

Midnight Cry Messenger

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

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Homosexuality and the Bible

by Phil Enlow

The following is a transcript of a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle in February, 2014.

Well, Praise God! Isn't it wonderful to come into a place and sense the presence of the Lord and know that He cares enough about people like us to come and be with us? And that's just a revelation of His nature and His character.

Well, praise the Lord! Hold on to your hats. I've felt a quickening in the last several days on a very controversial subject, but one that we probably need to address and face. And, I don't know if the title will hold or will seem pretentious when I'm done, but it's "*Homosexuality and the Bible.*"

And unless you live in a cave, you know that's a real issue in our day. We live in a different world than many of us grew up in where things that were once whispered are now paraded in the streets with great pride, great defiance. In

fact, I almost feel like I need to preach this now before they throw me in jail, because the time will come when that will happen, as things go.

But we need a scriptural balance, because you've got all kinds of opinions out there and that's not what we need. You've got folks that are just real religious and I guess the most egregious example — that means the worst one — there's a church, I'll use the term and let you be the judge, but there's a church in the midwest that is notorious for their hateful behavior with respect to this question.

And, I'll let God be the ultimate judge, but it seems like the spirit they exhibit is so far from the Spirit of Christ that it's doing the devil more good than it is the Lord. But, you've got all shades of people who are religious and who just will simply take the Bible as a book of rules, and they'll just have a condemning spirit.

And you've got some that are trying to bend and twist the scriptures to fit what they want to do and justify. And then you've got others that will simply call this (the Bible) a relic of the past, or a book of hate. You dare to quote something from here and it's hate.

We just need some clarity and some truth. Because, as I say, young people today are growing up and the logic that has been established through repeated publicity, and just a

relentless campaign to put out the idea that this condition is simply a biological reality and we're just prejudiced and hateful if we don't recognize it. But we need to get a real biblical view that balances all of these things.

And we need to go...first of all we need truth. But truth, more than just a collection of ideas, is really a person. You want to know truth, you'd better look at Jesus. You can come up with a set of religious doctrines and say, "We've got the truth," and if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you don't have truth. You have what the Pharisees had. They had a derivative of something that they had taken control of and it wasn't the Spirit of God in it at all. But you look at Jesus and you look at His character and His life, and ultimately that's what defines truth.

Now one of the arguments that people will make, and I'm sure some of you heard this, that Jesus never said anything about this, the implication being that, well, it's okay because He didn't say something specific about it. What they don't realize is that Jesus at every point, not only affirmed all of the scriptures as reliable, as the Word of God that would never pass away, He was the Author!

When He talked about the Old Testament, He was there. He said, on one occasion, "...Before Abraham was, I am."

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Forgiveness

by Mike McInnis

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

A thief may steal something from another man and do so without any quailm of conscience, but even a thief (without exception) will be angry if someone else steals something from him. This illustrates quite clearly that he knows it is wrong to steal even though in his corrupt and selfish nature he can excuse his own wrongdoing. An adulterer may excuse his own actions while condemning the same transgression in his own spouse.

Paul states that even the Gentiles, who were not given the Law, written in tablets of stone, nonetheless, have the principle of the law ingrained in them. "*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,*

their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" (Rom. 2:14-15). This is demonstrated quite clearly by the fact that every man (in the flesh) believes in "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Even young children manifest this very principle when they are struck by another child or a toy is taken from them.

The most difficult action for any human being to take towards another is to demonstrate a spirit of true forgiveness. In fact it is actually impossible to perform acts of true forgiveness apart from the work of the SPIRIT OF GOD. True forgiveness as shall be demonstrated by the sons of GOD is not just an action taken now and then, but rather a state of mind which has regard towards the mercy of GOD which has been demonstrated towards them. The fruit of the SPIRIT in the child of GOD causes him to delight in

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Editor: Phil Enlow

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings to all in the wonderful name of Jesus! Well, summer is here in North America and here we still are, looking to Jesus. We continue to be thankful for His very present-tense leadership and desire to follow the Lamb more and more closely as the days grow darker.

The lead article in this edition addresses an issue that is very controversial in modern-day America: homosexuality. We have reached a point in our societal rebellion against God that seemed inconceivable not many years ago. In state after state so-called "gay marriage" is being recognized, often because of judges who impose their personal views upon the people by re-interpreting our various constitutions in the "light" of modern thinking.

And the more radical among the homosexual community aren't satisfied with mere "tolerance." They demand that everyone "celebrate" their lifestyle — and woe to anyone who holds a contrary view.

Sadly, on the other side, there are those who are genuinely hateful in their supposed defense of biblical truth, bringing great reproach upon the gospel and adding fuel to the devil's fire.

The article is a transcript of a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle in February of this year. I felt a strong desire to make a clear biblical stand regarding the subject, and at the same time to do it in the spirit of Eph. 4:15 where we are told to speak "the truth in love." Jesus never compromised with sin yet He always reached out to sinners and offered hope.

The second article is another by Bro. Mike McInnis and addresses the subject of "Forgiveness." It is wonderful and clear and I trust will bless many.

Another June Convention has come and gone. It hardly seems possible! We had folks gather from several states and from overseas as well as our four assemblies. The Lord's presence was evident from the start

Forgiveness

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forgiveness. The legalistic mind of the flesh is that which demands satisfaction or at least a credible apology before granting its own version of forgiveness.

It is this legalistic mindset which holds the notion that one should not grant forgiveness unless he sees fruits of repentance in the offending party. The fruit of the SPIRIT produces a mind which is not concerned with apologies but rather is impossible to offend. "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.*" (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

True forgiveness is a product of the SPIRIT of GOD who causes the people of GOD to love their neighbor as themselves.

and to Him belongs all the glory.

The Wednesday evening service was about our spiritual heritage: who we are and why we do as we do. We looked back in a quick overview of the life and ministry of Bro. Thomas and how he came to the convictions he came to. At the same time it was emphasized that we haven't inherited a tradition or a religion to follow but rather a heritage of being on a journey with Christ as our active Head.

Other services were titled, "God in the Valley," "Surrender Your Heart," and "The Day God Shut the Door." There was something for everyone: encouragement, challenge, and admonition. God works in the lives of His own to shape and mold them, using many of life's darker moments in the process. He desires our hearts. Anything less will not do. And the door of opportunity will not be forever open.

We have but to look to the words of Jesus who warned that the world will be living as if the coming of Christ and the end of the age are just fantasy, not realizing until too late that they have been deceived. The only prescription Jesus gave on the subject was a simple one: Be ready. I hope you are. Nothing could be more important.

These services can be heard on the website: www.midnightcry.org. From the home page click on "Audio and Video of Services," then scroll down the list. Remember us in your prayers as we remember you. We need the Lord as never before. Thank God He is faithful!

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

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

That man who is led by the SPIRIT of GOD hopes to be found with the same mind which was in CHRIST JESUS as HE prayed for HIS tormentors. "*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*" (Luke 23:34). No one apologized to HIM nor asked for forgiveness. HE prayed in this fashion because that was HIS nature as a perfect MAN who had the SPIRIT without measure.

One of the fruits of the SPIRIT is "long-suffering." (See Gal. 5:22). It is impossible to be "longsuffering" without manifesting a forgiving spirit and vice versa. This is also closely akin to the work of "forbearing" with one another: "*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*" (Eph. 4:2). Patience, tenderness, and kindness are necessary parts of forgiveness and where you find one you must find the other. It is the evident work of the SPIRIT when these attitudes are found and the obvious work of the flesh when they are disregarded and set aside in favor of "justice." Has not CHRIST taught us to walk in HIS steps? "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:20-23).

The flesh promises us a feeling of satisfaction when we demand an apology from another person, who it tells us we have a right to be offended by. It promises an even greater enjoyment if such apology is not forthcoming and we can hold a grudge against them until they come around. Yet such a spirit of unforgiveness is like a cancer that eats at our very vitals and only serves to bring us into a place of bitterness and quenching of the SPIRIT. Those who walk in such an attitude cannot walk in peace since the scripture clearly says, "*But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" (Matt. 6:15). A man cannot have the enjoyment of sins forgiven if he is unforgiving.

We are sure that JESUS CHRIST has paid the complete price of Redemption for HIS Elect Bride. "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*" (Col. 1:14). Now while there is a certain aspect of "forgiveness" which relates

to the legal remission of sin which CHRIST did undertake in HIS own body on Calvary's tree, the primary meaning of "forgiveness" as it is set forth throughout the scriptures is not a legal satisfaction itself, but rather the result of the "legal action" (as HE made HIMSELF an offering for sin) which the LORD is pleased to apply to the conscience of those for whom CHRIST died.

We see this set forth in the First Epistle of John, where he says, "*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). John is not saying that the legal standing of the sons of GOD is dependent on them confessing their sins. No part of the legal standing of the sons of GOD is in anywise dependent on their own actions, but rather, completely rests in that work which CHRIST undertook, performed, and finished in their behalf.

Yet it is true that the application of "forgiveness" is brought to them through the work of repentance which is wrought in them by the SPIRIT of GOD, causing them to confess their sins and thus enter into the joy of the LORD in their own conscience. That man who is without repentance has no enjoyment of the blessings of redemption in his own soul. Yet as a man is humbled by the SPIRIT to see CHRIST as that PERFECT SUBSTITUTE, he can then taste and see the "forgiveness" of GOD in a manifest sense.

This is not something that only happens once in the believer's life, but is an ongoing work of the SPIRIT in them, causing them to confess their sins while being reminded of HIS blessed work as their ADVOCATE both in the past and at the present moment. "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" (Psa. 46:1). Is this not at the very heart of the Psalmist's declaration? "*If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope." (Psa. 130:3-5).

Thus it is impossible for a man who blasphemes the SPIRIT to have "forgiveness," even as it is impossible for a hard hearted, unforgiving man, to have his own sins "forgiven." "*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*" (Col. 3:12-15).

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(KJV). Do you want to know who Abraham met? Do you want to know who walked in the Garden? Do you want to know who said, "Let there be light"? You're going all the way back to the beginning.

And, interesting that this debate was mentioned (*the Ken Ham-Bill Nye debate on Feb. 4, 2014*) because it really goes to the heart of an issue that I know is on Ken Ham's heart, and do pray for this. It is an opportunity, because the real debate about origins is not a debate about science. Everybody has the same facts. We all look at the same bones, the same rocks, but the way you understand those things has everything to do with a belief system.

Do you believe that the Bible is an accurate record of, not science so much, but history? Or do you say, well, we are going to assume, which is what they do, that there is no God and everything has happened naturally. Therefore, we've got to account for it in some fashion. And you interpret everything in the so-called light of that. That's what that whole business is about. But I'll tell you, Jesus was there!

You know, I'll just refer to a couple of scriptures that you're familiar with. You can look them up later, but if you want to make note of them, Matthew chapter 5, Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets..." Not the least stroke of the pen will pass away 'til all be fulfilled. You talk about affirming what Moses wrote and all the things that bear on the subject today. He affirmed all those things.

And, you look at creation itself, and I will look this scripture up for you and that's in Mark chapter 10. It's not the subject of what we're talking about today, but the Pharisees, those were religious hypocrites, came around and wanted to know about divorce and why did Moses...you know, where did all that fit?

And basically Jesus answered their question, not with some religious dogma, but going back to the beginning. He said, "...At the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

So you've got a lot buried in that. He is affirming the history of the world because of the beginning of the creation. He's not talking about billions of years after the

beginning of the creation. That's not the subject today...but if we're gonna look at truth, we're gonna have to look at Jesus first of all, and we're gonna have go back to the beginning, if we're gonna discover what God intended when He created this world, because that's the measure. It's not my opinion, it's not what I feel, and think and all those kinds of things, or anybody else. And, I will...perhaps this is a good time to throw in this simple fact. If you look at the ministry of Jesus and you contrast Him with the religious people of His day, the Word tells us that, "...God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world..." but to save it.

And it says, God didn't send Him in, so you're not talking about Jesus as though He's different from His Father. You're talking about the very heart and the purpose of God expressed toward human beings. And nobody knows with greater clarity all of the ugliness that lies in the human heart and in human behavior, but yet in spite of that, He did not come to condemn, but to rescue.

Jesus never went around picketing sinners. He never went around even condemning sinners! Interesting, the poem that you read had to do with that woman taken in the act of adultery, and Jesus was more interested in helping her and exposing the hypocrisy of those would-be stone-throwers than He was in condemning.

And after they had all walked away because they were convicted, they knew they couldn't meet the challenge: if you are without sin, throw a stone. They walked away and Jesus looked up and said, is there nobody condemning you? She said, no, nobody is condemning me. He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Do you want to know something about the heart of God? We need to be in a position where we can speak and know truth, but we can have the Spirit of Christ.

You know what was in Him was the very Life of God. He didn't come as a religious teacher, just coming up with better ideas and better philosophies. He literally had God living in Him! When people met Him, they met the God who was in Him! He didn't have to preach to sinners and say, straighten up your behavior. What good does that do if you don't change the heart?

But in the light of just being around Him, people knew they were not like Him. They knew, they sensed, because of that contact of their spirit with His. And it drove some away, and why? Because they preferred darkness. They were afraid of the light! They didn't want to come into the Light because the Light would expose what they really

were, and they didn't want to face that.

But you had others caught in a terrible web of sin who rushed to that Light and they found hope! They knew what they were, but instead of feeling rejection and condemnation, they felt love and hope, and Someone who reached out wanting to help them. Oh my, what a glorious Lord we have who could reach down to someone like Mary Magdalene who lived a horrible life... immorality, a prisoner of darkness, and sin and devils! You wonder why people like her and others could just feel such gratitude because He freed them from a prison they had no power to escape. The woman at the well...He told her the truth, but she felt welcome. She felt hope. She felt love from His Spirit.

It's not, "What's the matter with you?" "Why are you doing that kind of stuff?" "Stop it!" God help His people to have His Spirit. But as I say, you go back to the very beginning...if you want to know what truth is, what God's purpose is and why we are where we're at, you've got to go back to the beginning, because God created a perfect world, didn't He?

It wasn't perfect because of the biological structure; it was perfect because His life filled it. Now you can speculate all you want, but the fact is Adam and Eve were warned not to eat of a certain tree. If they did, they would die! Well, it seems reasonable that if they hadn't eaten of it, they wouldn't have died! Now I don't want to go anywhere with that. We've got to deal with what is, not what if.

But the fact is, God created a world that was amazing. And in that creation, He gave every one of us great capacity for pleasure, for enjoyment, powerful desires that were meant to find a place, a holy place in His creation! There's not a thing wrong, fundamentally, with every appetite that we have, every capacity for pleasure that we have. God's not against pleasure. He invented it!

But oh, what has happened because man took that independent course is what has brought us to the place that we're at today. And, what happened in the beginning, that disobedience was called "sin." And I think it's worth just talking for a moment about sin and what it is. Because if you just going around saying, homosexuality, or anything...I just picked that one, but pick anything...and say, "Oh, that's a sin," what most people think about is that God has just made up...if it's even so...God has just made up a bunch of rules. They don't really have any meaning or purpose. They're just rules because He's a big bully in the sky and He can do as He pleases. And He likes this

and doesn't like that, so He just imposes His rules upon us and they don't really have any purpose. But I want to tell you, that's not the way it is.

What is right and what is wrong is defined, not by rules that are arbitrary, they are defined by the very character and nature of God! The moral law of the universe is as real as the physical laws. Why don't you just go out and defy the Law of Gravity? "I don't like that. I don't agree with that. It's just a stupid rule. I want to fly. I'm gonna get on a cliff and, by God, I'm gonna fly. I don't care about your rules, God!" So what's gonna happen?

You're gonna have a nice flight. You're gonna enjoy the trip down. But you're not gonna enjoy the end result. There is a defiance of simply the way something is! When you're talking about sin, you're talking about a violation of the very purpose and nature of God in the beginning.

Now the interesting thing is, when God said to Adam and Eve, "Don't eat of this fruit. The day you eat it, you will die," He didn't say, "I'm gonna hammer you, I'm gonna punish you." He said, "You will die!" There's a *consequence!* If we follow an independent course, and we fall under the dominion of these wonderful desires that God has given us, but we use them for self, they become destructive. They become just the opposite of everything God intended.

If you had a small child and they were enchanted by the look of a coral snake they happened to find – "Oh that's pretty, Mama. That's my pet. Oh, how beautiful this thing is" — would you be some kind of a monster to tell them, "Don't do that?" What's the purpose of telling a child not to play with a coral snake? Obviously there's a consequence. You love them enough just to warn them because you know what's coming as a fruit of that.

You know, we have fire, something without which civilization could not exist. Fire is a wonderful tool, isn't it? We warm, we cook, we produce power. There are so many things that all flow out of fire. But what happens when fire is used in a way it's not intended, gets out of control beyond the bounds of that usefulness? That same power that is in fire becomes a horrible, destructive force.

And that is what's happened to the human race when they had the arrogance to tell God, I'm not gonna live by your rules...and again a misunderstanding about rules. But I'm not gonna obey you. I'm not gonna listen to you, because my nature, my desires are crying out, they're crying out to be fulfilled.

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And fulfilling them and chasing that rainbow of satisfaction that I'm supposed to get from following my own lusts and desires is more important to me than honoring You and listening to You. Is that not where the human race has come? Oh my God!

What does the scripture say in James chapter 1? We use this quite frequently. But it's a pretty good picture of what happens: verse 13 of chapter 1, "When tempted, no one should say, God is tempting me. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone." (NIV).

So how does it happen? "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed." Okay, so you've got something that responds on the inside, something that hungers to do a certain thing. And when you yield to that, you give in to that, and you begin to try to rub your fur in that particular way, and it's outside the will and the purpose of God, you are caught, dragged away and enticed.

"Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." You know, it's interesting that the scripture tells us over in Romans 5, you can look it up, that death reigned over the human race, even for all those centuries where they didn't disobey a particular command. Adam was given a command. He disobeyed it. But for centuries men lived and they didn't have a particular command that they rebelled against, but what they did was simply follow the inclinations of their own nature, and they died, didn't they?

Do you see death as a consequence? If God just simply walked away from the human race, we would die. It has nothing to do with punishment. It is a consequence of following the inclinations of our nature apart from the purpose and the will of God. I'll tell you, it's God's love, not His condemnation that would strive with men.

And, of course, we saw what happened in Noah's day when it reached the point where there was no more point in striving because men had so hardened themselves against His love, against any knowledge of Him, they just shoved it out of the way and said, "No, we're gonna do what we're gonna do, get out of our face. We don't believe you."

What happened? Darkness! There was such a darkness that God looked down and it says, "His heart was filled with pain." Pain...think about the nature that's behind that...the grief that He felt! He said, the inclination of their heart is only evil continu-

ally...nothing left to work with, no hope for people that reach that point.

But even then, He didn't give up, did He? He never gave up on His purpose. Thank God! We wouldn't be here this morning. If God was like us, He'd have given up a long time ago. But God's not like us. That nature that has that dream of a race of people set free from all of this, filled with His life. What does the scripture say about pleasure? "...At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (KJV).

Pleasures for a few moments and then you're hungry and empty and craving again, always just pulled by your nature, pulled by something, by a promise that can never be fulfilled. Oh God, what a horrible thing that the human race has fallen into.

Let's look at what is a lot of people's favorite passage. I'm saying that a little bit facetiously, but in Romans chapter 1, we need to look at it head on. It's not something we need to duck. Our young people need to understand, because they are being absolutely brainwashed with the message that's behind that movement that is set to... and what's happening is people are being captured, they're being destroyed. Instead of condemnation, we ought to have love and a hunger to see people helped.

Oh my God, isn't that what Jesus did? I want to be like Him, don't you? But now, you know, the wrath of God, the judgment of God, absolutely that is something that is coming. There's gonna come a day when God is gonna judge the world, and it's not just for breaking rules. It's for the heart that has just rejected everything about His purpose, chosen what is evil, chosen what is totally contrary to His nature and will! It's a cancer in His universe and there's judgment that's gonna fall on this world, and it's real, and we don't need to duck that.

But I see something else in this. And it says, "The wrath of God is being revealed..." (NIV). So what's going on here is there's an aspect of God's wrath that is being experienced *now* by people. So we need to find out how that happens.

It says, "...is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men, who suppress the truth by their wickedness." So here you've got this pull. My nature is so strong it wants its way. It is filled with this delusion that I can be my own God. This life that I have is mine to do with as I please. I will do what I want. I will not honor God.

"...Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his..."

Now listen to this. "...His eternal power and divine nature." You're not just talking about the fact that He's so powerful He can create galaxies. That's one side of it...but His *nature*!

We see, if we have any eyes to see, we see His goodness! He sends His rain on the just and unjust! He sends His sunshine! There are so many things, if we could only see His goodness! In spite of what we see in this world, God is a good God! Yeah, there are a lot of terrible things that happen, but if God just stepped back, completely let it go, what do you think would happen to this world?

You've got a God who is still striving with men. I don't know how long that's gonna happen because we are winding up this age. But God's nature is available. If people can see it, if they'll only have the eyes to see it, it's made plain! God has revealed Himself in nature itself. So it says these things, "...Have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..."

Now the consequence of that is what? "...Men are without excuse." See, there's enough information right there, if anybody has the least inclination and they begin reaching out toward that God that they sense and they see, there's a God who is tuned to that frequency, I'll tell you. So it's not that men are just absolutely, totally ignorant, is it?

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile..." useless, worthless, "...and their foolish hearts were darkened." Now I'll tell you, if you really see the greatness of God, there's nothing you can do but say, whoa, wow, praise and honor belong to Him! He is an awesome, wonderful, amazing God! Lord, that I have the privilege of being alive... thank You! Thank You for the purposes that You have created me for! Thank You for so much! Lord, I want to have a thankful heart for all of this!

But you see a world of people who say, "No, I refuse to recognize Him! I refuse to acknowledge that I owe my existence to Him or that He has any kind of purpose for me. I am my God. I will do as I please." That's the spirit that drives human nature. Boy, do we need help. We need help that is beyond our power. But this is what's happened. This is how men got in the state that they got.

"Although they claimed to be wise..." And don't they? "...They became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." So you've got people who actually think they're

smart and they made idols, bowed down and worshipped.

You know there's one passage in Isaiah...I can't remember right where it's at right now. But the Lord is, through the prophet, kind of showing the ridiculousness of what they were doing. And He described a man who would take a log. He'd cut it in two parts. And he would cut one part up and burn it and make his supper. He'd take the other part and carve an idol and bow down and say, "You're my god, help me." But are we any smarter today? We worship technology. We worship ourselves, mostly...so not any smarter than they were.

So anyway, now what is the expression, the current expression, the present-tense expression of God's wrath? "Therefore God gave them over..." *He gave them over*. There is a point that men reach when their hearts are so hard, so dark that God simply takes His hands off and lets them go. And what He's letting them go for, is to experience the consequences of their choices.

"Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts..." Hang on...I jumped a line. "...To sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator."

This is not a "more than" as I think it says in the King James. This is "rather than." This is absolutely a choice of two totally incompatible things. You can't say, "Oh, I worship God. I just worship these other things, too." Oh, no. It's one or the other! We either worship...and the thing about worshipping creation is, **we're** created. And the real worship is not just stuff, it's me! I am the center of my little universe, thank you very much. I will do as I please. And whether it is stated that defiantly or not, that's the spirit that drives men. You wonder why there's so much trouble in the world?

So they, "...Worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." All right, this is where it comes to...our subject. "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."

That's pretty straight talk. You have to do some serious twisting to try to make this something else. What is being pictured here is not something that is a matter of biology,

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is it? There's no biological component to this. This is a moral thing. This is a power that rules over men.

Now it's not confined to this issue, is it? You go on and it takes everything into account. It just happens to mention that particularly right here. But it is not biological. It is a fruit of a choice to follow one's own nature.

And, when it comes to this particular issue of homosexuality, it's a complex thing. There's no simplistic answer that covers every case. It's a very complex trap. But I'll tell you, one factor that is left out of the discussion with most people is the reality that there is a kingdom of darkness.

It's real, it's populated by wicked spirits who hate God, whose nature is the polar opposite of God. Whatever He stands for that's right and good and beautiful and pleasurable in the right sense, he (the devil) wants to twist it around and make it something else and absolutely destroy. Even one of the devil's names is Destroyer, and that's what he's out to do. My God, we ought to have compassion on people!

There are powers out there that seek to destroy them, that have arrayed all kinds of cunning traps that have the power to appeal to this nature, and to the desires that God gave them! But through whatever circumstances apply to the individual, they cause those things to be turned in another way.

And one of the things you're dealing with concerning people that we need to recognize, it's easy to just toss off a little platitude: oh, it's a choice. There are a lot of people who discover these kinds of desires that arise without being bidden, seemingly unwanted. They fight against them. They arise without any...so you see how the Devil is enforcing a lie. The lie is, I was born that way biologically. I was wired this way, therefore it's legitimate. That's the lie that's being peddled.

But what's going on behind the scenes, is however the circumstances, as I say, work out for the individual, you've got something that is being engendered from without, and probably within, too. There are spirits at work that are taking natural, God-given desires and turning them in another direction. And you wind up with people just... they finally just say, well, it must be normal and they just go that way. Lord, we need compassion for people who are in traps. But that's what's pictured here.

And you know, there are people out there, preachers, who will absolutely take

this particular sin, they'll focus on this one thing, and if it occurs at all, "It is a sign of reprobation!" My God, everybody who's ever been guilty of this, "you are reprobate, you have no hope!"

I remember early, before I came here, that brief little ministry I had, a man I knew became a friend, and that had happened to him. He'd gotten caught a little bit during his teen years in this trap. And a preacher found out about it and that's the line he took. "You are reprobate, you are without hope."

When I first met him, he was home from a visit from an institution, deep depression. And I'm happy to say, God brought him out of that. Oh, what a lie! I was just angry when I found out about it! What a lie! You see... they're turning this completely around! Yes, when God turns people over, these are the kinds of things...and we'll go on here in a minute...these are the kinds of things that can result. But you can't flip that around and say, if we have these things, therefore God has turned them over!

Because the world is full of sinners! There's nobody else! All have sinned! We all fall short! There's not one of us that can look in the mirror and say, "Well, I'm different because I didn't do this particular behavior or that one...I'm better or I'm different." Oh God, help us. But that's what...oh, that made me angry. God, we don't need that kind of a spirit. That's just religious dogma! It's a total misunderstanding of the Word of God, because there's such plainness in some other passages of scripture, and the Spirit of Jesus that reached out.

But anyway, this is one thing that has resulted from human desires, not brought under the control of God's Spirit, not used for the purposes for which He gave us those desires. What are you gonna do? We are not made to manage those things. We are not made to be able to rule over ourselves independently of Him and use God's gifts in a way that is wholesome, to put it plain. It takes God! It doesn't take religious dogma. It doesn't take therapy. It takes the power, the transforming power of God's Spirit in the heart to set people free from traps like this! And it takes His love to reach those He can reach.

But if you think this just has to do with this one thing, read on. "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God..." Didn't think it worthwhile...my God, I know about Him, but who cares about that? I'm gonna do my thing. "...They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over..." You have the same thought here...

He gives them over. He says, all right, you don't want Me, I'm gonna let you experience the fruit of your choices.

You know, God said, through Paul, in Galatians, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (KJV). If we sow to the Spirit, we reap life everlasting. If we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption.

And you know, in several places the lusts and human desires are referred to as "deceitful." What does that mean? It means they lie to you! It means they arise and create the illusion in our minds that this is the pathway to my happiness, to my wellbeing! I feel good because I took this drink or this drug, or did this, or did that. It gave me a little bit of pleasure. I've got to do that again. I need more. I need...and you walk, just like a little animal, you walk right into a trap. You don't know what's on the other end of that. You don't know the powers that are at work to destroy lives. Oh God, help us! They are liars!

You nature will lie to you! And if we're not willing to receive the loving, merciful testimony of God about that, there's nothing left but slavery and death. Oh, I thank God for His mercy toward us.

So anyway, "...He gave them over to..." (NIV). To what? "...A depraved mind." You've got a mind that just doesn't think straight. It doesn't see straight. It's not capable of understanding. Why? "...To do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness..."

So it isn't just about the one thing, is it? Let's get this in context. Let's not say, well, there are sins and then there's this one, way up here. It isn't that way. God doesn't grade sins. "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity."

Now, let's see what that consists of. "They are full of envy..." Have you ever envied? Yeah. "...Murder..." Well, I don't know if we've got murderers here, but praise God, God can save murderers, too. But I'll tell you, if you've ever had an intense hatred rise up in your spirit toward somebody, you're a murderer. That's what Jesus said.

"...Strife..." I would never be involved... don't you tell me that! You're striving right then. Oh my God, we're so guilty of some of these things. "...Deceit and malice." A spirit of ill will that sort of secretly wants something bad to happen to somebody. A 'God's-gonna-get-them' kind of a spirit.

Oh, here's one! "They are gossips..." Whoa...I'm glad gossip is not a sign of reprobation. We'd have a lot of reprobates. But you see, this is all lumped together. It

all flows out of the same cesspool of human nature. This is what happens when men insist that they can live apart from God! Every kind of thing comes out. Homosexuality is just one of them.

"...Gossips, slanderers..." Are you gonna say stuff that's bad and negative, and try to run somebody down? "...God-haters, insolent..." Whew! "...Arrogant and boastful." Do you want to know what the real root of all of this is? It's arrogance!

Let me throw this in, 'cause you will have some people that will try to tell you that the sin of Sodom, or the reason God destroyed them was not the homosexuality part, but it was because they weren't neighborly, they didn't take care of one another, and they weren't hospitable and all that kind of stuff. And they're getting that from Ezekiel 16.

And Ezekiel 16 says, this was the sin of Sodom. And the first one was arrogance. You start with an arrogant, I-am-God-I-can-do-as-I-please spirit, you're going to descend into other things. And so when you talk about the one thing that most people refer to, you're talking about a *consequence* of a spirit. So God was going right back to the *root cause* of why they fell into the condition they fell. So you can't really divorce the two.

But anyway, people will take and twist the scriptures to try to justify. But anyway, "... Arrogant and boastful." Well, there's none of us that can escape these things and say, well, we've never been guilty of any of this. "They invent ways of doing evil; they..." Whoa! "... Disobey their parents." That sounds like it's out of place. In all this list of terrible things, and they "disobey their parents."

You know, we better see things the way God does. These flow out of a rebellious spirit that basically says, "I'm God!" I can govern my own life. And if I feel, if I have a desire, I have every right to try to fulfill that desire. God, don't get in my way."

And you wonder why the world is in the condition that it's in. As I say, this is the polar opposite of God's nature. God is love! He seeks the welfare of everyone. You get a world that is filled with His Spirit, there are pleasures that you and I have no idea...and they last forever.

The blessing of God, "...it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it," the scripture says. (KJV). And everybody is equally sharing because no one is just out for themselves. Everyone is just, oh — that's the nature of God. And when that's the nature, and it will be in the New Creation, it's gonna be something else. Man, I want to be a part of that. And I have only one pathway

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that gets me there, and that's Jesus and what He's done for me. Nothing else.

But anyway, "...They disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless." You know, I mentioned this, the business of the kingdom of darkness. It's interesting how the Lord, every once in a while will pull the cover off the reality of that. How many of you saw the news the other day about that family up in Ohio that had these...? I mean, even the secular officials, the medical people, the law had to admit, there's something supernatural going on here. There was a family...it seemed like it followed them in a particular house. I'm not gonna try to dissect what all happened, but it's obviously spirits.

And the woman witnessed her daughter levitating off the bed, all kinds of manifestations. But the one that really got everybody's attention was the little boy, and I think...I don't know if it was at the hospital or where it was, but there were medical people and there was an officer of the law who witnessed this. He literally walked up the wall backwards onto the ceiling, flipped down, hit somebody, and it took seven men to hold him. Those are the little details that sort of halfway stick in my mind.

And everybody who saw that said, there ain't no way that can happen. It's absolutely supernatural and they ascribed it to demons. People are paying attention. They'll recognize there is a kingdom of darkness and it's real. Now, God doesn't tell us that to make us afraid, because we serve One who has destroyed his power, and if we're with Him we have every right to stand and not to just take what the Devil dishes out.

But it's real! People do not understand what they are up against. And it doesn't just happen in things like that. It happens with the simplest things. Some of you may remember a pretty widely known case of demon possession that Brother Thomas had to deal with many years ago. And there was a condition that was prominent in this young lady's life.

I won't go into the details. But there were occasions when Brother Thomas was able to force that demon to talk through her. And one of the things that he was made to say, or maybe he was boasting about it, I don't know, was where her condition came from. And he had dealt with her so young... he actually said the condition is hereditary, or they think it is. In other words, it had been done in such a way that everybody just thought, oh, she was born with this predis-

position, she was born with this condition, and she wasn't. It was a demon that had brought it on.

Now we don't need to go start looking for demons under our beds and getting paranoid. But we need to recognize the truth of the world we live in. It's not just what you see, there is another kingdom. In fact, there are two kingdoms, thank God! The Kingdom we have is the one that's over all. But these things are real. But here's the condition that people can get to.

"Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." (NIV). Boy, you've got people out there promoting, and by God, if you don't acknowledge — you better *celebrate* the things that are going on.

What kind of a spirit is behind that? But should we despise people in that condition? God help us. They'll turn around if you read something like this, "That's hate!" God doesn't hate people. It's His mercy that reaches out in truth. Oh, Praise God! We just need the Spirit of God. We need truth in this area, in every area. If God's gonna use us to help people, we need to understand some things.

But there's a scripture that absolutely gives the lie to the notion that if someone is caught in the particular sin of homosexuality that is a sign they are reprobate and they have no hope. That's a lie from Satan! And all you have to do is look over in 1st Corinthians chapter 6, to see it plainly. Paul is talking about various categories of wicked behavior, and he includes that one.

But he says, verse 9, chapter 6 of 1st Corinthians, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?" Now these are people that this is their choice, this is the direction they are going, this defines their life, because if we're gonna talk about those who have ever been guilty of anything, that includes all of us. But this is somebody who, this is the way they go, this is what they are, they live and die in this condition. They will not inherit the kingdom of God.

"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes..." which was a part of heaven worship of that day, "...nor homosexual offenders..." That's another scripture they love. "...Nor thieves nor the greedy..." Now that takes in a lot of folks. "...Nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." But thank God for the next verse!

"And that is what some of you were."

Were! That's a message of hope! We don't need to be picketing against this and against that! We need to be offering hope for those that God would reach! We need to have a heart that sees men the way God sees them! God loves people in all these categories! His heart longs to reach out and open a door of hope! Now if they slam that door shut and say, "I will not," there's gonna come a day when they will wish they had. But just as Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn it, that's not our place either. Praise God!

In the King James it's, "...Such were some of you." "That is what some of you were." (NIV). But! "But you were washed, you were sanctified..." That's set apart for God! Lifted out of that condition, set on a different course, set apart, you're Mine now, you're not your own! Thank God! Washed, sanctified! "...Justified..." That's made righteous! "...In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

See it's in this particular context he goes on. He says, "Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything." Boy, the nature of sin is that it will turn you into an addict! It's obvious with things like alcohol and drugs, but it's true of every kind of sin. If you're prone to anger, you're gonna be caught like a fish, or like a little animal in a trap. If you don't get rid of that bitterness, it's gonna possess you, it's gonna make a slave out of you. Anything.

"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality..." So that covers the whole gamut. "...But for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." Thank God for that! He cares about our bodies. They belong to Him. We have a right to trust Him with things.

"By his power God raised the Lord from the dead..." That's how we know all this is true! That's the authentication from heaven itself that every bit of truth in this Word is true! Jesus was not a religious teacher! All the religious teachers are dead! He's alive.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?" Now he's exhorting the people of God. We're part of Him! We're not just little entities running around. We are so connected to Him that our bodies are actually part of Him!

"Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute?" That's one example that he's using here. "Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, the two will become one flesh. But he who unites himself with the Lord

is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually, sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price."

Oh, what a price! You think of what it cost Him to open a door of hope for you and for me. Incredible price that He paid to come from Heaven's glory and take our sin, and all the humiliation, and the pain, and the sense of separation from His Father that was dished out on Him...for me, for you. Oh my! Has He not earned the right to give us life, to be our Lord and our rescuer?

"Therefore honor God with your body." So that's pretty plain, isn't it? And about the part where there are people in all kinds of categories of things we call sin — and they are — they are departures from His purpose, using His gifts in ways that He didn't intend, and in ways that are destructive, that lead to death. And just like we wouldn't let a child play with danger, He loves enough to tell us the truth. But yet, there's hope—there's hope.

Now I want to look at a scripture that just...I was thinking about this and kind of running some references, and I ran into one that I hadn't thought about in a while, and particularly in this connection. I'm gonna go ahead and turn over to Titus, because it's amazing. I believe it gives us a real picture of how we need to think.

And I'm gonna back up into...chapter 3 is where I'm mainly going, but I want to back all the way up into verse 11, because this is instruction for us here, first of all. It defines the grace of God and what the grace of God is about. It's not an indulgence of sin as some people almost make it. This is a real power that works to change us! It works in our hearts, it enlightens our minds, it enables our wills...it does all the things that are necessary to enable helpless sinners to actually live for God! That's what grace is.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Jesus didn't come to save us *in* our sins, but *from* them. Praise God!

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“These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.” Now here’s some instruction that has to do with our living in a broken world. How do we relate to people? What do we do with rulers, with government, with sinners that we are among? How do we act? What’s our attitude supposed to be? Okay?

“Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities...” That’s a hard one. You think about how hard it was in that day. I mean, we think we’ve got it bad? There were heathen emperors. There were all kinds of stuff going on in that world. And yet, there’s a spirit of humbleness and submission that God was looking for in His people, trusting, because the ultimate authority is in heaven anyway. He’s over all. He’s more interested in changing us than He is in changing the world. You know, we want to change the world so that it’s more comfortable for us! God is interested in changing us! He’s gonna use the evil of the world to do that, to work in us.

All right, “...To be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one...” Oh God, how easy it is to do that. I mean, we’re all guilty. Lord have mercy, you look at some news stories and then you look at the commentary underneath, and wow! They don’t quite have missiles, but it’s close. Verbal missiles, and slander and anger and all kinds of — boy, that’s the spirit of the age. But God is looking for a different kind of spirit from us.

“...To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate...” And how about this one? “... And to show true humility toward all men.” Think about that. God, give us that grace to be like Jesus, to not make these instant, negative judgments that basically set us up as Pharisees.

But listen to how he puts this into perspective. This isn’t just an instruction, ‘this-is-the-way-it-ought-to-be’. Listen to the explanation. “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.”

You don’t have to be caught by a particular thing to be caught by *something*. And whether you have grown up in a place where you are sheltered from a lot of the behaviors you might look down on, you’ve got the same nature. You get the right circumstances, you and I are capable of anything! We have no right to look in the mirror and say, you’re better than anybody else. We are not! Oh, I’ll tell you, that’s one

of the greatest revelations anybody could have...that we’re sinners, helpless, needing rescue, needing a Savior, enslaved...that’s what sin does.

“We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But...” Now we’re gonna get the perspective. We were in the same condition, but how did God react? Did He come down with thunders of denunciation and say, “What’s the matter with you? Straighten up and fly right!”? What did He do? It says, “But when the kindness and love...” Kindness! Boy, it’s not our nature to be kind to a lot of people. Oh, they get us all upset! But here’s the Spirit of God...kind.

“...Kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” He didn’t look at a single thing and say, “That qualifies you.” Nothing qualified me! He showed mercy. I did not deserve it.

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” He didn’t just come and rearrange my behavior. He changed the inside. That’s what real salvation is about. It’s us just coming to the end of ourselves and casting ourselves upon the promise of God, so that He can change us from the heart level out! The behaviors will take care of themselves!

“...Washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

Now, do we get the perspective as to what kind of people God wants us to be? He wants us to be His, to live with Him. But when we live in a broken world and we see people who are caught by all kinds of things, to have the same kind of a spirit and heart toward men that He’s had toward us, not ever to cause people to think, “they think they’re better than I am.”

What would we do if somebody came in here who was pretty obviously part of a lifestyle like that? What would we do? Should they be loved and welcomed? I’m not talking about somebody who wants to come in and be the song leader and live their lifestyle. I’m talking about somebody who comes — oh God, we need to have a heart that reaches out and welcomes people of every kind!

Who do we think we are if we don’t? God deliver us from our prejudices, from all these things. You know, I have read and I have heard numerous testimonies from people who were caught in this particular lifestyle. And I had read one not too long

back that was — you talk about somebody who would have been the last person that you would have imagined that would have ever become a follower of Jesus. This lady was a tenured professor in a major university. She was the head of women’s studies, the ultimate feminist, lesbian, totally immersed in that culture, totally satisfied with it, looking at Christians as judgmental.

Was she wrong? No. Looking at Christians as judgmental followers of some ancient stuff that’s irrelevant today, totally happy in what she was doing, a real intellectual. Over a period of at least a couple of years, God arranged for her to form a genuine friendship with a minister and his wife. And they didn’t preach at her. They didn’t condemn her. They came together and they just shared. They gave truth, but they gave it with love, without pushing, trusting God to open the heart and work. No hurry, not trying to get a “decision,” not trying to do anything, but just share the love of Christ and let God work!

Isn’t that what God’s looking for. We can’t save people. Getting somebody to mouth a few words doesn’t make them a Christian if God’s not working! But what an awesome testimony it was about how God just dealt with her. And the behaviors didn’t stop. She was still there.

I’ve heard of others testimonies similar, where people came and sat in church and their behaviors didn’t just change right off. But they were loved and reached out to, and God did the changing.

And it’s a long, long story, but the end result is that lady was brought to real faith in Christ, and went and actually taught at a seminary for a short time, wound up — today she lives — I don’t think she lives all that far from here, actually. But today, she is a minister’s wife, active in the ministry, has adopted children that she loves.

I mean, talk about the grace of God. I’ve heard a number of cases like that, where people weren’t just shunned because, “You’re not like us.” The Spirit of Christ reached out and just.... Some of these are gonna be the case where, “...such were some of you.” (KJV).

There’s a place that Jesus has won in His Kingdom for a lot of unlikely people. If a murderer happens to hear this, how do you know that God doesn’t have a place in His Kingdom for you? Jesus died for murderers. He was crucified next to one, and said, “...today you will be with me in paradise.” (NIV).

Oh, may God fill us with His life, not doctrines, ideas, and dogmas, but with His life, so that we can have a spirit that is welcom-

ing to people, does not shove people away, does not communicate hatred and rejection and condemnation, no Phariseism. God gives us the kind of spirit that can do that and yet people know where we stand.

You know, there’s a lot folks out there, that if you try to do that — oh, “don’t you know?” They did that with Jesus. This woman came in and began to wash Jesus’ feet and what did the Pharisee say? “If this man were a prophet, he would know...what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” He wouldn’t let her touch Him!

Oh, what phony holiness. You know, the only people that Jesus said, “woe” to? It wasn’t the sinners, it was the religious people that thought they weren’t sinners. God give us His Spirit to where we know the truth, we know what the Word teaches, we know that these things, and many others....

A lot of folks caught in homosexuality will look at the heterosexual world and say, well, this is what you want? It’s just as bad, a lot of it. And they’ve got a point. The answer to homosexual lust is not heterosexual lust, it’s being God’s, letting Him put things the way He wants them. And He knows how to do that.

I am so thankful for the kindness and love that God has shown to me and to you. But it isn’t just for us. I want to understand what’s going on. I want to stand for the truth, but I don’t want to do it with a hateful spirit, or a legalistic, Pharisaical spirit.

Wouldn’t that be awesome if God would save somebody right in our midst. We could watch the transformation that God did! Not by us trying to make people look like, and act like us, but by sharing the love of God and His saving power with people. There’s no end to what God can do, if we’ll let Him do the saving and just be an expression of His Life. May God just help us in this and every area to bring glory to Him. Praise God!

NOTICE

Once again it is time to update the mailing list. Since the paper is sent out free of charge we feel it is only right that it be sent only to those who truly desire to receive it. The only way we have of knowing that is for people to write and let us know. If you have not written in years and still desire to receive the paper PLEASE LET US KNOW!

ALSO: There has been confusion in the minds of some as to how often we publish the MCM. At the present time we publish quarterly or four times per year.

Amazing Grace

*How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost,
But now am found
Was blind but now I see.*

A tablet on the north wall of the Church of St. Mary, Woolnoth, contains the inscription:

“John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a seller of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.” These simple words describe in rugged terseness and brief outline the life-story of the writer of the famous hymn, “Amazing Grace.”

Speaking of the momentous change which occurred when “the wicked, licentious libertine” was transformed into a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says in another of his hymns:

*In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.*

*I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His longing eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.*

Like the demoniac amongst the tombs, this man, on whom the laws of God and the bonds of society and civilization had no power, was changed. The lion was turned into the lamb at the sight of the Victim of Calvary, and by the power of the Gospel of the Grace of God (Rom. 1:16).

It was not the ethical Christ, the Founder of the Christian religion, nor the exemplary Christ, the object of modern thought, but rather was it the rejected, thorn-crowned, pierced, dying Christ of God. John Newton required something deeper than the ethics of Christianity, something more powerful than the example of perfect manhood to change the evil within him and remove the guilt of a life of sin. He found it, not by an elaborate system of prayers and penances, but while yet in the midst of his sin. He learned that “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). The condescending love of Christ to a rebel so unworthy touched his heart, and smote his long seared conscience. It brought home to him the awful sin of which he was guilty,

rejecting a love which was so full, and doing despite to the salvation which was so free.

You may be as deeply sunk in sin as was John Newton. Or, you may be an upright and virtuous person. However, if the revelation which brought conviction and conversion to the slave trader has never been yours, your sin is as great as his, and you are still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23).

The sight of a crucified Saviour not only wrought conviction of sin, but brought peace to his heart:

*Another look He gave which said,
I freely all forgive;
This Blood is for thy ransom paid,
I die that thou mayest live.*

Here Newton saw the love of God supplying the sacrifice which His holiness demanded (Heb. 9:25, 26), the Son of God stepping into the place of ungodly men, and at the hands of justice suffering the wrath and condemnation due to man on account of sin. On the ground of what Christ has accomplished, God can now be just, and justify all who come to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:18). By trusting to that finished work the “African blasphemer” was saved: — truly, this is “Amazing Grace”!

The grace of God which softened, and saved, and raised up John Newton as a witness is unmerited and free. God is no respecter of persons. His grace extends to you: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). The precious Blood which cleansed John Newton’s crimson stains was shed for you (1 John 1:7; 2:2). The Word of God thus assures you of salvation, if you will but believe on His Son (Acts 16:31). Then, like John Newton, you will be able to sing:

*’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved:
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!*

*Thro’ many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

Yea, though this heart and flesh should fail,

*Though mortal life should cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.*

When we’ve been there ten thousand years,

*Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing His praise,
Than when we’d first begun.*

— J.H.

*Gospel Tract Society, Inc.
Independence, Mo.*

Jesus My Carpenter

by Lawrence Peter Medici

*In a world filled with loneliness,
Searching for good,
I laid myself in Jesus’ hands,
Like a broken piece of wood.*

*And with his gentle tools of love,
My heart at first He carved,
And filled it with His guiding light,
Where it once was dark and starved.*

*Then He filed my fears with Perfect Love,
And my doubts He chipped away,
With His Promise of Eternal Life,
And Peace for every day.*

*And as the Finish Coat He painted,
His Precious Blood all over me,
Then the vice of life was loosened,
And my spirit was set free!*

*For Jesus now this life I live,
To me He’s been so good,
He made me such a happy man
From just a broken piece of wood.*

**Visit Midnight Cry Ministries
on the web:
www.midnightcry.org**

COMING EVENTS

**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

San Francisco, Oakland, California
KBCW TV-44 - Sunday, 6:00 A.M.

Seattle, Washington (reaches Vancouver)
KVOS TV-12 - Sunday, 7:30 A.M.