition Scholarships** range from \$500 to \$1,000 each year for sons, daughters, and spouses of pastors, missionaries, and other full-time ministerial employees of local Baptist churches, Baptist Associations, or other Mississippi Baptist or Southern Baptist agencies.
 7. **Baptist Association CRV Dependent Student Scholarships** range from \$500 to \$1,000 each year for sons, daughters, and spouses of pastors, missionaries, and other full-time ministerial employees of local Baptist churches, Baptist Associations, or other Mississippi Baptist or Southern Baptist agencies.
 8. **Church Leadership Grants** range from \$250 to \$1,000 per year based on a nomination from a church pastor or minister of a Southern Baptist church. Students must have demonstrated leadership abilities in Acteens, RAs, Baptist Student Union, and summer missions or similar activities in community-service organizations.
 9. **Alumni Dependent Scholarships** range from \$250 to \$500 each year for sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, and spouses of alumni.

In addition to the awards shown above, students may be eligible for WCC academic, talent, or leadership scholarships of \$500 to \$6,000; Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grants (MTAG) of \$500 to \$1,000; Eminent Scholar Grants (EMG) of \$2,500; and grants for College Work Service (CWS).

Southern Baptist CRV students may also apply to the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for additional financial aid. This aid is applied for in a separate process through the School of Missions and Biblical Studies at William Carey College.

Guide to Scholarships, Awards, and Grants for 1996-1997

William Carey College makes financial aid commitments to qualified full-time students based on academic achievements, leadership, special talents, and dependents of groups related to its institutional mission. All financial aid commitments are made through the Director of Financial Aid based on recommendations from the scholarship committee, department chairmen, deans of schools, and the athletic director.

The priority application deadline for all freshman scholarships is **February 1**. The priority application deadline for transfer scholarships is **May 1**. Students must be enrolled full-time and must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours each trimester to receive scholarships. Applications received after the above dates will be considered on a funds available basis. Transfer students must attach a copy of their cumulative grade reports or transcripts in order to be considered for a scholarship, award, or grant. Applicants for a Trustee Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship must attach proof of membership.

Financial aid may include scholarships, awards, grants, and loans. Aid based on leadership or special talent such as music, art, theatre, forensics, science, and other academic areas is included in the totals shown below. Scholarships funded directly by the College from endowment, memorial gifts, and annual gifts are also included in the totals shown below.

In addition to the awards shown below, students may apply for **Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grants (MTAG)**, **Eminent Scholar Grants (EMG)**, and **grants for College Work Service (CSW)**, **Church Related Vocation (CRV)**, and **Church Related Vocation Dependents (CRVD) and Alumni Dependent Scholarships (ADS)**.

FRESHMAN STUDENTS		JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGE/TRANSFER STUDENTS	
Trustee Merit Scholars (\$16,000 off campus)	\$24,000	Trustee Phi Theta Kappa Scholars (\$6,000 off campus)	\$10,000
Criteria: ■ National Merit, Achievement Finalists, Semi-finalist, STAR student, or 31 ACT ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.5 ● Participate in Honors Program		Criteria: ■ Membership in PTK or 3.7 GPA with minimum of 60 semester hours ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.5 ● Participate in Honors Program	
Presidential Excellence Scholars (\$12,000 off campus)	\$16,000	Presidential Excellence Scholars (\$4,000 off campus)	\$6,000
Criteria: ■ 28 ACT or valedictorian, salutatorian or top 5% of class ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership or exceptional talent in academic areas* ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area ● Participate in Honors Program		Criteria: ■ Students with 3.4 GPA with 60 semester hours ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ■ Leadership or exceptional talent in academic areas* ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area ● Participate in Honors Program	
Academic Achievement Scholars (\$6,000 off campus)	\$10,000	Academic Achievement Scholars (\$2,000 off campus)	\$4,000
Criteria: ■ 24 ACT or rank in top 10% of class ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership or outstanding talent in academic areas* ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area ● Participate in Honors Program		Criteria: ■ Students with 3.2 GPA with 60 semester hours ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ■ Leadership or outstanding talent in academic areas* ● Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area ● Participate in Honors Program	
Leadership Service Grants (\$2,000 off campus)	\$5,000	Leadership Service Grants (\$1,000 off campus)	\$2,000
Criteria: ■ 21 ACT or rank in top 20% of class ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership talent in service areas ● Maintain overall GPA of 2.8 or 3.0 GPA in major area ● Participate in Student Foundation Service Program		Criteria: ■ Students with 2.8 GPA with 60 semester hours ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ● Maintain overall GPA of 2.8 or 3.0 GPA in major area ● Participate in Student Foundation Service Program	

***All leadership and talent scholars who receive Trustee, Presidential, or Academic Achievement Awards must participate in the Honors Program.**

Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grants (MTAG) are available to freshmen and sophomores for up to \$500 per year and for juniors and seniors up to \$1,000 per year. **Eminent Scholar Grants** are available to eligible freshmen for \$2,500 per year.

Work Service Grants - \$4,000 (freshman) and \$2,000 (transfer). Students living on the Hattiesburg or Gulfport campuses may receive College Work Service Grants of \$1,000 each year in addition to the above scholarships and awards. Off-campus students in Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans are considered for Work Service Grants on a funds available basis.

Athletic scholarships are available in **Basketball - Men's and Women's; Tennis - Men's and Women's; Soccer - Men's and Women's; Baseball - Men; Softball - Women.** Award amounts are recommended by the athletic director. **Athletic grants-in-aid are reduced by the PELL grant awarded each year.**

William Carey College Minister's Golf Tournament

- Location:** Timberton Golf Course, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
- Date:** May 20 and 21, 1996.
(Tournament will begin 1:00 pm Monday and 8:00 am Tuesday.)
- Cost:** \$65 per person.
- Format:** Two man scramble.
- Lodging:** The College will provide free lodging on the campus.
(You will need to bring linens and towels.)
- Dinner:** The College will provide a complimentary meal on Monday evening of the tournament.
- Director:** Ron Hickman (PGA golf pro at Timberton) and his staff will direct the tournament.
- Dress:** Golf collared shirt with slacks or shorts.

Space is limited to 70 golfers. Deposit of \$30.00 is due by April 1, 1996.

For reservations or more information, call (601) 582-6115.