

# The Word of Life Messenger

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

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## **PAUL’S INSTRUCTION TO THE CHURCH**

*Acts 20: 17-35*

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In these verses in Acts chapter twenty, Paul under inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes to the elders of the church at Ephesus (20:17). He gave some wonderful instruction to strengthen them and to instruct us today in local New Testament churches.

First, the church under leadership of the Holy Spirit and instruction from the pastor is to be faithful to the faith. “The faith” in the Bible is the body of revealed truth concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The Bible teaches there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Jude verse three instructs us to “contend for the faith which was once (once for all) delivered unto the saints.”

In being faithful to the faith, the pastor is to feed the flock. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Not only is the pastor to feed the flock from the word of God, but also to lead the flock. The flock should be led to green pastures as they feed upon the word of God.

Being faithful to the flock leads us to be faithful to the fight. Paul instructs Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12a). Paul

says “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (II Tim. 4:7). The heroes of faith in the Old Testament “waxed valiant in fight” (Heb. 11:34). “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions” (Heb. 10:32).

Also, we need to be faithful to the finish. Paul says “I have finished my course” (II Tim. 4:7). In these days of falling away, we are to stay true and stay on the course. Preach the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and declare “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Second, we are to be factual in preaching as we declare the word of God. We are “to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). The gospel is “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” (I Cor. 15:3-4). When we preach this message, we are giving the facts as God gave in His word.

Fellowship is also a factual truth in the Bible. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul thanks God “for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:5). Relationship has to do with our

being born into God’s family, whereas fellowship has to do with the life of the believer as we serve God and rejoice one with another in the truths of God.

Next, we are to be fervent (earnest, glowing, or hot). The church at Laodicea was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. Jesus said “I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16). The Bible mentions at least three areas in which we are to be fervent. First, we are to be fervent in spirit. “Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11). Second, we are to be fervent in prayer. “Ephraim, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. 4:12). Third, we are to be fervent in charity or love. “See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Peter 1:22). “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8).

In the fourth place, we are to be farsighted and far-reaching as churches and pastors. In His commission to the church, Jesus said, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name

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# HOPE THAT ENDURES

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*“The hope which is laid up for you in heaven whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col. 1:5)*

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Today there is much talk about hope. Undoubtedly, a hope grounded in truth and focused on a noble goal is one of the greatest influences in human life, fashioning

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## PAUL'S INSTRUCTION TO THE CHURCH

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28: 19-20). The first “teach” refers to the teaching of the gospel. Then after they are saved, they should be baptized. Then teach them to observe the teachings of His word.

Also, we are to have flavor mixed with grace as pastors and churches. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). Paul in writing to the Colossian church explained this so well. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6).

Last, may I remind you that one day we will be faultless as we arise to be in His presence. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). We as believers are already forgiven and saved through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. As we live for Him, we are to be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15).

*~Gladwin Carpenter*

character, stimulating endeavor, sweetening the disposition, and fostering patient endurance. This can be seen in the lives of such great Christian missionaries as William Carey (India), Adoniram Judson (Burma), and Hudson Taylor (China) who despite great obstacles and early set backs were rewarded at last with a great spiritual harvest. As Carey said, we are to “attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.” Someone has said “The future is as bright as the promises of God.”

Our hope as Christians is one which looks above the world and beyond this present age to the land that is fairer than day. It is a hope which realizes that though we can do great things here by God's grace that this is not our best life now. In this world there are often sin, trials, disappointments, failures, sorrow, grief, and death. While there are also triumphs, joys, and gains our lives here are marked by the reality that we can never completely escape the consequences of sin and a fallen world and that our hopes are often dashed or never completely fulfilled.

Our hopes as Christians is Christ centered. It is Christ who died the innocent in the place of the guilty to redeem us from the curse of the law. We are all sinners and cannot make ourselves acceptable to a thrice holy God. We have transgressed God's law, lived our lives for ourselves instead of God's glory. We have not loved God with our whole heart or our neighbor as ourselves. We are often filled with pride and self-sufficiency, our thoughts and actions are often not what they should be, and we are too often unthankful, unrepentant, and discontent. We too often fail to do what we should do and take our

spiritual duties and opportunities lightly. We are often too worldly, materialistic, and carnal. All the agony, sorrow, and woe in this world has its root in our sins and unbelief. In God's sight we are guilty, hell deserving, and under the sentence of death. But God in His marvelous grace and love sent His Son to bear the punishment for our sins. The wrath that should have fallen on us was placed on His own dear Son. This message, the good news of the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ according to the Scriptures gives us our hope. When we believe in Christ as our sin bearer, God credits to us the perfect righteousness of His own Son, forgives our sins and accepts us in Christ. The believer is justified, sanctified, and will one day be glorified. We are now born again and children of God. We now have hope in the heart, help for here and now, and a home in heaven with Christ. Moreover, Christ is now interceding for us that our faith fail not, ordering our lives and our circumstances for His glory and the strengthening of our faith. He is preparing us as He prepares a place for us. He is coming again for us that we may be with Him, be like Him (have new bodies like His glorious body and be confirmed in righteousness), love Him completely, serve perfectly, and experience fullness of joy with Christ and all the redeemed. There will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more sin, sickness, separation or disappointments. The Scriptures declare “In hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). Here is a hope that will endure because it is built upon the promises of God.

*~Larry Windham*

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# “BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN”

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Recently I listened to a sermon by a Baptist preacher in which he assumed a prophetic attitude, and not only stressed the imminence of the Second Coming of the Lord, but almost went so far as to set a definite date for this occurrence.

While it is true that everything would indicate that we are rapidly nearing the end of the present dispensation, Christ Himself said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man.” It seems that all is moving on in exact accord with the sure word of prophecy, and we are justified in believing that in the not too far distant future we shall hear the voice of the archangel, the shout of the Lord, and the trump of God, and we who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will rise to meet the saviour.

But, Paul told the Thessalonians brethren, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself

above all that is called God or that is worshiped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Undoubtedly, there is already a “great falling away” as is evidenced by the church drifting deeper and deeper into apostasy. But there is something that still prevents (holds back) this culmination of evil, making it impossible for the anti-Christ to appear.

“Now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work only he who now letteth (hinders) will let until he be taken out of the way” (II Thes. 2:6-7). Surely this restraining power is none other than the Holy Spirit working through the church. As has been truly stated, “The Spirit’s dispensational work is to complete the Body of Christ, His instrument in the world to witness of the redemptive purpose of God.”

When the body of Christ is complete, He will step out of the pic-

ture, ceasing to function in the manner employed throughout the church dispensation. “When this occurs, the true church will be raptured from the earth, and the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob’s trouble, will be ushered in.”

Deduct, therefore: Christ will not return to the earth before the man of sin, the anti-Christ, has been revealed, and so far as I know, there is no evidence that he is even in the world today.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught.” Do not be alarmed by the prevalent corruption of faith and decay of morals as we draw near to the time of His coming for the saints. “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,” and those days, like our own, were days of fearful apostasy, pleasure loving, brilliant achievement, dissipation, and breaking down of moral barriers.

~J.W. Anglin

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## GOD’S REVELATION TO US

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What we are, our relation to God, our faith in Christ Jesus as our Saviour, and our devotion to him as our lord are based upon God’s revelation to us. The Bible is this revelation. It is “The once for all delivered faith.” To Timothy Paul said, “And that for a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished

unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:15-17). This revelation of God to man is complete and finished for this dispensation. There have been no revelations from God since Apostolic days and will be no more till Jesus comes again. This revelation is given to every individual. God does not have any order of men interpret it for your heart and mind. He has those he has given the privilege of teaching his Word. Everyone who knows any of the revelation has the responsibility and privilege of teaching what he knows.

~E.R. Henderson

### A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO LIVE ALONE

I live alone, dear Lord,  
stay by my side  
In all my daily needs,  
Be Thou my guide.  
Grant me good health,  
For that indeed, I pray,  
To carry on my work  
From day to day.  
Keep pure my mind,  
My thoughts, my every deed,  
Let me be kind, unselfish  
In my neighbor’s need.  
Spare me from fire, from flood  
Malicious tongues,  
From thieves, from fear,  
And evil ones.  
If sickness or  
An accident befall,  
Then humbly, Lord, I pray,  
Hear Thou my call.  
And when I’m feeling low,  
Or in despair,  
Lift up my heart,  
And help me in my prayer.  
I live alone, dear Lord,  
Yet have no fear,  
Because I feel your Presence  
Ever near.  
Amen

~Gospel Tract Harvester

## RADIO PROGRAMS

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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- CHRIS DUNCAN

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DEVOTIONAL: LARRY WINDHAM

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# Notice

The Northeast MS Baptist Bible Conference will meet with Center Hill Baptist Church, Plantersville, MS on Friday, July 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The program is as follows:

7:05 p.m. - Gladwin Carpenter

Alt. - John Gray

7:30 p.m. - Chris Duncan

Alt. - Billy Little

7:55 p.m. - Bobby Joe Poss

Alt. - Fred Hartley

Bro. Alton Elrod, pastor, and the church invite you to this time of worship and Bible study. A meal will be served after the conference.

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"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

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## T.V. PROGRAMS

### TV WCVJ - Channel 13

Grenada, MS

*Tuesday*, 8:00 p.m.

C.A. Fayard, Jr.

### TV W39CD - Channel 39

Fulton, MS

Website: [www.w39cd.com](http://www.w39cd.com)

*Tuesday*, 9:30 p.m.

First Baptist Church

Belmont, MS

Bro. Trent Jaudon

*Wednesday*, 8:30 p.m.

Bro. Chris Duncan

Bro. Bobby Joe Poss

*Thursday*, 7:00 p.m.

Bro. Lloyd Minor

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