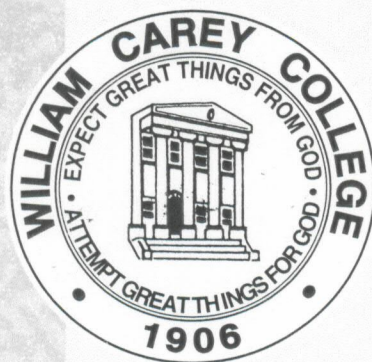


The CAREY PULPIT

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

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

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

Romans 10: 13-15

Table of Contents

Hardy R. Denham, Jr.

Director, Church and Denominational Relations
William Carey College

From the Cooper School of MissionsPage 2

Sermons by Hardy R. Denham

"When Glory Fills the House"Page 3
"People By Whom I Don't Like to Sit"Page 4
"God's Grace and Our Guilt"Page 5
"A Divine Deluge"Page 6

Sermons by Dan Caldwell

Associate Professor of Religion and Director of Biblical Studies
William Carey College on the Coast

"There Is Hope"Page 7
"A Misplaced Trust"Page 8

Sermons by Jason Coker

Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church
New Augusta, Mississippi
William Carey College Student

"The Belief of a Blind Man"Page 9
"Life Is Not Fair, But Jesus Is Always There"Page 10

Sermons by Charles Mitchell

Pastor, Lakeview Baptist Church
Pensacola, Florida

"The Secret of Aaron's Rod"Page 11
"Prayer Works"Page 12

Sermons by Andy Hepburn

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Tillman's Corner
Mobile, Alabama

"Give Me That Mountain"Page 13
"The Transfiguration"Page 14

"Campaign for Excellence, 1998–2002"

Investing in Eternity

The Lord Jesus said, "And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous (worldly) mammon (money), so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations" (Luke 16:8).

These words from the lips of the Master are the summation of one of the strangest parables told by Jesus. The parable is about a cunning crook, a man who was the business manager of an estate. This man had mismanaged his master's business and was about to be put out in the cold. Faced with the dilemma of being without a job, he used—or really misused—his position in a manner which would result in his being taken care of later. This business manager called in his master's debtors one by one and altered the books by reducing the amount that was owed.

Obviously, what he did in reducing the debts owed his master by other people further cheated the master. However, the consequence of this conduct was that those debtors would be in his debt and provide for him when he was unemployed.

Looking beyond the contemptible conduct of the steward, there are three important truths Jesus taught in this parable:

- First, we all have temporary control over some property.
- Second, what we have will soon fail; that is, we cannot keep it forever.
- Third, we are to use what we have while we have it in a manner that will produce dividends in eternity.

The faculty and staff, trustees, alumni and friends of William Carey College are engaged in a five-year CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE (1998-2002), and we believe this campaign will produce dividends in eternity. The goal of this campaign is to raise \$6,250,000 to be allocated to meet current needs at the college. One of the

most pressing needs is the allocation of \$750,000 to fund scholarships. The various scholarships offered students make obtaining an education at William Carey College cost competitive with state schools. For example, the scholarship of \$5,500 for resident Southern Baptist church-related vocational students and \$4,500 for nonresident CRV students cover approximately seventy-five percent of their tuition costs.

In the fall trimester of 1997, there were 212 Southern Baptist CRV students enrolled at William Carey College. This is the largest number of CRV students enrolled and marks the ninth straight year of increases in Southern Baptist church related vocation student enrollment at the college. This enrollment makes us the flagship school in Mississippi in the area of church-related vocations, and one of the leading schools in the southeast.

Who can project the degree of impact that these students and others before and after them will make on our world through their service in church ministries and world missions for the Master? Eternity itself will only reveal the answer.

As we give through the CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE, providing not only for scholarships but other vital aspects of the operation of the college, we are implementing the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the parable of the shrewd steward. We are using what we have control over now in a manner that will result in great dividends in eternity.

Hardy R. Denham, Jr.
Director of Church and Denominational Relations

WHEN GLORY FILLS THE HOUSE

2 Chronicles 5:2-14

Introduction:

King Solomon spared no expense in building the temple in Jerusalem. The temple was not a large building (90' by 30'), but it was one of the most expensive buildings in history. The Bible states that 22.5 tons of gold were used to cover the interior walls. But the temple was just an expensive building until something happened—until the glory of God filled the house (vss. 13b-14).

What is the glory of the Lord? The Hebrew word for glory is *cabod* (from the root *cabad*, which means "to be heavy"). Thus glory refers to the majesty and splendor of the Lord.

Consider the experience of the dedication of the temple to see when it was that God's glory filled that place. Glory filled the house when:

I. The Saints Were Congregated.

- A. The people of Israel were present before the temple (vss. 2-3). This was a significant day in the life of the nation. The 'tent of meeting' was being replaced by a permanent structure of great beauty. The event itself demanded the presence of everyone. That presence was the prelude to God's glory filling the house.
- B. The people of God must be present for the glory of God to fill this building.
 1. In the Old Testament, God's presence was seen in the cloud. This was the same cloud which had guided them in the wilderness, hovered on Sinai, and filled the tent.
 2. Today there is no such cloud. God, through His Holy Spirit, is present in the lives of His people. (Refer to 1 Corinthians 6:19.)

II. The Scriptures Were Central.

- A. The ark of the covenant was moved into the temple (vss. 7-10). It contained the tablets on which the Law of God had been written. These represented God's word being central in the midst of the nation.

- B. The word of God deserves centrality in the life of God's church.
 1. Sir Walter Scott told a servant, "Bring me The Book." Knowing that the library contained hundreds of books, the servant asked, "Which book?" Scott answered, "There is but one Book."
 2. The Bible deserves centrality because of its revelation, reliability, and relevance.
 3. Baptists and The Bible must be inseparable, for this Book alone is the basis of our beliefs and behavior.
- C. God's glory will fill the house only when the word of God is preached and taught. People are not to come to discuss current events and debate their views, but to meet the God revealed and made known through the declaration of His Word.

III. The Sacrifices Were Consecrated.

- A. The people assembled before the temple made sacrifices to the Lord (vs. 6). So many sacrifices were made that no scribe could count and record the number. This was not a senseless slaughter of livestock, for it was done before the ark—that symbol of God's presence.
- B. Christianity is a life of continual sacrifice.
 1. First, it began with the sacrifice of God's Son for us (John 3:16).
 2. Second, it is experienced only as we commit our lives to Christ in an act of faith.
 3. Third, it demands the continual giving of self in God's service (Romans 12:1). Apart from this sacrifice, the name of the place will be *Ichabod*—"the glory has departed."

Conclusion:

Words fail in an attempt to define the glory of God, but the church should be a place where His glory can be experienced. It will be when the saints are present, the Scriptures are primary and the sacrifices are presented.

PEOPLE BY WHOM I DON'T LIKE TO SIT

Luke 15:25-32

Introduction:

I have a problem with assigned seating because there are some people by whom I don't like to sit. This doesn't mean that I am a snob or that I consider myself better than others. My dislike has nothing to do with another person's character, but his conduct. Since I have asthma, I will not sit by one who smokes. Because of my feelings about alcoholic beverages, I hate having to sit by someone who is drinking or drunk. And I don't particularly like sitting by a person with a foul mouth.

But my dislike of sitting beside some people is not restricted to a place like a stadium. It includes church as well. The older brother in Jesus' parable described the Pharisees of that time. You would find them front row center in church.

Consider three reasons why I would not like to sit by him—even in church.

I. He Was Critical, and Not Constructive.

- A. The older brother recited the sins of the prodigal rather than rejoiced in his homecoming. When he was told of the younger brother's return, he criticized the father for receiving him and was most specific about the prodigal's conduct.
- B. There are times when criticism is out of order.
 1. The prodigal was deserving of criticism, but not at that time. The prodigal had already said it all about himself (vs. 18).
 2. The situation called for redemption, not reprimand. The prodigal didn't need censure, but help in putting life back together.
 3. Paul wrote, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1).

II. He Was Loyal, but Not Loving

- A. There is no doubt about the older brother's loyalty. He also received his

share of the inheritance early (vs. 12b), and the same exit used by the prodigal was also available to him. Not only did the older brother stay home, but he also served the father obediently (vs. 29a).

- B. Loyalty may not be as praiseworthy as it first appears.
 1. On the surface it appears that the older brother was deserving of commendation.
 2. However, closer examination reveals flaws in his loyalty.
 - a. His response indicates that he served out of a sense of obligation, not because he really wanted to (vs. 29a).
 - b. His response indicates that he served with an eye on reward (vs. 29b).
- C. Loyalty is to be an expression of love. Jesus reprimanded the church at Ephesus—in spite of the fact that they did the right things—because their service was not motivated by love (Revelation 2:4).

III. He Was Calloused and Not Concerned.

- A. The older brother did not really care about anyone but himself.
 1. He didn't care enough about his brother to go to the "far country" to try and bring him home, or even to welcome him when he returned.
 2. He didn't care enough about his father's feelings to share in his joy when the prodigal did return.
- B. There is a growing sense of callousness toward others. Many people live with an "I don't care" attitude about other people and their real needs.

Conclusion:

There are people in the social arena by whom I don't like to sit because of their practices. And there are some in the church by whom I don't like to sit because of their spirit. Perhaps that's the reason I don't like to sit by me some of the time.

GOD'S GRACE AND OUR GUILT

Isaiah 43:25

Introduction:

A pastor announced to his congregation that he knew what someone in the church had done and if the person didn't put a \$100 bill in the collection plate the pastor would tell everyone in town. When the offering was taken, there were 20 \$100 bills, and a note which read: "I don't have the \$100 today, but please don't tell—I'll get it to you tomorrow." This shows that everyone feels guilty about something.

The text focuses on the reality of guilt and God's response of grace. Consider:

I. The Reality of Guilt.

- A. The Lord God addressed a people who were guilty before Him.
 1. Consider the background of Isaiah 40-66. Israel had failed in their responsibility to God (Exodus 19:3-8).
 2. Guilt is the automatic consequence of sins, thus the people were guilty before God. Because of their sin and guilt, they had suffered the loss of their land and the consequence of captivity.
- B. Guilt is a reality of life today.
 1. The Word of God indicts all people as sinners and then renders the verdict of "guilty as charged."
 2. Even though some people seek to deny the reality of guilt, overwhelming evidence proves that people are guilty. One authority said people are not bothered by sin anymore, but they are bothered about something.
 3. The issue now is not whether or not we are guilty, but what are we going to do about it?

II. The Remedy of Grace.

The Lord God responds to the reality of our guilt by acting in grace.

- A. The grace-response is a manifestation of the character of God.

1. The Lord does not offer grace because I need it, but because it is His nature to do it.
 2. Text says He does so for "my own sake." That means because of the kind of God He is. I may act out of character, but God acts consistent with character; thus He is gracious.
- B. The grace-response relates to all our sins, not just some.
 1. If God's mercy and grace were based on our guilt, it is conceivable that some guilt might be too great to be forgiven. This is the way it is with people. There are some things we won't forgive, so when God's grace is offered to some people they say, "But, you don't know what I've done," as if sin is too great.
 2. Since grace is because of God's character, not our conduct, no sin is unforgivable. Because grace has nothing to do with the nature of sin but the nature of God, He forgives all sins. What about 'the unpardonable sin?' It is the refusal to accept the forgiveness offered by God. Refer: Isaiah 1:18; 55:6-7; and 1 John 1:9.
 - C. The grace-response completely erases the record of sin and guilt.
 1. First, God "forgives" the sin. The Hebrew word means "to blot it out."
 2. Second, God will not "remember" our sins. Since God has full knowledge, that means He does not bring them up to us again.

Conclusion:

Carlyle Marney said, "I am too old to be innocent." This applies to all of us. The Bible is uniform in its indictment of sin and verdict of guilty. Somehow I think you already knew that.

The question is, what will you do about it? You can continue to try to live with guilt and it will destroy you, or you can respond to God's grace and He will deliver you. The choice is yours.

A DIVINE DELUGE

Isaiah 44:1-5

Introduction:

In 1996 the hill country of central and southern Texas experienced a drought. But this year the same area was flooded due to the great amount of rain—on one day, 18 inches fell.

There is a spiritual parallel to this environmental condition in Texas. Many churches are in a state of spiritual drought. The evidences of this are manifold. However, the Lord God is able to provide the rain of spiritual blessings resulting in new life in the churches. This is what is needed.

Isaiah spoke in the context of the captivity of Judah following the fall of Jerusalem in 587-86 BC. The text speaks of a spiritual drought in the land which would be reversed by God pouring out the water of His Spirit. This is a reference to the restoration of the people to their land after the captivity. The passage speaks to us about what God can do for His church today.

Consider:

I. The Reality of the Thirst.

- A. Isaiah pictured the land as thirsty. This is a metaphor describing the condition of the people in captivity. Sin and its consequence had left them parched spiritually. They were like a lifeless desert.
- B. People today are like that for they have an insatiable thirst.
 1. The proof of this can be seen in many ways, such as the fascination with psychics and mystics.
 2. Isaiah explained this thirst by saying that the Lord created it (vs. 2a), and as long as one is away from the Lord he will never be satisfied. The poet wrote: "I tried the broken cisterns, Lord, but, ah, the fountains failed. And even as I stooped to drink, they mocked me as I wailed. The frail vessels Thou hast made, no hands but Thine can fill, and the waters of this earth have failed, and I am thirsty still."

II. The Resources for the Thirsty.

- A. The resources are promised. God said, "I will..." (vs. 3). He is able to satisfy that insatiable thirst, and He is willing to do so. We do not have to persuade God to revive—He will do it when His conditions are met.
- B. The resources are plentiful.
 1. God said, "I will pour" (vs. 3). The emphasis here is on the twice used word "pour."
 2. We have seen situations where water is scarce and rationed. But God has resources to inundate us.
 3. What a tragedy that we are so content to stand under a dripping faucet of blessing while He is ready to give us a cloud burst.
- C. The resources are powerful. When God waters, the desert becomes a garden. The metaphor speaks about the power of His Spirit to satisfy our lives.

III. The Response of the Thirsty.

- A. The response of the people to God is implied.
 1. In Isaiah 43 the focus is on the sins of the people. These sins led to the Babylonian captivity and the situation of being spiritually parched.
 2. However, something had happened. God said, "But now" (vs. 1a), implying that the people had turned from their sin to the Lord.
- B. The response of the people to God is individual.
 1. Note, "this one," and "another" (vs. 5).
 2. God will not pour His blessing of spiritual renewal and revival on a church unless all of us who are the church individually call on Him.

Conclusion:

We stand in need of a spiritual deluge on our parched lives. Will it come? It is up to us.

THERE IS HOPE

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Introduction:

This experience in the life of Ezekiel has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Most interpretations lend themselves to theories of resurrection. God's miraculous work is evident in the experience of the widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:22) and the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:35). To conclude that the emphasis in Ezekiel 37 is the theme of resurrection is possible. However, I think we would be remiss if we did not view the passage in light of the current situation at hand.

Ezekiel dealt with a group of people who were in despair, who were captive slaves and living in a foreign territory. God's message to Ezekiel, and to us today, is simple. There is hope in the midst of despair.

Let's look at this passage of Scripture and seek to understand three truths: what God was doing, what Ezekiel was doing, and what the outcome was on that eventful day.

I. What Was God Doing on that Eventful Day? (vss. 37:1-3)

- A. God placed His hand upon Ezekiel. This was not the first time God had done this (3:14; 3:22; 8:1). God used these experiences as a means of preparing Ezekiel for the experience he would have on that day.
- B. God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones and asked if the bones could live again (vss. 2-3). God showed Ezekiel a hopeless situation. The valley of dry bones was comparable to the situation the people of Israel were facing in Babylonian exile.
- C. God was at work in what seemed to be a hopeless situation. In our times of despair, we can hold to the truth that God is working in our lives.

II. What Was Ezekiel Doing on that Eventful Day? (vss. 37:4-10)

- A. God asked Ezekiel a difficult question (vs. 3). Ezekiel responded to God by saying that only He knows the answer to the question. He was affirming that such an ability resides only in God.
- B. Ezekiel prophesied twice to the bones as God commanded him. God gave Ezekiel a decisive role in this event.
- C. Ezekiel listened and learned as God explained the events to him. His role was one of obedience and faithfulness to God's leadership in his life.

III. What Was the Outcome on that Eventful Day? (vss. 11-14)

- A. The despair in the lives of the exiles would soon turn to hope. God said He would bring them home to the land of Israel.
- B. The stagnate life of the people would soon return to life. There would be joy in the life of the people once again.

Conclusion:

We need to ask ourselves the same three questions. What is Christ doing in our lives today? Even in the midst of despair, God is at work in our lives. What are we doing for Christ today? God called for Ezekiel to be active and obedient in spite of his current situation. What is the result of the work of Christ in our lives today? Only you can answer these questions.

A MISPLACED TRUST

Mark 10: 17-22

Introduction:

In beginning the invitation, my childhood pastor called upon those present to place their *trust in the Lord*. His request was simple and easy to comprehend. Yet, I have learned that it poses a challenge greater than any I have faced. Our commitment to this challenge is essential for having continued fellowship with Christ. Our commitment to this challenge is a daily experience and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

Jesus encountered a man who trusted in the things of this world more than in Him. The man asked all the right questions. However, he came to value all the wrong conclusions.

I. The Truth Desired (vss. 17-18).

- A. In verse 17 we are introduced to a man who was wealthy (vs. 22), young (Matthew 19:16-22) and powerful (Luke 18:18-24). He had it all, but he wasn't content! Unlike the Pharisees (vs. 2), the rich man's purpose was not to test Jesus. He was eager to learn! His eagerness was demonstrated by his "running," his "bowing" and his addressing of Jesus as "Good Teacher" (vs. 17).
- B. The man's question tells much about him. His focus was on obtaining eternal life. However, he asked what *he must do*. Rather than looking to Jesus, he was searching for some new prescription which would lead him to salvation. Jesus responded by saying that no one is good but God alone (vs. 18). Jesus was simply alluding to the goodness of the Father (Psalm 145:9). The rich man did not understand Jesus and proclaimed his goodness by professing to keep the commandments (vs. 20).

II. The Truth Proclaimed (vss. 19-21).

- A. Jesus responded to the rich man by quoting commandments which emphasized a person's relationship to other people. Jesus had a reason for

addressing these commandments. He knew that to be right with God meant to be right with one's neighbor.

- B. The rich man was disappointed with Jesus' response. He claimed to have kept the commandments since birth. His response was more naive than dishonest. If he had kept all the commandments, why was he seeking Jesus? By coming to Jesus, he was acknowledging a lack of fulfillment and contentment in his life. A life without Christ is a discontented life. Jesus could have rebuked the man. Instead, He reacted to the man with love. Jesus sought to meet his need for eternal life. Jesus sees our present condition and what we can become.
- C. Jesus told the rich man to sell what he had and to follow Him. Jesus was not condemning wealth nor praising poverty. Jesus did not make renunciation of possessions a universal condition for inheriting eternal life. He simply challenged the man to remove the obstacle holding him back from faithfully following Christ.

III. The Truth Rejected (vs. 10:22).

- A. The rich man's retreat was in distinct contrast to his approach. What made the difference? He learned both the nature and the price of what he needed. He missed the greatest treasure of all! This contrast is seen in many realms of our life today. We enter into something with great anticipation and excitement, only to learn of the high cost of commitment or love involved.
- B. One faint ray of hope is found in the rich man's sorrowful retreat from Jesus' command. We face the same command today. How you respond to the command will affect you for eternity.

Conclusion:

Are you eager to follow Christ today? How do you respond to Christ as He leads you? Learn from the mistake of the rich man. Depend upon Christ. He will never fail you.

THE BELIEF OF A BLIND MAN

Mark 10:46-52

Introduction:

There was once a man who was a great tight rope walker. He made up his mind to stretch a rope across Niagara Falls and walk across it. Everyone in the area came to see this amazing event. When the day came, there were hundreds of people on hand to witness his skill. He stood before the crowd and asked, "Who believes I can do it?" No one said anything for a moment, then a zealous fan screamed, "I believe, I believe!" With this encouragement, the tight rope walker leapt onto the rope and started across. He walked all the way across the falls and back. The crowd went wild. He then asked the crowd, "Do you think I can do it pushing a wheel barrow across on the rope?" The crowd grew very quiet, until the same zealous fan screamed again, "I believe, I believe!" The tight rope walker grabbed the wheel barrow and jumped up on the rope and walked all the way across and back. The crowd went wild! Finally, he asked the crowd, "Do you think I can walk across pushing the wheelbarrow with a person in it?" The crowd was silent, except for the zealous fan that screamed, "I believe, I believe!" The tight rope walker then told him to get in the wheelbarrow.

There are a lot of people in the church today who scream, "I BELIEVE," but they do not believe enough to get in Jesus' wheelbarrow.

Blind Bartimaeus believed in Jesus in such a way that it caused him to take action. There are some lessons we can learn from this blind man.

I. Our Belief in Christ Should Make Us Desperate.

- A. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus could make him see. Bartimaeus cried out to the Lord for His mercy (vss. 47-48). He was desperate for Jesus Christ. The definition for desperate is "leaving little or no hope; made reckless by despair or urgency."
- B. We should be desperate for Jesus. Just like Bartimaeus, we need healing, and Jesus is our only hope. Our belief in Christ should drive us to our knees in

desperation. When we recognize who He is and the condition we are in, we will see our need for Him. If we, God's people, are not desperate for Jesus, why should the lost world see a need for Him?

II. Our Belief in Christ Should Make Us Unstoppable.

- A. Bartimaeus was blind, but his belief in Jesus made him absolutely unstoppable. The crowd told Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he would not hear them (vs. 48). He believed in Christ so much that no one was going to stop him from getting to Jesus. There was something in his despair that made him unstoppable. A great number of people could not stop him.
- B. If we believe Christ is who He says He is, what in the world can stop us if we live in Him? We need to be like the old blind man and make up our minds to be unstoppable. Nothing will stop us from reading God's Word, praying, proclaiming, serving, giving, loving, and caring! If Christ be for us, none can stand against us! Let us be unstoppable for Him!

III. Our Belief in Christ Should Make Us Followers.

- A. Jesus told Bartimaeus, "Go thy way." (vs. 52). The greatest thing is that Bartimaeus' way became the way of Jesus Christ. He did follow Jesus. His belief in Christ made him a follower. He had a choice and he chose to follow Christ.
- B. Our belief in Christ should make us followers of him. Following Him means that we become like Him. There are way too many people in the church today who believe in Christ, but they are not followers of Christ.

Conclusion:

Bartimaeus believed, and he became a desperate, unstoppable, follower of Jesus Christ. We are to be no less. We need Christ, He wants to use us, and it is our choice. What will we do?

LIFE IS NOT FAIR, BUT JESUS IS ALWAYS THERE

John 9:1-38

Introduction:

Joni Erickson was a beautiful teenager. She was full of life, and everything was looking good for her. She was very athletic and loved to ride horses. She was a Christian young lady. In 1967 Joni was paralyzed in a diving accident. Young Joni realized that life is not always fair.

Life is not always fair to us, either. Just because we are Christians we are not exempt from the pains of life.

A blind beggar experienced the unfairness of life, but found hope in the end. He learned what to do when life is not fair.

I. When Life Is Not Fair, Stick to the Truth.

- A. Truth is defined as reality or actually. All that the blind man knew was that one time he was blind, and now he could see (vss. 11, 15, 25, 30-33). The blind man never compromised what he knew to be true.
- B. Life was not fair for Elisabeth Elliot. She found the man of her dreams and finally got married. His name was Jim. Soon they felt God calling them to be missionaries in Ecuador, and obeyed. Jim began learning the Auca language so that he and four of his friends could spread the Gospel to the Auca Indians. Something happened and the Indians turned on them and killed them. Elisabeth and Jim were only married for two years. Life was not fair. In spite of the death of her husband, she stayed. Not long after, she led the Aucas, who had killed her husband, to Christ. When life was not fair, she stuck to the truth.

II. When Life Is Not Fair, Keep the Right Attitude.

- A. The formerly blind man kept the right attitude. His neighbors turned him in, his parents turned him away, and his religion

turned him loose. But the formerly blind man never complained one time. He kept the right attitude when life was not fair.

- B. Dr. Viktor Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist, learned through his own imprisonment in the death camps of Germany that human life does have meaning. He said, "Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress...everything can be taken from man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." He kept the right attitude.
- C. We need to have the right attitude when life is not fair. Sometimes we cannot change the situations we are in, but we can always change our attitude while we are in them.

III. When Life Is Not Fair Look Ahead.

- A. The formerly blind man had no other place to look except ahead. His past was dark, his present was depressing, so he looked ahead. He asked Jesus to tell him who the Son of Man was so that he could believe in Him. He looked ahead and believed.
- B. Joni Erickson looked ahead. Paralyzed as a teenager, today she is a successful singer, writer, speaker, artist, and wife. She has appeared on numerous TV shows, including the movie about her life. When life was not fair Joni looked ahead.

Conclusion:

Like the blind man, life will be unfair to us. What will we do when it is? Let us stick to the truth, keep the right attitude, and look ahead. We are not rescued from the unfairness in life, but we do not have to face it alone. God wants to make us overcomers in Christ. We will be when we stick to the truth, keep the right attitude, and look ahead.

THE SECRET OF AARON'S ROD

Numbers 17:1-13

Introduction:

In the 1950s and 1960s a very popular television program was "I've Got a Secret." A person with a secret would appear before a panel of celebrities who would try to guess the secret. In this passage of Scripture, we have the opportunity to know the secret of Aaron's rod. It reveals truths about Jesus Christ.

Before investigating the secret of Aaron's rod, review the events leading into chapter 17. Korah, the son of Izhar, led a rebellion against the authority of Moses as the leader of the children of Israel and Aaron as the priest. In Chapter 17 God confirmed the ministry of Aaron and gave us Old Testament pictures of Jesus.

I. The Secret of Aaron's Rod Was Personal (vs. 3).

- A. Personal in Selection—Each of the tribes of Israel was represented by a rod. Each of the rods had the name of the tribe, except that of Levi; it had the name of Aaron. In so doing, God makes clear His choice for the priesthood. It was His decision, not man's. Philippians 2:9-11 states that God had given Jesus a name which is above every name. One day every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The name:
1. Jesus—speaks to His humanity
 2. Christ—speaks to His deity
 3. Lord—speaks to His authority
- B. Personal in salvation—Just as Moses was told to place Aaron's name on the rod, so the Scripture states that if we are to experience eternal life with Jesus, our name must be written down (Revelation 21:15).

II. The Secret of Aaron's Rod Was Productive (vs. 8).

Moses placed the 12 rods on the altar before the Lord. After a long night, Moses came to the altar to find that the one which was dead was now not only alive, but producing almonds. The productivity of the rod gives us three important truths as it relates to Jesus:

- A. His promise was fulfilled—The rod which blossomed signifies God's chosen one. Jesus was God's chosen as the first fruit of the dead. (The almond is the first fruit of the season.)
- B. His presence was realized—The rod had been dead. It was now budding. It was alive! Jesus showed himself alive on many occasions (Acts 1:3). He is alive for all to know.
- C. His purpose was revealed—Without a doubt, Aaron's ministry of the priesthood was confirmed. For us it is the revealing picture of Jesus, our High Priest in Hebrews 10:12.

III. The Secret of Aaron's Rod was Prolific (vs. 8-10).

- A. The rod that served as a testimony to Israel that day in the wilderness was also placed in the ark as a continual reminder to the nation.
- B. The Lord Jesus was offered as a sufficient sacrifice for the whole world (John 1:29). Just as the rod provided not just one almond but many, so the Lord Jesus provides life for whomever will come to Him.

Conclusion:

In these chapters of Numbers we see sinful man in rebellion as revealed in Korah's actions. Then, we see the desire of God's heart to reconcile men unto Himself. The secret of Aaron's rod is the simple gospel message to lost men and women everywhere. Jesus is alive, and there is life in Him.

PRAYER WORKS

Acts 25

Introduction:

On August 19, 1997 I heard the most dreadful words, "It is cancer." That was followed by a discussion that surgery was necessary and if that wasn't effective, treatment would follow, but there is no known cure.

Now, I realize that I am not the only one ever to hear those words, but this time the words were directed at me. It was time to pray!

Some might challenge that you ought not pray just in an emergency, and I agree. Prayer should be a vital part of our everyday walk with the Lord. However, close study of Scripture reveals how growth took place in the life of a believer because of the emergencies of life.

One such case unfolds in Acts 12 in the life of Peter and the church.

Consider four things that we can learn about prayer from this passage. First notice:

I. The Person.

Peter is at the center of the event found in our text. Herod's response to the growth of the church was to kill James and arrest Peter. A quick review of Peter's life can help us to see how prayer has changed him. Three words characterize Peter's walk with the Lord:

- A. Downfall — In the gospel records we see Peter either at the top or the bottom of events. One moment he is saying "not me, Lord," and the next he is running out into the night. We see him full of self and fear.
- B. Diligent — The events of John 21 changed the life of Peter. He moved from fear to faith. His love for Jesus is seen as he is willing to follow in spite of law and traditions (Acts 10).
- C. Decision — Because of his growth in the Lord, Peter could find rest now even in prison (vs. 6).

II. The Petition (vs. 5b).

Two things we must notice about the church's action of prayer while Peter was in prison:

- A. How faithfully they prayed. The phrase "constant prayer" is used to show us the faithfulness of the church to pray for Peter. The early church was a praying church because they knew it was their only hope.
- B. How fervently they prayed. Prayer was the first choice in the situation and their only choice. When we realize we have only one option, we will not treat it lightly.

III. The Product (v. 6-23).

The faithful and fervent prayer of the church brought about a great work.

- A. The deliverance of Peter (vss. 6-18). Only the Lord could have brought Peter out of prison. Notice the number of guards and the inability of Peter.
- B. The demise of Herod (vss. 19-23).
 1. His reaction—Herod was mad because Peter was gone.
 2. His ruin—Because of Herod's disregard for the things of Christ, he met judgment and death. Herod sought religious acceptance—not a right relationship with the Lord.

IV. The Purpose (vss. 24-25).

The purpose of these events was to magnify the Lord, mature the early church, and spread the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost world.

Conclusion:

Prayer really does work. It may not always get us out of every situation, but it will get us through every situation for our good and His glory.

GIVE ME THAT MOUNTAIN

Joshua 14:6-15

Introduction:

Caleb was a great hero of the faith. Six times the Bible says about him that he "wholly followed the Lord." He was an overcomer who obeyed the Lord. Caleb was born a slave in Egypt and died a hero. He was given the promise of a great inheritance because of his faithfulness.

I. Caleb, the Spy (vss. 6-8).

- A. Israel had been out of Egypt about two years when they arrived at the entrance to Canaan. Instead of believing God's Word and claiming their inheritance, the people asked for a report from 12 spies.
- B. Caleb, along with Joshua, encouraged the people to enter the land. They were men of faith. The majority of 10 walked by sight; the minority walked by faith. A rebellious nation saw only the obstacles, while Caleb and Joshua saw the opportunities.

II. Caleb, the Submissive Servant (vss. 9-10).

- A. Caleb had to suffer with the unbelieving nation through years of wilderness wandering. He saw people die in the wilderness, missing out on the promised inheritance. He had to listen to murmuring and complaining. Yet, he remained faithful to the Lord.
- B. How did Caleb endure the wilderness?
 1. He did not have to fear death. God had promised him that he would see the promised land.
 2. He knew he had an inheritance awaiting him in Canaan.
 3. He knew that the Lord would not fail him. Christians are to be submissive in serving Christ. We, too, are in a pilgrim journey with its own hardships. Caleb is our example in submissive service.

III. Caleb, the Success (vss.11-14).

- A. Caleb lived to enter the promised land and claim the blessing promised him. He said he was as physically strong when he entered Canaan with a new generation of Hebrews as he had been when he scouted out the land.
- B. Caleb asked for a mountain. Even in Canaan he was a man ready for the hard job. His request reveals about him that:
 1. Caleb was a man of vision. He continued to see opportunities where others saw obstacles.
 2. Caleb was a man of vitality. He did not shrink from the hard task.
 3. Caleb was a man of victory. He won his inheritance.

Conclusion:

From Caleb we learn that unbelief looks at the giants while faith looks at God. Unbelief depends on man's "common sense," while faith rests wholly on the Word of God. Caleb's dedication and faith saved his life, gained him an inheritance, overcame the enemy, and enabled him to enrich his family for years to come.

The Lord expects Christians to be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). We are to be overcomers of this world through faith in Jesus Christ.

We today can overcome the enemy and claim the inheritance the same way as Caleb. This requires that:

1. We be wholly yielded to the Lord;
2. We know God's promises and believe them;
3. We keep our hearts and minds fixed on the inheritance; and
4. We depend on God to give the victory.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Mark 9:2-13

Introduction:

The transfiguration of Christ was one of the key events in Jesus' earthly ministry. It was the only time during His ministry on earth that the glory He had with the Heavenly Father before His incarnation showed through the flesh. The transfiguration was not a reflection of glory from the outside, but a revelation of glory from the inside.

The transfiguration took place about six months before Christ's crucifixion. The experience was God's way of affirming that Jesus Christ was His Son. The experience was not for Christ alone, but the three disciples who were with Him on the mountain. Coming events could cause them to doubt the Lord's identity. Thus the transfiguration was an event which revealed Jesus' true identity as God's Son. There are four factors in the transfiguration to be noticed:

I. The Change in Christ (vss. 2-3).

When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain it was as if the veil of the Lord's humanity was pulled back. This gave the three disciples the opportunity to see more than the human Jesus. They were able to glimpse the glory of God.

II. The Conversation on the Mountain (vs. 4).

Moses and Elijah talked with the Lord Jesus about His coming death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31). These two represented two types of Old Testament revelation. Moses was the lawgiver. Elijah was the first of the great prophets and represented the Old Testament prophetic ministry. Both the law and the prophets pointed to Jesus Christ. The presence of these two on the mountain proved that death is not the end of life. The Lord Jesus was facing death, but that would not be the end for Him.

III. The Confusion of Peter (vss 5-6).

After the departure of Moses and Elijah, Peter suggested that three booths be built—one for Jesus and the other two for Moses and Elijah. Peter's suggestion was born out

of his confusion and fear. "For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid" (verse 6). Peter evidently felt the situation merited some statement and said the first thing that popped into his head.

IV. The Center of Attention (vss. 7-8).

The cloud of God's presence covered the scene, and the Lord spoke the word of affirmation: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (verse 7). This was a word of encouragement to Jesus and exhortation to the three disciples.

Conclusion:

What was the purpose of the transfiguration experience? It was two-fold. First, the transfiguration was a picture of the Kingdom of God in which Christ is to be glorified among all people.

Second, the transfiguration was for the purpose of strengthening Christ and the three disciples for His coming suffering in Jerusalem.

SERMON ILLUSTRATION

Tied To The Past:

Someone said that every sinner has a past and every saint has a future. That is true, and since we are all sinners, each one of us has a past. There is a sense in which we do not ever get away from our past. Mistakes made in the past can result in lasting consequences. And, too, we are what our yesterdays have made us.

However, a person can move away from the past. We do not have to continue to live or behave the way we did yesterday. Every new day is a new opportunity, and we can use it to grow, develop, and thus change from the way we thought and acted in the past.

Tragically, so many people are tied to their past. Dr. Robert Schuller relates that when an elephant was born in old China, the animal's hind leg would immediately be chained to a big banyan tree. The baby elephant would tug and scream, trying to free itself. After four years of captivity, the elephant would have ceased trying, and when released, it would never try to run away, thinking it could not. Talk about being chained to your past!

So many people are like that. They become captives to the patterns of thought and behavior and to experiences that happened in the yesterdays of life. They carry these into each new today, thus allowing them to dictate behavior.

Scholarships and Grants for Church Related Students William Carey College

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 5 below).

CHURCH RELATED VOCATION (CRV) students may apply for William Carey College scholarships of \$4,500 per academic year for off-campus students and \$5,500 per academic year for campus-based students (#6 below). Campus-based CRV students will also receive a \$1,500 per academic year work scholar grant.

CHURCH RELATED VOCATION DEPENDENT (CRVD) students may apply for William Carey College scholarships ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per academic year (1, 3, 4, and 5 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 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.
 4. **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.
 5. **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.
 6. **CRV Tuition Scholarships** provide \$4,500 per year for off-campus church-related vocation students who enroll at the College and \$5,500 per year for campus-based church-related vocations students. These scholarships are comprehensive and may not be combined with any other scholarships or grants offered by WCC. 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.

In addition to the awards shown above, Mississippi Baptist students and CRV dependent 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.

William Carey College Guide to Scholarships, Awards, and Grants

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. Scholarships funded directly by the College from endowment, memorial gifts, and annual gifts are 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 or an official transcript. Transfer students must have the registrar verify their cumulative GPA on the attached form or an official transcript.

In addition to the awards shown on this form, Mississippi residents may apply for **Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grants (MTAG)** and **Mississippi Eminent Scholar Grants (MESG)**. Students may also apply for grants for **College Work Scholars (CWS)**.

FRESHMAN STUDENTS

Chancellor Scholars \$20,000

(\$16,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- National Merit, Achievement Finalists, Semi-finalist, or 31 ACT
 - Total award divided equally over 4 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.5
 - Participate in Honors Program

Presidential Scholars \$16,000

(\$12,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 28 ACT or valedictorian, salutatorian or STAR student or exceptional ability in talent areas*
 - Total award divided equally over 4 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area
 - Participate in Honors Program

Academic Scholars \$10,000

(\$6,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 24 ACT or outstanding ability in talent areas*
 - Total award divided equally over 4 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area
 - Participate in Honors Program

Leadership Grants \$5,000

(\$2,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 21 ACT or leadership talent in service areas
 - Total award divided equally over 4 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 2.8 or 3.0 GPA in major area

JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGE/TRANSFER STUDENTS

Chancellor Scholars \$8,000

(\$6,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- Membership in PTK or 3.7 GPA with minimum of 54 semester hours
 - Total award divided equally over 2 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.5
 - Participate in Honors Program

Presidential Scholars \$6,000

(\$4,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 3.4 GPA with 54 semester hours or exceptional ability in talent areas
 - Total award divided equally over 2 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.3 or 3.5 GPA in major area
 - Participate in Honors Program

Academic Scholars \$4,000

(\$2,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 3.2 GPA with 54 semester hours or outstanding ability in talent areas*
 - Total award divided equally over 2 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 3.1 or 3.3 GPA in major area
 - Participate in Honors Program

Leadership Grants \$2,000

(\$1,000 off campus)

- Criteria:
- 2.8 GPA with 54 semester hours or leadership talent in service areas
 - Total award divided equally over 2 years
 - Maintain overall GPA of 2.8 or 3.0 GPA in major area

***All 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.

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

William Carey College
Third Annual
Minister's Golf Tournament

Location: Timberton Golf Course, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Date: May 18 and 19, 1998.
(Tournament will begin 1:00 pm Monday and 8:00 am Tuesday.)

Cost: Call (601) 582-6115 for cost information.

Format: Two man scramble.

Lodging: The college will provide free lodging on the campus.
(You will need to bring linens and towels.)

Dinner: The college will provide a complimentary meal on Monday evening of the tournament.

Director: Ron Hickman (PGA golf pro at Timberton) and his staff will direct the tournament.

Dress: Golf collared shirt with slacks or shorts.

Space is limited to 72 golfers

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