

# February 2015

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You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at [christistheway.com](http://christistheway.com).

Finally, brethren  
**WHATEVER THINGS** are true  
are noble  
are just  
are pure  
are lovely  
are of good report  
IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND IF THERE  
IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –  
**meditate on these things.**



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"We cannot live on borrowed goodness" (William Barclay, comment on LUke 23:26, **The Gospel of Luke**, 189)

"Righteousness has its obligation to rebuke as well as love has to forgive" (J.W. McGarvey, **Fourfold Gospel**, 517)

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## The Beauty of Galatians 6:10 in its Context

Tanner Campbell | Rapid City, South Dakota, USA

*(Last fall Tanner Campbell was hospitalized with meningitis and was not expected to live and certainly not to retain his mental ability. By the grace of God in answer to many prayers, he is back close to his full, impressive ability. It is great to begin again publishing articles by this fine, young man of God. - Keith)*

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This beautiful text, Galatians 6:10, has been the victim of great violence for the last six or so decades. To this day men still debate over this verse, but that is not my intent today. Although I will touch briefly upon the views of man, I will not speak as if playing defense, but my goal is to simply speak about the beautiful truths found here in the sixth chapter of Galatians, with special focus on the tenth verse.

It seems that most who debate over Galatians 6:10 are not focused on the subject matter of the verse, but rather

whether the verse is a commandment to the individual Christian or to the church. I believe the subject matter of the verse eliminates the need to ask whether this verse is for the church or the individual. But for the sake of illuminating the truths of this verse, let's quickly consider from the context who the real audience is for verse 10.

- 6:1 "yourself, you"
- 6:2 "one another's"
- 6:3 "anyone thinks himself"
- 6:4 "let each one"
- 6:5 "each one shall bear his own load"
- 6:6 "let him who is taught the word"
- 6:7 "whatever a man sows"
- 6:8 "For he who sows"
- 6:9 "And let us not be weary"
- 6:10 "As we have therefore opportunity"

From the context, we see nothing but commandments to individual Christians.

Demonstrating therefore, that this is not a commandment toward the action of a collective church, but for the individual Christians, in everyday life, to do good to all men when they see the opportunity to do so, and all the more, to do good to their own brother if that opportunity arises (and it will). Even the "let us" of verse nine, and the "as we" in verse ten demonstrate these truths. Why? Because Paul is including himself in the commandment as an individual Christian who is not a part of any church in Galatia. Therefore, it can be concluded that this is a commandment to be fulfilled within the realm of an individual's responsibility to Christ. But as I briefly mentioned before, there is really no need to discuss this aspect of the text further, because our focus is on the subject matter of the verse.

Too many have quickly embraced the idea that this is a verse about money; benevolence. Those who affirm that Galatians 6:10 is a commandment to the church believe it is about money. Even many of those who believe the verse is a commandment to the individual believe it has to do with money. However, the context tells us otherwise. The context has nothing to do with anything that is of this material world, and everything to do with spiritual things; things that bring one to an eternal home in the end. Galatians 6:10 is spiritual; not Financial.

To set the stage for Galatians 6:10, I believe it is necessary to begin at Galatians 5:13.

The Galatians were currently facing a dreadful problem; they were killing one another spiritually. Paul addresses this issue when he tells them to love one another and serve one another (5:13-14). The opposite was the current reality as they were biting one another, devouring one another, and consuming one another (5:15). They were seeking vain glory, they provoked each other to anger, and they were acting according to their jealousies (5:26). What then is the solution? "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (5:16). That's the solution! They were not being the spiritual people that they should be. They were allowing themselves to be driven by the flesh and not by the Spirit, i.e. that which the Spirit of God teaches us to sow and produce (5:22-23).

Following these statements, we reach chapter 6:1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." As so many within the churches located in Galatia have been operating according to the flesh, the natural man, and not the spiritual man, Paul calls upon "ye which are spiritual" to do what they can to "restore" such as have been "overtaken" in the works of the flesh. The statement of verse 2, to "bear one another's burdens," relates to the immediate context to bear one another's spiritual burdens. Paul has nothing in mind about one's financial burdens, health burdens, or any type of material, physical burdens. What's important for these Christians is that they work with each other in love and a "spirit of meekness." If one of them is burdened spiritually by a sin, the others lift the burden off their shoulders, giving them the ability to get out from under that sin with less difficulty.

And if we think ourselves better than another brother, more capable, and stronger, then we are deceiving ourselves (6:3), for we would be the driving force of spiritual death among the brethren. Verse four teaches us that we are responsible for our actions and accountable for them. Keeping the plank out of our own eye is a very good start to begin helping our brother (Matthew 7:3-5). We must examine our own work, and then we will have rejoicing when we are approved after our examination. The other option (the sinful one) is to not consider our own spiritual health, but to find joy in the faults of our brother (6:4). Remember, each one is accountable for his own actions (6:5).

Verse six addresses the subject of imparting knowledge. This remains in the context of helping a brother get back on the right track. One thing that is essential to the spiritual health of every brother is to become skilled in the knowledge of the truth. "Who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). The one "who is taught the word" (6:6) is one who has chosen to obey the word and therefore enters into fellowship with God and His people. The one who is "spiritual" (6:1) now shares "in all good things" with the one who was once "overtaken in a fault." What "all good things?" As in any context, the word "all" is only unlimited within the span of the subject. Here, Paul is dealing with the spiritual fellowship and the hope of eternal life that the teacher

now shares in common with the repented brother. Therefore, the sharing of “all things,” refers to all things spiritual. Those who act presumptuously and venture away from the context might see this scripture to be about paying the preacher. But contextually, that idea is not present. We can look elsewhere for that commandment (1 Corinthians 9:7-14).

Verses eight and nine bring the whole context into a summary before the final conclusion in verse 10. Essentially these two verses illustrate the simple fact that he who does the works of the flesh (as discussed in Galatians 5:18-21) will not inherit the kingdom of God. However, he who does the works of the spirit (as discussed from Galatians 5:22 to this point in the text) will inherit eternal life. Notice how clearly the context establishes exactly what Paul means when he says “and let us not grow weary while doing good.” Let us not grow weary while doing the works of the Spirit, which is also the works of the spiritual person. This and this alone is what the text refers to when addressing the subject of “doing good.”

Now to the grand finale, the conclusion to the whole matter, Galatians 6:10. “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” Because we started with considering the whole matter, this is no longer a difficult verse to understand, nor is it debatable as to the point being made. The point is simply this: we should act when we see an opportunity to help bring a natural man to become a spiritual man. This is especially true to those who are already of the household of faith but have been overtaken and burdened by sin. It is our duty, as their brothers, to help them be the spiritual man once again. That is what “do good” means, in this verse. This is a command that every individual Christian can fulfill, it doesn’t take any amount of money to seize an opportunity to talk to the lost of this world, or an erring brother. This is the greatest good that we can do as Christians, and the only good that this particular scripture is addressing.

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## Heaven is Still For Real

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

Five years ago, Alex Malarky’s story of dying and going to heaven at the age of 6 became the basis of the best-selling book *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven*. It was used to support the testimony of a 4-year-old boy who also claimed to go to heaven, as told by his father in the book and movie *Heaven is for Real*. These accounts altered how churches and preachers view heaven – claiming God was communicating through these boys’ stories. That all changed last month when Alex confessed to making up his story. “I did not die. I did not go to heaven,” said the now teenager in an open letter to LifeWay and other bookstores. “I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible.” Fortunately, he has the character and integrity to admit he misled people; and Tyndale Publishing is recalling the book.

When will people learn to base their faith on the Word of God and not the stories of men? No further testimony is needed to know God’s will, which is why He no longer speaks or gives revelations. Jesus told His apostles that the Spirit would guide them “**into all truth**” (John 16:13). Their writings became the basis of Christianity (2 Peter 3:15-16). The spiritual gifts given to Christians, which confirmed the authority of the apostles (Acts 19:6), discontinued once the Word was completely given (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Everything God wants people to believe is found in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Hence, Jesus proved there is a heaven when He “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light **through the gospel**” (2 Timothy 1:10). Those who trust in men and modern experiences for their faith are following Malarky, when they should be trusting in the only book inspired by God.

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## Where Is Authority for the Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone?

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

We must have authority from the Lord Jesus Christ for all we believe, teach, and practice (Colossians 3:17). Protestant denominations teach that lost sinners are justified before God “solely through faith in the Redeemer’s blood” (J.M. Pendleton, **Church Manual**. 48). Where is authority from Christ for the doctrine of justification by faith alone? There is no doubt we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1-2). The problem is the word “alone.” In fact, the only time in the Scriptures this doctrine is mentioned, the inspired writer brands it as false. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). To be justified before God, we must obey Him by faith. Christ declared, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The Hebrew writer taught, “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9). There is no authority from Christ for the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

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## Questions from New York about Salvation

### Question

I am having a conversation with a friend about how to be saved, baptism, etc. I asked her to tell me, if she was asked by someone how to be saved, what she would say. She said: “I would tell them that they need to accept Jesus

Christ as their personal savior via a simple prayer (our direct connect to God). Admit (Confess to God that you are a sinner. Repent or turn away from your sin.) Believe (Trust that Jesus is God's Son and that God sent Jesus to save people from their sins.) Confess (Give your life to Jesus. Ask Him to be your Lord and Savior.). That's really it. I believe from the moment that you say that prayer God welcomes you into His family. Your name is written down in the Lamb's Book of Life and it can never be erased. No requirements. No age limits. Just faith alone.

Now do I think everyone needs the Roman Road or see all the Bible verses to back up their belief, no. I believe there are situations (especially during mission or evangelical work) where God just shows up and pours His love on people in such a way that they can no longer deny that He is real, and that they need him as their personal Savior and Lord. I believe anyone who asks has been led by the Holy Spirit to a place where they know that God is real, and they just need a little guidance in the process. No evidence needed. Do some people come to faith intellectually? Sure. But I do believe that God knows us so intimately that He knows the best way for us to come into a knowledge of Him... and that everyone will make a choice who they believe in before the rapture of the Church.

Do I think baptism is necessary for salvation? Absolutely not. I believe is an outward sign of an inward decision, and that God took away the necessity of baptism in order to be saved when He died on the cross (same as the veil being torn in two in the temple, out with old covenant and in with the new covenant). God has eliminated all barriers to Him. The Heavens are open. We can talk with him about anything, whenever – and He can minister to us. I believe Baptism of the Spirit is a second experience, and that we have to invite the Holy Spirit into our hearts to comfort us, guide us into all truth, and to give us the power and confidence to show God and all of his attributes to people."

I realize that this is a lot, but I focused primarily on the baptism saving part. I then asked her how she would explain Acts 2:38, where it says that we need to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.

She replied: "Oh see, now that is an interesting question... it is SO interesting that I spent nearly two weeks in Biblical Hermeneutics talking about it, and had to write an essay about it. Let's just say it is a debatable thing for one reason: it depends on how you interpret the Greek. Personally, I believe the word 'eis' in Acts 2:38 means 'because of' not 'for' as it has been translated in so many translations of the Bible."

It would be like a slap in Jesus' face for me to believe that God could not redeem me without some kind of prerequisite. I would never put conditions on God like that.

I replied that it wouldn't be a slap in God's face to figure that there are conditions for salvation, because the Lord Himself said in Mark 16:16 that we must believe and be baptized to be saved.

She again went to the Greek argument she had used for Acts 2:38.

### **Answers**

Thanks so much for forwarding this information to me. I am happy to respond.

First, the only way we can know the will of God for us is through His Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Whatever we say pertaining to salvation must be in accordance with the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11).

With that in mind, where do we read in Scripture that anyone was ever taught "to accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior"? Where do we ever read about a lost sinner outside Christ being directed to pray for salvation? Where was any alien sinner (Ephesians 2:11-12) ever instructed to confess his sins? How can anyone "speak as the oracles of God" and teach such doctrines unknown to Scripture?

How can anyone claim God will not blot sinners out of His book? Israel in the wilderness was our example of the danger of falling away from Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). But the Lord declared to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book" (Exodus 32:33).

How can any believer in Christ claim there are no requirements for salvation? "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)

How can any Bible believer assert that salvation is by "faith alone"? "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). And, if salvation is by faith alone, why do we have to pray, admit, repent, and confess? That's four things in addition to faith. Are they requirements?

Are there no age limits? We certainly must be old enough to believe. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). And we have to be of the age to be able to repent. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Little children do not need salvation, for they are safe, being free from sin. "But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 19:14).

The only power God exercises to draw the sinner to Himself, regardless of the situation, is the Gospel. "For I am not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16). The sinner must learn the gospel to be saved.

*"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:44-45).*

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

*"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).*

Of course God has the power to save us apart from our intellect, but He chooses not to do so. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Saving faith is based on the acceptance of evidence.

Is water baptism necessary for salvation? It stands between the sinner and salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), the new birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5), the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21), being in Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27), putting on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), being sanctified and cleansed (Ephesians 5:25-27), putting off the body of the sins of the flesh (Colossians 2:11-12), and having our hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:22).

The Scriptures nowhere teach that baptism "is an outward sign of an inward decision" (or "inward grace"). They do plainly assert baptism is "an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Peter 3:21, **New American Standard Bible, English Standard Version**).

How could baptism have been taken away by the death of Christ on the cross, since baptism in the name of Christ never was part of the Old Testament but of the Great Commission of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19) and is plainly commanded in the New Testament? (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

There is only one baptism in effect by the authority of the Lord today (Ephesians 4:5). It is water baptism (Acts 10:47-48). All we need to be everything the Lord wants us to be is provided by the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Isn't it a shame that someone who claims to believe the Bible spent two weeks in "hermeneutics" (the science of Scripture interpretation) trying to figure a way to get around a plain verse of Scripture? "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38). That passage is so clear it takes the help of a theologian to misunderstand it.

But the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself. Jesus declared concerning the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). "For the remission of sins" is word for word the same in Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38. Did Jesus shed His blood "because of" the remission of sins or "in order to" the remission of sins? When you answer that question, you've uncovered the meaning of Acts 2:38 and discovered the purpose of baptism.

I didn't put in those requirements, God did. And, after all, aren't believe, admit, repent, and confess requirements?

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## Questions from Nigeria about Women Teachers

**Question #1:** Is it wrong for a woman to teach fellow women in a ladies class during mid-week class for women?

**Answer #1:** In every way the New Testament gives the right to act, the Scriptures authorize women to teach the Scriptures.

The apostle Paul directed Timothy, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). The word "men" in this passage translates the Greek term "anthropois," which means "universally with reference to the genus or nature, without distinction of sex, a human being, whether male or female" (J.H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. 46). Part of a preacher's work is teaching faithful people, both men and women, to teach the Word of God. Thus, by statement, the apostle authorizes faithful women to teach the Scriptures.

The apostle Peter commands all Christians, men and women, to equip themselves to defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15). Paul instructs Titus to command aged women to teach practical scriptural truths especially applicable to the feminine gender to younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Thus, Scripture commands women to teach the Bible.

Priscilla, with her husband, Aquila, explained to Apollos, an eloquent preacher who only knew John's baptism, "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:24-26). Thus, approved examples authorize women to teach the Word.

Several passages indicate women received the gift of prophecy (e.g., Acts 2:17; 21:8-9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Since the function of a prophet was to teach (1 Corinthians 14:4), it is necessarily implied that women may teach God's will.

**Question #2:** Is it wrong if the church fix this ladies class?

**Answer #2:** The Scriptures authorize the local church to teach the Bible. They do this by statement (Ephesians 4:16), command (Acts 20:28), example (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8), and necessary implication (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

The Scriptures authorize the local church to employ any arrangement to teach the Bible which does not violate New Testament principles. God has bound (matters of faith) the organization the church is to employ to teach, the local church (1 Corinthians 1:2) and the information to be taught: the Bible (Galatians 1:8-9; Romans 15:4). But he has not bound the arrangement through which the church may teach. It may be the whole church assembled (Acts 20:7), groups smaller than the church (Acts 20:17; Galatians 2:2), letters (Colossians 4:16), books, tracts, a correspondence course, magazines, radio, television, internet site, or classes. No single arrangement is exclusively bound.

The only limitation the Lord places on a woman teaching that He does not also place on a man is that women may not teach over men (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Indeed, a woman may teach fellow women in a ladies class during mid-week class for women? In fact, it is more appropriate for an older woman to fill this role than it is for a preacher (Titus 2:3-5).

**Question #3:** Is it wrong for a preacher to be present during the ladies class?

**Answer #3:** A woman may not teach the Scriptures with authority over a man nor in any other way be over men in the local church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12). The preacher should not attend the women's class if a woman is over the class.

However, an elder might sit in on the women's class to be sure it is done correctly if it is understood he is there as an authoritative observer, not as a student. In this case the woman teacher is not over a man. It would be parallel to a school principal observing a woman teacher in her class in a public school.

**Question #4:** Should ladies class where a woman should teach ladies class be a private arrangement with the preacher without the knowledge of the Church?

**Question #4:** This is answered under question one. This is simply an arrangement for doing what the church is authorized to do: teach the Bible. It is good for the class to be a function of the local church.

**Question #5:** The statement from the scripture that said, "*Where two or three gathered in my name I am there*" Does it mean that all such gatherings are for worship assembly?

**Answer #5:** The context of this passage, Matthew 18:20, pertains to the church withdrawing from unrepentant sinners (Matthew 18:15-19). However, it is a general principle applying to our fellowship in the local church. Whatever we do as a local church that is in harmony with His will, He is in fellowship with us in the doing of it. This includes but is certainly not limited to the public worship assembly of the local church. No, not all gatherings of the church are necessarily worship. For example, the church could come together to discuss whether or not to withdraw from a sinner (Matthew 18:17) or to hear a report concerning a preaching trip (Acts 14:27). Since the church is a spiritual relationship (John 18:36; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 1:3,22-23), all proper activities of the church are spiritual.

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## Mark Well Her Bulwarks | Number 1

Tommy Thornhill | Etna, Arkansas, USA

In the Old Testament we learn that God promised to give the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land of Canaan as their "promised land" (Genesis 12:7; 15:18-21; 26:2-5; 28:2-3; 35:9-12). Even though it had been promised to them, they did not obtain it until they went in and conquered the land under the leadership of Joshua. The book of Joshua tells us they received all the land God had promised them. "Not a word failed ..." (Joshua 21:43-45; 23:14-15). This brings me to the lesson I want to write about.

After the land was divided among the tribes, land boundaries were placed to mark off the territory of each tribe. But once the boundaries were established, God knew people might be tempted to move or change the boundary lines, so He issued strict orders that these landmarks were not to be moved or changed (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:15; Prov.22:28; 23:10). In fact He had anticipated that some might be tempted to obtain land they had no right to, so He included the prohibition in the last of the 10 commandments given to the Jews on Mt. Sinai. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field (my emphasis – t.t.), his man servant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's" (Deuteronomy 5:21). The idea is that one must not have any evil intent toward what belongs to another.

Since it was to make sure that boundaries were not tampered with, we read where one of the Psalmists, many years later, wrote these words, "Walk around Zion, and go all around her, count her towers; mark well her bulwarks (emphasis mine – t.t.); consider her palaces, that you may tell it to the generation following" (Psalm 48:13).

In this passage the Psalmist is praising and magnifying God for the greatness of Zion (a name applied by the prophets to Jerusalem – t.t.). A bulwark is a defensive wall or rampart; a fortification, a defense. Today, the church of Christ is the spiritual Zion (see Hebrews 12:22). The plea made by the Psalmist almost 3000 years ago is badly needed in Zion today. There is a great pressing need to "mark well the bulwarks ... that you may tell it to the generations following."

There is a continual need to "mark well the bulwarks," the elements of strength that protect God's Zion, the church, His Israel (Galatians 6:16), from the surrounding world. Many members of the Lord's church no longer know what the bulwarks are, or where they can be found. The walls of separation standing between the Lord's church and the world have fallen into disrepair, allowing the enemy to breach the bulwarks and destroy the church. (Note in this article when I use the term church, I am referring to the members that compose it in a local congregational sense. When you think church, think members).

Past history reveals what happens when people no longer "mark well the bulwarks." In the early years of what we call "the restoration movement," the church grew mightily because the lines of demarcation between the Lord's church and the world were clear and distinct. But, when some ceased to continue to "mark the bulwarks" the innovations of the missionary society and instrumental music came in and portions of the ramparts were torn down in spiritual Zion. Since I started preaching over 60 years ago, I have seen the same thing happen to my generation, and the ones following. The bulwarks were breached by some who wanted human institutions, i.e., church supported benevolent societies and sponsoring church arrangements, attached to the Lord's church. The desire was to make the church more compatible to the worldly minded. Scriptures were twisted to teach things never intended. Some even said, "we don't need a 'thus says the Lord' for all the things we say and do. After all we do many things without biblical authority." They were abandoning such scriptures as 1.Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:17; Philippians 4:9; and 2Timothy 2:15, at least in practice, if not in preaching.

This led to a further crumbling of the ramparts. The open breaches allowed some to add entertainment and recreational facilities, such as gymnasiums, fellowship halls, family life centers and other social activities. More emphasis was placed on "fun, food and frolic" than on the preaching of the saving gospel of Christ. It was said then, and is still true, that "people attracted to the church by such gimmicks will be as dead as the fried chicken, weak as the iced tea, and as cold as the ice cream." In other words, if it takes such activities to get them coming, it will take much more to keep them. Those who advocate such practices forget that the gospel is God's only power to save (Romans 1:16), and that the kingdom of God is "not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Today we are seeing the results of the destroyed bulwarks. The present generation is taking the digression even further. The earlier digressives at least made a pretense of adhering to the word of God. Today, the pretense is gone. Preachers and churches in many places have abandoned the scriptural method of establishing Bible authority by the use of statements and commands, approved apostolic examples and necessary inferences. Many refer to it by the acronym CENI. But regardless of what they call it, it is still Biblical. In modern terminology things are bound or authorized by telling, showing, implying, which some have shortened to TSI. Either way it is the same. (to be continued).

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Paul, To The Ephesians | Ephesians 1:5-8

## **Predestined for Adoption**

Patrick Farish | Lancaster, Texas, USA

"In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:5, 6, **English Standard Version**).

To predestine is to foreordain, predetermine. The predestination of the Father is in the same manner as His election: in the election he "chose us in him" so the adoption is, as He purposed, "in the Beloved."

God's will was, those who are in Jesus Christ will be adopted; just as those "in him" are chosen (:3). He predestined

us and we will therefore praise “his glorious grace.” By this marvelous gift we are brought into His family.

Children become members of an earthly family in one of two ways. Either they are brought in by natural birth; or they are brought in by adoption.

The Christian is both the product of birth (John 3:3-6), and of adoption (Romans 8:15). The child who emerges from his mother’s womb partakes of the features of his parents, in appearance and genetic factors; the adopted child, lacking these, is nonetheless given full membership and participation in the estate and name of his family.

The Christian, therefore, is to partake of his Father’s features (Matthew 5:43-45; 1 Peter 1:17-19) with the understanding that he is an heir (Galatians 4:7) of an “inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:4-5).

The **English Standard Version** introduces verse 5 by borrowing two words from verse 4, so the passage reads “In love he predestined us ...”. This has the sound of John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” This verse is a good working definition of “love,” as the provision of a needed thing: God saw the world as in need of salvation; and he gave his only Son. So: love God (1 John 5:3); love the Lord (John 14:15, 21); love your wife, one another, your neighbor, your enemy, and the brothers (1 Corinthians 16:14).

In the Beloved, by His blood, we are redeemed and forgiven, the gracious provision of His love (John 3:16). Since “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,” and “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin,” the problem is solved when we learn that lithe blood of Christ “will purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:22; 10:4; 9:14).

By His blood we are redeemed. Older readers remember “trading stamps,” so popular a few years back. For each purchase a prescribed number of stamps was given, and when several books of stamps were filled, the “redemption center” was visited. Your stamps were “redeemed,” at an exorbitant price (number of stamps) to be sure, but redeemed nonetheless, for the desired merchandise. If the price to redeem the trading stamps was exorbitant, how much more the price for the spiritual blessing which is redemption: “the blood of Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Romans 3:24, sinners are “justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” When Christ died, “by means of his own blood” he secured “an eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). Paul tells the Colossians, in Christ “we have redemption.”

Redemption means buying back; we were slaves to sin, because we had sinned and had nothing that could free us from that slavery; but Christ died for us. These are Paul’s words, as he is defending the resurrection of the dead; he said “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures ...” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Because He died, shed His blood, we have redemption. By His blood we are forgiven. Sometimes people say something like, “I’ll forgive, but I won’t forget!” The glory of God for us is seen in that He forgives, not to remember again. The Psalmist wrote, “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (103:12). We may well continue to be ashamed as we think of our transgressions; but having complied with His instructions, faith believes we are forgiven and is comforted. The faithful Christian believes and is comforted by the assurance that “the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

In redemption and forgiveness the grace of God has been “lavished” upon us, bestowed in great abundance, by his wisdom and insight. There is much benefit in meditating on grace: not as directed by some human author, but as you see it unfold in the Bible. God has been marvelously good to man. Noah, Moses and Naaman come quickly to mind. Our pondering of “grace” in the light of His word is of great spiritual profit.

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## Jamaica Patois Wisdom | Number 20

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

(The Jamaican Patois dialect is colorful, unique and humorous. It is my desire to share some of the philosophy shown in this mix of colorful phrases that are witty as well as thought-provoking. I hope the readers both profit and enjoy. In my quarter-century plus of teaching there, I have come to appreciate some things about their culture. – Jefferson David Tant)

**Patois:** High seat kill Miss Thomas puss

**English:** The high seat killed Miss Thomas’ cat.

**Meaning:** People who fight for positions for which they are not qualified will face embarrassment.

There is one word that pretty well describes the idea of this bit of Patois wisdom, and that is “humility.” Jesus illustrated this in one of his well-known parables.

*“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this man,’ and then in disgrace you*

*proceed to occupy the last place. But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:8-11).*

If we want honor or respect, it is better to let others give it, rather than claiming that we are worthy of such. "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (Proverbs 27:2). There are two men in the Bible who exemplify this spirit of humility. John the Baptist was respected by many, as multitudes came to hear him preach (Matthew 3:5). As they expected and looked for the Messiah, they questioned John about his own identity. Note John's response: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29-30). John was content to be the "lesser light," the "best man" at the wedding, as we would identify him. (cf. Luke 3:15-16). Barnabas serves as another example for us. After Paul's conversion to Christ after he had inflicted much harm on the early church, he attempted to become a part of the church in Jerusalem. But they were understandably somewhat hesitant about accepting him, until Barnabas came to his rescue, and spoke on his behalf (Acts 9:26-27).

Then in Acts 13, the Spirit called for "Barnabas and Saul" to begin the first of the "Missionary Journeys." At first, the pair is referred to as "Barnabas and Saul (or Paul)," but in time it appears that Paul became the dominant partner in their labors, as "Paul and Barnabas" came to be used most of the time when reference is made to them.

Never once do we see an attitude of sour grapes in John or Barnabas as they took a lesser role. And when all it said and done, it is not the respect and honor that men give us that really matters. Sure, it is nice to have the accolades of men, but what really matters would be to hear the words, "Well done, faithful servant. Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:23).

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from the e-book, "And They Shall Become One Flesh"

## **Money In The Marriage**

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

*Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with precious and pleasant riches. (Proverbs 24:34)*

### **His Money / Her Money**

There is a money and marriage trend in our society which is both disturbing and contrary to the message of the Scriptures - the separation of a household's money into "his money" and "her money." This has perhaps come in part due to the rise of two income households, though such is certainly not new (consider the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31).

Genesis 2:24 states of the man and his wife, that "...the two shall become one flesh..." How does the separation of money fit with this basic precept of marriage? No longer is it his and her's - it is now our's. The apostle Paul stressed this to be the case with regard to the sharing of affection within the marital relationship. He wrote: "Let the husband render to the wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)

If authority over our own body is given to the spouse, how foolish to think that we should maintain exclusive authority over "our own money." Which is greater, your body or your money?

We are not saying that each spouse cannot have their own separate spending money, as established by a budget. But, before it becomes "my money," it has been "our money," and "our budget" has appointed a certain portion to each of us for our own personal use (ie. not groceries, car repairs, etc.).

### **Effective Planning**

Alan Lakein, author of "How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life" is credited with saying, "*Failing to plan is planning to fail.*" It is important that we establish a plan for all aspects of our life. In the realm of finances, we call this a budget.

The Bible emphasizes the need for planning (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6). Though these texts primarily address planning with regard to military action, the importance of such is no different for personal finance. One is forethought and preparation for the effective use of equipment and personnel; the other is forethought and preparation for the effective use of money.

Personal finance expert, Dave Ramsey has stated:

*The very first place counsel should be sought is in your home. Yes, your spouse does have a brain and one that may even work better than yours. The traditional sexist relationship*

*where the wife is not involved in matters of money is not only shortsighted, it is also just plain dumb. On the other hand, the "modern" woman who allows her husband to completely dump all the finances on her is not only being mistreated, she is also missing out on basic opportunities of communication in a good marriage. (Financial Peace, Dave Ramsey, p. 193-194)*

An effective budget will take into consideration all the NEEDS of all the members of the household. When developing our budget, we need to be sure that the Lord is included in it (Proverbs 15:22; 16:1-3). And God's place in our budget is not an afterthought, but the first place (Proverbs 3:9).

### **Stewards Of God's Goods**

The blessings which we enjoy have been entrusted to us by God. He desires that we be faithful stewards of all that He has given, and that certainly includes our finances. Part of good stewardship is to have a plan, as discussed above. This plan and stewardship are not the husband's responsibility, nor the wife's responsibility - it is for both.

There are five general areas of responsibility with regard to finances. They are:

- giving to the Lord
- providing for your family
- paying bills and debts
- helping others in need
- entertainment and leisure

It is not appropriate to leave any of these undone. God's word addresses each of them:

- God is to receive the firstfruits (Proverbs 3:9) of our increase, not the leftovers.
- One who will not provide for his family has *"...denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever..."* (1 Timothy 5:8)
- It is wickedness to borrow and not repay (Psalm 37:21).
- Paul indicated that when the opportunity (and by necessity, the ability) is available, we should *"...do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith..."* (Galatians 6:10)
- And finally, Solomon correctly stated that *"...it is good and fitting for one ... to enjoy the good of all his labor..."* (Ecclesiastes 5:18).

What is absolutely important for us to do, if we are to be faithful stewards, is to prioritize these various monetary tasks correctly. For an individual, this is an individual responsibility; for the married couple, this is a mutual responsibility.

Jesus asked the question, *"...if you have not been faithful in unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the truth riches?"* (Luke 16:11)

We must be faithful steward in the here and now, if we expect to be entrusted with the riches of the hereafter.

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## **Repentance**

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

The word "repent" is found approximately 111 times in the Bible in some form ("repent," "repented," "repentance," etc.). One definition given for this word is

*"to change one's mind, i.e. to repent; used esp. of those who, conscious of their sins and with the manifest tokens of sorrow, are intent on obtaining God's pardon; to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins"* (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament. 405).

The message delivered to the people guilty of sin in the New Testament was one of repentance. John the Baptist told those coming out to him, while preaching in the wilderness, to repent (Matthew 3:2). Our Lord, after His temptation by Satan, began to preach repentance (Matthew 4:17). Peter, whose sermon was recorded on Pentecost, told those guilty of crucifying Jesus to repent (Acts 2:38). The apostle Paul often taught those to whom he wrote of the need of repentance (2 Corinthians 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:25, etc.).

Why was this sermon topic such a prominent part of the preaching and teaching of those servants of God? Because of sin and its destructive nature! When one violates the law of God, he must repent of that iniquity. All have sinned (Romans 3:23) and need forgiveness, which comes through the sacrificial gift of God's Son on the cross, as one turns from his evil ways.

There are at least two things revealed in the Oracles of God which will lead someone to repentance. Notice what the

Bible says:

1. Godly sorrow. Paul said, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Those who really love the Lord, when made aware of their sins, hearts will be filled with sorrow, causing them to turn from their iniquities to the Father in humble obedience. The only sorrow some have is either because they got caught or they are suffering as the result of their sin. This would be worldly sorrow. Disciples of Christ do not want to do anything contrary to their Father's will.
2. The goodness of God. In the book of Romans, this same apostle said, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4) Stop for just a moment! Think of how good Jehovah is to every one of us. He is kind, loving, forbearing, and longsuffering with all. We have so many blessings; there is no way we could begin to list all of them. Why would we want to sin against our Creator, Sustainer, and Savior knowing how we are blessed by Him? If we are guilty of wrong-doing, just the thought of how good He is to us, should lead us to repentance.

If we truly repent, the fruit of this action will be clearly evident. John the Baptist, told his audience, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). Paul, when he was still referred to as Saul, showed signs of his change of mind. He no longer persecuted the church of our Lord. Instead, he became one of its most able defenders. He now becomes the persecuted rather than the persecutor. When Luke reveals the story of this man's conversion, he tells of Saul going three days without anything to eat or drink (Acts 9:9). All such action on the part of Paul was fruit of his genuine repentance. It is not just a matter of confessing a wrong, but of turning from such a course of conduct and then living to please our great God every day. If I have wronged someone, then I need to make that right with them as well.

Is there a need for repentance in your life? God certainly wants those on the wrong side of His law to seek His forgiveness. Notice what Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Our Heavenly Father is willing to save all those who will manifest a contrite, obedient heart.

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## **Fulfilling The Great Commission**

Sean P. Cavender | Raymore, Missouri, USA

In the gospel according to Matthew, Jesus is pictured teaching His apostles, preparing for the days after His ascension to heaven. Jesus claims the authority that had been given unto Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:28). Using that authority, He tells His disciples to "go ye therefore" (Matthew 28:19).

We first read of how Jesus told His apostles to go, preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Their mission was to take the gospel to Judea, on to Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth, taking the gospel to all nations of people (Acts 1:8). However, this commission was not limited to the apostles. Individual Christians also took up the mantle, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:4). Then local churches began to fulfill this great commission as well (Acts 13:1-3).

The New Testament church still has this commission as her mission today. Individual members of the church ought to take this mission very seriously. The salvation of souls should become extremely important to us and we must take the gospel to those around us.

### **Teach The Gospel To All Nations**

Jesus told His apostles to go forth and teach all nations. The message to be taught was the gospel of salvation (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). The Greek verb used in Matthew 28:19 for "teach" is often translated as "making disciples."

We cannot make disciples without first teaching them. Ignorance never makes disciples of the Lord. Discipleship involves a commitment to following and imitating a particular teacher and way of living. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to follow Him and His teachings (Matthew 10:25; 1 Peter 2:21). When we follow Jesus, becoming like Him, we become part of the family of the Lord (Matthew 12:49).

We must make disciples by teaching the word of God. Teaching God's word is the first step towards becoming a follower of Jesus (Romans 10:17). Paul and Barnabas taught the gospel in Antioch, making disciples through their preaching (Acts 11:26). Those disciples were called Christians.

Christianity is meant to be shared with all people and all nations. No barriers of race, sex, or ethnicity are to exist in the church. The gospel united and is meant to be taken to the whole world. No culture, no society, and no world religion will overcome Christianity. The church must take the good news of salvation of Jesus Christ to the world.

### **Baptize People Into Fellowship With The Father, The Son And The Holy Spirit**

Teaching is the first thing that must be done in making disciples. However, baptism must follow (Matthew 28:19). Jesus taught that baptism saves (Mark 16:16). The apostles preached that baptism was for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism is an important part of the great commission!

Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was made a disciple of Jesus through water baptism (Acts 10:48). Baptism puts one into a right relationship with God to have fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Disciples are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The phrase, "in the name of..." often refers to the characteristics and authority of a person. When a person is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they are submitting to the authority of God for salvation.

Disciples are subject to the will of God. We are subject to the will of the Father. We are subject to the obedience to the Son. And we are subject to the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

### **Continue Teaching The Disciples**

Sadly, many churches and Christians are misguided. They seem to think once we have taught the plan of salvation and someone obeys the gospel that is where our responsibility stops. Jesus taught, as part of the same great commission, that we are to continue teaching. Jesus said, "teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded" (Matthew 28:20). The Great Commission never truly ends. We teach people to convert them and make disciples. We teach disciples to obey the commandments of God.

There are two implications that we should consider. First, the church must develop teachers of the word of God (Acts 13:1; Hebrews 5:12-14). Too many times the church does not strive to develop men and women to teach the Bible. And far too many Christians are content with not teaching!

Secondly, disciples must be willing to be taught. It is interesting when the Bereans were converted to Christ, they desired to learn from the Scriptures on a daily basis (Acts 17:11, 12). Sadly, many non-Christians show more interest in the Bible than Christians do. As disciples of Christ, we should desire to learn and be more like our Savior and Lord (Matthew 10:25).

### **Conclusion**

The Lord promises to be with us when we work and fulfill this commission (Matthew 28:20). The Lord has called us to do this great work. It is an important mission that we should not neglect, as Christians nor as the church. Let's commit ourselves to this great commission. The Lord will be with us and bless our efforts.

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## **Is Trustee Members of the Church of Christ Nigeria Scriptural?**

Chizuru Lowell Odoemelum | Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

Brethren, I am confused about lots of things going on here in the Lord's Church in Nigeria, I don't know much about other places in the world.

I am very fortunate to be a member of the Lord's Church and I strongly believe in the teachings of the Bible, which the Lord's Church adopts as its standard, and for that reason I will always strive for the truth. Lots of doctrines and teachings going on here won't stand up to a comparison with the Word of God. I found one more disturbing and worthy.

Members of Trustee Nigeria is really giving me trouble and concern in the sense that they are taking their power, very soon they will be deciding how many local Churches will be existing.

I have read many reports in regards of their action here and how they have been taking some brethren to court and how they have been ordering some brethren that taught something different from what they believe to remove the name "Church of Christ" from the sign post because of false teaching.

I have gone to the Bible to search where they got their power and how Scriptural it is and I came to conclude that they are another body different from the arrangement of God for his Church and therefore a human organization.

"An organization is a body of persons formed into a whole, consisting of independent and coordinated parts, especially for harmonious or united action." "A human organization would be such a body formed by men, governed by man, apart from divine origin or authority" (Homer Hailey).

I consider members of Trustee Nigeria as a human organization base on their form of organization. Most of their actions are against the teachings of the Bible and should be avoided. Bible teaches against brethren going to law court with their fellow brethren.

*"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not*

*before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Corinthians 6:1-3)*  
If you read further to vs. 4 – 6 you will understand better.

Also their actions disrupt the autonomy of the Church. Remember the church is a divine organization and it was designed by the wisdom of God (Ephesians 3: 8-10). It was built by the Lord in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3: 10-11). This church is built upon a divine foundation and it is ruled by divine authority. Christ has been made the head over all things to the Church (Matthew 16: 18-19; Jeremiah 3: 11; Ephesians 1: 22-23).

The Church recognizes the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice, its by laws are the Scriptures (Hebrews 9: 15-17; 10:9-10; 10:19-22).

It has a divine plan or arrangement (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:18-28; 1 Timothy 2:14; 1 Peter 2:5-10).

In all this characteristic listed above no human organization possessed any of them.

God has not left His Church "without form and void" but has given to the Church system and order through spiritual laws (1 Corinthians 12:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-12; Matthew 28:18).

There is only one divine arrangement for the Church of God (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:20-27; Romans 12:3-8). The local Church or Congregation is the only organization or government God gave to his Church, each church subject to the will of Christ. (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The local Churches or Congregations are to do the will of God not the will of members of trustees Nigeria. One brother told me that the Trustees have map out their constitutions for the churches here and if any fail to adhere to this constitution that they will come and stop them (local Church) from worshiping. Human innovations established by "the doctrines and commandments of men" in matter of worship make it vain in God's sight (Matthew 15:1-14). God's divine organization is the Church, and any other apart from the Church, whether bigger or smaller is sinful and should be avoided. Any other constitution written or verbal apart from the Holy Bible is sinful and should be avoided.

The trustee members Nigeria are now trying to lord over God's heritage and make decisions that are contrary to the will of God. And many brethren here now see this group of men as the authority in the church rather than the Bible. Every little thing they run and report to the members trustee church of Christ Nigeria. I don't see them as my own authority; rather I see them as erring brethren that need to be called in order with the truth of the Scriptures.

If God had appointed Elders in every church to see it's affairs (Titus 1: 5; Acts 14:23), then why are some brethren not okay with that? We cannot do evil so that good may come (Romans 3:3-8). Everything must be done in harmony with the will of God and pleasing to him in order to be good. No problem can be solved by false standards, and for the fact that we have been practicing something for years does not justify it in God's sight.

The trustee members Nigeria are human organization and by their actions they disrupt the autonomy of the churches and therefore cause controversy in the Kingdom of God. The elders of the local congregation were asked to take care of the flock among them (Acts 20:28). And they were asked not to Lord over the flock among them (1 Peter 5:1-3).

If the Government of our land asks churches to register their churches fine, there is nothing wrong in this. But to use this and form another organization making law for the churches I see as not being satisfied with God's arrangement for his church.

A particular local congregation can send their elders to go and register the church if the need so be that the church cannot exist without registration on behalf of the churches of Christ. The church is one universally and has one head and one law and one savior (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Remember even elders in the Lord's Church have no legislative authority; they cannot make laws but can function only as they are authorized to do by the Lord. Christ alone has legislative authority. "There is one law giver" (James 4:12).

The elders have the oversight of all matters within the local congregation. So if the elders that the Bible teaches us are the officers of the churches has limited power over the church, then where do these men known as members of trustee church of Christ Nigeria get theirs and how effective do you think they will be?

Many young Nigerian Christians are now seeing them as scriptural organization, that they represent the churches, and they do a good work. Even I listened to one brother, a son to one of our late preachers, a seasoned preacher who fought for the truth all his Christian life. This brother was promoting the trustee members and was very proud of them. When I tried to call him to order, he told me that the problem most of us have is our educational background and terminology, that I should go and learn more.

Another argument he came up with "Do we need Scriptural Authority in all we do? That we do lots of things without

Bible authority.” But I’m still trying to figure out those practices we do outside Bible authority.

The Jews and the Lord himself recognized the need for divine authority (Luke 20:1-8). If we must not have authority in all that we do in religion today, that means the Bible is of no value (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Remember that God demands we follow his authority in all that we do both in word and deed (Colossians 3:17). Therefore, we need divine authority, Bible authority for everything we believe, teach and practice.

Many times Brethren talks about expediency to fortify most of their practices. In order for a thing to be scriptural expedient in spiritual affairs it must facilitate in the accomplishment of God’s will and must be in harmony with his word. In order for a thing to be expedient it must first be lawful (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23).

Brethren I am not convinced about members of trustee Church of Christ Nigeria and what they are representing, their function and who appoints them. Members of the Board of Trustees Church of Christ Nigeria are men who are not satisfied with God’s arrangement for his church and as such are erring brothers. They are brethren but erring ones and they need to study more about the government of the church of Christ and what God has demanded from them.

The problem our brethren are having is this, they want to be like them, they want to conform to the world rather than transforming (Romans 12:1-2). Very soon they will have their secretariat, if they have not gotten one yet. Soon they will be contesting elections on that regard because every one of them wants to be at helm of affairs. Politics in the Church, brethren we should be careful of all these things and avoid them.

My conclusion on this is that Members of Trustees Church of Christ Nigeria are men that occupied a wrong position in the Lord’s Church and they need to be corrected. Let us all strive for the truth once given to us (Jude 3).

I stand to be corrected if found wanting in my article.

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Parables of the Master | Matthew 22:1-14  
**The Marriage of the King's Son**  
Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

#### **Differences in the Parables**

This parable is strikingly similar to the Parable of the Great Supper, but there are important differences. Jesus taught the former earlier in His ministry when he was attending a supper given by an important Pharisee and there might still be hope for the Jewish nation. He spoke this one during the week before His crucifixion when He had already pronounced judgment on the Pharisees and the nation (Matthew 21:28-44) and in answer to the angry response of the chief priests and Pharisees over this condemnation (Matthew 21:45-46). In the Great Supper parable those invited were rude toward and contemptuous of a wealthy man and his feast, whereas in the Marriage of the King’s Son they were contemptuous of and rebellious toward the king and his son. In the Great Supper they were shut out of the feast; in this they and their city were destroyed.

#### **The Parable**

A king gave a wedding feast for his son and invited guests, but they were not willing to come. So he sent out other slaves informing them the feast was ready and ordering them to come. But some paid no attention to the command and went about their usual occupation, while others reacted with outright hostility and abused and killed the king’s messengers. Their rebellious, contemptuous refusal of the king’s invitation was doubly inexcusable, for he was not summoning them to some onerous task such as military service but honoring them by inviting them to the wedding feast of the prince. So the king was infuriated and sent his army to destroy both those who abused his messengers and their city.

Then, since the feast was prepared and his intended guests were unworthy of it, the king sent his slaves into the highways to bring in anyone, good or bad. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king made his entrance, he saw a guest who was not wearing a wedding garment. The king asked him why he was not appropriately dressed, and when the guest couldn’t give a reason, the king ordered him to be bound and thrown into the darkness outside the hall, a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Then the Master Himself drew the conclusion - “For many are called, but few are chosen” (verse 14).

#### **Meaning**

God is the Great King whose “name is to be feared among the nations” (Malachi 1:14) and Jerusalem was His city (Psalm 48:1-3). His Son Christ Jesus was about to be wed, His kingdom was compared to a wedding feast, and the Jews as a nation were the invited guests. God sent His prophets to invite them to His kingdom, but they were not interested. He also sent John the Baptist, as well as apostles, prophets, and evangelists, telling them the kingdom had arrived, but they abused and killed the messengers. Thus God destroyed both their nation and their city.

Because the Jewish nation rejected and killed the messengers of God, He opened the door to the Gentiles to come

in. The invitation was not just to the morally upright but to all mankind, both good and bad. But those who fail to put on the wedding garment of righteousness will be cast out of the heavenly kingdom. Though the gospel calls all, only those who respond in obedient faith and turn to righteousness are chosen by the Lord for the eternal, heavenly kingdom.

#### **Application**

The gospel invitation is the summons of the King to the wedding feast of His Son. Those who refuse this call are rebellious to the Great King and face utter destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

He invites all, Jew and Gentile, morally upright and immoral wretches (1 Timothy 1:15-16), to come into the kingdom. But when He comes in the person of His Son in judgment (John 5:22,28-29), even those who have responded by faith and obedience to the gospel call and have been saved will be cast out and punished eternally if they have not put on the garment of righteous living (Revelation 7:13-14; 19:8). Yes, a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ, can be cast into outer darkness away from the light of God and spend eternity weeping and grinding his teeth in anguish.

God calls all mankind to His Son's wedding feast through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), but only those who accept the call, wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, put on the wedding garments of righteous living, and remain faithful to the Lord (Revelation 19:13-14) are chosen of God (Ephesians 1:4).

