

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

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No. 39

I'll Bet You Didn't Win!

Steven C. Harper

No, I wouldn't really bet on it. But if I did, I would be right. If you played the "Power Ball" lottery this past week, the chances against you winning were about 87 million to 1. Yet, people lined up in some places and waited for more than an hour for a chance — one in about 87 million — to win "the big one." Almost \$300 million! If I have my facts right, this means that just in the last month people have laid out about \$600 million for a chance to get rich. [Lotteries typically pay out only 50% of money received. You have a better chance of winning at a slot machine, typically paying out about 90% of money paid in.] Can you believe it? \$600 million!

Now would be the appropriate time to remind us all of the stern warning given by the apostle Paul to Timothy: "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of

God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:6-11). I know you've heard it before, but please read it again!

It is abundantly clear that many are looking to get rich, and no doubt many will pierce themselves through with many sorrows before they learn (if they ever do) that money is not the source of happiness or contentment. Unfortunately, many of those who have gotten caught up in the pursuit of riches are those who are disciples of Jesus Christ, and they have fallen "into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts" just as easily as those of the world, and they have been "drowned" in the same "destruction and perdition" as everyone else. Sad to say, but many brothers and sisters in Christ have let the lure of riches — big riches — draw them away from the pursuit of the eternal reward and have begun chasing the temporal ones.

Every day, I get more evidence that the things that harm the soldiers in God's army are not the persecutions and hardships, but the lure of riches and the life of ease. Any soldier will tell you they will fight harder when the enemy is attacking them, but how many will admit that they are most susceptible to enticements of

comfort and luxury? What soldier would turn down an offer of rest and relaxation over an assignment to stand watch 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year? Very few, sad to say, and less every day, it seems. The devil has laid down his weapons of persecution and trial in this country and has resorted to a more successful weapon of enticing wealth and luxury, and it doesn't take an in-depth study to figure out that he's been successful lately.

The answers to these weapons of our enemy, the devil, are found in the words of the apostle Paul in the text we just considered. Instead of pursuing after riches, we should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. These are the building blocks for faithful service — not a big bank account and a Mercedes-Benz in the six-car garage. (Alongside your Ferrari, Lamborghini, Corvette, Escalade SUV, and Hummer.) A rich man without Christ is simply a condemned rich man. Money has not brought him any closer to Christ than before. In fact, he is probably farther away (cf. Matthew 19:24).

Think about these things for a minute: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. These are the things we should be pursuing — not the riches of this world! The Christian is identified by these attributes, not by how much money he has in his wallet or by the car he drives, and we should be pursuing these things. We need righteousness. We need godliness. We need faith. We need love. We need patience. We need gentleness.

We need righteousness because no man on this earth could be called righteous (outside of Jesus Christ). God looked down at man and declared, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10) We needed help and God provided. In His compassion for man, God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). And God revealed His righteousness to us through the word (Romans 1:17), that we might know what we must do to become His children. Nowhere do

we find that God, looking down and seeing the monetary poverty of mankind, sent His angels to provide an unlimited bank account for our use.

And in His provision, God has also "given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Not only has God provided the means by which we may have life (eternal life), He has also provided the instruction that leads us to live lives of godliness after our initial obedience. He cared enough to provide everything we needed. Nowhere do we read of God providing us the winning lottery numbers so we would be at ease while here on earth.

Faith is almost a given, but we must understand the great need in our life. The lack of faith will prevent us from coming to God (Hebrews 11:6), and it will prevent us from obtaining the final rest, just as surely as it did for the faithless Israelites (Hebrews 3:16-4:11). Nowhere do I read that the lack of riches will prevent us from coming to God.

Love should also be a given, for Jesus commanded that we love one another, and by doing this, the world would know that we were His disciples (John 13:34, 35). Nowhere do I read that the world will know that we are His by how much money we have.

Patience is a needed trait, too. Patience allows us to endure through the trials we may face and the temptations to cave in to material wealth. Nowhere do I read of God guaranteeing that we will be able to endure all if we just had the financial means to do so.

And gentleness is needed, too. Gentleness will allow us to answer for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15), and allow us to lead others out of error and into truth (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Nowhere do I read of anyone converting others to Christ because they were rich.

~via *The Burns Park Beacon*, North Little Rock, Arkansas

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Fight The Good Fight

Jim Jonas

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called...”
(1 Timothy 6:12).

School bullies with an inferiority complex like to fight. Politicians with a craving for pork like to fight. People with a pure mean streak like to fight. Even some religious folks who desire the limelight like to fight. But only perverse people enjoy fighting and the turmoil and suffering it spawns.

But, like it or not, every breathing, thinking person is at war with spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Thus, Paul urges Timothy to “wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18) and “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12).

Make no mistake: A war is being fought, our soul is the prize and the outcome is for eternity.

The modern religious world recoils from militaristic terminology. They would rather emphasize love, peace and harmony to the exclusion of the darker side of faith. But it was the Holy Spirit, not Bible translators or right-wing religious zealots, who chose this wording to describe the conflict between good and evil. The New Testament speaks of armor (Ephesians 6:10-18), weaponry (2 Corinthians 10:3-5), enemies (Philippians 3:18) and fighting (2 Timothy 4:7). Not a pretty picture but accurate nonetheless.

In this battle, truth is constantly attacked. We must fight to preserve and advance it (Galatians 2:5). Our character as godly people will be assailed. We must give no occasion for justified criticism (2 Corinthians 8:21). But amidst the fiercest battles, let us remember one thing: The war is not ultimately against us but Christ. Satan hates Him so passionately that he also hates all those loyal to Him. Jesus repeat-

edly alludes to this (e.g. John 15:20-21; 16:1-4).

Even in warfare, men recognize certain rules of engagement. The Geneva Convention establishes humane treatment in the midst of inhuman behavior. We must not only fight but fight as children of God, as ones who possess His spirit. If we begin enjoying the battle and use it as a pretext for satisfying our own carnal urges, then we bring guilt upon ourselves even as did the Assyrians and Babylonians of old (cf. Isaiah 47:5-7; Zechariah 1:15).

We have no choice as to whether we shall participate in this battle; we’re already in it. The only choice to make is which side we will be on. Victory belongs only to Christ and those on His side (1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:33-39).

~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 46

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Leota Springer’s and Willie Ridgeway’s uncle, Buel Gladdney*, is at home following surgery to put a stint in his heart ... *Scottie Goode’s father, Hubert Goode*, is in the HealthSouth Rehabilitation in Huntsville ... *Angie McCrary’s sister, Peggy McGee*, is to begin chemo treatments in Birmingham this Tuesday... *Arvel Newton’s nephew, Chester Newton*, continues at home with his battle with cancer ... Remember *Millinea Word* as she continues her treatments/medication ... *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home and not able to be out ... *Aldeen Noles* is in the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ... *Shelia Moore’s mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead*, is in the Athens Convelesant

Center...*Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty, Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Dickeys:* Jerry, Charlotte, Justin and Brandon are in the mountains this weekend...*Susan Williams* is in Hawaii on her honeymoon...*Sheila Moore* is now back home after visiting with family in Indiana.

GOSPEL MEETING: There is a gospel meeting this week through Wednesday at the **Northside church** in Lexington. *B. J. McGregor* is the speaker. They will have a services Monday through Wednesday at 7:00 p.m....The **Belgreen church** in Belgreen is beginning at meeting today through Wednesday with different speakers. ... The **River Bend church** in western Lauderdale county is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services at 7:00p.m.. *Richard Boone* of Lawrenceville, Georgia will be the speaker in the meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING: The elders have scheduled a business meeting following our service this evening. All the men please plan to attend this meeting.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Communication group one will meet tonight after the evening service. If you are in group one remember to meet with your group this evening.

OUR MEETING: We had an excellent meeting this past week with brother Vic McCormick preaching. The lessons were very good and we appreciate the work that brother McCormick did. It was good to get to know the McCormicks (Vic, LaDonna and Christy) and we wish them well as they return home to Florida.

THE RECORD: *Averages for September 2001*

Sunday: Bible Classes 86
 Morning Worship 99
 Evening Worship 75

Wednesday:
 Bible Classes 73

Gospel POWER

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

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