

# *A Light in the Valley*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)*

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## ***Remember to Be Thankful***

*by: Kris Brewer*

In Luke chapter 17, Jesus was approached by 10 men who were afflicted by leprosy. They called upon Jesus to show mercy to them, thus asking for Him to heal them of their leprosy. Jesus sent them to the priests, which was required for them to be able to reintegrate with the rest of the people once they were healed. As they traveled along, they realized that they were indeed healed. Of the 10 men who were healed, only one returned to thank Jesus for what He had done for them. We are not told what happened with the other 9 men.

Often, when reading an account such as this one, we are amazed at the actions of the participants. How could these men be so ungrateful as to fail to return to thank Jesus for such an amazing gift? Surely we would never respond in such a way! We would, we believe, be like the one man who did think to return to Jesus and express his thankfulness!

Before going further, it should be noted

that all of these men should have returned to thank Jesus for what He did for them. This seems evident from the rebuke, though mild it may be, that Jesus proclaimed at the end of this account:

*So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:17-18)*

With such an amazing blessing bestowed upon them, how could they fail to return to Jesus and offer up thanks? And yet, if we are honest with ourselves, it is pretty evident that the nature of people has not changed much in the last 2000 years! When it comes to being thankful for what God has done for us, it is quite easy to forget to be thankful!

We, for example, often spend a lot of time praying to God, asking for His blessings. We pray for physical bless-

ings, we pray for health, we pray for healing in time of sickness or injury, and we pray for comfort at the sorrowful time of losing a loved one. But, when we are overwhelmingly provided for, we recover from our illness or injury, and we are comforted in time of sorrow, do we remember to go back to God in prayer and thank Him for what He has provided? Do we remember that He is the one who provides these things for us?

### ***Why are we not thankful?***

Perhaps the best way to correct our unthankfulness is to identify what causes us to be unthankful. There are many different reasons that we might be unthankful, and all cannot be identified in one short article. But, here are a few to consider:

Selfishness. Maybe we are unthankful because we think that God owes us the things that we ask of Him. Instead of thinking of the things we pray for as requests, we address God as if they are demands. So, when we are given what we pray for, we act as if we have only received that which we deserve. Of course, in reality, God owes us nothing. We should stand in awe of every blessing He graciously provides to us!

Forgetfulness. Sometimes we might just be so distracted by all the things that happen around us in our lives, that we just forget to go back to God with thanksgiving after receiving His blessing. Being forgetful, however, seems to indicate that receiving these blessings from God is not very important to us. If we understand how significant it is that we are on the receiving end of God's blessing, how can we fail to be thankful?

Laziness. Perhaps we fail to be thankful to God simply because it is too much trouble for us to think about all that He has done for us.

Looking forward, and not backwards. Sometimes, we might simply fail to thank God for what we have received in the past because we are so focused on looking forward. This, in general, is a good approach:

*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13–14).*

However, when it comes to being thankful, it is imperative that we look back, see what God has done, acknowledge His blessing, and thank Him for caring for us!

There is no justifiable reason for us to fail to be thankful to God for His answering of our prayers. We are not told why these 9 men were unwilling to return to Jesus and offer their thanks to Him. Perhaps we have difficulty identifying why we fail to be thankful as we should. We should realize that being unthankful is a serious issue, and therefore we must be diligent to show thankfulness:

*For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good... (2 Timothy 3:2-3)*

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## ***The Message, Not the Messenger***

*by: Justin Brewer*

In 1 Corinthians 1:12-17 (and revisits the issue in later passages), Paul establishes a principle for the Corinthians and for us; the messenger of the gospel is just the messenger and is not what is important. Many of the Corinthians were dividing up based on who they “followed,” as though Paul taught something different from Cephas, who taught something different from Apollos, who taught something different from Christ. Paul’s overall point is that the messenger may change, but the message itself does not. Therefore, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ all taught the same thing and there should not have been divisions among the Corinthians based on which evangelist they preferred. Paul notes that Christ is the only one that should be looked to as someone special because He is God and He did sacrifice Himself for us (distinction made in 1:13).

Today, some Christians do a very similar thing; have you ever heard someone say that they were a “fan” of a particular preacher? While the Christians that say such things aren’t necessarily intending to express a belief similar to those in Corinth, the result can very well be the same. If we are a “fan” (and there is other terminology that could be used) of a particular preacher, then we can easily become blinded to what message they are trying to convey (whether truth or false).

Some Christians go to the other extreme and because a particular preacher or

Christian says or writes something, they automatically take a position in opposition to that viewpoint. They may argue with that particular Christian simply because they don't like them, but agree with someone else who says/writes the EXACT same thing just because they DO like that person.

Rather than worrying about the politics of who is saying what and whether or not we like THEM, we need to concentrate on what the message is that is being conveyed. If it is truth, accept it. If it is false, reject the message and explain to them "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Remember to "test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1) and remember to examine the context of any passage used because even the Devil can quote Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11).

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## ***How Would It Have Been Expressed?***

*by: John R. Gibson*

Does the Bible teach there is a place of eternal torment where those who failed to do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21) will spend eternity in a conscious state of suffering? Because it is such a horrific thing to visualize, we are tempted to explain hell as no more than a condition of missing out on the blessings of heaven. For more than a century there have been religious groups, including Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, which argued that there was no "after death torment" for the wicked, but that they simply ceased to exist. The movie Hell and Mr. Fudge showed how Edward Fudge, a Limestone County native who once preached for several churches of Christ in this area, came to reject the idea of eternal torment. In more recent years there have been those in evangelical circles who have explained hell as little more than missing out on the glories of being with God in eternity.

In this article I don't intend to examine every argument that has been made against the idea of eternal punishment, nor will I consider every passage that could be used to support the concept of a place of conscious existence where the unrighteous suffer. Instead, I want to ask the question, if there were a place of eternal punishment and God had wanted to convey that idea to us, how would it have been expressed any differently? As you read the following verses, just ask yourself

what the intended message was. I believe most would agree that they often contain figurative language, but figurative language is intended to convey an idea, to paint a picture, and we need to be honest about the concept these seek to convey.

*"And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**." Matthew 8:11-12*

*"Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the **furnace of fire**. There will be **wailing and gnashing of teeth**." Matthew 13:40-42*

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the **furnace of fire**. There will be **wailing and gnashing of teeth**." Matthew 13:47-50*

*"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the **everlasting fire**. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire." Matthew 18:8-9*

*"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the **everlasting fire** prepared for the devil and his angels:...*

*And these will go away into **everlasting punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:41, 46*

## Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM  
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

## Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman  
1023 E Baxter Ln.  
Bozeman, MT 59715

Check our Facebook Page for weekly  
MeetUp studies around Bozeman:

[www.facebook.com/GVchurchofchrist/](http://www.facebook.com/GVchurchofchrist/)

***Everyone Welcome!***

*“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into **hell fire**—where **‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’**” Mark 9:47-48*

*“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the **day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—**indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish**, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good,” Romans 2:5-10*

*“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain **fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries**. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law **dies without mercy** on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how **much worse punishment**, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, **‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’** says the Lord. And again, **‘The Lord will judge His people.’** It is **a fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:26-31*

*“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be **tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the **smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’” Revelation 14:9-11*

The fate of the disobedient is described as “weeping/wailing and gnashing of teeth;” “everlasting fire;” “everlasting punishment;” “the fire is not quenched;” “tribulation and anguish;” “fiery indignation;” a punishment worse than death without mercy; being “tormented with fire and brimstone...forever and ever.” If the Bible does not teach a place of conscious existence where the unrighteous suffer, I ask again, how could it have been expressed differently so as to convey that idea?

*All quotations from the New King James Version, copyright 1994 by Thomas Nelson Publishers*

# ***Teaching Our Kids the Things That Are Most Important***

*by: Greg Gwin*

A survey by the University of Michigan (reported in USA Today) studied traits that mothers think are important to instill in their children. These values were contrasted from 1924 to recent times. Here are the results:

1924 - Independence (24%)

- Tolerance (6%)

- Loyalty to church (50%)

- Strict obedience (45%)

Today - Independence (75%)

- Tolerance (47%)

- Loyalty to church (22%)

- Strict obedience (17%)

The results of this survey, while not terribly surprising, are still quite disturbing. In 1924 children were taught to respect authority – that’s what ‘loyalty to church’ and ‘strict obedience’ are all about. Today’s parents have decided that independence (‘do your own thing’) and tolerance (‘never criticize anyone else’) are by far the most important things. Any wonder then that crime rates are soaring; drug and alcohol abuse are at all time highs; moral values are nearly non-existent?

God’s Word commands us to train our children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4), and to show our love for them by supplying appropriate discipline (Proverbs 13:24). Common sense, our own experiences, and even the statistics show us that God’s way is the right way. Think!

# ***Daily Bible Reading***

## ***December 2015***

December 1 1 Chronicles 2-4  
December 2 1 Chronicles 5-6  
December 3 1 Chronicles 7-9  
December 4 1 Chronicles 10-12  
December 7 1 Chronicles 13-17  
December 8 1 Chronicles 18-23  
December 9 1 Chronicles 24-27  
December 10 1 Chronicles 28-29,  
2 Chronicles 1-3  
December 11 2 Chronicles 4-8  
December 14 2 Chronicles 9-14  
December 15 2 Chronicles 15-20

December 16 2 Chronicles 21-25  
December 17 2 Chronicles 26-30  
December 18 2 Chronicles 31-36  
December 21 Ezra 1-2  
December 22 Ezra 3-7  
December 23 Ezra 8-10  
December 24 Nehemiah 1:1-7:3  
December 25 Nehemiah 7:4-10:39  
December 28 Nehemiah 11-13  
December 29 Esther 1-6  
December 30 Esther 7-10, Job 1-3  
December 31 Job 4-8

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