



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHY DIDN'T HE STOP THE STORM?

Johnny O. Trail

Storms in our lives are not always bad things, spiritually speaking. Just as rainstorms cause the foliage in the natural universe to grow, spiritual storms can cause one to grow spiritually too.

Matthew chapter fourteen (vs.22-33) deals with an event in the ministry of Christ that many people are aware of in religious and secular settings. The fact of Jesus walking on the water has entered our vernacular to mean that one is perfect or has an inflated opinion of themselves if they can “walk on water.” This means that no person is as unique or as perfect as Jesus was and no person ever will be. That being the case, the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ walking on the water deserve deeper investigation.

Previously in the ministry of Christ, Jesus had been asleep in a vessel that was tossed severely in a storm. The text tells the reader that Jesus was soundly asleep at the stern of the vessel. Upon the alarm of the Apostles in the boat, Jesus stops the storm. Mark 4:35-40 says, “*And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked*

the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?”

From this event, one learns that Jesus had the ability to stop the most powerful forces of nature. Notice the response of the Apostles in Mark 4:41, “*And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”* Since these events fall earlier in the chronology of Jesus’ life than Him walking on the water, one deep question might come to mind. Why did Jesus not stop the storm in Matthew fourteen?

Theoretically, He could have created a water surface that was calm and smoother than polished glass. Instead of Peter becoming distracted by the storm (Matt. 14:30), he could have easily strolled to where Jesus was on the face of the water some three or four miles from shore (John 6:19). Jesus allowed the storm to continue while Peter began to sink beneath the waves (Matt. 14:30). Why would Jesus allow the storm to continue amidst their fears and anxieties? Consider these points:

There is a blessing that comes from weathering a storm. God can stop the storm in our lives, or He can go with us through the tempest. All


Christians will face a storm in their lives. Some will face more than their fair share of troubles. Some storms will be in connection with chronic illnesses that have no real end in this life. Some storms might be bereavement or loss — whether it is death or loss of a particular situation in life.

Just as Jesus might have stopped the storm that made Peter and the other Apostles fearful, but did not, He allows us to face storms too. What sort of blessings might one enjoy who endures the storm faithfully to the end?

We are blessed by storms because it makes us stronger in our Christian walk. Paul took pleasure in his infirmities. Second Corinthians 12:9-10 says, “*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*” When a child of God faces a problem and navigates it successfully, he becomes stronger in his faith.

We are blessed by storms be-

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Stop The Storm...



Editorial...

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT... #4

Garland M. Robinson

Refer to the September, October & November issues for the first three installments of this series.

A social club that provides benevolence, entertainment and fun. The Lord saves the church, not social clubs and benevolent societies. "...Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23. The body is the church, Col. 1:18). "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This is done in and by and through the church, not man-made organizations.

Many churches cater to social and community pursuits of the world. As a result, they have ball teams of all sorts, exercise classes, financial seminars, on and on and on. There's no end to their worldly quest. You would think Jesus was the captain of their softball team! Church members may have a lot of "fun" in organizations and activities, but they end up losing their soul in the process because clubs and organizations is not what saves. The work of the church is regarding man's soul. The church is where the saved are, not clubs, etc. When all is said and done, the church is all that really matters. There is no Bible authority for the church to provide for clubs and societies.

We must conform to Jesus and his word, not the world (Rom. 12:2). Jesus said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I

will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (1 Cor. 5:17).

A business or fund-raising organization. A lot of "churches" have business adventures or some other means of raising money. Some have rummage sales, car washes, cake walks, retail stores, entrance fees, and various other kinds of fund-raisers. It costs a lot of money for the church to preach the Gospel through meetings, lectureships and missions. But can you imagine a church charging admission to these gatherings? Would you expect to find Jesus collecting the money before people can go inside to hear the Gospel? Would He have the angels assist him to make sure attendees have paid? Is that what Jesus died for? No. Where is the Bible authority for such things as the above? The Scriptures tell us where the church receives its money to carry on its work. The Holy Spirit said, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..." (1 Cor. 16:2).

The New Testament teaches the Gospel is for all. It's FREE for the rich and the poor, the young and the old, for both male and female. Jesus did not die for only those who could pay a fee in order to hear the "good news" of salvation. He died for all mankind. The cost has already been paid by Jesus going to the cross. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). Jesus did not say, "no man can come unto me unless he pay the fee." Instead he said that ALL shall be taught of God. Those who hear and learn of the Father are those who come to Jesus and to be saved.

Peter declared that Christians are a spiritual house, not a man-made house. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). The Holy Spirit made sure that we know God receives glory in his church, not in organizations founded by men. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21).

We all should prefer to work and serve in "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever" (1 Peter 3:18).

A democracy where the majority rules. Churches established by men have conferences, synods, seminars, etc. They have delegations of men sent from various churches to meet, discuss and vote on the position or practice they will endorse and support. They never consider what God's will is on matters. They decide for themselves what they will do and pass down their legislation to impose on congregations.

The church of Christ, however, is a monarchy where God is its head and authority. God has supreme rule. The church is governed by the doctrine of God. The apostles delivered to churches everywhere "...the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at

Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4). They did so by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Local congregations of the church of Christ are overseen by elders, also known as pastors, overseers, shepherds (Acts 20:28). God’s word judges his church, not man’s rule or a conference where men vote. Jesus said, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48). Paul made clear that his words were the words of the Lord. “*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*” (1 Cor. 14:37).

A place to gain riches. Many have used the church for that purpose. Politicians often “get religion” when it’s election time. They want to be able to say “I’m a member of such and such church.” Others use the church as a means to gain control over the money and property.

The point of gaining riches is illustrated in Acts 5 where we learn of Ananias and Sapphira who lied about their offering. Paul made clear that he “...coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel” (Acts 20:33). Christ spoke of some who followed him only for what they could get out of him. “*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed*” (John 6:26). Peter tells us of some who “...through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...” (2 Peter 2:3). The apostle John tells us of some who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

Composed of perfect people. Human beings are not perfect. Even when they obey the Gospel and have their sins washed away, they are still not sinlessly perfect. “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say*

that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10). It is written, there are none righteous, no, not one for all have sinned (Rom. 3:10,23). The faithful make mistakes and sin, but their heart is set on repenting and being right with God. “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

Stop The Storm...

(Continued from page 89)

cause it makes us focus on God.

In Matthew fourteen, Peter started to sink because he took his eyes off Christ. Matthew 14:30 says, “*But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*” When Christians face difficult situations in their lives, they are forced to pay more attention to God. Most faithful saints are driven to their knees in prayer when they deal with tribulations, bereavement, and infirmities.

We are blessed by storms because it makes us face our fears.

While some are critical of Peter, he was the only one who had enough courage to get out of the boat. Jesus was critical of his “little faith,” because the Creator of the universe was right next to him, ready, willing, and able to pluck him from the tempestuous waves. Christ is near His people in a very real way (Heb. 4:14-16; cf. Matt. 28:20).

We are blessed by storms because we can see God’s providential working in our lives.

Joseph had a terrible set of circumstances befall him through no fault of his own. Yet, he understood that the bad things help him in the deliverance of his entire family. Genesis 50:19-20 says, “*Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*” From these passages and others, one might learn that the ability of God to accomplish His purposes in the face of evil is one proof of His power.

We are blessed by storms because we know that God is near

Jesus is coming again and will save only his church. Are YOU a member of it? Are you a FAITHFUL member of it? Only the faithful will be saved in the end. “*...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10). “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 15:58).

in our times of trial. Paul was aware of this fact when he stood before the Lord. “*Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*” (2 Tim. 4:17-18).

We are blessed by storms because our trials help us comfort others.

If we lived a life free from problems, we would not be able to relate to others or help them in their times of need. Second Corinthians 1:3-4 says, “*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*” When we have already taken the journey of bereavement, pain, temptation, and tribulation, we can guide others as they struggle along the same pathway.

Storms in our lives are not always bad things, spiritually speaking. Just as rainstorms cause the foliage in the natural universe to grow, spiritual storms can cause one to grow spiritually too. James 1:2-4 says, “*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*”

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THE ASSEMBLY AND ACTS OF WORSHIP

Alan Adams

First Corinthians 11:17-16:9 contains a continuous, connected, composite of what we often call “the worship service,” “church,” “preaching,” and so on; in other words: THE ASSEMBLY. In this beautiful assembly collage, we see:

1) *The People of It* — “whole church assembled together” (1 Cor. 14:23), men and women (vs.34-35);

2) *The Nature of It* — “worship God...God is among you” (v.25), “speak...to God” (v.28) cf. “all here present before God” (Acts 10:33);

3) *The Place of It* (“together...into one place,” 1 Cor. 11:20);

4) *The Purpose of It* — “church [being] edify[ed]” (14:5); and

5) *The Time of It* (“the first day of every week” (16.2, NASV).

WHAT ARE PEOPLE TO DO IN THE ASSEMBLY?

Now, as to *The Activities of It*: A careful consideration of our text will show five separate and distinct acts. We say this with the complete awareness that there are those among us who literally scoff at the notion of any acts of worship, much less five specific ones. These are the same people who scoff at the plan of salvation and ridicule the “five-steppers.” The fact is, in both cases, it is a simple matter of arithmetic.

These activities of the assembly are “acts of reverence paid to God;” that is, they are acts of worship.

One, there is **Hearing** (“the word [voice] of the Lord”; cf. Isa. 28:14,23; Neh. 8:1-8) which is led by one who preaches (Acts 20:7) or speaks (1 Cor. 14:19).

A second act is the **Lord’s Supper** by which the assembly participates in an act, the goal of which is “remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:25).

A third is **Singing** (1 Cor. 14:15), which is to be done “to the Lord” (cf. Eph. 5:19).

Each of these acts takes place in an assembly gathered before God; and each act is uniquely “God-ward.” Not a single one of these acts is spectator oriented; rather, each is group-oriented, collective and participatory.

The New Testament knows nothing

of an assembly wherein one or more do these “acts of worship,” while an audience of appreciative (even “edified”) spectators looks on. It is ironic that some Christians view First Corinthians fourteen, not as part of New Testament teaching on “the assembly,” but rather as a unique First Century gathering in which some of the assembled in essence *performed*. There is absolutely no warrant for such a conclusion. The “whole church assembled together” (1 Cor. 14:23) is a lovely example of collective, “joint participation” (fellowship). In the assembly, each Christian gathered, participates heart and soul, “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24), in each act of reverence to the glory of God.

A fourth assembly act of worship is that of **Giving**. Every so often, you come across someone who thinks he has discovered that the act of giving in the assembly is not an act of worship. But, just from a cursory perspective note this: 1) giving is surely an act, and, 2) it is an act (something we do) in the assembly. Yet, let us note further.

First, that an act of giving, an offering of a portion of one’s material goods, can ever qualify as an act of worship, is seen in Matthew 2:11. The record says that when the wise men “...*were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*” Surely, no one will dispute that these men from the East were giving a portion of their material goods; and that very act of giving was indeed an act of worship.

Second, as regards “giving” in the assembly, consider carefully the context. We have an assembly of “the whole church” coming together on the “first day of every week.” Among the various activities of that assembly, each Christian (“every one of you”) was to “*lay by him in store as God hath prospered him*” (1 Cor. 16:2). We have a *specific* act, done at a *specific* time, and in a *specific* setting or place (“in the assembly”). It was done with a view toward and in consideration of how God

“hath prospered” the giver.

This assembly, by its nature, was “God-ward” — gathered “before God.” Wouldn’t then, this divinely prescribed act, therefore be an “act of reverence paid to God?” Isn’t that precisely what worship is? “But,” one might demur, “Does it follow that anytime I take money from my pocket to give to a good cause or a needy person, I am, therefore, worshipping?” No. Such “giving” falls under the broad purview of Christian service. It is absent that “to-God” quality which constitutes it an “act of worship” in the assembly.

The *fifth* “act of worship” in which the assembly participates is **Prayer**. We pray “*Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name*” (Matt. 6:9). Prayer, we see, by its nature, is an act of worship whenever or wherever it is done. And, it is to be done in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:15-17; 2 Tim. 2:1,8).

So much more could, and should, be said about the assembly. There should be no doubt that the picture of THE ASSEMBLY painted by Paul in First Corinthians 11:17-16:9 gives the lie to:

1) The idea that the New Testament does not speak of “worship services”;

2) The idea that the assembly, the one in which the five acts of worship are done, may be divided on any basis;

3) The idea that women may lead the assembly in its acts of worship — whether as speaker, prayer leader, song leader, translator, or with regard to giving or the Lord’s Supper;

4) The idea that part of the assembly may do the acts of worship while the rest watch and listen; and

5) The idea that an act of worship which is to be exclusively done in the assembly may be rightly done out of the assembly; and, of course,

6) The age-old idea that a person can get just as close to God out of the assembly as can all those people in the assembly.

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CONCERNING ASSEMBLING

Fred Dillon (deceased)

“**N**ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).

Many years ago when I first obeyed the Gospel of Christ, we didn’t pass many Lord’s days without hearing a sermon or at least part of a sermon which included the tenth chapter of Hebrews, verse 25. Members of the body of Christ, their elders, deacons and preachers took verse 25 as a command from God, delivered by the Holy Spirit, to members of the church. It was considered a command to be obeyed, and those who violated that command knowingly and wilfully without a “providential” reason considered themselves sinners.

Time is filled with swift transition. First, the world began to compromise or vice versa with people of religion, and the Lord’s day became a day when business and industry operated as usual, men and women were expected to work various shifts, which engulfed the Lord’s day and prevented attendance at worship or Bible classes.

The entertainment industry, major sports such as the National Football League and National Baseball Association made Sunday the premier day for their promotions. While in the old days, someone might sneak off “fishing” on Sunday, suddenly, the Lord’s day became the one day of the week when everybody “did their own thing” with no hesitation.

Over a period of months and years, members of the church gradually fell in line with the world. Many Christians adjusted to the world to the point they gave little thought to working on Sunday, even when they were not required to do so. Young people, following Dad and Mom’s example, began to take jobs, knowing full well they would be taken away from the one day of the week when their focus should be on spiritual things. Thus, they began to starve themselves to death (spiritually), and either left the church or took their worldly ways into the church.

Brethren, we need to go back and study Hebrews chapter 10 verse 23 through verse 30. Believe me, God

was serious when He inspired this Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17). “All Scripture” includes **Hebrews 10:23-30**.

We are surely to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (v.23).

We certainly must “consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (v.24).

God meant it when He cautioned us not to forsake the “**ASSEMBLING of ourselves together, AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS...**” (v.25). Notice, the Holy Spirit did not say forsaking “the assembly” (Sunday morning); but rather, he said the “assembling” — whenever the saints assemble for worship and edification.

The conjunction or preposition “for” which begins verse 26 connects back to verse 25 and warns, “*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*” Our Lord suffered and died for all of us “one time,” and He won’t do it again. The redeeming power of the blood has been released “once for all time,” and there is none other.

God makes it plain to the unfaithful in verse 27, “*But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.*” Judgment is coming for all and it will begin at the house of God!

Under the law of Moses in the Old Testament, a man was stoned to death at God’s bidding by the whole congregation of the children of Israel because he was discovered picking up sticks on the Sabbath Day (Numbers 15:32).

God warns us (Christians), “*Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*” (the Holy Spirit, v.29)

“*...Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people*” (v.30).

I was once asked to preach for a rural congregation which supported the work I did with the elderly and infirm. I centered my lesson on He-

brews chapter 10. I didn’t compromise with business, industry, sports or entertainment. Know what? Three precious souls responded because of their negligence in attendance and dedication to Christ. How many more needed to do so? How many in the brotherhood have forgotten God’s specific command in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25? How many still believe it to be a sin to forsake the assembling of the church? God does! So does His Son, and likewise the Holy Spirit!

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JESUS' BURDENS DURING THE CRUCIFIXION

Victor M. Eskew

If you are burdened, pray! If you are having difficulty making it through each day, pray! If you think you are near the point of giving up, pray. God can and will strengthen you.

When we experience struggles, problems, and difficulties, we often will tell others: "I have a lot of burdens on me." These are not physical burdens. They are emotional burdens that lay heavily on one's mind. Interestingly, they can cause our physical bodies to grow weak. These emotional difficulties often make it hard to put one foot in front of another.

Jesus knows what it is like to experience a pile of emotional trials. There were many that came upon Him on the night of His betrayal and on the day of His crucifixion. The first thing that was placed upon the shoulder of Jesus was **betrayal by a friend**. "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he; hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him" (Matt. 27:47-50). What a

tragic event! One whom Jesus chose and deeply loved, betrayed Him into the hands of his enemies. And the price was a mere thirty pieces of silver.

As the mob led Jesus away, another painful occurrence happened. The other **eleven disciples fled from the scene**. Mark writes: "And they all forsook him, and fled" (Mark 14:50). Jesus stood alone at that time in the torch-lit garden. Not one of His followers remained close by his side. Not one was willing to be with Him as he was taken to the palace of the high priest.

Matthew tells us that "Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end" (Matt. 26:58). Surely, this was a good thing. But, it proved only to be another heartache that Jesus had to suffer. Three times Peter was confronted about being a disciple of the Christ. And, three times he boldly denied the claim. Yes, three times, Peter proclaimed: "I know not the man" (Matt. 27:70, 72, 74). Jesus was in close proximity to Peter when this happened. In Luke 22:61, we are told: "And the Lord, turned, and looked

upon Peter..." Even though Jesus had predicted Peter's denial, it did not lessen the pain Jesus experienced. Peter was the one apostle who had boldly affirmed that he would never be offended (Matt. 26:33).

Still another hardship Jesus faced was being **condemned knowing He was innocent**. Jesus had never violated the Law of Moses. He never committed a crime against the Roman Empire. All He has done is speak the truth and perform multitudes of good works. Even so, the sentence of death was spoken against Him. "And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required" (Luke 23:23-24).

Have you ever been accused of an evil you did not commit? Have you ever experienced punishment for something you did not do? Do you remember the anguish of that experience? Multiply that many times over and you will have some understanding of the agony Jesus experienced when He heard those words that would bring about His death.

Another burden Jesus felt was the **constant blasphemy of His enemies**. It was constantly said: "If thou be the Son of God." Too, the Jews told the authorities: "He claims to be a king." Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus was a King. Yet, who He was questioned and ridiculed even while He hung on the cross. "And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, he saved others, let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke 23:35). "And the soldiers also mocked him" (Luke 23:36). "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him" (Luke 23:39). It is never enjoyable to have others making fun of you. Even if you know their claims are false, their scoffing and evil speaking still pierces the heart.

Yet, another strain put upon Jesus

LET US LOOK TO THE WORD OF GOD WHEN WE ARE...

- **Discouraged** Read Acts 20:32 for it "is able to build us up."
- **Doubting** Read Matthew 6:24-33 and be refreshed knowing there is nothing to worry about.
- **Disturbed** Read Romans 8 and feel secured as a faithful child of God.
- **Distressed** with a troubled heart. Read John 14:1-6 and find solace.
- **Drifting** away because our faith is growing weak. Read Hebrews 11 and be encouraged by the great Saints of old.
- **Dealing** with temptation and it seems it is too much. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and see there is a way out.
- **Deserted** by those around us and we feel we are alone in this life. Read Psalm 23 and know there is ONE who is with us who really does care (1 Peter 5:7).
- **Distraught** with the guilt of sin. Remember the solution is revealed in God's Word. We can be delivered spiritually when we submit our will to His Will (Heb. 2:9; 5:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:8; Matt. 7:21; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10 and Mark 16:15-16).

— Jerry Joseph

involved His mother. Mary was loyal to her Son. She was at the crucifixion. She stood near the foot of the cross watching her son writhe in pain and anguish. That could not have been easy for Jesus to bear. We do know that at some point, He committed the care of His mother to his apostle John (John 19:26-27).

Burden after burden was placed upon Jesus that Thursday night and Friday. Note, this was in addition to the physical afflictions Jesus bore in His body. As we watch our Lord, we see *strength*. We see *patience*. We see *courage*. We see *faithfulness*. How is this possible? The answer goes back to the quiet of the Garden of Gethsemane. When Jesus entered in that place, He did something very important. He prayed and resigned His will to the will of His Father in heaven. In fact, He did so three times (Mark 14:32-36). The key words of His supplication were “*nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.*” Whatever came upon Him during those next several hours, He would endure knowing that God’s will was being done. He arose from the dust of the ground with renewed faith, strength, and determination. The heavy burdens of that night and following day would not overcome Him.

Dear readers, we must do exactly what Jesus did. We, too, have our problems, challenges, and enemies we face. They make life hard. They burden us with weights that sometime seem unbearable. What is our recourse? Prayer! When we pray, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus. When we pray, we also adhere to the divine counsel of the apostle Paul. In Philippians 4:6-7, he exhorts us, saying: “*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*”

If you are burdened, pray! If you are having difficulty making it through each day, pray! If you think you are near the point of giving up, pray. God can and will strengthen you. He will grant you tranquility deep within your soul. Yes, the counsel of four little words is essential: “Give it to God!”

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WORSHIP PLEASING TO GOD

Denver Thomas

We Sing, we Pray, we Study, we Commune, we Give

That reverence and sanctity that once characterized worship services in days gone by seems to have come and gone. Just a generation or so ago, people came to worship services prepared to serve the Lord “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). They knew the hour set aside for meeting and were present on time. They assembled quietly and were ready to worship. They knew and followed the book.

Today, it seems many come to entertain and to be entertained. I heard one preacher say from the pulpit “*We are here to entertain God.*” Many people do not seem to know the need to arrive on time. Many come at the last minute and want to “visit” a while. Starting time seems unimportant to them. Others come and chat about any number of topics none of which have to do with worship or spiritual matters. One is left to wonder just what has happened to people today.

Jesus, in his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, said “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*” That hour is the here and now, and that saying applies to his followers this day. This saying encompasses two distinct parts. The first is in “*spirit*” and involves our attitude and our commitment in his service. If our heart is not in the proper “frame-of-mind” then we will not be able to worship in “*spirit*” as we are instructed. Paul spoke to this when he wrote “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*” (1 Cor. 11:26-30).

And, then there is the in “*truth*”

part which relates to how worship follows the acceptable pattern. We have been incorporating five items in worship from early days and have Scriptures for what we do. We **sing** (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), we **pray** (Acts 1:14,24; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12; Jude 1:20), we **study** (2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-13; 1 Peter 2:2), we **commune** (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-30) and we **give** (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

But, then there are those within the brotherhood who find the book insufficient for their needs, so they commence to add items. Sermons quite often contain material for which there is no Bible support. All too often, instruments are added to singing. Choirs are assembled in place of congregational singing. And of late, women are being used in leadership roles in worship. And, not to be overlooked is the entertainment issue which has become all too commonplace, especially in larger congregations. Frivolity has become an all too frequent part of many lessons and sermons. People like being entertained and there are those who are more than willing to oblige.

From the very beginning there have been those who thought there was a better way. Jeremiah spoke to this in Jeremiah 10:23 when he wrote “*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*” The writer of Proverbs said, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Prov. 14:12).

God has always demanded that His people follow that which He has instructed. Jesus gave us two warnings that many seem to totally ignore. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*” And, in John 12:48 he said, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*”

Are we listening?

PO Box 821, Milton, WV 25541



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

for my 65 year old mother; that God would help her to overcome her fatigue, body pain, Rheumatoid Arthritis, memory fog and get closer to God. Thank you for your prayers and for your excellent fundamental Bible-based *Seek The Old Paths*. May God our heavenly Father continue to bless you and use you to teach men to be better followers of our Lord Jesus Christ”

...**Cipriano Almanza III, Richmond, TX.** “I’m currently at Oklahoma State Reformatory. I do Bible studies. I have been sent some STOP issues. I really enjoy them. I’m trying to find the one talking about the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. I’m also requesting to be put on your mailing list please. Thank you”

...**Bobby Stewart, Granite, OK.** [The issue you’re looking for is Aug/2020. You have been sent a copy. All back issues can be found and printed at: www.seektheoldpaths.com/stop.html]. “Thank you! ...**Darrell Key, Bessemer, AL.** “I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* magazine. My brothers and sisters in Christ receive it and I would really like to receive one too. God Bless”

...**Jessie Campbell, Fort Towson, OK.** “Thank you”

...**George & Rita Kapushy, Hot Springs, SD.** “I have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths* for several years now, and always look forward to the next issue”

...**Terry Riffe, Lakeland, FL.** “What about cremation? I’ve seen little on the subject. I’m not aware of any biblical point it would violate. Countless have been ‘lost at sea’ as well as various other places where there was no ‘burial’ as we think of it. Different cultures have various ‘disposal’ rituals as to the deceased. The Lord will have no problem taking care of us as he sees fit. As a matter of fact, flesh (and blood) can not enter heaven. We were made of the dust of the earth. He will have no problem doing whatever he has in store for us. We will be ‘changed’ into a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-54).”

“Bud Upchurch has passed away”

...**Mesa, AZ.** “Thank you all and may God bless the work of *Seek The Old Paths*. I love it”

...**Clifton Oglesby, Foreman, AR.** “Thank you”

...**Nelwyn Wilkinson, Liberty, MS.** “This money is to support the Lord’s work. May God bless all those involved in the publishing of *Seek The Old Paths*”

...**Jared Herren, Cookeville, TN.** “Return to sender”

...**Julian Varney, Crum, WV.** “Betty Sliter has passed away”

...**Coloma, MI.** “Thank you so much for your gospel paper”

...**Bill & Kay Lewis, Sapulpa, OK.** “Return to sender. No longer around”

...**Bill & Dora McKenzie, Hawthorne, CA.** “Good job always!”

...**Jason Gann, McMinnville, TN.** “I would like to request that you send STOP to my children. I really enjoy reading the articles and hope they will too”

...**Kathy Tedder, Murfreesboro, TN.** “Thank you for all you do”

...**Barbara Sperow, Prescott, MI.** “While there’s never been an issue of *Seek The Old Paths* I found not to have a relevant topic, the November 2022 is urgent! The evils we face today in our daily lives are not at all new. America, as most of the 60+ and up year olds, knew a kinder God respecting the way of life, is fading way too fast. The modern family is too often a one parent home and seldom does that one parent seek God and his instruction, therefore, few of the children do. Thank you so much for always, with boldness, speaking God’s way”

...**Amanda Kunze, Grandbury, TX.** “Please stop mailing STOP to me! I enjoy your paper very much but I can read it online and save the postage. Thanks”

...**Larry Powers, Sharon, TN.** “Thank you”

...**Teresa Dale, Sun City West, AZ.** “You all bring glory to God through your servant hearts. Thank you to all the writers in the STOP publication. We are a small congregation so please change the number of publications you send each

“T hanks to the Leoni C/C for the STOP publication and the elders and all who contribute to it. Thanks for the fine lessons”

...**Allen & Irene Tate, Cache, OK.** “Greetings. I am 37 years old and incarcerated in the Texas Prison system. I would like to ask for your prayers

month. Thank you and God bless”

...**Mountain View C/C, Staunton, VA.** [Editor: we mail bundles in groups of 10 in each envelope. It is much cheaper than mailing random assortments of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, etc. There is a considerable discount when every envelope has the same quantity.]

“Thank you for your work and may God bless and keep you. I would like to ask that you put a young brother on your mailing list and start sending him copies of your publication. I know that he would enjoy it and read them with the Lord’s love in his heart. Thank you”

...**Tony Hale, Beebe, AR.** “We have enjoyed reading your articles for years. However, we are deactivating our church so please cancel our account”

...**John Williams Jr, Plattsmouth, NE.** “Can’t say it enough, just want to thank you for the great selection of topics chosen to be published in STOP. The article by James W. Boyd, ‘RESTORATION PREACHING’ (STOP Nov., 2022), is so much needed to be heard by the Lord’s church today in its fight against liberalism which seems to be increasing. We see in the Old Testament Jeremiah proclaiming to the people to ‘ask for the old ways’ as Jude does in the New Testament to ‘earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.’ It is pleasing to know that STOP is publishing such articles in their attempt to prevent more liberalism from slipping into the Lord’s church today. Keep up the good work”

...**Jim Reaser, Grafton, WV.** “To whom I love in the truth of God. I appreciate so much your stand for and love of the truth. Keep teaching the good word of God and keep warning God’s people of the dangers we face”

...**Gentry, AR.** “This is a good paper, I pass it on to others”

...**Lexington, TN.**

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