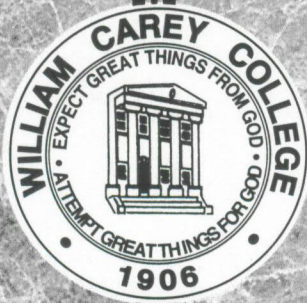


The Carey Pulpit

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



A Ministry of the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies
William Carey College
Hattiesburg, Mississippi
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The Church Related Vocation program continues to experience record enrollment.

In 1990, a total of 48 CRV students were enrolled at William Carey College, and by the fall trimester of 1995, this number reached 188.

As we begin our spring trimester of 1996, we have 193 CRV students actively involved in the church vocation program.

Table of Contents

Larry W. Kennedy

Dean, Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies
William Carey College

From the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical StudiesPage 2

Sermons by Eddie Bates

Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church
Sontag, Mississippi

"A Life-Changing Ministry"Page 3
"God Is With You"Page 4

Sermons by Hardy R. Denham

Director, Church and Denominational Relations
William Carey College

"The Lord Is Here"Page 5
"The Shipwreck of Life"Page 6
"The Shepherd's Love"Page 7
"What Matters Most?"Page 8

Sermons by Chuck Pourciau

Pastor, First Baptist Church
Louisville, Mississippi

"Facing Our Gethsemanes"Page 9
"The Miracle That Didn't Happen"Page 10

Sermons by Frankie Clark

Pastor, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church
Laurel, Mississippi

"Trusting God"Page 11
"Experiencing the Majesty of Jesus"Page 12

Sermon by Kermit McGregor

Pastor, First Baptist Church
Mendenhall, Mississippi

"The Joy of Christian Living"Page 13

Sermon by Bob Rogers

Pastor, First Baptist Church
Poplarville, Mississippi

"Getting Off to a Good Start"Page 14

The response to *The Carey Pulpit* has truly been outstanding. In our first publication, we gave five reasons for its ministry:

1. Provide pastors with new and creative ideas for sermon preparation.
2. Recognize pastors who are doing an outstanding job in sermon preparation.
3. Magnify the task of preaching.
4. Emphasize the importance of homiletics with the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies.
5. Express appreciation to pastors for making a significant contribution to William Carey College.

The many letters and calls from pastors across the Convention clearly show that *The Carey Pulpit* is accomplishing its purposes. Knowing that this publication is making a positive contribution in the area of sermon preparation encourages all of us within the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies. We look forward to working with many of you as we magnify the task of preaching the gospel of Christ.

If you are interest in publishing some of your sermon material, please call me at (601) 582-6115. I'll explain the format that we use for publication.

The Biblical Studies program continues to grow at William Carey College. In the fall of 1990, a total of 28 religion majors were enrolled at the College. Through your support, we saw that number grow to 113 for the fall trimester of 1995, and as we begin this spring trimester of 1996, we have 120 majors. Ministerial students have found a caring community within the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies, and we are excited that we can have a part in seeing these students mature spiritually and intellectually as they seek to be faithful to God's call.

The Church Related Vocation program has also experienced record enrollment. In 1990, a total of 48 CRV students were enrolled at William Carey College, and by the fall trimester of 1995, this number reached 188. As we begin our spring trimester of 1996, we have 193 CRV students actively involved in the church vocation program. All of these CRV students have a letter from their respective pastor stating clearly that they have made a public commitment to full-time church vocation. These students represent the future leaders of our churches, and we believe that they will make a positive difference in the kingdom of God.

Representatives from the SBC seminaries visiting the College for recruiting purposes report that our Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies is one of the largest and most viable religion/CRV programs of any Baptist college within the Convention. This affirmation from our seminaries certainly encourages us to give our best in educating these students for ministry in our SBC churches.

The William Carey College Minister's golf tournament, scheduled for May 20-21, 1996, will be played at the Timberton Golf Course near the Carey Hattiesburg campus. The cost is \$65 for the two-day tournament. If you wish to participate, please contact me, and I'll give you more details concerning the tournament.

Thank you again for supporting all the we are doing at William Carey College. We look forward to providing sermon ideas that will help you in preaching the Word of God.

Larry Kennedy
Dean, Cooper School of
Missions & Biblical Studies

A LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY

Acts 16:6-10

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul had a vision that led to a life-changing ministry in Philippi. If we are to have a life-changing ministry in our world, we must have a similar vision. Consider with me three aspects of the vision that leads to a life-changing ministry.

I. To Have a Life-Changing Ministry, We Must Have a Vision That Prompts Us To Help a Hurting Humanity (vs. 9).

- A. In his vision, Paul saw a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and *help* us." It was the cry of a man in need.
- B. Our world is filled with people who are much like the man in Paul's vision. These folks are hurting and crying out for help.
- C. The unknown poet said it best:

I need a truer vision, Lord. A vision filled with thee, to see the needy world again with eyes willing to see. A world where people are hurting and hungry every day, a world that is ready and waiting to hear what you would say. I need a wider vision, Lord, a vision filled with thee. To see that lonely woman down the street from me, the teenager that's all mixed up, the child that's been abused, the daily cares in my neighborhood. Lord, I want to be used. Give me a new vision, Lord. A vision filled with Thee, to see the world and my neighborhood as Your eyes would see. Help me use my gifts, dear Lord, in ways that glorify You, to act with loving kindness toward those with a different view. A truer, wider new vision, Lord. That's what I need. To carry out Your command in word and thought and deed (*Dimension*, Winter 1986).

II. To Have a Life-Changing Ministry, We Must Have a Vision That Propels Us To Respond With Urgency (vs. 10a).

- A. The text says that "when he had seen the vision, *immediately* we sought to go into Macedonia." Paul and his disciples responded with urgency.
- B. People in our world are in crisis and are in need of help. As Baptists we often get caught up in planning and praying and forget to act. Planning and praying are integral parts of effective ministry, but without action, they accomplish very little.
- C. The church must respond with urgency to the needs of people. All it takes is commitment and compassion on our parts. Dwight L. Moody once said, "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And that which I can do, by the grace of God I will do."

III. To Have a Life-Changing Ministry, We Must Have a Vision That Promotes the Sharing of the Gospel (vs. 16:10b).

- A. Dr. Luke captured the essence of the vision when he concluded that "God had called us to preach the Gospel to the Macedonians."
- B. We would be amiss in our duties as Christians to simply provide food, clothing, and shelter for a hurting humanity and overlook the need for a spiritual rebirth.
- C. A man was driving through a mining region of West Virginia. As he drove along, he noticed a field that was filled to capacity with mules. When he inquired about the mules, he was told that the mules were work animals from the mine. Periodically, the mules had to be brought up from the darkness of the mine and into the light or they would go permanently blind. Our world must be exposed to the light of the gospel or it will be permanently lost.

GOD IS WITH YOU

Jeremiah 1:4-19

Introduction:

Loneliness is a condition that plagues a great deal of society. It is an emotion that virtually everyone experiences to varying degrees at one time or another in life. Loneliness, according to many health care professionals, is the major cause of depression and suicide. One psychologist described America as "the lonely crowd."

Although loneliness can be just as real for the Christian as it is for the non-Christian, it should not be a defeating experience for the Christian.

As God called Jeremiah to service, He assured him that He would be with him. As Christians, we have that same assurance. I want to share with you some specific times when you can be assured that God is with you.

I. You Can Be Assured that God Is With You When You Proclaim the Truth (vss. 4-8).

- A. God called Jeremiah to go and speak His word. God assured him that He would be with him. Jeremiah's message was not popular with the people; however, the Lord was with His prophet.
- B. When we take a stand and speak for Christ, our message is often not popular with the world. The "Good News" is not good news to everyone. But like Jeremiah, we can be assured that God is with us.
- C. When Joshua was told by God that he was to be the leader of the people, he experienced the loneliness of leadership; however, God quickly spoke to his feeling of loneliness when He said, "...as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5).

II. You Can Be Assured That God Is With You When You Position Yourself Against Evil (vss. 17-18).

- A. In verse 17 the Lord tells Jeremiah to "Gird up his loins and arise, and He would make him like a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze."

God told the prophet that when he positioned himself on the side of righteousness, He would be with him.

- B. As Christians, we need to position ourselves against the evils of the world. When we do this, we can be assured that the God of creation is with us (Matthew 5:10).
 - C. Prior to his crucifixion, Jesus encouraged His fearful disciples with these words: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he shall abide with you for ever...I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:16, 18).
- ### III. You Can Be Assured That God Is With You When You're Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake (vs. 19).
- A. In verse 19 God tells Jeremiah that those whom he would speak against would fight against Him; however, they would not overcome him because He would be with him. Jeremiah would be persecuted and ridiculed, but he would not be overcome.
 - B. When we proclaim the truth, we will be persecuted. But through it all, we can rest in the truth that God is with us.
 - C. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."
 - D. The Apostle Paul was persecuted for righteousness. In the face of persecution, he wrote, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me: that by me the preaching might be fully known..." (2 Timothy 4:17).

Conclusion:

Regardless of how alone you may feel, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal savior, you are in the company of the King. As Christians we claim the promise of Christ: "...and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

THE LORD IS HERE

Genesis 28:10-22

Introduction:

Flora Goforth is the central character in Tennessee Williams' play, *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. She is an explosive, vulgar showgirl who has gone through six husbands, living a dissolute, frivolous life. At the end of the play, Flora is dying in a mountaintop villa in Italy. With her bejeweled fingers, she clutches at life and shrieks, "Bring God to me!...How do you do it, whistle, ring a bell for Him?"

Many people think of God as being way off somewhere while they are down here in the crises of life. And like Flora, some in their anguish cry, "Where is God? Bring Him to me!" The fact is, however, that the Lord God is already here.

When Jacob in his flight stopped for the night, he discovered that God was right there.

I. The Place of God's Presence.

- A. The place of God's presence was a lonely one.
 1. Jacob was away from family and home in a lonely place named Luz. Loneliness was man's first problem in the world (Genesis 2:18), and many people today deal with it.
 2. The Lord God is in the lonely places of life. Some places are called "God-for-saken," but what place really is? In Psalm 139:7-9 the psalmist wrote about the "everywhereness" of God. Even Death Valley was called *La palma de la monos de Dios* (the palm of God's hand) by the Mexicans.
- B. The place of God's presence was associated with failure.
 1. Jacob had failed in life. He had cheated his brother and deceived his father.
 2. Many people today are so acquainted with failure they know it by its first name. James Dobson wrote about people looking for success who "realize too late that they have frantically climbed the ladder of success, only to discover that it was leaning against the

wrong wall" (*Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives*, p. 181).

3. However, the Lord God does not reject failures and can be found in places representing failure.

II. The Perception of God's Presence.

- A. The perception of God's presence came in the night (vss. 11-12).
 1. Jacob had to stop running and get still before he could become aware of God's presence.
 2. People are often unaware of God's presence because they are so preoccupied with other things. A child, looking at Holman Hunt's painting of Christ knocking at the door, asked her daddy, "Why don't they open the door?" Then she answered her question, "Maybe they're in the back watching TV and don't hear Him knocking."
- B. The perception of God's presence involved a declaration (vss. 13-15).
 1. The Lord God spoke to Jacob in that experience.
 2. The Lord God does speak to people in their dilemmas. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, asked Jeremiah, "Is there any word from the Lord" (Jeremiah 37:17). There was and there still is!
- C. The perception of God's presence resulted in commitment (vss. 20-22).
 1. Jacob committed his life to the Lord God and left Bethel (Luz) a different person.
 2. This kind of commitment is needed for it determines:
 - a. The direction in life.
 - b. The dividends of life.
 - c. The destiny beyond life.

Conclusion:

The Flora Goforths are everywhere today. Perhaps you are like her—at the end of life's rope, trying to hold on and crying out, "Bring God to me!" Like Jacob, we need to see that God has already come to us in Jesus Christ, and He is here—ready to help.

THE SHIPWRECK OF A LIFE

1 Samuel 10:14 -27; 31:1-13

Introduction:

As a teenager from Pensacola, Florida, I traveled old highway 90 to college in Mississippi. In those days the highway was a causeway across Mobile Bay. At the eastern end of the causeway, there used to be an old sailing bark sitting high and dry on a mud bank right by the road. It later burned, but I remember looking forward to seeing that landmark as I passed that way. In my young adventurous mind, I would think of how that vessel must have looked under full sail on the high seas and the exciting ports it visited. But there it sat, high and dry, rotting on a mud bank—a pitiful and forlorn shipwreck. No matter how illustrious its past had been, that's how it ended up.

King Saul was one of the greatest shipwrecks in the Old Testament. He was given a great opportunity for service and greatness, but he ended up impaled on his own sword. David later lamented about him, "How are the mighty fallen" (2 Samuel 1:19). Consider:

I. Saul's Peerless Potential.

- A. Saul began with a promise of success. He had a great physique (10:23); he was modest (10:22); he exercised self-control when criticized (10:27); he was skilled in warfare (11:11); he was empowered by God's Spirit (10:9-10); and he showed compassion to other people (11:12-14). Saul was equipped to be a man after God's heart and live a life of service to others.
- B. There is great potential in every person's life. Not all people are created equal, but every person has the potential to become more than he is. This being true, what a sin it is to settle for mediocrity.

II. Saul's Disappointing Decline.

- A. First, Saul was too ambitious. He allowed his ambition to succeed get out of hand (13:5-10). Ambition is an essential for success in life; but when it is not properly controlled, it can lead to ruin.

- B. Second, Saul had too little help.
 1. He eventually reached a point when he wanted no help, but there was a time when help, had it been given, would have made a difference (10:27).
 2. Celeste Holm, a movie star of another day, said, "We live with encouragement, or die without it—slowly, sadly, angrily."
 3. Third, Saul was too uncertain about himself. He seemed to have lacked self-confidence (15:17). This is also seen in his reaction to David's popularity with the people (18:6-9).

III. Saul's Final Failure.

- A. Saul's life on earth ended in suicide.
 1. His rebelliousness became more and more frequent. Even though he remorsefully said, "I have sinned" (15:24), he continued to disobey God. The Lord rejected Saul as king (13:14); Samuel, his counselor, abandoned him (15:35); and David was chosen as Saul's successor (16:1ff).
 2. Finally, after years of consuming jealousies, cancerous suspicions and debilitating disobedience, Saul's life ended in defeat at Mt. Gilboa.
- B. Consider some truths to be learned from Saul's failure.
 1. First, what the Lord God can do in a life is dependent on the person being obedient to Him.
 2. Second, the Lord doesn't allow a person to ruin his life without doing His infinite best to stop him.
 3. Third, a person can progress so far in his rebellion and sin that his heart is hardened beyond redemption.

Conclusion:

That sailing bark, shipwrecked on a mud flat that I used to pass reminds me of Saul and others like him I've known. The memory of that ship is a reminder of what can happen to a life which gets off course.

THE SHEPHERD'S LOVE

Luke 15:1-7

Introduction:

Henry Scobie is a character in the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, by Graham Greene. Scobie is a policeman who becomes involved in intrigue and death. Sick of his life, he plans suicide. He stops at the church. Scobie has no desire to pray—what is the good in that, he thinks. But as Henry Scobie begins to pray, he hears God say, "I love you."

The sheep in Jesus' story is a perfect picture of the need of people, and the shepherd gives us a picture of God's love. Notice that the Shepherd's love is:

I. A Personal Love.

- A. Each of the sheep in the flock were known to the shepherd. One of the sheep in the flock of 100 was missing. How did the shepherd know that? He knew each sheep personally and knew which one was missing.
- B. The Lord God loves people individually.
 1. The individual tends to become lost in the faceless crowd today. Countless people come and go, unnoticed and ignored by others. But the Lord knows each one of us individually and loves us.
 2. A father took his son hiking. They climbed to the summit of a high hill from which they could look out on the countryside for miles around. The father told the son to look as far as he could in all directions. Then he said, "Son, God's love is wider than all that." The boy responded, "Yeah, and to think I'm standing right in the middle of it!"

II. A Pursuing Love.

- A. The shepherd would search for a lost sheep until he found it. It was easy for a sheep to become lost because of its tendency to wander and its inability to see for any distance. The shepherd would look for the lost sheep until he

either found it or evidence of what happened to it.

- B. The Lord God pursues lost people.
 1. The Lord's pursuit is proven (Genesis 3:9; Luke 19:10).
 2. The Lord's pursuit is persistent. He does not weary in His search.
 3. The Lord's pursuit is purposeful. He seeks that He might save.
- C. The Lord is searching for you now. During World War I, a soldier was wounded and left to die in "no man's land" between the trenches. A buddy wanted to crawl out and rescue him, but the officer said, "No. He's probably dead now, and you'll be wounded or killed in the attempt." The buddy persisted, and the officer relented. When the buddy fell back into the trench with the fallen soldier, the soldier was dead and the buddy wounded. The officer said, "I told you so." The buddy responded, "He was alive when I reached him, and he said, 'I knew you'd come.'" So the Lord has come seeking you.

III. A Patient Love.

- A. The shepherd was gentle in the treatment of his sheep. Remember, the sheep was lost because it went astray and not the carelessness of the shepherd (Matt. 18:12).
- B. The Lord is gentle and patient with sinners. When a person goes astray, people are prone to act like the Pharisees, ready to criticize and condemn. But the Lord is gracious, ready to receive and pardon.

Conclusion:

The Lord did us no favors when He likened us to sheep. They are the dumbest of all animals, incapable of taking care of themselves. Isaiah likened people to dumb sheep who go astray (53:6).

But the Lord God seeks the lost, and He does so because of His love for us. Like Henry Scobie, we too should be overwhelmed by the sense of His love for us.

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Philippians 1:12-26

Introduction:

Life becomes like a runaway animal when a person loses sight of what matters most. After the Watergate scandal brought down the Nixon administration, John Ehrlichman was quoted in the *New York* magazine as saying, "I'm more and more realizing that I have lived 50 years of my life without ever really coming to grips with the very basic question of what is and what is not right and wrong, what is and what is not valuable and worthwhile."

Many people today are like Ehrlichman. They, too, are confused about what is really important. The result is that they live their lives for things which matter very little, if at all.

Paul was aware of what matters most. In an autobiographical passage in a letter to his favorite church, he identified what mattered most to him.

I. The Advancement of the Gospel.

- A. The Gospel meant more than anything else to Paul. His letters reflect his regard for and commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul had committed his life to sharing the gospel with every person he could reach.
- B. Paul's imprisonment meant the advancement of the gospel.
 1. First, Paul had the opportunity to witness to men he could not have touched as a free man (vs. 13; 4:22).
 2. Second, other men were encouraged by Paul's example to preach more boldly (vss. 14-18).

II. The Magnification of the Lord.

- A. Paul's desire was that Christ be exalted. He declared his hope that Christ "shall be magnified" (KJV) or "exalted" (vs. 20.)
- B. The Christian is to magnify Christ.
 1. There are two instruments of magnification which help people to see things more clearly. The microscope enables men to examine what the eye cannot

see, and the telescope makes it possible to see what is distant.

2. The Christian life is to be an instrument of magnification which makes it possible for people to see the greatness and glory of Jesus Christ.
- C. Tragically, some use Christianity as a means of self-exaltation. Paul wrote of those who preached for the purpose of self-aggrandizement (vss. 15, 17). The Roman emperor Justinian built the great church of Sophia in Constantinople. When finished, it was thought to be the most beautiful and ornate worship center in the world. As Justinian looked around the structure when it was dedicated, he was heard to whisper, "Solomon, I have outstripped you."

III. The Good of Other People.

- A. Paul was concerned about the good of the Philippian Saints.
 1. Whether Paul lived or died did not really matter to him. In fact, pressed between the two, he seemed to have preferred going on to be with the Lord (vss. 21-23).
 2. But he refused to think only of himself and what he wanted instead of other people and what they needed (vs. 24-26).
- B. In God's economy, people are what is most important. The natural man places a premium on himself and selfish acquisition. Frank Pollard has said the motto of a lot of people is, "Get all you can, can all you get, and sit on the can." But God cares about people, not as objects to be manipulated and used, but as persons of eternal value and worth.

Conclusion:

What John Ehrlichman said of himself is equally true of others. Many people live without knowing what is really valuable and worthwhile. Paul, however, knew what mattered most, and living for these resulted in a life well-lived.

FACING OUR GETHSEMANES

Mark 14:32-42

Introduction:

I really enjoyed the film classic *Where the Red Fern Grows*. It is about a poor boy who scrimps and saves to buy two coon dog puppies and trains them into champions. My favorite scene takes place during the dogs' first real hunt. The boy's dad had sharpened his little hatchet to a razor's edge. The idea was that the boy would cut down the little sapling in which his dogs treed a coon. The dogs treed their first coon in the largest tree in the forest. In despair the boy looked at that little hatchet, and he looked at that tree.

How often do we feel like the boy did that day? We encounter major obstacles and feel ill-equipped to handle them. Yet it is always encouraging to know that Jesus also faced huge obstacles. Jesus also faced His Gethsemanes. Although we'll never experience any obstacle remotely similar to the cross, we can learn about our Gethsemanes by examining the Gethsemane experience of Jesus.

I. Gethsemane Is a Time of Personal Interaction with God (vss. 35-36a).

- A. This was a time of intense, intimate, personal prayer for Jesus. That He used the word *Abba* when addressing God was an indication of that fact. *Abba* was used in common, everyday, family language. The Jews never used this word when addressing God, because they thought such intimacy was inappropriate. Jesus thought such intimacy was necessary.
- B. God is not interested in us beginning our prayers with a *King James* recitation of the ten commandments, the 23rd Psalm, or the Sermon on the Mount. He expects us to interact with Him in a very personal way.

II. Gethsemane Is a Time of Honest Expression (vs 36b).

- A. Jesus was saying, "Father, I do not want to do this. I don't like the way this is shaping up. Please change the game plan if possible." He was honest with God.

- B. Does God know our hearts? Yes—then why should we deny what is in them? Too often we aren't honest with God because we are ashamed of what is in our hearts. Yet God already knows how we feel. Therefore, we need to be honest with God about our feelings over our distressing situations.

III. Gethsemane Is a Time of Spiritual Dependence (vss. 37-40).

- A. If Jesus had been depending on the prayer strength of the disciples, He would have been left lacking. In His most trying hour, they slept.
- B. To rely solely or principally on the strength of man is to guarantee failure. To have victory in our Gethsemanes, we must place primary dependence on God.

IV. Gethsemane Is a Time of Firm Resolve (vss. 41-42).

- A. The Father communicated to Jesus that the cross was the only way to accomplish His will. Therefore, Jesus did not attempt to flee from those coming to arrest Him.
- B. What does this tell us? When God gives us the course, we had best pursue it with a firm resolve. It is only by remaining faithful through our Gethsemanes that we can experience the truly abundant life God intends for us.

The boy in *Where the Red Fern Grows* was determined to keep his promise to his dogs. He continued to chop away at that huge tree well into the next day as his dogs waited patiently for their prize. Finally, in frustration, he sat down with a look of defeat etched across his face. It was then that the wind began to blow and rustle the leaves clinging to the tree limbs. The boy came to the alert when he heard a creaking sound. Finally, the huge tree fell thunderously to the ground.

It matters not how large are the obstacles we encounter as we follow the Lord through this life. If we trust Him, we can see them removed. In the words of Jesus: "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20).

THE MIRACLE THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN

Matthew 14:1-12

Introduction:

One morning this week I received the call I had been expecting but dreading. Earlier in the week a 39-year old friend of the family died of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Even though the doctors didn't give his family any reason for hope, they kept believing that a miracle would take place. Yet theirs was the miracle that didn't happen. Why?

John the Baptist was in prison not because he had committed a physical crime, but because he had spoken out against the king. I'm sure that his disciples, friends, and family were praying for the miracle of his release; but that miracle didn't happen. Why?

The "why" question is one that is impossible to answer. Yet we can, through this account, gain some encouragement. Let's examine two myths.

I. There Is the Myth that John Lacked Faith.

- A. I'm sure there were those of John's day who told John if he had enough faith in God, his miracle would happen. He had done no wrong, and his ministry was just beginning. After all, he was just in his early thirties. If he just kept his faith in God, God would deliver him. When John was executed, however, those same people would have to admit that John lacked faith. Yet hear what Jesus himself said about John in Matt. 11:11 while John was in prison: "I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist..." This statement indicates to me that John didn't lack faith. His "lack" of faith could not have been the reason for his miracle not happening.
- B. When our miracles don't happen, the Devil will try to get us to think that we do not have enough faith. He will try to get us to say, "If only I had trusted God more, this wouldn't have happened." Yet having things go our way is not the true test of faith. The true test of faith is trusting God when things do not go our way.

Anyone can have faith when the miracles do occur. Faith is trusting God regardless of the outcome. Faith is trusting God when the miracles do not happen. Otherwise God is no better than our broker. To say that all personal tragedy reveals a lack of faith is a myth that must be exposed.

II. There Is the Myth that His Death Cut Short a Great Ministry.

- A. Imagine what those close to John were saying when news of his death reached their ears. "Oh, what a waste! He was such a great prophet and had a large following. Imagine what could have happened if he had lived a normal life span." Many would have proposed that it cut short a great ministry. But did it? John's purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus. It was no coincidence that he passed on as the ministry of Jesus began.
- B. When someone dies of something other than old age, we always hear the same thing. "What a waste!" But was it? Since when is it up to man to determine when a person's physical life has fulfilled God's purpose for it? We operate on central time, and God operates on eternal time. However long life is on earth, it is just a brief moment when examined on the plane of eternity.

Conclusion:

Hear this dictionary definition of myth: "A collective opinion, belief, or ideal, that is based on false premises or is the product of fallacious reasoning." This is a perfect definition of the two myths discussed above. If we accept them as factual, we will fail to grow through our miracles that do not happen. If we reject these myths and trust the Lord, we can grow and have victory over our miracles that didn't happen.

TRUSTING GOD

Romans 11:33-36; 8:1, 28, 32

Introduction:

A two-story house caught on fire. The family, including the father, mother, and several children, were on their way out when the smallest boy became terrified, tore away from his mother and ran back upstairs. Suddenly he appeared at a smoke-filled window crying hysterically. His father, outside, shouted to him, "Jump, son, jump! I'll catch you." The boy cried, "But Daddy, I can't see you." "I know," his father called, "but I can see you."

Like the little boy, we can trust our Father. Let's examine three reasons we should trust God as the source of strength, encouragement, and hope.

I. We Can Trust God Because He Has Sublime Wisdom.

- A. God always knows what to do.
 1. There are times when the greatest of human minds will not be able to give you a solution. You may even turn to the Bible and not find the answer in black and white.
 2. The writer of James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."
- B. George Washington Carver, the great African-American botanist, discovered thousands of uses for the peanut and soybean. When he appeared before a Senate subcommittee and was asked to tell them how he was able to discover such wonderful uses for these plants, he replied, "In the Bible." When asked if he found all of these uses in the Bible, he said, "No, the peanut and the soybean are not in the Bible, but God is. I asked God to help me, and He did."

II. We Can Trust God Because He Has Sustaining Power (vs. 36a).

- A. God's power sustains the universe. The witness of Scripture tells us that at some

point, God created this vast universe which we call home. Not only did He create it with His awesome power, but He also maintains it as well. I'm certain that unless God intervenes, the sun will rise again tomorrow, just as it did today.

- B. God's power sustains salvation (Romans 8:1). Not only does God have the power to save, but He has the power to maintain salvation as well, even when we think we've blown it. Take for example the story of Peter the night before the crucifixion.
 1. Peter was told he would deny Jesus, and he did.
 2. When Jesus appeared to Peter in John 21, Jesus did not condemn Peter; he directed him to "feed my sheep."

III. We Can Trust God Because He Has A Supreme Plan (vs. 36b).

- A. Sometimes our experiences are not good. Some of our experiences are filled with pain, confusion, and disappointment. Romans 3:32 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are called according to His purpose."
- B. Consider the life of David. He was forced to leave his position in Saul's court, his family, his country, and the place of worship. He had to seek refuge in the caves of the wilderness. It was in that cave that David cried out to God, "In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast."
 1. Before David could lead, he had to learn to follow.
 2. Before David could reign as king, he had to learn to be God's servant.

Conclusion:

There are at least three reasons why we can trust God as our source of strength, hope, and encouragement. He has sublime wisdom, sustaining power, and a supreme plan.

EXPERIENCING THE MAJESTY OF JESUS

Matthew 17:1-8

Introduction:

Nationally acclaimed radio personality Paul Harvey hosts a weekly program entitled, "The Rest of the Story." It is not uncommon for him to describe facts about historical figures. His famous remark, "And now for the rest of the story," signals to his fans that they are about to hear some little known facts about that particular historical figure—facts that may allow them to see a different side of the person.

This form of revelation is similar to what the disciples experienced upon a mountain with Jesus. Suddenly he appeared differently. His face and clothing glowed brighter than anything they had ever seen. Some translations say, "They saw him differently." This was God's way of letting the disciples know "the rest of the story."

In that moment upon a mountain, the disciples came face-to-face with the reality that Jesus is God. The Lord threw back the curtain and allowed the disciples to behold the sovereign majesty of His son. God is still revealing this same Jesus, and we, too, can experience His majesty. Let's examine three ways we can experience the majesty of Jesus.

I. We May Experience the Majesty of Jesus by Following Him to a Secluded Place.

- A. Jesus led them upon the mountain for the primary purpose of revealing His true self to his disciples. Jesus said, "He that keeps my commandments is the one that loves me. And the one that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him" (John 15:21).
- B. We must always follow the leadership of Jesus.
 1. He may lead us to a literal place of solitude with the purpose of revealing himself to us.
 2. He may lead us to a figurative place, a point in our lives where we tune out the busy world around us to listen and to wait patiently for Him to reveal His majesty to us.

II. We May Experience the Majesty of Jesus in Scripture.

- A. As Jesus changed before the eyes of his disciples, they looked and saw Moses and Elijah. These two figures were synonymous for the Law and Prophets in Judaism. Peter suggested the building of three tabernacles—one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. His intentions were good, but his assessment was wrong. He equated Jesus to the other two. The voice from Heaven said, "Hear ye Him."
- B. Jesus is unparalleled to the law or prophets. He's more than a character in a story, a prophet, a master teacher, or a miracle worker.
- C. We can experience the majesty of Jesus when we approach God's word and allow the Spirit to speak to our hearts.

III. We May Experience the Majesty of Jesus by the Stroke of the Master's Hand.

- A. Upon hearing the voice from heaven exalting Jesus, the disciples fell to the ground in fear. In that posture of reverence before God, they realized their finiteness and God's infiniteness. Jesus touched them.
- B. God will always personalize His word.
 1. When we receive forgiveness, we have been stroked by the master's hand.
 2. When God in His faithfulness has met our needs, we have been stroked by the master's hand.

Conclusion:

When we are obedient to follow Christ to a secluded place, when we approach God's word and allow the spirit to speak to our hearts, when we place our trust in Jesus, we too can experience the majesty of Jesus and say, "Now I know the rest of the story."

THE JOY OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Philippians 4:4-7

Introduction:

You and I live in a world of economic fears, ecological failures, energy frustrations and ethical fantasies. Periodically, we reach for the stars, but more often we crouch in the corridors of despondency. The Apostle Paul was also under immense pressures as he sat in a prison cell, yet he penned the most tender epistle of joy ever written. To the saints at Philippi he said, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again...rejoice" (vs. 4). Another translation suggests, "Keep up the glad spirit..."

"Joy" is one of God's big little words. "Joy" is neither superficial steadfastness nor is it legalistic laughter. Happiness may evoke a smile of acquiescence but "Joy" is a product of the spirit (Galatians 5:22). Consequently, Paul has given us three ways by which we may "keep up the glad spirit."

I. Love People (vs. 5).

- A. There must be a demonstration of love.
 - 1. This love must be *specific*.
 - a. "Let your gentleness be known."
 - b. William Barclay says this is one of the most "untranslatable words in the New Testament."
 - c. "Let your moderation, your kindness, steadfastness, forbearance, softness be known."
 - 2. This love must be *inclusive*.
 - a. "Let you gentleness be known to all..."
 - b. The Gospel is for the intellectual Nicodemus, the immoral Samaritan, the prejudiced Simon, the diminutive Zacchaeus and the rebellious Judas Iscariot.
- B. There must be a motivation of love.
 - 1. "The Lord is at hand," said the great apostle.

- 2. There is the probability of a dual emphasis on the consistent presence of the Lord and the coming again of our Lord.

II. Learn To Live One Day at a Time (vs. 6).

- A. Learn to relax.
 - 1. "Be anxious for nothing," says the Apostle Paul.
 - 2. This sounds like the words of Jesus given in Matthew 6:5: "...do not worry..."
 - 3. This also sounds like John 14:1 — "Let not your heart be troubled..."
 - 4. Too many of us can be described as Martha, "...distracted..." (Luke 10:40).
- B. Learn to review.
 - 1. Note the fowls of the air (Matt. 6:26-27).
 - 2. Note the flowers of the field (Matt. 6:28-30).

III. Lean on God (vs. 7).

- A. To lean on God, one must acknowledge Him.
 - 1. The requests must be "made known to God" (vs. 6).
 - 2. Ps. 14:1 says, "The fool has said there is no God."
- B. To lean on God, one must approach Him correctly " ...with thanksgiving" (vs. 7).
- C. To lean on God, one must accept what God gives (vs. 7).
 - 1. "...the *peace* of God..."
 - 2. "The *peace of God*" can also be understood as "*The God of Peace*."

Conclusion:

"Keep up the glad spirit! Rejoice...always" by loving people, learning to live one day at a time, and leaning on God.

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

Philippians 1:1-11

Introduction:

Garfield the cartoon cat says that every year he resolves to lose weight, but every year he loses his resolve instead. Whether it's a New Year, a new marriage, a new career, or just a new day, we all want to get off to a good start. A great place to learn how is in the way the apostle Paul starts off the most joyful letter in the New Testament. To get off to a good start—

I. We Need to be a Servant (vs. 1).

- A. Paul and Timothy were "servants." The word *doulos* literally means slaves.
- B. Paul makes it clear that neither apostles nor deacons are to lord it over others. All are servants of Jesus Christ.

II. We Need to be a Saint (vs. 1).

- A. Pope John Paul II can pronounce someone a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, but that is not the full meaning of the word. Paul was talking to the entire church. "Saint" is a word that describes all Christians.
- B. "Saint" literally means "holy one, one set apart." Like the frog in the kettle who was boiled in water that was gradually heated, a Christian can be slowly submerged in the filth of this world unless he guards himself by a commitment to holiness.

III. We Need to Give Thanks (vs. 3).

- A. Paul's language in vs. 3 can mean he was thanking God every time he remembered them, or every time they remembered him. According to 4:10, 16 and 2 Corinthians 11:9, the Christians in Macedonia, where Philippi was located, had remembered his needs with great generosity. For that Paul was thankful.
- B. A sign of maturity is being able to receive a gift and say, "Thank you." A sign of Christian maturity is to thank God for others.

IV. We Need to Love from the Heart and Head (vss. 8-9).

- A. Verse 8 says Paul longed for the Philippians with the affection of Jesus Christ; literally he said with Jesus' "bowels." In Paul's day, people thought of the stomach as the seat of emotions, whereas today, we would say, "I love you with the heart of Jesus."
- B. But notice in verse 9 that Paul balanced emotional love with intellectual love, saying that he prays their love will abound in "knowledge and depth of insight." A missionary cannot really love a culture unless he acquires a knowledge of their language and culture. Likewise, if we really love people, we will want to know what makes them tick. We will love from heart and head.

V. We Need to Make Right Choices (vs. 10).

- A. "Discern what is best." Some things are good, but they aren't the best. We should choose the best.
- B. "Discern...[to be] pure and blameless." We should make choices that keep us pure before God.

VI. We Need to Produce Fruit (vs. 11).

- A. "Fruit of righteousness" probably refers to Christian character, such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.
- B. It can also refer to the fruit of new Christians, as John 15:5 implies.

Conclusion:

Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote,

*One ship drives east and another drives west
With the selfsame winds that blow. 'Tis the set of
the sails and not the gales which tells us the way
to go. Like the winds of the sea are the ways of
fate, as we voyage along through life: 'Tis the set
of a soul that decides its goal, and not the calm or
the strife.*

Set the sail of your soul the way Paul did in Philippians, and you will be going with God.

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).

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 (ESG) 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 (ESG)**, and **grants for College Work Service (CWS)**, **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.**

The Biblical Studies program continues to grow at William Carey College. In the fall of 1990, a total of 28 religion majors were enrolled at the College.

Through your support, we saw that number grow to 113 for the fall trimester of 1995, and as we begin this spring trimester of 1996, we have 120 majors.

Ministerial students have found a caring community within the Cooper School of Missions.