

Light and Life

What Can I Do?

These days it seems like everyone is working an angle. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, even when charity is accomplished, the motive is often for some outward reward (Mt 6:2). There is a challenge to our perception however, because much good is accomplished in secret (Mt 6:3) – and with no expectation of equal reimbursement.

Malcolm Forbes famously observed that “you can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do absolutely nothing for him.”

The sacrifice of Jesus is the chief example of this sentiment. Romans 5:8 states that “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” We were “without strength” (vs 6), utterly helpless and lost in the fog of sin. We had severed our relationship with God by open rebellion against His will, yet He sent His Son to bear the penalty of our error.

Of course, there is nothing we could possibly do for God that would equal the matchless blessings He graciously bestows upon us. In response to God's concern for mankind, David penned “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit Him?” (Ps. 8:4).

We can never repay God for what He has done for us – no matter how righteous we are, how much we pray, or how loudly we sing His praises. What is so special about God's gift of salvation through Jesus is that it came at such a cost, and for people who can give so little. But we **can** give ourselves – and that's all God wants.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart – these You will not despise” (Ps. 51:17).

- *Sam Bunyard*

Just My Thoughts

Marvelous Light

“Into marvelous light, I'm running, Out of darkness out of shame; By the cross You are the life, You are the truth, You are the way.”

This line, from the hymn aptly named, *Marvelous Light*, is one that strikes a chord with me, and hopefully with others. As humans – men and women who were once slaves to sin – we all know what it is like to live in darkness. Some know this better than others. Living in darkness is cold, lonely, unfulfilling, and terrifying. The one who is in darkness has no hope. They are stumbling around, with no end in sight.

And so it was for millennia until Christ came to earth and brought with Him hope, life, and light – marvelous light. “When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’” (Jn 8:12). Jesus is the light of the world – the only true source of light in this dark world.

Many try to find ‘light’ through self-gratification – just making themselves happy. Many others try to find light through service – certainly not a wicked pursuit, but still, one that fails to truly find the light. And many are happy to just stay in the dark in supposed contentment.

But brothers and sisters, all these people, no matter how self-serving or noble or confused they may be, are in the darkness. It is only those who seek Christ, who follow Him, who join with His body who will step into his marvelous light and be found.

Let us be those people who step into the light of Christ and stay in it this week – and every week.

- *Hayden Cathey*

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.
KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

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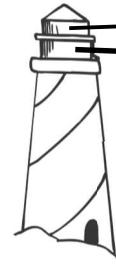
**Service, not silver, is the
better measure of success.**

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Alan Revier
GW Walsh

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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Gary Fletcher, Tony Tolbert, Rai Starr, Diane Willis, Js Swim, Tricia Deen
Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis
Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Tonight Sam and Warren will address some of the questions which have been recently submitted by our members.

WELCOME – We are thrilled to add Alex Corder to our number! Let's do all we can to make Alex welcomed to our family!

The Cryptic Jesus

Sometimes Jesus taught in plain terms that everyone could understand. For example, “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Mt 7:12). It may be hard to practice, but it's easy to understand.

At other times, Jesus was more cryptic. “They will put some of you to death... but not a hair of your head shall be lost” (Lu 21:16-18). What? And, “whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (Jn 11:26). How is that possible? And of course, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53). Christians have been accused of cannibalism over that one.

And why would Jesus talk this way? Perhaps His explanation of the use of parables clarifies it: “Hearing you will hear and not understand... because the hearts of these people have grown dull” (Mt 13:14-15). Or as Paul put it, “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Co 2:14).

Viewed from a physical perspective, the cryptic sayings of Jesus remain unknowable. But from an eternal and spiritual perspective, they make much more sense. So — which perspective do you have? - *WKing*