

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Bertha Segebart
 Cradle Roll 2: Dorothy Mars
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: NEED VOLUNTEER!
 Cradle Roll 2: NEED VOLUNTEER!
 Wed. Evening Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: NEED VOLUNTEER!
 Cradle Roll 2: NEED VOLUNTEER!

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of August 28, 2016

Sunday School ----- 28
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 40
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 30
 Mon. Eve., 08/29/16 Service ----- 38
 Tue. Eve., 08/30/16 Service ----- 38
 Wed. Eve., 08/31/16 Service ----- 40

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of August 28, 2016

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 247.01
 Love Offering, Bro. Rodney Woodcock ----- \$ 806.25
Total Received for Week of 08/28/16: \$ 1,053.26

Average amount of UNDESIGNATED Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00



GIVE OUT A GOSPEL TRACT THIS WEEK!

LISTEN TO -



ABIDINGRADIO.COM

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go *up*. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start *today* - OK? Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Lois Mae Floyd ----- Pianist/ Organist
 ----- Greeter
 Shayne Hooper, Brian Crawford, Charity Crawford ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, ----- Outreach
 Bertha Segebart ----- Custodian
 Flowers ----- Shirley White, Charity Crawford

REMINDER



Dr. W. A. Criswell, Pastor
 First Baptist Church
 Dallas, Texas
 1944 - 2002

The Sign of the Lord's Second Coming

Matthew 24:32-42

March 23, 1978

by Dr. W. A. Criswell

The title of the message is a word, a phrase used in the Bible when His disciples asked the Lord the sign of His coming. And the context is this great apocalyptic chapter in Matthew 24. Jesus went out, departed from the temple, never came back. His disciples came, for to show Him the buildings of the Temple - some of the layers, some of those great stratum of stones in this temple, that the Lord was looking at with His disciples and are there today - the Western Wall, as they call it; used to be called the Wailing Wall. Those stones are the stones of the wall, the foundation wall, the building, of course, long since destroyed as our Lord said it would be.

So they came to point out to Him those massive tooled stones built by Herod. And Jesus said until them, *"You see all these things? Truly I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Matthew 24:2). And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, *"Tell us what shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matthew 24:3). Then follows, of course, this tremendous apocalyptic discourse of our Lord that we shall look at briefly this morning.

This is not unique in the life of our ministry. When you turn the pages you will find it oft mentioned, such as in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of Luke:

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in heaven and on earth. And when these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:24-25, 28).

The phrase, the substantive, "second coming" is never used in the Bible. It is always either this word, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming," *parousia* - presence. It is either the presence or it is the *apokalupsis* - "the unveiling," or it is *epiphaneia* - epiphany, the *"appearance of the Lord."*

The presence of the Lord: *"What shall be the sign of Thy being here?"* And the Lord answered in great detail. You see "signs"; signs are ABC's that spell out words and spell out sentences, and blessed are the eyes that can see them, blessed are the ears that can discern them, and blessed is that mind filled with wisdom from God that can understand them. Signs are such as you see in the budding of a tree and you say, "Spring is here," or standing on the banks of the Niagara River and the great rapids begin to shoot, the sign of the great falls that are just about a mile further down.

So signs point to something. They spell something. They declare something. And it is a wonderful heart and mind that can put the ABC's together and to see what it is that the sign is avowing.

Now our Lord says here, *"When they say, what will be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world"*—that is, the signs
(continued inside)

of the coming of our Lord always point to one thing, always to one thing. When you put the words together, the syllables together, the sentences together, the signs point to one thing, and that is **“the end of the world” (Matthew 24:3)**. Now lest we think that this is unusual or different, all of the signs of all human life and all human experience, and all the signs of everything we see about us point to the same thing: the end of the world; all of it.

The suns die out, the stars grow cold and dark, trees die, flowers die, leaves die, animals die, men die. They are dead animals, dead trees, dead flowers, dead grass, dead stars, dead planets, dead solar systems, dead men. The whole earth points to the end, the dissolution, the disintegration of all things. It is only in the diseased mind of the evolutionist and the pseudoscientist that things come up. Always in all the experiences of life things go down. If you have a fine breed of horses, just leave it alone and pretty soon they’ll turn into broomtails. If you have a fine breed of cattle, just leave it alone and pretty soon they’ll turn down into scrubs. If you have a fine breed of orange trees, just leave it alone and pretty soon it’ll descend into bushes. All life goes down; it is only in the aberration of an evolutionist’s head that things ever come up. All the world goes down. Everything points to the same thing: the disintegration of life, the disintegration of everything created and the ultimate end of all things.

Now if that is a sign, if these are signs that are everywhere, what is unique about the revelation of our Lord when He says that the sign of His second coming is also the sign of the end of the world? If all of the signs point to the dissolution and the disintegration of all things, what is there unique about the revelation of our Lord? It is this: outside of Christ, in science, in philosophy—especially modern philosophy called existentialism—in all of the areas of life, the signs that we see point to abysmal and darkening despair. There’s not anything but death; death to the whole world, death to everything you see, death to everything you feel, death to everything you observe, death to the universe we live—death, death, death, death, despair, no purpose, no reason, no end, no goal, no vision, no tomorrow, no anything! That is the ultimate, blackening despair of those who find no purpose or reason or meaning in life.

So all the signs that they see and all the signs that they experience point ultimately to an absolute dissolution of all things. Nothing faces us but the midnight darkness of death and the grave. Now that is science and that is modern philosophy.

Well, what is this sign that is unique in the life and ministry and teaching of our Lord? It is this: that the signs that point to the end of the world and the dissolution of all things—the burned out stars, and the burned out sun, and the dead bodies, and the dead animals and the dead flowers, and the dead world—the great revelation of our Lord is that these signs that point to the end of the world also point to a tremendous and magnificent triumph, namely the establishment of the kingdom of our Lord God, and the new heavens and the new earth, fashioned under His gracious hands. It just turns the whole thing around, from despair into

glory, from meaningless into purposedness, (from) tragedy (into) triumph. The great teaching of our Lord in the signs that we see in the world are like this: out of death comes life, out of ceasing to be comes living and abiding forever, out of the transitory and the temporary comes the eternal, and out of catastrophe comes the second coming.

To the Christian, as he sees the disillusion of all things around him—including his own body, including his own life, including his own family, including everything that he’s ever seen or known—to the Christian, out of that comes the marvelous assurance that from the grave God will raise us up. And out of the dissolution and the disintegration of the despair of this life will come an incomparable and a glorious and a heavenly triumph.

So the Lord speaks about it. And He speaks about it, not in cheap enthusiasm, not in blind optimism, but the Lord speaks about the signs of the ends of the world, realistically. And as I read this page as I’m going to try to do right now, as I look at it, it is the same thing as if I were looking at the daily newspaper; just the same thing. What I read in today’s newspaper is exactly what I read here, and what I read here is what I read in the daily newspaper.

All right let’s take the first thing that the Lord will mention here. He says:

“Now let us learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye say summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that it is at the doors. Truly I say unto you, This generation—genea, this kind, this species, this race—shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matthew 24:32-34).

He’s talking about there, the Jew; in the Bible the fig tree is a figure and a sign of the Jew. And He says, this genea—this generation—this species—this Jew—he will still be here till all these things come to pass. They will be fulfilled.

Well, he’s still here. All of those other tribes, and clans, and national groups, and on and on that we read about, two thousand years ago, they’d been so long dead that we had to dig up antiquarian, archeological data and cuneiform inscriptions in order to even find out who they are and what they did. Not the Jew. He’s still here. You can go down the street and shake hands with a whole bunch of them if you want to. He’s still here, just like Jesus said.

And the Lord said he’s going to go back home, he’s going back to Palestine, he’s going back to Canaan’s land. And thirty-sixth chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, he’s going back in unbelief, and he’s going back to trouble, trouble, trouble (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

Now let me tell you something. If they ever find peace over there in the Middle East, it will be a denial of the Word of God. God says there’s no peace over there. There’s no peace over there. And when I read these newspapers, “No peace,” and when I read these newspapers, “Peace, peace,” next day I read, “No peace.” When I read, “made a concordat,” “made a treaty,” “made

a gesture,” went over there and visit, shook hands, patted one another on the back, kissed one another on the cheek; read the next paper, ooh, firing of guns! That’s according to the Bible. That’s just reading what the Bible says. That’s exactly what it’s going to be until the Bible calls it “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).

But what we’re talking about now is, he’s going back home. He’s going back home. His face is turned toward Palestine (Ezekiel 36:24-28). That’s a sign; that’s a sign. For two thousand years there was no state over there. On the fifteenth day of May in 1948, there was created a nation of Israel. For the first time since Titus destroyed it in 70 AD, in our day and in our time we’re seeing these signs of God come to pass; just as the Lord said.

Hastily may I point out one other. He says here:

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be when the Lord comes. In that day they were eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark. Then when the flood came and took them all away; so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:37-39).

Now the Lord will expatiate on that. He calls it the Laodicean age of the church. And I have lived to see it go; I’ve passed out of, in my lifetime, the Philadelphian age of the church to the Laodicean, the last age of the church. The Philadelphian age of the church is the age of the open door.

When I was a boy you’d go anywhere in this world and preach the gospel and be wonderfully welcomed, gloriously welcomed, happily welcomed. Man alive. You can’t imagine how many prayers I’ve heard for China, and we’ve sent missionaries over there by the thousands. And we would pray for India, and we would pray for darkened Africa, and we would pray for the ends of the earth. And our missionaries went everywhere. When Philadelphia needed a church, it was the age of the open door.

I have seen practically all of the world closed, practically all of it; two-thirds of the nations of the world will not allow a Christian missionary inside—even India, even India. And I’m kinda working along in that area of life. Even India will not allow a Christian missionary. The only way to get a missionary in is if he is an agronomist, an agricultural expert, or a physician, and he goes there as an agronomist or as a physician, but never as a Christian missionary. The age of Philadelphia is gradually closing, and the Laodicean age is gradually opening, when you see the signs of the great and illimitable apostasy.

Dear people, I hate to hasten but let me do this one thing, and then I have to close. I want to show you what I mean by the age of Laodicea, the last age of the church, the age when Christ is outside the door (Revelation 3:20)—what the Bible calls the age of apostasia, the falling away.

When I was in India I looked with mine own eyes at the British Baptists closing down the mission stations established by William Carey himself. I stood with Haiderali, Indian Baptist pastor, in

front of the Baptist church in Agra where the beautiful Taj Mahal is built, looked at the pediment, there in the middle of it was the stone of dedication. Instead of being on the side—the cornerstone—where we would put it, they put it up there in the pediment; and I read it, “Agra Baptist Church, 1845,” the day that our Southern Baptist Convention was founded. Haiderali was sent there to close down the church; close it down.

All right, this is today’s Baptist Standard. I hold it in my hand. It was placed on my desk last night. And I read on the back page:

“British churches quote redundant.” Churches are closing down for good all over Great Britain. A recent exhibition at the Victorian Albert Museum in London presented graphic evidence of the shutdowns. In ’75 and ’76 the Anglican Church commissioners authorized the demolition of one church every nine days. The advisory board for redundant churches predicted in its annual report for ’75 that between 1960 and 1980 the total number of the Church of England declared redundant will exceed one thousand, and this rate will increase.

In England, Wales, more than six hundred non-Anglican churches are recorded as having closed. In the past forty years, about five thousand Methodist churches have been shut down. United, Reformed, Quaker, Baptist, congregation also are closed. According to a new study, change and decay are the future of our churches. British churches have been and are being shut down because of dwindling congregations.

Many churches have simply been demolished. Others have been transformed into community centers, art centers, post office, fish and chips shops, auctioneering houses, and wholesale groceries.

A former Methodist chapel in East Sussex is now an office for a typewriter manufacturer. Another in Stratford on Avon—where Shakespeare lived—another in Stratford on Avon is a museum featuring vintage cars. A chaplain in Davenport, Plymouth, has been turned into a pub. Thirty churches of England have been approved for conversion into living accommodations.

Do you remember my telling you about two days ago, walking down the streets of Leningrad, and there’s a beautiful church; it’s a warehouse? A glorious church; it’s a granary. A magnificent edifice, raised to the glory of God; it’s a railroad station. The most beautiful cathedral in Eastern Europe, and the largest; now an exhibition of evolution and atheism; remember my telling you that?

Now I want you to tell me the difference. What’s the difference between the indifference and the apostasy in England and the one you find in Russia? The tragedy of Russia is not that! Those churches have been converted into granaries and warehouses. The tragedy is that people don’t care. They don’t miss them. And England is the same way. They don’t care. What does it matter to them whether the church is turned into a pub, or a typewriter manufacturer, or a fish and chips, fish and chips shop, or whatever. They couldn’t care less, nobody goes.

“*These are signs,*” God says. And they are signs of the falling away. “*When the Lord cometh, will He find faith in the earth?*” (Luke 18:8).

Bear me, please, two more minutes. When He cometh, when He cometh, how will it be? Will the trumpet sound and the great announcement? No. “*Two will be in a field; one taken, the other left. Two will be grinding at a mill; one taken, one left. Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your God doth come*” (Matthew 24:40-42).

When He comes, it will be first without announcement. He will come furtively, clandestinely, secretly, to waft away His people, to steal away His jewels—an old Anglo-Saxon word that’s not in the Bible, an old Anglo-Saxon word for that is called the Rapture, when the Lord steals away His pearl of price, coming as a thief in the night, without announcement, and that could be any day, any moment, any time (I Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 13:46).

The second part, the Lord says here in chapter 24, is after the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29). And that’s the Revelation, the *apokalupsis*. That’s the first word in the Revelation (Revelation 1:1), *apokalupsis, Jesus christou*; the Revelation, the unveiling of Jesus Christ, after the rapture, and God’s people are taken away.

“*Then as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be*” (Matthew 24:27). After the tribulation of those days, between the rapture and the tribulation, practically all of the Revelation is about that, from chapter 5 through chapter 19:

“*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, the moon not give her light, stars fall from heaven, the powers of heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven—now you look at that: the sign of the Son of Man in heaven—then shall all the tribes mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*” (Matthew 24:29-30).

Doesn’t that sound exactly like the text of the Revelation? “*Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him*” (Revelation 1:7), and here the Book calls that a sign. What is the sign? “*Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in glory*” (Matthew 24:30).

And when we use the word “cloud,” we think a mist, you know, a cloud. Never that in the Bible. The cloud, such as filled the temple, filled the sanctuary, such as the cloud that received our Lord Jesus, as Dr. Patterson was preaching about last night, in the sense of “a

cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). “*And when He cometh, He cometh with clouds*” (Revelation 1:7), and here, the sign of the coming; that is the shekinah glory of God (Matthew 24:30). That’s the chariot in which the Lord rides. And that is the glory in which the Lord shall clothe Himself when He appears before men.

When the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14) to establish His kingdom in the earth by His omnipotent hand, and purging it, there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1-2). And our beautiful city shall come down to this earth out of heaven—streets made out of gold, gates made out of pearl, walls made out of jasper, the river of life flowing through it, and a forest of the trees of life growing on either bank (Revelation 21:10-21)—and God’s redeemed, living in His presence, world without end forever and ever (Revelation 22:3-5).

*It may be at mid-day, it may be at twilight;
It may be perchance, that the blackness of midnight
Will burst in the light and the blaze of His glory,
When Jesus comes for His own.*

*O joy! O delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying—
Caught up with our Lord through the clouds into Glory,
When Jesus comes for His own.*



God give to us faith to believe that beyond the catastrophes that we see in this world, and beyond our own age and death, and beyond the dissolution of all things, we see in them the sign of the coming of our Lord, and the new kingdom, and the new city, and the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new redeemed who shall worship Him forever and ever.

And our Lord, in that faith and in that glorious promise, may we live our lives down to old age. And if the Lord delays His coming and we fall into the grave, in the quiet assurance that the almighty Son of God is able to speak to these who have mingled their dust with the dust of the ground, and they shall come to life and live in Thy presence like a great redeemed throng, singing Thy glory forever and ever. Amen. ÷

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

‘ **LEADING SCHOLARS DEBUNK MEDIA NARRATIVES ON HOMOSEXUALITY** - A major new report, published today in the journal *The New Atlantis*, challenges the leading narratives that the media has pushed regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Co-authored by two of the nation’s leading scholars on mental health and sexuality, the 143-page report discusses over 200 peer-reviewed studies in the biological, psychological, and social sciences, painstakingly documenting what scientific research shows and does not show about sexuality and gender.

The major takeaway, as the editor of the journal explains, is that “some of the most frequently heard claims about sexuality and gender are not supported by scientific evidence.” Here are four of the report’s most important conclusions:

One - “The belief that sexual orientation is an innate, biologically fixed human property—that people are born that way—is not supported by scientific evidence.

Two - “Likewise, the belief that gender identity is an innate, fixed human property independent of biological sex—so that a person might be a man trapped in a woman’s body or a woman trapped in a man’s body—is not supported by scientific evidence.”

Three - “Only a minority of children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behavior will continue to do so into adolescence or adulthood. There is no evidence that all such children should be encouraged to become transgender, much less subjected to hormone treatments or surgery.”

Four - “Non-heterosexual and transgender people have higher rates of mental health problems (anxiety, depression, suicide), as well as behavioral and social problems (substance abuse, intimate partner violence), than the general population. Discrimination alone does not account for the entire disparity.”

The report, “*Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences*,” is co-authored by Dr. Lawrence Mayer and Dr. Paul McHugh. Mayer is a scholar-in-residence in the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University and a professor of statistics and biostatistics at Arizona State University. McHugh, whom the editor of *The*

New Atlantis describes as “arguably the most important American psychiatrist of the last half-century,” is a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and was for 25 years the psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. It was during his tenure as psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins that he put an end to sex reassignment surgery there, after a study launched at Hopkins revealed that it didn’t have the benefits for which doctors and patients had long hoped.

‘ **OBAMA ADMINISTRATION ABDICATING U.S. STEWARDSHIP OF THE INTERNET** - When the Obama administration announced its plan to give up U.S. protection of the internet, it promised the United Nations would never take control. But because of the administration’s naiveté or arrogance, U.N. control is the likely result if the U.S. gives up internet stewardship as planned at midnight on Sept. 30

It’s shocking the administration admits it has no plan for how Ican retains its antitrust exemption. The reason Ican can operate the entire World Wide Web root zone is that it has the status of a legal monopolist, stemming from its contract with the Commerce Department that makes Ican an ‘instrumentality’ of government. Antitrust rules don’t apply to governments or organizations operating under government control.

Without the U.S. contract, Ican would seek to be overseen by another governmental group so as to keep its antitrust exemption. Authoritarian regimes have already proposed Ican become part of the U.N. to make it easier for them to censor the internet globally. So much for the Obama pledge that the U.S. would never be replaced by a “government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution.”

Rick Manning, president of Americans for Limited Government, called it “simply stunning” that the “politically blinded Obama administration missed the obvious point that Ican loses its antitrust shield should the government relinquish control.”

As the administration spent the past two years preparing to give up the contract with Ican, it also stopped actively overseeing the group. That allowed Ican to abuse its monopoly over internet domains, which earns it hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

‘ **CUBA’S CRACKDOWN ON CHURCHES** - The first half of 2016 has seen church demolitions in Cuba gather pace as the government crackdown on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) on the island continues. The authorities have also begun to confiscate 1,400 Assemblies of God (AOG) churches that were earmarked for seizure in 2015. The latest report by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) details 1,606 separate violations between January and July 2016.

Cases include the demolition and confiscation of church buildings, the destruction of church property, arbitrary detention and other forms of harassment, in particular, seizure of religious leaders’ personal belongings. The government has continued to

follow through with the confiscation of 1,400 AOG churches; 100 of those churches are under threat of demolition.

AOG leaders and leaders from other denominations expressed concern to CSW that the government's repression of religious groups has worsened significantly over the past year. There has been an unprecedented spate of church demolitions.

Four large churches linked to the unregistered Apostolic Movement were destroyed by the government in central and eastern Cuba. In each of these cases, the pastors and their families were dragged out of their homes in the very early hours of the morning. They were also detained and held in separate police stations for the duration of the demolition. In some of these cases, large numbers of members of the churches were detained, apparently to stop them from protesting. The report also details the arbitrary detention and harassment of many church leaders.

' BARNAs: ONLY 3% OF U.S. TEENS READ BIBLE DAILY - According to a new nationwide study by Barna, only 3% of teens in America read the Bible daily. The study, 2016 **Teen State of the Bible**, found that 69% own a Bible, but very few are serious Bible students. Group publishing has a proposed solution called **Pierced**, a New Testament aimed for teens "who don't read the Bible." It "reads more like a novel than a textbook."

Stripped away are "centuries of added formatting" such as chapter and verse numbers and footnotes. Added are "the actual notes of ten teens" so "the reader can journey through the story of Jesus with his or her peers." Veronica Preston, Design Artist of Pierced, says, "It allows them to know that they are not alone; wrestling through God's Word with others ... feeling free to be vulnerable in the process" ("Novel-like New Testament Created for Teens Who Don't Read the Bible," Christian Newswire, Aug. 26, 2016).

What teens really need is new birth salvation and serious discipleship, a prominent part of which is to learn how to be an effectual Bible student. This is what happened to me in 1973 at age 23 years. I was born again that summer, and suddenly I had something I never had when I was growing up in church, and that was a hunger to know God and His Word. I didn't want a watered down, novel-like edition of God's Word. I wanted an accurate translation of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts that were written by holy prophets of old under divine inspiration.

The Bible is not a novel or a cool Facebook page. The newest part is 2,000 years old, and God has ordained that some real labor is required to learn it and to benefit from it. Proverbs 2 says the effectual student of God's Word must be like those who seek for silver, which implies serious digging. Paul instructed Timothy to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). We have had the blessing of teaching many young people to be effectual Bible students, but first they must be born again and then surrender to God's will, which requires separation from the evil things of this world (Romans 12:1-2). Without that, they can read the cheap

novel-like New Testaments and paraphrases 24/7 and never learn God's Word.

- Evangelist David W. Cloud



HYMNS WE LOVE

"I Will Sing The Wondrous Story"

Pastor Francis H. Rowley has given the following account for the writing of this hymn:

"I was minister of the First Baptist Church of North Adams, Massachusetts in 1886. The church and community were experiencing a period of unusual interest in religious matters, and I was assisted by a remarkable young Swiss musician by the name of Peter Bilhorn.

"One Sunday following the evening service he said, 'Why don't you write a hymn for me to set to music?' During the night these verses came to me. The original poem began 'Can't You Sing the Wondrous Story?'

"However, when the song was first published by Ira Sankey in 1887, the phrase was changed to 'I Will Sing...'"

I Will Sing the Wondrous Story

*I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
How He left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary.*

CHORUS:

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea.*

*I was lost but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way.*

*I was bruised but Jesus healed me,
Faint was I from many a fall;
Sight was gone, and fears possessed me,
But He freed me from them all.*

*Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrow's paths I often tread,
But the Saviour still is with me,
By His hand I'm safely led.*



Anabel Gillham
1928 - 2010

Why Do I Hurt?

by Anabel Gillham

How many books have been written, how many sermons have been preached, how many different answers have been given in answer to the question - *Why do I hurt?*

I certainly can't answer that question which others have grappled with for years, but Paul gives us some insight in the book of II Corinthians - enough insight to calm the fears, doubts, and frustration just a tad perhaps.

He begins by stating this fact. **II Corinthians 4:10: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."**

The idea is this - Yes, we who are living are always being exposed to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be plainly seen in our mortal lives.

There's one facet of the answer: As we hurt, suffer, endure pain and allow Christ to control and handle that pain, others will become aware of the life of Jesus being lived out in the midst of our discomfort and will be encouraged. Paul's circumstances were, to say the least, unpleasant, yet he says in Philippians Chapter 1, verse 12 -

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

I'm confident that you have friends who have exemplified Jesus' strength, His love, His confidence in the midst of a tragedy or serious illness. You go to "cheer them up" and you come away having been "cheered up!" That is possible only through the life of Christ being lived through that person.

We are being changed into His likeness, which is the primary purpose of living here on Planet Earth (Romans 8:28-29).

II Cor. 4:16 says, **"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."**

And just what is the inner man? It is the **"new creature in Christ Jesus"** (II Cor. 5:17). It is the "earthsuit" - the body that we live in here on earth - is wearing out, will get feeble, sick, and have all sorts of problems, but as we live with this "suffering" we come to know Him better.

Add to that 4:17: **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal**

weight of glory."

To look at it simply - These little troubles (which are really so transitory) are winning for us a permanent, glorious and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain.

So one answer to the question, **Why do I hurt?**, is this:

So that others will witness Christ facing this "hurt" for you and will ask, "I don't understand how you can do this!" and we get to tell them about the One who is handling it for us-through us. Then, as the days go by and suffering comes to them they will come to you and say, "Tell me how I can let Jesus face this through me, please. I desperately need help."

- edited

I Loved You Enough

Some day when my children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates a parent, I will tell them:

I loved you enough . . .

to ask where you were going, with whom, and what time you would be home.

I loved you enough . . .

to insist that you save your money and buy a bike for yourself even though we could afford to buy one for you.

I loved you enough . . .

to be silent and let you discover that your new best friend was a creep.

I loved you enough . . .

to make you take a Milky Way back to the drugstore (with a bite out of it) and tell the clerk, "I stole this yesterday and want to pay for it."

I loved you enough . . .

to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your room, a job that would have taken 15 minutes.

I loved you enough . . .

to let you see anger, disappointment and tears in my eyes. Children must learn that their parents aren't perfect.

I loved you enough . . .

to let you assume the responsibility for your actions even when the penalties were so harsh they almost broke my heart.

But most of all,

I loved you enough . . .

to say NO when I knew you would hate me for it. Those were the most difficult battles of all. I'm glad I won them, because in the end you won, too.

-Author Unknown