

# Gospel Power



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

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## “More Than Conquerors”

Sewell Hall

*“Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment’” (Matthew 22:35-38).*

These words of Jesus should not be surprising. Those who love God are those for whom the world was created. Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

Observe from verses 29 and 30 that those whom God foreknew and “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” were the ones whom He called. But according to verse 28, those whom He called are those who “love God.”

So those who love God are those He foreknew, predestined, justified and glorified

according to His purpose — the purpose of the ages. Whether we are a part of this great plan depends upon whether we love God. If we do not love God, then we are not among those predestined.

The love God asks is not a “touchy-feely” kind of love. The love with which He loved us was certainly not that kind; if it had been, we would not have been saved by His love. His was an active and sacrificing love. Ours for Him must be the same. It must be a love that commits itself to doing the will of God. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). This kind of love “seeks not its own” (1 Corinthians 13:5); rather is “seek[s] first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

Love for God is often tested. Too often, we see someone who has claimed to love God disillusioned by disasters and disappointments. Sickness that takes the life of a child, an automobile wreck that leaves one handicapped, a fire that destroys a home, or the loss of a large investment sometimes cause people to blame God. Some do as Job’s wife encouraged him to do: “Curse God and die” (Job 2:9)! This only

proves that their love was not genuine.

In times of distress, genuine love does not fail (1 Corinthians 13:8). “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:35-37).

Throughout the Old and New Testaments when trials came, those who truly loved God ran to Him rather than from Him. When God demanded that Abraham offer his son as a sacrifice, Abraham confirmed his love for God by proceeding to do it. Joseph’s suffering, rather than diminishing his love for God, seemed only to increase it. David’s love for God grew as Saul pursued him and some of his most beautiful psalms were written when he was in the greatest danger. Still ringing down through the centuries from a prison in Philippi are the songs of praise from Paul and Silas as they suffered the pain of bleeding backs and bound feet. Truly in all of these things, they were “more than conquerors.”

If our love for God is genuine, we too will be “more than conquerors.” Conquerors merely defeat their enemies; those who are more than conquerors make their enemies their servants and emerge from the conflict stronger than before. When we face “tribulation, or distress, or persecution,” etc., we need to see it as a test, a challenge and an opportunity to prove our love for God.

And if our love for God does not fail, we can be sure that His love for us will not fail. “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did

not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things” (Romans 8:31-32)? “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you,’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

~via *Christianity Magazine*, Volume 16 No. 9-10.



## God Uses Bad For Good

W. Perry D. Hall

*“Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me”* (Psalm 41:9).

Yes, it was ridiculous. No, there isn’t a rational explanation. Again, yes, I knew the already historically determined outcome. And again, no, I didn’t think it would change; nor did I think my inward screaming could alter history.

While reading to my girls, I read about Judas’ betrayal of Jesus - of a friend by a friend (John 13:18; Psalm 41:9). No one, including Jesus, has escaped that same penetrating loneliness, piercing our soul by a friend’s betrayal. I mentally shouted as Judas left the upper room, “Don’t do it.” Futile, I know, but that’s how I felt.

While history records massacres, catastrophes, starvations, and other horrifying events, no event matches the love and hate found on the cross. Mere words cannot reach down into the fathomless depths of either that love or hate. No ocean, nor no human mind, is deep enough to contain the explanation. Revulsion consumes my soul. This entire scene, from betrayal to the lingering suffering, agonizes my mind. His pierced hands and side pierce my

heart. Shuddering and trembling overtake me when reading, yes, simply reading the words “there they crucified Him” (Luke 23:33).

How can mere words, without the evocative benefit of speech, cause such inward shrinking from pain? Dear friends, those are not mere words. The crucifixion’s reality is as assuredly real as you and I. Both self-righteous and godless men crucified Jesus. And yet, shame and delight grip me simultaneously; almost as paradoxically as the love and hate on that darkened day. As loudly as the rebellious, ignorant, and jealous rogues clamor “crucify Him, crucify Him” (Mark 15:13,14), I, the eternally grateful sinner, cry out, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

It sounds somewhat selfish, but I am glad, in a way, Judas did it. (Not that I’m glad for his sin, but how God can use bad for good.) I am a lost sinner in need of salvation from sin. God in His sovereign grace and power used Judas’ evil betrayal and Jesus’ selfless sacrifice for my redemption. My flesh, imagining the torture of nails piercing through and securing the body of the innocent Jesus to splintered wood, shouts out to Judas, “Don’t do it!” My eternal spirit, fearing the torture of hell awaiting the unforgiven, whispers, “Thank you, Jesus!” “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 50



## *Proper Motivation*

**J. F. Dancer, Jr.**

Have you ever stopped to think about why you believe the things that are a part of your personal faith? Have you ever given much thought as to why you act as you do from time to time? Serving God is not just something that is composed of a series of acts or rituals. It is something that is supposed to come from the

heart even though it is supposed to be governed by God’s word (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Paul reminded the saints at Rome (Romans 6:17) that they had “...had obeyed from the heart...” Their motivation was a sincere effort to please God. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that acceptable worship was to be “in spirit...” (John 4:24) as well as in truth (according to God’s precepts). Paul warned Timothy of those who would have a form of godliness but who would deny the power behind it (2 Timothy 3:5). Their worship and service were a set of rituals and nothing more.

Jesus said that he always pleased the one who sent Him (John 8:29). His motivation was to please His Father. So should ours be! At work we may do things to please our supervisors or fellow workers. At school we may do things to please the teacher or our fellow students. At home we act sometimes so as to please other family members. This is not all bad. But when we let this move into the realm where our religious convictions come into play we need to be sure that our motivation is to please God. When we please God there will be times when we please some of our fellow humans. But we must be sure that we are not acting because of worldly entanglements, but to please God (2 Timothy 2:4).

What one does in service to God is important for this service can be in vain if it is based upon the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). On the other hand, if one follows the letter of the law, but has improper motivation then his service is also vain. Life is a time to build and the folly of a wasted life (foolish building) is seen in Matthew 7:21-27 in the man who built his house upon the sand. When the time of testing came his house fell (and great was the fall thereof). He had wasted his life – including whatever religious services he had performed. He had not loved the Lord with all of his heart, soul and strength. Let us be sure that we not only to do the things that God expects of us, but to do them with the right motivation. ~via *Standing Firm*, Beaver Dam, Kentucky

# News & Notes

**THE SICK:** *Jerry Dickey's mother, Pat Dickey*, was moved this week from ECM Hospital in Florence to the Florence Comprehensive Care Rehabilitation...*Cindy Mosley* was able to be at Bible study Wednesday night after being sick last weekend...*Willie Ridgeway* was not feeling well and not able to be out on Wednesday night ..*Henry Trousdale* was sick this past Wednesday night and was unable to be at Bible study...*Suzette McIntyre* was sick and was unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night ..*Arvel Newton's nephew, Chester Newton*, continues at home with his battle with cancer... Remember *Kerry Cox's grandfather, Coy Lowman*, continues at home ... *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 ..*Sheila Moore's mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead*, is in the Athens Convalescent Center ..*Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, and *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

**GOSPEL MEETING:** There will be a gospel meeting this week at the **Southern Blvd. church** in Sheffield. *Colly Caldwell of Tampa, Florida* will be the speaker. The meeting will continue through Wednesday with services at 7:00 p.m.

**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.

**THE RECORD:** *Averages for November 2001*

**Sunday:** Bible Classes ..... 84  
 Morning Worship ..... 97  
 Evening Worship ..... 65

**Wednesday:** Bible Classes ..... 67

# 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.

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Anderson-church.org

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