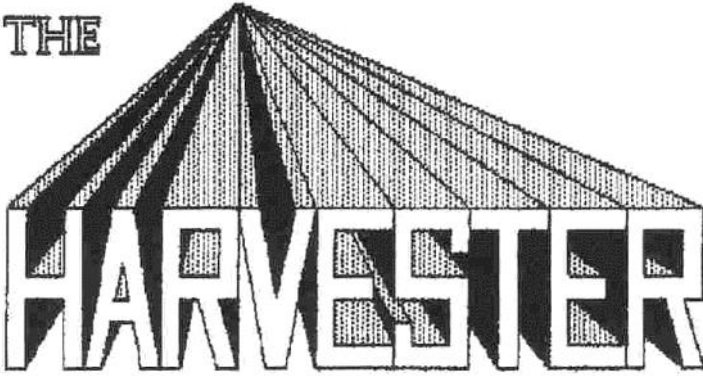


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

May 2015

No. 353

CHRISTIANS ARISE

Men are not being men. Women are not being women. Husbands are not being husbands. Wives are not being wives. Fathers are not being fathers. Mothers are not being mothers. Children are not being children. Christians are not being Christians.

Gone are the days where we as Christians took a stand. Gone are many of leaders in the Church and leaders of families. The generations before us were not afraid to say what needed to be said, do what needed to be done. Unafraid to go against popular opinion, our forefathers stood

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equipped as Christian soldiers (Eph. 6:13-17). Do we stand as strong, as steadfast, today?

In 2 Timothy 3:1-6, Paul describes the last days in which men are extremely sinful and corrupt. And the men *"of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."*

Whether referring to the Jewish state's last days or our world's, Paul's description is witnessed around us today. The *"silly women laden with sins"* Paul refers to are individuals, both men and women, who are easy prey to false teachers who promise ease of conscience if they follow after them. We have likely heard or seen "mega 'churches.'" Thousands of people fill arenas to hear these messages of inspiration, to feel uplifted, and to feel encouraged. What do these "mega 'churches'" really offer? These thousands are searching for a sect or a religion that fits their lifestyle. These *"silly women laden with sins"* are simply looking for someone to tell them that what they are doing is okay; there's no need to change their lifestyle. We know this is backwards. We know that we fit our life to the Bible - God's Word...don't we?

Where is everyone? A family patriarch passes, and soon the entire family is gone from the congregation - maybe the Church entirely. A leader in the congregation passes, and soon the entire congregation is gone. To our left and to our right are empty seats. In front of us and behind us are empty pews. Why? Often times we hear that people are falling away because they aren't inspired; they don't feel encouraged by the messages they are hearing in services. Part of the problem is we don't like hearing that we are doing something wrong. This is why thousands flock to "mega 'churches'." You won't hear these speakers say "X is wrong! The Bible says it is wrong!" They would lose followers if they took a stand for what the Bible said.

Fear. Too often this keeps us from saying what needs to be said. Fear of offending someone by telling them something they are doing is wrong according to the scriptures. Fear of losing numbers from the congregation. In this day and age, fear of even being sued. We see those who take a stand for what is right portrayed by media as conservative, evil, old-fashioned, and wrong--while those who allow everything are seen as right and progressive. "Fearful of the masses" or "fearful of offending someone" is not a description of a Christian soldier. Neither is "popular." Being a Christian soldier means we will often be unpopular. Being a Christian soldier means we stand for God, and we will stand up for God and His Word.

We cannot be scared to tell a family member, friend, coworker, peer, or brother and sister in Christ what the Bible says; even if it means saying they are wrong. Continuing in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul goes on to tell Timothy

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Are we using the scriptures to do these things? Do we sharpen the sword, never to use it? It appears in these modern times that we are too afraid to do so. In all aspects of life, we are too afraid. God gave us all roles we see in the scriptures, but we are too afraid to take up these roles. Men are too afraid to be the head of their families, women are too afraid to guide the household in subjection to the husband, and parents are too afraid to tell their children "no." Children seem to run the household now. Are we scared of being called old-fashioned?

None of us are mistake-free. Paul writes to the Romans that we cannot judge another for a mis-

take we too are making (Rom. 2:1-3). This does not mean we are to never correct others. Why would Paul tell Timothy we are to use the scriptures for correction (2 Tim. 3:16-17) if nobody was rightly capable of correcting one another? What Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:3-5 and what Paul tells us in Romans 2:1-3 is that if I have a problem with lying, for example, I should not be telling you how wrong you are for lying. Rather, we are both wrong, and we certainly can work with each other to improve together. If I have this problem with lying, and I see you have a problem with stealing, using the scripture I can tell you that you're wrong for stealing, and you can tell me I am wrong for lying. The part we forget the most is that we don't condemn one another; the Word condemns us.

To correct each other is not a personal matter, and we have a problem separating our personal feelings from instruction and correction in the Bible. Our goal is to please God; our goal is to follow God's Word; our goal is to help each other follow God's Word. We either let our personal feelings for one another or fear keep us from fulfilling what should be our goals as Christians. It is our duty to use God's Word to not only improve ourselves, but also to instruct and correct others. This includes telling those around us what the Word says, even if it is telling our family, friends, peers, and brethren that they are doing something wrong. Those leaders in the family and Church excelled at this. It was beyond speaking their mind; it was speaking God's Word.

Do we take a stand today? Will we put our foot down for God? Will our men be men, women be women, and children be children? Will Christians be Christians? *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (Josh. 24:15) We, as Christian

soldiers must take a stand in these perilous times.

BEN McMANUS
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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: I believe in the existence of God. How can I get close to Him?

ANSWER: In Matthew 7:21 we read *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* It is not enough to simply believe there is a God and think that we will be with Him eternally. We must believe in God and do what He says to do in the Holy Bible in order to please Him. The inspired writer of Hebrews has this to say about faith: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"* (Heb. 11:6). Pay particular attention to the conjunction "and". It is not enough to simply believe there is a God and think we'll be pleasing to Him. We must 1) *"believe that He is"* and 2) seek Him *"diligently."* James very plainly expounds that in James 2:19-22,

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?...Seest thou how faith wrought with [Abraham's] works, and by works was faith made perfect?

Perfect means "mature" or "complete". Believing in God and doing what He says do (works) puts us in a savable condition before our creator. In order to have a pleasing walk before God one must *"obey the gospel."* If one refuses to obey, the consequences are horrible and eternal. Please pay very serious attention to the

following verses from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9,

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

From what we've just read we learn that the gospel is what one must obey to begin a pleasing walk before God Almighty! The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Mark vividly conveys what the gospel is that is to be obeyed: We read Jesus' word in Mark 16:15-16,

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

It wouldn't do any good to be baptized (completely submerged in water) without believing in God and that Jesus gave his body in payment for our sins and shed His blood that we may have life by touching it in the watery grave of baptism.

After we have been baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38), we receive a present or a "gift" from God, the indwelling of The Holy Spirits in our hearts! It is at this point

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that we can feel a closeness to God! At this point we cannot sit back and think we are going to be just fine without doing anything else. The Apostle Peter teaches us about this very thing in his 2nd letter. We learn from Peter's inspired writing that we are to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. And *"give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"* (2 Pet. 1:5-10).

Our salvation is NOT "sure" in that we are now and for always saved. We can fall from the grace of God and be lost in eternal hell (gehenna)! To make our election or salvation sure based on the body and blood of Jesus Christ we must continue to grow and walk in faith in all of the seven items that Peter mentioned!

To be close to Christ we continue in his word (John 8:31). With this closeness He will give us strength to endure the hardships of life. If we continue in the Lord's word to the end of life we will enjoy life eternal in Heaven (Rev. 22:14-15).

We read in 1 John 3:23-24 that God's commandment is that we should believe in Christ and love one another. "Faith" and "love" are commands that we are to continue to walk in daily.

Space will not allow an exhaustive consideration of the question at hand. In closing please remember that we are to sing, pray, study, read, search, meditate, and have an active faith in God in order to be close with Him, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. May we all draw closer to God via our daily walk in His Word. Without Him we would not have been created or have hope in Jesus' blood freely given to all who believe, obey, and continue walking with Him!

TIM ELDRIDGE
Woodland, AL

Gospel Meetings

| DATES | PLACE | SPEAKER |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| May 1 - 3 | Van Lear Van Lear, KY | J.D. McDonald Woodbury, TN |
| May 8 - 10 | Liberty Liberty, KY | J.D. McDonald Woodbury, TN |
| May 11 - 15 | Goochtown Eubank, KY | Joe Hill Hager Hill, KY |
| May 21 - 24 | Mount Zion Crab Orchard, KY | Hunter Bulger Prattville, AL |
| May 29 - 31 | Verona Verona, KY | Joe Hill Hager Hill, KY |
| May 30 - 31 | Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY | J.D. McDonald Woodbury, TN |

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What did Joseph instruct to be put in Benjamin's sack? HIS SILVER CUP (Genesis 44:2)
2. Which female judge described herself as a "mother in Israel?" DEBORAH (Judges 5:7)
3. Whose mother took him a little coat once a year? SAMUEL (1 Samuel 2:19)
4. Who did the men of Athens ignorantly worship? THE UNKNOWN GOD (Acts 17:23)
5. According to James, what happens if you break one commandment of the law? YOU ARE GUILTY OF THE WHOLE LAW (James 2:10)