

What Every Christian Worker Should Know

PART #2
STUDENT MANUAL
Studies 1 - 13

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

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Student Manual

Studies 1 - 13

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THE WORKER'S BEST BOOK

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Psalm 119:1-16

Key Verse -

Psalm 119:11 -

The theme that predominates this longest psalm in the Psalter is the writer's reference to the Word of God, which he variously describes as God's -

testimonies -

Psalm 119:2 -

precepts -

Psalm 119:4 -

statutes -

Psalm 119:5 -

commandments -

Psalm 119:6 -

and judgments -

Psalm 119:7 -

All these are gathered up in the key verse of this study -

Psalm 119:11 -

It would seem, from these words, that David had a very great desire and longing to please God. He had a consuming passion to be holy, to be delivered from sin in every shape and form and to live a God-glorifying, sanctified life.

Surely this is the right desire of every true child of God.

What is your greatest desire in life? As a Christian believer? Do we not long to please God, to live a life that is Christlike and glorifying to Him?

How is this possible?

Our key verse tells us. In this one verse, we read about -

- the best of Books,
- in the best of places, and
- for the best of reasons.

Let us consider these three simple points.

1. THE BEST OF BOOKS

The best of books is described here as -

Psalm 119:11 -

There are very many wonderful books in the world, but the Bible is supreme. It is unique for it is quite different from every other book. As one has said -

It is worth more than all the others put together.

Another has said -

The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance.

What is there about the Bible that makes it so different from other books? Why is it the best of books?

a. Because of its source.

The Bible is the best of books because of its origin. Where does it come from? It comes from God Himself as the psalmist tells us - *Thy Word.....*

These two words indicate the divine origin of the book. God is the Author of the Bible.

There were, of course, many writers employed in compiling it, nearly forty to be exact. These forty writers wrote over a period of 1600 years. But God was superintending their writing, as we learn very clearly from -

2 Timothy 3:16 -

2 Peter 1:21 -

This is the first reason why the Bible is different, why it is the best of books.

b. Because of its stability.

The Bible is absolutely up-to-date, although it was written centuries ago. This is a very remarkable thing. Man's writings are always in need of revision, but God's, never! Compare -

Psalm 119:89 -

1 Peter 1:24-25 -

and the words of Jesus in -

Matthew 24:35 -

Thus, because God is the Author, it is authoritative, reliable and accurate. Indeed, it is the best of books.

c. Because of its sufficiency.

The Bible contains everything we need for faith and for practice; that is, for what we believe and for what we do.

There is no demand that is made upon us in this life but that we shall find help, guidance and wisdom in this best of all books.

Thus we see that the Bible is the best of books because of its source, its stability and its sufficiency to help us in every circumstance and situation.

Now notice next what the psalmist did with the best of books.

We are told that he hid God's Word in his heart.

We suggest, therefore, that he hid the Bible -

2. IN THE BEST OF PLACES

Psalm 119:11 -

David said these words. He did not hide it in a cupboard, in a drawer or in an old trunk, but he hid it and stored it up in his heart. This means that David placed the Word of God at the very centre of his life, at the core of his being.

David, of course, had a very small Bible compared with our Bible. It probably consisted only of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), the historical books and some of the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

But, he said, I have buried it deep down in the very centre of my being. I have hidden it in my heart.

This raises the question - How can we put, or *hide*, the Bible in our hearts?

There are three things that we must do if we are to hide the Word of God in our hearts.

a. We must take it in our hands.

That is to say, we must secure a good copy of the Bible, well bound, with good print, a copy that we shall treasure, preferably a King James version, though many other versions can be used for reference. This is the first step.

b. We must get it in our heads.

This means that we must read it, learn it and inwardly digest it. We must do this regularly as we pray the prayer -

Psalm 119:18 -

But we must have the Bible not only in our heads, we must notice the exact thing that David says here in our key verse.

This is the second step.

Psalm 119:11 -

c. We must hide it in our hearts.

That is, we must let it drop right down into the very centre of our being. How do we do this?

Psalm 119:15 -

We must meditate in the Word of God.

Job 23:12 -

Jeremiah 15:16 -

Ezekiel 3:1-3 -

This is the third step.

Here, then, is the best of books, hidden in the best of places. But why should we hide the best of books in the best of places?

This leads us to consider the third point of this study.

3. FOR THE BEST OF REASONS

David tells us that the reason he hid God's Word in his heart was that he -

Psalm 119:11 -

In other words, the psalmist tells us here that the Word of God hidden in the heart has a sanctifying effect upon the life.

How does the Bible produce this sanctifying effect in us if we hide it in our hearts?

a. It causes us to recognize sin.

Our tendency is to excuse sin, but once we begin to read and meditate in the Word of God and to hide God's Word in our hearts, then we begin to see sin for what it is - the horrible thing that God hates and that made it necessary for the Lord Jesus to die upon the cross. We then discover that God requires truth in the inward parts -

Psalm 51:6 -

As we read the Word of God, we pray the prayer *quicken my conscience till it feels the loathsomeness of sin.*

It is the Bible, read and received into the heart, that does this quickening work -

Psalm 119:25 -

b. It makes us hate sin.

It is a very wonderful thing when a man begins to hate sin, when he begins to read and meditate in the Word of God and then finds himself loathing sin.

By nature, we love sin, but once we begin to dwell deeply in the Word of God, we find ourselves loving all that God loves and hating all that He hates. That is holiness.

c. It leads us to turn from sin.

What a glorious thing it is when the Holy Spirit ministers to us through the scriptures and turns our hearts away from those things that grieve God.

Psalm 119:9 -

Compare the following -

Genesis 39:7-13 -

Proverbs 28:13 -

d. It points us to the One Who has made an end of all our sins.

As we read the scriptures, we are pointed -

to the Sin-bearer Himself -

John 1:29 -

to the One Who is ready and willing to forgive our sins -

1 John 1:9 -

to our great Advocate above -

1 John 2:1 -

to the One Who is willing to deliver us and to give us the power to live an entirely new life -

John 8:11 -

What a wonderful book the Bible is!

It is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to effect our sanctification, to make us holy, to make us like the Lord Jesus.

So in conclusion:

Let us take the Best of Books - God's Word -

Let us hide it in the best of places - deep down in our hearts, and

Let us do this for the best of purposes - that we may become the men and women God wants us to be!

*Hide God's Word in your heart,
Hide God's Word in your heart,
His Word of love sent from above,
Hide God's Word in your heart.*

NOTES

THE WORKER'S LIGHT

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: **Philippians 2:1-16**

The theme of this series of studies is based upon a striking phrase taken from -

Philippians 2:16 -

In this second study of the series, we are to consider the section of this epistle in which these words occur -

Philippians 2:14-18 -

It is important to notice that Christians are spoken of as -

Philippians 2:15 -

It is well that we should emphasize the fact that, while all people everywhere are the children of God in a *creative sense*, only real Christians are His children in a *redemptive sense*.

Compare the following -

Malachi 2:10 -

Acts 17:28-29 -

John 1:12-14 -

Galatians 3:26 -

The Apostle Paul tells us that as *sons of God* we are to -

Philippians 2:15b -

or, as the New English Bible puts it - *like stars in a dark world*.

We are to be *luminaries* as the word really means. Just as the stars shine in the heavens, so we, a heavenly people, are to shine for the Lord.

Compare the following -

Numbers 6:24-26 -

Proverbs 4:18 -

We are to shine as Moses did -

Exodus 34:29 -

as the Lord did -

Matthew 17:2 -

as John the Baptist did -

John 5:35 -

and as Stephen did -

Acts 6:15 -

Now read -

Matthew 5:16 -

To shine for the Lord is the very essence of Christian service, and all can do it. The following comparison makes it clear just how we may shine.

John 8:12 -

Matthew 5:14 -

1. WHERE ARE WE TO SHINE?

a. We are to shine in the world.

Philippians 2:15 -

This refers to the inhabited world in which we live. But it also refers to the *world system*- all that is opposed to Christ and that excludes Him and which we are forbidden to love.

1 John 2:15-17

As Christians, we are in the world, but we are not to be of it.

John 17:11 -

John 17:15 -

b. We are to shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation).

Philippians 2:15 -

The word *crooked* means *not straight*.

Compare -

Proverbs 2:13-15 -

Isaiah 53:6 -

It also describes this generation as *perverse*, which means *distorted*.

What a dreadful spiritual and moral darkness engulfs this generation of mankind! On every hand there is an appalling ignorance of God and of spiritual things. God's indictment against the human race, as recorded in **Romans 1:21-32**, is still up-to-date.

Gross moral darkness covers the face of the earth.

Sin abounds on every hand, as is indicated by the increase in divorce, drink, drug addiction, gambling, crime, sexual offences and corruption generally.

Genesis 6:5 -

This is true of this generation. It should be read in conjunction with -

Matthew 24:37 -

It is in the midst of this dense darkness that we are to shine for the Lord -

in public -

Matthew 5:14 -

and in private -

Matthew 5:15 -

socially and domestically.

2. HOW ARE WE TO SHINE?

Often the light in a lamp is ineffective because the wick needs attention, or it is obscured because the glass is smoky.

Philippians 2:14 -

tells us of two things that smoke up the glass.

Philippians 2:15-16 -

tells us of five characteristics of the life that is brightly shining for the Lord.

How are we to shine?

a. By not murmuring.

Philippians 2:14 -

The word *murmurings* really means *mutterings*.

Numbers 20:2 -

Numbers 21:5 -

Compare with -

Acts 6:1 -

1 Corinthians 10:10 -

b. By not disputing.

Philippians 2:14 -

The thought here is of going to one another and creating disaffection by unwise talk and gossip.

Disputing is *murmuring* let loose, infecting others with careless talk.

c. By being blameless.

Philippians 2:15 -

This simply means being free from blame so that no one is able to accuse us.

An illustration of this is found in -

Daniel 6:4 -

d. By being harmless.

Philippians 2:15 -

This means being free from adulteration or being sincere and without guile.

John 1:47 -

1 Peter 2:1 -

The special reference is to our motives. It is never the wrong things that we do or say that are the most serious offences. It is the wrong motives that prompt our actions and words that are the greatest sin.

e. By being without rebuke.

Philippians 2:15 -

The idea here is of living in such a way that we do not have to be checked, corrected or chastened by the Lord because of carelessness and because of failure to judge ourselves.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32 -

f. By holding forth the Word of Life.

Philippians 2:16 -

This refers to our active witness in preaching the gospel and making known God's wondrous way of salvation through faith in Christ.

We may *hold forth the Word* by preaching, by personal witness, by tract distribution, by informal meetings, by letter writing, and by many other different ways.

Above all, such *holding forth* must be accompanied by a consistent life, as indicated in points (a - e) above.

g. By living in the light of the day of Christ.

Philippians 2:16 -

The apostle closes this brief exhortation by referring to the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Thus he reminds us that we are to live and labour day by day in the light of this solemn time of reward or loss.

Romans 14:12 -

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 -

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 -

These, then, are the marks or characteristics of those who shine as lights in the world.

Now notice the third and final question.

3. WHY ARE WE TO SHINE?

a. That God the Father may be glorified.

Matthew 5:16 -

Notice the last eight words in this verse.

There is only one life that will glorify Him. That is the Christ-filled, Spirit-controlled life that shines before men and commends Him to them.

b. That the Lord Jesus may be magnified.

To magnify a thing is to make it appear bigger. Christians, by their shining witness, are to make the Lord Jesus appear *big* before the world.

Just as lamps magnify the light, so we are to magnify Him.

Philippians 1:20 -

c. That we may be lost sight of.

A lamp does not attract to itself. It is the light that attracts.

John 3:30 -

See how John the Baptist is described in -

John 5:35 -

There can be no shining without burning, and burning means sacrifice. It is when we are willing to let self go that Christ becomes all and in all.

Matthew 16:24-25 -

d. That sinners may be saved.

We are to shine before men with the red light of warning.

Ezekiel 33:8-9 -

We are to show constantly the green light, or the *all clear* of a consistent and brightly-burning life. In this way, we shall point sinners to the Saviour and will hear His "***Well done!***"

And we shall be rewarded *in the day of Christ* -

Philippians 2:16 -

Compare -

Matthew 25:21 -

2 Cornithians 5:10 -

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THE WORKER'S JOY

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Psalm 89:15-18

Psalm 89:15-18 -

John Nelson Darby, in his 1890 translation of the Old Testament renders the opening words of this section of scripture as follows:

Blessed is the people that know the shout of joy.

The word, *blessed* simply means *happy*. Here we are reminded that Christians are happy people and, because of their inward happiness, they shout for joy.

When the man at the Gate Beautiful experienced healing and came to know the Lord, he shouted for joy, and went on shouting for joy, for we are told that -

Acts 3:8 -

God's people should be happy, joyful people. Their joy is inward and spiritual, whereas ordinary happiness is outward and is only a temporary thing.

There is a sense, of course, in which God's people are a sad people. Jesus said -

Matthew 5:4 -

This seems to contradict what we have just been saying.

What it means, of course, is that even if we are passing through trials and testings such as bereavement, we can know inward joy and true blessedness because the Lord will comfort and uphold us.

It is an interesting fact that we have no record of Jesus laughing.

We are told that He was a Man of Sorrows -

Isaiah 53:3 -

but this was written in anticipation of the sufferings He was to endure at Calvary as our Sin-bearer.

On the other hand, the Lord spoke of *My joy* -

John 15:11 -

His desire for His own disciples was that they should experience His joy.

Is this desire of His being fulfilled in us? Are we happy, joyful Christians?

Over and over again in the Bible we read of the blessedness of God's people. We have a fine example of this in -

Psalm 89:15-18 -

where we are told why Christians are, or should be, happy people.

Why are Christians happy people? Read again **Psalm 89:15-18**.

Consider some of the reasons the psalmist mentions.

1. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY
KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND.

Psalm 89:15 -

The reference here is to the blowing of trumpets. Just as it is customary for church bells to be rung in order to call the people of our land to worship, so in olden days trumpets were blown to call the people to worship God.

When they heard the trumpets being blown, they rejoiced because they were at once reminded of the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts which were being held to celebrate the Lord's dealings with His people.

The important word in **Psalm 89:15** is the word *know*. He does not say, *Blessed is the people that hear the joyful sound*.

This tells us that God's people are happy because they have spiritual discernment. They have come to see and to realize the truth of -

Ephesians 1:3 -

Some years ago, I went to an exhibition of modern art. While I was gazing at one fantastic effort consisting of a few straight lines and a few daubs of paint, a *modern* artist came up to me and asked how I liked the picture.

I told him I could not understand it at all, to which he replied, *Excuse me, sir, you haven't been initiated*.

He was right. I had not, and still have not, been initiated!

And to understand the mystery of the gospel and the things of the Spirit, you have to be initiated. This is made clear in -

1 Corinthians 2:14 -

The things of the Spirit are hidden from the undiscerning, as we learn from Jesus' prayer in -

Matthew 11:25 -

We need to be shown the path of life for we do not know it for ourselves, nor can we find it without divine help.

Psalm 16:11 -

If you invite a worldly man to go to a prayer meeting or take a non-Christian to an evangelistic service or give your testimony to someone who does not know the Lord, what is the result?

Out of politeness, these people may attend the meeting or the evangelistic service, or

listen to the story of your conversion, but, until they become Christians, they do not know the joyful sound. Their heart does not leap as they contemplate the things of God.

They have no shout of joy.

Do we have a shout of joy? Does it thrill us as we meditate upon the love and the tender mercy of God? Do we raise to Him a joyful sound and song of thanksgiving because He has sought and found and saved us who are such unworthy and unlovely sinners?

2. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY WALK IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S COUNTENANCE.

Psalm 89:15 -

One translation renders this: *They live within the sunshine of Thy favour.*

This means that God's people live in the sunshine of His smile. No wonder they are so happy!

This is not true of the unbeliever.

There are some very solemn words in the Bible which describe the position and the condition of the man who is not a Christian.

He is said to be lost -

Luke 19:10 -

He is perishing -

John 3:16 -

He is condemned -

John 3:18 -

Then we read in -

Psalm 7:11 -

This is very solemn indeed for it ties up with -

John 3:36 -

Unconverted, unregenerate men are at enmity with God. It is only when a man turns in repentance to Christ and trusts Him as his Lord and Saviour that he can rejoice in the truth of -

Colossians 1:21 -

Those who are not Christians do not love the Lord. They do not obey Him or serve Him because of their sin.

Ephesians 4:18 -

But Christians have been -

Romans 5:10 -

and God's smile is resting upon them because they have been -

Ephesians 1:6 -

They have -

Romans 5:1 -

They experience -

Philippians 4:7 -

No wonder they shout for joy! No wonder they are happy! Do we share this joy, this happiness, this blessedness?

2. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY
CONSTANTLY REJOICE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Why do they rejoice in this? Because His Name represents His person, His character, His attributes and His work.

What do we know about the person of our Lord, the character of our Lord, the attributes and the work of our Lord?

We find the answers to these questions in the earlier verses of **Psalm 89**.

a. He is merciful.

Verse 1 -

b. He is faithful.

Verse 1 -

c. He is a covenant-keeping God.

Verse 3 -

d. He is incomparable.

Verse 6 -

Verse 8 -

e. He is the Lord of nature.

Verse 9 -

f. He is Creator of heaven and earth.

Verses 11 & 12 -

g. He is the Sovereign Lord enthroned above.

Verse 14 -

Is this what the worldly man rejoices in? Does the very mention of God and of His Name cause the unbeliever to shout for joy?

No!

But it is so different with the believer, the true child of God. The very mention of the Name of the Lord, and the very thought of all that that Name signifies, causes the Christian to shout for joy.

Do we feel like shouting for joy?

4. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY ARE EXALTED IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

There are some very wonderful words at the end of -

Psalm 89:16 -

What do they mean?

They refer to our acceptance in Christ and to our being clothed with His righteousness.

By nature -

Isaiah 64:6 -

But the moment we put our trust in Christ as our Saviour, God imputes His righteousness to us. He clothes us in the righteousness of His Son.

Read the following verses and rejoice afresh in the wonderful thing which God has done for all those who have put their trust in Christ as their Saviour.

Isaiah 61:10 -

Romans 3:20-22 -

Romans 4:5-8 -

Thus we read in -

Romans 8:1 -

that is, to those who are clothed in Christ's righteousness.

We can therefore sing with Charles Wesley -

*No condemnation now I dread, Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ
my own.*

Or we can sing, with a shout of joy, the words of Count Zinzendorf -

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.*

*This spotless robe the same appears,
When ruined nature sinks in years.
No age can change its glorious hue,
Its glory is for ever new.*

*Thou God of power, Thou God of love,
Let all the world Thy mercy prove;
Their beauty this, their glorious dress
Jesus the Lord, our righteousness.*

So, if you are a Christian and if your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you are clothed in His righteousness and seated with Him in the heavenlies. What a blessed thing this is!

Surely, as we think about it, it makes us shout for joy.

Does it?

5. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THE LORD IS THE GLORY OF THEIR STRENGTH.

Psalm 89:17 -

The literal meaning of these words - *Thou art the glory of their strength* - is that God's people glory in the fact that the Lord is their strength.

We are so weak, we fail so much and we are so *strengthless*, and we live in a troubled, fearful world - but, thank God!

He is our strength and He says to us -

Isaiah 41:10 -

We shall always be weak in ourselves, but, like the apostle Paul, we can know the power of Christ resting upon us and we can say,

2 Corinthians 12:10 -

6. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEIR HORN IS EXALTED.

Psalm 89:17 -

These words need some explanation.

The horn was an eastern ornament worn by men and women when they were in good spirits and in a confident frame of mind. It denoted beauty, plenty and power.

This reminds us that all our resources are in Christ. In Him is everything that we need for time and for eternity.

Colossians 2:9-10 -

What did Charles Wesley mean when he wrote:

Thou, O Christ, art all I want: more than all in Thee I find?

He meant just this, that all our resources are in our risen and glorified Lord.

Happy, indeed, are the people who can say this! They are the ones who should be shouting for joy.

7. CHRISTIANS ARE HAPPY PEOPLE BECAUSE THE LORD IS THEIR KING AND THEIR DEFENSE.

This is how this section of scripture ends -

Psalm 89:18 -

What security! Our God and our King is our Defense!

*He has been our help in ages past;
He is our hope for all the years that are to come.
He is our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!*

Are we shouting for joy, or is all this meaningless to us?

Psalm 89:15 -

Happy are the people who know the shout of joy. They are happy and joyful because they are so rich on account of their union with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. All their fresh springs of joy, of peace, of power, of love and of grace are in Him!

NOTES

THE WORKER'S STRENGTH

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Deuteronomy 33:24-25

Deuteronomy 33:24-25 -

Anybody needing encouragement will certainly find it in the closing words of this small section of scripture, indeed, in the whole of **Deuteronomy 13**. This chapter speaks of -

Deuteronomy 33:1 - *And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.*

All these blessings are ours today through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as we learn from -

2 Corinthians 1:20 -

What is the message of these verses for ourselves?

1. WE LEARN THAT, AS CHRISTIANS, AS BELIEVERS, AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE ARE TRAVELERS ON A JOURNEY.

This is clearly implied in -

Deuteronomy 33:25 -

by the use of the word *shoes*. What are shoes for? They are for walking, for journeys. And the Christian life is most certainly a journey which begins on earth and ends in heaven, though, of course, really it never ends. It goes on in heaven through all eternity!

This journey begins at conversion, and, so far as this earthly life is concerned, it concludes either at death or at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Within the context of **Psalm 23**, the journey begins in -

Psalm 23:1 -

and ends in -

Psalm 23:6 -

In the New Testament, this idea of the Christian life being a journey is clearly taught, for Christians are described as pilgrims who are passing through this earthly scene - *pilgrim(s) through this barren land.*

Hebrews 11:13 -

1 Peter 2:11 -

and as those who are walking in a new way -

Ephesians 4:1 -

So the word *shoes* reminds us that we are travelers journeying on to a better land.

2. WE LEARN THAT WE, AS CHRISTIANS, ARE JOURNEYING OVER VERY ROUGH COUNTRY.

The people to whom God made this promise had rocky, flinty mountain roads to negotiate. Leather shoes would have been useless, for they would have worn out at once and their feet would have suffered. The Lord most graciously provided shoes made of iron and brass -

Deuteronomy 33:25 -

This reminds us that we, as Christians, are traveling on a very rough road. No preacher needs to remind his congregation of this fact, for it is self-evident.

The Lord has wonderfully blessed us -

by saving us -

Hebrews 7:25 -

by giving us eternal life -

1 John 5:11-12 -

by making us citizens of heaven -

Philippians 3:20 -

But the journey to heaven is a rough one. We are constantly beset by trials and testings. The Lord has never promised that it would be different from this.

Compare -

Psalm 34:19 -

John 16:33 -

Philippians 1:29 -

1 Peter 4:12 -

Perhaps you are experiencing the roughness of the way now. If so, this is part of the journey prescribed for you by the Lord Himself.

3. WE LEARN THAT WE TRAVEL ONLY A STEP AT A TIME, INDEED, A DAY AT A TIME.

The Lord promises shoes of iron and brass so that we may journey on over the rough roads. But, shoes speak of walking and we walk only a day at a time.

Thus, the Lord says -

Deuteronomy 33:25b -

He does not say *as thy weeks.....or months.....or years*, though that is true. But we travel only one day at a time, or as we are reminded - a step at a time -

Psalms 37:23 -

It is a merciful providence that we live only one day at a time, for, if we knew all that is in store for us in the remaining days of this year, next year and the years that follow, the burden would be intolerable. Immense fears would beset us. We would be overcome with apprehension.

Thus, on the rough journey of life, we who are Christians, have to learn to go one step at a time and to live one day at a time. We must not try to look into the veiled and distant future. We must endeavour to do what Jesus exhorts us to do -

Matthew 6:34a -

In other words, do not be anxious about tomorrow for -

Matthew 6:34b -

or as The Amplified New Testament puts it -

Matthew 6:34 -

We often say, *How time flies!* In actual fact, the journey we take is a slow one.

Then the question arises, *How shall we find strength to meet all the demands of the journey?*

Well, that is cared for in the wonderful promise before us.

4. WE LEARN THAT THE JOURNEY WE ARE TAKING TO
THE HEAVENLY CITY IS A JOURNEY FOR WHICH
STRENGTH IS SUPPLIED TO MATCH EACH AND EVERY DEMAND.

Read what the Lord says -

Deuteronomy 33:25b -

This is what Alexander MacLaren meant when he said -

The two sums of *thy days* and *thy strength* keep growing side by side, the one as fast as the other, and no faster.

In others words, if the days increase, so will the strength increase. If the burdens are heavier, then the supply of grace will be greater.

2 Corinthians 12:9 -

Notice this wonderful fact. This guarantee of sufficient strength to support and sustain us is applicable to each one of us in three spheres -

a. In our home and family life.

Surely there is a reference to this in -

Deuteronomy 33:24 -

What demands are made upon those whose main task is to be in the home - to the mother, or perhaps to the father!

What does God say to those who are pressed on every hand in the domestic sphere?

He says -

Deuteronomy 33:25b -

b. In our church and assembly life.

This is referred to the words in -

Deuteronomy 33:24-

How can I, as a Christian, be a help to my brethren, my brothers and sisters in Christ with whom I have fellowship and with whom I engage in service in my church?

How can I be sufficient for this, to be a dedicated, Spirit-filled and, therefore, a humble, kind and loving Christian?

The Lord says -

Deuteronomy 33:25b -

c. In our daily walk.

The words in -

Deuteronomy 33:24b -

refer to the process of extracting the oil from the olives by foot presses, by treading out the oil. This was very hard work. Where did those who were engaged in it find their strength?

The Lord answers -

Deuteronomy 33:24b

How wonderful the Lord's promise is, and how sufficient His strength will be for every demand that is made upon us!

Of course, we must appropriate that strength as it is offered to us by the Lord and in the Person of the Holy Spirit Who indwells us if we are true believers.

Compare -

Zechariah 4:6 -

John 14:16-17 -

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 -

NOTES

THE WORKER'S BURDEN

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: Psalm 55:22

Psalm 55:22 -

All of us have to carry burdens. This is a world of burden-bearing. Sorrow and trouble come alike to all mankind.

Compare -

Job 5:7 -

Job 14:1 -

There is a Spanish proverb which says, *There is no home anywhere which sooner or later does not have its hush.*

It is true also that some people have to carry heavier burdens than others. Some are handicapped and frustrated at every turn of the road. Some carry hidden burdens which others, including their own friends, do not know they are bearing, for many a breaking heart is hidden behind a smiling face.

Often the deepest and most poignant burdens carried by men and women are those which are not seen. All this is true of Christian people as well as of people who are not Christians. We are reminded of this in -

Psalm 34:19 -

A quiet reading of **Psalm 55** will soon convince us that the writer of the psalm was a very burdened man. Perhaps one word in -

Psalm 55:5 -

emphasizes the intensity and the weight of the burden he was carrying.

It is the word *overwhelmed*.

This leads us to ask our first question.

5. WHAT KINDS OF BURDENS DO PEOPLE CARRY?

They are too varied to be enumerated with any degree of completeness, but we may mention the following -

a. Burdens to do with the home.

To most people, home is *sweet* - but not to all. In many homes there is poverty, sickness, sorrow and dislocation.

b. Burdens that have to do with business responsibilities.

c. Burdens in connection with the Lord's work.

For one example, turn to -

2 Corinthians 11:28 -

d. Burdens to do with our friends.

This kind of experience is described in -

Psalms 55:12-14 -

e. Physical burdens.

An example of this is found in -

2 Corinthians 12:7 -

f. Temperamental burdens.

These make us prone to fear, anxiety, worry, depression, and even despair.

g. Burdens connected with loss and bereavement.

For instance -

John 11:19 -

h. The burden of disappointment.

i. The heaviest burden of all - the burden of sin.

What a heavy burden is the burden of unforgiven sin, or an unruly tongue, or an uncontrolled temper -

Romans 7:24-25 -

There are so many burdens that we are called to bear. We have mentioned only a few, but our next question is this -

2. WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THESE BURDENS?

In this psalm we are told several things which we are not to do in relation to our burdens.

a. We are not to doubt God.

Psalm 55:1 -

How easily doubt assails us when trouble comes upon us! But we must *never doubt God!* No relief can be found this way, but only an increase of trouble.

b. There is the temptation to complain and to indulge in self-pity.

We have an illustration of this in -

Psalm 55:2 -

Here is something to avoid, for there is no relief from our burdens in complaining and self-pity.

c. We must guard against the danger of despair.

There is no doubt that -

Psalm 55:4-5 -

describe a man who was in great despair. There is no relief from our burdens by getting into this condition.

d. We must not yield to the desire to escape.

If we run away, we carry our burdens with us, though it is natural to want to run away.

Psalm 55:6-7 -

No relief from our burdens can be found here.

e. We must not become embittered against others, as the psalmist did.

Psalm 55:15 -

How, then, can we find relief when we are heavily burdened? What can we, and what should we, do with life's burdens?

Three things are clearly indicated in the wonderful promise at the head of this study.

6. WE ARE TO ACCEPT THE BURDEN FROM THE LORD.

The word *burden* here literally means *that which He hath given thee*, or the word may simply mean *gift*. Did you ever think of your burden as a trust from God?

To understand this is to take the first step in the transformation of trouble! That trial, that disappointment, that loss - is that God's doing?

Yes. He has permitted it, child of God. He has trusted you with it for some very wise and loving purpose.

Romans 8:28 -

It has not come because of *fate* or *bad luck*. It is not simply *just one of those things*. Therefore, accept it from His hands.

One very sure reason why God gives us burdens to bear is that they may draw us closer to Him.

Psalms 55:19b -

How easily we forget Him and how slack we get sometimes when things go *smoothly*, where there are no *changes*! Your burden, whatever it is, will you accept it from the Lord? Will you take it from His dear hand? This is the first thing to do with life's burdens.

7. WE ARE TO CAST THE BURDEN UPON THE LORD.

The word *cast* here literally means *fling* or *hurl*. It requires and denotes action and effort.

Daniel was cast into the lions' den. Read **Daniel 6:7-16**.

Jonah was cast into the sea -

Jonah 1:15 -

John the Baptist was cast into prison -

Matthew 4:12 -

The devil will be cast into the lake of fire -

Revelation 20:10 -

And you and I are to cast our burdens upon the Lord -

Psalms 55:22 -

He is the great Burden-bearer. His gracious word to sinner and to saint is found in -

Matthew 11:28-30 -

Here we see a further reason why He gives us these burdens - that in our weakness we may prove His strength and the all-sufficiency of His grace. He wants us to learn the great twofold lesson that - we cannot, but He can.

Read about Paul's heavy burden: from whom it came, why God permitted it, how Paul prayed for it to be removed and what God said to him.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9a -

Now see what Paul was able to say after God had spoken to him -

2 Corinthians 12:9b-10 -

Your burden, whatever it is, will you cast it upon the Lord? Will you let Him carry it for you? It is too heavy for you!

3. WE ARE TO LEAVE THE BURDEN WITH THE LORD.

Once we have cast our burden upon the Lord, He assumes full responsibility for the burden and for us. He promises to sustain, or uphold, us. How wonderful this is!

Psalm 55:22 -

He shall sustain thee, and more - He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Never? No, never!

Psalm 55:22 - (The Amplified Bible) - *Cast your burden on the Lord (releasing the weight of it) and He will sustain you. He will never allow the (consistently) righteous to be moved - made to slip, fall or fail.*

NOTES

THE WORKER A STEWARD

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: 1 Peter 4:10

1 Peter 4:10 -

In the course of my travels I have stayed in hundreds of homes. Some of these have been magnificent, some were less grand, and some were quite humble, but, in every case, I have enjoyed much kindness and wonderful fellowship.

What were all my hosts and hostesses doing? They were opening their homes and extending to me their gift of hospitality.

The Apostle Peter, in -

1 Peter 4:10 -

is urging his readers to use this wonderful gift of hospitality. In effect he says, *Some of you have homes in which you live. Now, your homes are a gift from God. You are stewards to use that gift for the blessing of others and for the extension of His kingdom.*

Peter then goes on to say that all Christians should be 'good stewards of the manifold grace of God', or as this expression really means*the many sided grace of God.*

Every Christian is a servant of God, but he is also a steward. There must, therefore, be a distinction between a servant and a steward.

What is this distinction?

A servant is one who serves and is in subjection to his master. A steward is also a servant, but the word 'steward' includes the idea of special responsibility.

God has entrusted certain things to us. We are responsible to Him to use them properly.

For example -

Genesis 15:2 -

We are told that Eliezer was the steward of Abraham's household. In other words, Abraham had placed all the affairs of his household and property into the hands of this capable man and had made him responsible for managing all his affairs.

1 Chronicles 28:1-2 -

Here we have a beautiful account of the way in which David gathered together all the key people needed in order to undertake the plans for building the temple.

Incidentally, David was not allowed to build it. This became his son Solomon's responsibility in later years.

However, we read that *David assembled all the princes of Israel.....and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king*. Thus we see from this verse what the Old Testament concept was of a steward.

The ten servants, of whom we read in our Lord's parable in -

Luke 19:12-13 -

were stewards. In another translation, the words 'occupy till I come' read 'trade with these until I return'.

Thus we see that these servants were given a responsibility. They were to trade with the pounds their master had given them for that purpose. It is the custom for wealthy landowners to place their land, their farms and property into the hands and under the direction of a manager, or a steward. Such a man is responsible to care for and administer all the affairs relating to the estate.

But, if we are God's stewards, what has He entrusted to us to administer and dispense for Him for which He will hold us responsible?

Our life

What a tremendous gift this is that God has bestowed upon us! What wonderful bodies He has given us, with minds to think, hearts to love, wills to choose, and with such infinite capabilities!

Do we recognize the responsibility of stewardship with regard to our lives, to our bodies?

Paul reminds us that -

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 -

If we are stewards of our bodies, we shall discipline our habits in regard to eating, sleeping, working and relaxing so that we become as fit as God would have us for His service.

Our influence

God has given this to all of us. He holds us responsible as to how we use it. Our influence is a trust from God. Paul says -

Romans 14:7 -

We need to remember that, consciously or unconsciously, we all influence others by the way we live, the way we talk and the way we react in all circumstances. God has given to every one of us some power over other lives. This imposes upon us a mighty responsibility.

How are we influencing others? Do we recognize, in this aspect of our daily living, that we are the stewards of the Lord?

Our money and our possessions

As a matter of fact, we should not say 'our' at all, for all that we have is God's. We are only His stewards.

Do you have a bank balance and some investments? Do you own a house, a car, a shop, a business? You are only a steward of these things. God has entrusted them to you for you to use for His glory. All these possessions of 'mine' are really His, and they are only lent to me.

Regarding my house, for example, I am only the caretaker. If you 'own' a business, you are only the manager of that business.

Do you recognize this trust in regard to the matter of possessions?

Our children

Those of us who are parents have been entrusted with a wonderful gift. If we are Christian parents, God has given us children as a holy trust from Himself. Many Christians recognize this.

When their children are born, they give them at once to the Lord. They act upon the principle that, first of all, these children are God's for Him to do with them what He sees best, and they dedicate them to Him for His special service. Many missionaries were thus given to the Lord on the day of their birth.

In effect, the parents said, *Lord, this lovely little one You have given to us is Yours first of all and You have lent him to us. Thank You for entrusting him to us. Please help us to bring him up in a way which will bring glory to You. As the years go by, please help him to fulfil Your plan for his life.*

A true steward will rejoice at the prospect of his son or daughter being called of God. Unfortunately, there have been occasions when the sacrifice has seemed too great and Christian parents have rebelled and have tried to turn their children away from the mission field as their lifework.

When this happens, it indicates a failure on the part of the parents to recognize that children are a trust from the Lord Who says, as did Pharaoh's daughter -

Exodus 2:9 -

Our time

We all have time on our hands to use as we wish, but how do we use it? Paul says -

Ephesians 5:16 -

which literally means - 'buy up the opportunities'.

I believe that if every Christian recognized that his time is the Lord's, then there would be no scarcity of dedicated workers in our churches and Christian work generally.

It is a very sad thing that, when the need for workers is so great, the opportunities for service are so glorious and the time is so short, so few are willing to give much or any time to the things of the Lord.

Priorities can easily get mixed up. Time, which could be, and should be, invested for the kingdom of God, is frittered away on secondary, secular and, sometimes, sinful things.

In humble recognition of the lordship of Christ in our lives we need to remember His prior claim to each day as it opens and unfolds before us, and we should be willing as good stewards, to say with Frances R. Havergal -....*Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

Do we fit into this ideal? For it is God's ideal and not man's.

Special talents and gifts

God has endowed all of us with some special talents. These are a trust from Him. It may be a gift of speech, a gift of song or a gift of hospitality in a nice home where some of God's weary servants can find refreshment.

Multitudes of men and women in the forces, students away from home, have been able to thank God for the Christian homes into which they have been welcomed and shown such love and kindness.

Many lonely people likewise, have benefited immensely from the kindness and love of those who have opened their homes to them. Why have these hosts and hostesses been so hospitable?

It is because they have recognized their stewardship in relation to their homes.

Some of the talents which God has entrusted are very wonderful. Who, for instance, can estimate the value of a really fine singing voice?

Those who are blessed with beautiful voices face a real test. The world is quick to spot a good voice and to encourage the owner to make his mark on the stage or the concert platform. The financial offers are sometimes very considerable.

Some of the finest singers in the Christian world have turned down very many offers.

Why?

Because their first concern has been to use their gift for the Lord and to sing the gospel to as many people as possible.

The gospel of the grace of God

We have a responsibility to live the gospel, to preach the gospel and to send it forth to the ends of the earth.

The Apostle Paul wrote some very challenging words in -

1 Corinthians 4:1 -

He also wrote -

1 Thessalonians 2:4 -

All the way through his many years of service, Paul recognized that he was a steward of the gospel and that God had entrusted this message of salvation to him, not only that he might enjoy it and rejoice in its benefits, but that he might share it with others.

The good news that Christ Jesus had come into the world to save sinners and that salvation had been procured and was available to all men, was a holy 'deposit' which God had entrusted to His servant.

Paul acknowledged this in his letter to the church at Rome. He not only said *I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome* and *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*, but he said - *I am a debtor.....*

In other words, he said, *I owe to all men to preach the gospel to them.*

Romans 1:14-16 -

This is the vision we need to capture, or, if we have lost it, we need to recapture it.

I owe the gospel to my family, to my friends, to my colleagues and to all and sundry.

I am in debt to them.

I am a steward of the gospel. I have been put in trust with the gospel.

Now, as we look further into this important matter of being faithful stewards of the Lord Jesus, and as we look at the various relevant scriptures, we learn some very interesting lessons.

1. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A STEWARD.

There are a number of scriptures which make this perfectly clear. For example, Paul says -

1 Corinthians 12:7 -

Again, after he has mentioned a few of the gifts that have been 'given' to Christians, he goes on to say -

1 Corinthians 12:11 -

1 Corinthians 12:14 -

He says much the same thing when he is writing to the Christians at Ephesus.

Ephesians 4:7 -

The Apostle Peter also underlines the same truth that every Christian is a steward, for he says -

1 Peter 4:10 -

If we are Christians then we are stewards and God has entrusted us with responsibilities for which we are accountable to Him.

8. CHRISTIANS MAY BE GOOD STEWARDS OR BAD STEWARDS.

It is significant to notice that Peter uses the qualifying word 'as *good* stewards of the manifold grace of God'.

In the Bible we are told that there are two kinds of Christians - spiritual and carnal -

1 Corinthians 3:1 -

There are two kinds of servants - faithful and unfaithful -

Matthew 25:21 -

There are two kinds of vessels - some to honour and some to dishonour -

2 Timothy 2:20 -

And there are two kinds of stewards - good stewards and bad stewards.

9. THE PERIOD IN WHICH WE ARE TO EXERCISE OUR STEWARDSHIP IS UNTIL THE LORD COMES.

We are here for only a limited time. One day, and it may be soon, our earthly span will be completely ended. Moreover, one day soon the Lord will come. Then the opportunity for exercising and fulfilling our stewardship down here on earth will be over.

What Jesus said in relation to Himself is also true in relation to each one of us -

John 9:4 -

The period for exercising our stewardship is until we die or until the Lord comes.

10. WE ARE TO EXERCISE OUR STEWARDSHIP IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMING OF CHRIST AND OF THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

This thought adds urgency to the whole matter. It challenges us to be diligent, for every Christian will have to give an account of his stewardship. It would be dreadful to be

found wanting.

In that day, we shall either receive a reward or we shall suffer loss.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 -

Daniel Webster was once asked, *What is the greatest thought that has ever occupied your mind?*

His immediate response was, *The thought of my personal accountability to God.*

He was thinking, of course, of -

Romans 14:12 -

If we were to live more in the light of this truth, we would live more carefully and with a greater discipline. Our giving would be different. We would be more loving and considerate in our dealings with others lest we should be -

1 John 2:28 -

11. THE SPECIAL REQUIREMENT IN A STEWARD IS
NOT SUCCESS , BUT FAITHFULNESS.

It is great to be successful, but our chief concern should be to be faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2 -

There is great encouragement here. When we stand before the Lord, He will not speak about our successes but of our faithfulness.

To many He will say -

Matthew 25:21 -

Will He say that to you? It is faithfulness and not success which will be rewarded.

6. THE SPECIAL MARK OF A STEWARD IS THAT HE MUST BE WITHOUT BLAME.

Perfection is not the requirement for a steward, nor is this possible. God demands that we should be blameless, without blame, and this is possible!

Titus 1:7 -

This equally refers to every believer. This means that we are to live day by day in such a way that no one can point the finger of blame against us for inconsistencies in our lives.

When I was a small boy, I spent some months with an aunt in her home in the country. One day, when she and my cousins were out, I went into the garden and decided to do some digging.

I was successful - I found a potato!

Excitedly, I went on digging until I had unearthed and stacked up quite a pile of potatoes. I was elated. But when my aunt returned, I learned, to my consternation, that those 'seed' potatoes had only been planted the day before!

I was wrong, although my intentions were good. But, as a boy of six, I was quite blameless.

12. FAITHFULNESS IN STEWARDSHIP IN THIS LIFE
QUALIFIES US FOR SPECIAL SERVICE IN THE LIFE TO
COME.

In the parable of the nobleman, the faithful servant was commended -

Luke 19:17 -

So does service down here qualify us for service to which God will appoint us when we get to heaven?

Yes, it means just that.

In his modest way, the servant said -

Well, I've done very little down here since I came to know the Saviour. But it is wonderful to think that I'll be able to serve Him up there forevermore!

Whatever service we are seeking to do for the Lord now, if we discharge our responsibility faithfully, this will qualify us for greater service in glory.

The Lord is looking for faithful stewards.

He is the worthy Lord of the stewards, so let us give Him such devotion and dedication that, in that day, when we shall see His face -

Revelation 22:3-4 -

we shall hear Him saying to us -

Well done.....!

NOTES

THE WORKER'S CREED

A.D. 46 and TODAY

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Acts 15:11

Acts 15:11 -

It is very important to believe the right things, and then to have full assurance concerning what we believe.

Peter was engaged in a lively discussion which centered around the question of rites and ceremonies and whether or not these were necessary for salvation.

Acts 15:1 -

Suddenly, he gave his answer in no uncertain terms -

Acts 15:11 -

Here, then, was this apostle's creed. It is the creed of every true Christian. Everybody has a creed or system of belief of one kind or another.

What is the Christian's creed? Here it is in clear and unmistakable terms. It is not, by any means, complete or comprehensive, but it contains several vital truths which may be described as basic Christian beliefs. What are these?

13. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

We learn this from the words 'even as they'. What do these three words signify?

By looking at -

Acts 15:7-9 -

we see that the 'they' refers to the Gentiles.

Peter, of course, was a Jew and here he is stating the fact that the salvation which God has provided for the Jews has also been provided for the Gentiles, and thus for everybody.

The gospel was first given to the Jews -

Matthew 15:24 -

John 1:11 -

When the Jews rejected the Lord, then the gospel was given also to the Gentiles and now there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - both may be saved.

Luke 2:32 -

Romans 10:12-13 -

Galatians 3:28 -

This is our first point of belief -

Romans 2:11 -

Revelation 22:17 -

Romans 1:16 -

This is what we believe.

2. WE BELIEVE IN THE UNIVERSAL NEED OF SALVATION.

It is implied in the words of Peter that all men everywhere need to be *saved*. There are no exceptions to this, for by nature all men are spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1 -

they are lost -

Luke 19:10 -

they are blind -

2 Corinthians 4:4 -

they are alienated from God -

Ephesians 4:18 -

they are condemned -

John 3:18 -

and they are under God's wrath -

John 3:36 -

This is true of all people, therefore, all need to be saved. This is why the gospel of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to be preached to all people, because this is the only way in which they can be saved.

Matthew 28:19 -

Luke 2:10-11 -

John 3:16 -

The Jew needs to be saved. So does the Gentile.

The American needs to be saved. So does the Japanese.

The poor man needs to be saved. So does the rich man.

The educated man needs to be saved. So does the illiterate man.

Old people need to be saved. So do young people.

Thank God, *all* may be saved!

This is what we believe.

14. WE BELIEVE IN THE COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF GOD'S SALVATION.

Notice Peter's words - *we believe we shall be saved*. Wasn't he saved already?

The answer to this question is both. *Yes* and *No*, for there are three aspects in God's salvation: *past, present and future*.

The moment we come to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith and trust Him as our Saviour, at once we are saved from the guilt and penalty of our sins. All our past sins are blotted out -

Isaiah 44:22 -

they are cleansed away -

Acts 13:38-39 -

and any other sins that we may commit from then on are covered by our Saviour's work on Calvary -

1 John 2:1-2 -

But we are not only saved from the guilt and the penalty of sin, but, through faith in our risen Lord, we are *saved by His life* from the power and dominion of sin.

Romans 5:10 -

Thus, salvation has to do with the past and the present. But what about the future?

This is provided for also. When the Saviour returns from heaven, all who are His will then be saved from the very presence of sin -

John 14:2-3 -

Acts 1:11 -

1 Corinthians 15:23 -

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 -

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 -

What a full and complete salvation is God's salvation! This is what we believe.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD-APPOINTED SAVIOUR.

There are many man-appointed saviours, but there is only One Whom God has authorized to be the Redeemer of mankind. Who is that One? Peter tells us in the three titles -

a. *The name* Lord Jesus Christ.

The name *Jesus* speaks of our Saviour's humanity and of the purpose for which He came into the world -

Matthew 1:21 -

b. *The name* Christ.

This title is the name that tells us He is the One anointed by God to be the Messiah of His people Israel and the Saviour of the Gentiles -

Matthew 16:16 -

Luke 24:26 -

Luke 24:46 -

*c. The title **Lord.***

This title tells us that He is the One appointed by God to be the Lord of all -

Acts 2:36 -

Acts 10:36 -

Thus we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is unique. He stands alone as the Saviour of all who trust Him.

Isaiah 45:22 -

John 10:9 -

Acts 4:12 -

There is no other Saviour. This is what we believe.

15. WE BELIEVE THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE ALONE.

How are sinners saved? On what basis does God deal with sinful men and women?
What are the grounds on which they can come back into fellowship with Him?

Peter tells us -

Acts 15:11 -

We are saved by Christ, through His atoning work. And all this is of grace - that is, salvation is unmerited by us. It is, therefore, the undeserved gift which God bestows freely upon all who believe on Him.

We are not saved by doing our best, by keeping the commandments, by going to church or by saying our prayers.

To see how we are saved, read -

Ephesians 2:8-10 -

Titus 3:5 -

Salvation is altogether of grace and through faith. Grace provides the salvation and faith receives it and receives Him.

Luke 19:6 -

Luke 19:9 -

This is what we believe.

6. WE BELIEVE IN THE SECURITY OF ALL BELIEVERS.

Notice how confidently Peter said, *we believe.....we shall be saved.*

He meant that Christ, Who had saved him from sin's penalty and Who was able to save him from sin's power, would eventually save him from the presence of sin.

Philippians 1:6 -

Jude 24 -

He could never fall away and be lost -

John 10:28-29 -

Hebrews 13:5-6 -

This is what we believe.

16. WE BELIEVE THAT PERSONAL FAITH IS NECESSARY
TO SALVATION.

Peter says - *we believe.....*

This covers belief in the facts of the gospel and trust in the Person Who saves. God has provided salvation. Our part is simply to believe.

John 1:12 -

John 3:16 -

John 5:24 -

Acts 16:30-31 -

Romans 10:9-10 -

This is what we believe. Is this your creed? Is this your Christ?

It is not enough, of course, to believe in a creed. Faith must be in the Person of Christ Himself.

Saving faith is faith that believes that Christ is able and willing to save and that trusts Him as personal Saviour.

DO YOU THUS TRUST HIM?

NOTES

NOTES

THE WORKER'S WARFARE

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: 1 John 3:8

1 John 3:8 -

A modern translation of these words reads -

The Son of God came to earth with the express purpose of liquidating the devil's activities.

In this one verse the writer gives us one great reason why the Lord Jesus came from heaven to earth. There were, of course, other reasons.

Matthew 5:17 -

Luke 19:10 -

John 14:8-9 -

1 Timothy 1:15 -

Hebrews 9:26 -

Here, however, we are told that He came to liquidate the works of the devil!

Satan is a real person having the attributes and characteristics of personality.

What are *the works of the devil* and how does he try to work in the lives of God's people?

SATAN OPPOSES ALL REFERENCES TO THE SACRIFICIAL WORK THAT JESUS DID UPON THE CROSS OF CALVARY.

Matthew 16:21-24 -

Read these verses carefully and you will notice that Jesus came into the world to die and that, when Peter said, *No* to this, it was, in fact, Satan speaking through Peter, trying to turn the Lord aside from the purpose for which He had come into the world.

If there is one subject the devil hates, it is all references to Calvary. Why? Because Calvary spells his doom.

Today he tries to get Christians, and preachers in particular, to leave out all references to the cross, or to minimize the significance of the Cross. But read again **Matthew 16:24**.

Satan also tries to get Christians to evade the true implications of the Cross, that is, death to sin and self. God's plan for us is that we should die to ourselves, and dying by crucifixion is a very painful business.

The devil opposes this teaching and tries to prevent us from entering into the experience of -

Romans 6:11 -

2. SATAN SNATCHES AWAY THE GOOD SEED OF THE WORD OF GOD LEST IT SHOULD FIND LODGMENT IN THE HEART AND BRING FORTH FRUIT

Mark 4:15-16 -

Whenever the Lord is sowing His Word into the hearts of His people, the devil is there to snatch away the seed.

The Lord is the Sower. Satan is the great enemy.

How active the devil is when the Word of God is preached, and after the Word of God has been preached! His great effort is to snatch away the good seed of the Word so that no fruit results from the ministry.

It is one thing for us to hear the Word, but quite another thing for us to receive the Word and to put it into practice.

Hebrews 4:2 -

Be careful, not only how you enter God's House, but how you leave it. Be on the lookout for Satan!

17. SATAN ATTACKS THE FAITH OF THE CHILD OF GOD.

Luke 22:31-32 -

The important word to notice in these two verses is the word *faith*. What does this mean? It means that, in all the experiences of testing and of trial that the Lord permits in the lives of His children, the devil's great object is to get them to lose their faith in God.

When sickness comes, when reverses come, when we experience loss and bereavement, the great temptation comes to us to doubt God and to ask, *Does God Care?*

This is the devil's work. He always attacks the faith of God's people.

He did this with John the Baptist -

Matthew 11:6 -

He did this with the disciples who were crossing the sea -

Mark 4:40 -

Thank God, over against the devil's work, which is to destroy our faith, we have the Saviour's prayers that our *faith fail not* !

Hebrews 7:25 -

18. THE DEVIL TEMPTS GOD'S PEOPLE TO MAKE A DEFECTIVE CONSECRATION AND TO COMPROMISE IN THE MATTER OF THEIR

DEDICATION.

Acts 5:1-4 -

Ananias and Sapphira were well known members of the church. There was a great deal of dedicated giving going on, so Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession, but, they made out that they were presenting all the money that they had received for it to the Lord, whereas, in fact, they were keeping back part of it.

They were insincere and dishonest. Their action was altogether hypocritical. Who was behind this action?

Acts 5:3 -

What a solemn possibility this is to be able to lie to the Holy Ghost! It is possible for us to do this even when we sing hymns -

Matthew 15:8 -

Matthew 12:36-37 -

How easy it is for any Christian to keep back part of the price, to retain a little sin, a little of the world, when God says, *Destroy All!*

1 Samuel 15:3 -

19. THE DEVIL TRIES TO FORCE THE CHRISTIAN TO BE
INCONSISTENT IN LIFE AND BEHAVIOUR.

Ephesians 4:25-29 -

But is the writer really addressing Christians when he speaks of lying, anger, wrath, stealing, *foul language*.....?

Yes! He is writing to Christians. Every time we are guilty of any of these sins, or any other sins that are not mentioned here, we *give place* to the devil. In other words, the devil gets a foothold in our lives.

2 Corinthians 2:8-11 -

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 -

1 Timothy 5:13-15 -

20. SATAN HINDERS GOD'S SERVANTS IN THEIR SERVICE BY
PUTTING DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 -

We do not always remember this when we find God's work is hard, difficult and discouraging, when doors are suddenly closed to the progress of the gospel.

Who is often behind all this? The devil himself!

Where God is really working, the devil will always do his utmost to upset and hinder the work that God is doing.

Ephesians 6:12 -

21. SATAN PERSECUTES THE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST.

Revelation 2:10 -

There are many Christians alive today who are experiencing the very kind of thing that

is spoken of in this verse. Every Christian experiences some measure of persecution, trial and tribulation. The devil sees to that!

In this study, we have taken a glimpse of only some of the ways in which Satan gets to work in the lives of God's people.

Do you think this is a dismal study ? Does it make you feel discouraged? Do you feel that you are pretty helpless against such a powerful enemy?

If so, read again these words -

The Son of God came to earth with the express purpose of liquidating the devil's activities.

Did the Lord Jesus achieve His purpose or did He fail?

Thank God, when He died upon the Cross, He conquered Satan and dealt with sin, death, hell and every evil thing. What is more, we may be -

Romans 8:37 -

*Jesus, the Name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly.*

*Jesus, the prisoner's fetters breaks,
And bruises Satan's head.
Power into strengthless souls He speaks,
And life into the dead.*

NOTES

NOTES

THE WORKER'S WITNESS

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 -

One of the great and deeply significant names given to Christians is that of *witnesses*. It is a word which appears many times in the Bible.

In Isaiah 43:10-12 -

the Lord twice says it of His people, the Jews.

It was after His death and resurrection and just before His ascension that Jesus said, referring to Christians in this dispensation of grace -

Acts 1:8 -

How is the world to be evangelized?

The answer is given to us here, for in this one verse we have what we might rightly call - *The divine plan for world evangelization*.

God's plan is that His own people should be effective witnesses to His saving grace, wherever they are and wherever they go. This is to be the whole work of the whole church for the whole age.

Incidentally, we ought to notice that the word *witness* is the key word in the book of **Acts**. We only have to read this inspired history of the early church to see how readily and rapidly the first Christians got on with the job of witnessing.

Today, some people think the Church is going to sink beneath the waves of humanism, atheism and all the other 'isms' that are so prevalent, but NO!

God has His witnesses everywhere. He has had them through the darkest periods of human history. He has them today, sometimes in the most unlikely places.

In order to grasp the full significance of the privilege and responsibility of witnessing, it will be helpful if we emphasize five lines of truth which are clearly stated in -

Acts 1:8 -

1. THE PEOPLE GOD CHOOSES.

Who are the people whom the Lord chooses to be His witnesses? Notice the personal pronouns in **Acts 1:8 - *ye.....you.....ye.....***

In other words, God chooses men and women, not angels or supermen or even *special* people.

In the first instance, Jesus chose Peter, James, John and other ordinary men and women from the rank and file of life. They were to be His witnesses. They did, in fact, become His witnesses!

They were very ordinary people. On one occasion, their *ordinariness* was very much noticed, for we read in -

Acts 4:13 -

Have a good look around any church and see the variety of people who are present. These are the kind of folk God chooses to be His witnesses. Some of them may be uneducated or even illiterate. But, if they are Christians, they are qualified to be witnesses for Christ.

The great principle in relation to God's choice of those who serve Him and witness for Him is stated in how -

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 -

Most of the Lord's witnesses, therefore, are ordinary people, though He also chooses some people of noble rank to be witnesses for Him.

The point for us to notice from all this, however, is that God expects every Christian to be a witness. Witnessing is a necessity of a truly saved soul. A light that doesn't shine, a spring that does not flow, a seed that does not grow, is not more an anomaly than a life in Christ that does not witness for Christ.

It is perfectly clear, then, that the people who God chooses to be His witnesses are all those who are saved by His grace.

Every Christian is to be a missionary. Being a missionary means being a witness for Christ and to His saving and satisfying grace and power. Wherever there are people, then witnesses are needed. Wherever Christians live and work, therefore, they are to be the Lord's witnesses.

If you work in a shop, therefore, you are just as responsible to the Lord to be His witness there as any missionary 'on the field'. You are one of the people chosen by God to be His witness. But how does all this work out in a practical way?

2. THE PLAN GOD ADOPTS.

Wherever there is a Christian, there is to be a witness. He wants airmen, soldiers, sailors, tailors, builders, grocers, bankers, nurses, chemists, etc., to be His servants.

What is a witness? A witness is one who gives a testimony that is based on personal knowledge. A witness must tell not what he thinks or supposes or overhears, but what he knows from personal experience.

He must give firsthand and up-to-date evidence. A witness must be able to say, *I know that is true. I was there when it happened.*

John 3:11 -

John 9:25 -

Acts 22:15 -

God's plan, therefore, is that every one of us who loves Him and who belongs to Him should tell what we have seen and heard and what we know of Him and of His grace.

But notice that our testimony is to center upon the Person of Christ Himself.

Acts 1:8 -

We are not to witness to a church, a denomination, movement, a society, a system or a creed. We are to witness to the glorious Person of our Lord and Saviour Himself!

It is important to notice also that, in the case of the Christian, witnessing is not by any means to be only a matter of telling, but primarily it is to be a matter of living. We should certainly use our lips in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We so easily talk about everything else and everyone else, so why not talk about Him?

The psalmist said -

Psalms 107:2 -

After our Lord had healed a man, He said to him -

Mark 5:19 -

But, first of all, it is our consistent lives that are to witness for Christ. Notice that our verse says -

Acts 1:8 -

What we are is more important than what we say. But if our lives are witnessing for Him, then our sayings will be effective and powerful. What a glorious plan this is which the Lord has adopted for the evangelism of the world!

Everyone of His children is to go forth into his ordinary sphere of life, and to live and speak for the Lord there.

All this presupposes that a Christian witness must have had a vital, personal experience

of faith in Christ, otherwise he cannot be an effective witness by life and by lip. A nominal Christian can never be a true witness.

Before anyone can be a true witness for Christ, he must really know, love and belong to Him. We have already noticed that every Christian is to witness just where he is.

Now we must see the worldwide significance of this.

3. THE PLACE GOD INDICATES.

Where are God's witnesses to go? In -

Acts 1:8 -

a very definite geographical setting is indicated where the Lord told His early followers that they were to witness.

This was a repetition of His words in what we call the Great Commission. But, in a more specific form as to where they were to begin and how they were to extend the area of their witnessing -

Matthew 28:19-20 -

True, a witness is not necessarily a preacher in the accepted formal sense of that word. Yet our Lord's intention was to make it clear that His people were to go to all people everywhere and tell them about Him and about the salvation which was now available through faith in Him.

This inevitably means that some witnesses must leave their homes and go to other places and other lands in order that they may obey the Lord's commission and to be His witnesses to peoples who have never heard of Him.

Acts 1:8 is our authority for sending out *foreign* missionaries. This commission is obligatory on all Christians in every age.

Obedience to the Lord's commission to take the gospel to all people and to all parts of the world, inevitably meant for the early Christians that some of them had to leave home and loved ones.

The same is true today.

In my early Sunday School days, we used to sing a hymn which began -

The whole wide world for Jesus.

That should be our vision: to make Christ known to people wherever they are!

This being so, consider the following three statements which are the natural application of this truth.

a. In the light of Acts 1:8, as His witnesses, every one of us should be willing to go anywhere for the Lord.

Whoever we are, whatever our age and whatever our circumstances, we should be willing to be the Lord's witnesses in the place of His choice.

He may want us to take a secular job in Africa, primarily in order that we may live there as His witnesses.

On the other hand, He may want us to have special training in order that we may be better qualified to serve Him as a witness in the ministry, or as a missionary, in our own country or overseas.

What He asks for is our willingness to obey Him and to do what He wants in the place of His choice.

Here is another consideration. He may want you to go into hospital to be His witness there. Have you thought of that?

Nobody is keen to go into hospital as a patient, but what an opportunity such an experience presents to a Christian to witness to doctors, nurses and the other patients!

b. In the light of Acts 1:8, young people under the age of thirty, should be especially exercised as to whether or not the Lord would have them be His witnesses where the need is greatest.

Undoubtedly, the need is greater in some lands than in others: in India, Africa or South America, for example, there are millions of people who have not yet ever heard of Christ.

Every young person who has health and strength should be willing to go wherever the Lord would have him go in order to live and to labour for Him there as His witness.

There are vast numbers of people scattered around this world of ours who need someone to go to them and tell them about our Saviour. Many of them are gripped by sin and bound by superstition. Many of them are worshipping false gods and are devotees of a false religion.

They need desperately to know of the One in Whom alone they will find pardon for their sins, peace with God and the power to live happy, holy and useful lives.

Who will go and tell them of Jesus? It is the job of every Christian to be a witness, but some must go where the need is greatest.

Perhaps a fellow or a girl reading these lines, is one whom God would have leave home, friends and a well paid job in order to go to some far off place where there are those needing to hear of Him and to know Him Whom to know is life eternal.

John 7:3 - *His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.*

c. In the light of Acts 1:8, all who would be His witnesses must begin in Jerusalem.

That is to say, we must begin at home. Those to whom our Lord first spoke these words were, in fact, quite literally to begin witnessing for Him in the city of Jerusalem.

In obedience to Him, that is exactly what they did.

The application of this to ourselves is quite simple: we are to begin to witness for Christ just where He has placed us, where we live and work and among our own people.

If it is His will for us later to go to some other sphere to witness for Him there, we must nevertheless begin at home. Of course, what we are at home we shall be in any other sphere, no less and no more!

If we are not witnessing here, going there (wherever 'there' may be) will not have the effect of suddenly making us a witness.

Going to the mission field does not make a missionary. Before ever a missionary goes overseas to witness for Christ, he must be a witnessing Christian at home.

God's great heart of love yearns over the whole wide world. His method for evangelizing it is to send forth living witnesses.

I always find the following scripture very challenging -

Romans 10:13-15 -

In the light of these words, surely we should be filled with a holy enthusiasm to make Christ known. Being a Christian is the greatest thing in the world. The greatest favour we can do to anyone is to introduce them to Jesus Christ.

We need to ask ourselves - *Where would I be if Christ had never entered my life?* Then we need to think of some non-Christians who have none of the spiritual benefits which we enjoy. They are totally occupied with things which end with the grave.

But who is sufficient for these things? It is never easy to be a witness for the Lord. Indeed, in ourselves we do not have what it takes. Notice, therefore, the divine enabling for this task promised by our Lord Himself.

4. THE POWER GOD SUPPLIES.

Acts 1:8 -

No one can be an effective witness without the power of the Holy Spirit. Before our Lord began His public ministry, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and He was able to say -

Luke 4:18 -

The Lord's first followers obeyed His command and waited for the promise of the Father, the endowment with power, before they began witnessing for Him.

Luke 24:49 -

They could not have witnessed in their own strength, any more than we can! An effective witness must have a personal Pentecost.

How does anyone, anywhere, witness effectively for the Lord? The secret is in -

Zechariah 4:6 -

But the time is short. Souls are in need and are dying. We must -

John 9:4 -

There is a great urgency in this matter of witnessing for Christ.

How long have we got to do it?

5. THE PERIOD GOD GIVES.

How much longer have we in which to evangelize the world?

Until the Lord comes again!

Acts 1:8 is followed by -

Acts 1:11 -

All these signs of the times proclaim the fact that the coming of Christ is imminent. If you and I would be His effective witnesses we must be on the job now! The matter is urgent, the time is short, the need is great.

Millions are lost and the Lord Jesus says to each one of us -

I want you.....You.....YOU.....to be My witnesses. Go out into the world and live for Me. Show forth to others, just where you are, that you love Me and know Me.

Tell them who I am, how much I love them and that I long that they should love and know Me too.

Tell them that I died for them and that I rose again and live to be their Saviour and their Friend for time and eternity!

NOTES

THE WORKER A SERVANT

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Acts 20:18-21

Acts 20:18-21 -

The words which we underline for this study are *serving the Lord*.

In the context in which these words occur, we have an inspired portrait of a true servant of the Lord. Paul was giving his charge to the elders at Ephesus. In it he incorporated his own personal testimony concerning the way in which he had endeavoured to serve the Lord.

You see, we who know and love the Lord are not only His children and members of His family, but we are His servants.

This is not a self-imposed designation. It is not that with any kind of presumption we have taken it upon ourselves to call ourselves God's servants, but it is God Himself Who has made us and Who describes us and uses us as His servants.

The Apostle Paul speaks of himself and Timothy, his son in the faith, in this way in -

Philippians 1:1 -

Here, therefore, were the older man and the much younger man, who worked together, prayed together and had fellowship together as fellow-believers, and both were *servants of Jesus Christ*.

The Lord Jesus is described in scripture as the Servant of Jehovah -

Isaiah 42:1 -

He is unique in this respect as He is presented to us as the Perfect Servant.

Among the Lord Jesus' followers, however, Paul the apostle was the divinely appointed servant *par excellence*.

All that we see and learn of him in the record of his work and in the content of his writings, places him before us as the perfect example of a Christ servant.

We are, therefore, fully justified in looking at Paul and asking, *What are the marks of a true servant of the Lord?*

22. THE FIRST MARK OF A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS A SURRENDERED WILL.

The phrase, *servant of the Lord*, has in it the whole idea of being a slave. Paul's will had been brought into complete subjection to the Lord's will for him.

In another place he describes himself as *the prisoner of Jesus Christ*.

Ephesians 3:1 -

Again, in reference to the Lord, he says -

Acts 27:23 -

In other words, he describes himself as the Lord's *willing slave*.

This surrender of his will to the will of the Lord, this capitulation from the service of self to the service of Christ, took place right at the beginning of his Christian life when he said -

Acts 9:6 -

He had come to realize his identification with the Lord Himself, Who, in the voice of prophecy, had said -

Psalm 40:7-8 -

This is the first mark of a true servant of the Lord.

He realizes and enters into the truth of George Matheson's words -

*My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine.
If it would reach the Monarch's throne
It must its crown resign.*

*It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant
And found in Thee its life.*

How do you fit into this pattern? Is your will laid down? Have you surrendered what you want? Have you bowed in subjection to what God wants?

So many of us call ourselves servants of the Lord, but do we, in fact, serve Him, or do we just serve ourselves or other people?

If we would be truly effective in the service of our Master and would enter into the true meaning of the Master-servant relationship, we must be ready to say with Frances Ridley Havergal -

Take my will, and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.....

We know this to be true in a theoretical sense, but do we know it by experience?

A true servant of the Lord is one who comes to the place where he can say, in the words of his Lord -

Luke 22:42 -

2. THE SECOND MARK OF A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS A HUMBLE MIND.

Paul tells us that he served the Lord -

Acts 20:19 -

In other words, a servant of God must be like the Saviour Himself Who said,

Matthew 11:29 -

If there is any position or calling in the world where pride, self-esteem and self-importance should have no place, it is here in the service of the Lord.

The qualification for service is meekness, Christ-likeness. The man who is weak and powerless in himself, has no confidence in the flesh -

Philippians 3:3 -

is the man who can become spiritually strong -

Ephesians 6:10 -

for such a man can say with Paul -

2 Corinthians 12:10 -

Someone once asked an old saint what the first Christian virtue is.

Humility, was the reply.

What is the second virtue?

The old Christian replied, *Humility*.

And the third virtue? persisted the questioner, and the old saint answered again, *Humility*.

In the service of God there is no room for self-seeking, for self-importance or for the spirit of Diotrephes who loved to be first -

3 John 9 -

As we think about this mark of humility in the Apostle Paul, we are brought back again to Paul's Master, Who, though He was so glorious and so great, and was One with His Father God, in the 'stoop' of His incarnation He -

Philippians 2:7-8 -

This is the 'mind' that must be in us! Paul says -

Philippians 2:3 -

Philippians 2:5 -

Jesus once said -

Matthew 20:26-28 -

Perhaps that is one of the most challenging and humbling statements in the Bible. Even Jesus, great though He was, came not to be waited upon. He came to wait upon and minister to others.

We see an illustration of this in **John, chapter 13**, where we are told that Jesus took a towel and washed the feet of His disciples.

John 13:4-5 -

What a manifestation of His lowliness!

What a need there is for us, who profess to be His servants, to be like Him in this respect!

This is a saving virtue in Christian work, for when there are tensions, upsets, or divisions among those who are engaged together in the service of God, the cause is nearly always pride on the part of one of the parties.

Somebody wants to have his own way or to have the last word. Somebody is self-opinionated, intolerant, inflexible, PROUD.

Where there is a humble mind in a Christian servant, the devil can gain no ground, but where there is pride he can, and he will, come in like a flood.

Isaiah 59:19 -

Ministers, deacons and elders are sometimes proud. This is sad, for those who serve the Lord, in public or in private, must have a humble mind because -

Proverbs 23:7 -

23. THE THIRD MARK OF A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS A COMPASSIONATE HEART.

Acts 20:19 -

Paul tells us that he served the Lord *with many tears*.

He also says -

Acts 20:31 -

Here this man of tears puts us to shame! How cold our hearts are and how dry our eyes. How few of us know what it is to weep over others!

Paul knew what it was to shed agonizing and copious tears over sinners who needed to be saved and over saints who had fallen by the way or who needed to know more of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

A Salvation Army officer once wrote to General Booth to tell him that in his most difficult sphere of service he was distressed because he seemed to be getting no results from his labours.

The General sent back a message of two words: *TRY TEARS!*

It is -

Psalm 126:6a -

who will -

Psalm 126:6b -

Soon after I became a Christian, I heard three preachers, each of whom was a great soul winner. I shall always remember their preaching, but most of all, I shall remember their tears. They were so different from one another, but each man preached with tears of compassion.

Is it any wonder that many souls were saved as the result of their clear, impassioned preaching of the gospel?

a. The first preacher was Gypsy Smith.

I was sitting about twenty feet away from him. When he came to the close of his sermon, he was brushing the tears off his cheeks between every sentence of his appeal.

b. The second preacher was Lionel Fletcher, a man of very different temperament.

He always invited those who would accept Christ to come forward and confess Him openly. When his hearers began to respond, the evangelist's tears began to flow.

c. The third preacher was Mel Trotter, a one time alcoholic who, after his conversion, founded many Rescue Missions on the North American continent.

I was sitting next to him on the platform at the Westminster Central Hall in London. Just before he stood up to preach, he turned to me and said, *Pray for me! I have got to change the message!*

He preached with dynamic eloquence and with a burning passion. Then he made an appeal for men and women to come to Christ. As they came from every part of that large building and stood at the front to indicate their need and acceptance of the Saviour, Mel Trotter was blinded by his tears.

Brethren, where are our tears? Where are my tears? Lord, give us back our tears!

As servants of God we need a surrendered will, a humble mind and a compassionate

heart.

But Paul tells us of something else we need.

24. THE FOURTH MARK OF A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS A STEADFAST SPIRIT.

Paul tells us -

Acts 20:19 -

Did you ever know a servant of the Lord who was not tested?

What terrific testings came into Paul's life!

At every turn and in every circumstance he was put under intense pressure from the devil and from the enemies of the gospel - all of which were permitted by the Lord for the furtherance of the gospel and for the good of His servant.

We have a very powerful enemy. If he cannot get us down in one way, he will most certainly try to do so in another way. He never gives up, and we must never give way!

Romans 8:37 -

In the face of trials, adversities and testings, we need to be men and women of steadfast spirit, otherwise we shall soon give up.

Proverbs 24:10 -

Thank God, we have a mighty refuge into which we can fly at such times!

Proverbs 18:10 -

If we are to be qualified and effective servants of the Lord, we need grit as well as grace. If, for instance, we are called to be leaders in His work, we must recognize that leadership can be a very lonely business.

I shall always be grateful for the help given to me by a friend on one occasion. I was under great pressure at the time. I felt I could easily give up altogether. This good friend,

however, knowing of the attacks which seemed to be leveled against me and of my temptation to faint heartedness, said - *Hold on! Leadership is always a lonely business, but the Lord is on your side and all His resources are yours!*

He had, for many years, been the captain of a ship and he knew from personal experience what he was talking about. He could well have given me his timely advice in the words of -

1 Corinthians 15:58 -

or he could have added another -

Galatians 6:9 -

God's servants must be men and women of steadfast spirit. They must know how to be stayed upon Jehovah, how to be still and know God as their refuge and strength.

Psalm 46:1 -

Psalm 46:10 -

They must have the testimony of the psalmist -

Psalm 142:3 -

Psalm 142:5 -

It is hard to be a true servant of the Lord. Only those who have been given grace by God to have a steadfast spirit are truly qualified for this office.

Paul's description of true servants of God is very comprehensive, as he gives it to us in -

Acts 20:19-21 -

He could have stopped at this point and said that those who serve the Lord must have a surrendered will, a humble mind, a compassionate heart and a steadfast spirit.

But he had something of vital importance still to say.

5. THE FIFTH MARK OF A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

The apostle tells us that he -

Acts 20:20 -

to those to whom he ministered. This was a tremendous thing to say. All of us who serve the Lord should be able to say it.

See what Paul says in -

Acts 23:1 -

Acts 24:16 -

Paul was not perfect. He had made many mistakes. He often failed, but no one could justly point a finger at him and accuse him.

a. Paul had a clear conscience - EVANGELISTICALLY.

That is, he discharged his responsibility towards the lost.

Acts 20:20-21 -

Acts 20:26 -

What a tremendous claim he made!

See what Peter had to say about this very thing.

1 Peter 3:15-16 -

Have we a clear conscience with regard to lost souls around us? Are we seeking to pay our debt to them?

b. Paul had a clear conscience - DOCTRINALLY.

That is, he was faithful in his proclamation of the truth. We learn this from -

Acts 20:27 -

He did not withhold anything that was 'profitable'. A modern translation of this verse renders it -

I never shrank from letting you know the entire purpose of God.....

It is very easy to shrink. Think over the tremendous statement in -

2 Corinthians 4:2 -

c. Paul had a clear conscience - FINANCIALLY.

That is, he was not doing God's work for personal gain. We learn this from -

Acts 20:33-34 -

There were probably many wealthy people in Ephesus, but rather than take any step or be in any position where he could be criticized and where, by so doing, God's name could be brought into dishonour, Paul worked for his living and made tents so that no one could say that he was in the Lord's work for personal gain.

NOTES

THE WORKER'S PRAYER
THE PRAYER FOR DIVINE
QUICKENING

STUDY 11

Scripture Portion: Psalm 80:18

The word we shall consider in this study is the word *quicken* (or quickened, quickeneth, quickening). This word, in one of its forms, occurs twenty-five times in the Bible.

Psalm 71:20 -

Psalm 80:18 -

Psalm 119:25 -

Psalm 119:37 -

Psalm 119:40 -

Psalm 119:50 -

Psalm 119:88 -

Psalm 119:93 -

Psalm 119:107 -

Psalm 119:149 -

Psalm 119:154 -

Psalm 119:156 -

Psalm 119:159 -

Psalm 143:11 -

John 5:21

John 6:63 -

Romans 4:17 -

Romans 8:11 -

1 Corinthians 15:36 -

1 Corinthians 15:45 -

Ephesians 2:5 -

Colossians 2:13 -

1 Timothy 6:13 -

1 Peter 3:18 -

The word means *to bestow life and to preserve life*. This covers our basic need because we need to receive life and to be preserved by life.

We need to receive life initially, which takes place at the time of conversion, but we also need to be preserved by life continually, which refers to God's work of sanctification.

From several scriptures we learn two things.

a. The Holy Spirit is the Quickener.

John 6:63 -

1 Peter 3:18 -

b. The Word of God is the Instrument.

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to accomplish His quickening work. We learn this

from many references in **Psalm 119**. For one example read -

Psalm 119:50 -

25. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT
QUICKENS US WITH NEW LIFE SO THAT WE BECOME PARTAKERS
OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

Ephesians 2:1 -

We are by nature spiritually dead. When the miracle of the New Birth takes place, we are born again by the quickening work of the Holy Spirit.

We learn from -

1 Peter 1:23 -

2 Peter 1:4 -

that the Word of God is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to make us *partakers of the divine nature*. It is the *seed* of the new life which is dropped into our souls and which makes us *alive*.

Romans 6:11 -

Romans 6:13 -

A Christian is one who is born again -

John 3:3 -

John 3:6 -

John 3:8 -

and who receives the new life of the risen Lord -

John 1:12-13 -

An illustration of this is found in **Ezekiel 37:1-10**.

26. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT
QUICKENS US IN OUR DESIRES TO PRAY AND GUIDES OUR
PRAYING.

Psalm 80:18 -

It is in the indwelling Holy Spirit Who prompts us to pray. For an illustration of this, read -

Acts 9:11 -

Immediately after his conversion, and as an evidence that he really had been converted, Saul of Tarsus prayed! This is the first exercise of the new life.

Luke 18:13 -

As Christians, we are frequently conscious of the Holy Spirit within us urging us to pray. He leads us to the place of prayer and then He shows us how to pray.

Romans 8:26-27 -

Think how the disciples needed this quickening when they were in Gethsemane.

Read **Matthew 26:36-44**.

3. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT QUICKENS US WHEN WE ARE IN DANGER OF GETTING SLACK, DULL AND CARELESS.

Psalm 71:20 -

The operative word is the word *again*. The psalmist had fallen and he needed to be lifted up. Often our spiritual life flags and we need to be revived.

It is easy to get spiritually out of touch with the Lord and -

to become disobedient -

Jonah 1:1-3 -

to deny the Lord -

Read **Luke 22:54-62**.

to turn away from Him -

John 6:66 -

to become carnal -

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 -

to walk in the flesh -

Galatians 5:16 -

Galatians 5:25 -

to allow wrong attitudes -

Philippians 4:2 -

to become lukewarm -

Revelation 3:15-16 -

At such times, we need the quickening work of the Holy Spirit to renew our love for the Lord and our determination to please Him.

Notice the significance of the word *so* and of what follows in -

Psalm 119:88 -

27. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT
QUICKENS US WHEN WE ARE IN BONDAGE AND SETS US FREE.

Psalm 119:154 -

How easy it is to get into bondage -

to sin -

Romans 6:12 -

to self -

Romans 6:16 -

to Satan -

Luke 22:31 -

The psalmist prayed -

Psalms 119:154 -

This reminds us of the Saviour's present work of intercession on our behalf.

Hebrews 7:25 -

How is this prayer of intercession answered?

The Lord Jesus Himself, from the throne, is the great Liberator as we learn from -

Romans 8:2 -

The medium through which He works is the Word of God.

5. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT INSTRUCTS US IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ENABLES US TO PLEASE GOD.

Psalm 119:40 -

The psalmist's prayer was simply that God would show him the right way and enable him to walk in that way.

This is exactly what the Holy Spirit does as we turn to the Word of God with the desire to hear God speaking to us -

Psalm 119:18 -

as we meditate upon what we read -

Psalm 119:15 -

and as we compare scripture with scripture -

Acts 17:11 -

This is the only way to discover the kind of life God wants us to live and to receive the divine enabling to live it.

This is why we must not neglect our Bible.

28. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WEANS US FROM WORLDLINESS AND SETS OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE.

Compare -

Psalm 119:36-37 -

Colossians 3:1-2 -

How can we be weaned away from worldliness and become absorbed with those things which are glorifying to the Lord? It is so easy to become a worldly Christian. What a tragedy it is when this happens!

The psalmist prayed that he might have his eyes turned away from beholding *vanity*, which simply means *that which is vain, empty, unprofitable, useless and perishable*. What a description of the world!

1 John 2:15-17 -

7. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT COMFORTS US AND SUSTAINS US IN TIMES OF TRIAL AND AFFLICTION.

Psalm 119:92-93 -

The writer seems to say, *If God hadn't quickened me when I was in the midst of trouble, I would have perished. But God did quicken me and He did it through His law.*

Compare -

Psalm 143:11 -

We all experience trial, trouble and testing. At such times we should turn to the Word of God and wait for the Holy Spirit, through the Word, to quicken us with His sustaining grace.

1 Peter 4:14 -

Compare -

Psalm 119:49-50 -

John 14:26 -

In concluding this study, please notice again that the Holy Spirit is the Quickener and that He quickens us through the Word of God.

This means that, in order to benefit from His quickening ministry, we must do two things-

1. **Ephesians 5:18 -**
2. **Colossians 3:16 -**

NOTES

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THE WORKER'S REWARD

STUDY 12

Scripture Portion: Psalm 19:11

Psalm 19:11 -

God promises a reward to all who keep His commandments. There is a reward for obedience. Some of God's children are disobedient. Alas, all of us are at times. But others are obedient. If, and as, and when, we obey Him, the Lord promises us a rich reward - *A GREAT REWARD*.

The reference is not primarily to future rewards, which we shall receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but to rewards that we receive here and now.

One day we must all appear before the Lord to be rewarded, or to suffer loss, according to the way we have lived and laboured for Him.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 -

2 Corinthians 5:10 -

But these words in **Psalm 19:11** speak of a reward of obedience that is to be received and enjoyed in this present life. Notice the words *in* and *is* in the actual process of doing God's will and of keeping His commandments - *there is great reward*.

If we obey God, we shall be rewarded in the very act of obedience.

Before we think about the reward which God promises and gives for obedience, let us look at -

Psalm 19:7-11 -

29. WE ARE TOLD SEVEN THINGS ABOUT THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN HIS WORD, THE BIBLE, AND WHICH WE ARE TO KEEP.

a. They are powerful -

Psalm19:7 -

The Word of God is the instrument He uses to turn men and women from darkness to light, from Satan to Himself. What a powerful instrument it is!

Acts 26:18 -

1 Thessalonians 1:9 -

Hebrews 4:12 -

b. They are plain -

Psalm19:7 -

The commands of the Lord are so clear and plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not be in any doubt about them.

Isaiah 35:8 -

c. They are pleasing -

Psalm19:8 -

How often we have thought that God's will and God's way is hard, and even bad! But this is not the case.

Romans 12:2 -

1 John 5:3 -

d. They are pure -

Psalm19:8 -

Absolutely pure, with no mixture of evil.

Unadulterated and undiluted!

God's commands are holy, like God Himself.

e. They are permanent -

Psalm19:9 -

They are never out-of-date. They are appropriate and applicable in every age and circumstance. They are never in need of revision.

Matthew 5:17 -

f. They are precious -

Psalm19:10 -

To the true believer, Jesus is precious -

1 Peter 2:7 -

His blood is precious -

1 Peter 1:19 -

His Word is precious -

2 Peter 1:4 -

g. They are preventive -

Psalm19:11 -

Prevention is better than cure. God seeks to prevent us from sinning and grieving Him by giving us His commands.

How wonderful are God's commandments! How right the psalmist is to speak of them as being *perfect*!

Psalm19:7 -

2. WHAT REWARDS DOES GOD PROMISE TO THOSE WHO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS?

a. The first reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is long life.

Perhaps we wonder in what way obedience can affect one's length of days. Read -

Deuteronomy 32:46-47 -

Proverbs 3:1-2 -

It is quite reasonable, as a general principle, that if we will seek to live within the compass of the will of God and obey His laws, then our days will be lengthened.

If we break His laws and live careless, intemperate and self-led lives, then our days will be shortened.

b. The second reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is protection.

There is a wonderful promise in -

Ecclesiastes 8:5 -

Does it mean that nothing will ever go wrong in our lives if we disobey God? It means that -

Romans. 8:28 -

will be fulfilled in our experience.

Sorrows, trials and testings will come, but, as they will only come from His hand, they will never be *evil*, but always *good*.

Deuteronomy 23:5 -

c. The third reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is gladness.

Nehemiah 8:13-17 -

Notice the last words in **verse 17**.

The most joyful people in the world are the people who are constantly seeking to keep God's commandments and to please Him.

1 Chronicles 16:27 -

Acts 2:42 -

Acts 2:46 -

d. The fourth reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is great peace.

Yes, great peace!

Psalm 119:165 -

The Revised Version substitutes the word 'disturb' in place of 'offend'.

What a priceless reward this is, to enjoy great peace even in the world of trouble, disturbance, alarm, fear and war!

Isaiah 26:3 -

Philippians 4:6-7 -

e. The fifth reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is the assurance of salvation.

Many Christians lack assurance, but this is not God's desire for any of us. He wants us to be sure of our salvation, sure that we are eternally safe, and sure in Christ our Saviour.

Colossians 3:3 -

1 John 3:24 -

f. The sixth reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is answers to prayer.

There is a wonderful promise in -

1 John 3:22 -

where we discover the reason why some of our prayers are not answered. If we seek to obey God, He promises to hear us and to answer our prayers.

g. The seventh reward God promises for obedience to His commandments is the conscious presence of Christ.

John 14:21 -

Notice that the emphasis is upon the word 'manifest'. The Lord is always with us, as we know from -

Matthew 28:20 -

Hebrews 13:5 -

But we are only made really conscious of His presence when we are obeying Him.

30. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS?

a. It means seeking them.

We cannot know His commandments until we find them. We can only find them by seeking them.

1 Chronicles 28:8 -

b. It means seeking them all.

Read **1 Chronicles 28:8** again. This is a lifelong occupation!

c. It means obeying them.

That is, not only finding them and understanding them, but also doing them.

John 2:5 -

Acts 9:6 -

James 1:22 -

d. It means obeying them promptly.

As the psalmist did in -

Psalm 119:60 -

What are you hurrying for?

To keep God's commandments!

e. It means delighting in obeying God.

As the psalmist did in -

Psalm 112:1 -

Underline in your Bible-

Deuteronomy 5:29 -

NOTES

NOTES

THE WORKER'S JOURNEY

STUDY 13

Scripture Portion: Psalm 23:4

The Rev. John McNeill, the Scottish evangelist and preacher, likened this glorious **Psalm 23** to a well tuned harp of six strings.

Each verse is a string and each string is so perfectly tuned by the divine Musician that any fingers that stray among the strings, however artlessly, should bring forth some music from them.

It is the fourth string I want to strum just now.

Psalm 23:4 -

The psalmist likens the Christian life to a journey.

Psalm 23:1 -

Have you started the heavenly pilgrimage there? Can you say, *He is my Shepherd?*

The end of the believer's journey is in -

Psalm 23:6 -

If you have started the journey in **verse 1**, you will finish it in **verse 6**.

In between are all the varied and wonderful experiences through which you will pass as you journey on to the house of the Lord, where you will dwell for ever.

Take a good look at our text and notice -

31. THE PATHWAY ON WHICH WE ARE TRAVELING.

What kind of a pathway is it? See what David says -

Psalm 23:4 -

The path along which you and I are traveling is a dark, gloomy valley.

David is thinking of those dark ravines with high towering walls that seem to go up to heaven, through which he had often led his sheep.

For all of us, this life is a valley of experiences. The road that leads from grace to glory must go by the way of the valley. It is a vale of tears and sorrows, trials and disappointments.

Come with me a moment and look into the valley through which we are traveling. Do you see that little home? The curtains are drawn. There is sickness. There is death.

Listen! What are those noises? A plane has crashed!

That is the valley, that is something we all encounter on the journey of life.

See how slowly that woman walks. She is in the valley of the shadow.

Why is that man walking with a crutch? He is in the valley, too.

Who is that - a policeman?

Yes, of course, we are in the valley! Whichever way we look we see the valley and the shadow. As one of our best known hymns puts it: *Change and decay in all around I see.....*

No traveler on the journey of life is exempt from the valley of the shadow experiences. Rich or poor, king or beggar, young or old, we are all in the dark, gloomy valley.

Jesus said -

John 16:33 -

But surely our text refers to death? Perhaps it does, but not exclusively. Even in life we are in the midst of death. There is no need to wait for death in order to experience the shadows and valleys of life.

Life for us all is a living death. We are dying all the time. Yes, we are traveling along a dark, gloomy pathway.

But David tells us in our text about -

2. THE PROSPECT THAT IS BEFORE US.

What a wonderful prospect the child of God has, for, with the Lord as our Shepherd, our future is bright indeed!

The words I want you to notice are - *walk through!*

Are you in the valley of sorrows, disappointments, trials or darkness? Are the dark shadows falling depressingly across your path? Is the part of the road along which you are at present traveling very rough?

Listen - you are traveling through!

There is radiant brightness and perfect joy for you at the end of the journey, *if* the Lord is your Shepherd.

In Damascus, there is a long, dark lane which ends in a tunnel. The traveler descends and passes through the tunnel. On the other side, he emerges into the courtyard of a beautiful oriental palace, flashing with color and sunlight!

We are now in the valley, the tunnel, but we are going through to the sunlight of our heavenly home.

What a prospect! Every day that passes, we are a day's march nearer home.

Have you ever stopped and thought of all the sin, sorrow and suffering there is in the valley of this life? Have you then asked, *Is this all God made us for? Is this the best He can give us? Must we only know 'blood and toil and sweat and tears? Will the doctor and the surgeon be always needed? Is there nothing better than this?*

Of course, there is! We are going through to the other side!

I knew a man in business who was a better churchman than he was a Christian. One day he said to me, *I want to tell you something that really amuses me.*

He then went on to tell me about a certain bishop who was convalescing after a very serious illness. The thing which amused my friend was that he had heard that bishop preach on heaven and how marvelous it will be to be there.

Within a few days, the bishop became so ill that everyone thought he was going to heaven, but they called in doctors and specialists to do all they could to keep him alive on this earth.

When they had succeeded in saving his life, the bishop that was so keen to go to heaven went for a Mediterranean cruise so that he could get his health fully restored and stay on earth for a bit longer!

It seemed a great joke to my business friend.

If heaven is our home, and we are going there, and it is so much more beautiful and glorious than anything here, why are we so loath to go there?

It is because God has given us an instinct within us which makes us want to live on this earth as long as possible.

Thus, when we are sick, we strive to get better. But let us not lose the optimism that should characterize us as travelers to our heavenly home.

Notice a third thing in our text.

32. THE PERSON WHO GOES WITH US.

Psalm 23:4 -

We are not alone in the valley. David knew that, whenever his sheep were going through the valley, he was there with them.

In the same way, if he was in the valley, then the Lord, his Shepherd, would be with him.

How wonderful - he would never be alone!

Do we sufficiently count on the Lord's presence with us? Does the presence of our loved ones mean more to us than His presence? Is His presence as real as theirs?

It should be, and much more so. Let us, therefore, count on His presence more. There is never a shadow, but He is there. In every valley experience of life, He is there - our Lord and Shepherd, the Mighty God.

THEN, the psalmist tells us in this text about -

4. THE PERIL WE OVERCOME.

Psalm 23:4 -

I will fear nothing. No fear?

What is the greatest peril in your life and mine?

It is fear, and fear is our greatest peril because, while we fear we do not trust. Fearing and trusting are opposites.

How can I get rid of fear - fear of the past, the present and the future?

O, the havoc fear, and its twin brother worry, play in the lives of men and women!

Listen!

Psalm 23:4 -

Listen again!

Hebrews 13:5-6 -

Isaiah 43:1-2 -

Here is the antidote for all fear, worry and anxiety - the realized presence of Christ.

Do you remember when the disciples were crossing the lake, their little craft was tossed with the waves, the wind was contrary, they were troubled and they cried out in fear?

Then what happened? Jesus came and said,

Matthew 14:27 -

When we realize His presence, fear and doubt and anxiety go.

Have you overcome this peril?

Once, when Paul was afraid to preach, the Lord said to him,

Acts 18:9-10 -

Then Paul -

Acts 18:11 -

The realized presence of the Lord banished Paul's fears. The same can be true of you. But there is something else our text emphasizes about the journey of life.

33. THE PROTECTION WE ENJOY.

Psalm 23:4b -

David knew it. Very often, as he had been leading his sheep through the valley, a lion or a bear had lurked near to harm the sheep. Very frequently he had to protect his flock with his rod and staff. The rod was a heavy club with which to slay any animal. The staff was a shepherd's crook with which to restrain the sheep from wandering.

How we need this twofold protection!

First, we need the rod to protect us from all the outward attacks of Satan.

Second, we need the staff to keep us from all the inward waywardness of self.

We are such silly sheep - *Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.* But He gives to us His wonderful protection right to the end of the journey.

What a comfort!

Psalm 23:4b -

An unbeliever once said to a Christian, *Supposing when you get to the end of life's journey, you find there is no such place as heaven after all?*

Well, said the Christian, *I shall say to myself, 'You've had a wonderful time getting here, anyhow!'*

We know that one day we shall have passed through the valley and we shall be -

Psalm 23:6b -

What a grand time we are having, even in the valley, with the presence of our Lord and Saviour ever with us!

*Thus, when we come to the end of life's journey,
Think of the battles we lost and we won -
Then we shall see it was worth all the conflict,
And, best of all, we shall hear His **Well done!***

NOTES
