

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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As we begin the fall trimester of 1996, I'm delighted to inform you that we have 207 church related vocation students enrolled at William Carey College.

It is encouraging to work with so many outstanding young people who have responded to God's call.

These really are exciting days at William Carey College, and we thank you for all the support you are giving to the College.

*Larry Kennedy
Dean, Cooper School of Missions
and Biblical Studies*

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ILLUSTRATING THE SERMON — HOW GOD SPEAKS

President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a great sense of humor and was known for being mischievous at times. Once he was welcoming the ambassadors of various countries to a formal dinner at the White House. Of course, FDR had done this many times, and as usual he was saying pleasant things like "Good to see you tonight;" "I'm so glad you could come;" etc. In the midst of it all, FDR thought, "These people really are not listening to me. I could say anything and the response would be the same."

To prove his theory, he decided to say something outrageous. As the Swedish ambassador took his hand, FDR leaned forward and whispered, "I murdered my mother-in-law this morning." With a big smile, the ambassador responded, "Keep up the good work Mr. President." Next, the Canadian ambassador stepped forward to shake the president's hand. Again FDR leaned forward and whispered, "I murdered my mother-in-law this morning." The ambassador quickly responded, "God bless you, Mr. President, you are doing a wonderful job." This went on for several minutes with no one really acknowledging FDR's words. At some point in the proceedings, the French ambassador stepped forward to greet the president. FDR took his hand and said very softly, "I murdered my mother-in-law this morning." The French ambassador hesitated for a second. He then moved very close to the president and said, "Mr. President, if you did it, I know she deserved it." That man was really listening.

When God speaks we need to listen. The prophet Isaiah went to the temple to worship. As he stood there, he refused to allow the world to silence the voice of God. His faith allowed him to hear God asking, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us." Because Isaiah was listening, his faith also enabled him to say, "Here am I. Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). **God speaks in worship, and we need to hear His voice.**

Thousands of years ago King David heard the voice of God through creation. He exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Ps. 19:1). On that clear night in Jerusalem when David observed the heavens and wrote his Psalm, he probably saw with his eyes 2,000 – 3,000 stars.

Thanks to technology that King David was not privileged to have, we now know that in our galaxy there are 200 billion stars. Astronomers tell us that our Milky Way Galaxy is just one of 50 million galaxies in the universe, and each galaxy has approximately 200 billion stars.

The diameter of our galaxy (let's forget about the other 49 million galaxies for the moment), is 100,000 light years (a light year is the distance light travels in one year). Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, and there are 31,557,600 seconds in a year. Now if we multiply 186,000 miles by 31,557,600 seconds, we arrive at the distance of one light year—5 trillion, 869 billion, 713 million, 600 thousand miles. This means that 100,000 light years translates into 586 quadrillion, 971 trillion, 360 billion miles (586,971,360,000,000)¹. Are you still with me?

If we could build a space craft capable of traveling 186,000 miles per second, it would take that space craft 100,000 light years to cross our galaxy. And remember at the end of the trip, there would be 49 million more galaxies to traverse.

Dr. Wernher Von Braun (1912-1977), the German scientist who came to America to develop the space program, was pondering the vastness of the universe. As he marveled at what he called "the precision" of the universe, he asked himself a simple question, "How do I explain the universe?" Von Braun said that he had two choices. He could believe that the universe was eternal—it had always been there and would always be there. Or, he could believe that "God" had made it all happen. He chose to believe the latter. **God speaks through creation, and we need to hear His voice.**

¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (New York:Harper & Row, 1986), 30.

MY IDEAL PASTOR

1 Timothy 4:12

Introduction:

A prospective pastor being interviewed by a major Mississippi church asked the pastor search committee, "What do you want in a pastor?" I had not thought too much about it, but in the weeks that followed, I thought a great deal about it. I want my ideal pastor to be 1) a genuine person, 2) a gracious pastor, and 3) a good preacher.

I. A Genuine Person.

- A. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in his book *On Being a Real Person*, points out that the most important thing in being genuine is to admit that we have not "arrived." Rather, we are to confess that we are on a journey of becoming, and what we are today may not be sufficient for the demands of tomorrow.
- B. I don't expect my pastor to be perfect, but I do expect him to follow Paul's advice to Timothy to "be an example" in certain areas: 1) in family life, 2) in financial matters, and 3) in faith.

II. A Gracious Pastor.

- A. The word "gracious" comes from the Greek word "charis" (grace) meaning beauty. The ideal pastor should have inner beauty, a beautiful spirit exemplifying Christ's spirit—kind, compassionate, and considerate. Grace has been defined as "the unmerited favor of God," and it cannot be developed apart from the presence of God in the life of the individual.
- B. The word "pastor" comes from the word for shepherd. He should lead the flock like a good shepherd, but that does not imply that he is to do all the work. Remember, a shepherd does not reproduce sheep—the sheep reproduce sheep. It is the pastor's responsibility to lead us, but it is our responsibility to witness and lead others to Christ.

III. A Good Preacher.

- A. Although good preaching is difficult to define, certain qualities do not contribute to good preaching.
 1. Good preaching is not *long* preaching. Some people think the longer the sermon the better it is. While long sermons *may* be good sermons, length does not guarantee quality. None of Jesus' sermons are as long as the average sermon in evangelical churches today. How many people even remember the name of the featured speaker at the dedication of the Gettysburg battlefield? Edward Everette spoke for more than two hours, and his speech is never quoted. However, every school child knows the speech hastily scrawled on the back of an envelope and delivered in less than two minutes by President Lincoln.
 2. Good preaching is not *loud* preaching. Some folks confuse loud preaching with good preaching. Once again the example of Jesus would dictate that content is more important than style of delivery. A very wise old professor at William Carey College advised young preachers, "Fools who don't have much to say, say it loud."
 3. Good preaching is not loquacious. Good preaching should be simple, not wordy, and clearly make the point without confusing complexity. Referring again to the Gettysburg Address, this immortal bit of oratory contains only nineteen words of more than two syllables.
- B. What should be the qualities that define good preaching?
 1. Good preaching is grounded in the Word of God.
 2. Good preaching incorporates the wisdom of the ages.
 3. Good preaching should be concerned with the wounds of men.

MAKING WISE DECISIONS

I Kings 3:5-15

Introduction:

We all face choices and must make decisions in our lives. We need help with the decision-making process. The psychologist Albert Bandura emphasizes the importance of following a model to learn new skills. No greater model of wisdom can be found than King Solomon. In the text (I Kings 3:5-14) God appeared to Solomon.

The *place* of His appearance—the designated place of worship and sacrifice. What better place for God to appear to us?

The *form* of His appearance—in a dream. God appeared to Solomon in a dream. He appears to each of us in the form which we can best receive Him.

The *purpose* of His appearance—to offer Solomon a choice. “Ask what I shall give thee.” If someone came to you and said, “I’ll give you just one wish”—what would you wish? Let us look at Solomon as a model for wise decision-making.

I. His Wise Ways.

- A. He loved the Lord (vs. 3).
- B. He obeyed the Lord (vs. 3).
- C. He habitually attended the place of worship (vs. 4).

II. His Wise Wish.

- A. “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge, . . . to discern between good and evil”(vs. 9).
- B. Let us look at the decision-making process which Solomon used to arrive at this wise wish.
 1. He looked back. “Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy” (vs. 6). He looked back and gained a perspective on history for aid in making present decisions. He observed models of great men before him. He had a positive outlook.

2. He looked within. “I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in” (vs. 7). What an admission for a king to make. I don’t know how to do the most simple things of life (go out and come in) without God’s help.
3. He looked around. “And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people . . .” (vs. 8). He saw himself in light of his role and responsibilities. Again his positive outlook is evident. In verse 8 and again in verse 9, he refers to them as a great people. (As with David, he overlooked the rebellion, sin, and failure of Israel, and saw only their greatness.)
4. He looked up. His prayer was “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart.” He admitted that the task was too much for him alone. He needed God’s help.

III. His Wise Words.

- A. The wisdom of Solomon is renowned. The book of Proverbs is a collection of his wise sayings. He was “wiser than all men” (I Kings 4:32).
- B. The Queen of Sheba proclaimed: “behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard.”
- C. The greatest illustration of wisdom in all literature is the story in I Kings 3:16-28.

Conclusion:

If someone had the power to grant you just one wish, what would you wish for? A group of young children was asked this question, and one of them spoke up and said, “I’d wish that every wish that I ever wished would come true.” Solomon asked for wisdom, and God said, “Because thou hast asked this thing, behold I have done according to thy words, and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor” (vss. 12-13).

Solomon got what he wished for and everything else he could want.

LIVING UNDER GOD'S RAINBOW

Genesis 9:11-13

Introduction:

A rare and beautiful sight is a double rainbow. I first saw one several years ago after a fresh spring rain. The sight of a full rainbow with a second complete rainbow inside was an awe-inspiring experience. I thought of the first rainbow and of the promise of God's protection which it symbolizes. When I saw a second double rainbow some years later, I realized that as Christians we are to live under God's rainbow. The model of a man who lives under God's rainbow is Noah.

I. See Noah's Faith.

- A. He believed God when he had no experience to support his faith. Had it ever rained? (Gen. 2:5).
- B. He obeyed God in spite of difficulties (Gen. 6:22, 7:5).
- C. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8). He didn't earn it or deserve it; he merely found it.
- D. He was perfect in his generation (Gen. 6:9). This is a comparative perfection, not absolute perfection.
- E. He walked with God (Gen. 6:9), one of only two Old Testament characters to do so.

II. See Noah's Fortitude.

- A. He faced ridicule because he was doing God's will.
- B. He did his work and preached God's message for 120 years.
- C. He didn't stop until the task was accomplished.

III. See Noah's Failure.

- A. The dual nature with which the Apostle Paul struggled is illustrated by the two significant acts of Noah after the flood.
 1. He built an altar and offered sacrifices to God.
 2. He planted a vineyard, made wine, and got drunk.

- B. Noah engaged in a shameful act. The town reprobate stumbled into the small Anglican church just as the congregation was reciting the Prayer of General Confession—"We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts... We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." The old drunk muttered, "That's my kind of people. At last, a church I can belong to."
- C. The attitude of the sons of Noah reflect the attitude of mankind toward sinful man. Ham added to his father's humiliation. Shem and Japheth provided a "covering" (not a cover-up) for his sin. That's what God did for Adam and Eve when they were found naked. That should be the attitude of the church.
- D. "There's some good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it behooves none of us, to criticize the rest of us."

IV. See Noah's Future.

- A. God promised never again to curse the ground (Gen. 8:21).
- B. God made a covenant with man (Gen. 9:13).
- C. Noah is included in God's Hall of Fame of the Faithful (Heb. 11).

Conclusion:

If you want to live under God's rainbow:

1. Remember God remembers (Gen. 9:15).
2. Remember God forgets (Heb. 8:12 and 12:17).
3. Remember God goes with you.

"God is in every tomorrow;
therefore I live for today,
certain of finding at sunrise
guidance and strength for the day,
power for each moment of weakness,
hope for each moment of pain,
comfort for every sorrow,
sunrise and joy after rain."

MY KIND OF CHURCH

Acts 2:42 - 47

Introduction:

In her book, *Meeting House Hill* (The Macmillan Co., 1952), Ola Elizabeth Winslow tells the story of the meetinghouses of early New England and their relevance to the life of the people. She describes them as standing for "the good of the whole," "holy walking," and "the eternal against the transient. She further states that their story was one of convictions and purposes. Her description fits some of my idea of what a church should be.

Luke painted a cameo picture of the Jerusalem church, and it's my kind of a church.

I. My Kind of Church Is a Praising Church.

- A. The gathering of the church was characterized by gladness (vss. 46-47a).
 - 1. True worship is to be a celebration of faith and a relationship with the Lord God.
 - 2. David said, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1).
- B. The Lord God was the focus of praise in the Jerusalem church.
 - 1. Such praise is reasonable. Paul wrote, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:30)
 - 2. Such praise is rewarding. Physicians have discovered that people with cheerful attitudes are healthier than those who are sour and glum. Someone said, "the surly bird gets the germ."

II. My Kind of Church Is a Passionate Church.

- A. The people in the Jerusalem church cared about each other (vss. 44-45). They had a unity of spirit which produced a unity in support.
- B. The concern of the people in the Jerusalem church was:
 - 1. Expressive. They did what was necessary to meet the needs of people (vs. 45b).

- 2. Expensive. What they did to meet the needs of people involved sacrificial giving (vs. 45a).

- C. The church is to be a people who care. There are churches which are known for their doctrinal orthodoxy. Churches should also be known for their concern. This should involve more than just the pocketbook. The Samaritan who stopped to help did what he could with his own hands before he paid someone else to help (Luke 10:33-35).

III. My Kind of Church Is a Productive Church.

- A. The church in Jerusalem was a growing fellowship.
 - 1. Some of their growth was spiritual in nature (vs. 42). Two of the activities of this church were Bible study ("the apostles' doctrine") and prayer. Spiritual growth requires both of these.
 - 2. Some of their growth was numerical in nature (vs. 47c). Notice, the Lord was the One who did the adding to the church.
- B. The church created the atmosphere for growth to take place.
 - 1. Growth was made possible because of their commitment to Christ. The Lord God was able to use this church because they were committed to Him.
 - 2. Growth was made possible because of their image in the community (vs. 47b). They had a good reputation. Who wants to join a bickering church?

Conclusion:

Gutzon Borglum's Confederate Memorial on Stone Mountain in Georgia is viewed by thousands each year. The carving was done through the use of a specially designed machine which projected a 200-foot high picture from a slide which measured only three inches.

The Jerusalem church cast a large image of what a church should be. Any church can become this kind of church if it is comprised of people who know the Lord and are willing to allow the Holy Spirit to direct and control.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TURNING ASIDE

Exodus 3:1-10

Introduction:

A pastor was visiting with a member of the church who was confined because of illness. The pastor commented on how much the member was missed. The man responded, "The church doesn't miss me half as much as I miss being in the worship services." There was a man who knew the importance of turning aside.

Moses turned aside to seek to understand the mystery of a burning bush. When he did, he came face to face with the Lord God in an experience which totally changed his life.

Consider what happened when Moses turned aside:

I. He Heard God Speak.

A. The Lord was in that burning bush.

1. The Bible says, "The angel of the Lord appeared to him in...the midst of the bush" (vs. 2). But when the voice from the bush identified Himself, it was the Lord God (vs. 6).
2. Notice that it was not until Moses turned aside at the bush that the Lord spoke to him (vs. 4).

B. People need to hear God speak today.

1. To be sure, some people do not think the Lord speaks today. The problem, however, is not that God is silent, but that people do not stop to listen.
2. When people turn aside from the frenzy of daily activities to worship God, they are able to hear Him speaking.

II. He Learned What God Was Doing.

A. The Lord God stated His concern for Israel. The people of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. When Moses turned aside, the Lord stated His intention to deliver the people (vss. 7-9).

B. The Lord God is at work in our world.

1. Some have the mistaken idea that God has withdrawn and is unmoved by our

human dilemma. Mark Twain wrote: "Special providence, the term nauseates me! God does not know we are here, and He would not care if He did."

2. But, as was true with ancient Israel, He sees, knows, cares, and wants to do something about our situations.
3. The proof of this is found in the incarnation, for He has come down in Christ to seek and save (Luke 19:10).

C. The Lord's purpose is understood when people pause to worship. Just as Moses only learned of God's intention to save Israel when he turned aside, so we understand His purpose when we pause to worship.

III. He Discovered a Purpose for Life.

A. Moses found God's will for his life.

1. God said, "I will send you...that you may bring forth my people out of Egypt" (vs. 10).
2. Moses left the bush to walk onto the stage of history as the great leader of his people. Think of what he would have missed had he not turned aside.

B. People find a meaning for life in the experience of worship.

1. So many people lack that sense of purpose. Arthur Schopenhauer, the philosopher, was sitting on a park bench, pondering the profundities of life. A policeman intruded on his thoughts, asking, "Who are you and what are you doing here?" Schopenhauer responded, "I wish I knew; I wish I knew."
2. When people meet God in worship, He answers those basic questions and gives us a reason for living.

Conclusion:

Some depreciate the value of worship by their comments, and others by their conduct. It is more than a spiritual pit stop by the race track of life. Moses learned the importance of turning aside. Have you?

WHEN THE DAY COMES

Malachi 3:16-4:3

Introduction:

The ancient Greeks and Hebrews viewed history in different ways. The Greek historians saw history as cyclic in movement, constantly repeating itself. The Hebrew historians (prophets) saw history as progressive—moving toward a climax. That climactic event is “the day of the Lord.”

Malachi looked forward to that day and announced, “For behold the day comes” (4:1). Consider what he said the Lord would do in the day when He comes. When Christ comes:

I. He Will Reveal the Works (3:18).

- A. The distinction between the righteous and wicked wasn’t clearly seen.
 1. There was such a confusion of values in Malachi’s day that distinctions between good people and bad were often blurred.
 2. People’s evaluation of human activity is often faulty. Each of us can think of times when we were fooled by other people. In a day of shocking exposes, we have discovered that people of supposed impeccable reputations are really crooks. Some people live Jekyll and Hyde lives.
- B. When Christ comes, He will show the difference between the righteous and the wicked.
 1. First, He will reveal the works of the wicked. Many, like Achan, are crafty in concealing their sins (Joshua 7:1, 19-21). But, the Lord knows, and He will make the works of the wicked known (Ecclesiastes 12:14).
 2. Second, He will reveal the service of the saints. I believe there is a group in every church which could be named Saints Anonymous. These are folks who never hold offices of high visibility, but who render great services which generally go unnoticed by others. Christ knows, and He will make their service known.

II. He Will Right the Wrongs (4:1,3).

- A. Wrong seems to triumph at times.
 1. In the confused values of Malachi’s day, bad people seemed to be blessed. He wrote: “Henceforth we deem the arrogant blessed; evil doers not only prosper but when they put God to the test they escape” (vs. 15).
 2. Often times it seems that people get away with wrongs. A double murder in Los Angeles in 1994 is still legally unsolved in spite of the “trial of the century” which captivated TV audiences for a year.
- B. People often want to right wrongs. True, Christians are to be socially conscious people and seek needed reforms. But vigilante movements and the desire to get even are wrong.
- C. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, and He will deal with the guilty.
 1. Even though it may seem that the wicked are getting away with their wickedness, they are not! The wicked often seem to be at ease, lounging in chairs on the deck of a luxury liner. But the name of the liner is *Titanic*.
 2. Furthermore, a day of judgment is coming (Hebrews 9:27).

III. He Will Reward the Worthy (4:2).

- A. Malachi saw a final day of victory and vindication for God’s people.
- B. Consider three factors about the day of coming vindication:
 1. First, the participants in victory are those who fear the Lord.
 2. Second, the day of victory will be a new day when righteousness reigns.
 3. Third, the coming day will bring healing for life’s hurts.

Conclusion:

History is moving at a steady pace toward the day of the Lord. Someone well said, “the day of the Lord is when the Lord has His day.”

IT CAN BE BAD TO BE GOOD

Luke 18:9-14

Introduction:

The prayers of children are simple and to the point. One little girl prayed, "Dear God, make all bad people good, and all good people nice." She hit a nerve, for sometimes the good people are not very nice.

This was true of the man Jesus introduced in the text. We know he was good for he was a Pharisee. We also know he was good for he told us so. The Pharisee's prayer was a self-eulogy. He saw himself as the best man in town, and he was proud of that. But, his goodness was bad because he wasn't very nice. He teaches us that it can be bad to be good.

I. Goodness Should Be Commended.

- A. There were some commendable factors concerning the Pharisee.
 1. First, he was a moral man. He had a concept of right and wrong. Even though his morality was more negative than positive, he did live according to a moral code.
 2. Second, he was a religious man. He tithed and fasted regularly. Furthermore, in the practice of his religion he did more than was required of him. This is reflected in how much he gave and how often he fasted.
- B. Excellence in People Should Be Praised.
 1. Finding fault with others is condemned, but applauding the good in other people is right. Paul had the practice of writing something good about most of the New Testament churches to which he wrote epistles.
 2. One great failure of some people is withholding words of praise until the people they might have blessed are no longer in this world.

II. Goodness Can Be Condemnable.

The Pharisee was good, but his goodness was no good. There are four facts about his goodness which made it condemnable.

- A. First, it was spoken. The Pharisee's prayer was nothing but bragging about himself. If you are really good you don't need to say so. James Richardson said, "I never met a man who said he was good who really was."
- B. Second, it was superficial.
 1. The Pharisee's goodness was only skin deep. It was a moral and religious cosmetic which camouflaged a bad character.
 2. Jesus condemned the righteousness of the Pharisees because of its superficiality (Matthew 5:20).
- C. Third, it was superior.
 1. The Pharisee thought he was better than others because he did better.
 2. Self-worth is not related to one's behavior but being. The sinner is as precious to God as the saint.
- D. Fourth, it was self-centered.
 1. The Pharisee was good in order to make himself acceptable to God. He was good for what he could get out of it.
 2. Jesus taught that true goodness is not the conformity to laws but the conduct of love.

Conclusion:

The experience of the Pharisee teaches that it's possible to be good and still be bad.

There are three lessons which can be learned from the situation of this Pharisee. First, all people need to be saved, even those who profess to be good. Second, goodness can never save a person, for the Pharisee was lost even though he did good things. Third, a person can be lost and not know it.

The basic question in life is not how good or bad a person may be. It is whether or not a person has accepted Christ as Savior.

THREE UNCHANGEABLE FACTS

Luke 16; John 5

Introduction:

Politicians, educators, and scientists are telling us about the changes that will be taking place as we approach the year 2000. We certainly do live in a changing world; however, there are certain facts that never change. Consider with me three unchangeable facts.

**I. The First Unchangeable Fact:
There Is a Hell.**

- A. The place called hell is described in Luke 16:19-31. The rich man who died and went to hell discovered that no man is rich enough to buy back the past. He discovered in hell that there are no sermons, no altar calls, no prayers of the saints, and no summons from God for repentance.
- B. The rich man testifies to the fact that in hell there is agony (vs. 24). The word "agony" refers to extreme suffering. There is extreme suffering in hell, and this suffering is caused by fire.
- C. The rich man testifies to the fact that in hell there is separation (vs. 26). Lost people in trouble often call upon church people for their prayers. They don't want anything to do with God, but they sure do appreciate the prayers of God's people when they get into trouble. But in hell, there will be no saints of God to whom they can turn. There is separation from God and the Godly.
- D. The rich man testifies that in hell there is memory (vss. 27-28). Without a doubt, this will be the most horrible part of hell. The lost person will remember the last sermon, the praying saint, the plea of a loving child, and the concern of a dear mate. They will remember those people still living who have become fixed in their denial of Jesus Christ. Memory will torment the lost person in hell forever.

**II. The Second Unchangeable Fact:
There Is a Heaven.**

- A. Heaven is a reality. In John 5:29 Jesus said, "and shall come forth...those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life." Hell is a place of judgment, and heaven is a place of joy.
- B. Jesus said that heaven was a place of reward. "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great" (Matthew 5:11-12).
- C. Heaven is a place of peace which gives the saints of God comfort. Jesus said, "...but now he [Lazarus] is being comforted here, and you are in agony" (Luke 16:25).
- D. Heaven is a place of rest. John wrote in Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

**III. The Third Unchangeable Fact:
There Is a Choice.**

- A. A person can choose heaven, or he can choose hell. What is your choice?
- B. Recently the Associated Press carried the following story: After graduating from high school, two teenage girls wrote suicide notes to their parents. They then proceeded to lie down in the middle of a railroad track, allowing a moving train to send them into eternity. The notes they left behind read: "Life has no meaning. Life has no direction. There is no hope."

Conclusion:

The girls had a choice. They could live or they could die. Just as the two girls had a choice of living or dying, so does lost mankind have a choice of hell or heaven. Paul wrote to the Romans, "for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

REASONS FOR GIVING THANKS

Psalm 34:8-9

Introduction:

As long as I can remember, Thanksgiving Day was always a very important holiday to my family. Though it may not be classified as a religious holiday to some, it took on the form of a religious worship expression in our home. Our family assembled on Thanksgiving Day and gave God the praise and thanks He deserved for pouring out His blessings upon our family.

As you reflect on Thanksgiving Day this year, allow me to challenge you with some reasons for giving thanks to God.

I. We Should Give Thanks to God for Forgiveness of Sin.

- A. God, in all of His glory and holiness, can forgive us of sin. This is not something that He is forced to do by some law, but something He has chosen to do by His grace. He takes our sins and casts them away, never to remember them again.
- B. Give thanks that He has made a way of forgiveness. It's through His son, Jesus Christ. We are not able to handle the guilt or the penalty of our sin. However, Jesus can if we will call upon Him. "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

II. We Should Give Thanks to God for Family and Friends.

- A. Jesus surrounded Himself with family and friends. He was an expert at building relationships. He spent time alone with them when it was important to do so. Jesus poured Himself into those around Him.

- B. Jesus didn't mistreat Judas, even though He knew Judas would betray Him. He didn't turn His back on Peter, even though He knew that Peter would deny Him. He didn't abandon His disciples, even though He knew they would abandon Him. Why? Because He loved them.
- C. This Thanksgiving reflect on your family and friends and ask God to help you respond to their needs, the way Jesus did.

III. We Should Give Thanks to God for Fitness and Fortune.

- A. Because of God's goodness, we have our health and wealth. Remember, blessings are God's provisions given to us to achieve His purpose. God gave me my life and my material possessions for accomplishing his purpose in life.
- B. We may misuse our health and fortune; and as a result, we will never truly enjoy them. But, when we realize that God has given them to us to use them to reach others, we find the true joy in possessing them. If we misuse them, we never seem to have enough, and we're not satisfied. If we use them as He desires, we always have enough—because He is always going to give us what we need to accomplish His purpose—and we are completely satisfied.
- C. How have you viewed your health or your material possessions? Perhaps you have been dwelling on the half of the glass that is empty instead of rejoicing over the part of the glass that is half full.

Conclusion:

We often focus on what we are lacking in life. This Thanksgiving Day, let's focus on what we have, or what we can have by giving our hearts to Christ. Perhaps we will find forgiveness for our sin, a renewed appreciation for family, friends, fitness, and fortune.

CHRIST CHALLENGES THE CLERGY

Mark 7:6-8

Introduction:

With the world watching, Christ rebuked the Pharisees. Christ could have retreated and taught His disciples in private. But Christ took the opportunity to demonstrate "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribe and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:29). Let us examine Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees.

I. Dialogue Does Not Mean Devotion (vs. 6).

- A. The Pharisees gave lip service to God. They were great on dialogue but short on devotion.
- B. Most all of the marriages in the U.S. begin with sacred vows. Yet, half of all marriages end in divorce. Why? Because people often claim devotion with their mouths, but fail to put it into practice. They forget their vows.
- C. Justin Martyr said, "By examining the tongue of a patient, physicians can find out the diseases of the body, and the philosophies of the mind."
- D. A well-known brand of fountain pen has the following directions: "When this pen runs too freely, it is a sign that it is nearly empty." When we have to speak freely of our spirituality, we lack it.
- E. When preachers speak of faithfulness and then are immoral, they speak with their lips and not their hearts. When church members let lost souls die and go to hell, they speak with their lips and not their hearts. Thomas Brooks said, "A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue."

II. Demonstration Does Not Mean Dedication (vs. 7a).

- A. The Pharisees wore long flowing robes. They led in worship and prayed in the streets; however, their demonstrations were in vain.

B. Some years ago Johnny Carson had on his TV show a man with the world's largest machine. This machine was huge, containing thousands of gears and levers. When turned on, the machine glowed with fascinating lights and made spectacular noises. The catch was that the world's largest machine was absolutely useless. This machine could not produce one thing. It had no purpose. The Pharisees' demonstrations were like this machine. They were in vain.

- C. In Acts 5:1-5 we discover that Ananias and Sapphira had a demonstration without dedication.
- D. When people put money in the offering plate begrudgingly, their demonstration does not mean dedication. When a man prays in God's house, but has problems with a brother, his demonstration does not mean dedication. When a man leads in a church service, but his home life is a wreck, his demonstration does not mean dedication. When a teenager comes to church on Sunday, but lives like the rest of the students Monday through Friday, his demonstration does not mean dedication.

III. Doctrine Does Not Mean Deity (vs. 7b, 8).

- A. The Pharisees knew the Old Testament laws, but they didn't know God personally. The Pharisees took God's law and added their own laws and interpretations.
- B. Today people often create doctrines from God's word; however, that does not mean that God can be found in these doctrines.
- C. The church needs to hear Paul's challenge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 in order to examine our doctrines and know if God is in those doctrines.

Conclusion:

Christ rebuked the Pharisees. He pronounced their righteousness useless. He then demonstrated that: 1) dialogue does not mean devotion; 2) demonstration does not mean dedication; 3) doctrine does not mean deity.

WHAT IS A MISSIONARY CHURCH?

Acts 11:19-30, 13:1-3

Introduction:

An excellent example of a missionary church is the church in Antioch of Syria. By adopting the characteristics of this church, we could be well on our way to regaining the strong missionary emphasis that is so needed today. What are the characteristics of a missionary church?

I. A Missionary Church Is Scriptural in Its Stance (Acts 13:1).

- A. The orthodox tenets a church holds usually determine its soundness. We strive for tenable theological principles drawn from the Scripture alone. It is upon such a firm foundation that we stake the destiny of our souls. However, our witness to the world must be in more than creeds or statements of faith.
- B. Jesus taught, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Division comes within a body today not because of wrong teaching but because of a bad attitude. This ought not to be.

II. A Missionary Church Is Practical in Its Service (Acts 13:2-3).

- A. These folks prayed. Prayer is the source of spiritual power. The dynamic of the Spirit moves the church as the result of prayer.
- B. This church "ministered to the Lord." The Greek word translated "ministered" is the source for our word "liturgy." They were a people of worship. Their worship experience prepared them for their ministry in the world.
- C. They were a people who fasted. This practice is mentioned twice (vss. 2-3). Fasting is bringing the body under control. Too many people today are more occupied with feeding the body than nurturing the spirit.

III. A Missionary Church Is Liberal in Its Stewardship (Acts 11:29).

- A. Along with their faithful proclamation of the Gospel, they ministered in the spirit of the Gospel. The church received an offering for the needy saints in Judea. The spirit of liberal giving reflects the influence of Barnabas who was sent from Jerusalem to confirm the work done in Antioch.
- B. Benjamin Franklin made a practice of leaving his purse at home whenever he went to hear the evangelist Whitfield preach. "Poor Richard" was to advise: "A penny saved is a penny earned." Two many church members have caught the spirit of Franklin rather than the spirit of Barnabas.

IV. A Missionary Church Is Evangelical in Its Spirit (Acts 11:20-28).

- A. They were "preaching the Lord Jesus." The word "preaching" in the Greek text is the source for our word "evangelism."
- B. Their evangelistic zeal contributed to their missionary vision. As the result of the light burning brightly at home, the beams were eventually to go out to the far places of their world.

Conclusion:

Dr. L. R. Scarborough would exhort preachers of another generation to "call out the called." With the booming population of the world, the need of the Gospel grows greater with each day. Meeting the needs of our world challenges any church. As in the days of the church at Antioch, the answer comes from the church sensitive to the leadership of God's spirit.

SOMEONE IS LOOKING AT YOUR GIFTS

Mark 12:38-44

Introduction:

The Gospels tell us that Jesus sat down and viewed the "treasury." This was the place near the temple entrance where the gifts and tithes were deposited. Jesus was watching the offerings that people gave.

Some of the rich were giving for show, and others may have wanted to impress the wise and popular teacher. Then a widow dropped in two small coins—the "widow's mite." Jesus startled the disciples with His statement that this widow gave more than all the other contributions combined, for while they gave out of their surplus, she gave all that she owned. Her gift was a tremendous sacrifice.

This passage teaches some basic principles about Christian stewardship that is worthy of our consideration today. What are these principles?

I. Jesus Owns Our Gifts.

- A. When we give, we should do so with the awareness that God owns everything.
- B. Jesus is Lord of the church also. When we give to the church budget, we are giving to the Lord. He is Lord of the treasury.

II. Jesus Sees Our Gifts.

- A. "[He] beheld how the people cast money." The Greek word translated "beheld" means "one looking at a thing with interest."
- B. Christ sees today. He observes what you give today. That is a sobering thought indeed!

III. Jesus Judges Our Gifts.

- A. Jesus not only saw what each person gave, but He also noted the amount of each gift. He did not condemn the rich for their large gifts.
- B. What He wanted to underscore was not the amount of the gift, but the sacrifice the widow experienced in contributing her mite. Gifts should be evaluated by God's standards and not counted.

IV. Jesus Desires Our Gifts.

- A. Throughout the Bible we find the Lord pleased with the gifts of those who loved Him. Genesis 8:20 tells us that Noah built an altar for the Lord and took every clean beast and every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar. Verse 21 indicates that the Lord was pleased with the gift of Noah.
- B. Jesus delights in the offering of His people whether they be of self or substance.

V. Jesus Blesses Our Gifts.

- A. Jesus commended the widow for her giving. Suppose she had said, "My gift is so small it will never do any good. It will not be missed if I keep it for myself." She would have missed the commendation of her Savior and Lord.
- B. If you are not a steward, you are missing numerous blessings. It is indeed far better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Conclusion:

"And the Lord sat over against the treasury." He is here today. He is looking at your giving. Jesus wants to know how much sacrifice you are willing to experience for His cause. Remember He sacrificed so much to redeem you. How much will you sacrifice? How much will you give?

Scholarships and Grants for Church Related Students William Carey College, 1997-1998

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 7 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, 4, and 7).

CHURCH RELATED VOCATION DEPENDENT (CRVD) students may apply for William Carey College scholarships ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per academic year (1, 5, 6, and 7 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. **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.
 5. **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.
 6. **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.
 7. **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.
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In addition to the awards shown above, students may be eligible for WCC academic, talent, or leadership scholarships of \$500 to \$5,000; 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.

* Limited to students who are members of a church affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

** A CRV student is defined as one who has made a public commitment to a church related vocation (ministry or missions) in a church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

William Carey College Guide to Scholarships, Awards, and Grants for 1997–1998

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 chairs, deans of schools, and the athletic director.

The priority application deadline for freshman scholarships is January 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. All applications will be considered on a funds available basis.

Financial aid may include scholarships, 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.

To apply, freshman students must have their ACT/SAT score or rank in class verified by the high school counselor on the attached form. Transfer students must have the registrar verify their cumulative GPA on the attached form.

In addition to the awards shown below, students may apply for Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grants (MTAG), Mississippi Eminent Scholar Grants (MESG), and grants for College Work Scholars (CWS), Church Related Vocation (CRV), Mississippi Baptist Student (MBS), and Church Related Vocation Dependents (CRVD) and Alumni Dependent Scholarships (ADS).

| FRESHMAN STUDENTS | JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGE/TRANSFER STUDENTS |
|---|--|
| <p>Chancellor Scholars \$20,000 (\$16,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ National Merit, Achievement Finalists, Semi-finalist, or 31 ACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.5 • Participate in Honors Program | <p>Chancellor Scholars \$8,000 (\$6,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ Membership in PTK or 3.7 GPA with minimum of 54 semester hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.5 • Participate in Honors Program |
| <p>Presidential Scholars \$16,000 (\$12,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ 28 ACT or valedictorian, salutatorian or STAR student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership or exceptional talent in academic areas* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area • Participate in Honors Program | <p>Presidential Scholars \$6,000 (\$4,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ Students with 3.4 GPA with 54 semester hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ■ Leadership or exceptional talent in academic areas* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area • Participate in Honors Program |
| <p>Academic Scholars \$10,000 (\$6,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ 24 ACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership or outstanding talent in academic areas* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area • Participate in Honors Program | <p>Academic Scholars \$4,000 (\$2,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ Students with 3.2 GPA with 54 semester hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ■ Leadership or outstanding talent in academic areas* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area • Participate in Honors Program |
| <p>Leadership Grants \$5,000 (\$2,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ 21 ACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 4 years ■ Leadership talent in service areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain overall GPA of 2.8 or 3.0 GPA in major area • Participate in Student Foundation Service Program | <p>Leadership Grants \$2,000 (\$1,000 off campus)</p> <p>Criteria: ■ Students with 2.8 GPA with 54 semester hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total award divided equally over 2 years ■ Leadership talent in service areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Chancellor, Presidential, or Academic 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. Mississippi Eminent Scholar Grants are available to eligible first time freshmen in the amount of \$2,500 per year.

Work Service and Work Scholars — A select group of students may receive College Work Service Grants of \$1,100 - \$1,200 or Work Scholar Grants of \$2,500 or \$3,300 each year in addition to the above scholarships and awards.

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. Awards are recommended by the athletic director. Athletic grants-in-aid may be reduced by the PELL grant awarded each year.

Mississippi Baptist Student and Church Related Scholarships — Students may apply for scholarships in these categories ranging from \$250 to \$3,500. These scholarships are based upon the written recommendation of a Southern Baptist minister.

Alumni Dependent Scholarships range from \$250 to \$500 each year for children, grandchildren, siblings, and spouses of alumni.

Seventh Annual Winter Bible Study

Sponsored by
The Cooper School of Missions
and Biblical Studies

EPHESIANS *The Life Worth Living*

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9:30 – 3:00

Kresge Room
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William Carey College

Led by Hardy R. Denham

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