

# GRACE & TRUTH



Sanctify them in the truth;  
your word is truth.

JOHN 17:17



# TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH

N A I R O B I

## NO. 126 2016 CONTENTS

### Editor's Desk:

*We welcome you to read and profit from 'Grace & Truth', a publication of Trinity Baptist Church, Nairobi. We believe there is a very great need for serious Biblical literature to be produced in our country of Kenya. We trust your soul will be fed and that you will be challenged from the Word of God. We welcome feedback from you by letter, phone or email. Please also visit us on the web at: [www.trinity.or.ke](http://www.trinity.or.ke)*

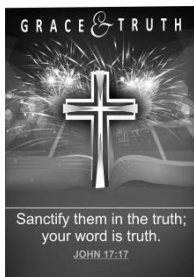
**Keith Underhill**

## GRACE & TRUTH

### Magazine

- 3 Editorial
- 4 Dead to Sin
- 6 The Life of David
- 9 Minister's Remuneration Rights
- 14 Is there such a thing as Tongues Speaking Today?
- 16 The Bible is True
- 22 Meaning of "Sons of God" in Genesis 6:4
- The Internet and Social
- 24 Media
- 27 Urgent Call for Missions

**Cover:** Any one desiring to live a life that pleases God will achieve this by the truth contained in the Word of God. God's will for His people is sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3) and this is in answer to Christ's prayer: '*Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth*'. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us on how to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.



Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible.

The American Presidential elections have not long been concluded. The attention of the world through the media was fixed there as if there was nothing more important to which to pay attention. Is there anything we can learn as Christians from this? There are many lessons, but one very important one is that we are not to look to the world to change society. How can the politics of defamation, lies, hate usher in a benevolent society? The media cannot be trusted, having its own agenda, whether transparent or secret. Writing during the Second World War in his *Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis had a senior devil tell a junior, concerning someone who had become a Christian, ‘to direct the patient’s desire for heaven to trying to create it on earth through various means like politics’.

The first thing we want to make clear is that participation in the process of electing one’s leaders is important for a Christian. We acknowledge that those who rule over us are “God’s servant” (Romans 13:4), and we are to pray for them (1 Timothy 2:1-3). To engage obviously we must have knowledge of the candidate and his policies. This takes time and is where the danger lies, because it can become all-absorbing.

The second thing is that the political process cannot bring about lasting change of character. God never designed it to do that. Good government is to be a terror to wickedness (Romans 13:1-4), and so is a method of restraint. This is necessary because the heart of man is bent to do evil. But laws on the statute book cannot change the heart! That was the weakness of the Ten Commandments written on stone, and why the new covenant promised they would be written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34, see Hebrews 8:6ff.). So we have to look beyond what Government can do if there is going to be any meaningful change in this world. For example, a desire to murder may be stopped from being fulfilled through fear of the consequences but that will not change the desire. There are laws against corruption, yet corruption continues apace.

The third thing is that the real ‘politics’ in this world arena is quite different (see [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/election-is-over-lets-get-political](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/election-is-over-lets-get-political)). Already God has established His kingdom and enthroned His King, demanding absolute loyalty. Earthly kingdoms come and go, but this is an eternal kingdom (see Daniel 2). This kingdom is entered through repentance of sin and faith in Christ (so Mark 1:15). All in this kingdom have had their lives totally changed by the new birth (John 3:3,5) so that above all life in the kingdom is characterized by love. For the earthly kingdom people sacrifice themselves by giving money, giving time, researching all the facts, eagerly awaiting results and staying up, and reacting with exuberance or disgust. Can we do less for the glorious kingdom of God? No, we should do more, much more, and give our all! Christ gave His all for us.

---

## Ephesians 2:1-2

When you consult a doctor the first thing you are asked is, “What is your problem?” If a student performs poorly the teacher wants to know the reason why. When a company makes losses it must investigate. So it is axiomatic that if a solution to a problem is to be found the problem must first be as fully understood as is possible. Why are there never-ending problems in this world from a personal to an international level? The Bible is absolutely clear that it is **SIN**, which entered through Adam’s disobedience. So there is sickness and death, so there is war, injustice, and oppression. So it is incumbent on us to accurately understand what sin is, what it means to be a sinner, and the implications. This is what Paul goes on to do in Ephesians 2:1-3. Why does he do this? We might think that with a new chapter there is a totally new subject, but remember the chapter and verse divisions were inserted into the Bible many centuries later. Paul wants us to know for sure “the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe” (1:19), the very power that raised and highly exalted Christ (1:20-21). Because this sin has made us absolutely helpless to do anything to save ourselves such immeasurably great power must be exercised if anyone is to be saved. Having demonstrated our helplessness (2:1-3), Paul continues by magnifying the power and grace of God. But the first word that explains the awful condition of sin is ‘dead’.

### 1. WE WERE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

What a terrible word “dead” is. The aphorism says, ‘While there is life there is hope’. The ruler of the synagogue earnestly implored Jesus to come and lay hands on his little daughter to make her well as she was “at the point of death” (Mark 5:23). But when she died people said, “Why trouble the Teacher any further?” (v. 35). Once Jesus had died the women were so hopeless that they just came to prepare the dead body with spices. There is only one possible hope, “the working of God’s great might”, His resurrection power.

Obviously those about whom Paul was writing were physically alive; but in another sense they were dead (cf. 1 Timothy 5:6). Just as a physically dead person does not respond to any external stimulus, so a spiritually dead person does not respond to any spiritual stimulus. Spiritual death is being separated from God, having no spiritual life (see v. 5). There is no spiritual understanding, no spiritual desire, no ability to do the things God wants.

Remember what you were like before you were raised by God from spiritual death. God was always speaking to you but you could not hear as if you were a dead person. The heavens were declaring the glory of God (Psalm 19:1, see also Romans 1:20) but we could not see it. God’s hand was providing, protecting and guiding (Acts 14:17) but we did not recognize it. Many times conscience told us ‘No!’ or accused us after we had done something (Romans 2:15) but we did not heed it as the voice of God. Many of us heard the Bible at home, in Sunday School, and preaching, but although we might have been respectful we refused to heed.

The most awful thing about being dead is that a dead person can do nothing for himself; he is not even aware of his hopeless situation; he does not know that he fails to come up to God’s standards. So the Bible is quite clear that an unsaved person is **dead** spiritually, and not just sick, or in a coma, or even at the point of death (see also Colossians 2:13). This is why salvation is described as a resurrection (Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 2:12, 3:1). If anyone is going to be saved GOD Himself must do a resurrection type work.

## 2. WE WERE VERY ACTIVE IN SIN

This condition of death has to do with “trespasses and sins”; it is sin that has caused death. Adam sinned, lost fellowship with God, and was expelled from the Garden (Genesis 3:10,24). Through Adam all are accounted sinners, for death spread to all people (Romans 5:12,17). “Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Sin separates from the gracious presence of God, and this is what the Bible calls ‘death’. Let us be sure that God hates sin, “He cannot look at wrong” (Habakkuk 1:13); neither does He wink at it.

- So death is *firstly* a judicial action of God, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Yet we continue to be very active, ‘walking in trespasses and sins’. ‘Walking’ is a picture of behaviour, a characteristic way of life. The adding of the word “sins” to trespasses is just a way of emphasizing that we are both failures and rebels before God. There is a fullness and variety of sin, in thought, word and deed, both of commission and omission.
- So death is *secondly* a deliberate choice we make, by which we walk in way we think is right (Proverbs 16:25). An objection is often raised: ‘But we do not all live in immorality, hatred and blasphemy.’ It is true, there are many good and respectable people on the outside; but sin is in the heart, pride and lust, and what we fail to do. Jesus had strongest words of condemnation for very religious Pharisees, hypocrites!

### Two doctrines to learn

(1) **Total Inability.** We are totally unable to do anything to save ourselves from sin. This is true of all people, as “we *all* once lived in the passions of our flesh” and we were “like the *rest of mankind*” (see 2:3). The Bible is very clear: “No one *can* come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44,65); “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it *cannot*. Those who are in the flesh *cannot* please God” (Romans 8:7-8); “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is *not able* to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Why do people fight this clear Biblical teaching? Is it not because it totally humbles us, and removes any possibility of works-salvation, of doing anything of merit? Be honest, it is hard to admit that you are not able to do something. We usually resist help until we completely fail. For example, a simple thing like getting the top off a jar, or unlocking a door. And where there is a failure to have an adequate view of sin as involving total inability then God’s work in salvation is devalued, and His grace is slighted, the very things emphasized in this passage!

(2) **Salvation is of the Lord.** Salvation is possible only by the working of God’s immeasurably great power. Only God has power to raise the dead, so such are totally dependent upon Him. It is often strongly objected, ‘Why are sinners exhorted if they cannot do anything? Surely, such exhortations imply ability, free-will!’ But Jesus exhorted Lazarus to come out of tomb though he had been dead four days. Jesus invites anyone to come to Him, although He says they cannot unless drawn by the Father (John. 6:35-44). Having declared that “no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27), He immediately goes on to invite them to Himself, “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden...” (v. 28). The reality is that there is divine power in preaching of gospel of Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 1:18). How else do you explain how you became a Christian? Do you say, ‘Once I was dead, living in sin?’ Do you look back and proclaim, ‘Unless the Lord had opened my eyes I would still be in darkness?’ ‘Thank the Lord that He had mercy upon me when I was helpless and hopeless.’

## 2. DAVID'S RISE TO FAME (1 Samuel 16:14-17:58)

### (1) God's providence in exalting David

Remember that Samuel had not anointed David in public before all Israel, but only before his family (16:13). However, the Lord was soon at work to show all the people that David was indeed the king after His own heart.

- King Saul actually called him into his royal court to play soothing music when he was tormented by an evil spirit from God (16:23). David needed this experience in court where he was going to serve the Lord in the future.
- It was David whom his father Jesse sent to the battle front, arriving at the very time when Goliath appeared with his taunts against Israel (17:23).

Even though he had been anointed, he never sought these things for himself, but was always walking in the path of humble duty. He went to Saul by Saul's request and his father's permission, and returned from court when he was not required. He obediently carried out his father's commands to care for the welfare of his older three brothers. God fulfilled His plans for David in these seemingly ordinary ways. Yet remember how important is David's position in God's plan of redemption in Christ, for Christ would be his descendent and sit upon his throne! Here is one great principle to know the guidance of God in your life. Always carefully continue in the path of duty, however insignificant that duty may seem to be, for God is able to open and close doors as He sees fit. Conversely, do not try to take advantage of opportunities that make you forget your duty. For example, things that come up on the Lord's Day as a test of your obedience to the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment.

### (2) The enemy that needed to be defeated

Perhaps the Philistines had heard that Samuel and Saul had parted ways, and that an evil spirit from the Lord made Saul basically unfit to rule. They would hope that now was the opportunity to go into battle again after the defeat at Michmash (ch. 14), and this time they were going to do it by a representative man, Goliath.

- *Goliath's person* (17:4-7). What a formidable foe! His height, his armour, and his obvious strength. No wonder that Israel feared (17:11). Even the formerly courageous Saul, but now without God's Spirit, and Jonathan his son cowered.
- *Goliath's challenge* (17:8-10). Let the battle only be decided by a duel between 2 men. They think the army of Israel will not be able to produce one strong enough. Goliath was a man who trusted in himself and his own gods (17:43-44).

There were none in Israel who could overcome Goliath by their own native strength. The situation looked hopeless, as if the nation of God would now be subjugated by the Philistines.

### (3) How David defeated Goliath

First, by his *jealousy* for the honour of the Lord. It was this that provoked him to action (17:26). He could not stand idly by when the name of the Lord of hosts was being blasphemed (17:45). God's great and holy name had to be vindicated against Goliath's, an uncircumcised man, defiance. David shows that he really is the man after God's own heart, who is 'out and out' for God, putting God's honour and glory before all other considerations. He takes his place with Phinehas (Numbers 25:6-13), Elijah on Horeb (1 Kings 19:10), Ezra (9:3), and of course our Lord (John 2:14-17). No personal cost is too great where God's glory has suffered loss in the earth (17:46). We desire all the earth to know who God is, and that God's people be strengthened in the faith. If you rightly have jealousy over your marriage partner, what about your

divine Husband? Are you appalled when God's name is blasphemed, when His truth is perverted by professing Christians, when evil is tolerated in God's church? Have you displayed jealousy for the name of Him you call your God? Are you strong enough in the Lord to stand, and to take the initiative, my brethren?

Second, by his *faith* in the Lord's power to deliver him from the enemy. David was not a novice in religious experience, and he applied his past to the present (17:34-37). Saul's own unbelief could not therefore discourage him (17:33). He did not go to meet Goliath in self-confidence at his ability to sling stones (see Judges 20:16), for he knew the battle was the Lord's, who would honour His own glory (17:47). David knew what God would do, because He knew Him as a covenant-keeping, faithful God. We must be sure that God will do what He has revealed in His word, and go forth in faith. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). Read Hebrews 11 and consider what faith has accomplished in the lives of God's people (especially vv. 32-37). Faith does not guarantee worldly success, but it does guarantee spiritual victory.

- The preaching of the gospel is God's primary means of saving sinners (so 1 Corinthians 1:21-24). If you really believe this, then be bold in your proclamation both publicly and privately. Recall past experiences of God's blessing.
- God will answer persevering prayer (Matthew 7:7-8). Be encouraged to zealously continue in prayer for the unsaved, for the growth of the local church, for the triumph of Christ's kingdom throughout the earth.
- God will bless unswerving obedience to His will, as with David. This is in direct contrast to Saul from whom God took away His Spirit because of his disobedience. Do not fear man or let the world dictate what you do or say. Could this be why you are not experiencing the blessing you desire?
- This is a clear example of what true faith is. Saul and all Israel had a profession of faith in Jehovah. But they did not believe that He was able to help them in this situation. Faith is nothing, it is dead, if it is not practical. Christ and the word of the gospel are strong enough for you to act upon for time and eternity. As David trusted the Lord, trust Him yourself, that you might be reconciled to God and live knowing His daily help to do His will.

### 3. GOD'S METHOD OF SALVATION

There is something even more fundamental to learn from the story of David and Goliath. Most people stop at the practical lessons to be learned from David's life. But we must look deeper, and ask what is David's **God** doing? Why is this episode so important that it is recorded in such great detail? Is it just a story for Sunday School (although it is gruesome)? We must learn to see the Bible, not as isolated events, but as *salvation-history*. God is working out His purposes in individual lives, and the life of the chosen nation, to prepare for the coming of the Saviour, and to show how it is that He saves His people.

#### 1. How God brings salvation to His people

The Philistines were gathering their armies in the expectant hope of defeating Israel, God's people. The question is, How will God deliver them? He does not do it by a mighty army crushing the Philistines, nor even by a mighty man of valour to overcome Goliath. Remember, all are afraid (17:11).

- Through a *representative*. The whole issue between the two nations was to be decided by one from each. Great Goliath stood on behalf of the Philistines. To defeat him was to defeat all (17:9). This is the way God deals with men, both in condemnation and salvation.

(a) The whole human race was reckoned guilty by God because of the one sin of Adam in the Garden (Romans 5:18). This is why we are all sinners and all are subject to death. You may have questions about this, but this is the way God has decided to deal with us, and He has also made a way out.

(b) All who are united to Christ by faith are acquitted and receive life through this one act of obedience when He died on the cross (Romans 5:18). Adam failed the test and plunged humanity into death. Christ has come as the second Adam, and He did not give in to temptation as Adam did, but obeyed His Father perfectly in everything, so defeating the devil. The cross was the final encounter (Luke 22:53, John 14:30-31) when Satan's head was bruised and he was overcome (Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 2:14-15). It was the seed of the woman defeating the seed of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Satan holds us in his iron grip. He is our accuser on account of our sin. But Christ has borne the punishment for our sin and has risen again triumphant from the battle. You cannot fight 'Goliath' and win. You must have a representative to do it. And only the God who became man can do it.

- Through the *Lord's anointed*. This is what made David different. Only one set apart and equipped by God can enter into this battle. For this reason David was anointed and given the Holy Spirit (16:13). Now it is Jesus Christ alone who has supremely been anointed to be the Saviour (Acts 10:36-43). He is David's greater Son (Matthew 22:41-45), designated 'the root of Jesse' (Isaiah 11:1,10, Romans 15:12). Like David with only his sling before mighty Goliath, Jesus of Nazareth may seem weak; as He hung seemingly helpless on the cross one might think He was on the brink of defeat. But behold the cry of victory, "It is finished!!" (John 19:30) as the hours of darkness end. **He** is the victor. Would you have been ashamed to own David's victory over Goliath as yours, because you had not fought? But it was just an earthly, temporary victory. Christ has obtained a spiritual, eternal victory. Come to God and by faith claim His victory for you.

## 2. How God brings the Saviour to the throne

David's victory over Goliath brought him fame, and then aroused Saul's jealousy. As a result there were attempts to kill David (18:6-11, 19:9-10). For up to 10 years David led the life of a fugitive, at one point only narrowly escaping from the hand of Saul (23:25-27). Why did God have him anointed, then suffer, and even betrayed by some of his own people (e.g. the Ziphites, 23:5,12, 26:1ff.)? The leaders of God's people must first be trained through suffering, and even rejection by those they come to save. Think of Joseph rejected by his brothers and spending years in an Egyptian prison; of Moses rejected by his people (Exodus 2:11-15) and then looking after sheep in the land of Midian for 40 years. David had to be humbled by trouble and want to trust in the Lord more and more (see Psalm 59:16-17). It is no different with our Lord. He had to suffer as part of His training (Hebrews 5:8). Although He "learned obedience" it does not imply that He ever rendered less than perfect obedience. His own received Him not (John 1:11); He had nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20). It was because He suffered even to the cross that God highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:8-9). The divine principle is: without suffering there is no glory; 'no cross, no crown'. Note two things from this divine pattern:

➤ Jesus Christ is a King who perfectly understands the sufferings of His people (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16). He has gone through exactly the same temptations that we experience. So draw near to Him no matter how perplexed, how burdened, how faltering you are. He will not cast you away, or give up on you, or upbraid you.

➤ The pattern for the Saviour is the same as for the saved. Suffering must precede glory. This is an aspect of true Christian experience which is largely ignored today. Read John 16:33, Acts 14:23, Romans 8:17, Philippians 1:29, 2 Timothy 3:12. So do not be surprised when suffering comes upon you as a Christian – jealousy, misunderstanding, opposition, false accusation. It even happened to your Lord and Master. Remember that this is one great way by which God is training you, moulding you into the image of His Son (Hebrews 12:10-11), preparing you for that great Day.

## 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Many pastors would want to preach from this passage in order to increase their remuneration! It is helpful sometimes to ignore the chapter and verse numbers and read from 8:13. “...*If food makes my brother stumble, I will **never** eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble...*” (emphasis mine). This will help us to understand that Paul, while being free, and a qualified apostle of Christ would not insist on his rights to the detriment of the faith of other Christians, or in a manner that *put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ* (v. 12). This is because, if exercising your rights proves to be a hindrance to the spiritual growth of another person, then it is better to discard those rights.

Nonetheless we shall take the remuneration rights of Paul as the basis of the rights to financial support for gospel ministers. We should understand that Paul's point is to establish these rights only to blow them away, by showing that, having rights is one thing, and making financial demands on the church is another. Paul sets an example for the ministers of the gospel when it comes to remuneration.

Basically in these 14 verses, he says two things which have an excellent balance:

- 1) Gospel ministers have rights to be financially supported by those to whom they minister.
- 2) The decision as to whether or not to be supported does not belong to the church, it belongs to the minister.

What does Paul say about the remuneration rights?

### 1. Ministers have rights too! (vv. 1-2)

- a) ***I've the freedom*** – The question, “*Am I not free?*” has the obvious answer, ‘Of course! You're free.’ Paul had the freedom to act as he chose without being accountable to any man when it came to the matter of eating meat. If they had rights to eat meat offered to idols, Paul also had the rights. But he also had the freedom of not eating the meat! This point is resumed again in verse 19.
- b) ***I am an apostle*** – “*Am I not an apostle?*” Once again, the expected answer is evident – “But of course, Paul. You are an apostle of the Lord. You are called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus (1:1). You are an apostle – *not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father* (Gal. 1:1). Therefore, having a position of higher responsibility and authority, means more rights and privileges. Two-fold proof of his apostolic office is provided to stop every mouth that was critical of this position.
  - i. He had seen Christ – “*Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?*”
  - ii. Therefore, he had been personally commissioned by Christ to be an apostle.
- c) ***You are the proof of my rights*** – “*Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.*”

The fruit of Paul's ministry is the Corinthians. They were his farm, his *workmanship!* They should not be criticising him. They are his *workmanship in the Lord*, meaning that they were a product of Christ's redemptive work and Paul was the tool employed to this end. The church of the Corinth was the ‘*seal*’ of this apostleship and ministry in the sense that their salvation authenticated Paul's ministry to be genuine.

More often than not gospel ministers are treated as if they do not have any membership rights in a church, leave alone remuneration rights! Yet a minister ought to be first of all a member before he becomes a minister. They are Christians, brothers *in the Lord*, too. They are to be treated as such.

The claim of fruit and therefore success of one's ministry has been abused by some. More often what is called success of ministry is in the eyes of the person in question and so it could be spurious. Some other times, success is amplified and magnified and urged even when the minister is in error!

“Still, there are cases when the success is of such a character, so undeniable and so great, as to supersede the necessity of any other evidence of a divine call. Such was the case with the Apostles, with the reformers, and with many of our modern missionaries.” (Charles Hodge)

## **2. Ministers have more rights than you! (vv. 3-7)**

Undoubtedly, Paul senses opposition in the matter of surrendering his rights and so he says, *“This is my defence to those would examine me.”* Paul establishes a judicial trial which some of the Corinthians may have desired to try his actions. He had already told them, *“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself”* (1 Corinthians 4:3). It is interesting that he accepts the inquiry and so makes this defence. Is it wrong to defend oneself? Even if our LORD did not so much defend Himself against His accusers, yet it is not wrong. Paul, His apostle, defended himself many times – in the temple (Acts 22:1); before the Council (Acts 22:30-23:7); before Felix the governor (Acts 24:11-21), etc. The second letter to the Corinthians, as well as some portions of Galatians, is devoted to his personal defence, because of his ministry which was at stake.

1) ***They have rights to basic human needs at your cost*** – *“Do we not have the right to eat and drink?”* In other words, we have a right to abstain from secular employment in order to meet your spiritual needs and be supported by the church as ministers of the gospel. In the same way, even if the Corinthians had the right to eat even food sacrificed to the idols, they did not have this right to have the meat bought for them, but Paul had!

2) ***They have rights to have spouses supported as well*** – *“Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?”* Most of these ministers were itinerant preachers. Clearly these men were married. It is also obvious that Paul is not just interested in the support for the 12 Apostles. He also has in mind the other ministers of the gospel, because he mentioned Barnabas, and the brothers of the Lord (James, Jude, et al), who were engaged in the ministry, and with their wives too! The point he is making, which must not be forgotten is his right to have a companion in travel, even a wife (if married), at the cost of the church. And for this he refers to the precedent set by the rest of the apostles and ministers of the gospel. Precedence is important in establishing a principle.

3) ***We are not exempted from the rights that the other ministers enjoy*** – *“Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?”* Paul is not asking the church to do what they could not do, or won't do. They were already financially supporting others, why shouldn't they also support Paul? Paul associates himself with Barnabas, his early co-laborer, who was so highly regarded in Jerusalem (Acts 4:36, 11:22ff., 13:14). Those who constantly appeal to their separation over John Mark seldom remember that the two men remained partners in the gospel ministry. Apparently, just like Paul, Barnabas maintained the same self-denying practice of abstaining from receiving sustenance from those to whom he preached. Both Paul and Barnabas laboured to meet their own daily needs.

I have always maintained that if a pastor found himself in a church that is not able to support him financially, he should himself break the cycle of unfaithfulness by abandoning any other vocation and labouring hard in the ministry to build the saints so that they may learn the grace of faithfulness in giving, even win more souls to Christ, and effectively expand his financial support base. This way break the cycle of unfaithfulness. Brother pastors, work hard in the ministry vocation – preach in and out of season, pray, love the flock that God has put under your charge. Be diligent to feed the sheep with good spiritual meal – the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Strengthening the weak, healing the sick, binding up the injured, bringing back the stray ones and seeking the lost. Stop eating the fat ones, feeding yourselves! (Ezekiel 34)

### 3. Ministers' remuneration rights are strongly entrenched

- 1) ***This is natural justice*** (vv. 7,13): Ministers' rights are foundational in society – *a labourer is worthy his wages*. You earn from your employment.
  - a) Soldiers do not serve at their own expense (v. 7)
  - b) He who plants vineyard will eat its fruits (v. 7)
  - c) Dairy farmers drink milk from their own animals (v. 7)
  - d) Priest eat from the temple (v. 13)

Priests earned their living from the temple where they served. It is a fact that you earn your salary or wages from your employment. If you are a teacher, it is not too much to expect to be remunerated by the Teachers' Service Commission – it is your right! Being a pastor, it is not embarrassing to say that the church pays me! After all I work for them. If you employed a watchman, or a secretary in the church, you would pay him! Failure to pay him would be unfair, unlawful and sinful. What about your pastor?

- 2) ***This right is entrenched in the legal justice***. Ministers' remuneration rights are recognized in the Old Testament Law – *“Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain’”* (vv. 8-9)

He quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4 to explain that the Law of Moses sanctioned this. As much as God's kindness extends to animals – He *feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field*, yet He is not *just* concerned for the oxen. God is particularly and especially, even *'entirely'* concerned for those who minister the gospel. If those who generally spread the honours of the name of God are kindly provided by the Lord (birds), how much more will the Lord provide for those whom He has especially commissioned to proclaim the oracles of God (preachers)?

The preacher ought to be as hard working and as diligent as a ploughman (v. 10). The ploughman exerts himself in ploughing in hope that the Lord will give rain and increase in harvest. In the same manner the one who threshes the grain has the hope of enjoying his crop and also sharing this with others for his profit. There are too many preachers who are simply lazy – they need to be rebuked by the hard work of the ploughman and the discipline of the soldier so that they spend and are spent for Christ. There are too many lazy bones in the ministry – men who are not worthy to be called pastors at all! Pastor, you want to be paid well? Then work hard. How many hours do you spend in the week serving the people? How much do you pray for them? Do you visit them in order to profit them or it is only when they are sick or have major challenges like bereavement? How much do you love the flock? Do you study to show yourself approved? Are you a workman who does not need to be ashamed?

The church on her part, has a God-ordained responsibility both to pay their pastors well and to respect them. Love your pastor for he labours for you. Pastoring is a hard labour, for it is being over you in the Lord and it also involves admonishing people. It is travailing as in childbirth for Christ to be formed in the lives of people. It involves helping people keep the narrow way, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to flee evil,

teaching them how to flee from idolatry and adultery. It is helping people to know sin for what it is. It also presenting Christ, and the glory of heaven so clearly that people want to hasten there. Please learn in the name of the Lord *to esteem them very highly in love because of their work* (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). Don't speak behind their backs, instead love them. Care for them in prayer. Deacons be sure to look after your pastors as well in more practical affairs – do not impoverish them! Give them full support!

This passage is also quoted in 1 Timothy 5:18 as follows: *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The labourer deserves his wages"* (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Preacher, unless you labour hard by *ruling well, in preaching and teaching* you are not worthy of double honour. It is desirable that at least one of the Elders be relieved from his secular calling in order to devote himself fully to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Such an elder is entitled to receive remuneration for his service.

- 3) ***The principle of commutative justice*** – “*If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?*” (v. 11).

Pastors labour in providing for the church a spiritual meal, that which is permanent, imperishable and unfading. Will you not share with them that which is temporal, perishable and can even be stolen? How can you be given more and not be willing to give less? Yet our society does not recognize the work of pastors, first of all because too many pastors are lazy, and too many congregations want to benefit from their pastor's labour for free. Pastors are expected to engage in secular employment within the week and preach on Sunday. Yet the work of pastoring is even more demanding within the week than for the hardworking man.

If pastors sell (freely...without money) a product that has eternal value, is it too much for earthly currency to be used to compensate their labours? Is not this of far lesser value? Pastors *sow spiritual things*, surely it is not too much for them to *reap material things* from their hearers. Will you rob them? Will you treat them so unjustly?

- 4) ***The principle of precedence***. The Corinthians themselves recognized this right by paying others – “*If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?*” (v. 12).

The Corinthians had been remunerating other people who laboured in the gospel in their midst. This set a precedence which they should honour with regard to Paul. If people employ maids, drivers, shepherds, etc. and pay them, why should they not pay their pastor? This means that Paul would not have been asking too much, were he to be supported. Moreover, he had ‘*worked harder*’ in their midst than everyone else (15:10). So this is even more reason why he earned the right to be financially supported.

Yet, he says that he had, deliberately, not made use of this right. He opted to ‘*endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.*’ His primary principle was to see the progress of the gospel and to remove any impediment for the prosperity of the gospel. Our primary concern is that Christ is preached, even when we are financially impoverished. Yet a church that impoverishes her pastor, will be liable before the Chief-Shepherd!

- 5) ***The precept of Lord Jesus, taught in the Gospel*** – “*In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel*” (v. 14).

Paul not only appeals to the Old Testament Law, natural justice, reason and precedence but also to the gospel that Christ taught. He goes to the teaching of the Lord for the livelihood of his disciples - *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from*

*house to house* (Luke 10:7, emphasis mine). Christ has commanded that pastors be remunerated; will you defy your Master?

### Applications:

- 1) There are men who are gifted, qualified and called to the ministry. Yet they fear to come into the ministry lest they imprison themselves in perpetual poverty. Many parents would not want their sons to venture into the ministry for the fear that they would end up paupers. My friend if you are called to the ministry, while there is no guarantee of becoming rich, the Lord will look after you. Enter into the ministry and the Lord who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field will provide for you too. Perfect love for the Lord and the conversion of souls will cast away this fear of the unknown since you are well known by the One who calls you – He is able! Enter into the service of King of kings. Parents, encourage your sons to enter the ministry. Paul did not write this while he was starving – he was well looked after by His Master. The Lord sent ravens to feed Elijah. Will not He who gives the power to gain wealth command the cattle on a thousand hills to belong to the steward of mysteries of God?
- 2) No church should deny her pastor the material blessing that he deserves. Do not wait for your pastors to picket so that you may know that they are struggling financially. So many churches are guilty of this civil crime. Pastoral work is very difficult – it comes with a lot of mental anguish and sorrow for the salvation of souls. Paul compares this work to being a father and a mother at the same time! How do you remunerate your labourers? Or are you simply impoverishing them? Consider very seriously what you give your pastors. If you give less than 10% of your personal income to the church, then you want your pastor to die a poor man. Give as soon as you get your income. Give thoughtfully, generously, and cheerfully. This is how you show yourselves as a church to be Biblical.
- 3) Yet ministers have to be very careful in demanding their remunerations. They must not resort to worldly methods of demanding their remuneration rights. I don't preach to simply earn a living... I preach to 'earn souls for Christ'. Many pastors are in it for money – it might be that this will be their only reward. One of the qualifications for ministers is, he must *not be a lover of money* (1 Timothy 3:3) or *greedy for gain* (Titus 1:7). Peter reiterates this when he says that the work of a pastor is to *shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly...* (1 Peter 5:2).
- 4) The world is observing how the church conducts her business. Do they mistreat their pastors financially? Are their pastors lovers of money? Are they corrupt? Judgements are made by the world indicting the church, especially because the church has not been very scrupulous in employing the wealth of this world for the prosperity of the gospel. If we are not faithful with material blessings here on earth, what hope is there that we would be better stewards of heavenly glorious riches? Since we are heirs of glory, we should live as aliens here on earth and this would be reflected in reformed coffers!

This message is available on You Tube on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3ACT4K2ScQ>

**Is There Such a Thing as Tongues-Speaking Today?**

There is a lot of excitement over the subject of tongues in the church of today. Many consider that speaking in tongues is the necessary evidence that a person has received the Holy Spirit. Throughout the world worship services take place where the whole congregation supposedly erupts into tongues-speaking. Countless individual Christians claim to pray in tongues in private. For so many, such experience is enough, it is proof that the gift of tongues is alive and well, and so even to question it is branded as unbelief. May I urge you never to make experience your final authority, but only the Scriptures. Explicit references to tongues in the Bible are only found in Mark 16:17, Acts 2:3-4,11, 10:46, 19:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10,28,30, 13:1,8, 14:5-6,18,21-23,39, and we shall be considering these passages.

1. We must first consider what these ‘tongues’ are. ‘Tongues’ is a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:10). One speaking in a tongue is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking a real language on earth but one previously unknown to the speaker. This is obviously what took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:7-11). The tongues in the Corinthian church also seem to be such real human languages, because in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul uses the very example of languages (v. 10), notes the tongues should be interpreted like any language (v. 13), and uses an example taken from the Old Testament (v. 21) which refers to a real language, that of the Babylonians. Someone asks: What about the “tongues of ... angels” (1 Corinthians 13:1)? In the context Paul is imagining the very highest possible tongues (whether or not existing) and teaching that even that would be just an empty noise if there is no love.

2. Tongues interpreted is equivalent to prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 14:2-5 Paul compares tongues with prophecy. If a tongue is not interpreted then it benefits no one, even though “mysteries in the Spirit” have been uttered (v. 2). For Paul, the word “mystery” uniformly means something that cannot be known unless it is revealed (see 1 Corinthians 15:51). Tongues is therefore a revelation from God, so that when interpreted, it is equal to a prophecy (v. 5). It is so important to understand that tongues is direct revelation from God, just as the written Scriptures are! If it is a direct gift of the Holy Spirit how could it be anything else?

3. Why did God give this peculiar gift? Why go to the trouble of getting someone to speak in a language that a person does not know and then to get it translated so that the hearers can understand? 1 Corinthians 14:20-22 give the *Biblical* answer. There is an appeal to the “law”, the Old Testament, as it continues to have authority over Christian believers. In Isaiah 28:11-12 God tells the Israelites that, because they have refused to hear His prophets who spoke their own language, He will bring them into judgement through a people (the Assyrians) who speak a language they do not understand. This is one of the covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:49, see Jeremiah 5:15). When God speaks to His people in this way it is in judgement. Therefore, tongues had two purposes: (1) God is judging His people the Jews, who have refused to listen to the great Prophet (Christ), and is taking away the kingdom from them (Matthew 21:43). (2) At the same time that God is turning away from the Jews, He is turning to all the nations of the world by using their own languages, as at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11).

4. The gift of tongues is not needed today. Although we cannot rule out exceptions, the purpose for which this gift was given has been fulfilled. Tongues are a direct revelation from God (like a prophecy), in a real foreign language. We have learned that they were a sign of judgement upon the unbelieving Jews. So consider this illustration. The driver of a vehicle wants to turn left and he puts on his indicator. After he has made the turn he switches the indicator off, for there is no more purpose in it flashing (the illustration is borrowed from an address of O. Palmer Robertson, *Tongues Today?*). It is the same with tongues. Once the kingdom was taken away from the Jews and there was no more danger of the church being Jewish (see Acts 15), then tongues had already served its purpose. Also remember that direct revelation from God has been completed through the apostles (Ephesians 2:20). If you think this conclusion is ridiculous because there are those who claim to speak in tongues today, you must ask this question: “Have such claims been tested so that it has been proved that real foreign languages were spoken?” If not, how can you be sure that such are genuine gift of tongues according to the Bible.

5. But someone objects that every Christian should speak in tongues at least once as the evidence of having been baptized in the Spirit. This is a common teaching, but it is not true.

- Every Christian has been baptized in the Spirit at conversion. This is what united every single true Christian (1 Corinthians 12:13). The experience of Pentecost was not a second blessing for the apostles. For the **first** time they were receiving the great gift of the new covenant established through Christ’s death and as a result of His resurrection (Acts 2:33). John the Baptist declared that this is the very reason why Jesus came (see Matthew 3:11 and parallels).
- Not everyone spoke in tongues in Acts. There are only three clear occasions (Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6), and possibly a fourth (Acts 8:17). Significantly, each one marks a turning point, the Jews, the Samaritans, the Gentiles, and finally the disciples of John, becoming Christians. The evidence of having been baptized in the Spirit (or having received the Spirit, or being true sons of God) is not speaking in tongues but putting “to death the deeds of the body”, and having assurance that we are sons of God (Romans 8:13-17). Note what Paul considers is the evidence of being “filled with the Spirit”, and it is not tongues (Ephesians 5:18-21).
- Tongues is only one gift of the Spirit, given as He wills (12:11). The question, “Do all speak in tongues?” demands a denial (12:30). Tongues was downplayed by Paul in Corinthians. It comes at the end of the lists in 12:8-10, 29-30, 14:26; it is not one of the “higher gifts”. Prophecy is to be much more desired in the church (14:1). He calls the attitude of the Corinthians towards tongues ‘childish’ (14:20).
- If Mark 16:17 is insisted upon, then ALL believers MUST also “cast out demons ... pick up serpents ...” etc. “Those who believe” are best seen as the apostles who were displaying such unbelief (vv. 11,13,14). Truly these signs did follow them.
- Also consider 1 Corinthians 13:8. If “the perfect” (v. 10) refers to the completed Scriptures, then tongues as revelation (together with prophecy) were destined to pass away when the canon of Scripture was completed. Historically this is what happened. As tongues interpreted are equivalent to prophecy, then such tongues are the foundation of the church which has been laid and completed (Eph. 2:20).

6. The modern phenomena called ‘tongues’ is rarely (if ever) the Biblical tongues. It is not a known language; little attempt is made to interpret (as directed in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28); it is mostly private yet as with all spiritual gifts it was not given not for personal benefit (see 1 Corinthians 12:7).

(This is an edited version for this magazine of a sermon given by Geoffrey Thomas, retired pastor of Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, in 1997 at a Pastors' Conference in Nairobi)

I want to deal with the teaching that the Bible gives us about itself. First, the Bible is True (Infallibility); second, the Bible is Enough (Sufficiency); third, the Bible is Binding (Authority). What we believe about the Bible is a subject of greatest importance. There are those people who object, "You make too much of the Bible; you can prove anything from the Bible." They tell us that the greatest weakness of evangelicals is their belief in an infallible (= without any errors) Bible, that it is intellectually unacceptable, that it is in fact dishonest. They say to us that it is hopeless for Christians to unite around a book. Let us unite, they say, around the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the way, He is the truth. Not a book, but a person. We say that we are very happy to unite around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to make Him our authority, to make Him central guiding principle of Christianity, to say with the apostle that for us to live is the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:21).

## 1. THE PERSON OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

So let me begin firstly by considering the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, what He claimed for Himself.

a) He claimed He is going to judge the world. All the world is going to be gathered before Him and He is going to separate them as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats and men are going to receive their eternal destiny from His lips (Matthew 25:31-46). And then consider that the standard by which all men and women are going to be judged is their relationship to Himself. Have they obeyed Him? Have they bowed to Him? Have they been ashamed of Him? And their destinies are all going to depend on that.

b) He claimed pre-existence. He said, "Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:56). He goes right back before Abraham, to the very beginning.

c) He claimed absolute equality with God. "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). John's Gospel begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1), and it ends with Thomas saying, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

This then is the Jesus Christ of the Bible. I believe He is the Maker of heaven and earth. I believe He designed the human brain and the human body. I believe He upholds all things by the word of His power. I believe all the laws of the universe are His laws. I believe one day He will come again in power and majesty and great glory, and that He will pull this universe apart atom by atom and He will put it all together again, a whole new universe in which righteousness will dwell. I believe one day every one of us must stand before Him, must meet Him face to face, and receive from His lips a summons where we will spend eternity. I believe when you meet Him you meet ultimate, absolute and final reality. I believe He is the only God there is. He is the whole form of God. He is the whole glory of God. It is found in Jesus Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found infinitely and immeasurably in Him (Colossians 2:3). I believe in the infallibility of Jesus Christ. He can say nothing wrong. He speaks on marriage, He speaks on divorce, He speaks on creation, He speaks on the human predicament, on the human heart and its problems, He speaks on death, He speaks on eternity. He pronounces inerrantly on every single issue that you and I will ever meet in life. I believe that He was free from all the prejudices and misconceptions and traditions that cluttered His age just like they clutter our age. People thought then that it was wrong to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath day (Mark 2:23-27). Some people thought that it was wrong to eat food unless first you

ceremonially washed your hands (Mark 7:1-8). Some people thought it was great to pray on street corners at the top of your voice (Matthew 6:5). Some people thought it was possible to divorce for any reason, if your wife offended you (Matthew 19:3-9). Some people thought they could be free from the responsibility of caring for aged parents by simply saying, “Corban”, my help to you is a gift to God (Matthew 15:4-6). Some people thought it was all right to love their neighbour and hate their enemy (Matthew 5:43). Jesus was surrounded by confusion, by people who were children of their time. *He* was not a child of His time, He was the holy child Christ Jesus, and He corrected His generation on all those issues and many more. Some of them were very popular, beloved prejudices, and almost everybody in His own generation, including His disciples, believed them. It did not matter, He stood against the flow even if it meant that they crucified Him. He was never bought. You could not win Him by a smile, or by a frown. He never taught error. This then is the Son of God. “I am the truth” (John 14:6).

## 2. CHRIST’S VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES

How did this infallible Christ view the Scriptures of His day? It would be incredible if He was silent on so important a matter, or if He did not commit Himself.

a) Jesus used the Old Testament Scriptures in all sorts of circumstances.

- He used them in temptation, when there was the full frontal attack from the devil (Matthew 4:1-10). He met the devil by quoting from the book of Deuteronomy. Three times He said, “It is written”. He quoted correctly and relevantly not using the Scripture like a charm.
- He used Scripture to answer His enemies. He appealed to the Bible when they were arguing about divorce (Matthew 19:5). He appealed to the example of David when they were arguing about eating corn on a Sabbath (Matthew 12:3-4). He said to His enemies, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).
- He used the Scriptures to encourage the people in their faith. Cleopas and his companions were distraught on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13ff.). Jesus had died, and the bottom of their lives had fallen out. He opened up the Scriptures, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. He showed them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. He called them fools and slow of heart not to believe all that are in the Scriptures.
- He used Scripture to express His own faith. When He preached in Nazareth it was that the Scriptures should be fulfilled (Luke 4:16ff.). When He worked miracles it was that the Scriptures should be fulfilled (Matthew 8:17). When He was betrayed by Judas it was that Scripture should be fulfilled (John 13:18). When all forsook Him it was that Scripture should be fulfilled (Matthew 26:31). When they put Him to death Scripture had said that the Messiah should die (Luke 23:37). And when He is dying He quotes Psalms 22 and 31. Scripture must be fulfilled. And when He rose from the dead it is that Scripture should be fulfilled (1 Corinthians 15:4).

He totally trusted and obeyed Scripture. Jesus used Scripture, and never used any other book of His age that we know of, nor even once referred to them. He never even used the Apocryphal books, although there are some wise things in those books.

b) Jesus quoted from every part of Scripture. 179 verses of Jesus’ own teaching are quotation from Scripture; that is, about 10% of Jesus’ teaching. He quoted from all those passages that men grumble at today. He quoted from Genesis 2, that in the beginning God made them male and female. He appealed to Noah’s flood and to Lot leaving Sodom and fire and brimstone falling upon it. He referred to Lot’s wife (Luke 17:32), to Moses lifting up the serpent (John 3:14), to Jonah in the whale and to the men of Nineveh repenting (Matthew 12:40-41), to Naaman being cleansed of his leprosy (Luke 4:27), to Elisha going to the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4:25-26), and to the Queen of the South coming to Solomon (Matthew 12:42). He quoted 5 prophets directly. He quoted from 8 Psalms. He was familiar with Scripture.

c) Jesus taught a doctrine of Scripture.

- Scripture is God speaking. He called Scripture, “the commandment of God” and “the Word of God” (Mark 7:8-9,13). When He quoted from a Psalm, for example, He said, “David himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared,...” (Mark 12:36). David would be chatting with his wife and children, or with his men. But there came a time when a Spirit of revelation came upon him. And he wrote the 23rd. Psalm and other Psalms. What David said then, God said.
- Scripture is going to endure. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one iota (smallest Hebrew letter of the alphabet) or one dot (small part of a Hebrew letter) to pass away from the law (Matthew 5:18).
- Scripture is unalterable. He said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Scripture is going to be fulfilled.
- The Scriptures are true. “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

That was the doctrine of Scripture that Jesus taught. He taught a doctrine of God, a doctrine of redemption, a doctrine of the eternal state, but that is what He taught about the Bible. If the Bible is full of mistakes, should not He have warned us and said, “If the Bible is not the Word of God, I would have told you”? Because on one occasion He did say, “If it were not so I would have told you” (John 14:2).

So we have seen, firstly, who Jesus Christ is, God incarnate, infallible God. Secondly, He used the Bible, and He taught the doctrine of Scripture. If He is our Lord, and if a disciple is not greater than His master, He binds our consciences to this doctrine of Scripture.

### 3. CHRIST GAVE HIS WORD TO THE APOSTLES

a) Paul was very conscious that his message did not originate with him. It was a derived message; he had received it. “I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you” (I Corinthians 11:23), he wrote in reference to the Lord’s Supper. Or when he summarized the Gospel, in I Corinthians 15:3ff, “For I delivered to you ... what I also received,...”. He wrote to the Galatians about the gospel, “For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:12). So Paul and the apostles were conscious that they were passing on something, that they were delivering a message, and that they had received this from Christ. Of this great Christian teaching about the Lordship of Christ, His incarnation, His redemption, the meaning of His sufferings, and His resurrection, Paul says, ‘I am handing it down, in my preaching and in my letters’. But it did not begin with Paul. Paul received it. He got it directly from Jesus Himself. Remember he spent those years in the wilderness where he received revelation as he meditated on Scripture, in the presence of God (Galatians 1:17). The Christ who had spoken to him on the road to Damascus, spoke to him, and made things clear. So that was one thing then that Paul, Peter and the apostles received from Jesus Christ; Jesus’ doctrine of Scripture.

b) There is not a hair’s breadth of difference between the apostles and Jesus in their attitude to the Word of God. Paul wrote, “All Scripture is inspired by God,...” (2 Timothy 3:16). And Peter wrote, “...no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21). So the authors of the New Testament letters have the same attitude to Scripture as the Lord Jesus Himself. The apostles quote every part and every book of the Old Testament. The only book that is not quoted directly is the book of Esther. Like our Lord they appeal to the Old Testament with, “It is written”. The author of the Hebrews writes of God as saying something (1:5,6,7,8,10,13), and then proceeds to quote David, or a prophet. *God* says; not Isaiah, nor David. Paul believed in everything written in the prophets (Acts 24:14). Peter writes that Paul’s writings are distorted by the people who distort the other Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16). In other words, for Peter the writings of Paul are already on the same level as the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

c) The doctrine of Inspiration. So then, if you ask the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; if you ask any of His apostles in any part of the New Testament, ‘What about Scripture?’ we are told the same answer, ‘Scripture is from God’. God is its author. It is given by inspiration of God. It is the Word of God. If you can show that something is Scriptural then you can say it is inspired by God. If you can say, ‘Scripture says’, then God says the same thing. And if you ask the Lord Jesus Christ how thorough, how total is the inspiration, then the Lord says, ‘Not an iota, not a jot shall pass from the law until all is accomplished’ (Matthew 5:18). What we mean by inspiration is that God came in the exercise of a very special providence, and that God supervised the writing of the whole of the Scriptures. God did not simply show men some things and let them write it down as they pleased; let them feel something and then compose it in their own words. The inspiration is related directly to the writings. The result is not a complete understanding of the vision they had, nor even a complete understanding of the message they wrote; but as a result of the inspiration these men said exactly what God wanted them to say. It is objected, ‘But to err is human. We cannot have human activity without sin or error.’ However the problem is a different one. Is God able so to supervise, so to rule and overrule the operation of the human mind and the human body, as to ensure that men say exactly what God wants them to say and to write exactly what God wants them to write? Now it is interesting that in Revelation 10:4, where John is about to write something, God says, ‘Do not write it’. Now God can do that because God can do whatever pleases Him. So God allowed these men the use of their personalities, the exercise of their faculties, their minds, their memories, their emotions; God freely enabled them to use their experiences and even autobiographical references. But in all God insisted they put down and record exactly what He wanted them to put down and record. He works all things after the counsel of His own will. He prevented them from teaching error. He is the author of all they said, and all they did. Of course, there was no destruction of the personality; they were not typewriters. Nor is it always dictation on God’s part; God saying, ‘Take this down’, although there are elements of an immediacy and an intimacy like that. But the great, the comprehensive idea, the whole essence of this concept is that, every Scripture is inspired by God, in the sense that *every part of Scripture says exactly what God intends that part of Scripture to say*. It bears its adequacy, its infallible testimony, to God Himself and to His will for our salvation.

#### 4. THE DIFFICULTIES IN SCRIPTURE

There are difficulties, as with all of life. Some aspects of Christianity are difficult. God is One, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, these three are one God. There are some difficulties with the infallibility of Scripture. But that does not mean that we reject what the Son of God says. There is a difference between difficulties and errors.

a) The difficulty about creation in Genesis chapter 1. The Bible is insistent the universe is God’s creation. The most fundamental answer the Bible gives to the question, ‘Who is God?’ is, ‘God is the Creator of heaven and earth’. It would have no existence without Him. In fact, He made it in Christ (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16).

✦ In Genesis 1 you see God’s approach to creation from the simple to the complex, 6 great acts. On the first day light, the second day the sky and the sea, the third day the earth, the fourth day the sun and moon, the fifth day birds and fishes, the sixth day animals and man, and on the seventh day God rested. Some of these acts were out of nothing. Others of those acts God made out of already existing material that He had created. And immediately you say, ‘If God created something then it is not natural, it is miraculous. God said, ‘Let there be light’, and immediately there was light. If you could imagine that one minute later you saw that light stretching out from one part of the universe to the other. You would say that because we know light travels so many millions of miles in a year, the universe must be 300 million years old, as a rough calculation. But you know that a minute before God had acted and made that light. So He made Adam. You would have looked at Adam and you would have said he was about

23 years old. But he was only made a minute earlier! God made him out of the dust of the earth and embraced him and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Man became a living being. Jesus turned water into wine. The man drinks it and says, 'Good aged wine'. But is a minute old. Jesus multiplied the loaves and it was bread, not flour and water, immediately made by Him as the Creator.

✦ There are different views about the 6 days of creation. Many Christians believe that on each day God acted with six great acts of creation. You say, I can accept that. There are others who say the 'days' are great periods of time, perhaps a year. A day with the Lord is as a thousand years. Others see a sort of framework and they argue for that in Genesis 1. On the first day light and darkness are made, and on the fourth day the sun and moon are made to rule over the day and the night. On the second day God made the air and the sea, and on the fifth day He made the birds and the fishes that rule over the air and the sea. On the third day God made the earth and on the sixth day God made the animals and man that rule over the earth. And on the last day He rests, as the Lord of all creation. Christians debate these things. What do you believe about this? We want to believe what God has revealed to us in His Word. Our minds are captive to that Word of God. When He asks us to believe Genesis 1 He is not asking us to commit intellectual suicide; He is not asking us to believe something irrational, to stop studying, to stop asking questions, to stop reading that. You are learning so much from it, the wonders of the first chapters of Genesis. Oh! We thank God for them. There is no negotiation for us. God created the universe; He made the first man Adam; there was no sin, no death, when God made man. It was a perfect world. And there was an historic fall that plunged Adam and all of us then into sin and death. Those things the Lord Jesus and the apostles all say are true. That is what the Christian faith teaches.

b) The difficulty of violence in the Old Testament. The Old Testament teaches, "An eye for an eye". That is it teaches that the punishment must fit the crime. Do not kill someone if by an accident you lost an eye through him through a fight. Not a life for an eye. There were occasions when whole civilizations were so evil that they had to be exterminated. Noah's flood is the great example of that, as an irredeemable civilization. Joshua's army similarly faced a Canaanite situation, verminous in its wickedness. God put a sentence of death upon it and its executioner was Joshua and his hosts, and when Israel fell into the same sins the same judgment came upon them too. It is not nationalism. It is a demonstration of divine rectitude, divine justice. We are living in a moral universe. What a man sows that he also reaps. They are not events that the church can practice today because God has not given us the sword. He has given the powers that be the sword (Romans 13:4). He has given us spiritual weapons of warfare. And those events in the Old Testament point forward to the day of judgement.

c) The difficulty of some of the statements in the Psalms. For example, "Happy shall he be who takes your little one and dashes them against the stone" (Psalm 137:9). We call them 'imprecatory' Psalms. People say, 'How can this be the Word of God? How can you reconcile that with a God of love? How can you reconcile that with John 3:16, with the gentle Jesus?'. The answer is that those prayers in the Psalms are the expressions of Old Testament Christians when surrounded by their enemies, like bulls of Bashan that want to gore them to death, like wolves that want to tear them to pieces, that blaspheme the Name of the Lord, that want to destroy the Name of the Lord from the whole earth. And these Old Testament Christians, under siege, are pronouncing in God's Name, in that vivid poetic language, 'Let God arise, let God's judgement fall upon His enemies, upon the whole of a society and a life-style, from the king to the least person, the least child, who worships the god Molech'.

d) There is another, and that is *your* difficulty. And I do not know what your difficulty is. But I find Christian after Christian who has one particular problem passage in the Bible and really worrying about this one passage, so that it seems the devil gets to them and sows doubts in their minds. 'Can God really have said that?' And Satan comes to them and says, "Has God said?" Did he not say that to our first

parents? It would seem incredible to me if Satan had stopped that trick of doubting the Word of God, that way of undermining our faith in the Word of God. Now there are problem verses. There are not many of them. And remember they have been around for hundreds of years. Augustine talks about them 1600 years ago. Christians have been looking at them. They have been answering objections to them from the cynics, from those who despise the Gospel, from those who hate the Word of God; from the Enlightenment onwards, right up until the liberal critics of our own day. Nothing new is under the sun. Buy a commentary if you have got a problem of a verse in Scripture and look and see what a commentary says, what a believing author says. Talk to another Christian, talk to your Pastor. There are difficulties, but those difficulties are enormously exaggerated, devilishly exaggerated. I have books at home that are free from error, not a mistake in them. I have manuals that come with machines that I buy and they are wholly true. If there is a mistake in them the manufacturer will correct the mistake in those manuals. If the books of men are true how much more this Book in front of which every generation is summoned to stand.

e) The biggest difficulty of all is our coldness to Scripture. The difficulty is in us not the Word. The blessed man of the first Psalm has his delight in the law of the Lord and in that law he meditates day and night. He loves the Bible. *That* is a searching test of my Christianity. Not only that we read it and read it diligently every day and that we sit under the best preaching that we can hear, but that we actually love it. More than that, that we actually have fallen in love with the Bible. Now is that our relationship to the Bible, do we see it as a relationship of affection and love and delight? “His *delight* is in the law of the Lord”. Is it not true that sometimes our preference is for other literature, or some devotional book or some biography or (whisper it not) some television programme. When a Christian says he does something for relaxation (and I am sure that we are really ourselves when we relax), then he does what he wants to do, what he loves doing. And I am asking, are you saying, “I study the Bible because I have to, because it is food for my faith, it is part of my discipline, but to relax I do something else”. If so, that whole element of delight has shifted, and you are not turning to God’s Word for pleasure. When we want pleasure we go to something else. God’s Word for duty, for discipline, for information, and before we know where we are we have ceased to delight in the law of the Lord. I think increasingly we are making some unBiblical distinctions between our religion and our pleasures. Do you know there are people who never think of coming to a Christian Conference for a holiday! Do you know there are people who never think of the prayer meeting as a night out? It is almost a working night. It is a working week. There is strain and there is discipline. We have lost this commitment to this delight in the Word, a delight in our devotions. But the blessed man delights in the law of the Lord. He finds pleasure in religion. There is not a distance between religion and pleasure, between religion and recreation. Religion is what he loves doing. He loves it. He really does! It is his preferred occupation. When he has time, where is this man? He is reading the Bible. He is meditating on it. He is reflecting on the law of God. Oh! He *loves* the Bible. He holds the Bible to him. It is wonderful. He loves God’s Word. He is fascinated by it; by the evidences for its inspiration, the full accuracy of every word, the complexities of many of its statements, its marvellous use of concepts, its wonderful use of prepositions, its minor details of language. He is taken up by it all. Here is a man loving the Bible. You see, the Bible itself is something we can handle, something we can feel. It is tangible proof that God exists, that God is. It is an objective proof of the reality of God. He is in love with the Word of God. So I am saying to you let us confess the infallibility of Scripture. Let the infallibility of Christ drive us to that confession. As we submit to our Lord then we ourselves say that Scripture is truth, the Word is truth. Let us never stop there. The devils believe the Bible is the Word of God. The devils are very orthodox; they believe the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. I am saying, ‘Let us *love* it! Let us delight in it!’ The devils never delight in the Word of God. But let us love this Word of God more and more and more, until we meet Him whom we have met in its pages throughout our lives.

## Meaning of “Sons of God” in Genesis 6:4 (2) *Barnabas Olare*

---

### (2) Redemptive Historical use of the phrase and/or equivalents

In the Old Testament there are two groups for which this phrase or its equivalents are used. The first is the angelic order, which is clear from the direct reference to angels particularly in Job as “the sons of God” (1:6, 2:1, 38:7). (We have already explained why we think this is not the sense particular to the context of Gen. 6:2.)

The second category in the Old Testament for whom the phrase and its equivalents are used is those of the human race who are in covenant relationship with God, whom He owns as His people and who exhibit an acknowledgment of His ownership of them however imperfectly. It is in this regard that God calls Israel “my firstborn son...my son” (Exodus 4:22-23, Hosea 1:10, 11:1).

In the New Testament it is those who have a relationship with God through Christ that are admitted to the scope of this title (John 1:11-12), being made members of God’s family (see also Matthew 5:9, Romans 8:14,16, Galatians 3:26).

This covenantal perspective, I think, provides us with the sense of use that fits with the context in which the phrase “sons of God” is used in our immediate text, as we shall show shortly.

### (3) Context

We have said earlier that the early chapters of Genesis deal with man, his creation, fall and degeneration leading up to the first universal judgment in the flood. Our immediate context is that of the moral free fall which begun in chapter 3 in Eden and the resultant curse upon both the serpent and humanity; the violent fallout between Cain and Abel in chapter 4, Abel on the one hand being representative of obedience and acceptance with God, and Cain on the other disobedience and unrighteousness. It is noteworthy that Cain succumbed to the onslaught of evil even after God’s warning (Genesis 4:6-7), and the curse pronounced on him entailed essentially a life away not only from God’s favour but also the favour of man; “the ground will no longer yield to you its strength...you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth”. The line of Cain comes across as representative of an ungodly generation, notwithstanding the obvious natural abilities of his seed. It is in his line that the first break from God’s order of marriage is broken by Lamech. Lamech also repeated the violent streak of his forefather Cain and presumptuously assumes that because of God’s patience with Cain’s murder of Abel, he was much more immune from judgement. “If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is *seventy-sevenfold*.”

Notice that throughout Cain’s line no mention is made of any God-ward attitude or longing for worship, only worldly achievements in the spheres of architecture, animal husbandry, dealings in metal works and music (4:17,20,21,22). On the other hand, as soon as Seth who was given to the first couple as a replacement for the godly seed of slain Abel, begins his lineage, “men begin to call on the name of the Lord” (4:26). We see here a clear distinction between a people concerned with the secular and temporal things in Cain’s line and another which is concerned with calling upon the name of the Lord in Seth’s. It is this distinction which brings us to the close of Genesis 4. Chapter 5 focusses the spotlight on the godly line at the expense of the non-elect, a development which is continued throughout the Old Testament (Abraham’s seed is to be named in Isaac at Ishmael’s expense, Jacob is loved and Esau hated, etc.).

This however does not mean that Cain’s line is not multiplying, for humanity as a whole is multiplying, but so is sin. When we bring this build up to Genesis 6, it becomes easy to see that the multiplication ascribed to man in 6:1 encompasses humanity as a whole, both those in covenant relationship with God (Seth’s line) and

those without (Cain's line). It is also not difficult to see how women from the ungodly line of Cain, which was innovative and cultured in many ways including love of music, art and pleasure in general (see Genesis 4:21-22), would be attractive to men of the godly line of Seth; and how this would lead to indiscriminate marriage between the godly and the ungodly, the contamination of the holy people of God and hence the wholesale judgement on all humanity save Noah and his family. Notice that it is the "wickedness of man that God saw was great" not of angels (6:5) and it is man that He determines to annihilate from the face of the earth. The "sons of God", who initiated the unholy mingling, then must fall in the category of men and not angels.

#### **(4) Analogy of scripture**

The severe judgement that God brings as a result of the marriage between the holy line of Seth and the unholy line of Cain is consistent with God's attitude to similar occurrences elsewhere in scripture. God strictly forbade intermarriages between His chosen people and unbelievers because it inevitably led to religious apostasy and moral decline and attracted the most severe punishment (Numbers 25:1-15). Again in 1 Kings 11, King Solomon is said to have "loved many foreign women", against God's express warning "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." And sure enough verses 4-6 record that they did turn his heart away from God, so that he even built altars for foreign gods (v. 7). This drew God's anger in verse 9 and hence the judgments in verses 11,14 and following.

It is not just in the Old Testament that we see this prohibition of marriage between believers and unbelievers. The New Testament also maintains that we must not be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14), and Christian widows are permitted to remarry with "whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39).

In the light of this clear teaching of scripture, the antithesis in Genesis 6:2 between "sons of God" and "daughters of men" makes sense when seen in the light of two groups of the same race, distinguished from each other by the relations they sustain to God, either good or bad.

#### **Conclusion**

It is clear that human kind is the subject addressed in the context of the early chapters of Genesis, its creation, fall, degeneration of its conduct and ultimate judgement in the flood. The context is clear that those judged were men. Since God judges the sinner and in verse 2 we see that it is the "sons of God" who initiated the offence, and considering that we do not see in the immediate or wider context a judgement on angels, we must conclude that these "sons of God" were men and not angels. In any event, angels according to our Lord do not marry. As for which men in particular, we suggest that "sons of God" is used in Genesis 6:2 for that section of the human race which had a relationship with God. This is because it is Seth's line which in the preceding chapters "calls on the name of the Lord", as opposed to the line of Cain which follows earthly pursuits.

The meaning can only be found when the phrase is looked at in its antithetical position to the second one in this verse, "the daughters of men". On the face of it the immediate antithesis consists in two things; the first, that the former are "sons" with masculinity the obvious implication, as opposed to the "daughters" which implies femininity; the second antithetical point is "of God" as regards the former as opposed to "of men" regarding the latter. It is in understanding this antithesis aright that we have the key to unravelling the meaning of the phrase "the sons of God". Another important aid to unravelling the meaning is the nature and target of the judgement that followed the unholy unions between the two; these two points form the basis for our investigation as we seek to find a meaning that is sustainable in the context in which the phrase is found.

## Part 1: Gospel Opportunities

As at the time of writing, approximately 2 in every 10 people on the planet are on Facebook—and that’s just one out of hundreds of popular social networks! The internet, as particularly accessed through social media, is a global phenomenon. There’s no denying it.

Such globally sweeping influences, I observe, tend to have one of two effects on a populace: ubiquitous adoption, or reluctant skepticism. And there’s no better place for one to observe this two-pronged effect than in a local church. On the one hand are those who regard social media as part of daily life – as in, what’s there to think about? It’s no different from eating 3 times a day; you just do it! Then on the other hand are those that are more likely to frown at this internet and social media thing that sadly seems to have everyone perpetually staring at their mobile phones.

Now, generalizations are dangerous, but I’ll go out on a limb and wager that as you read those two descriptions above, the picture you had of the first group was that of younger people, while the second made you think of the older and more reserved members of the body. If that’s the case, then there seems to be a polarization of sorts here, and that alone is reason enough for us as Christians to lovingly and objectively discuss this issue, for the Bible exhorts us that even in matters not of first importance, each one of us should be “fully convinced in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). So who, or what, is right? Should we side with the first group, or with the second?

The answer is probably different from what you might expect. See, essentially, these two (albeit oversimplified) groups are analogous to the proverbial ditches on either side of the straight and narrow; one adopts without thought of spiritual danger, the other refrains at the expense of God-given opportunity.

How then, are we to think of these things? What role should social media play in our Christian lives? Does God have any expectations? And does the Bible say anything about it?

Before we can really examine social media, we first have to define it. Only then can we begin to search out the mind of Christ in the Scriptures, and to extract the relevant principles applicable to our present-day context. We’ll begin by focusing on the word “media”, for “social” is just a modifier that tells us what kind of media we’re talking about.

The Oxford dictionary defines “medium” (the singular form) as: *an agency or means of doing something, or, a means by which something is communicated or expressed.* Aha! So a medium is, in our case, a means of communicating or expressing something. Great! A fundamental question to ask at this point, therefore, is “Why?” Why do we communicate at all? Where does the need come from? Why is it so central to humanity in the first place?

There are two broad answers to this. The first, popularly known as the *evolutionary* view, asserts that through the process of evolution, human beings have developed complex communication and expressions in order to better ensure the survival of our species. Interesting, but does it explain why so much of the information we pass on seems to have little to do with survival? Does it explain the apparently contradictory desire of a beautiful woman to express romantic love to a wheelchair-bound man, a seemingly sub-optimal potential mate? It certainly doesn’t explain why your conscience yearns to make peace with a creator outside yourself, and why even atheists express hatred against a God they claim not to believe.

The true answer to the “why” question is that we communicate and express ourselves because we have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Since God is an intelligent, self-aware being, who has forever existed in perfect communion and love as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, men created in His image also have the distinguishing capacity of knowing Him and relating to Him and fellow human beings in a way that no other species on earth ever can.

Now, we could look in numerous places for various types of media, but since we’re in Genesis at this point, we actually need not go beyond the Bible itself to discover the most common ones. There truly is nothing new under the sun. Here are some of the means of communicating and expressing that we can find in various Biblical accounts, from the Old Testament and into the New:

1. Speech. *Genesis 1:23* — Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”
2. Facial Expressions. *Genesis 4:6* — The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?”
3. Touch. *Genesis 45:14* — Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck.
4. Song & Poetry. *Exodus 15:1* — Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea ...”
5. Signs. *1 Samuel 20:21* — “And behold, I will send the boy, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,’ then you are to come, for, as the Lord lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger.”
6. Letters & Writing. *Colossians 4:18* — I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.
7. Gestures. *Acts 21:40* — And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, ...

These citations show you just a few of the varied means through which we are able to express (and in return perceive) feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, and knowledge. It’s what we do as human beings; we communicate. It’s happening even at this very moment, from my mind to yours via the keyboard I’m typing on! Therefore, a right understanding of the proper use of our means of communication and expression, that is, ‘media’, will help us fit this supposedly new “social media” into an already existing and overarching Biblical framework.

A Christian must consider communication in light of the 3 types of persons he communicates with: God, fellow believers, and non-believers.

His responsibility towards the first two is succinctly captured in the Great Commandment:

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (*Matthew 22:37-40*).

And his responsibility towards the third is also clearly outlined in the Great Commission:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

These two (the Great Commandment and the Great Commission), held together by the bridge of the gospel, are the lenses through which we must view the opportunities that any media presents to us, including social media. Here are some personal, practical questions to ask:

- Would I say that God is glorified by my use of the internet and social media?
- Am I making use of social media to love God with my mind? Or is social media keeping my mind too busy to commune with God?
- How can I use social media to love my neighbor as myself?
- How am I serving the church online?
- Am I building better relationships as I use social media?
- How can I use social media to be of encouragement to persecuted believers?
- Do people who follow me online know that I am a Christian?
- What testimony do the things I post give concerning Christ my Lord?
- Am I ready to lovingly but firmly give a reason for the hope that is in me, or do I avoid religious discussion altogether?
- Do I show up for every fight I’m invited to? What does that say about my spiritual maturity?
- Am I setting a good example to the world, and to those who look up to me?

The list could go on and on. However, what I hope is becoming clear in your mind is that with social media, we have an unprecedented and unique opportunity to do far more for the kingdom than was possible in Paul and Barnabas’ day. We can Skype someone halfway around the world to find out how they’re doing. We can tweet endlessly all day. We can supplement our weekly spiritual nourishment with sermons from faithful preachers around the world. We can pray for an imprisoned missionary that we’ve never met and rejoice when they post a YouTube video after their release. There is no end to the opportunities open to us. But to whom much is given, much will be required.

Are you using social media for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind? Are you avoiding it for the same reason? If not, I plead with you to reconsider. For His name’s sake, do not bury this one talent in the ground.

Prayerfully resolve this day to serve the Lord your God with all that you are and all that you have, both online and offline.

---

Jonah had felt pity for something that was of very little value – a plant. But he did not want God to show pity for eternal souls!

Are we willing to face this divine logic? Most of us care for houses, cars, plants and animals to the point that we are distressed if anything happens to them. Have we transferred that compassion to sinful people? Are we more concerned about a dent in our new car than we are about Christless souls going off into eternity?

(Quoted from Roger Ellsworth in, *They Echoed the Voice of God*, p. 48, in dealing with Jonah 4:5-11)

I wish to make an urgent appeal in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ: Christian Brother, will you go out with the gospel? Do you not know that there are many communities who are yet to hear gospel of Christ? The great commission (Matthew 28:19-20) is as fresh today as when it was given on the first century. The Lord does not wish that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore He said, “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*” (Matthew 24:14)

What is the gospel? It is the glorious good news of the salvation of sinners from their sins, misery and eternal woe, by the most loving and gracious Saviour, Jesus Christ. He perfectly obeyed the Law of God, which we could not obey, and so purchased the righteousness of God for us. He died our death and perfectly satisfied divine justice. The gospel brings sinners to the kingdom of God under the reign of Christ.

This gospel will not be proclaimed by the angels – it will be proclaimed by Christians. It is financially supported, not simply by the *wazungus*... it is by us, here in Nairobi and Kenya. What are you doing for the gospel to be proclaimed?

The gospel is to be proclaimed *throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations*. As we speak, there are many communities in Kenya who are yet to know of Christ. Right here in Nairobi, there are Nubians, Somalis, Rendille, Boranas, and so many other people groups who are without God, without Christ! Believe it or not, there is a community that is devoted to moon worship here in Kenya – the Rendille.

The love of Christ controls us, (2 Corinthians 5:14) so that we no longer live for ourselves, since Christ has died for us. You ought to consider leaving what you are doing and go out to make disciples of all nations. Remember that the coming of Christ is tied to this glorious enterprise of disciple-making.

The Lord says here, “*...and then the end will come.*” Shall we not ‘hasten’ His coming, humanly speaking? Surely we want others to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4). But this cannot happen unless they hear the gospel. And they cannot hear the gospel unless someone preaches to them. But no one will preach to them without being sent (Romans 10:14-15).

Are you going or will you send someone? Surely, those of you who have recently completed college can spare a year or five for the cause of the One who left the glory of heaven for you, and He is coming again to take you to His kingdom, can’t you? If you can’t go, then give for the support of those who have heeded the call to go. Start planning as soon as you secure a job how much to give for the sending of missionaries from your local church. This should be over and above your normal giving in tithes/offerings. May the Lord increase your bounty, and may your standard of giving be multiplied.

You may watch this message here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWHTKbtuUwg>

# GRACE & TRUTH

## Subscription

Grace & Truth is a quarterly magazine that promotes a deeper understanding of the Biblical truth so as to know the Triune God in order to love Him more and serve Him better. It is sent to you free of charge through the generous contributions of other Christians.

Subscription to Grace & Truth is free but if you are able to help towards the costs then please send **Kshs. 50** a copy through the provided address below.  
You are also welcome to give donations as well.

We pray that the Lord will greatly profit you through this magazine. Please pray that the Lord will use this periodical for His glory.  
We welcome your feedback on the magazine sent to you. You may send your subscription and comments by e-mail to:

[gntmag@gmail.com](mailto:gntmag@gmail.com)

or by mail to

P.O. Box 57907, 00200 NAIROBI.

**Chief Editor:**

Keith Underhill

**Editor:**

John Muketha

**Producer:**

Murungi Igweta

**Design & Printing:**

Theלים Systems

**Published by:**

Trinity Baptist Church

P.O. Box 57907, 00200 NAIROBI.

Tel: 0202626016 or 0202626023

Cell Phone: 0728 431067 (for M-Pesa)

**E-mail:** [tbc\\_kenya@ymail.com](mailto:tbc_kenya@ymail.com)

**Website:** [www.trinity.or.ke](http://www.trinity.or.ke)

You may send your questions, comments and compliments to:

**THE EDITOR,  
GRACE & TRUTH MAGAZINE**

**Using the address above.**

**You may obtain your virtual copy by logging to our website.**