

# The Word of Life Messenger

*“Holding forth the word of life” Phil. 2:16*

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No. 2

## **ARE YOU FAITHFUL?**

*“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10)*

Recently, I received an invitation to attend a conference at a church where they had an ice skating rink, a Disney style children’s playground, numerous tennis and baseball and softball fields, Olympic indoor and outdoor swimming pools, weight training, and aerobic fitness centers and other good things to enjoy. Now it is not my purpose to sit in judgment of that church or what they are doing. I certainly would not pretend to be more holy than they are for each of us shall give an account of himself unto the Lord and that is plenty to consider. However, in the United States many of us have gotten quite comfortable in our churches. We must have comfortable pews or chairs, comfortable temperatures, beautiful surroundings, marvelous music, and friendly faces and plenty of activities. This was not the case for the church at Smyrna. Many of them were suffering great persecution and in danger of losing their homes, their livelihoods, and even their lives for their faith in Christ. In the eyes of men this church was a poor, afflicted church, not unlike many of the early churches. In the eyes of men this was not a prosperous church.

And yet, this church was commanded by our Lord to “be thou faithful unto death.” Now the word faithful means much more than just holding on or persisting in the path

they were pursuing. The Greek word for faithful comes from the same root word from which we get our word faith. To have faith is to be absolutely convinced about something, to trust in something completely. Thayer says this word used in relation to God and His creation is “the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon p.513). In relation to Christ, he says it denotes “a strong or welcome belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God” (p. 573). To be faithful means that one can be trusted or relied upon. Why can such a person be trusted or relied upon? Because that one believes that there is an eternal God who created all things, who controls all things, and who consummates all things. He believes that this God sent his only eternal Son to become one of us as the Son of Man and the Son of God, to die for our sins according to the Scriptures, be buried, and rise again the third day and that God has saved us based upon what Christ did for us. The faithful one is one who is absolutely convinced of who Jesus is and what He has done. He knows he is a sinner and that he deserves God’s judgment and that he cannot save himself by his works, his bap-

tism, his connections, or his church membership. (See John 1:12-13). He knows that his salvation is all of God and His marvelous grace and He sent His beloved Son to be our Savior. He knows that Jesus, God’s Son, died the just for the unjust, the sinless for the sinner, the innocent in behalf of and in the place of the guilty and bore in his own body there on the cross his guilt and shame (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). Moreover, he knows that this Savior will not leave him or forsake him and that if he should die or be killed he will go directly into the presence of Christ. He knows that one day his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will return and his body will be raised and made new, like unto the body of his Savior, not subject to disease, sickness, or death, but fitted for an eternity with Christ. He believes that Christ will judge his servants and reward those who have been faithful to Him. He believes the “sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

The Christian church is not a country club or a center of entertainment and recreation. It is a people called of God to worship Him, witness of Him, and work for Him. It is called to proclaim the gospel to the farthest corner of the earth even

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# ANOTHER GOSPEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER

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“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

As you read Paul’s letters you

will find him on several occasions defending the truth or refuting error. Here in Galatians is certainly one of those instances. Judaizers and other false teachers were coming behind Paul and undermining the gospel. When people hear error on a regular basis they tend to accept it as truth. That is very evident from church history.

There is a poplar restaurant in the town where I live that calls an item on their menu “purple hull peas.” But it is not “purple hull peas,” it is “black-eyed peas” and they are calling them “purple hull peas.” Face-

tiously speaking, if this practice continues, there will be a whole generation of people who eat at that restaurant that will never know the difference between “purple hull peas” and “black-eyed peas.”

Focus on what Paul says in vv. 6-7 - “another gospel, which is not another.” My point is this: Some people are preaching and teaching what they say is the “gospel” but it amounts to no more than “black-eyed peas.” They don’t know the difference! Did you hear about the penguin who asked the policeman, “Have you seen my brother?” And the policeman said, “I don’t know, what does he look like?”

We can’t tell one penguin from another, but Christians ought to be able to discern between something being called the gospel and THE GOSPEL. Water baptism is not THE GOSPEL, a sinner’s prayer is not THE GOSPEL, going to the altar is not THE GOSPEL, good works is not THE GOSPEL. Yet there are people who believe these things are the gospel!

Paul defines the gospel in I Corinthians 15:3-4 - “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;” In verse two of that same chapter, Paul said, “By which ye are saved.” That is what saves and in Romans 1:16 Paul stated that “the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.” Do you know the difference between “purple hull peas” and “black-eyed peas”? Do you know the difference between something being called the gospel and THE GOSPEL?

— Venlon Bradford

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## ARE YOU FAITHFUL?

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when it means hardship and suffering. It is not to be a group focused on self-gratification, but on Christ’s glorification. Not all roads in the Christian life are easy. It is said of Paul and Barnabas that these were “men who hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Scripture says “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him” (II Timothy 2:12). Again, Paul said “For unto you it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake” (Phil. 1:29). Our dear Savior said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it (Mark 8:35). The pleasures of this world shall soon be gone. Only those things that are done for Christ will endure. Let’s be careful about bringing the world into the church. It causes us to get our eyes off the one we are to love, obey, and serve.

The church at Smyrna came face to face with the reality of what the

Christian life was all about. They were losing everything, but they still had Him. To have Him is to have everything important. Paul said my highest goal is that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection. Do you know Him who is life eternal? Have you believed the gospel of how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures? If so, “be thou faithful even unto death.” There is no reason to quit, to be deterred by suffering and hardship, or to accept the world’s cheap substitutes for close intimate fellowship with our Lord. There is no such thing as retirement in the Christian life. Keep on studying, praying, preaching, teaching, worshiping, witnessing, giving, singing, serving, and going. He is worthy. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. He will give us a crown of life. He will give us Himself!

— Larry Windham

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# A MOMENT WITH THE WORD

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“. . . I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 1:20). In this verse the pronoun “me” occurs three times; “Christ liveth in me.” “who loved me,” and “who gave Himself for me.” I can say with confidence that Christ is “in me” because I know He “loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I have never read this verse without wanting to point my finger toward myself. The Word of God is wonderfully personal.

In Ephesians 5:25 we read, “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.” Then in Revelation 1:5, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” The Lord loved His church enough to die for it. In our text, the love of God is narrowed down to one individual. It is focused on “me,” “you.”

“Who refers back to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we know something about the lover, we will appreciate the wonderful love for

each of us. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and co-equal with the Father. John 5:23, “...all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.”

**THE BLESSING:** How wonderful to be blessed by such love as His! For years I have sought for a worthy illustration of the love of our Lord, but I have found none. I like John 13:1, “having loved His own... he loved them unto the end.” There is no blessing comparable to being the object of divine love.

**THE BLESSED:** The one blessed is “me.” I am the object of His love and so are you. But who am I and who are you? Romans 3:10-18. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.” How sinful we are.

**THE BENEFIT:** The benefit is suggested by the words, “gave Himself.” What a gift! Who could

possibly give more than himself? This is what Jesus did. He came “to seek and to save that which is lost.” And in so doing, he gave His own life and shed His precious blood. We need to keep in mind when we consider Calvary that Jesus did not help Himself. He had enough power in one word to defeat all enemies. “No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18). And Christ did take it again on the third day. The word “gave” suggests, “For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold...; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The hymn writer wrote: “Wounded for me, Wounded for me. There on the cross, He was wounded for me, Gone are my transgressions and now I am free, All because Jesus was wounded for me.”

— Jack Maroon

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## WHAT AN INHERITANCE!

*“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance” (Eph. 1:11)*

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When Jesus gave Himself for us, He provided great things for us. He provided a full and free salvation for us. If you are pardoned, it is through His blood for He has “washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5). If you are justified, it is because of His righteousness for “your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake” (1 John 2:12) for “he was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). Again, the Scripture declares “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). If you have peace with God, it is because “Christ made peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). If you are sanctified, it is because He is of God sanctification unto you (1 Cor. 1:30). If you are kept from falling, it is because

you are preserved in Christ Jesus (Jude 1) and if you are perfected in the end, it will be because you are complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

When Jesus who is the mediator between God and man and the federal head of the covenant of grace died for our sins on Calvary’s cross He procured for Himself a people of His own and provided privileges which only he could provide. All the glorious consequences of His obedience and death are the joint riches of all who are in Him and on whose behalf He died, was buried, and rose again at the divine will. We are His inheritance and He has no heritage apart from us. He enters into glory, but not for Himself alone for the Scripture declares “Whither the forerunner is for us entered” (Heb. 6:20). Does He stand in the presence of God? Hebrews 9:24 declares “He appears in the pres-

ence of God for us.” It is only through His provision that we have this right, and not any merit of our own. Therefore, Jesus is to be magnified in all things for all is in Him and by Him. Our inheritance is made certain to us for it is obtained in Him. Each blessing, even heaven itself is sweeter because it is in Him. He is our portion, our elder brother, our kinsman-redeemer, our all in all! How precious will be our eternal lot as His children! Eternal joy, eternal fellowship, eternal provision, eternal mercy, eternal righteousness, eternal worship, eternal purpose, eternal pleasures! “All things are yours, for ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” Catch a glimpse of your inheritance weary one and your sighing will soon turn to singing. What a savior, what an inheritance!

— Larry Windham

## RADIO PROGRAMS

### WCPC – HOUSTON, MS, 940 KC

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BRO. FRED HARTLEY

SUNDAY, 7:30-8:00 A.M.  
BRO. GLADWIN CARPENTER

MON.-FRI. 4:55-5:00 P.M.  
BRO. GLADWIN CARPENTER

SATURDAY, 9:15-9:45 A.M.  
REEDY'S CHAPEL- BOBBY ADAMS

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BRO. JOE HOLMES

SUNDAY, 3:30 P.M.- 3:45 P.M.  
BRO. BOBBY JOE POSS

### WOHT 92.3 FM – GRENADA, MS

MON.-FRI., 7:25 A.M.  
DEVOTIONAL: LARRY WINDHAM

SUNDAY, 8:00-8:30 A.M.  
ELLIOTT BAPTIST CHURCH

### WBIP 99.3 FM – BOONEVILLE, MS

SUNDAY, 8:00 TO 8:30 A.M.  
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If you are receiving multiple copies  
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## Notice

The Northeast MS Baptist  
Bible Conference does not  
have a meeting place for  
March 2007.

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The North Central MS  
Baptist Bible Conference will  
meet with Liberty Hill Baptist  
Church, Hwy. 43, Phil Camp-  
bell, AL on Tuesday, March  
20, 2007. The time is 9:50 a.m.  
to 2:10 p.m. with lunch served  
at 12:00 noon. Six messages  
will be brought with each  
speaker choosing the scripture.

Bro. Bobby Poss and the  
church invite you to this time  
of worship and Bible study.

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Please NOTE the following  
correction in the January 2007  
issue. The article, "He Gave  
His Only Begotten Son" on P.  
2 had a typing error in the fol-  
lowing verse, it should read:  
"For He (God) hath made Him  
to be sin for us, who knew no  
sin; that we might be made the  
righteous of God in him" (2  
Cor. 5:21).

## WORD OF LIFE MESSENGER

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