



PREPARATIONS **FOR THE** **GREAT WEDDING**

A BOOK OF ENCOURAGEMENT
TO BUILD CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST,
THAT WE MAY LIVE PLEASING TO HIM,
AND FIND POWER IN PRAYER.

BY WILLIAM R. HUNT

Preparations for the Great Wedding

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Introduction

This little book was written with the idea of helping the Heavenly Bridegroom's wife make herself ready for marriage. All successful brides have three essentials—communication with the bridegroom, confidence in the bridegroom, and commitment to the bridegroom.

A New Year's Challenge

I challenge you to make Ephesians 4:1 your goal for this year—to do everything pleasing unto our Lord.

Watch your attitudes toward others, the position where God placed you, giving to God's work, others who think differently than you, drivers in other vehicles, money, your prayer life, Bible reading, your tongue, and the salvation of others. Watch your stewardship of time (both work and private), God's calling, and whatever else God has given (talent, body, spirit, or soul).

Check out the definition of a robber in Malachi 3:8.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
God the Father.

Handling Pain

How do Christians handle people who hurt them? Is there Biblical help in this area? Whether we are hurt by accident or intentionally, the pain is identical. There are numerous ways we are hurt—unkind words, lies, untrue rumors, gossip, situations created by others, etc. Many times our minds become occupied with thoughts about those who have hurt us.

If that happens, we have lost our focus both on Jesus and on the following scriptures: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding (Prov. 3:5).

We need to climb up into the tree with Zacchaeus, and sprinkle forgiveness on the

heads of those who have hurt us as they walk below us. It is always better to get above people to see Jesus only. Then listen for Jesus to say, "Today I must abide at thy house."

When our focus is not on Christ, we lay ourselves open to many problems. We must stay above people, or we will lose our focus. Remember, Jesus was above the people when on the cross He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It seems to me that Jesus sprinkled forgiveness on their heads by praying for them. What do you think?

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a pardon from sin.

A Great Example for Us

Why do people become angry at God, and blame Him because of devastating circumstances?

1) They are either ignorant of, or ignoring, the Word of God. (See Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4.) Jesus said, "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

2) Their concept of sin is wrong.

3) The nature of man is hindering.

4) The attributes of God may be distorted, perverted, or twisted in their minds. The Word of God is man's instruction manual, and our guide for a joyful and peaceful life. Circumstances change. Emotions are erratic, unpredictable, and vacillating. The Word of God is pure, powerful, unchangeable, and eternal. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33). The Psalmist wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the throne of grace.

Angry With God

Why does anyone become angry at God, and blame Him because of devastating circumstances? What are the Biblical answers? Their concept of sin may be distorted. Romans chapters 1-7 give us God's view of sin and the remedy for sin. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against sin (1:18). The progression of sin without Christ is always downward toward destruction, and a life void of virtue, righteousness, integrity, and godliness (1:19-32). Mankind is either under the influence of Christ, or of the devil. Satan came to deceive, divide, steal, and kill. Jesus came that mankind might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
cleansing from all sin.

Costly Ignorance

The cost of ignoring the Word of God is found both in the New Testament and the Old. In Ezekiel 33:31; Isaiah 29:13, 14; Romans 1:21-32; Matthew 7:26, 27; and Revelation 2, 3, Israel, by ignoring God's Word, lost God's presence, protection, provisions, security, etc. Their understanding became distorted.

God said, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). In the New Testament, the same principles are observed. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, . . . God gave them over to a reprobate mind . . ." (Rom. 1:22-28).

Is this picture of destruction for those who ignore God's Word? Read Matthew 7:26, 27. Israel is an example; they were destroyed, and went into captivity (Ezek. 1:1).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
His peace.

Where Confidence Belongs

In Exodus 3 and 4, God is saying to Moses, “Place all your confidence in Me.” Before anyone will place all their confidence in God, God must get their attention. With Moses it was a burning bush (3:2). Next God said, “. . . Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (v. 5). God is able to reveal Himself to you (3:5). After God commissioned Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, Moses’ confidence in God was still weak; Moses said to God, “[Israel] will not believe me” (4:1a).

God still wanted to build Moses’ confidence. The LORD said to Moses, “What is that in thine hand?” Moses said, “A rod.” God said, “Cast it on the ground.” Moses cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from before it. (See Ex. 4:2, 3). God desires that men have total confidence in Him. Give God control of your “rod.”

Christ will build your confidence.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the path through wilderness.

Three Things

Notice the following three subjects: men who pleased God, the price they paid, and the power God gave in Genesis 22:2, 12, 17; Daniel 1:8, 9; 6:10-28. According to tradition, all the apostles faced martyrdom except John; he was banished to Patmos. By A.D. 54, Christians were said to have turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

There are two groups of Christians. One lives a good life, attends church, abstains from gross evils, does many good works, but wages no war against sin. The other group does all the above, but forsakes every pleasure and enjoyment that undermines their enjoyment of God. Their greatest joy is the enlargement of Christ's church. The cry of their heart is, "Lord, glorify Thyself through me." They have placed all their confidence in Christ.

May I encourage you to join the latter group?

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
heaven.

The Quest of Men

God has promised blessing, success, and companionship, which are the quest of man. “*Blessed* are ye that sow beside all waters” (Isa. 32:20a). May we sow the gospel seed without distinction of race, social standing, or education. “. . . The gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is *in all the world*; and *bringeth forth fruit*” (Col. 1:5, 6a). “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*” (Matt. 28:20).

We have the best and the most expensive seed on earth—*The Truth of God*. It cost Christ His tears, His honor among men, His blood, and finally His life. “. . . My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please” (Isa. 55:11a).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
dwel in the love of God.

The Promise of the Father

“. . . Wait for the promise of *the Father* . . .”
(Acts 1:4).

What is the promise? They were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2).

What was the result of the promise? God gave the Gentiles “. . . the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith*” (Acts 15:8, 9).

Christ pronounced a blessing and promise concerning a *pure heart*. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they *shall see God*” (Matt. 5:8).

1 Peter 1:22 and 25a are about purity of soul and heart: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . . love one another with a *pure heart* fervently. But *the word of the Lord endureth for ever*.” We can place all our confidence in Christ and His word.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the spring of living water.

Jesus' Cry

On the cross Jesus cried, “. . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). That was the greatest cry ever uttered. No being through eternity had ever heard of one, or known of one, of the Trinity having broken fellowship. This cry in some mysterious and awful manner reveals that Christ had been forsaken by God.

Had it not been for this cry, mankind would never have known the awfulness, hideousness, repulsiveness, and wickedness of sin in the sight of God. The real meaning of Isaiah would never have been revealed. “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:2). Place all your confidence in Christ. Die to your own will.

Live a life totally to please Christ.

Jesus, the Lamb of God which was slain, has redeemed to God by His blood people out of every tribe, language, people, and nation. He has made us kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. *Oh!* He is worthy of all our worship and all our time on the Lord's Day.

Christ Condescended

Christ became “lower than the angels” (see Heb. 2).

He became man. He became partakers of man’s nature. He became flesh and blood. He suffered death. By the grace of God, He tasted death for every man. He became a merciful and faithful High Priest in all things pertaining to God. Both He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are one.

Therefore, Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren. All Christians have an exalted position. Don’t at any time or place be ashamed of Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the mercy seat.

Life Given

Here we see despair, rejoicing, and hope. “My God, my God, *why* hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34b).

In Luke 23:34-44, *the thief* lost his hope. *The chief priest* was rejoicing. He concedes God disowned Jesus. He said, “He trusted in God” (Matt. 27:43a), but at last the truth comes from His own lips: He is forsaken of God. But wait! He is saying more: *hope* for a sin-sick world. “*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*” (Luke 23:46b), and last, “. . . *It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*” (John 19:30).

Listen to the centurion standing at the foot of the cross, “*Truly this man was the Son of God.*” John 10:18 fulfilled: “No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” Later in Luke 24:6 we learn that *He is risen.*

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the wisdom of God.

It Is Finished

Read John 19:30-34. From the cross comes the cry, "*It is finished.*" This was not a cry of defeat, but of victory. These words, we are told by scholars, carry the meaning brought to a perfection, a thing not brought to an end, but brought to a perfect completion (Matt. 27:50 and Mark 15:37).

It was a loud cry. Heaven heard the words. The angels rejoiced. Satan heard, and knew he was a defeated foe. All creation heard the cry. The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent (Matt. 27:52-54).

The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The cross begins its work of revelation. The very man charged to crucify Jesus, said, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Place all your confidence in Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
His cross.

Perfection

Read John 19:30-34. *"It is finished"* was a cry of completion with perfection, a life without regrets. Jesus said, ". . . I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things. . . . I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28, 29). "I delight to do thy will, O my God: thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:8).

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me" (John 12:49a).

No talent, no gift lost or misused, no troubled conscience. Yet time for the Mary Magdalenes possessed with devils, the woman of Samaria, the beggar, a man living in the tombs with an unclean spirit, a rich young ruler. *"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."*

He was a Friend to sinners, seeking to reconcile men to God. What a privilege! He was sent from God the Father.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the Light of the world.

Finished Plan

"It is finished" is, in essence, "Father, Our plan to restore man back to Us is completed with perfection."

What an honor offered to mankind as a gift—all these blessings: acceptance with God, lively hope, pardon from and cleansing us from all sin, a pure heart, fellowship with the Father and His only begotten Jesus, union with Christ, divine nature, love slave, deliverance from the power of darkness. A soldier for Christ, "(For the weapons for our warfare are not carnal, but *mighty through God* to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4, 5).

Christ now says, *"Son, daughter, repent, and give Me all your heart."*

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
being fruitful for God.

Opened Door

Read John 19:30-34. *"It is finished."* His mission—the great work of atonement—was to bring life to whosoever will confess his sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Before any men could have everlasting life, Jesus' earthly life had to be finished by death on the cross. He made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice that satisfied God's wrath against man's rebellion against God. Yes!

Yes, *"It is finished"* opened the door to God's presence, God's gifts, grace, mercy, fellowship, joy, peace, love abounding, inheritance with Christ, knowledge of his will, and a delight in it, deliverance from the power of darkness, and Christ in you. The above is a gift, a gift only to all who will allow the Lord Jesus full control and absolute authority over their lives.

It will be worth it all when we stand before Jesus!

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
fellowship with God.

Focused Prayer

Read Luke 23:34b. No prayer for forgiveness was ever uttered like the prayer from Jesus on the cross; *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”*

His first words from the cross were not for His mother, brothers, and sisters, or for His own followers, but for sinners. The cross was His mission, His goal, His purpose—God’s love for a world of lost sinners. Christ never lost His focus despite the pain, the rejection, the crown of thorns, the beatings, nor the nails that fastened Him to the cross.

What is your focus? In Romans 5:8 Paul wrote, “But God commendeth [or demonstrates] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

I rejoice that Christ never lost His focus.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the city where they need no sun.

No Excuse

Read Luke 23:34b. From the cross Jesus said, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” We see that ignorance is sin, and needs forgiveness. If ignorance removes sin and man’s accountability of himself to God, there was no necessity for this prayer. This prayer is for all mankind. Granted, the immediate would be the soldiers, those who nailed Him to the cross, the priests who willingly were ignorant, etc.

Paul and Peter confirm the people’s ignorance. Peter said, “And now, brethren, I [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers” (Acts 3:17).

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:8, “Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” He said in 1 Timothy 1:13, “[I] was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but *I obtained mercy*, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Later, “. . . a great company of the *priests* were *obedient* to the *faith*” (Acts 6:7). Be a reader of God’s Word.

Sacrifice Accepted

Read Luke 23:34b, *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”* From the cross, Christ displayed forgiveness. He knew His blood and sacrifice were accepted by the Father for the remission or forgiveness of all sin. Hebrews 9:22 tells us without shedding of blood is no remission or forgiveness. In Matthew 27:25 we hear the Jews sentencing themselves and their children: All the Jews said “release Barabbas,” and Christ’s “blood be on us, and on our children.” *But, oh!* hear Christ: *“Father, forgive them.”*

I wonder how much our ignorance has injured our own souls, marred our testimonies, harmed others, delayed God’s objective, and pained the heart of our God.

Will you die to your own will? Will you determine to do God’s will? A good help to finding God’s will is by reading God’s Word, and meditating on it. Be doers of the Word, not just hearers.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
an inheritance from God.

Changed Nature

In Genesis 1:27 and 5:1, we are told that God created man in *His own image*; male and female created He them. Satan told the woman that God didn't have their best interest at heart (Gen. 3:1-8). People still believe that lie.

The woman believed Satan, and obeyed him. She then enticed her husband to disobey God. They both lost God's image. God's image was replaced with Satan's image—a sinful nature.

We read that Adam and Eve's children were born with Adam's image, or a sinful nature (Gen. 5:3). Cain confirmed the sinful nature by murdering his own brother (Gen. 4:8). Man now is born with a nature rebellious toward God, and extremely selfish.

Every baby starts life completely self-centered. Deny the baby what he wants, and he seethes or boils with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. By the Cross came the possibility of deliverance from the sinful nature to a divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Torn Veil

Suddenly the curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). The curtain separated holy men from the presence of God. No person was allowed to look into where God's presence dwelt, let alone enter into His presence, except the high priest, and he could enter only once a year on the great Day of Atonement (Ex. 30:10).

The Jews say that this veil was four fingers' breadth in thickness. Man was made to live in the presence of God, but sin separated man from God. The thick veil displayed God's view of sin. The rent veil showed the Father's acceptance of Christ's sacrifice.

Man may now come boldly to the throne of grace, and find forgiveness, cleansing, and the possibility of being partakers of the divine nature (Heb. 4:16).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the knowledge of God.

In This World

Peter taught that mankind had the possibilities of being partakers of the divine nature in this present world (2 Pet. 1:4).

God has called us to glory and virtue. He has enabled us to fulfill our calling through His divine power, and His willingness to give us His nature. Jesus taught the same principle in John 15 when He said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." The vine and the branches both have the same nature.

Paul, in writing about the hidden mystery, confirmed both Peter and John in Colossians 1:26, 27 when he wrote, ". . . *Christ in you*, the hope of glory."

Jesus taught the same in John 14:17b when speaking of the Holy Spirit. "For he dwelleth *with you*, and shall be *in you*."

Follow Jesus. He is the Way out of
the war zone of the world.

Two Parts

Obtaining the divine nature requires two things. *Man's Part:* Yielding ourselves in absolute surrender to God (Rom. 12:1). Let it be in faith that God does now accept my surrender. *God's Part:* By the grace of God, by the power of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, it is a life kept surrendered to which we are destined, and a life that is possible for us, praise God! Let us believe that God will maintain it.

God promised it in a number of books. Jeremiah and Ezekiel are two. Jeremiah 31:31—32:41, and Ezekiel 11:19, and 36:25-28. Please notice the “*I will*” from both prophets. “*I will* put my law in their inward parts, . . . and *will* be their God, and they shall be my people.” “*I will* forgive their iniquity, and *I will* remember their sin no more.” “And *I will* give them one heart, and *I will* put a new spirit within you; and *I will* take the stony heart out of their flesh, and *will* give them a heart of flesh.” “Then *will I* sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.”

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
conquer death and hell.

Absolute Surrender

At times a life absolutely surrendered to God has its difficulties: doubt, skepticism, mistrust in God's promises, His grace, His keeping power, His leadership, and His concern for you. *The following are helps.*

George Muller had two great points concerning absolute surrender. He had been enabled by grace to maintain a good conscience before God day by day. He was a lover of God's Word. In short: complete obedience to God, and day by day fellowship with God, spending every day in His Word and prayer. Bible helps: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22a). See also Matthew 7:21; Luke 11:28; Colossians 3:17.

Notes

Follow Jesus. He is the Way
through the storms of life

Be Holy

Jesus taught and died that men could have a pure heart.

The apostles preached it. “. . . Be filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:17).

“. . . Be filled with all the *fulness* of God” (Eph. 3:19).

“Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16b).

“. . . Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

“. . . Be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4a).

Notice, not *partially filled* or *partially holy*. The Trinity is pure and holy. Also, this is the will of God (1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23, 24).

Is it possible for a holy person to be tempted, and is temptation sin? We will let the Bible answer that question soon. Remember, one of our goals is to endeavor to live so as not to embarrass our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a good conscience.

Preparations

John 17:6-16 recorded the prerequisite for Acts 1, which records the apostles' preparations for heart purity: being in the presence of the Christ, seeking counsel from Christ, listening to and obeying Him, listening to and obeying God's messenger, being all of one accord, being people of prayer, being determined to be scriptural about the Lord's business, being people of prayer concerning the Lord's business, not questioning the Lord's decision, and being willing to wait for God's timing.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the gift of the grace.

Created Holy

Genesis records that man was made in the image and likeness of God. God made His angels holy (Psa. 104:4; Mark 8:38; and Matt. 25:31). The angels and Adam and Eve were created holy without any sin, yet they were tempted.

Angels and man both had a free will. Adam and Eve both chose to sin (Gen. 3:6). Also, a number of the angels also chose to sin (Jude 1:6).

All three synoptic gospels record that Jesus, who was without sin, was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:10; Mark 1:13; and Luke 4:8). Jesus “. . . was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

To sum up: we see a number of the angels and Christ chose not to sin; therefore, temptation is not sin. They both were tempted, but thank God, they choose God rather than self-interest, so we can, too.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
confidence in God.

Temptation

What are the major areas of temptation? “Temptation proceeds from the enemy; sin proceeds from the individual. Sin is from the heart. Mistakes are from the head” (C. W. Ruth). There are two areas of temptations.

#1 From within.

#2 From without. “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). Pride consists of at least three kinds: pride of *race*, pride of *place*, pride of *grace*. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).

Paul was given a thorn in the flesh by God, that he would not be lifted up by pride (2 Cor. 12:7).

Satan is indifferent to the means, as long as man is separated from God. There is no experience in grace where a person is exempt from temptations.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 for God’s help on temptations.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
all the gifts of God.

Job's Temptations

What are the major areas of temptations, entertaining the suggestions of Satan? Peter said in 1 Peter 1:6b, "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."

We forget that verse 5 says we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Job 1:12-19 is a good example of manifold temptations, messengers appear, lined up with bad news: (1) your servants are killed; (2) your sheep are killed; (3) your camels are stolen; (4) your children all died in an accident.

"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (vv. 20, 22).

He was a great example of what to do when everything is going wrong.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
full understanding.

Not for Us

Because of the justice of God, hell was created for the fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4). But because many men chose to follow the sin path of the angels through rebellion against God, hell had to be enlarged (Isa. 5:11-14).

It was the justice, love, mercy, and grace of God that brought about two dwelling places: heaven and hell. Every being will spend eternity in one of those two places. Jesus took the justice I deserved by crucifixion, that I might have a *personal* relationship with Him, experiencing and enjoying His love, mercy, and grace, plus many other joyous benefits (John 15:5). *Hallelujah!*

What a Saviour! I urge you to place all your confidence in Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way when
there seems to be no way.

Justice for Mankind

By Jesus' taking the justice of God on the cross for mankind, we see His love and heart's desire for all mankind.

“. . . Be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4a).

“I am the vine, ye are the branches” (Jn. 15:5a).

“. . . Chosen of God, and precious” (1 Pet. 2:4).

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

“My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9b).

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18).

“. . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).

“. . . We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

I urge you to place all your confidence in Christ. You will never be sorry.

Reason

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. 1:18a).

In this verse, man had two problems. First, he needed to leave where he was, and come. Second, he had something from which he could not free himself. His sins were like scarlet. Hebrew for “scarlet” literally means double-dyed; sin has a deep-fixed permanency in the heart.

“To discharge these strong colors is impossible to human art or power; but to the grace and power of God, all things, even much more difficult, are possible and easy” (A. Clarke).

Paul confirmed the power of sin in Romans 7:17, 20; and the power of God in Romans 8:1, 2, 11, 13, 32, 35-39.

Hallelujah, what a Saviour! “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
joy.

Two Problems

Read Isaiah 1:18. We have seen that man has two problems. Now, let us examine the reason God says, “*Come now.*”

Notice, He identified Himself as reasonable and powerful. God will remove the deep-fixed permanency of sin in the heart.

Reasonable would carry the ideas of reliable, steadfast, dependable, and trustworthy. To Israel, Joshua said, “. . . Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you” (Joshua 23:14a). King Solomon had this to say: “There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant” (1 Kgs. 8:56b).

I suggest reading Isaiah 55:1-3 and Deuteronomy 8:1-4.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
stability in God.

Delivered

Read Isaiah 1:18. It is God speaking to religious people. This week we will examine the One who calls Himself LORD, or Jehovah, meaning the One who will always be personal, continuous, and absolute in existence.

Notice, He said, "*Come.*" He was the Initiator. In reality they were dead in sin, and should have come to Him. He was not in need of help. He knew each person's language. He knew where he was located. He was within hearing distance. He claimed to have power that was beyond man's ability, and offered to use this power to free the person from sin.

From Adam and Eve to Revelation 22:17, we find the LORD condescending to all mankind, offering freedom from sin and death, that they might be given the water of life freely. Freedom from sin is confirmed in Romans 6:6-12; 1 John 3:8; and Hebrews 2:14. Ezekiel and Jeremiah both prophesied of God's deliverance.

What God promises, He is able to deliver. You can place all your confidence in Him.

Where Is My Help?

Where is there help for those who are discouraged or struggling spiritually due to wrong priorities?

“When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek” (Psa. 27:8).

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God (Psa. 42:1).

“Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart (Psa. 37:4).

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psa. 40:8).

In Psalm 18:2, notice the personal relationship: “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

I urge you place all your confidence in Christ, and trust His Word.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
peace.

What Has Christ Done for You Personally?

He *created* you for Himself (Col. 1:16).

He took your *nature* on Himself (Heb. 2:16, 17).

He *helps* you when tempted (Heb. 2:18).

While *you* were a *sinner*, He demonstrated His love for you (Rom. 5:8).

The law was a *gift* from God to you, to *bring* you to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

You were *chosen* to be holy in Him before the world was created (Eph. 1:4).

I suggest you meditate on all things that you can think of which Christ has done for you personally. Then name them one by one, and give Him thanks for each one. You will be strengthened in Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
love.

Powerful Light

In the 1950s, a friend and I went fishing at the Montros power plant lake. We planned to be at the warm waters at daybreak. We loaded my boat that night, and drove to the lake.

In the dark, we unloaded the boat by flashlight, then placed our fishing equipment in the boat. We needed to cross the lake. We headed the boat toward the power plant lights, and began to row in the dark. We took turns at rowing. Through the night, the lights did not appear to get closer.

When daybreak came, we discovered we were only about 400 feet from where we launched the boat. You see, we had been stuck on a stump that was below the surface of the water, but we knew it not until light came. We had been rowing hard, but going nowhere. Some of you may be in spiritual darkness, doing all the motions, but going nowhere because of being stuck on a spiritual stump.

Read God's Word. It is a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path. Also, look to Jesus: He is the Light of the world. Jesus and His Word disperse spiritual darkness. Read John 15; Romans 1-8; and Colossians.

A Good Goal

Read Isaiah 8:17; 6:11; and 6:5-8. A. W. Tozer described Isaiah's life this way, "Nothing can prevent the spiritual rejuvenation of the soul that insists upon having it. Though that solitary man must live and walk among persons religiously dead [from whom God has hid His face], he may experience the great transformation as certainly and as quickly as if he were in the most spiritual church in the world. The man that will have God's best becomes at once the object of the personal attention of the Holy Spirit. Such a man will not be required to wait for the rest of the church to come alive. He will not be penalized for the failures of his fellow Christians, nor be asked to forego the blessing till his sleepy brethren catch up. God deals with the individual heart as exclusively as if only one existed. . . . Every prophet, every reformer, every revivalist had to meet God alone before he could help the multitudes."

Have *total* confidence in *total* surrender to Christ. Thirsting for and seeking to be more pleasing to Christ are good goals for us.

Glorifying Christ

Read Jeremiah 9:23, 24. In our day some people glory in power, some in fame, some in a sinful lifestyle, some in sports, some in education, some in ignorance, some in possessions, some in riches, and some in poverty. But God said, “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he *understandeth* and *knoweth me*, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth.”

May I ask you some questions? Are you glorying in the cross? Are you glorying in knowing and understanding God’s attributes?

Your concept of God will determine your lifestyle. None of us will be judged by our concept of God, but by God’s Word. Hide God’s Word in your heart, that you may not sin against Him (Psa. 119:11). Place all your confidence in Christ and His Word. Make the goal of life to glorify Christ, and Him only.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
find the will of God.

Heart Springs

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9a).

From the heart spring all the actions of life. It deceives man with respect to sin. It is more deceitful to a man than the devil, gratifying its propensities. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19). “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26a).

Read Deuteronomy 30:6. This is God’s promise and remedy for the heart. God will circumcise man’s heart.

This was *fulfilled* in Acts 15:8, 9. “. . . And put no difference between us and them, *purifying* their hearts by faith.”

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
God the Father.

Satisfied Life

When our children were young, we were camped on Big Sugar Creek. I was raised in the area. One day I heard dogs chasing a deer. I told all the family to sit down by some bushes, and not move. In just a few minutes, the deer that was being chased, jumped into the deep part of the river. It swam downriver until its feet touched the bottom, and there it stood very still. Upon arrival, the dogs swam back and forth cross the river, searching both river banks, yet they were unable to find any deer trail. They finally left.

When a person stands in God's river, there are safe provisions for every situation: love for truth, pleasure in His will, confidence and fellowship in Christ, present cleansing from all sin.

I encourage you to plunge into God's river of mercy, grace, and truth; there you will find God's fullness, safety, and satisfaction for life.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the treasures of God.

Judgment on Disobedience

In Jeremiah 32:16-25 notice the acknowledgments about God in Jeremiah's prayer to God: creative powers, nothing too hard for God, lovingkindness, great in counsel, and mighty in works, looking on the ways of the sons of men, signs and wonders in Egypt, and delivered Israel out of Egypt with signs, with wonders, with a strong hand, with an outstretched arm, with terror, giving them a land flowing with milk and honey. They came in and possessed the land, but became disobedient. Now judgment is upon them because of their disobedience.

See 2 Timothy 3:16. This prayer was written for our edification. There is safety in having high and right concepts, and obedience to God.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a pardon from sin.

A Great Old Story

Read Jeremiah 23:22. Notice “my counsel,” “my people,” “my words” “turned them from their evil way.” Many are substituting for the counsel of God with YouTube, the internet, commentaries, and other books.

If we have not stood in the counsel of God, these tools may add to our word count, but they will add very little change of lifestyle or entertainment, if any. He who has followed the instructions of this verse, has the promise from the eternal God that men will turn from their evil ways.

Read Acts 19:19. If they will follow the instructions of Romans 6:1, 2, 12-15; Galatians 5:24-26; Colossians 3:1-5; and 2 Corinthians 5:17, there will be *new* goals, affections, desires, purpose, vocabulary, and a love for God’s Word and His will.

As time passes, we will find ourselves saying, “The longer I serve Him, the more I love Him. I am His, and He is mine.” There will be a longing in our heart to hear the old, old story of Jesus and His love for all mankind. Also, we will have a delight to do His will.

We Can Live Well

When I walked Saturday morning, the temperature was 28 degrees. On top of the hill there was not any frost. Down in the valley there was frost. As cars passed by with their lights on, beautiful light was reflected by the frost. Because the cars were speeding by, the little reflections danced everywhere. The frost was putting forth no effort; it was only reflecting what it was supposed to reflect.

I learned a good Bible lesson. Matthew 5:14-16 teaches that we are reflectors for God. All men at times will go through valleys. We are still God's reflectors. 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10 tells us God's grace is sufficient for the valleys. Colossians 3:12-17 tells us we should be reflecting mercies, kindness, meekness, and longsuffering. 1 Peter 1:4 tells us how it is made possible when we are in the valley. The Bible teaches that we can live as not to be a disgrace to our Jesus. Place all your confidence in Him and His Word.

I love and appreciate each of you.

Reasons

There are reasons all people should be grateful and desire to be a Christian: God's kindness and mercy to every sinner.

Every sinner deserves immediate judgment, but because He is God and not man, His love and mercy withhold judgment until the day of judgment.

His kindness makes provisions for all men. God teaches men to plant and harvest crops for food (Isa. 28:26-29). He gives rain, and increases the flocks from which come clothing and food. He gives wood, straw, and mud to be used for building materials for shelters (Deut. 7:13, 14). God gives wisdom and knowledge, wealth, and honor (2 Chr. 1:11, 12). He gives skill in learning. He is the source of every good thing (Dan. 1:17).

God gave His *only* begotten Son to suffer the wrath of God for all who make Jesus *Lord* of their *life*. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6b).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
His cross.

Our Pattern

Acts 13:22 tells us of the character of King David: he was a man after God's own heart. Psalm 27:1-8 and 63:1-3 tell us of David's heart cry and heart throb: knowing God's heart. We have a pattern and guidelines to follow.

The great petition and cry of our heart should be: let the life of God in our souls have full control, and that we might be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). With this preparation, we are prepared for the admonition of Matthew 5:13-16: *to be a light to those who sit in darkness, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
find God's goal for your life.

Relationship

God's desire and God's design is to have an intimate relationship with every person. Many have rejected His desire and design. It is our job to persuade them to change their mind, goals, affections, direction, and spiritual appetites (Matt. 28:19, 20). We are to follow Christ, and Him alone.

Acts 1:4 teaches that God's desire and design cannot be accomplished by preaching alone. These seasoned preachers, taught by Jesus Himself, were told to wait for the promise of the Father. Deuteronomy 30:6 tells us that the purpose of the promise is to enable man to love God. The promise purified men's hearts (Acts 15:9).

Without a pure heart, God's desire and God's design cannot be fully realized. With a pure heart, man is enabled to have such an intimate, loving relationship with Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the Light of the world.

Why?

There are reasons for being a Christian: for instance, God's goodness and mercy to every sinner.

In Genesis 3, mankind's sin and God's goodness are displayed. When man first sinned, God could have displayed His justice by destroying man or all creation. Instead, we see the goodness and mercy of God displayed. Man hid, but God went to the man. God is still the One initiating the relationship by saying to the sinners, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18a). "Come, . . . I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He said to Zacchaeus, ". . . Come down; . . . I must abide at thy house" (Lk. 19:5).

God also has called and sent men throughout the world who are saying, "Follow Jesus. He became a Sacrifice or Substitute by dying on the cross, and being resurrected for your sins" (John 1:29).

Oh, how great the goodness and mercy of God to a sinner like me! Thank You, Lord Jesus.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
fellowship with God.

Follow Him

“If *any* man serve me, let him follow me” (John 12:26a). It is recorded 16 times that Jesus said, “*Follow me.*”

That raises a big question for all who call themselves Christians. They need to ask themselves, “Who, or what am I following? Is it my own way, the church’s way, or am I following *Jesus Christ?*”

Jesus said, “Follow me.” Jesus did not say, “I will show you the way,” but He declared, “*I am the way*” (John 14:6a).

Israel followed King Jeroboam and his sin (1 Kgs. 14:16). Judah followed the wicked King Manasseh (2 Kgs. 21:16). Both kingdoms failed to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They lost their temple, their glory, their protection of God. God placed them under the bondage of their enemy.

“For whatsoever things were written . . . were . . . for our learning” (Rom. 15:4a). Your confidence and hope in Jesus Christ has eternal rewards.

When the Storms Come

The greatest hindrance to faith in God to the new convert, and many times older Christians, is feelings. Many believe if they don't feel saved, they are sure they're not saved. But it is written in Romans 1:17b, "The just shall live by faith."

Remember, we live in a world that is controlled by and capitalizes on feelings. Sports and the entertainment world have capitalized on feelings.

God operates on a much higher level. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." God operates on trust in Him, faith in Him. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he [God] is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Feelings are like a yo-yo, up and down. Faith is like an anchor. It holds fast when the storm is raging. I urge you to place your confidence and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Surrender

The chief element of what Jesus has done for us is His surrender of Himself and His riches. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). He surrendered His high honor. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). He prayed, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matt. 26:42b).

His surrender is a pattern for our surrender to Jesus.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the throne of grace.

Pattern

Jesus' surrender to God the Father is a pattern for our surrender to Jesus.

This is a pattern of surrender for young as well as old Christians. It is a day by day surrender, and it is the path to being established in faith, pleasing to God.

Let us look at Job 23:8-10. "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." I urge you to hold firm to your surrender, and make it more firm by a day by day surrender.

John 15:10 and Hebrews 10:7 give short word pictures of a surrender pleasing to our Jesus.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
cleansing from all sin.

Help for Seekers of Salvation

What does Jesus offer to ALL people?

Answer: Forgiveness from sins

To be saved, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. You must believe you are created by God and have enough faith to believe God's Word. Forgiveness is for "whosoever" shall confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. The Bible says *that* person "shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). St. John confirmed this when he said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). The gospel of Jesus Christ is for you!

What does Jesus have to offer to the world?

Answer: Removal of sin

If a person travels straight north until he reaches the North Pole and then he keeps moving, he will begin going south. If a person travels straight east, though, he can continue indefinitely, never meeting the west. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). God will "subdue our iniquities" and cast all our sins "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19b). God said, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). Not only does God remove sin and remember it no more, but God also said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

What must I do to receive God's salvation?

Answer: Believe that God will forgive you of your sins when you ask Him.

Reader, you, too, can be saved and have a personal relationship with Christ. Here is a suggested prayer. "Lord, I know I am a sinner and need to be saved. Lord, I know Jesus arose from the dead and that His blood was shed for my sins. Lord, I'm asking You to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. Lord, help me grow in Jesus and develop a love for Your Word. Lord, above everything, help me to keep my eyes focused on You and not on people. Lord, Your Word has confirmed that You would save me; I believe You *have* saved me. Please give me a witness from Your Spirit to my spirit that I am Your child. By faith I believe Your Word; still, my faith is weak. Lord, increase my faith. Amen."

Name and Date: _____

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

“. . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:37-39).

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:11).

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears” (Psalm 18:6).

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:5).

