

Thank you, ...Jon Dungan
Speaker for today

How Fortunate are We?

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

September Birthdays

6 Melinda McCollum 11 Marie Burruss 15 Marcos Perales
16 Jim Burruss 30 Dortha Gentry 30 Kurt Hoffman

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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The Hope Within You

By Jared Green

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:14-15).

When those around Peter’s audience could not understand why they would remain faithful to Jesus while being persecuted, Peter called them to be prepared to defend their hope. Why remain faithful to the Lord, even amid life’s difficulties? That is a question we all must be ready to answer.

The Israelites’ hope was found in God’s faithfulness to them. Just before Joshua’s death, he and the Israelites renewed their covenant with God. In Joshua 24:2-13, Joshua reminded the people of God’s unwavering faithfulness. God led Abraham through all the land of Canaan and gave him Isaac (v. 3). God then gave Jacob and Esau to Isaac, and Jacob’s family ended up in Egypt (v. 4). Years later, God sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and plagued Egypt until the people were delivered (v. 5). When the Egyptians gave chase, God parted the Red Sea to provide Israel safe passage, while the Egyptians were swallowed up (vv. 6-7). God then brought Israel into the promised land, giving them victory over all who would stand in their way, so that the people could live in a land perfectly laid out by God for his people (vv. 8-13).

After Joshua recounted God’s faithful works, he called the people to put away their fathers’ false gods and serve the Lord alone. No matter what others chose to do, however, Joshua said, *“as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”* (v. 15). Having been reminded of God’s faithfulness, the people could not agree more. They answered Joshua, *“Far be it from us that we should forsake*

the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed” (vv. 16-17).

The Israelites’ hope and motivation to obedience was rooted in what God had done for them. The same should be true of us. We have experienced an even greater deliverance! *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5).*

What is the reason for our hope-filled obedience, even amid life’s difficulties? That God, in his mercy, sent Jesus to save us from our sins and reconcile us to himself. May we all echo Joshua’s great words: *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).*

Popping the Question...Setting Up a Study

By Brian Mitchell

Would you like to study the Bible? Often in personal evangelism, we are reluctant to do the one thing that most needs to be done, that is come right out and ask people to study the Bible with us. One of the more fascinating things about the Apostle Paul, was how easy he found it to talk to people about the gospel, even in unfamiliar and uncomfortable surroundings. In whatever circumstances he found himself, Paul found it natural to preach the gospel with boldness and confidence--Acts 17:16-17, Acts 28:30-31.

Unfortunately for the Lord and His church today, we as His people, are often far more reluctant to discuss matters of a spiritual nature with those whom we come in contact with. “We may engage in broad discussions of religious topics now and then, and we may even invite others to the services of church. However, we do not very often simply ask people if they will study the Bible with us.” Why is that?

The waiting game is popular with many. While relationships are important, we don’t have to be blood brothers, before we can ask someone to study the Bible. Some people call this serendipity evangelism—which simply means that we are hoping people will discover the gospel truth by accident. So we don’t say anything, and even at time justify questionable activities, on the basis that we are trying to establish contacts. “Whether or not we are consciously following the approach of serendipity evangelism, we seem to have great trouble popping the question. We delay asking people point-blank for a home study.”

Waiting is not always better. Granted there are times when it is not possible or even expedient to ask a new acquaintance if they would like to study. Wisdom teaches us to look for the best moment, when all things considered, we have the best chance of getting a yes. The problem is this, “Very often the optimum moment to ask about a Bible study comes earlier, rather than later, in our association with people.”

If we are planning to ask for a Bible study at some point, it is often better to do it sooner rather than later. Even if the answer is no, we may still develop a relationship and be in an even better position to teach them later on. And if we don’t ask, the answer is always going to be no and we will always know that we did not do the most important thing needed to lead someone to Christ. Ask them if they want to study the Bible.

Not every situation is the same. Wisdom may indicate, a different timetable in different situations, but eventually we must still ask people to study. And no this is not always comfortable and thus not always easy, and it is easier for some than others but that does not exclude any of us from seeking to study the Bible with others. A man may dread asking a woman to marry him and he may stumble through doing so, but eventually he gets around to it because he loves her. If we love the lost like Jesus loves the lost, no matter how uncomfortable it may be, we will ask people to study the Bible.
