

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

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Standing Firm in the Faith

by Phil Enlow

The following is a transcript of a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle in November 2012.

I've got a scripture I can't seem to get off my mind, so I'll just go with it and just see what the Lord has. It seems like I've been in 1st Peter for the last three Sundays, different emphases each time. But Peter, the Lord's apostle from the very beginning, was writing, no doubt late in his life, to encourage believers, and I believe to give every one of us a picture of what we've been called to, because that's what it is.

He begins in Chapter 1 with talking about how we've been chosen of God. He foreknew us. He did everything necessary to make it possible for us to have a hope that goes way beyond this world. It's not something that depends upon our ability, or depends upon any worthiness in us, but

it's something that He has done.

The reality is that we go through many things in this life in the process of getting ready for that, but one theme you see throughout is the fact that God has called us to glory. You get kind of a little picture of that when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and he saw Him glorious, and it just was an overwhelming experience for him. You see another picture of that when the disciples saw the Lord transfigured. All of a sudden He began to shine like the sun, and their earthly eyes couldn't take it in. But I don't know how much we really appreciate what the Lord has for us and what it is that He's called us to.

But that's a theme throughout this, that Peter is seeking to teach us...first of all, the greatness of what God has done, but then, what is our part? How do we cooperate? How do we, as David said, not be like the horse and the mule? You know, the horse and the mule, you can't explain what you're going to do, you have to use physical means to kind of steer them the way you want them to go. But the Lord doesn't want us to be like that. He wants to deal with us as sons and daughters, that He can communicate with, and that we will be willingly responsive, and loving Him, and all of that.

One theme that you will see throughout the book of Peter is a life of trust in the heavenly Father. You see it in Jesus.

He talks about in chapter 2 how Jesus endured many things, but He didn't fight back, He didn't threaten. He just simply committed Himself into God's hands, and that becomes a pattern for everyone of us...that our lives of faith, of trust... there are many things that we don't necessarily understand—many things we don't understand, but yet we know because of Who we're trusting in that it's gonna be okay. He's got everything in His hands.

And so we are called to do the same thing that Jesus did. And there's a sense, too, of our inter-relationships... he talks about husbands and wives, talks about "all of you" in Chapter 3, verse 8. "...All of you, live in harmony with one another." (NIV). And you get these themes of a sense of submission, of humility, of all those things, and you come to...I guess my favorite chapter is chapter 5.

And, there are many themes that we have talked about at one time or another. And there's one that I just...my mind just keeps going back to that I don't remember ever focusing on it exactly. But you remember how we're encouraged to clothe ourselves with humility toward one another. That's a defining characteristic of our relationship. Now if you scratch any sin deep enough, what do you find?

Pride. That's it! That's what God is dealing with. That's

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The True Heart of Worship

by Ken Yonish

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs" (Psalm 100:2). When God saves us he places within us a new life. His life. Without his life we are lost and without hope destined for destruction. Paul the Apostle said that *"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).* This life within us cries out to its Creator with yearnings that we can't explain or understand. *"Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out 'Abba, Father'.* From within us now whelms up the very Spirit of the Son who lives in us in adoration back to the Father.

God in all his greatness made man and put his Spirit into him, giving him eternal life through Jesus Christ. As his children we now give him glory, praise and worship for what he has done.

Think about that for a minute. Let that thought soak in and resonate in your soul!

As his children we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Our life now is to bring him glory. *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* 1 Peter 2:9. We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. We sing a song that even the very angels in heaven cannot sing. *"And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except for the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth" (Revelation 14:3).*

Praise God!

What a day that will be when we can sing the song of the redeemed before the throne of God. All of God's children in perfect harmony singing praises to our Father...for all eternity!

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings to all in the wonderful name of Jesus! After an unusually cold winter it appears that spring is finally within sight. I know every believer is looking forward to the new heavens and the new earth where, not only will righteousness dwell, but where also the weather will always be perfect as will our bodies! As the Word says in Rev. 21:4, "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

It is our habit to post transcripts of our television broadcast on our website. We have several faithful ladies who undertake the challenge of transcribing the recordings into a computer so that we can include "Closed Captioning" for our deaf "listeners." From their efforts I post transcripts as each weekly broadcast is aired.

Recently one of those was specially quickened to me as I worked with it and I felt that it would make an appropriate article. Thus, "Standing Firm in the Faith" is the lead article in this issue.

The farther we go towards the end of the age the more apparent it becomes that believers need to be ready, not just for the Lord to appear in the sky and send angels to gather them, but to stand firm for Him in the midst of growing darkness.

The relative freedom the church has enjoyed in America is the exception and not the rule in the larger context of history. It is even the exception in our present world as believers in many places must stand in spite of persecution and even death for the name of Christ.

I often think of Daniel 11 where he foretold of trouble and evil to come. He spoke of one particular evil ruler, yet said of God's people, "...the people who know their God will firmly resist him." Daniel 11:32.

Surely we need to get to know our God in a much deeper way than we have in the past. All that we as God's people to stand in such an hour is to be found in Christ. And

True Heart of Worship

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Although there are no accounts of Jesus ever leading out in music before he delivered a sermon to the people or taught his disciples there are plenty of references to songs in both the old and new testaments.

In 2 Chronicles 20 we read the account where Jehoshaphat was king of Jerusalem and was opposed by the armies of the Moabites and the Ammonites. Jehoshaphat was fearful of being defeated by these enemies and prayed to God for help. God answered and said not to be afraid because this battle belongs to the Lord. God gave specific instructions to Jehoshaphat to appoint singers to go before the army to "praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying 'Give thanks to the Lord for his love endures

yet we need more than mere doctrine about such things; we need a real living relationship that we can draw upon.

Bro. Ken Yonish recently shared a short article the Lord had quickened to him regarding worship and I believe you will find it to be both enjoyable and profitable.

Another short article is included from Bro. Mike McInnis entitled, "The Time Will Come." Mike is right in saying that the things of which Paul warned have always been with us, yet surely we can see the acceleration of darkness in our day.

We recently received a letter from a sister named Barbara Ponder with, "An Unforgettable Testimony" enclosed. I know you will be blessed as I was in reading it. What a wonderful God we have! How merciful He is!

In preparing this issue I was also drawn to Sister Wendy Downing's testimony which we first published in 2007. I believe she would heartily agree that as hard as her life was growing up, yet God, in His grace and wisdom, has used it all to make her the blessing she is today, not just to her immediate family, but to the body of Christ.

The Lord continues to open up new broadcast opportunities. We covet your prayers in all of this as we desire only His will. It has always been our practice not to solicit listener support. In a way this opens up opportunities where others are not so eager to go yet where is a great need. Check the website for the latest broadcast schedule.

Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21). Music must be important to God for him to include it in battle plans that ultimately led to the defeat of Jehoshaphat's enemies that day. The enemies turned on themselves and were destroyed by each other.

Certainly David knew the significance of music. God called David a "man after his own heart." 1 Samuel 13:14. Many of the psalms were written as praise songs that were sung in the temple. Many expressed an attitude of praise and adoration to God for his mercies and his love, others praised the beauty of his handiwork evident in the creation of the stars and the heavens. In Psalm 8 David says "O Lord how excellent is thy name in all the earth...when I consider the heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon the stars which thou hast ordained."

In Psalm 34:1-3 David says, "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together." This is an open invitation for all who hear to join David in praise to God.

Psalm 100 tells us to:

¹ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations

Did you know that WE are the ones giving praise? When we praise we give to God, yet we reap the benefits of his presence. "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever" (Psalm 16:11, NIV).

I could go on and on citing scriptures encouraging us to sing and worship God and to give thanks for what he has done for us. Giving thanks is real. Praise is real. Singing and worshipping is real. It is the promise of God that when we draw near to him, he draws near to us.

Psalm 22:3 KJV declares "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

James 4:8 NIV says "Come near to God and he will come near to you...."

I recently passed by a church sign that

got my attention. Under the church name read the following: "Traditional Service at 9am; Contemporary Service at 11am".

Can it be that worship has come to this? Can we really choose a style of worship that appeals to us? Can we simply walk up to the worship vending machine, drop in our money, and select the flavor that gives us the fuzzies inside and makes us feel good?

I don't want Traditional if God is not there. I don't want Contemporary if God is not there. I just want God! I'm afraid we've missed the boat if we prefer anything else.

We must have the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to break the yokes and bondages in lives. There must be a total and absolute surrender of our will and our way. Anything less is simply a sensational experience for the flesh but void of the Spirit of God. It may feel like the real thing but I'm afraid many times it is not.

Psalm 150 NIV encourages us to worship with everything we have.

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing,

praise him with the strings and pipe,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,

praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

I especially love verse 5 so much that I'll say it again in the KJV: "praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals."

It is only when the heart is made new and the Spirit within cries, 'Abba, Father,' can we truly enter into true worship. Whether it is loud or quiet it is a matter of the heart. Then it won't matter what the "style" is because it will be all about Jesus and nothing about us. Isaiah 29:13 reads "...these people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honor but they have removed their heart far from me."

Jesus told the women at the well in John 4:23-24 "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Let's be the kind of worshipers that the Father seeks. Let's make our worship about him and not about us.

An Unforgettable Conversion

as told to Barbara Ponder

Danny attended church regularly as a child, but at the age of seven, he lost his dad, and in time he became bitter. He said: "If there was a God, He wouldn't have taken my dad when I was so young." In spite of this, he always respected his wife, Anita, for her beliefs. She often talked about future events that are predicted in the Bible; in fact, she rarely missed an opportunity, hoping to, at least, prepare him for what is coming.

He listened politely until he finally decided he'd "had enough," then he calmly, but firmly, told her: "Now you know I don't believe that 'stuff' and I don't want to hear about it anymore." But early in July of 2013 he was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus; it had already spread to vital organs and he had only months left to live. With such devastating news, his unbelief was a paramount concern, and since Anita wasn't free to talk to him about it, she asked the Lord to send someone Danny would listen to. Family and friends were praying for him and a few had an opportunity to talk to him about his need for Jesus, but he wasn't interested. Anita was caring for him at home and although he had many visitors, that one person she had asked the Lord to send, didn't come. Eventually, Danny told her he didn't want anyone coming to the house anymore, with one exception: her daughter, Jennifer.

As the cancer continued to spread, Danny took in less and less nourishment and soon became just a shadow of his former self. He was weak and emaciated; his skin hung from his bones. He was unable to swallow even a sip of water. His voice was reduced to a whisper and, in time, would be gone. When Anita knew he had only days left to live, she called family members and close friends to let them know.

She couldn't ask anyone to come, so she trusted that the person she'd asked the Lord to send would just "show up." But not wanting to be alone when he passed, she called Jennifer, who wasn't working at the time, and asked her to come and stay with her. She agreed to come and could leave on Saturday, since it was a holiday weekend, and her husband would be home to stay with the kids.

Anita didn't tell Danny she was coming, in case he'd changed his mind; but when she arrived Saturday evening, he showed no sign of surprise and whispered a greeting as

if he'd been expecting her. That night, she stayed up to give him his medication, make sure he was comfortable, and let Anita, finally, get a full night of sleep.

The next day, Sunday, November 10, 2013, strange things began to happen. Anita and Jennifer both felt a chill on the left side of Danny's bed, so intense that they avoided that part of the room. It was very disturbing; Jennifer called it "spooky" and said it actually gave her "chill bumps." On the right side of his bed, and in the rest of the room, the temperature was completely normal.

Danny had been having restless periods for quite some time. He would toss and turn constantly, but now he was extremely agitated. They tried to comfort him and, thinking he might be in pain, tried to give him his medication, but he pushed them away.

Then they realized he had become focused and was whispering in response to, what they perceived to be, two beings they couldn't see or hear. Jennifer listened closely to what he was whispering; Anita listened, and also observed his reaction to these beings, and it was frightening. It was clear that the being on his right was in an elevated position because Danny looked up, where the ceiling meets the wall, as he responded in a whisper, "yes.....yes.....yes.....I know."

But when he turned to his left he looked down, toward the floor, and there was a look of sheer terror on his face, as he recoiled in fear and whispered, "no.....no.....oh no."

He turned to the right again and looked up as he whispered, "yes.....yes.....yes.....alright." Again, he turned to his left and, just as before, he looked down and, filled with terror, he responded in fearful whispers, "no.....no.....no." They couldn't say how long the encounter continued, but his final response was to the being on his right and he looked up as he whispered, "yes.....yes.....OK," then his restlessness and agitation returned.

Anita was visibly shaken when Jennifer left the room to call her grandpa Mitch. She told him what had happened and wanted to know what it meant. My husband knew immediately there was a battle going on, a battle between good and evil, a battle for Danny's soul. He also knew there was no time for any discussion; instead, he was prompted to tell her to go back and ask Danny if she could give him the plan of salvation. If his response was good, then she

should present it, and invite him to receive Jesus.

When Jennifer returned, she found her mom overwhelmed with fear that Danny's soul would be taken before he was willing to admit he was a sinner and needed Jesus. Anita wanted his final moments to be peaceful, but knew that he must first accept Jesus. Jennifer got her mom's attention and told her what her grandpa said to do.

It was obvious she was uncertain about following through with it; she may have felt inadequate, since she was young in the faith. Then Anita remembered a New Testament she had ordered some time ago; on one of the pages was the plan of salvation, written as a prayer to receive Jesus. She ordered it, basically, because it was free, and her budget was tight, but she knew it would be a good idea to have it on hand.

She told Jennifer where she kept it, and when she found it she realized it was like the one she had at home, just a different size. She returned to Danny's bedside where Anita was sitting, trying to calm herself; but knowing there was no way she could read the prayer, she told Jennifer which page she thought it was on.

She opened it to the page, took Danny's hand and asked him if she could read a prayer to receive Jesus. He nodded his head in the affirmative and whispered, "Yes," and immediately became calm!! He listened intently, nodding his head in agreement with each part of the prayer, as she read: *"God, thank You for loving me. I know I have sinned against You. I believe that your son, Jesus, died for my sins because of Your great love for me. I believe that You raised Jesus from the dead. I now put my trust only in Jesus to love me, forgive me of my sins and lead me in my new life. Thank you for our new relationship and the gift of eternal life. Amen."*

Then she asked him: "Do you understand everything I've read and do you believe and accept it?" By now, Danny could no longer even whisper, his voice was gone, but he nodded his head in agreement, mouthed the word, "Yes," and the moment that final "Yes" formed on his lips, the intense chill that had clung to his left side totally disappeared!! The peace that came over him was so evident it could be felt; the entire atmosphere of the room changed. The battle was over!! There was absolutely no doubt that Danny

was a new man.

II Corinthians 5:17 says: "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" He had peace; Romans 5:1 says: "Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." And he would live forever; John 11:25 says: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live."

With praise and worship music playing in the background, they thanked the Lord over and over and praised Him for the unforgettable miracle they had just witnessed. And Danny, with a big smile on his face, kept mouthing the words: "Thank you, thank you, thank you." The praise continued, uninterrupted, as they gave some attention to a now relaxed and cooperative Danny; they washed him, dressed him in clean clothes, changed the bedding, and made him comfortable.

Jennifer went to bed early, and Anita stayed up, feeling certain it would be Danny's last night. She sat close to him, his hands in hers; knowing that the moments they were about to share would be both sweet and sad. There was silence as Danny, still mouthing his words, told her how much he loved her, thanked her for taking care of him, for being so patient, and never giving up on him.

As they continued to express their love for each other, Danny began to slip away. His breathing was shallow, each breath was less frequent. Anita leaned closer to him, and whispered softly: "It's OK now, you can go to be with Jesus." He took one last breath, and was gone! In spite of the grief she would experience, she is grateful that even as he is "absent from the body," he is "at home with the Lord." (II Corinthians 5:8.)

We see God's hand, from start to finish, in Danny's conversion. God orchestrated every detail and those who played a part in it were simply His willing instruments. True "deathbed conversions" are rare and, unlike Danny, you may not have a "last minute" opportunity to make the most important decision you can ever make. You may die suddenly, or have a brain injury and be unable to communicate, or you could suffer some other health crisis that would prevent you from ever making that decision, so please make it now, before it's too late. You don't know how much longer you will live, but you can know where you will be the moment you breathe your last breath.

Standing Firm

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what caused Lucifer to be lifted up in his own estimation of who he was and to rebel against God...his pride. And so that is the thing that God has to deal with in us, and we are loaded with it and don't realize it.

And so God is absolutely going to overshadow the lives of His children in a way that will challenge and crush the pride that's there, not because He's angry, not because He's mad at us, but because He loves us enough to want to deliver us from that terrible destructive force that has taken root within us! And we simply cannot be what He has called us to be, unless He deals with that.

You know, chapter 5 begins with Peter speaking about Him being one who will share in the glory to be revealed. You get that theme that just kind of permeates this passage. And then you get down to verse 10, and you see, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory..." Again, the same theme. So this is where we're going. We understand that it's something only God can engineer, but we have a part to play.

And so, in past times we've focused on how we're to humble ourselves, "...therefore, under God's mighty hand..." And that involves recognizing that we are indeed under God's mighty hand, that He is not absent from the things that happen to us in our lives. They do not happen by accident...that even things that are difficult, distressing, maybe unjust, maybe...whatever it is, they're not accidents. God literally overshadows and orchestrates these events to do what?

To deliver us! You know, I've said many times, if somebody gets your goat, it simply goes to prove that you have one.

And we've all got them. And unless God challenges those goats in us, they're gonna remain areas of resistance to God's will, and areas of a stronghold that needs to be broken. And I certainly have my share. I'm made of exactly the same stuff you are. But God is absolutely going to challenge them, and He's going to keep challenging the ones that get you, until you become more concerned with the fact that you've got a goat, than you're concerned with what made it react.

Now, just think about that one. What is God concerned about in these circumstances? Is He concerned about that terrible wrong that somebody said or did? No, He's concerned with your reaction to it.

And when we become more and more

like Jesus, we don't have to fight that kind of a battle. We can give it to the Lord, and humble ourselves under His mighty hand and see that power over us broken. And that's what He's seeking. So, "...Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand..."

And of course, we have the promise... it's a promise and a warning all in one, where God opposes the proud. So if there's an area where God keeps trying to shine His light, put His finger on in your life, and there's something in you that just continually resists and rises up, that's not a good thing. You're in a place where God's going to be continually opposing that. He's going to resist you! You're not going to get ahead. You're not gonna prosper trying to exert self-will in any aspect of life. I'm not gonna prosper.

But there is a place where we can enjoy the presence, and the blessing, and the deliverance of God. And that's when we let go and we say, Lord, not my will, but Yours be done. I mean, what better example do we have than our Lord Jesus? He came to fulfill a divine calling, a divine purpose. Every aspect of His life was devoted to that! He never deviated from that purpose!

And that purpose involved the ultimate humility, the ultimate humiliation of letting go of earthly value, everything that men treasure and saying, no, there's something greater, and I'm in the hands of God, and that's what my eye is upon. Oh my, isn't that what we're called to?

This is not an earthly calling. This is not a religion to add to your life. This is life itself! This is what everything is about! And Peter was just...you could just sense the yearning in his heart. He had seen the Lord's glory. He had touched and seen and fellowshiped with the risen Christ. He knew this was real! He paid for it with His life ultimately! That's how sure Peter was. And so, man, he wanted to somehow impart that vision. You see that in chapter 2...I'm sorry, in the second book where he talks about, "...we were eyewitnesses of his majesty..."

Praise God! So, we've got a solid witness here as to what this is all about. Obviously we have to cast all our anxiety on Him, because we all have it. In the process those are natural reactions. Peter is certainly not preaching some kind of perfectionism here. He understands, as we all must, that this is a process. But what Peter is showing us is the road. This is the way you go. Yeah, we don't certainly measure up, and we're not earning our way by walking on that road, but we sure are cooperating with what God is seeking to do in our lives. And we are in

the receiving position where God's grace can flow. Thank God it is by grace!

I don't have any resource that I can look to for any of this. Do you, anybody here? No, we don't have it. God understands that. I'm so glad we've got a heavenly Father that loves His children. He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. Praise God! So...I don't want in anything I say this morning, I don't want to try to convey some high, unattainable something by which we earn anything.

But anyway...and I understand you had an emphasis recently on what He says after that. "Be self-controlled and alert." That's certainly true! Because we are not unopposed in this process, are we? We've got an enemy who is going to be all-out to divert us from the course and the way that God has called us. He's gonna do everything in his power to say, no, it's not this way, it's really this way.

And so, we need to recognize that, and we need to not just bop along and think we've got a handle on it, the sun is shining, everything's great! We've got an enemy we're gonna have to learn how to recognize, learn how to detect him. God will help us, if we want to learn. "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Now, this is something we've said before. He's not talking to unbelievers here. He's talking about the damage that can be done even in a believer's life who is careless. You know, Paul warned that we reap what we sow! Many times we go certain ways and we give way to something that isn't of God, and what happens? We reap a harvest that isn't good.

And that's what he's talking about here. There are certain consequences because we have a part to play. There are consequences in the choices that we make. That's what he's saying. But I'll tell you, we have a Lord who is ready to help anyone who will lift their heart to Him and say, Lord, I want to go Your way. We are not on our own. Thank God!

But the thing that has jumped into my mind...I've just thought about it over the last few days. Maybe it's for me, I don't know. We'll just...I mean, I know it's for me, maybe it's only for me, but, somehow I don't think so. "Resist him, standing firm in the faith..."

I was about to say, as I often do, I don't know about you, but I do, since we are made of the same thing. This is not a small issue. How many times have you come in here, and you've heard the Lord speak to you in some way, and it's really been real? And you

see something, you see a part of truth, you see an aspect of truth, and it becomes real to you. And you say, yes, yes! That's right!

And then you go out, and what happens? Does it kind of...dissipate a little bit? And what the Lord is wanting from every one of us is an absolute consistency—a move in the direction of having a consistency in our convictions...that our convictions are not up here, down here, over there.

You think about a football team, for example. We all remember, many of you remember "Facing the Giants," and how the coach wanted them to build a stone wall, and 'nobody-gets-past-me' kind of attitude. Well, that's a great attitude. That's a wonderful picture of that kind of an 'I'm-not-gonna-let-anything'...I've got a conviction here, I'm gonna stand!

But what happens if after a while I get tired...you know, this is beginning to be hard work, I've got something else I'd rather be doing, and all of a sudden you let down that effort? What's gonna happen?

They're gonna run right over you. What's gonna happen if you have a city wall and you just kind of let it crumble...oh well, that's okay...we put up a good effort for a while, that's good enough?

You see the problem. Every one of us has areas where we need the Lord to teach us convictions that we can stand by, that don't change with the weather, that don't change with circumstances, don't change with who we're with, where we're at. We need to have a sense of who we are! We're God's people! We're headed for glory and we're going to act like it under any and all circumstances.

Now I can just hear somebody with a legalistic bent saying, yeah, preach it! That's what I've been looking for! I've got my standards! Here are my 'do's and don'ts', and we're gonna do this! And not only and I gonna do it, I'm gonna impose it on everybody who will listen!

No, this is not a 'rules-to-live-by' thing. This is a walking with the Lord. This is surrendering to His way. This is understanding...this is in the context of humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand. This is in the context of allowing God to shine His light down in here, and not fighting back. And not saying, 'God, it's not quite like You say it is.'

How many of you have ever said that, or not really said it, but that's kind of how it really was? No, it's not really that bad! It's not this way, it's that way! I know better! There's not a one of us here who hasn't done that in some area of our lives. We resist, by nature, God's light that would shine deep in

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Standing Firm

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our hearts. And oh, how God longs to pour in His grace and to see us surrender.

But I mean, even the conviction to walk with God that way, even the conviction to say, God, my life is yours! I'm not my own, I don't belong to myself! That thing needs to be absolutely rock-solid, or the devil is gonna run rough-shod, and we're gonna keep right on falling in the mud over the same issues.

And God needs to give us that sense of firmness, of 'steadfastness,' it says in the King James, where we're gonna build, by God's grace, we're gonna build a stone wall, and we're gonna be the same person, regardless.

Now, this applies to so many things. I just trust the Lord to help me to do it, to make sense of this. But you see it in a negative sense in Eve, don't you? She knew what was right! When the devil asked her about the trees of the garden, she said the right thing. But somehow, at that particular moment, her conviction was not very strong, was it? And what she allowed the devil to do was to challenge the truthfulness of God's Word, and to call His motivation into question, saying, He's really not got your interest at heart! He's got His own agenda! You would be better off to take this course than what He says!

And so she allowed the devil to reason with what God had said, and obviously you see what happened. She began to consider. She began to listen. It looked good. It's good for food. It's this, that and the other. And one thing led to another, and down she went. And down we all went, because Adam chose to follow her.

But you look at somebody else like Daniel, for example. You remember that occasion when some of the guys who were in government with Daniel became very jealous of him because he was...under the king, he was the top dog. He was the guy that the king looked to and honored and they tried like crazy to find something wrong with the guy. If we can just catch him doing something wrong, something illegal, then we'll have him! Then we can bring him down. Well, they couldn't find it, could they? Wouldn't that be wonderful for someone to be able to say that about us?

Man, they are so solid, they are so consistent in living for God that I can't find any ground to accuse them. It's mighty quiet in here this morning. But this is real stuff, isn't it?

Well, I've been walking around with me is who I've been walking around with. Well, praise God! But Daniel...you remember what happened was, they finally got together and said, we're not gonna get anywhere with trying to bring Daniel down unless we find some occasion that has to do with his belief in God. And so they tricked the king into this edict that nobody could pray to any God except the king for 30 days. And he signed it and there was some law that once something was signed, you couldn't undo it. So a lion's den was in Daniel's future there.

But what did Daniel do? What would you have done? What would I have done, for that matter? You know, it would've been awfully easy to say, well, I really don't have to make a show of this. You'd start weaseling and you'd start reasoning, and we start bringing our minds to bear on the situation, and the next thing you know, you're rationalizing this and rationalizing that. And Daniel could have said, I just have to go in my secret chamber. I can pray and they won't even know.

But what did he do? He went upstairs! He opened the window that faced Jerusalem, and he got in the window and he did exactly like he'd been doing! He prayed three times a day to the God that was connected with Jerusalem. It didn't make a bit of difference to him. Next thing you know, he's sleeping with the lions, and just having a wonderful night.

But I'll tell you, we have a God who can honor those who honor Him. But you see, that rock-solid, firm, I don't care the circumstances, I'm gonna do what's right. I'm gonna please God. I'm gonna serve him. This is not a small issue. It's easy to come in here, and we get it, and we see it, and we profess it, and we say, isn't that wonderful? But, this is not where we measure our lives. Our lives are what we are everywhere.

And, that's what God is looking at. That's what the world is looking at. That's what the devil is looking at. And God is looking, not just for someone who agrees in principle with these things and says, yes, I want God's will in my life, but, when the rubber meets the road they say, yes, Lord, I surrender that thing that my heart is just so...there's such a hardness there. But, I'm willing to yield that hardness to Your will, because I see something that's more important.

You know, you get down to where you want a mate, something that really matters to you in your life, that's when this matters. How firm are we in standing against the things, the traps that the devil will lay, and he will lay traps. Young people, the devil has got more schemes to pull at you

through this world than you have any power to imagine. But I'll tell you, there's a God who will honor you if you will honor Him if God can somehow establish this kind of a firmness and a conviction in our thinking to where it doesn't matter who we're with. It doesn't matter where we're at.

You think about the Hebrew children, another perfect example. The king came up with this grand big statue. I forget how tall it was. It was a huge thing. And man, they were all gonna...he got everybody out there to bow down to that thing, and they wouldn't bow. And you know, he warned them and they wouldn't bow. They didn't really have any certainty as to what was gonna happen.

You know, many times that's where we're at. We don't know what is gonna happen! As far as they knew, they were going to die. Is your faith such that you could stand there and take a bullet for Jesus if it came to that? It may come to that. It's coming...I mean, that's reality in many parts of the world right now. But that's the kind of certainty God wants to infuse into our spiritual life, where His kingdom is so real that that's what we live for, and it's not just here in the assembly, it's in every area of our lives.

God will honor a people like that. Look what He did for them. They stood there against the mightiest...in the face of the mightiest emperor on the face of the earth. God had even put the beasts of the field in his hand. God had raised this man up. And here he was opposing them. And they said, we don't know...our God is able to save us from the fire, we don't know if He will. One thing we know, we aren't gonna bow.

Well, you remember what happened. Of course, he heated the furnace seven times hotter, and the guys who threw them in...he was so anxious to get them in there, that the guys who threw them in were killed. And all the fire did was to burn their bonds. They were tied up and thrown in, and the next thing you know there were four of them in there walking around free and no fire on them.

We have a great God, folks. We have a God who honors those who honor Him. Now, that doesn't mean that everybody who honors Him gets to live in a situation like that, but I'll tell you, they 'get' to live. If you understand what God has called us to, it's either we get to glorify Him here or we get to glorify Him there. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain," Paul said.

Do you have that certitude in your heart, that firmness of purpose? Are you the same person out there as you are in here? Are the things that are wrong here, somehow right

somewhere else? I'll tell you, what's wrong in the light is wrong in the darkness. What's wrong when you're with the Christian fellowship is still...what's wrong there, is wrong when you're alone sitting in front of your computer, or out with your friends, or out with people of the world. It's still wrong.

God wants us to have convictions that don't shift. We're not called to be chameleons. We're called to have such a revelation of who we are and who He is, that we don't change with the weather. We don't change our convictions. God help us. God help me, because, I have to look in the mirror and say, Lord, I need help. I'm not always the same person.

You know, what is wrong when we're feeling strong is still wrong when we're feeling tired, and got a little pity-party going. What's wrong when we're here with people we know, is still wrong when we're in another city some place and nobody knows us. I appreciate all the nodding heads. I'm glad to get some agreement on this, but, this is real stuff. You see how the devil gets an advantage on so many of us. God help us to have that kind of...this is the difference between it being up here and it being down here. This is what controls what we are and what we do under all these other circumstances.

But somehow, we say, well, I've got it. I understand it. I get it. We think that's enough and it isn't. Oh God, give us the courage to stand up, because we are in a world that hates us. We're in a world that mocks us. And it is our nature to want to be liked.

Oh, how good we are at bending and twisting and trying to be more concerned about being liked than we are...and it doesn't mean we have to have a bad spirit, or be angry, or have any kind of a spirit other than the Spirit of Jesus. But I mean, we have to stand and we have to say, no, that's not the person that I am. And it's not because I'm better than anybody, it's because Jesus is real. It's because His salvation is real, and I want to serve and I want to honor him.

Oh I'll tell you what, it makes a difference when there's a real work of grace in a heart. This is not religion. I mean, religion is full of people who come in and put on a religious mask on Sunday that has nothing to do with what they are the rest of the week. That's just straight out hypocrisy.

But I'll tell you, real believers are still affected by this. That's who Peter is writing to. We, everyone, are affected, and we are weakened, and we become vulnerable to

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the enemy to do damage in our lives where we don't stand. And I'll tell you, when my will, my pride is challenged, that's where the rubber really meets the road, when God just continually puts His finger on something and I'm...

(straining).

...No it's not really like that! No, I can do this and I can fix it. How many of you have played those games? Yeah. When what we need to do is say, truth, Lord...because the real battle is, is God telling us the truth? If God's Word is true, then it's true and it's true everywhere, all the time!

And this is where the devil attacks! He will attack somehow, the veracity, the truthfulness of God's Word, or he'll twist it as he did with Jesus. Jesus, himself, went through these very choices of taking another route that would be easier on his flesh, being tempted by the devil, and what He stood for was the truthfulness of God's Word.

And that means the truthfulness of God's Word about you and me and our need. We can't come to God and say, I'm better than other people, I'm this, or I'm that. We are not, folks! We are sinners—hopeless, lost sinners! Without the grace of God, there's not an ounce of goodness naturally in us! The only goodness we could possibly ever possess is Christ coming in, imparting His own life, and His own goodness.

Oh, what a glorious Gospel we have that reduces us all to the same level where we have a God who loves us in spite of the reality of our condition. But oh God, what a humbling thing it is to take that place and say, yes, Lord. Truth, Lord. I'm exactly what You say I am. I'm not gonna make any protest of my own innocence. I'm not gonna think that I'm smarter than You.

But we've all done that, when we reason it out, and we figure, no, it's not quite like this. I can do it. I can figure, I can work it around, and think it a different way, and conceive of it a different way, and it'll be okay. It's what God says. It's the truth. And I want to have grace to, not only get the process, but be able to stand up to all the efforts of the enemy to divert me from that, when he says, no, there's another way, it's not quite like God said. It's exactly like He says.

Oh, what a glorious simplicity there is to this. I know there's so many aspects of it, and I feel like I'm probably going to wind this up in a bit and I'm sure others will be able to contribute. But, you can really develop a lot of aspects. But, it's a way of

looking at life according to the truth of God's Word.

But as God deals with us, there are going to be things that you are going to know in your heart that are wrong. It's not because there's a rule somewhere. You're gonna know that God is not pleased with this. But that doesn't change based on who you're with, and where you're at. As I said, what's wrong in the light is wrong in the darkness. And God needs to give us that kind of a steadfast heart, when our commitment is based upon the Word of God and what He reveals to us.

But the wonderful thing about this is that it's standing firm 'in' the faith! And, I guess I've already touched on one aspect of this. It means it's based upon the Word of God! That's one aspect of it, but it's also standing firm, not in my own...the power of my own resolve, which I do not have. I might be able to muster something for a day or two, but I'm gonna fall flat. My resolve is going to dissolve, if I rely upon that.

But it's faith...because right within this passage he said, God resists the proud, but does what? He gives grace to the humble! So, all I have to do is occupy that place where, Lord, I know that I'm the recipient of your mercy! I know that without your help I will absolutely fall. But, oh God, I gladly take that place of somebody who's not smart enough to figure it out, who does not have the strength, does not have anything I can look to. But Lord, I do have One that I can look to and that's You! And Your promise is true! You have promised that I will have the grace that I need to do what you called me to do.

Now the natural man hates this. He will not take that place of humbleness. But oh, what a blessed place it is. Oh, praise God! It lifts the burden from my shoulders and says, yes, I need to stand strong and firm, but I'm not standing by my own strength! As long as I am constantly pointed to Him, I've got all the strength that I need to stand. And so do you. Praise God! Praise God!

And so, of course, that word of encouragement there, he says, "...Because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings." Now I know that nobody here has ever experienced the devil telling you that you're the only one, everybody else is being blessed and you're being singled out. Anybody here ever not had the devil tell you that? It's a favorite tactic, but it's a lie like everything else he says.

I'll tell you, we have a God who is faithful to His Word, and all He's looking for from us, is that we simply surrender to His

Word and the process that it takes to make us over into creatures who can enjoy Him forever, who can enjoy the glory that He has prepared for us.

And that's why he finishes with this tremendous promise. "And the God of all grace..." the God of all grace, "...who called you to his eternal glory..." That's how we got on this road to start with. He invited us. He called us...in Christ! "...Eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while..." So here's the process. There's the road. "...Will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." So where do I get this quality from? If I look down deep and...

(straining).

No, I just say, Lord, I'm not any of this. I don't have anything to look to. I'm utterly weak! But what does the Scripture say about weakness? His strength is made perfect in weakness! If God puts you in a place that brings you to where you're facing something and you feel utterly weak, God has done you a favor!

How many of you have ever experience that, and you know what I'm talking about? God has put you in a place and you say, oh God, here I am in this desperate place! I need help, and now You've made me weaker than usual! What's going on? I don't get it! You must be mad at me!

No, He says, "...My strength is made perfect in weakness." (KJV). Oh! Well, that puts a different spin on it. Okay, Lord. Thank You! Thank You that I'm weak. Lord, I give my weakness to You. Then what happens? All of a sudden, somehow His strength just carries us through, without half the effort that you'd have to put forth if you were trying to do it. It's a way of rest. It's a way of joy. It's a way of experiencing what He died to give us. Praise God! Folks, do we have an awesome salvation?

But oh, God looks for that steadfastness, that firmness of not wavering, not being one person under certain circumstances, and a different person under other circumstances. God wants us to be absolutely consistent 24/7. And He will supply everything that we have need of, in order to make that happen. I just praise Him this morning. I bless His name. Praise God!

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The Time Will Come

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to these warnings and admonitions and shall embrace and encourage the errors which lead to their destruction.

Because of the close proximity of GOD's children to those who love this present world, the admonitions such as Paul set forth to Timothy are all the more dire and appropriate. As he reminded the Corinthians of the idolaters among the house of Israel, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:11-12). While we find complete rest in CHRIST we must never be complacent with the truth.

Do we not see this same sort of warning given to the Ephesian elders as Paul told them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31)? That warning is no less appropriate today than then.

The writer of Hebrews issues the same warning as the one Paul gave to the Corinthians, using a similar example. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." (Heb. 3:12-14). Those who are the true followers of CHRIST cannot be discovered simply by how they begin their journey but in what manner they complete it. The deceitfulness of sin is anything which would turn our eyes away from the absolute sufficiency of that which CHRIST has performed in the behalf of HIS elect.

Let no man judge himself to be a believer in JESUS CHRIST who has any confidence in any activity of his own flesh. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13).

A Testimony of God's Love

by Wendy McMillan Downing

This encouraging testimony of God's love was first published in 2007.

One of my earliest memories as a child is being wakened in the middle of the night by my daddy and momma fussing and fighting. I remember my sister (Candy Phillips) and my brother (Jack McMillan, "Jackie") trying to get us all out of the house. We would run to a neighbor's house, sometimes barefooted across a field or down the road. Seems like we would take turns going to different houses. Both of my parents were alcoholics.

I remember the fear I felt as a child, being in another room and hearing something break or a thud and knowing they were fighting again. To this day I can hear those sounds and I go back to when I was a child and I would find myself waiting for a scream or argument to break out.

As we were driving down the road one night, my daddy was driving drunk. He zig-zagged all over the road, barely missing cars. At 4 years old I remember asking God to be with us. Many things we saw as children that no one should ever have to see or go through. I know now the Lord had us wrapped in His arms. To me, this life was normal and I thought all parents and children were the same.

When I was 5 years old my momma passed away. I couldn't understand why God took her (why me?). I think then the bitterness started to grow. Candy and I went to live with our Aunt Margaret, and later on I went to live with our grandmother (Nanny). Jackie went to live with our Aunt Melva Dean and our little brother (John), who was 4 months old, was adopted by a lady in Southern Pines. We were being "auctioned off to the highest bidder." I hated being split up and I couldn't understand why we weren't all kept together.

After I went to live with my nanny, my grandfather, John, passed away. We had to move from a peach farm in Raeford, where I had open range to run and play wherever I wanted to, anytime I wanted to, to the projects in Southern Pines. I couldn't go outside in fear of being kidnapped or shot. It was the only place my Nanny could afford, \$17.00 a month. I was picked on for being the only white child in the neighborhood and on the bus. We had no car. I wasn't worried about hell because I was already living there.

Many times I would overhear grown-ups talking about me, not knowing I was paying

any attention to what they were saying. They would always say negative things, like I was going to end up like my parents, I would never finish high school, "Oh, she will be pregnant as a teenager." I believed what they would say. It was easy to believe the bad stuff. When someone would say something good I thought they were lying and just saying it to make me feel good. I never could believe the positive things. I knew I was "less than" everyone else, and, in their words, I was going to amount to nothing.

I carried those things with me all my life until recently. The Lord showed me that I am a child of the King that made everything, even me, a sinner saved by Amazing Grace.

My daddy was in and out of prison several times. He passed away when I was 11 years old, and with the help of his social security check we got every month we were able to move back to the country. It was heaven to me.

My teenage years were spent in rebellion. No one could tell me anything. I thought I knew it all and I just wanted to live my life the way I wanted to. My Nanny did the best she could and she did teach me many wonderful things. I thank God for giving me the chance to go to her years later and let her know how much I appreciated all she did do for me and how sorry I was for all the hell I had put her through. I remember her wrapping her arms around me and saying, "Oh, honey, you don't have to ask for my forgiveness. I always loved you just the way you were. I knew you would turn out all right."

One of the few times I remember feeling really special was one night I spent the night with my cousin, Billie Sue Clippard. As we lay down to go to sleep she came in the room with us and prayed. I remember her calling my name out to the Lord and asking Him to have His hands upon me. I couldn't believe someone was actually praying to God for me. I felt so special at that moment to hear someone calling out to the Lord for me. I know the Lord used her in a special way to help me through a very difficult time in my life.

I finally graduated high school in June 1988 after dropping out for a year. Just hearing everyone tell me, "I knew you couldn't do it and would drop out," was enough to make me go back and prove everyone

wrong. I was sick of all the negative things.

I was 19 years old and had just ended a string of bad relationships. My sister invited me to a church convention at Bible Tabernacle. I sat with my cousin, Melody Clippard, on the second row. I will never forget the service Brother Thomas ministered that night. He was speaking straight to me! I thought that someone must have gotten to him before the service and told him everything I was going through.

God was there and He was speaking to me face to face. The things He said were hard to hear, things I knew were true but **didn't want to hear**. When the service was over I left with my tail between my legs and so heavy-hearted. That night I couldn't sleep; all I could think about was what was said. Brother Thomas said God loves me. How could this be true, everything I had done? There was no way He would have anything to do with me. I finished going to the rest of the convention, 3 more services, one the following morning, that evening, and the next morning.

Thinking I could ignore what was said to me, I went back out in this world and tried to do the things I was used to. I couldn't. Something was going on in my heart that wouldn't allow me to continue on like I was. Thank God, that seed was planted and had started to grow.

The authority Brother Thomas spoke with was something I had never experienced. I was drawn to it and the anointing that was upon him when he ministered, it was paralyzing to me. All I could do was just sit in my seat and drink in God's precious word that was coming forward. I finally had a home. Thank God, He changes us little by little and day by day. The days that followed were long and hard, many things to overcome. Bitterness was finally being chipped away and replaced with healing and love. I experienced a peace and joy I had never known.

Later that year I met a young man, Danny Downing, that later became my husband in 1991. Dating was so different now. There is something awesome about dating someone that loves the Lord compared to someone that doesn't even know Him. The trust and love I had for him was something I had never experienced. I wasn't dating someone that in time I thought I could change. I didn't have to change him; he was already more than I could have ever hoped for. I

sure didn't deserve him. He is a husband that truly loves the Lord and I thank God for him every day and for helping me to wait on the one He had for me.

With marriage came a whole new set of trials. You have to remember I never had had a head over me before. I don't even think I truly honored God as my Head, much less my husband. I was still trying to do things on my own. I didn't want to submit to him or do what he told me to do (whether he was right or not). The rebellion was still there at work. I know many times Danny must have said to the Lord, "Lord, you said you wouldn't put more on me than I can handle," with me in mind. But, praise God, he hung in there with me. God's love is patient and kind -- never-ending.

You don't realize how selfish you are until you get married and then again when you have children, and I am very selfish. I realize I took my childhood into my marriage with me. The insecurities were still there. I just couldn't let them go. It wasn't until I almost destroyed our marriage that I realized I had to let them go. I saw how strong God's love was in Danny's heart and the true love the Lord gave him for me. (She that findeth a husband findeth a good thing.) I was able to lay difficult things at the Lord's feet and forget them and move on with the rest of my life.

Our young people sing a song that says, "He never said you'd only see sunshine, and He never said there'd be no rain. He only promised a heart full of singing, about the very things that once brought pain." How awesome that is, singing **about the things that once brought pain!**

The Lord has given me a new love for my Aunt Melva Dean West and Aunt Margaret Pope. The bitterness that was there is gone and I am very appreciative for all they have done for us. They both are like mothers to me now.

I have a heavenly Father, the father I have always longed for now. I can go to Him with anything, talk to Him anytime, and He meets me right where I am at. The Lord has blessed me with so much more than I ever deserve. I have a husband that loves the Lord and me and two healthy beautiful children, which are gifts that God gave us. My prayer is that the Lord will continue to help me be the wife and the mother He wants me to be. I desire with God's help that He can show Danny and me how to raise our children for Him. Thank you, Lord, for setting my feet on that solid rock and for finally giving me a home. Continue to mold and make me to what **you** would have me to be.

The Time Will Come

by Mike McInnis

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. II Timothy 4:3

Religion is a powerful force in the earth. Men will hate, persecute, and kill one another in the pursuit and perpetuation of it. The Muslim religion has of late been in the spotlight for quite a few incidents which prove that very fact. Yet, over the years, that religion which is commonly called "Christianity" by some has produced its own share of atrocities, perpetrated by men who were zealous to preserve what they perceived as its purity and to protect its subsequent generations against those who were thought to be its enemies.

There is only one LORD, one FAITH, and one BAPTISM which those, who were first called Christians, at Antioch have followed through the ages. On the other hand there are hundreds of closely aligned substitutes for that "pure and undefiled religion," which have been set forth by men in their quest to "improve" upon the original and make it into a kingdom of flesh and blood. It is these "substitutes" which have produced those who are ready to use the power of the flesh (i.e.: human governments and institutionalized religion) to defend and protect its supporters from all sorts of perceived "enemies" most especially those which it labels "heathens" and "heretics."

The weapons of warfare of true Christianity are not carnal but rest in the power of HIM who is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of its faith. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of 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; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." (2 Cor. 10:3-6).

The battle, to which the sons of GOD are called, is not that which is articulated by "conservative" radio and TV hosts or flamboyant "evangelists" and "positive thinking" preachers of varying stripes, whose smiles and upbeat message appeal to the religious flesh of men. In fact they are in essence as much and even more, the enemies of that "faith which was once delivered to the saints" as are the militant Muslims

and other zealots armed with bombs and machine guns.

They sometimes speak of the benefit of "faith" in a generic and generally inoffensive sort of way. The "conservative" pundits usually lay a groundwork to "prove" that our nation is one which was founded upon "Christianity" and is therefore morally superior to other nations because of this fact. They equate "godliness" with those who agree with them and "godlessness" to those who oppose their political and world views.

The smiling preachers (never a one of them clad in a "leathern girdle") espouse the common message of the ability of men to accomplish great things and approach unto GOD by the power of their own free will, enabling GOD to aid them as they attempt great endeavors and perform mighty works of "faith" which are said to impress HIM even as they impress other men by their efforts and successes of one sort or another; especially the supposed conversion of the masses.

Yet none of this has anything at all to do with the "preaching of the cross" which is the only message which compels the saints of GOD to worship at HIS footstool. It is this message alone, which characterizes the declaration of sound doctrine. All other teaching which purports to have a basis in "Christianity" is superfluous and detracts from the offense of the cross, and ultimately negates such in the minds of the hearers who are "naturally" repelled by such.

Paul told Timothy that the "time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Some construe his admonition to Timothy to be a prophetic reference to an age or time in the distant future when men would no longer desire to hear the truth. Yet it seems from the context of his remarks that he is apprising Timothy of the natural tendency of men (in all ages, particularly in his own) to move away from sound doctrine. He says, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." (2 Tim. 1:15). "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." (2 Tim. 4:10).

He had clearly declared that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12). This persecution does not come from simply living in a godly fashion or remaining morally upright.

Rather, the persecution of which he speaks is related to an unwavering commitment to the singular declaration and worship of the crucified CHRIST. This message in its stark simplicity is totally reprehensible to the natural man because it gives him no place to participate and therefore no place to glory. He will always seek to modify it in one fashion or other.

Each one of us has, beating within us, an evil heart of unbelief which remains unchanged and would seek to overturn the things we have been taught by the SPIRIT of GOD in the inward man. If it were possible even the very elect would thus be deceived. The exhortations of the word of GOD applied to us by the HOLY GHOST through the preaching of HIS word do indeed cause us to remember that form of sound words which is delivered to us. Yet we know that the enemy has sowed tares among the wheat, and some shall indeed pay no heed

Continued on Page 6

These Hands

By Lawrence Peter Medici

*These hands that now a Bible hold,
Once held a gun in crimes so bold,
From handcuffs tight, there still are
scars,*

*That can't be seen from behind bars.
These hands, so often clenched to fight,
Have found in darkness God's sweet
light,*

*And now in Jesus' name are raised,
Only He is worthy to be praised.*

*These hands, that gambled, cheated,
and lied,
Now cling to the One who for me died,
His hands were nailed to Calvary's
tree,*

For God so loved the world, and me.

*These hands, that shot drugs in my
veins,*

*Now worship God, He lives and reigns!
'Though locked in prison I may be,
God holds these hands for eternity.*

COMING EVENTS

June Convention

June 25-28, 2014

Southern Pines, North Carolina

November Meeting

November 26-29, 2014

Lexington, South Carolina

Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

*Monday - Friday**

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
KAAY	1090 AM	Little Rock, AR	7:15 AM
KXEG	1280 AM	Phoenix, AZ	9:00 AM
WNVY	1090 AM	Pensacola, FL	7:00 AM
KCNW	1380 AM	Kansas City, KA	12:15 PM 9:30 PM
KWDF	840 AM	Alexandria, LA	1:00 PM
WKDI	840 AM	Denton, MD	9:15 AM
KUTR	820 AM	Salt Lake City, UT	2:15 PM
WKXV	900 AM	Knoxville, TN	8:30 AM
WNQM	1300 AM	Nashville, TN	10:00 AM
WDZY	1290 AM	Richmond, VA	2:15 PM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Short Wave

WHRI ANGEL 1 – (Central & South America)

Mon.-Fri.: 0700 UTC-7.315 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC-21.630 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 2300 UTC-7.315 MHZ

WHRI ANGEL 2 – (Europe, Russia, Middle East & Africa)

Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC-5.920 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 0800 UTC-5.920 MHZ

KWHR ANGEL 3 (Hawaii) – (Asia, S.E. Asia & South Pacific)

Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC-9.930 MHZ

For a current schedule of "Angel" stations go to <http://www.whr.org/Program-Schedules.cfm>, scroll down to "Detailed Schedule Search," enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click "Start Search."

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

The NRB Network (DirecTV 378)

Sun.-6:30 AM Eastern

Mon. 3:30 AM Eastern

Local Broadcasts

Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32

Sun. 7:30 AM

Boone, NC - MTN-TV - TV 24

Cable 18 - Sat. 8:00 PM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62

Sun. 7:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGG TV-16

Sun. 7:00 PM

JAX, FL - WJXX - Ch. 25 HD - Sun. 6:00 AM

WTLV - Ch. 12 HD - Sun. 6:00 AM

Nampa, ID (Greater Boise area) - KCLP-18

Tues. 8:30 PM

Salt Lake City, UT - KTMW TV-20

Thurs. 7:00 PM & Sat. 10:00 PM