


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. 5

How To Change Your Life

Mike Wilson

How does one make significant spiritual changes? How do you improve your service to God? How do you break the old patterns and undergo a complete paradigm shift to make fundamental changes in your life? These five key points will help, if you take them to heart.

Listen to life-changing truth with passion.

I'm in favor of doing things "decently and in order," but if you park your brain in the vestibule, sit down on a pew and vegetate, you won't get very much out of a sermon. Take your physical and mental intensity to the next level!

Raise your personal expectation. "Excel still more" (1 Thessalonians 4:1, 9-10; Philippians 3:12-14). A famous success coach says, "We must remember that the same level of thinking that brought us where we are today will not take us to where want to go tomorrow." The Bible puts it this way: "Whatever your hands finds to do, verily do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or wisdom in Sheol where you are going" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). I do not agree with all the personal philosophies of Nelson Mandela, but he is right when he says, "There is no passion to be found in playing small – in settling for a life that is less than what you are capable of living."

Harness the power of faith in God. "I can

do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). You have this built-in, God-given capacity to be all that you can be – to dream big dreams, to make a profound difference for good. Do you believe it? Part of the secret is replacing your limiting beliefs with empowering beliefs. You're not just a "victim" of circumstances beyond your control. An example of a limiting belief is found in the lame man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:5-7). He was preoccupied with finding someone to put him in the pool when the water was stirred, while the real answer to his problem was standing right in front of him, in the Person of Jesus! We have all been conditioned to think a certain way, but in reality, we have the power to accomplish a whole lot of good things if we believe, with God's help, that we can put these virtues into action (Luke 17:6).

Model successful godly behavior. Success leaves footprints. Someone has said, "Do what other successful people do, and you will be successful." This is as true of spiritual success as it is in any realm. "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Follow

the example of your Savior!

Other Christians can help as well. Do you want to do something well in the Lord's work? Then learn as much as you can from someone who's doing it well. Find a mentor, ask for advice, and then follow his or her godly example.

Decide to succeed at all costs. Successful people are not lucky. "Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity." You're going to make some mistakes. Do the best you can, but let it rip and just start making decisions. There isn't anything you can foul up that we can't fix." That little piece of advice changed her life!

Too many Christians suffer from paralysis of analysis. In your effort to honorably do the Lord's work, you're going to make some mistakes. It is better to go forward and learn from these mistakes, than to remain inactive. Be clear on the goals you would like to accomplish, and prayerfully commit yourself to them. Indeed, "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest (Luke 10:2).

~via *Focus Magazine* Vol. 5 No. 1



An Unburdened Conscience

Jim Jonas

"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14 NKJV).

The Hebrew writer is affirming the supremacy of the covenant of Christ against the relative inadequacy of the Mosaic Law. He states that Jesus is the "Mediator of a better

covenant, which was established on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). What is the essence of these better promises? Jeremiah had glimpsed it six hundred years earlier: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12; cf. Jeremiah 31:34).

This promise of absolute forgiveness was incompatible with Mosaic system, for its provisions "cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9). The sacrificial offering of animal blood, devoid of any consideration of additional redemptive offerings, was useless against the power of sin (Hebrews 10:4). If forgiveness was to be forthcoming, it would require a unique and extraordinary measure in order to achieve it.

But something extraordinary did occur: "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12). This is what Jeremiah and the other Old Testament prophets previewed "that God, Himself, would eventually provide a way for the conscience of man to be completely free from the burden of sin. Unbelievably, this required God to take on human form and offer Himself as an atoning sacrifice.

The effects of unresolved guilt can be devastating: Loss of emotional vitality, an oppressive sense of shame and self-loathing, even the eventual deterioration of physical health. When we have acted contrary to a properly trained conscience, the resulting trauma can be spiritually debilitating. Some people remain plagued by a pervasive sense of guilt decades after the offense has been committed and forgiveness has been sought.

This is unnecessary! Yes, sin is horrible, hurtful and humiliating, but the whole purpose of Jesus' offering of Himself is to unburden us from the guilt of sin and its destructive residue. The recipe for atonement is not Jesus' blood

plus a lifetime of self-inflicted persecution. While it is not mentally possible to forget all our sins, those lingering memories should be woven into the fabric of wisdom and maturity of an unburdened conscience, not used as a scourge.

The sacrifice of Jesus, together with a penitent heart and a renewed resolve to do right, is sufficient to completely cleanse our conscience from dead works and serve the living God. May we do so with a buoyant and clear conscience that basks in God's forgiveness.

~via *Biblical E-Sights*; Vol. 1 No. 14



A Man Who Had Plenty

Frank Himmel

Only Luke records Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31). Scholars debate whether this was a parable or a historical account. Since parables are true-to-life illustrations, it makes little difference. The story is addressed to the Pharisees, who were lovers of money (v. 14). Their money and outward show of religion impressed men (v. 15). Perhaps folks viewed their wealth as an indication of God's approval. Jesus knew better.

The story is about a man who had plenty. We ought to be able to relate to that.

He had plenty of money. The man is not named. (Some folks refer to him as Dives, based on Jerome's Latin word for rich.) He was just 'a certain rich man.' He could be anyone with plenty of money. Who is that? Doesn't rich always describe folks who have more than we? It shouldn't. Most of us have plenty, far more than is essential to life.

Plenty of money was not the man's problem. It was what he did with it. "He habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in

splendor every day" (v. 19). He consumed it all. It all went to self. And that was inexcusable because...

He had plenty of opportunity to help others. "And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table..." (vv. 20-21).

Sometimes we console ourselves that we would do more if only we had opportunity. Beware. The problem is rarely lack of opportunity; it is unwillingness to see it. This man couldn't see it lying at his gate! Neither will we if we, like him, are always looking in a mirror. That focus on self later became unbearably painful because...

He had plenty of torment. In Hades, the realm of the dead. The man who had been so comfortable in life was not indecibly miserable in death. Instantly, he became the beggar. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me...I am in agony in this flame" (v. 24). Now he could see clearly. It was too late. All that remained was an eternity of agony. And it was his own fault because...

He had plenty of instruction. At the end of the story the rich man pled with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers. "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead'" (v. 31).

The Bible that the rich man had so long ignored contained all the instruction, evidence, promises and warning that anyone would need. If that won't move us, what else would? Are you living daily in service to the Christ who was crucified for you?

~via *The Manslick Raod Speaker*, Louisville, Kentucky

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Mary Best* has been sick with the flu this past week and has been unable to be out...*Millinea Word* is beginning to take physical therapy for her back...*Rocky Rose* has been sick this past week and was unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night...*Ashley and Alyssa Thomas* are both feeling better after being sick over the weekend...*Rodney McCrary* was not feeling well Wednesday night and was unable to be at Bible study...*Monroe Pressnell* has been sick at home after returning from Florida...*Scottie Goode's uncle, O.L. Prince*, is in the ECM hospital being treated for staff infection...*Yvonne Pressnell mother, Opal McGuire*, is in the Ardmore Nursing Home...Remember *Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland*, is continuing her treatments for her cancer...*Sheila Goode & Lou Ann Phillips mother, Shirley Slaton*, is continuing to receive chemo treatments weekly in Birmingham...Also remember *Mattie Blanche Word* who continues at home and not able to be out...Also, *Gurtie Snoddy* who is in the Mitchell-Hollingsworth Nursing Home...*Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home...Remember *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunt*, and *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Pressnells: Monroe and Yvonne* are now back home after being away in Florida on vacation...*The Williams: Ray, Judy and Chase* are in Auburn visiting with Cori this weekend.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for group one to meet. If you are in group one plan to meet this evening.

FLORIDA COLLEGE LECTURES: The Lord willing, I will be flying to Tampa on Monday to attend the lectures at Florida College and will return Friday afternoon. I look forward to being able to go again this year and appreciate the church here for allowing me to be away.

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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