

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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May 23, 2021

“Christ First! Last! And Always!”

By Jefferson David Tant

“I beseech you ... brethren ... to present your bodies a living sacrifice ... And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2).
We all know the words. Do we really know what they mean?

“All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give:
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me Jesus, Take me now.
All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.
I surrender all...
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.” (J. W. Van de Venter)



We know the words, but do we sing them from the heart, or just from the lips? We must all agree that many of God's people are sorely lacking in real spiritual life. There is no zeal. There is no fire. The salt has lost its savor. The light has grown dim. Perhaps we need to confront ourselves soberly with a tough question: “Do I put Christ first in my life by complete surrender and commitment to Him?”

Right now, jot down the things in life that are most important to you. Be perfectly honest — don't fudge. Be sure to include job, family, personal comfort, social relationships, possessions, Christ, etc.

If Christ is not honestly at the head of the list, ask, “Would I be willing to put Christ first — ahead of my social life?” Sometimes when we might have the opportunity to serve Christ, whether it be attending mid-week Bible study, or visiting the sick, etc., we are excused because “This is my night to bowl,” or “Our company stayed too late...”

Did you take a job knowing you would be unable to participate in worship assemblies and Bible studies regularly? Be really frank with yourself. Is Christ first? Have you put absolute faith and trust in His promise of Matthew 6:33?

Did you miss a gospel meeting in order to see your son play in the baseball game? The excuse: “This creates a bond between me and my son, and will help me lead him in the way of Christ.” But which came first — Christ or family?

Can we actually put Christ first — ahead of them? Why should God ask such an outlandish thing? Yet, we recall Jesus saying, “He that loveth father or mother ...son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:33)

Sure, the problem is difficult. If you don't believe it, try it yourself. The same test was put to Abraham when he was asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham became the "father of the faithful" when he answered the question in God's favor. The rich young ruler (Matthew 19) "went away sorrowful" because he answered the question in what he thought was his own favor. Like the ruler, we have allowed our material prosperity and our environment to bind, gag, and deliver us to the world, the flesh, and Satan.

What a joy of release when we can finally say, "I surrender all." Then will we have presented our bodies a "living sacrifice unto God." Then will we fully realize that we are not our own, "for ye were bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Then the world will take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Then will the Lord be Alpha and Omega — forever!

"God Is At Work In You!"

By Matthew W. Bassford

A few months ago, my co-worker, Clay, examined Philippians 2:12-13 in a sermon, dwelling especially on v. 13. I've known for years that brethren have a bad habit of focusing on "Work out your own salvation," to the exclusion of "It is God who is working in you." However, Clay's study of the latter point brought home something I had never realized before.

God is working in every obedient Christian. Right now. He is working in me. Right now. He is working in you. Right now.

To describe this as heartening would be an understatement! Like many preachers, I struggle with the temptation to believe the insidious lie of Malachi 3:14. The devil very much wants us to believe that it is useless to serve God. In this pandemic era of social isolation, reduced or nonexistent assembling, and

Christians fighting and splitting churches over dumb stuff like wearing masks, he seems to have a stronger case than normal. Why not give up? It won't make any difference, right?

Wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong, and wrong. Even if it is not obvious to us, the arc of history bends toward God. He will work out His will, He will accomplish His purpose, and He will glorify Himself through His people if they will let Him do it.

The health-and-wealth preachers have a point, kind of. God does have a plan for your life. However, His plan is not for you to enjoy earthly happiness. It is for you to put your nose to the grindstone and do right every single day, cheerfully, unflinchingly. If you do, He will use you to accomplish what He wants to accomplish.

We cannot know what that is, not this side of Jordan, at least, and there is no point in speculating. If you preach the gospel and nobody listens, that does not mean you have failed. If you fight to raise godly children but they fall away, that does not mean you have failed either. God knew that His people wouldn't listen to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but He sent them anyway. Sometimes the Spirit convicts rather than converting, but that too is in accord with His purpose.

Throughout history, it always has seemed as though the cause of righteousness is failing. It seemed so when the wicked rejected Noah, when Israel sank into corruption in the time of the judges, when Solomon forsook the Lord, when the Israelites were carried captive, when Jesus was crucified, and when Saul shattered the Jerusalem church. God's people always appear to be given over to death. If it seems so in the present time, that should not surprise us.

Of course, the cause of God never actually does fail. Repeatedly, He brings about salvation in ways that no one else could have foreseen. He accomplishes His most spectacular works in the hours that seem darkest. So it will be for us, if indeed we do not grow weary and lose heart.

If we work, God will be at work in us, and He will succeed in His purpose. Go then, and work, whether preaching or teaching or supporting your family or raising your kids or watching your grandkids. Even if nobody else notices or cares, you can be certain that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Memory Verse of the Week

1 John 2:15 (NKJB)

*"Do not love the world or the things in the world.
If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*



News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Steve Switcher, Roy Robinson, Danny Cottrell

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:	Paul Johnson
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #1:	<i>"Satan—The Great Deceiver"</i>
<u>Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:</u>	Jerry Kennemur
	1 Corinthians (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page 23, Question #16</i>

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:	Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Russell Briggs
	<i>2 Corinthians 4:3-4</i>
Song Leader:	Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper:	Fred Johnson
Assisting:	— —
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #2:	<i>"The Tragedy of Being Deceived"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Tim Harris Jr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

May 26th:

Auditorium Bible Class:	Russell Briggs
	The Book of Proverbs (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page 28, Question #1</i>
Invitation:	Dan Cottrell
Song Leader:	Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer:	Tim Harris Sr.

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“Satan – The Great Deceiver”

Lesson Text: **Revelation 12:7-12.**

I. Satan Deceives Through Lies & Misinformation.

Genesis 3:4

- By Outright Contradictions, Half-Truths, & False Implications- **John 8:44.**
- By Doctrines Created by Men/Doctrines of Demons- **1 Timothy 4:1.**
- Some Of Satan’s Greatest Lies:
 - (1) *“Faith Alone Saves!”* **1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 2:38; James 2:19.**
 - (2) *“You Can be Saved Like the Thief on the Cross Today!”* **Heb. 9:16-17.**
 - (3) *“Join the Church of Your Choice.”* **Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4.**
 - (4) *“You Can’t Come to God by Your Own Free-Will.”* **Revelation 22:17.**
 - (5) *“You Don’t Have To Obey Any Commands Today!”* **Acts 17:30.**
 - (6) *“God is an Unloving, Homicidal, Egotistical, Bully!”* **John 3:16-17.**
- By Mis-Directing Souls Who Want To Be Saved!
- And Hiding the Truth in a Flood of Error- **2 Corinthians 4:3-4.**

II. Satan Deceives By Disguising Himself.

- By a snake in the garden- **Genesis 3:1.** Why a Snake?
- By an angel of light; Also, His ministers- **2 Corinthians 11:13-15.**
- False Prophets are wolves in sheep’s clothing- **Matthew 7:15-20.**
- Make no mistake, the devil is out to harm us! **1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 12:9.**

III. Satan Deceives By Demonizing The Truly Righteous.

- Satan did that with God- **Genesis 3:5.**
- The Jews tried to Demonize Jesus- **John 7:12; Matthew 27:63.**
- Tries to Keep People from Following the Right Way- **Acts 13:6-10.**
- Poisoning The Minds of Men Against The Truth! **Acts 14:1-3.**
- **2 Peter 2:1-2; 1 Peter 4:3-4.**

IV. Satan Deceives By Telling Us What We Want To Hear.

- **Genesis 3:5-6; Titus 3:3.**
 - (1) *“You need to enjoy all that life has to offer.”*
 - (2) *“A little Sin Won’t Hurt You.”*
 - (3) *“Everybody’s Doing it.”* **Ephesians 5:1-6.**
 - (4) *“You need to start living for yourself.”*
- Satan wants you to rationalize, justify, and go ahead and sin.
- **James 1:14-16; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Galatians 6:7-8.**

“The Tragedy Of Being Deceived”

Lesson Text: **2 Timothy 3:13.**

I. The Deceived Believe Someone Who Is Lying To Them.

- **1 Timothy 4:1-5.**
- Why Do People Believe lies?
 - (1) The Deceiver Looked like A Man of God- **Zechariah 13:4.**
 - (2) The Deceiver said He was speaking God’s Word- **1 Kings13:11-24.**
 - (3) Deceivers speak some truth, but not all of it. **2 Peter 2:18-19.**
 - (4) It sounds like the truth to them. **Romans 16:17-18.**
 - (5) *“They were just so persuasive and loving.”*
 - (6) They have convinced themselves that *“Doctrine doesn’t matter.”*
 - (7) They say, *“You have your portion and we have our’s.”*
 - (8) They trust & Never Study for Themselves- **Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1.**
 - (9) They are gullible like Children- **Ephesians 4:14.**
 - (10) They don’t Love the Truth- **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Ezekiel 14:4.**

II. The Deceived Fight And Argue Against The Truth.

- **Acts 19:23-26; 22:23; 23:12-13; 2 Timothy 4:14.**
- They can be very sincere and zealous in error- **Acts 26:9; Rom. 10:1-3.**
- They become convinced & openly defend their beliefs- **Acts 19:27-29.**
- They are Personally Offended When Told they’re Deceived- **Matt. 15:12.**

III. The Deceived Are Lost And Don’t Know It.

- Some look at Being Deceived as a “Pass on Sin.” **2 Cor. 11:1-4.**
- They Have Departed the Faith- **1 Timothy 4:1.**
- **2 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Peter 2:18-22; Matthew 15:14.**
- They Will Not Find Out Until Judgment Day! **Matthew 7:21-23.**

IV. What Is Our Response To The Deceived?

- **2 Timothy 2:24-26.**
- Love Them Enough To Reach Out To Them- **2 Corinthians 5:10-11.**
- Show From Scriptures Where They Are In Error- **Titus 1:9.**
- Don’t Be Arrogant or Unkind, But Speak Truth With Love- **Eph. 4:15.**
- Pray For Them Constantly- **Romans 10:1.**