

# The Word of Life Messenger

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

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## **THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP**

One of the precious teachings of the Bible is that great relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. The shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ and we are the sheep.

In the Old Testament, the shepherd in relationship to Israel, seeks the flock (see Ezekiel 34:12). The shepherd also feeds the flock (Isaiah 40:11). The shepherd keeps the flock. “He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock” (Jer. 31:10b). The twenty third Psalm describes the shepherd as personal and the one who provides. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1).

When we come to the New Testament, we would like to see some of the great descriptions of our shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His relationship to the sheep. In John ten, the true shepherd is the one who enters by the door (John 10:2). He not only enters by the door, he is the door. “I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7).

One of the great truths given in John ten is the description of the shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, in giving his life on the cross of Calvary for us. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). When Jesus died on the cross, he died to pay the penalty for our sins. He shed his precious blood to

redeem us to God. He was buried and rose from the dead as our great shepherd. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

The shepherd leads the sheep “and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 10:4). You can know his voice as the Holy Spirit speaks to you through his word. Not only do we as his sheep know him but he knows us. “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14). One of the identifying marks of a child of God is the fact that we hear his voice and follow him after we are saved. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

We can rejoice because the good shepherd who gave his life for us also keeps us. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28). We as believers in Jesus Christ are safe and secure in his powerful hand. “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). The word “able” in this verse comes from the word

that can be translated “power.” This means he has the ability to keep us. The gospel of Christ (his death, burial and resurrection) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Romans 1:16). Thus the same power of God that saves us is able to keep us.

One of the important things about sheep is that they must be fed. The well-being of the sheep, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, is that they feed in the green pastures. It was the responsibility of the shepherd to lead them to the pasture and the responsibility of the sheep to follow the shepherd and receive nourishment. This is even more important for the Lord’s sheep to be fed from the word of God. Peter gave the necessity of pastors in feeding the shepherd’s flock. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (I Peter 5:2-3). After feeding the flock, the Bible reminds us that Jesus is coming back again. “And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (I Peter 5:4).

*~Gladwin Carpenter*

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# **JOY OF THE LORD—YOUR STRENGTH**

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“For the joy of the Lord is your strength.” “Joy” and “strength” give us two ideas that inspire interest. What a miserable existence life is without joy and strength. This is true in every realm of life. For one who has no joy, nor physical strength, life becomes an intolerable burden. What a pity! And what a blessedness when such come to know the joy of the Lord. In the spiritual realm children of God may have a joyless and strengthless existence. How sad and unnecessary! Yet how common! Read the whole 8th chapter of Nehemiah in which much is said about reading, teaching, and learning the Word of the Lord. The whole book of Nehemiah is good reading.

Now let us look at our text as it applies more directly to us today. First, the joy of the Lord as our Saviour. The joy that comes to our hearts as we see that a just God has settled our sins in His only Begotten Son on the cross of the tree. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in

God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Romans 5:8-11).

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with JOY unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8). This joy made the early disciples mighty in preaching Jesus. It does the same today.

Second, the JOY in Jesus as our Lord; to know that all authority is given unto the Lord Jesus in heaven and on earth, and in that authority He tells what to do and how to do it (Matt. 28:18-20). “And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name 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.” Contemplate this fact and enter into this Joy. The only authority we have, that we need or want. This is also a JOY unspeakable and full of glory. This gives us strength to suffer for the Lord Jesus, yes, to die for Him.

Third, there is JOY of the Lord as our Shepherd. David recites that joy in the twenty-third Psalm. He cares for us, He will never forsake His own.

We can cast all our cares on Him for He careth for us (I Peter 5:7). Here is strength to walk through the valley of death and fear no evil.

Fourth, there is the JOY of the Lord as coming deliverer, Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He is our Blessed Hope (Titus 2:11-16). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” We shall be like Him and with Him. “Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2). This gives us strength to do as Paul exhorts in I Corinthians 15:58. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

~E.R. Henderson

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# **TRUST CHRIST TODAY**

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Jesus Christ is God’s way of bringing sinful man and a Holy God together. The scripture says, “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

In Christ man is declared righteous and has full acceptance with God. His sins are “blotted out,” “forgiven,” and “separated from him as far as the east is from the west.” The believer is seen clothed only in the perfect righteousness of Christ (Isa. 44:22, Eph. 1:7, Ps.

103:12).

This truly is good news, the most wonderful of stories the scriptures declare.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Have you been reconciled to God? You can be by believing the gospel of “How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, That he was buried, and rose again the third day

according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3-4).

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

Trust Christ today! Receive a full salvation, a rich inheritance with Christ, a new nature, a new righteousness, a new relationship, and a new meaning and purpose for living!

~Larry Windham

# THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS SON JESUS CHRIST

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In this season of the year we pause to give thanks for all the benefits from our Lord. It is necessary for God's children to give thanks for everything.

We counted our blessings and it was very necessary for us to give thanks to our God. His Name is blessed. He gave such a price for our sins, by giving Himself on Calvary. He is living today and is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. He is able to give unto His children our needs and is able to guide us in our ways. His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations.

God made known His ways unto

Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel, He makes us able ministers today. Let us look to Him for guidance and protection.

Will you join us in giving thanks unto the Lord, calling upon His Name by means of His Son, Jesus Christ? The worship services of the church are for the purpose of giving thanks to our Lord for His wondrous works. Jesus is the Light of the world. We praise His Name for all the blessings that come to us daily.

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and

glorious; and His righteousness endureth for ever. He sent His son to redeem sinners by giving His Blood to pay the sin debt. Holy and Reverend is His Name. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.

Blessed is the person whose trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ for He is faithful to keep that which we commit unto Him.

~D.C. Hartley

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## CHRIST DIED

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Low thoughts about sin will cause lower thoughts about Christ's death.

For whom did Christ die? Romans 5:6 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

For what did He die? 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 rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Why did He come into the world? Hebrews 9:28 "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." I John 3:5 "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Did God have anything to do with that death for sin? Isaiah 53:10 "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." II Corinthians 5:21 "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." Romans 8:3 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh."

Did Christ die willingly? Galatians 1:4 "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

What did he do with our sins? Isaiah 53:12 "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Hebrews 9:28 "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that looked for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Where did he bear our sins? I Peter 2:24 "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto

righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Is it necessary for him to repeat the act? I Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit." Hebrews 10:12 "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

The sin offering is a type of Christ as the one who has borne the judgment of God against sin. The offering that was burnt outside the camp was utterly consumed. The sinner deserves to be consumed with the judgment of God because of his sin. As the offerer watched the burning of the victim, he would say, "There am I, and my sin being consumed in the offering in my stead."

Do you see Jesus dying on the cross, suffering the judgment that we deserve to suffer? We are free because He paid for our sins. Thank God for Him.

~Charles Ellis

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## Notice

The North Central and Northeast MS Baptist Bible Conferences will meet with Friendship Baptist Church, 212 County Road 39, Houston, MS on Tuesday, December 15, 2009. The North Central Conference begins at 9:55 a.m. and concludes at 3:25 p.m. Lunch: 12:00 noon.

The Northeast MS Baptist Bible Conference begins with supper at 5:30 p.m. The service begins at 6:25 p.m. with the following preachers: Billy Little, Jeremy Williams, and Chris Duncan. Bro. Gladwin Carpenter and the church invite you.

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