



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XII
Issue 278

Do You Also Defer?

by – Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

The whole thing began in one of my favorite hangouts, a secondhand bookstore. Years ago while rummaging in one I was fortunate to find a small paper-covered booklet priced at five cents. I quickly scanned it and bought it, since it had possibilities for a weekday network radio program I conducted then in Texas as the *Crossroads Counselor*. When I read it over the air it was well received and many listeners wrote in for a copy.

The message of “Anytime” had to do with a young man who was given a book to read by a friend who told him that the book contained a message for him, a message which would open his eyes to much he had not seen, open his ears to much he had not yet heard, and open his heart to much he had not yet felt.

The man was eager to read it and promised to attend to the message at once; but Business clamored for attention, then Love captured him, then Children compelled him to defer reading the book, then Sickness laid its hand on him and he could not read, then Old Age enfeebled him, then Death was adamant when the man pleaded that he had not yet read his book. He was told that in all time there was no time for “anytime.”

Truly there is no *anytime* for making friends, no *anytime* for the kind letter you should write, no *anytime* for the visit to that shut-in you fully intended to make, no *anytime* to study of the Sacred Scriptures.

Indeed, for the believer there should be no spirit of *anytime* for anything, since for everything there is a time and a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Now is the time God invites our heart and mind to be occupied with His Image and Word. Now is the time God entreats us to walk worthily for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God. Now is the

time God enjoins us to become unashamed workmen seeking approval alone, studying His sacred scrolls which give us His intention for the entire creation.

Julius Caesar on his way to the Senate said, “The Ides of March have come.” One of his friends replied, “Yes, but they have not yet come!” When Caesar entered the hall he was handed a scroll by Artemidorous and was urged to read it immediately. He deferred doing so, and the hinge of history moved.

The conspirators crowded around Caesar on the pretext of wishing to present petitions. His attention thus being diverted, Casca drew a dagger from under his cloak and stabbed Caesar. He managed to grasp the arm of his assailant but was stabbed by others. When he saw Brutus also raise his dagger he exclaimed, “Et tu Brute!” Folding his mantle about him he offered no further resistance, falling dead at the foot of the statue of his rival, Pompey.

The slender thread that might have unhinged the course of history lies just here. In his hand as he fell was the scroll which had been handed to him when he entered the hall. The scroll contained a detailed preview of the plot to take his life; if he had but read it at the insistence of Artemidorous.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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HYPOCRISY OF FALSE EXPRESSIONS

(or, "A Demonstration of the Strange Influence of Demons")
... AMONG CHRISTIANS

What They Say



"WE CAN'T BOAST ABOUT GOING TO HEAVEN."



"YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY, TOTALLY HELPLESS TO SAVE YOURSELF."



"GOD CONTROLS ALL THINGS."

What They Mean



"IF WE GO TO HELL, IT'S OUR OWN FAULT!"



"YOU MUST MAKE A WISE DECISION IN ORDER TO BE SAVED."



"GOD DOESN'T CONTROL MAN'S FREE WILL!"

WRITTEN BY MARTIN ZENDER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSHUA WARREN

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What Is the Gospel that Paul Proclaimed?

by – Dan Sheridan

We hear so much from religious circles about the gospel. There is gospel music, gospel choirs, gospel meetings. Everything is “gospel.” I have even heard of a Gospel horse and a gospel dog! I have to admit, when I hear people talk about the gospel, to me, it is a vague term that is accompanied by stained glass and religious services, topped with pretty music.



Religion has produced a concept of the gospel that is essentially this: God has done something for you, so, in return, do something for Him – or else!

Self-righteous religion makes the gospel about sin. Religious folks love to point out the faults of others. Then they make the gospel about “cleaning up your act.” In other words, they tell you that you need to clean up your life or else God will punish you, and that punishment is forever!

Then they bring you into bondage by telling you that you must join a local club, called a church, where they further bind you down to various programs that are supposed to prove the reality of your conversion to God. Sunday services, Wednesday services, Saturday morning devotionals, and Friday night flag pole sittings! Also, do not forget the offering plate to help support this multi-million dollar business – excuse me, Church!

Yet this concept is foreign to Scripture. In order to understand the gospel, you need to step out of the smoke and mirrors of Religion to understand it. You need to clear your mind of stained glass and self-help programs. So let's go to Scripture – Scripture that was written not in a Theologian's office, surrounded by stained glass, but at kitchen tables, in homes, surrounded by coffee cups and dust on the floor.

The Apostle Paul, the apostle to the nations said this:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth (Romans 1:16).

The gospel, or good news, is not about you or your failures, but it is about the accomplishments of God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The gospel is God's power for salvation – nothing else can take its place. There is no other power in the universe which can turn men to God. All of the modern substitutes, like the attempt to “clean up your act,” or emotional excitement, cannot save or make men right before God. The sounds of the church organ or choir can't help either. The gospel alone, without any additions or apologies, is able to justify anyone who believes.

The gospel is a very simple message. Here it is:

1. Christ died for our sins. God's Son was actually dead. He was not alive. He was not floating around anywhere in some “spirit” form. He was dead. Death was lord over Him for three days. He went to a cross, and died for our sins.
2. He was buried. After He died, they placed his body in a tomb, and then they put a stone at the entrance.
3. He rose again the third day. He actually got up off of the slab on which they laid Him in the tomb. He got up, flesh and bone, and walked around, alive.

That's it. That is the message.

Now, when you think about all that Christ has done for you, do not think, “Since He did so much for me, I need to do something for Him!” The Gospel does not bring obligations. There are no strings attached, no obligations to fulfill. You are now justified. The Gospel is not your great opportunity to do something for God! Just look at the Cross and all that Christ did, then realize that there is nothing left undone! You can't pay Him back, so do not try! Simply believe it and thank Him! You will find that when you embrace this message, you will not have to manufacture “good works,” but they will flow naturally. Get the message right, and the fruit will follow.

One Day at a Time

by – J. R. Miller (1840-1912)

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1:5).

One of the secrets of happy and beautiful life is to live one day at a time. If we would learn it, it would save us from the worry that in so many people spoils the days, and would add immeasurably to the value of the work we do.



Time is given to us in *days*. It was so from the beginning. Each day had its particular apportionment in the stupendous work. So it has been ever since.

Time is *measured* to us by days. Each day has its particular section of duty, something that belongs in between sunrise and sunset.

This breaking up of time into little daily portions means a great deal more than we are accustomed to think. For one thing, it illustrates the gentleness and goodness of God. It would have made life intolerably burdensome if a year, instead of a day, had been the unit of division. It would have been hard to carry a heavy load, to endure a great sorrow, or to keep on at a hard duty, for such a long stretch of time.

How dreary our common task-work would be if there were no breaks in it, if we had to keep our hand to the plough for a whole year! We never could go on with our struggles, our battles, our suffering if night did not mercifully settle down with its darkness and bid us rest and renew our strength.

We do not understand how great a mercy there is for us in the briefness of our short days. If they were even twice as long as they are, life would be intolerable. Many a time when the sun goes down we feel that we could scarcely have gone another step. We would have fainted in defeat if the summons to rest had not come just when it did.

Night with its darkness seems to be a *blot* on the whiteness of day. It seems to fall across our path as an

interruption to our activity, compelling us to lay down our work when we are in the very midst of it, leaving it only half done. It seems to be a waster of precious time, eating up half of the hours. How much more we could accomplish, we sometimes say, if the sun did not go down, if we could go on without pause! Night throws its heavy veil over the lovely things of this world, hiding them from our view.

Yet night really is no stain on the splendor of day, no thief of time, no waster of golden hours, no obscurer of beauty. It reveals as much beauty as it hides – for no sooner has the sun set, leaving earth's splendor of landscape, garden and forest in gloom – than there bursts upon our vision the other splendor of the sky filled with glorious stars.

When the privilege of *work* is interrupted, God has another blessing – the blessing of *sleep*. One may figure out with mathematical certitude that it is a waste of time to spend one-third of each day in the idleness of sleep. Yet these hours, which seem to be lost, in which we appear to be doing nothing, bring us new gifts from God.

An old version renders the Psalm verse, “*He gives His beloved in sleep*” (Psalm 127:2). We lie down with our vitality exhausted in the toils and struggles of the day. Then, while we sleep, God comes to us in the silence and stillness, and refills the emptied fountains. It is really a new creation that takes place in us while we sleep – a miracle of renewal and restoration! We die, as it were, and are made to live again.

Thus we get hints of the graciousness of the divine thoughtfulness in giving us time in periods of little days, with which we can easily endure, and not in great years, in which we would faint and fall by the way. It makes it possible for us to go on through all of the long years and not be overwrought, for we ►

never have given to us at any one time more than we can do between the morning and the evening.

Not only are the days short, so that we can go on to eventide with our work or our burden, but they are separated as by a wall, so that there can be no overflowing of one day's care or responsibility into another. Night drops down its dark curtain between the days, so that we cannot see today anything that is in tomorrow. Our Lord taught us that we sin if we let ourselves try to carry the load of any day but this one little day.

"Do not worry about tomorrow," He said, "for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:44). If we allow ourselves to borrow anxiety from tomorrow, we shall find that we have a greater load than we can carry.

The only true way to live, therefore, is one day at a time. This means that we should give all of our strength to the work of the present day. When a new morning dawns, we should accept its duties, the bit of God's will it unrolls for us. Then we can lay our day back into God's hand at nightfall with confidence, saying, "Father, I have finished the work which you gave me to do today."

DEFER (continued from front page)

In the Scriptures God gives us sixty-six scrolls of His plan and purpose He wills to carry out through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In them He reveals all that we need for our sojourn on earth and entices us with a preview of our celestial citizenship.

Yet herein lies the tragedy. With the scrolls of the whole of God's purpose in his hands the saint, too, being urged to read, like Caesar, defers to do so. The procrastinating saint allows the Adversary to dismantle his soul with tradition, religion and philosophy, as well as the fancies of men. The non-vigilant saint allows the vitalizing scrolls of God to be supplanted by the devitalizing books of men. He allows worldly attractions, trivialities, tinsel, pressing affairs of business or family life or demands of unspiritual friends to draw him away from the obedience to God's command to study His scrolls and show himself approved to God, an unashamed workman, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

We should never be *anxious* about either *yesterday* or *tomorrow*. *Yesterday* is gone; therefore, it is useless to waste a moment of time or a particle of strength fretting over it. *Tomorrow* is not yet ours, and we cannot touch its life until it becomes our *today*.

God means for us to put our undivided attention into the doing of the present day's work. If we do this, we shall have quite enough to do to fill all of the hours and to engage our best energy, skill and strength. In this way, too, we shall best prepare for tomorrow. The days are all woven together in God's plan, each one following the day before and fitting into the day coming after it. Each takes up the work which the day before brought to its feet, and carries it forward to deliver it to the one which waits.

If we learn well the lesson of living just one day at a time, without anxiety for either yesterday or tomorrow, we shall have found one of the great secrets of Christian peace. That is the way God teaches us to live. That is the lesson both of the Bible and of nature. If we learn it, it will help cure us of anxiety; it will help save us from feverish haste; it will help enable us to live sweetly in any experience.

1903

What a tragedy this is! Saints dying beneath the ominous shadow of question marks, saints pondering problems that perplex all thoughtful and thinking persons, saints fearing while holding in their hands the scrolls which they defer to read. Dying, questioning the goodness of God. Dying, questioning the destiny of man. Dying, too busy to seek the answer His Word supplies to questions which sear the brain and sorrow the soul. Dying, with the scrolls containing the answers in their hands, unread. How many, with the scrolls of the whole plan, defer to read what God says about His eonian process and His ultimate goal for His entire creation?

Let us redeem the time because the days are evil, and remember that there is no *anytime* to redeem the time, there is no *anytime* to begin the reading of His scrolls, for the time is now, not *anytime*.

Treasures of Truth
December 1971

God's Opinion of You

From God's Point of View

by – Steve McVey

Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3).

One of the reasons we get confused about spiritual matters is because of the way we misunderstand and misapply words we use all of the time. For instance, consider the word, “glory.” In Hebrews 1:3, the Bible says that Jesus is the radiance of God’s “glory.” What does the writer mean by that? Does He mean that Jesus shines as brightly as the Father in His splendor? Perhaps, but I think the verse is much richer than that.



how much we are loved.

The opinion of the Father toward us isn't one of condemnation. Sin has done enough of that to us already. His heart toward us is to love us, and then love us and, having done that, He then will love us. If you want to see God's attitude toward you, look at how Jesus acted toward those who had sinned.

The word “radiance” is the Greek word *apaugasma*, which means “out-raying.” Jesus is the expression of God’s glory just as the rays of light that come from the sun express its essence. Yet what about this “glory” that Jesus perfectly expresses?

The word “glory” is the word *doxa*. The first definition, according to *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, is “opinion, judgment, view.” It's not until we come to the third definition in the list that we find anything having to do with “splendor, brightness.”

The first definition is the best definition in understanding what Hebrews 1:3 means when it tells us that Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory. To be literal, the verse could read this way: “Jesus is the out-raying of God’s opinion.” The verse goes on to elaborate by saying that He is the “exact representation of His nature.”

Jesus exactly represents the nature of God and perfectly expresses the Father’s opinion. The question arises, “Jesus expresses the Father’s opinion of what or of whom?” The answer is, “you!” Why would I suggest that that is the answer? It's simple. Jesus came to show us the heart of the Father toward us. One of the last things He did was to pray for us to know just

So, when you read about the “glory” of God, think about the Father’s opinion of you. Know that He loves and adores you, as Jesus made clear. Don't see yourself through the eyes of others who, at the best, love you less than perfectly. Don't see yourself through your own eyes, blurred by legalistic self-judgment and self-righteous scrutiny. See yourself as His beloved, in whom He is well pleased.

God is Love. That's the starting point for our proper understanding of Him and it's the all-inclusive framework through which we must see ourselves if we are to live healthy lives.

Stop depending on other people, yourself, your church background, your misbehavior, or even the way you have misread your Bible to give you your image of yourself. God has an opinion of you. Jesus has made it clear what that opinion is. He adores you. So don't insult Him by disputing His opinion of you. By faith, own it. Whether you feel it or not, own it. Whether you see it or not, own it. That's how faith works. As you believe Him concerning His love for you, you will find wholeness increasing exponentially in your life.



Thank you so much for this study! [*When the Vow Breaks*] It clears up a lot of confusion and gives our faith substance! There are so many people out there who feel guilty, and then there are others who just don't even try. The comments at the end are also very blessed. Thank you again, and I thank God that we met you and have access to His teaching through you! – *Email*

I have been receiving your *Daily Email Goodies* for about a year. To be honest I didn't read them very often, but started to do so a few months ago. I am so sorry that I wasted all those wonderful emails from you for so long by not reading them. You blow me away each day with your *Goodies*. Your wisdom, insight and writing ability has spoken to my heart daily, and you have also shown me how to take our Father out of the religious box. You now have become part of my morning routine, and often I forward them to family and friends.

I am a "recovered" Catholic and am so thankful that God opened my ears, eyes and heart to how big His

love is for ALL His creation. ... Thanks for daily uplifting me to know just how much our Father loves His creation. – *CO*

We would like to send a little something each month to assist in a small way. The check is on its way and we pray it will assist in getting more people interested in the "real gospel." We love your *Daily Email Goodies* so we print them and put them in a binder for future reading. God bless you and the work you do. – *CA*

I finished the book *Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift*, and gained so much from it. I saw things that I had not noticed before in all my studying. I think that we can only hold so much at a time and our loving Father knows when we are ready for more!

It comes to me that many people don't even believe in the first gift; they believe that the believing that they have they gained or worked up themselves! Most of this I think comes from not rightly dividing the Scriptures, but mixing them all up and trying to make sense of them that way.

I really appreciate your *Daily Email Goodies*. It helps me keep my mind on the things that are important and not just go into my day without that wonderful food that really satisfies. Thank you, and remember that you are in our prayers. – *Email*



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by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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