


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

March 25, 2001

No. 12

Receiving The Reconciliation

Gary Henry

The apostle Paul spoke of salvation from sin as something that is possible only because we can be "reconciled" to God in Christ: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:10,11).

One of the difficulties of life in a secular society is taking adequate account of the reality of God. On the down-to-earth plane of everyday living, we tend to conduct ourselves as "practical atheists," people who acknowledge the existence of God but live as though the question were not very important. When we do take God into consideration, we often make another mistake: we assume that all will be well between ourselves and God in the long run, regardless of how we have lived in the short run! We suppose that our relationship with God will somehow turn out to be the good one that common sense says should exist between God and His people. We appear to believe that, if anything needs to be done, God will take care of it without a need on our part to do even so much as pay attention. Time heals all wounds, we think, including this one.

But mere time will not repair the breach

between us and God. This very real estrangement is the result of sin — sin in which we have rejected the controls of God's sovereignty over our conduct and violated His will. "Death" is the word the Bible uses to describe the consequence of sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23), and more is involved here than the death of our physical bodies. Indeed, the penalty of physical mortality is the least of our problems. Apart from God, we are dead spiritually, no matter how long it may take for us to die physically. Deprived of the fellowship with God that we were created to enjoy, we are no more "alive" than the beasts of the field. The truth is this: in sin we are alienated from our God. What we most desperately need is to be reconciled to Him.

It happens that God has done what only He could have done to make this reconciliation possible. He made the vicarious sacrifice of Himself that allowed Him to justify us (Romans 5:6-9). But the reconciliation that has been effected is one that must be "received" (Romans 5:10,11) — and it must be received on God's terms, not ours (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:37-39; Romans 10:9,10; etc.). Even after one has initially been reconciled to God, there is the possibility of forfeiting it by attitudes and actions that are inconsistent with fellowship with God. Paul wrote to Christians in Corinth,

“We plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).

As modern people, taught to believe in the self-sufficient mastery of our own destiny, it takes swallowing our pride to admit that we need Jesus Christ to reconcile us to a God from whom we have alienated ourselves by sin. But that is exactly what the gospel of Christ asks us to admit. And the sooner we acknowledge the seriousness of our alienation, the sooner we will be ready to appreciate the magnitude of what God has done to recover fellowship with us.

Gratitude for the undeserved nature of this reconciliation is what moves us to receive it and appreciate it. When Jesus was criticized for allowing a sinful woman to wash His feet with her tears, He said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (Luke 7:47). If the gift of God’s forgiveness is to be enjoyed at all, it must be received. Proud people have a hard time receiving gifts and being thankful for them, probably because they do not like to think of themselves as needing anything that anybody else can give. But “empty” people who recognize their own spiritual poverty are willing to receive the gift of God.

If we are to be saved from sin, we must admit our neediness before God and be willing to receive what He offers. Without God’s gift, we are hopelessly lost. Humbly and reverently, we must cease from our pride and thankfully accept the reconciliation that God, and God alone, has made possible. That affirmation may go against the doctrine of humanism, but it is clearly the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). It is this same Jesus “through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Romans 5:11).

~via *Focus Magazine*; Vol. 2 No. 10

“God Was With Him”

Earl Kimbrough

“And the patriarchs becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him” (Acts 7:9).

In Genesis 37, Jacob had sent Joseph to see how his brothers fared. When they saw him coming, they conspired against him. Their envy was so great that nothing but his removal from their sight could satisfy their evil hearts. Reuben, the oldest, persuaded the others to let Joseph starve in a dry pit, rather than to kill him outright. He intended secretly to release Joseph and send him home, but while Reuben was away, his brothers sold the boy to a caravan of merchants on their way to Egypt.

Reuben tried to spare his kid brother, but he went along with the plan to make Jacob believe that a wild beast had devoured his son. The events that followed are explained in part by Joseph’s not knowing what his brothers did after he was sold. At his age, probably about seventeen, he could not comprehend the depth of his father’s love. He did not know why Jacob made no attempt to rescue him. Jacob was wealthy and could have found and redeemed his son from bondage. Egypt was near Canaan and tracing the caravan and locating the man who bought Joseph would have been relatively easy.

Joseph did not know that Jacob thought a wild beast had devoured him. As any hope of redemption faded, he may well have resigned himself to a life of bondage. He himself made no attempt to contact his father, even when he had the power to do so after his elevation to governor of Egypt. He may have supposed that his family had abandoned, but he knew something far more important: “God was with him.”

Envy is a terrible sin because of what it does to one obsessed with it and because of what it causes one to do to others. It is described in the Scriptures as “rotteness of [a disease in] the bones” (Proverbs 14:30). Aside from what

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

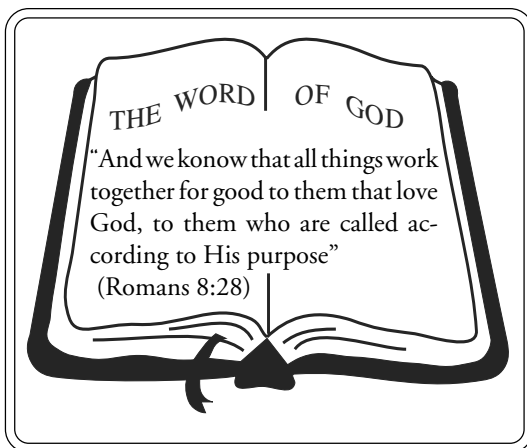
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

this may indicate in reference to the spiritual and moral state of an envious man, envy can also harm one's health. Paul labeled envy as a work of the flesh that can render one unfit to inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). He also shows that envy is evidence of a lack of love, for "love does not envy" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Envy causes one to hate and to hurt others. Eternity alone will reveal how much of the strife, division, and animosity that exists among brethren in God's family is prompted by envy. An envious person will hardly admit his condition even to himself; much less confess it to others. But its fruit is in evidence.

The story of Joseph is a record of God's providence in the life of a faithful servant. He was envied, despised, rejected, and lied about by his brethren, but God did not abandon him but brought him out of all his troubles. Let us not forget that although we may suffer these things, and more, if we trust God and obey his word, as best we can, he will bring us through it all (Psalm 23:4-6). The providence of God works in the lives of all who put their complete trust in Him. He can bring good out of evil (Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28).

"God withholds nothing good from him who is in Christ under grace; there is no condemnation to him; all things work together for his good" (James A. Harding, 1889).

~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 22.



Gospel Meeting

June 17-22

Mark White, Speaker

Anderson church of Christ
Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Onzell Tucker* had surgery this past Wednesday in Florence and is now at home...*Lou Ann Phillips* was down with her back and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night...*Wesley Phillips* has also been sick this past week with Bronochitis...*Marcia Cooper* has been sick this past week and has not been able to be at services ...*Millinea Word* began taking oral chemotherapy at home this past week...*Henry Trousdale* is to have gall bladder surgery upcoming... *Marla Clemmons father, Jimmy Blackburn*, had surgery this past week in Florence and continues in the ECM hospital... Remember *Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, who is continuing to take medication for his Leukemia ...*Sheila Goode & Lou Ann Phillips mother, Shirley Slaton*, continues treatments for her cancer... *Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland*, who is continuing her treatments for her cancer ...Also remember *Mattie Blanche Word* who continues at home and not able to be out...*Aldeen Noles* who is not able to be out ...Also

remember **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 Hunter**, and **Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty**, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: **Signa Skipworth** is away visiting her sister in North Carolina this weekend...**The Williams: Ray, Judy, Cori and Chase** are on vacation this week in Washington, D.C....**The Roses: Rocky and Donna** are away this weekend in Nashville...**Curtis Mosley** has been away this past week and is now back home... **Jamie McConnell** has been away playing basketball in a tournament in Kansas this week, but is now at home.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for communication group 4 to meet. If you are in group four remember to meet this evening.

GOSPEL MEETING: **The Parkway church** near Trinity is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday with services each evening Monday through Wednesday at 7:30. The speaker will be **Mark Hines of Cullman**.

STRINGERS VISIT: It was good to have **Collin, Jori, Rachel and Anna Stringer** visiting with us this past Wednesday night. They are now living in Fort Collins, Colorado. Collin preached here from 1988 and to 1995. It was good to see them and to see the newest member of the family, three week old Anna.

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

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391
Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
Larry White (256) 247-0988

Evangelist & Editor

David A. Cox (256) 247-1049
Office-(256) 247-5539

E-mail address: dacox@hiwaay.net

U.S. Postage
Paid
Bulk Rate
Anderson, Alabama
Non-Profit
Permit #6

Anderson church of Christ
P.O. Box 66
Anderson, Alabama 35610

Address Correction Requested

Left Behind?



There are questions about life after death and there is much speculation as to what will occur. There is a book and movie entitled "Left Behind" which gives a popular idea of what will happen when Jesus returns. Come join us next Sunday evening, at 6:00, as we explore the Bible teaching about what will happen at the end of time.