

Midnight Cry Messenger

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

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Things That Are Not

by Phil Enlow

Adapted from a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle on January 21, 2018.

I believe many of us live, if we know the Lord, between the tension of what is and what we hope will be, what we've been promised the Lord will do. It's always a challenge to deal with both. And the challenge is to look at what is and what we feel and see with natural eyes and still see beyond that. I certainly share these same struggles with every one of you because that's where the Lord has us. This is simply part of the outworking of what He is accomplishing.

We just heard a testimony from a brother concerning some negative, difficult, challenging circumstances being faced, and yet he sees the Lord in it. May we all have that kind of faith and vision to be able to understand the simple fact that God knows what He's doing. Thank God!

Romans, chapter 4, is a good starting point in considering this important truth. Here, Paul is unfolding the principles of the Gospel and he's dealing with the question: how does a man become right in God's eyes, considering the fact that we're all sinners, we all come short, and we have no power in ourselves to please Him or to make ourselves acceptable to Him? How in the world, then, can a man be right in God's eyes?

And so, he lays out, from God's dealings with Abraham, the basic principle that has applied throughout history. It is true that God gave laws through Moses, but the way a man becomes right has never changed. There's only one possible way that I, or anyone, can be right in God's eyes, and we see it in Abraham. He didn't become righteous because he worked for it or earned it or in any way put God under an obligation. Rather, he believed God — very simple.

And so, the scripture tells us that Abraham became the father of all of God's children, not simply those who were Jewish, but of everyone, because the principle applies to all. It doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or Gentile; we become right in God's eyes because we believe Him, and that's it.

Let's begin in verse 16: "Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace..." (NIV). And what is grace? That's God reaching down to help us, undeserving as we are, to do for us what we cannot do, to empower us to do what we could never do in ourselves. So, faith is the way we gain access to what God has promised and grace is

what makes faith possible.

"Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: I have made you a father of many nations. He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were."

The phrase that jumps out at me from this passage is, "things that are not." We who know the Lord have been promised some amazing things, have we not? Think about what we will be! God says we're going to be glorified! As I look out at you this morning, I don't see anyone who causes me to need sunglasses! Nor do you need them to look at me. But yet, that's what God has promised. Matt. 13:43, Rom. 8:18.

Here I am with all my weaknesses, all that I feel and see, and all that seems real to me at this moment in history, and yet there's God's promise about what I will be. That's an amazing thing! But it's the place Abraham occupied when God gave him the promise.

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How Can We Know?

by Phil Enlow

The following is taken from Chapter 9 of the book, "How Do You Know You Are Right?"

How do we tell the difference between those who are sent of God and those who represent religion? What yardstick can we use?

There is no human yardstick, no human barometer that will do. Yesterday's religion always blinds men to the present tense voice of God. Signs, wonders, experiences, feelings — these, too, are no gauge of anything. A strong emphasis on adhering to the letter of the word is insufficient as well. The Jews had that to no avail (John 5:39-40). Do you truly understand the scriptures? Whose interpretation is the right one? Scholars who've devoted a lifetime of study to the scriptures, delving into the Greek, the Hebrew and the Aramaic differ greatly as to its meaning.

The Key

Jesus Himself gives us the key in John 7:16-17: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

The true servant of God gives out truth, not handed down by religion, not dug out by human study and reasoning, but revealed to him by God. Of course, revealed truth is not something apart from the scriptures but is a proper understanding and application of them. Flee from any who claim they have gone beyond the Bible and beyond the church.

Revealed truth, however, will only be recognized and appreciated by a certain kind of hearer — the one whose will is surrendered to God, the one who desires God's will in his life above his own.

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings once again in the wonderful name of Jesus! Even as the world grows spiritually darker we who know the Lord have the privilege of praising Him as we look UP and AHEAD based on the certain hope He has planted in our hearts.

We live in a temporary creation, corrupted by sin and death. But God continues to call men and women out of the realm of sin and death and to prepare them for that which is forever. Praise the Lord! It won't be long.

This issue's lead article is once again adapted from a preached message that has also been used on the TV broadcast. The hope we have in Christ is not based on that which we can see with natural eyes but upon the promise of One Who cannot lie and Who has no limits upon what He can do.

The vast universe around us came to be simply because He spoke. That same word is active today and is bringing forth, not the old creation, but a new one that is incorruptible. We are called, as was Abraham of old, to put our faith in His promises despite all that we may see and feel.

The second article is a chapter from the book, "How Do You Know You Are Right." Our world is founded upon lies and the devil has made it his business to spread as much confusion and deception as he can to hinder and corrupt the gospel message. Can we know what is right? I believe we can. We may not be able to answer every possible question but God wants us to know that we can recognize His truth if we really want to.

A number of years ago a lady wrote to us asking if a Christian can be demon-possessed and so her question and our answer are also included. It is an hour when demons are more active than ever. Satan knows his time is short and I believe the Lord wants His people not only to be aware of this but to have a greater understanding of how to overcome.

Well, the month of June has come once again and thus it is almost time for our annual convention. This year we will be meeting here in Southern Pines from June 19-22. We are anticipating folks not only from several states but also from overseas as well.

Most of all, we are desiring and expecting

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In Abraham, we see a man who had no natural ability to make any of this happen. He simply listened to the voice of a God who had made Himself known and declared, "I will make you a father of many nations."

And it's even better than that! If you go back to Genesis 17, He first says, I "will" make you. But then He turns around and says, I "have" made you. Wow! Now you're not simply dealing with a promise of some future blessing. God is saying, "I have already done it!" Think about that!

I believe with all my heart God longs for us to come to a place where we understand that everything God has purposed for every one of His own is not merely something that He "will do" in the future, but rather something that He has "already done!" It is a fixed thing in God's heart and mind. What an amazing God we have Who is able to call things that are not as though they were!

Paul continues in verse 19: "Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead."

You know, it's a good thing when we face facts, when we're honest and able to come to a place where we recognize that there's no resource in us that can accomplish such things. None! The playing field is level! No one has an advantage, when it comes to the things of God, over anyone else. We are all equally in need of His love, mercy, and grace.

If you are one who has been born with some kind of earthly advantage, as men reckon such things, the reality is that God's going to have to destroy the illusion of that in your mind in order to bring you to the place where He can now save you, and do for you what He has promised. God's promises are not for those who are strong in themselves. They are for the weakest of the weak, the most unworthy of the unworthy. Thank God, for the hope that we have!

that the Lord will be there! How vain is anything when He is not at the center of it. May we pray and align our hearts to His purposes and not our own. Pray with us that He will accomplish those purposes.

One thing that is always a need is that every generation will come to truly know Him and not merely embrace hand-me-down religion. We need that which is real. Nothing less will do. Tradition and form cannot save. Human ability cannot accomplish God's purposes. It must always be, "not I but Christ."

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

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

Oh, that name, Jesus, we were singing about this morning! That means "God saves!" And it isn't as though the name belongs only to the Son. Look at John 17:11. Jesus was praying and said, "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one."

Ultimately, that name is from the heart of the Father Himself. It means "God saves!" Praise God! What an awesome God we have to lean upon! May He open our eyes to see beyond today, beyond yesterday, beyond all the things that we are not!

There are at least two senses in which things are not. First, we see what we are not, and we so easily allow that to hinder us, to discourage us and to cause us not to believe, not to rest, not to find comfort and strength in the Lord. We listen to the voice of the enemy!

But also, the things that God has promised are before us. They have not happened yet in our time-bound experience. And yet, ought we not to thank God for that which He has declared to be a fact? We serve a God Who is not bound by time.

And God's Word is not like our word. Think about it. We work within the confines of an old creation. Now, men are pretty creative. God made us in His image and we are able to take things that are part of our world, learn about them, and use that knowledge to accomplish many amazing things. But our resources and abilities are limited to that which belongs to this creation. We cannot go outside of that.

And, more than that, we are part of a creation that God has already judged! You may wonder, when did He do that? At the cross. That's part of the meaning of what the cross is about! When Jesus was about to go to the cross, He said in John 12:31, "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out." Something was set in motion at the cross. I don't care what you do in this world; it will burn up in the end!

Imagine working for a boss and you're building something, a great project that's visible and impressive, and you finally come to the end. You've expended your whole life's energy in this project and you hand it over to the boss, and he says, "Well, that's great! Blow it up. Burn it."

If you're living for this world, that's what your life will amount to. It doesn't matter what you accomplish that you may think is so great; it will burn up in the end and you will have nothing. We are part of a world that has been cursed!

I was thinking about what being confined to the old creation means. Consider for a moment a motivational speaker: what does he have to work with? What he's really try-

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ing to do is to change people's ideas about themselves and to tap into some supposed greatness that is in them that just needs to be unlocked so they can be everything they are supposed to be. But, where do the resources come from? They're still coming from the people themselves! They're still coming from the old creation.

But we serve Somebody who is not confined by that. And we're talking about a Word that is able to create what is said! That's amazing to think about. And, think about what we read in Heb. 11:3 — "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

So how did God create? He simply spoke! Did He need raw materials? No!

We know from the Word that it was through His Son that God created (Heb. 1:2, Col. 1:14, John 1:3). The one we have come to know as Jesus was the one who actually spoke the words. Can you imagine Him saying, "Father, what am I supposed to do? There's nothing out there! You told me to make this world, but what am I going to make it out of? There's nothing to work with?"

When we make something, we need raw materials. We can't make things out of nothing. He doesn't need anything to work with! The Word of God is living and powerful, we're told. It has the power to create what is spoken! We need to really understand that! Do you see what drives salvation, what drives the work of God and all He is doing? It is really a work of creation.

This present universe began with the creation of light. How? Did He tell His angels to collect some materials, mix them together in a certain way and thereby produce light? No! He just said, "Let there be light," and there was light! Everything in creation was brought forth by God, through His Son, who simply spoke. That's all He had to do to create stars! And galaxies!

And this Jesus, who spoke those powerful creative words, is the same Jesus that we are called to invite into our lives to take over as Savior and Lord. He is the One who spoke galaxies into existence in the beginning! He was there! He is the divine Son of God! Thank God! There is a work of creation happening right now that He is fully capable of.

We know that salvation through Jesus Christ is not merely a religion to practice. It's not some kind of self-help program to get us through life here. It's not a set of rules by which we qualify ourselves to be accepted by God! It is a new creation. It is something that has not existed, but rather that God is bringing into existence!

Now, go back to Abraham: everything in

his experience told him that what God had promised didn't make any sense. It couldn't possibly happen!

I'm guessing that there's no one here that's ever had that feeling about yourself! When you think about what God has called you to be, you're just brimming with confidence, right? You know that you've got it in you! God's called you because He sees good in you and now He's going to fan it into flame. No! God is bringing forth something that has not existed, that has nothing to do with the old creation. It is entirely new.

Read through Paul's letter to the Galatians. What's that about? It's about Paul writing to a group of Gentile believers. They had been brought to the reality that they could be right with God by faith in the promise, faith in what Jesus had done, end of story. Becoming right with God was not based upon their efforts, but had been obtained by simply committing themselves into God's hands, trusting in His provision. That was it!

Paul had won them to the Lord and established them in truth he had received by divine revelation, but then some false teachers had come in and told them that in addition to believing in Jesus they still had to keep the law of Moses, including the ritual observances, to be saved.

And Paul was so angry about this, he wished they'd all go to hell! That's pretty plain language but it's what he said! What a damnable error it is to tell people that what God has done through Jesus isn't enough, but rather you must, through your works, add to what He has done before God will accept you!

Near the end of his letter to the Galatians, Paul makes an interesting point. He's talking about the Law, and he says, basically, trying to attain righteousness through the law is worthless! It can't help you a bit. He says, "... what counts is a new creation." Gal. 6:15.

That's it! Paul had been given a tremendous revelation of what this is about. It is about God bringing forth a brand new creation to replace a corrupted one that has already been sentenced to destruction! Salvation is about bringing people out from this present creation, rather than them suffering the fate of being destroyed with it. They are to be rescued out of it, and fitted and prepared for a brand new one! That's what salvation is about! Anything short of that is just religion! We surely need the Lord, don't we!

Salvation is not about who and what we are and what we can do as human beings. It is about people who just simply hear the voice of God, like Abraham did, and believe Him. When God spoke, what did Abraham do? He believed God, and of course, his faith manifested itself in obedience. However, that obedience did not earn him something. It did not obligate God to do something for him. Rather, it demonstrated genuine faith! Nothing we

could ever do would put God in debt to us!

God had told Abraham to leave his family and go to a land that He would show him. Suppose Abraham had said, "Yes, God, I believe You, but I'm going to serve You right here"? See, that's not really believing God, is it? Believing God is, God, I know You have promised something that I cannot do, but I believe Your promise to me. I believe it and I'm going to commit myself to obeying Your voice. The rest is up to You.

That sounds like a wonderful place, doesn't it, where we so recognize our dependence upon Him, that we're able to rest our case in His hands! And, when you think about it, we are all pretty hopeless cases apart from Him!

There are so many scriptures that we know that I hope the Lord can kind of connect the dots in our minds. I referred, a few minutes ago, to the scripture where the Word of God is living and powerful. Do you remember the passage that's found in? It's in Hebrews, chapter 4.

The writer there is dealing with the fact that there is a promise based upon something that God has already finished. "I have given you this," was the promise to the Israelites. God had promised them the land, but they didn't believe it and so that particular generation failed to enter into the promise because of rebellion and unbelief.

Then he goes on to point out that there is yet a promise of God of entering into His rest! And who is it that enters that rest? Those who cease from their own works and enter into His rest. How can we do such a thing? Isn't there work to be done? Where does the work come in? He did it! Hallelujah!

The works were finished from the foundation of the world. Do you see what's going on here? What did Adam and Eve have to do to enjoy the Garden of Eden when they were created? What did they have to do?

Enjoy it! Rest in it! God didn't say, "All right, I've done things up to a point but now you've got to finish it." No! They stepped in. That's what salvation is about. God has done something that is so complete that He longs for us to just stop trying and start trusting. We put our lives in His hands, understanding that He is pulling us out of the fire, as it were, and getting us ready for eternity, and doing what none other can do.

There are a whole lot of things that the writer to the Hebrews brings into the picture. Sit down and read chapter 6 sometime, particularly the last part. You come to that passage where he talks about hope!

Now hope has to do with, what? Is it the present? Do I have to hope I have a pulpit and hope I've got people to listen? No, there you are! Hope has to do with something that's in the future. It hasn't happened yet. And so, there's an expectation there. This is not a

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“wishful thinking” kind of thing, but rather an expectation that something is going to happen. Now, what’s my ground for that? Am I just imagining all this stuff or do I have a real foundation for hope?

In Hebrews 6:16-20, the writer talks about two different things that are unchangeable, immutable, depending on which translation you’re looking at. They cannot be altered! They’re unchangeable things. No devil can countermand these things!

And what God wants us to know is simply this: there is a solid ground for hope! And it’s not just one thing, it’s two things! And you know what those two things are? Well, he tells you. One of them is His purpose. God has at some point, in the only language I know how to use, conceived a purpose. This is something that He has determined will happen! When He’s done, there will be a perfect, pure creation, no sin, no death, no sorrow, none of the things that corrupt this first creation. And He will have a family with whom to share His love throughout all eternity! That’s going to happen!

Whether you and I participate in that or not, it’s going to happen. That’s a fixed purpose that is unchangeable! No devil in hell can change that! That’s why the Devil is so angry, because he knows he is shut out from that forever! You wonder why the world’s in the shape it’s in and getting worse? Just wait. Thank God, though, His purpose is not affected by anything the Devil is allowed to do. God’s purpose stands!

So that’s one unchangeable thing! But he says there are two! The other thing is His promise! Now, can we trust a promise from Him? Yes! Because He can’t lie! That’s it! This is Someone Who not only makes promises but is also incapable of telling a lie!

So now you have two things upon which to rest your hope. One of them is an unchangeable purpose! And in addition to that there is a promise to carry out that purpose in specific ways. And so, Abraham stepped out in faith based upon that. God didn’t just say, I “will” make you, He said, I “have” made you! Those two things come together as a promise.

Do you see why the writer talks about creation in the beginning of chapter 11? Do you see the nature of the promises upon which all the heroes of faith rested their hope? It was that creative, fixed, Word of God! And the promises of God were allowed in their hearts and their minds to trump everything that would rise up against them, as in the case of Abraham, who hoped against hope. Praise God!

I desire to get to that place in my own heart and life where this is more and more real, because we so quickly fall into the same

place that Abraham and everybody else did at times. I know the “bottom line” is that he was strong in faith, but in the process there were times when he wasn’t so sure.

How is this going to happen, Lord? I don’t have a son. Did the Lord say, oh yeah, I forgot about that, okay, “boom,” you’ve got a son? No. There was some waiting, there was some trusting, there was a lot of standing firm in the face of the fact that it didn’t look like God was being faithful. Anyone here know what that’s about?

You may be in a place right now where you’re struggling with self-doubt and all kinds of things. You’re looking at everything in the world except what God has said. And God is calling every one of us to lift up our eyes and say, “Wait a minute, God is doing something that is eternal. I rest, not upon what I am, what I have been or what I have done. I rest upon two things: His purpose and His promise!

And so, I stand up and I look the Devil in the eye and say, “Devil, you’re right. If you’re talking about me and my virtues, I have none! But my hope is not in me! My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.” Praise God!

God has given us ground that we can stand upon and be confident and restful this morning. I know that there are people here who are in that place right now where you’re struggling, because that’s part of it. It doesn’t feel like it. It doesn’t look like it. You wonder, can God even love somebody like me? And the truth is, you’re exactly the kind of person God does love!

There’s nothing that gives God greater joy than to reach down into the gutter of human society and lift somebody up and give them a place in His eternal kingdom. That’s what it’s all about! The cross and the resurrection are amazing things, when you see them in the light of creation. One creation perished when Jesus went to the cross. When He came forth from the tomb another one was born.

In the first creation, God first made everything else and then He created man, and we messed it up. In this new creation, the order is reversed. God is producing a family of sons and daughters. When He is done with what He has purposed and promised to do, we will be ready to step into a creation that is all God intended it to be in the beginning.

This certainly isn’t a self-help program. This is God declaring what we are. Imagine looking at Abraham and there he is all alone in a strange land, with no kids, and getting old. And an unseen God says, “I have made you a father of many nations!” “Say what?” That would be the reaction if you were a southerner, I guess!

Think about other people in the Bible with whom I believe we can identify in various

ways. There was a particular time in Israel when they had wandered away from being faithful to God like they did so many times during the days of the Judges.

And one day an angel — and the guy didn’t know it was an angel at first — but an angel comes to a man named Gideon, who’s minding his own business! He’s just living his life out doing everyday stuff. And, this angel addresses him, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” Scripture doesn’t record him saying, “Say what?” but I bet he was thinking it!

But here is God calling something that is not as though it were. Now, was God calling him that because he had untapped greatness on the inside? Did he just need to hear a good motivational speaker to rise to the occasion and be something. No! This was a man who had nothing! As the events unfolded he just gave himself to the Lord and effectively said, “Lord, Your will be done.”

And he went through some challenges to his faith, but the ultimate thing is, all he did was commit himself into God’s hands. And the Lord said, “Go in the strength you have....” (Judges 6:14). And, you know, that was enough.

When God goes with us, we don’t have to muster up something. We just have to rest in the Lord and say, “God, I want to be a part of Your purpose. I want to be a part of something that’s eternal. Help me to find that place where what I do matters for eternity.”

Do you believe that the God of Gideon is still with us today? That the God of Abraham is still with us? That He longs to so work in us that we will more and more live in and experience that new creation?

What did Paul say in 2nd Cor. 5:17? He said, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

There is something that happens when the heart of a human being hears the voice of the Son of God and he humbles himself and says, “Yes, take my life! Come in! Lord, do what You have promised. I surrender my vessel for You to take and do with it what You will! I cannot fix me! I cannot make myself ready for what You have promised but I put myself in Your hands for You to do it!”

I’ll tell you, when someone does that from the heart as a result of God’s personal call, there is something supernatural that happens! Has that happened for you? It could happen for somebody this morning. God’s word is not slack. If you’ve never come to the reality of what this is about, that it’s giving yourself into the hands of Someone who is in the process of creating something that will last forever, if you haven’t got that, I pray that you will!

When you are born of that Spirit, there is a new life! There’s something that happens deep on the inside! And yet, the reality is, even though that has begun and that’s true, we yet

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live in bodies that are connected with the old creation, don't we? And that's where the tension comes in.

That's how it was with Abraham. Between promise and fulfillment there was a whole lot of waiting, a whole lot of being tried, a whole lot of standing. But, somehow, can we not see the purpose and the hand of God? Why would He allow such things to happen if they were not central to His purpose? That's at the heart of how He gets there!

That's what Bro. Dorsey was talking about. Do all things work together for good, or don't they? Is God a God of purpose? Is He in control, or isn't He? If we ever catch a glimpse of what God is doing, it will lift our eyes from the circumstances in which we are mired and we'll see rather the greatness of God and all that He's doing. And we'll better able to rejoice and look forward instead of backward, and sideways. God calls that which is not as though it were!

Think of all the glorious things that He says about His people. I'll guarantee you, when we get up in the morning and look in the mirror, there are not many of us that say, "Yes, I see that! I get it! I understand why You would say that about me, Lord!"

We have to deal with the same reality that everybody in the Word of God whoever put their trust in His promise did. It doesn't look like it! It doesn't feel like it! The Devil will be quick to point out our faults, portraying us in the most negative way possible! He will point to our history and say, "Look what you are! You will never be anything different!" He will attempt to define us in every negative way he can think of!

And if we listen to him, we're going to live in prison! This creation is a prison from which no man can escape by anything he can do. We need a miracle. We need Someone who has the power to come and speak something into existence that has never existed before. And He can do that. Praise God! Praise God!

So often we muddle through life thinking, "I'm such a mess-up. I'm not this, I'm not that. I'm such a failure. I'm so weak." And God is saying, "You're my child."

Look at I John, 3:1 — "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God!" Did I earn that? No way! He conceived a purpose in His heart in all eternity past. He sent His Son to make it so. And He sent His Spirit to reveal that to my heart and to call me to it.

He did that for you, too. He might be doing it for somebody here this morning that has never heard His voice in this way. You're part of a world that's dying. Even if it outlasts your lifetime, your life in this world will come to an end. Everything you've accomplished will

come to nothing if that's all there is.

Let's continue, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!" Note that positive confession! "The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known."

But, what? Thank God, this is one of those great "buts" in scripture. "But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure." And Jesus, in Matt. 13:43, tells us what the righteous will be like on that day: they "will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Can you even begin to picture this great company of people standing before the Lord, glowing, just like Jesus when He appeared on the mountain, but also to John in Revelation? There aren't any earthly sunglasses strong enough! But we will have eyes that can take it. Everything will be perfectly fitted to that new creation.

Only God can do this! And He does it, not for the proud and self-righteous, but for people who humble themselves and give themselves to Him and to His purpose, and trust Him to do it and to do it His way, and in His time. That's the place I want to occupy. But what a promise this is!

And, notice, it goes on to say, for those who have this hope, what do they do? They purify themselves. In other words, we cooperate with Him. It's not self-effort he's talking about. But it sure is talking about obedience and cooperation.

But oh, what he's talking about in Romans 8 carries this theme that's he's already introduced in earlier parts of Romans about who and what we are. Beginning in verse 15, Paul tells us that we "... received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs ..." — We are heirs — "... heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Do you think any one of us is going to stand there on that day and look back and say, "It wasn't worth it?" Seriously! We'll say, "It was worth everything!" It's worth everything to know Him.

But listen to the place of creation in all this. "The creation waits..." They're waiting on us. The creation waits! For what? "... In eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed." When Christ returns, God is going to unveil what He has been doing for all to see.

The world has been blind to it, unable to see, with no idea what God is doing, because it's hidden inside this flesh. But one day that will be gone. We'll be changed, made into His image, and then He's going to say, "This is what I've been doing. This is what it's about. This is what you said, 'No,' to. You wanted your life. This is what I would have given you." That's serious stuff, isn't it?

"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ..." (It's not a hopeless situation, is it? It's temporary!) "... in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves ..." (Now he comes down to us, sitting here this morning.) "... who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

That's the linchpin, that's the key, that's when the job is done, when these bodies are changed and they're no longer our enemies. Now they're completely made over, exactly like the body that Jesus had when He came out of that tomb. That's where this is going.

"For in this hope we are saved." See, there's this confident expectation of something that we don't see right now. "But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

Again, the ability to hope comes from Him! The ground of our hope comes from His fixed purpose and His unfailing promise, the One that cannot lie. We've got every reason in the world to be shouting this morning and to be praising God. This is real!

And, we get help along the way, don't we? "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit..."

Have you ever had times when there's just something that's yearning, something that's crying out, reaching out? God hears that! If your heart is towards Him, He knows that! He is tuned to that "frequency" every moment of every single day. We have no reason to look anywhere else, except to Him, with confidence. "He...knows the mind of the spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance ..." (in agreement) "... with God's will."

And this is where Rom. 8:28 comes in: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to ..." (What?) "... His

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Things That Are Not

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purpose.” It goes right back to the same thing! God has a purpose from all eternity! It’s as good as done.

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he ...” (the Son) “... might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

Now listen to how God, Who calls things that are not as though they were, puts this! “And those He predestined, he also called; those He called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” Now for you grammarians, that’s past tense. That’s something God has already done! The experience of that is something that we are walking out, living out, looking for its fulfillment. But it is as good as if it has already happened. What a place of rest and confidence we have in One whose word cannot fail!

This is a God Who, in spite of our weaknesses, our history, all the spiritual “baggage” we have, can look at you and say, “You are My child, I have glorified you. You are My dearly beloved child. You will be just like Me. You will share in My glory. You are My heir.”

How can He do that? What does He see in me that could make that happen? Nothing! But He knows how to speak words that can create in me that which has never been.

So, what is my place? To believe His Word, to receive it into the depths of my heart, to let it find expression, to do what Paul says, forgetting what is behind — you can’t fix it; Jesus fixed it — reaching forth to that which is before. I haven’t arrived but I’m going forward. I’m on a trail. I understand what’s going on. God is creating something that’s real where there was nothing!

We occasionally sing a song that I guess goes back into antiquity: “I see a new heaven, I see a new earth, God’s glory is filling the whole universe. Gone are the old ways, all things are new. God is creating a new life in you.” Is that what you see?

Do you see how everything fits together? Do you see what salvation is about? It’s an act of creation on God’s part. It’s Somebody Who has the power to speak things into your life and into mine that we could never manufacture. Our place is to believe it and to stand in faith, to emulate those who stood upon the promises of a God Who was able to speak galaxies into existence.

That same God can speak life into our deficiencies and make us what we otherwise could never be. He can call us what we are not in terms of our experience. But He can call us that as though we are, because He stands behind His word and He is able and willing to finish what He started. Praise God! I’m so thankful today that my past does not define my future.

My weakness does not define my capabilities. And I could probably make up some other sayings along the same line. But I’ll tell you, we serve a God Who is able and willing to do what He said He’s going to do. His purpose stands. His promise stands. And His words have the ability to create in you and me what has never been there before.

So, what do you lack? Cry out to Him. Look to Him. Listen to Him. Expect. Quit looking at all the stuff that would drag you down and cause you to feel that lack of confidence in who and what you are. God wants to lift our eyes. It’s not that we are something, it’s that He is everything!

Christ has done it all and He has promised to take us all the way home — and He will. And, He’s going to get the glory, isn’t He? We’re going to stand there and just be “blown away” with the amazing grace of Someone Who could do away with all of this that we see, and yet use it in the meantime to accomplish that which is eternal. He uses the stuff we experience here during our brief lives to help shape us for lives there that will never end. 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

We’re only here for a little while. That’s where my eyes need to be, and yours, too. Don’t let the devil bog you down with what’s going on in your life right now. Lift your eyes to the One Who is able to call things that are not as though they were — and make it so! Praise God!

How Can We Know?

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Our natural wills are totally contrary to God. Multitudes are blind and deaf to God because of “their” religion, “their” church, “their” ideas, “their” family, “their” interests, “their” lusts and desires, “their” plans and ambitions, “their” friends — in short — “their” life. They hold the reins of their own life and have no desire for anything that threatens that.

The very things men cling to in rejecting God are but chains that bind them to a world marked for destruction and make them easy prey for the devil and his demons. What men call liberty is the very thing that makes them slaves to sin and death. Only surrender to God brings freedom.

Abraham is a beautiful type. He was called to leave his family, friends and country for a land he had never seen. Gen. 12:1-3. I have no doubt he loved his family and friends and was happy and comfortable right where he was. Nevertheless when God’s command — and promise — came he obeyed. His obedience was an act of faith in the One who had spoken.

In the course of time, Abraham was called upon numerous times to believe, or to place his trust in God, and God counted Abraham’s

faith as righteousness. Gen. 15:6. In reality, faith and obedience are all we can offer God. We certainly cannot produce any righteousness in ourselves that He will accept. Praise God! He has provided all we need in Christ!

The commitment of will necessary in order to know is not a halfway thing. It is a commitment to walk in that knowledge even as Abraham did. Anything less is unbelief. We cannot expect God to reveal Himself to us only to satisfy our curiosity. We cannot say, “Thank you for the interesting revelation of truth, God,” and then go on unchanged to live our own lives. If that is your approach, I strongly question the source of any “revelation” you have supposedly received. There is no substitute for a will surrendered to do His will — before we know what that will is! That is faith!

It may seem strange to emphasize our wills after what we have said about God’s sovereignty in salvation. However, God does not trample upon our wills. We are not puppets dancing on a string. God works with our wills. If He didn’t we could never will to do His will.

God’s sovereignty does not relieve us of our responsibility to repent and believe, to exercise our wills to cooperate with Him. In fact His sovereignty is what makes that possible!

I love the illustration I’ve heard Brother Thomas use on many occasions. He said that salvation is like a man who walks up to a door upon which there is a sign that reads, “Who-soever Will.” The man responds, “That means me,” and goes through the door. After passing through he turns and looks back and on the inside of the door are the words: “Chosen in him before the foundation of the world”!

The Promise

Jesus gave a wonderful promise in John 7:17 to one who wills to do his will. He said, “he shall know.” Know what? The issue was the source of the message. Was Jesus just expressing his own ideas or was he giving out God’s message? That’s the same issue we face today. Is the preaching we hear living water from above or is it something else — a clever substitute? The promise still applies! We can know!

How can we know? How does this knowledge come? The same way Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ — God’s anointed. Matt. 16:16-17. It was revealed to him by the Father. That truth has never changed. The only way we can recognize and distinguish those God sends is by revelation. This revelation is not some great experience or feeling. It is a God-given inward knowledge and conviction. It is hearing a man speak and having God witness to your heart, “This is My word.”

Are you a candidate? Is God and His will and truth more important to you personally than “your” church, “your” ideas, all the

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How Can We Know?

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things enumerated above: “your” life? Are you willing to leave all and follow Him? Jesus said, “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:33.

You can know, but it will cost you your life. That seems a small price to pay, however when it dawns upon you that what you are asked to give up is something you can’t keep anyway! Jesus said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” Matt. 16:25.

Giving up your life is like a man who gives up a small leaky row boat, tossed about in a tempest with no destination and no hope, for a mighty ship on a sure course for a safe harbor. Christ Himself is the captain of that mighty ship! He has all the resources of heaven at his disposal to bring every one of God’s elect safely home!

Discipleship

The revelation of one to whom God has committed a true ministry of His word is but the first step. That is why Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31-32.

A disciple is a “learner.” The truth God would impart to us is not something that we can receive all at once. It is an ongoing process. It always involves a good deal of “unlearning” of things we thought we knew — especially for those exposed to much religion. This is where many stumble. Some aspect of their religion is so deeply rooted that they become unwilling to change. Though God mightily anoints someone with truth to help and deliver them from their religious captivity they simply cannot let go of their ideas.

Hosea 6:3 says, “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord ...” Following on is a process, not a passing fancy. It is a persistence that is not deterred from its course. It is the focus of one’s life. It is the unswerving pursuit of a worthy goal: “Then shall we know.”

Following on involves a continued recognition that we do not presently know all that God in His infinite love desires to share with us as we wait upon His teaching. Yet we follow on in faith that God “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Heb. 11:6.

“Seeking him” implies an effort put forth toward God. It means positive action in response to the promise: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Matt. 7:7.

“Diligence” means never giving up. It means giving our seeking a priority over other things in our lives. It is an effort that is deadly

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BOOK CORNER

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl’s deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan’s kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$6.50.

Does God Speak To You? by C. Parker Thomas

This booklet is composed of a wonderful series of articles published in the Midnight Cry Messenger during 1979. In this time of great spiritual darkness and deception what are the various ways in which He speaks and how can we learn to recognize His voice and respond? Suggested Price - \$3.50.

Examine Yourselves, By Phil Enlow

Paul said to “examine yourselves.” There must be a way to do that. Can you say with Paul, “I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” 2 Tim 1:12. Suggested Price - \$7.50

The Gospel, By Phil Enlow

What is the gospel? Everyone thinks they know--but do they? In this day of watered-down “easy-believism” it is critical to know what real salvation is. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Suggested Price - \$3.00

How Do You Know You Are Right? By Phil Enlow

A spiritual challenge. A study of spiritual knowledge and how it is acquired. This is an area of critical importance in this hour of spiritual darkness and deception. We cannot afford to blindly rest in tradition. Suggested Price - \$4.00

Immortality, By Phil Enlow

What does the Bible teach about immortality, the future of unbelievers, the future of God’s people? From the eight-part series in the MCM. Suggested Price - \$5.00.

The Keys of the Kingdom, by C. Parker Thomas

A clear study of the keys as they apply to us in today’s world. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

Light in This Present Darkness, by Phil Enlow

From the series in MCM. Message for God’s Remnant in the earth regarding the present hour of darkness. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Lying Signs and Wonders, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of articles concerning the end of the age exposing much deception as well as giving forth important truth needed by those who would be prepared for Christ’s soon return. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Midnight Cry, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains two articles that set forth the truths concerning the midnight cry: what is it? who hears it? who makes it? what is its significance for us. A must for people who would understand this ministry. Suggested Price - \$1.00

Sex and Marriage in the Light of God’s Word, by C. Parker Thomas

From a series of articles covering a whole range of scriptural and practical truth designed to help God’s people in this important area. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Sudden Death Overtime, by Phil Enlow

From the series published beginning in 2001. A look at our world and its prospects through biblical “glasses.” What can we learn from history? What lies in our future? Why is the world like it is? Things every Christian should know. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980’s on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

Tongues: My Testimony, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains the article by the same name as well as an article entitled “Tongues Should be Tested” by Gerald McGraw in which he recounts lessons learned from testing to discover the spirit enabling someone to speak in tongues. Startling! Suggested price - \$3.00

What About Genesis? by Phil Enlow

How should we understand the Genesis accounts of the creation and the flood? Can a simple historical understanding of these accounts be defended in this age of scientific skepticism? Does it matter? Suggested Price - \$4.00.

What Does Deception Look Like? by Phil Enlow

Recognizing spiritual deception at the end of the age. What are its characteristics? Satan is waging all-out war and his chief weapon is the lie. As never before believers need to be grounded in bedrock truth. Suggested Price - \$9.95.

Your Adversary, By C. Parker Thomas

Awhile back, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. Suggested Price - \$2.50.

Note: The prices listed above are suggested with the thought in mind of simply covering the costs of printing and mailing these materials. It is not our intention to become “book-sellers,” selling books for profit. Our desire is to get out truth that can help set God’s people free in this critical hour. Please write to us at:

Midnight Cry Messenger

P.O. Box 685

Southern Pines, NC 28388 USA

Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?

The following is a response to a sister who had become concerned that her past tongues experiences might have been demonic. One question she asked concerned whether Christians can be possessed. Her question was occasioned by the article "Tongues Should Be Tested." (See website.)

I believe the issue of "possession" vs. "oppression" can be something of a "red herring." We know that the devil can't touch the salvation of one truly born again, sealed by God's Spirit. However, the New Testament is full of warnings about the devil and his wiles. These warnings are not written to unbelievers but to Christians.

It is safe to say that the devil greatly hinders a lot of Christians through their ignorance of the word and his activities. Paul spoke in II Cor. 10:4 of "strong holds." He warned in I Cor. 12:3 that "no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed."

Spiritual gifts are exercised as we, moving in harmony with the Lord's will and call, yield ourselves to the inspiration of His Spirit. The devil counterfeits God's Spirit at every opportunity. The doctrine that every Christian should be filled with the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues is a false doctrine. It has given the devil lots of opportunity to deceive. On the other hand, there IS a true gift of tongues. It is portrayed as one of the least gifts and not for everyone (I Cor. 12:30).

It is certainly possible for a genuine Christian to unwittingly yield to the inspiration of a religious spirit. That is one of the reasons why we need the gift of discernment in particular, and the protection of Christ in His Body in general.

I have no way to know whether your tongues were of God or not. Even IF they weren't, I am confident that the Lord doesn't want you to panic or be fearful. He loves you! He is not mad at you! All of us have more bondage in our lives than we dare realize. The Lord wants us to take His yoke and learn of Him that we might find rest unto our souls. That is a process, one that His sovereign grace upholds. He is both able and willing to finish what He has started in us! Phil. 1:6. In Christ we have perfect righteousness! The devil can't touch that! Praise the Lord!

If you remain in doubt in the matter, you have every right to resist the devil with the blood, with all your heart and consciously put yourself in the Lord's hands. Then stand on

COMING EVENTS

June Convention
June 19-22, 2019
Southern Pines, North Carolina

God's promise in James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Then thank God that the devil has fled!

We live in an hour of great lying signs and wonders and the sheep need to know that the devil is in the sign and wonder business and not just swallow up anything that comes along claiming to be of God. He will guide us safely through as we look to Him from our hearts.

As I said in my brief note yesterday, the Lord knows your heart and is aware of your desire for Him. Look to Him with confidence and rest and learn as He teaches you along the way.

Your brother in Christ!
 Phil Enlow

How Can We Know?

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serious and persistent rather than casual and occasional.

Paul gave up everything "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Phil. 3:8. In verse 14 he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Of course, God's calling involves a transformation from what we are to what He has purposed that we become: "conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. 8:29. A growing knowledge of truth is a necessary ingredient in that transformation. How can we become a glorious church without spot, wrinkle or blemish apart from the washing of water by the word? Eph. 5:26-27. Where, in our present sea of religious confusion is the word that can accomplish that? It simply cannot be found in religion.

The voice of religion serves merely to preserve itself and to extend its influence. God has not forgotten His remnant, however. His voice is in the earth today to accomplish what He has promised. His faithfulness will prevail to finish the job in them that are His!

TV Network Broadcast
 — (30 Minutes Weekly) —
The NRB Network (DirecTV 378)
 Sunday - 6:30 AM Eastern
 Monday - 3:30 AM Eastern
VTN - Little Rock Arkansas
 Online or Cable
 Sunday - 1:30 PM Central
SacFaith TV - Sacramento, CA
 Monday - 8:00 AM Pacific Time
 Tuesday - 8:30 PM Pacific Time
 Watch Online or on Cable Channels
 Comcast 20 / AT&T 14 / Consolidated 19

Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

Monday - Friday

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
WEMM	107.9 FM	Huntington, WV	11:00 AM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Short Wave Radio

WHRI ANGEL 1

Australia/New Zealand
 Mon.-Fri.: 0900 UTC - 12.015 Mhz

East/Central Africa
 Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC - 17.815 Mhz
 Caribbean/Central & South America
 Mon.-Fri.: 2300 UTC - 7.315 Mhz

WHRI ANGEL 2

East North America
 Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC - 5.920 Mhz
 Mon.-Fri.: 2000 UTC - 11.750 Mhz

KWHR ANGEL 3

China - Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC - 9.930 Mhz
 Mon.-Fri.: 1715 UTC - 9.930 Mhz

Bonus Airings on Webstreaming

Angel 2 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 2000-2015
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For a current schedule of "Angel" stations go to lesea.com/whr/program-schedules/, scroll down to "Detailed Schedule Search," enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click "Start Search."

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

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Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32
 Sun. 7:30 AM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62
 Sun. 7:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGS TV-16
 Sun. 7:00 PM

Jacksonville, FL - WTLV - Ch. 12 HD
 Sun. 6:00 AM

Los Angeles, CA - KDOC-TV 56
 Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Minneapolis, MN - WUCW-TV CW23
 Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Monroe, LA - KMCT-TV 39
 Sunday, 7:30 A.M.

Palatka, Florida - WJGV-CD 48
 Sunday, 6:30 A.M. and Monday, 3:30 A.M.

Phoenix, AZ - KASW-TV CW6
 Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Pittsburgh, PA - WPGH-TV FOX
 Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

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

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

Please pray "...that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel..."
Ephesians 6:19.