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STAYING THE COURSE

Ev. Joel R McGarvey



I think back to this same time last year and things were very busy. We were excited about the summer ministry schedule. We had been with BDTLB fifteen years and 2020 was the first year that our summer schedule was completely filled as the year opened.

Then everything began to crumble and fade away. As lockdowns took hold and the virus spread, cancellations began. But we praise the Lord that we were able to press on and the Lord truly blessed the summer with lives coming to salvation in Christ.

Here we are again with the uncertainty continuing to linger, causing requests to be down. Churches are simply hesitant to plan too far into the future. We understand the situation and we are sympathetic to their feelings.

But while circumstances are what they are, *the* Church, and its purpose, though challenged, must remain unchanged. And when I speak of the Church I am not addressing that organized group of individuals meeting in that beautiful building down the street. The Church, the Body of Christ, is an invisible organism of individual believers unified upon a common faith and message (Eph. 4:3-6). Paul uses this analogy when

speaking of the Church and its members. ***“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ”*** (1 Cor. 12:12). ***“And He is the head of the body, the church...”*** (Col. 1:18a). Therefore, when I speak of *the* Church's purpose or responsibility, I am addressing the individual members of the organism, not some organization in a building. The organism and the organization may share in a purpose, but the execution of that purpose must be faithfully carried out by the individuals. The “success” of any organization rests solely on the faithful participation of its individual members. Therefore, the task at hand will never be executed to its fullest, until each individual member takes up the task.

With that in mind, we enter 2021 with resolutions and hope for a great year of ministry. While we anxiously await to see what the Lord has in store for this ministry, we know that our purpose remains the same-- Christ. In a time of turmoil, we must be resolute to keep ***the main thing the main thing***. It is sad to see how many have gotten their eyes off of the ministry and have become consumed with the political unrest and debates of the

Christ Died for your Sins

The Need: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

“For the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23a)

“...there is none that doeth good, no not one.” (Romans 3:12b)

The Result: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

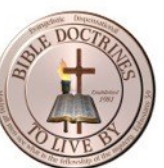
God's Response: “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins....” (Ephesians 1:7a)

Man's Response: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Believe it. Receive it. Have Eternal Life

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9



day. Two people can't carry on a conversation without its rapidly turning to some breaking information they just received from a trusted friend whose great uncle's neighbor lives next door to the grandfather of a retired government official who knows a doctor who wrote an article that everyone must see (ie Social Media). It has brought about division in churches and, even more sadly, many families. But worse than that, the cause of the Gospel of the Grace of God has, in many cases, been set aside or greatly diminished.

And this, my friends **must** be the primary focus of the Church, the primary focus of each individual member of the Body of Christ. **"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction (punishment, death) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power"** (2 Thess. 1:7-9). **"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev. 20:12, 15).

Friends, there is certainly a terrible day of judgment ahead, a day reserved for those who have not trusted the finished work of Christ for salvation. It is a day of judgment, and the first day of unending conscience punishment in the lake of fire. Of the day the believer is called Home it is often stated, "What a Day that will be". But the same can be said for those who have not trusted in the finished work of Christ on their behalf. What a day that will be; the wailing, the gnashing of teeth, the agony and despair will certainly dominate the day into eternity. **Do you believe this? Do you believe that a terrible time of judgment awaits all those who have failed to place their faith and trust in the finished work of Christ? Do you really believe it?**

Friends, we live in a very significant time, the time of salvation. **"For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored** (given aid, relief, help) **thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (2 Cor. 6:2). Yesterday is past, tomorrow is yet to come, and may never come for some, but today is available to **all**. What are doing with today? The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians, chapter five, that we have been given the ministry and the word of reconciliation (v. 18, 19). And then he wrote, **"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"** (v. 20). As His ambassadors, bearing the ministry and word of reconciliation, it behooves each believer to be actively sharing the saving Gospel of the Grace of God with the lost world around us. In his letter to the Romans, Paul stated, **"...and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?...So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"** (Rom. 10:14b, 17). On this same note we read, **"...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching** (proclaiming) **to save them that believe"** (1 Cor. 1:21). The task of reaching the lost with the message of God's saving grace has been given to me, and to you, and to every member of **the** Church, the Body of Christ. Together, we all must be about the task of sharing the Gospel presented to us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: how that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day for our justification. This is the answer to the world's despair; this is man's only source of lasting peace and hope. It is not found in a political party or governing body or religious organization. It is found only through faith, apart from any or all works, in the finished work of Christ.

As we continue through the New Year, let us strive to keep the main thing the main thing and focus our attention on the task the Lord has given to us. Let us all be found faithful ambassadors of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. V

Family Bible School
Exploring
the 80's time
Dates About FULL
Call: 616-785-3618
 A Ministry of Bible Doctrines To Live By Comstock Park, Michigan Adapted from Answers In Genesis 7 Cs of History

What Do You Think?

Do you like to travel? Camp? Study the Word?

Thinking about putting together what would be a unique time of fellowship and Bible study in the Fall (Sept.?) of 2021.

1. We'd choose an area of the country to visit.
2. The group would rendezvous at a selected area.
3. The group will Travel & Tour together.
4. Stop each night and enjoy a time of Bible study and fellowship together.

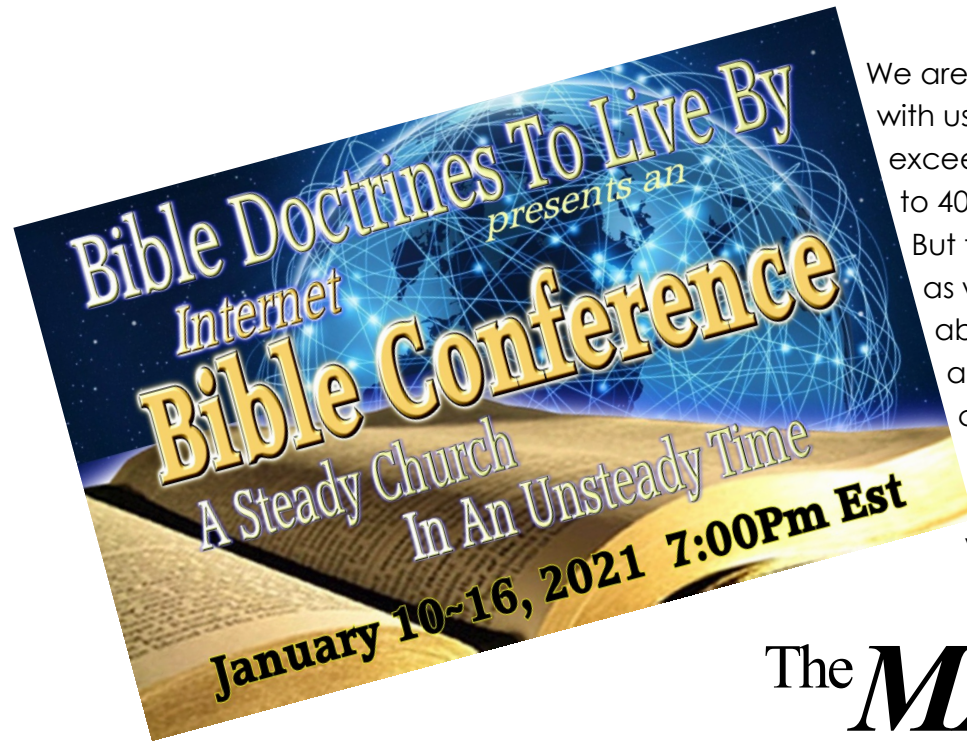
COST:

Costs would be limited to normal travel expenses: fuel, food, camping, and any entrance fees. **No BDTLB Fees.**

Let me know ASAP if you'd be interested.

616-785-3618





We are thankful for the many who joined with us each evening. The numbers far exceeded our expectations with close to 400 participating in each session. But that was only the first conference as we have already begun to think about what direction we would go and how we would do the next conference. Below are a few of the comments we received from viewers who wrote and shared with us their thoughts.

The MAILBAG

A few words from our viewers...

...it has been a wonderful blessing. Needless to say, its been quite different from what I have been use to. If you decide to do another conference I will surely watch it."

Michigan

"We really learned a great deal and were challenged and encouraged."

Michigan

"It has been a great week! We got to meet some Grace Pastors we had never heard before. The messages were timely. We are spreading the word around about your Sunday and Tuesday online Bible studies."

Iowa

"....writing to express our gratitude for your weekly messages and the Bible Conference you had last week. We enjoyed the different speakers and their topics. Both of us received a spiritual boost. As for the broadcast, I believe using social media is becoming more and more important in presenting the Word of God. I think this method will continue to grow, and the number of viewers will continue to grow exponentially."

Indiana

"I wanted to write and lat you know how very much I enjoyed the Online Bible Conference. Each speaker presented a wonderful gospel and challenged all of us in these perilous days."

Indiana

I was very blessed each night of the conference by the wonderful and uplifting messages presented. You can never preach enough on "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth".

West Virginia

Have You Watched...

BDTLB ONLINE?





CONFIDENTLY SECURE

Pastor Matthew Rithchey

Believers are secure, because our salvation rests on the faithfulness and integrity of Christ. The plan that God has for members of the Body of Christ has not been completed as of yet. His eternal purpose lies in the heavenlies, where we will receive our immortal bodies (I Corinthians 15:51-58, II Corinthians 5:1). However, there is NO doubt that God's plan for us WILL be fulfilled. Someday, our Lord WILL appear in the air and gather all the members of the Body of Christ to Him. He will take us to Heaven where we will receive our glorified bodies (I Thessalonians 4:15-18).

From the beginning, God has allowed humanity to have a choice. Adam had a choice to obey God and not eat of the forbidden tree, or to disobey God and eat of the tree. There have been only two main choices throughout history. We will characterize these two choices as being 'For God' ("Yes, I'll do things Your way"), or 'Against God' ("No, I think my way is just as good.").

Let's use Peter's words in Acts 2:38. He instructs the people gathered at Pentecost to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If the people at this time were 'For God', they would have repented and been water baptized for their sins in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. If they were 'Against God', they would have tried some other way.

Peter's words weren't directed to the Body of Christ. They were made when God was dealing with Israel during His plan for earth. The Body of Christ wasn't in existence, or known, outside of the mind of God, until revealed to the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:11-17). This message preached by Peter does not apply today. If you are 'For God' today, you will humble yourself and accept that Christ paid the penalty for your sins on the cross. Then, He rose again so that we can have life through His resurrection. This is God's plan of salvation for today, faith in Christ's work alone. If you are 'Against God', you will try to earn your way to Heaven through your own work.

Let's use another example. Mrs. Blank zealously attends every church service, prays for three hours a day, reads her Bible for the next three hours, and tops off her day by volunteering at various charity organizations. She makes sure that she is water baptized, confesses every sin to God, and partakes in each Lord's Supper. She genuinely believes that all of these deeds will earn her a place in Heaven. Mrs. Blank might be the most sincere person on earth and yet still be condemned to an eternity separated from God in the lake of fire. Sincerity alone does not save a person. Sincere faith in GOD'S requirement for salvation saves. Today that requirement is faith alone in Christ's work.

Philippians 1:6 ensures us that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it

Continued from page 4

until the day of Jesus Christ." We can be confident that the work God began in those who believe will be completed. We will someday be conformed to the image of His Son. We will be forever delivered from the effects and temptations of sin (1 Corinthians 15:24-28, 54-57).

Much of the controversy surrounding eternal security would be laid to rest if people understood that the word 'salvation' is used in many ways. It can be used to refer to salvation from enemies (1 Samuel 19:5, 2 Chronicles 20:17, Psalms 35:3); or used for salvation from the hurts and discouragements of the flesh (Psalms 37:39, 69:29). There are also three uses of the word 'salvation' when referring to believers in Christ.

They are:

PAST - The initial forgiveness of sin and deliverance from an eternity in Hell. We have been delivered, or saved, from the penalty of sin. This is oftentimes referred to as *justification*, which means "to be declared righteous." It occurs the moment we place our faith and trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus to deliver us from sin. See Romans 5:1&2, 2; Corinthians 5:21; and Colossians 1:14.

PRESENT - This refers to the experiential deliverance from the power of sin in our daily lives. While positional sanctification is a part of the past, as we have already been declared saints, practical sanctification, which involves our daily walk as believers, is ongoing. We continually fight against the urgings of the flesh as we seek to serve the Lord by walking in the Spirit. Our physical bodies still await the redemption of the body. On earth, we are called to surround ourselves with the things of the Lord. We are instructed to be active workers in the responsibilities entrusted to us in His Word. As we mature and grow as Christians, we consecrate (sanctify, set apart) more of our lives to God. The key is

to recognize that we have been set free from serving the flesh. We have been set at liberty to serve the Lord. Godly living and desires, including the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit, are the marks of maturity. See Romans 6, 12:1&2; Galatians 5:16-26; 2 Timothy 2:16&17, and the book of Titus.

FUTURE - This aspect looks forward to our everlasting deliverance from the presence of sin in glorified bodies (also known as glorification). It will be at this moment that practical and positional sanctification become one and the same. See Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 3:20&21; and Titus 3:7.

In each of these aspects, GOD does the work. Even in our daily lives right now as we are urged to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling", the next few verses point to God working in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12 & 13). He does the work in and through those who are willing to allow Him to do so.

Our security today as believers in the Dispensation of Grace depends on the faithfulness of God to do as His Word states. The work of confident, secure salvation depends on His work, not ours. We are secure because our responsibility is faith. God is the deliverer.

I would also like to point out that we have eternal life through faith in Christ due to His faithfulness to humble Himself, to come to earth, and to willingly give His life on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). Romans 3:22 states that God's righteousness can come upon all them that believe because it is "by faith (or the faithfulness) of Christ". In other words, we have the opportunity of looking forward to an eternal life in heaven due to the fact that Christ was, and is, faithful. Our salvation doesn't depend on our works, but His finished work. V

Prayer

Pick a time each day to pray (maybe before bed). Each day we have written some things for you to pray for. We have also left some room to write down some of your own prayer requests. If you need help, ask an adult to help you.



Sunday

Pray for your pastor and church.

Thank God for salvation.



Monday

Pray for your family.

Thank God for loved ones.



Tuesday

Pray for your friends.

Thank God for Heaven.



Wednesday

Pray for missionaries.

Thank God for the Bible.



Thursday

Pray for people who are sick.

Thank God for prayer.



Friday

Pray for your school and country.

Thank God for the people in your life.



Saturday

Pray for yourself.

Thank God for something you did this week.



Volume 4. Number 2.

WHAT IS PRAYER?



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "Pray without ceasing."

1 Thessalonians 5:17.

God wants us to pray. What is prayer? How do we pray? What should you say? Is there a time to pray? Let's talk about prayer today.

Prayer is talking to God



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "I thank my God always on your behalf..." 1 Corinthians 1:4.

Prayer is talking to God. We can talk to Him when we are afraid or sad. We can talk to Him when we are happy. There are no special words we have to say for God to hear us. We just talk to God in prayer. We should have respect for God when we pray, but we can always talk to God. We should also tell God "Thank You" for all the things He has done for us. It is amazing that we can talk to God in prayer!



Pray anywhere, anytime



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "I desire that people pray every where." 1 Timothy 2:8.



We can pray at church. We can pray at home or school or the playground. We can pray anywhere. We can pray at night before bed. We can pray before supper. We can pray at any time of the day or night. You don't have to have an adult pray for you. You can talk to God by yourself. God wants us to pray to Him anywhere at anytime.

Pray for everything



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer...with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God."
Philippians 4:6



We can pray to God about every thing. We are to pray when we are worried. We are to pray for others. We are to pray for our leaders. God wants us to talk to Him about every thing. This does not mean God always does what we ask Him to do. God knows what is best. Even Apostle Paul asked the Lord to take away a hurt, but God did not take it away. God did help Paul be strong to live with the hurt. Even when God does not give us what we ask, He will always give us peace in every thing.

God wants us to pray



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "Continue in prayer..." Colossians 4:2.



The Bible tells us that God wants us to talk to Him in prayer. When we pray, we can thank God for many things. We can say thank you that He has saved us and given us a home in Heaven. We can thank Him for Jesus Christ our Savior. God listens and cares about our prayers. It is wonderful to know that we can always talk to God! Prayer is one way we can show God how much we love Him.