



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

www.chapel-flock.com



Vol. 32 Issue 600

Feb. 07, 2013

Worship Music

[We Are Loved-](#)
[David Crowder](#)

[After All-David Crowder](#)

[Let It Rain-](#)
[Jesus Culture](#)

Prayer

Lord, I thank You for the victory You obtained by Your resurrection from the dead! No one else could have done what You did for us. You invaded hell; broke the power of its demonic forces; seized their artillery; and bound the devil. And because You did all this, You set us free! You are our great Victor, our great Champion, and You are the Lord of all lords. Thank You for cleansing me with Your blood and granting me the honor to be called a child of God and a joint heir with You. I give You all the glory and praise. Lead me, guide me, teach me in Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[“ On Your Knee's”](#)

Charles Stanley

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

(316) 247-3623

Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net

Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

[KLOV](#)

Bible Study Sites

[Chuck Smith](#)
[Through The Bible](#)

[Bob Coy/Teachings](#)

[Mike MacIntosh](#)

[Jon Courson](#)

[Biblos.com](#)

[Billy Graham](#)

[Charles Stanley](#)

[David Wilkerson](#)

[Greg Laurie](#)

[Virtue for Women-](#)
[Cathe Laurie](#)

1 NOW NABOTH the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, close beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria; and after these things, 2 Ahab said to Naboth, Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near my house. I will give you a better vineyard for it or, if you prefer, I will give you its worth in money. 3 Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you. 4 And Ahab [already depressed by the Lord's message to him] came into his house [more] resentful and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him; for he had said, I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers. And he lay down on his bed, turned away his face, and would eat no food. 5 But Jezebel his wife came and said to him, Why is your spirit so troubled that you eat no food? 6 And he said to her, Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, Give me your vineyard for money; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard for it. And he answered, I will not give you my vineyard. 7 Jezebel his wife said to him, Do you not govern Israel? Arise, eat food, and let your heart be happy. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal and sent them to the elders and nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. 9 And in the letters she said, Proclaim a fast and set Naboth up high among the people. 10 And set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, You cursed and renounced God and the king. Then carry him out and stone him to death. 11 And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who dwelt there, did as Jezebel had directed in the letters sent them. 12 They proclaimed a fast and set Naboth on high among the people. 13 Two base fellows came in and sat opposite him and they charged Naboth before the people, saying, Naboth cursed and renounced God and the king. Then he was carried out of the city and stoned to death. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth has been stoned and is dead. 15 Then Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite which he refused to sell you, for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16 When Ahab heard that, he arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it. 17 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel in Samaria. He is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to possess it. 19 Say to him, Thus says the Lord: Have you killed and also taken possession? Thus says the Lord: In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your blood, even yours. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Have you found me, O my enemy? And he answered, I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. 21 See [says the Lord], I will bring evil on you and utterly sweep away and cut off from Ahab every male, bond and free, 22 And will make your household like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the household of Baasha son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger and made Israel to sin. 23 Also the Lord said of Jezebel: The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 24 Any belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and any who dies in the field the birds of the air shall eat. 25 For there was no one who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord as did Ahab, incited by his wife Jezebel. 26 He did very abominably in going after idols, as had the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the Israelites. 27 When Ahab heard those words of Elijah, he tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his flesh, fasted, lay in sackcloth, and went quietly. 28 And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me? Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his lifetime, but in his son's day I will bring the evil upon his house.

Chapter 21

Now it came to pass after these things, that there was a fellow by the name of Naboth who had a vineyard, down in the area of mount Gilboa (1Ki 21:1).

And it was an excellent vineyard and it was next to property that Ahab owned, and Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard.

And so he came to him and he said, I'd like to buy your vineyard, name your price (1Ki 21:2).

And Naboth said, Hey, it's the family's. If I sell it, then I'm selling that which is the family's property. I don't want to sell you the vineyard. It's not for sale. And so the guy started pouting. He was so upset, just sitting there pouting and someone has crossed me. Can't have his way. And so he's pouting and his wife says, "What in the world's wrong with you?"

And he said, "Oh, I just can't stand it. I want that vineyard of Naboth.

And she says, "Well, quit your pouting. I'll get you the vineyard if you want the vineyard." And so she ordered the men of the city to gather together and she hired a couple of guys to lie against Naboth. So the elders were gathered together and Naboth was there. And these two men came in and they bore false witness.

They said, "We heard this man curse the king and curse God." And so the penalty for cursing God, of course, was being stoned to death. And so with the two men bearing witness against him, lying as they did, they killed Naboth and of course, Jezebel just moved in and took his vineyard and gave it as a present to her husband.

So the word of the Lord came to Elijah saying, Arise, and go and meet Ahab the king of Israel, which is in Samaria: he's in the vineyard of Naboth, he's gone down to possess it. And you shall speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Have you killed, and taken possession? And you shall speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall the dogs lick thy blood, even thine. So Ahab said unto Elijah, have you found me, my enemy? And he answered, I have found you; because you have sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away your possession, and cut off from Ahab all of his descendants. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like Baasha (1Ki 21:17-22).

In other words, the dynasty, the family dynasty is going to be gone.

And he also spake against Jezebel, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. And him that dies of Ahab in the city the

dogs will eat; him who dies in the field the fowls of the air or the vultures will eat. And there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whose wife Jezebel stirred him up (1Ki 21:23-25).

There is none any worse than this king.

They did very abominably in following idols, according to all the things that the Amorites had done before them, the people that the LORD had cast out of the land. Now it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he began really to live more carefully, he put on sackcloth, he fasted, and he lived very carefully. And so the LORD came to Elijah and said, These things will not happen in his days but in the days of his children (1Ki 21:26-29).

(Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)

MANY ADHERENTS OF CHRISTIANITY are beginning to admit that their attachment is to little more than a pallid "world religion." If they think about it at all, they may wonder where the moral and spiritual dynamic of the early church has gone.

God has humble, faithful people who personally know that moral, spiritual dynamic. "Genuine, effective faith," they will insist, "must always rest on an unchanging Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever!"

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews provides us a list of the shining virtues that Christians must exhibit in every generation. And he ties them to the reality of Christ's eternal and divine person: Keep on loving each other. ... Do not forget to entertain strangers.... Remember those in prison ... and those who are mistreated.... Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure. ... Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.... Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb 13:1-8) These exhortations are a call to the personal faith and godliness characteristic of the early Christian church. They are based on solid, fundamental Christian doctrine. That is the apostolic method of teaching, instructing and encouraging.

A New Testament pattern _____

We do not know if Paul was the human writer of this letter, but we can say that this same method of exhortation is apparent in the letters Paul wrote. He first gives his readers the scriptural reasons for certain Christian actions and attitudes. He provides the basis and the reason, and then he exhorts them to respond appropriately. So it is in this letter. Earlier sections state what Christ has done for the human race and what He now means to the Christian. We are assured that Christ is greater than Moses and Aaron, greater than the angels. We are told that once for all, by His own blood, He purchased mankind's salvation. That is the foundation, and it is strong and true. Then comes the exhortation: If all of the above is true, then "keep on loving each other." It is a good and gracious argument: because we have reasons for doing something, we ought to do it without delay and without reservations! Now, in the light of these reasons for exhortation and spiritual action, let me share a thought with you about our modern times and about modern ministries. Quite often we hear are mark that "the Reverend Doctor John Doe is an inspirational preacher." Frankly, in my judgment there are too many "inspirational" preachers in our day who are trying to cheer up their listeners without using sound, biblical methods. From my own contacts with them, I describe the "inspirational" preacher like this: after warming his audience with his natural charm, he energetically waves his arms and exhorts people to be a little holier, a little better, a little busier, a little happier and—perhaps—a little more generous. But he fails to give a single compelling reason why they should be any of these things in their daily lives. It is a method of exhortation without true biblical background or pattern. Suppose you are standing in your own yard, on your lawn, during a quiet summer evening. And suppose I am standing on the sidewalk only a few feet from you. Suddenly I shout at you, "Look out! Jump! Quick!" I reinforce my shout of warning by waving my arms and jumping up and down. You are not likely to jump. You have no reason to jump—or even to move! You may be puzzled or curious. But you know your yard and your lawn well enough to know there is no compelling reason for you to jump. But, if I saw you standing on a railroad track and I could also see a speeding train about to run you down and crush out your life, I would surely scream at the top of my lungs, "Jump! Train! Jump quickly!" In that case, there is plenty of reason for action, and you would jump for your life. You might possibly set an unofficial world record for the standing broad jump! You would be moved to action with good reason. The train is coming, and you will be killed if you do not jump. I can be very hard to move. If I am being exhorted to action by a man who is merely overheated emotionally, I am likely to drag my feet. I want that man to deal with me on the basis of valid reasons for my interest, my consideration and my decision to act and to move. Probably you have had some contact with the appeals of ministers who have espoused the cause of liberal Christian theology. Many of them say they want the same piety in people that we want. They want the same honesty, the same loyalty, the same purity, the same degree of philanthropic love expressed for their fellow men. They urge the performance of these good qualities—and quote persuasive poetry along with their urging. But they fail to provide the good and necessary reasons for these qualities and actions—reasons that are inherent in the Bible and in the proclamation of Christ's saving and keeping gospel. They want the spiritual virtues without dealing with the root hindrances to such virtues. They want men and women to be more like Jesus, but they want nothing to do with the new birth from above that imprints Jesus' image on people's lives. They want humankind to be forgiving and forgiven, but they do not recognize the biblical necessity for atonement, regeneration and justification. They want the blessing and the display of the fruits of the Spirit, but they reject the Bible's declaration that fruits are related to the fullness of the Spirit. Actually, they seem to expect fruit and harvest without any tree at all!

We must have a basis for our faith _____

Their disappointments must be hard for them to explain. The apostolic method was to provide a foundation of good, sound biblical reasons for following the Savior, for our willingness to let the Spirit of God display the great Christian virtues in our lives. That is why we come in faith and rejoicing to the eternal verity of Heb 13:8. Because Jesus Christ is eternal and without change forever and ever, we can trust Him and live for Him! Heb 13:8 is the verse of Scripture that gives significance to every other section of teaching and

exhortation in the Letter to the Hebrews. In this verse is truth that is moral and spiritual dynamic if we will exercise the faith and the will to demonstrate it in our very needy world. We hear much discussion about revival and renewal. People talk about spiritual power in the churches. I think this fact—this truth—that Jesus Christ wants to be known in His church as the ever-living, never-changing Lord of all could bring back again the power and the testimony of the early church. I wonder if you feel like me when I survey much of Christendom in today's world: "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know what they have done with Him!" If we would only seek and welcome our Lord's presence in our midst, we would have the assurance that He is the same Lord He has always been! As Christian believers, we stand together in the evangelical faith—the historical faith of our fathers. Yet we must confess that the evangelical church today is bogged down with moral boredom and life-weariness. The church is tired, discouraged and unastonished. Christ seems to belong to yesterday. The prophetic teachers have projected everything out into the dim future where it is beyond our reach—unavailable. They have dispensationalized us into a state of spiritual poverty—and they have left us there! But regardless of such teachers, the course of spiritual victory is clear: let us trust what the Word of God continues to say to us.

The Scriptures are open and plain _____

The Scriptures are open and plain. Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord. He is our great High Priest, alive and ministering for us today. His person, His power and His grace are the same, without change, yesterday, today and forever! He is the same Lord because He is the same God. He is the same, never having changed in substance, in power, in wisdom, in love, in mercy. In His divine person, Jesus Christ has never known correction or change. He feels now as He has always felt about everyone and everything. Jesus will not yield to those who charge that He is an absentee, that He is far away and unavailable. Our faith tells us that Jesus Christ is close at hand, that He is a living force in our lives today. He is the Holy Spirit of God fulfilling His promises moment by moment. We true Christians must stand together in our faith. Our Lord is as powerful now, as real now, as near to us now, as loving now as He ever was when He walked among the men and women on the shores of Galilee. The great spiritual needs around us should drive us back to the gospel records of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus. When evil men crucified Jesus, killed Him, they had no power to change Him. They could not alter the person and the personality of the Son of God. Jesus had come for the humiliation of death. He came to declare God's redemptive will. The plotting of jealous men could not destroy His divine affection for a lost race. Putting him on a cross did not drain away any of His love. That is why we believe with assurance and blessing that He is the very same Lord Jesus Christ now! And it is this ever-living Christ who wants to demonstrate Himself through our faith and love to those around us. How do you suppose Jesus feels today about the sinful men and women who walk our streets? He loves them. No matter how we feel about them, He loves them! We may be righteously indignant about the things they do. We may be disgusted with their actions and ways. We are often ready to condemn them and turn away from them. But Jesus keeps on loving them. It is His unchanging nature to love and to seek the lost.

It is the sick who need a doctor _____

And how does Jesus feel about the outcasts—the helpless and the hopeless? He said many times when He was on earth, "I have come to help the needy. The well do not need a doctor—but the sick need attention and love!" By contrast, what is our attitude? We look at the needy and measure them and say, "Let us determine if they are worthy of our help." I do not think Jesus during all of His ministry on earth ever helped a worthy person. He often asked those who appealed to Him, "What is your need? Do you need My help?" What would we think of a doctor who would make it known that he would treat or attend only those who could prove themselves well and healthy? What should we think, then, of Christian churches that seem to indicate they have help available only for those who can demonstrate they do not need help? Jesus is our Lord and Savior. The best thing we know about Him is that He loves the sinner. He has always loved the outcast—and for that we should be glad, for we, too, were once outcasts. We are descended from that first man and woman who failed God and disobeyed. They were cast out of the garden, and God set in place a flaming sword to keep them from returning. The greatest encouragement throughout the Bible is God's love for His lost race and the willingness of Christ, the eternal Son, to show forth that love in God's plan of redemption. The love of Jesus is so inclusive that it knows no boundaries. At the point where we stop caring and loving, Jesus is still there, loving and caring! I confess that I like kids. In my congregation, people used to remark that if they could not find me, it was probably because I had run across some little boy or girl delighted to get a piece of candy. But our Lord Jesus loved the children with a kind of love that none of us can even remotely approach. He loved and gave Himself to the children. It was a special kind of love for all who approached Him in need. And He is still the same today! Do you ever have times of discouragement? I mean, really rough and depressing periods? Do you have those human times when it is not easy to pray? Do you ever have a week when things are not as fresh and bright as they were the week before? I do, sometimes. And in those times we remember that we are changeable. In our humanness we do change. Thus, we need to remember that Jesus, our Lord, changes not. The manner of our love for one another may change, but the Savior's love remains the same, always constant.

Love one another _____

This is a good place for me to mention something else about our love for one another within the fellowship of our churches. The writer to the Hebrews appeals to us to "keep on loving each other as brothers" (Heb 13:1). In effect he is saying, "You are all born of the same Spirit. You are all witnessing for Christ and waiting for His coming. Therefore, you are to love one another!" Being the humans that we are, how is it possible for us to love one another in the bonds of our faith? Perhaps this perception of mine will be of help to you. I have always insisted that it is possible to love people in the Lord even though we may not like them! Here is what I mean. Some people are so nice and friendly and outgoing, so easy to get along with that we have no hesitation about accepting them and loving them. We find it easy to love people like that. But then there are the others! Some are unfriendly. Or perhaps they cut us down. Or just ignore us. Some have personalities that rub us wrong: it may be simply their temperament, or they may be boastful or sarcastic—or ignorant. And we think within ourselves, "It seems impossible for me to like that person!" I have come to believe that the Bible supports the position that we can love such people even if we do not like them! We do not like their boorish or distasteful human traits, but we will love them for Jesus' sake. I am being frank about this, and I hope I am being helpful. Do not ever say that you are not right with God because you like some people more than others. I believe you can be right with God and still not like the way some people behave. Our admonition is

to love them in a larger and more comprehensive way because we are all one in Christ Jesus. This kind of love is indeed a Christian virtue, and the Holy Spirit will help us to nurture it and display it in all of our contacts. There is much of eternal mystery in this gracious fact of God's love for us and the expression of our love for Him. A. B. Simpson's writings were always meaningful concerning this relationship. He said in one place, We become the objects of the very same love that the Father in heaven has for His Son. This is, indeed, the mystery of mysteries: that we are permitted to share the intimate and exclusive affection of the eternal Father toward His only begotten Son. He loves us now, not for ourselves, nor in proportion to our personal claims upon His affection, but precisely as He loves Jesus Christ, with infinite complacency and unlimited measure. This is the mystery hid from ages, and at last made known to the saints, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Some human clouds may for the moment shut out the radiance of Jesus' glorious face, but no one and nothing can change or quench His love for you. His eternal plan through the cross does not change, and it never will! Our Lord has never begun anything that He will not complete, bringing it to fruition in His plan for the ages. It is our responsibility to believe His Word and to obey His truth. It is our task to practice the Christian virtues in the power of the Holy Spirit as we await the coming of Him who will come.

A.W. Tozer; Jesus, Author of Our Faith; AND OTHER ESSAYS ON FAITH; COMPILED AND EDITED BY GERALD B. SMITH
Aiden Wilson Tozer (April 21, 1897 - May 12, 1963) was an American Protestant pastor, preacher, author, magazine editor, Bible conference speaker, and spiritual mentor. For his work, he received two honorary doctorates. Among the more than forty books that he authored, at least two are regarded as Christian classics: *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*. His books impress on the reader the possibility and necessity for a deeper relationship with God. Living a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle, he and his wife, Ada Cecelia Pfautz, never owned a car, preferring bus and train travel. Even after becoming a well-known Christian author, Tozer signed away much of his royalties to those who were in need. Prayer was of vital personal importance for Tozer. "His preaching as well as his writings were but extensions of his prayer life", comments his biographer, James L. Snyder in the book, *In Pursuit of God: The Life Of A.W. Tozer*. "He had the ability to make his listeners face themselves in the light of what God was saying to them", writes Snyder. Tozer himself produced the works: *Let My People Go*; *Man : the Dwelling Place of God*; *Paths to Power*; *The Divine Conquest*
The Knowledge of the Holy, (1961) New York: Harper & Row, ISBN 0-06-068412-7; *The Pursuit of God*, (1957) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, ISBN 0-87509-522-4; *The Root of the Righteous*; There are also many compilations of sermons and other writings which were edited and published by Christian Publications, Inc., after Tozer's death. Although the books were published posthumously, authorship is attributed to A. W. Tozer. [Wikipedia](#)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GRACE

A Clear Commentary on the Book of Romans

by Chuck Smith; 1. The Lost World

The Book of Romans begins, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ (1:1a). The word "servant" in Greek is *doulos*, which means "bondslave." A bondslave had no rights of his own. He belonged totally to his master. As a bondslave of Jesus Christ, Paul was living totally for his Master. Paul was called to be an apostle (1:1b). "Apostle" literally means "one who is sent." In his calling Paul was separated unto the gospel of God (1:1c). We remember that in the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2-3). Paul was sent by the Holy Spirit to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles. The word "gospel" means "good news." To hear some people tell it, God is bad news. But that's not true! God's love for us in Jesus Christ is good news. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures) (1:2). This Gospel wasn't an event that simply happened without warning. The message of the Gospel, especially to the Gentiles, was spoken of by God through the prophets. (When Paul refers to the "holy scriptures," he has only the Old Testament in mind.)

The good news is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1:3a). So often we read the "Lord Jesus Christ" and think of this as His first, middle, and last name. "Lord" is not His name; it is His title. The Greek word for "lord" is *kurios*. "Jesus" is His name. This is a Greek translation of the Hebrew name "Joshua," meaning "Jehovah is salvation." In Matthew's gospel we read, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21). His name implies His mission: "he shall save his people from their sins." "Christ" is Greek for the Hebrew word meaning "messiah" or "the anointed one of God," the one whom God had promised to send to His people. "Christ" or "Messiah" signifies His ministry as the fulfillment of the promise of God. "Jesus Christ our Lord" signifies the believer's relationship to Him. In the Bible we read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). The first part of that passage would be better translated, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord." Our obligation is more than confessing belief in Jesus Christ. You can believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but not be saved. You can believe that He died on the cross for your sins, yet not be born again. It's necessary to submit your life to Him as Lord of your life in order to have salvation. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (1:3). As king of Israel, David had a beautiful house in Jerusalem. When he saw the tent where people were worshipping God, he said, "Here I am dwelling in this exquisite palace, and all we have is a tent for God. I'm going to build a beautiful house for Him."

The prophet Nathan told him, "David, that sounds like a marvelous idea." But that night the Lord spoke to Nathan and told him that he had spoken hastily. "Go back and tell David that he can't build My house. It's good that the desire is in his heart, but he has shed too much blood." To soften David's disappointment God told Nathan, "Tell David that I'm going to build him a house." So, the prophet told David, "I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that you can't build a house for God. The good news is that God is

going to build you a house." God was telling David that through him the Messiah would come. God would establish His kingdom through David's seed, and there would never lack one from his offspring to sit upon the throne. David was overwhelmed. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (I Chronicles 17:1-16). The Lord took David from following after sheep and made him ruler over His people. Now He planned to build David a house and establish his throne forever. "Lord, what can I say?" David was speechless. Now that's a remarkable statement for David to make, because he was very gifted with words. Whenever I find it difficult to express my feelings to God, I turn to the Psalms where David expresses such things so well. Yet, here David was speechless because of God's goodness and grace. It's a wonderful experience when God so blesses us that words become inadequate to describe our feelings. As Savonarola said, "When prayer reaches its ultimate, words are impossible."

As we trace the genealogy of Christ back through Mary in Luke's gospel, we find Him coming through the line of David. Jesus is God incarnate and the seed of David, the beautiful God-Man, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness (1:4), for He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Some people say that the Virgin Birth is only mentioned in two of the Gospels and so we don't need to accept the event as fact. If we don't accept the Virgin Birth as fact, then who was Jesus' father? How many times does God have to tell us something before we believe it? God has told us twice. Isn't that enough? Jesus is the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (1:3b-4).

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name (1:5). Paul had the anointing and calling of an apostle, although he considered himself to be the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:12-15).

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ. And now a salutation, To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:6-7). The first title given to the believers, "beloved of God," fits everyone. Many times it's difficult for us to accept God's love, because we oftentimes don't really love ourselves. Since we don't love ourselves, we wonder how can God love us. But He does! More than that, we're called "saints." It was tragic when the Church decided to honor certain people for special deeds, thus setting criteria for sainthood. Should miracles occur by praying to a deceased person who was known for doing outstanding works during his lifetime, then the Church chose to consider the person a saint. Don't worry if the Church overlooked you. God has chosen you, and it's better to be considered a saint by God than from the Church any day. You have been called a saint. Now live up to your calling. Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:7b). Grace and peace are called the Siamese twins of the New Testament because they're always coupled together. This is the proper order of the two words, for you can't have the peace of God until you've first experienced His grace. Peace with God is necessary before you can have the peace of God. They're two different experiences. You can experience peace with God when you're saved, but still not know the peace of God. Many Christians are upset, worried, and frantic. They're not sure that God will work out everything, and their lives are in turmoil. They don't have the peace of God. This is the peace to which Paul is referring. After I recognize that the grace of God is unmerited favor, I can experience the peace of God because I'm no longer striving. I realize that His blessings haven't been earned by my merit or goodness. I'm now trusting in God's completed work, and I'm at peace in my relationship with God. I've totally committed myself to Him. First, said Paul, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all (1:8a). In the New Testament we're taught to pray to God through Jesus Christ. " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name," Jesus said, "that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world (1:8b). The godly faith of the Roman believers was well-known throughout the Church world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers (1:9). Paul's prayers were in the closet, so to speak. Paul states, "God is my witness," because he can't call on any man to verify his prayers. He was following the instructions Jesus gave us when He said, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matthew 6:6a).

Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established (1:10-11). Paul's motive for going to Rome wasn't to see the great Forum or the Circus Maximus, but to minister to the believers. He wanted to impart some spiritual gift through which they might be strengthened. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me (1:12). Gathering together with God's people has a two-way effect. You cannot minister to others without being ministered to yourself. That's the beauty of sharing our spiritual gifts with one another. Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38a). Sowing the truth in love always reaps the same. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles (1:13). Paul wanted to visit them before, but had been hindered. The apostle wasn't deliberately slighting the Romans by his absence. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise (1:14). "Barbarian" is an unfortunate word here because of its modern meaning as "savage." The term originated because the Greeks considered that all foreign languages sounded like "bar-bar" on incomprehensible babbling. The expression actually referred to those who didn't speak Greek. It wasn't a derogatory expression in Paul's day. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (1:15-16). Jesus Christ is God's power of salvation. To whom? To everyone who believes. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (1:17). Paul begins early in the book to introduce the two themes of his message: (1) the righteousness which is of God through faith and (2) the just shall live by faith. Man's righteousness before God isn't predicated upon the Law of Moses or the works of man, but upon believing in the work of God. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (1:18). Verse 16 emphasizes the power of God, verse 17 the righteousness of God, and verse 18 the wrath of God. People talk about the power and righteousness of God, but they often deny or ignore one aspect of God's nature - His wrath. The Mosaic Law was written on two tablets of stone. The first tablet dealt with man's relationship with God; the second dealt with man's relationship with his fellow man. A man is ungodly when he isn't right with God; he is unrighteous when he isn't right with his fellow man as God wishes him to be. The wrath of God is to be revealed against the

ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The two tablets of stone are thus tied together. You cannot have a right relationship with God and a wrong relationship with your brother. If you say that you love God, then you have to love your brother also. You cannot love God and hate your brother. Some people hold the truth of God, but they hold it in unrighteousness. You say you believe in God. That's wonderful. It's the place to start, but alone it isn't enough. The devils believe in God, so what makes you different from them? You must believe in God and glorify Him. That's the difference! Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (1:19-20). The existence of God is universally attested to. The design of His work is self-evident to all. Those who deny or ignore God are totally without excuse. When they knew God, they glorified him not as God (1:21a). Paul's first indictment against natural men is that they knew God, but they didn't glorify Him as God.

How many times have I failed to honor God and instead found myself arguing with Him. Peter and Paul argued with the Lord. This trait is part of my human weakness, and it doesn't give glory to God. By arguing with God, I bring Him down to my level, and even reduce Him below my level, because my premise is that I'm right. It's ridiculous! God knows far more about my own situation than I do. Neither were [they] thankful (1:21b). First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The circumstances of your life have been ordained by God and are working together according to a divine plan. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23a). Nothing happens to you by happenstance or accident. Don't say, "Good luck!" There is no such thing for a Christian. Similarly whenever you complain about your circumstances you're actually complaining about God. He has brought certain situations into your life for the best. When you moan and groan, God is displeased with your unthankful heart.

As Christians we need to learn to accept the things that come across our paths. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28a). May this truth be embedded in our hearts! When events that seem like tremendous tragedies come, we often ask, "If God loves me how could He allow this to happen?" We can't understand everything that comes across our paths, and God doesn't promise us total understanding. The lyrics to an old southern song have brought comfort to many.

Further along we'll know all about it. Further along we'll understand why. Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine.

We'll understand it all by and by.

The point of the song is that in heaven we can sit down with Jesus and ask, "Why did that have to happen?" However, when we get to heaven, we'll be so excited and full of rejoicing that we'll just enjoy it all! God doesn't owe us any explanations, but we owe Him our complete obedience, surrender, and submission. Imagine the potter with the clay. In front of him is the potter's wheel used to shape the vessel. After getting the clay to the right consistency, he throws it on the center of the wheel and begins to form it. The clay leaps up at his touch as he shapes it. Now as clay in the hands of the potter, so am I in the hands of God. The wheel on which the potter molds the clay is like the circumstances of my life. The wheel is under the total control of the potter, and that's all the clay needs to know. "It hurts!" the clay may complain. "I wonder how much longer the potter will mold me. Won't he ever stop?" God molds me by ordaining the circumstances of my life. I submit to Him so that He might work in me His eternal purposes. "I thank You, God, for all the disappointments and losses that I have experienced." Paul says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17). God's work in your life may be painful right now, but He's aiming at the eternal goal. He wants to bring you into a more glorious entrance into His kingdom. Maybe He has to deprive you now of something that you feel is so very important, but He overlooks your temporary ease for your eternal interest. He has such wonderful things prepared, and He's trying to lead us toward them. If only we would learn to flow with the Spirit and be thankful in all things, because we belong to God. If we live this way we'll never be disappointed. Accepting God's will for your life is like the little boy who built a model ship. He carefully glued into place all the masts, riggings, and sails. After months of labor he took it down to the pond and gently laid it on the water. Proudly, he watched as the wind filled the sails and the little boat sailed gracefully across the pond. Midway across the lake a strong gust of wind knocked the sailboat over and it sank. The little boy looked up and said, "Wow! What a great wind for flying a kite!" When God stops you on one venture, be open to what He may have in mind. Don't sit down and cry. He has something else for you to do. Look for it!

God often has to deal with us severely, because we're not open and listening to Him. We easily get into ruts with our well-ordered lives and stop looking for what God wants us to have. "I'm at a good job, getting seniority, and doing fine. This is terrific!" One day you go to work and the foreman says, "Here's your termination notice."

Now it's, "Lord! What are You doing to me? This is terrible!" God has a better job for you, but you weren't looking for it. Now you are! God couldn't bring you to the better position until He upset the old conditions. Now you're open and listening to what God has to say. The Father delights in giving good things to His children, just as a parent loves to give some wonderful gift to his child.

We have one son who's always been difficult to please. Buy him a new shirt and he'll say, "Does it match my slacks?" Buy him new shoes and he'll say, "Why did you get that style?" Sometimes God has a hard time giving us gifts, too. What a disappointment when you give a truly wonderful gift to someone you love, and he or she barely acknowledges it. That isn't a response anyone appreciates, especially God.

But became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (1:21b-22). Our imaginations often focus on the empty things of the world, and much of our mental power is exercised

on vain fantasies. How much better when our hearts and minds are filled with God, His Word, and His love. The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. Many times we profess ourselves to be wise and actually become fools by the theories that we believe and follow. And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man (1:23a). The men of the world tried to make an image of God by fashioning it in the form of man.

And to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things (1:23b). Have you ever seen the grotesque images of past civilizations or the awful images in India today that are worshipped as God? Quite often the statues are part man and part animal. How tragic and foolish! Yet people worship these things and say, "That's God. "

Now we come to the first "giving up" by God. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness [sexual uncleanness or impurity] through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves (1:24). Whenever man fashions an image of God in the form of a man, he brings God even below his own level. When a man puts eyes and ears on an idol, it still can't see or hear.

Setting God below his own level creates moral depravity in man, for he loses his high ideals and becomes like his god. His god is less than The ritual worship of false gods was often done through fertility rites and practices. In Paul's time, the great temple of Aphrodite stood on the Acropolis in Corinth. The priestesses of this temple were prostitutes who came into the city nightly. The Corinthians "worshipped" Aphrodite through sexual rites, and the profit supported their religion. Man degrades himself whenever he worships man, thus his god becomes in his mind a base creature, anything other than the true and living God. So, man is given up by God and given over to "uncleanness."

Who changed the truth of God into a lie (1:25a). Man has to live with himself, so he rationalizes his evil deeds in order to ease his conscience. But to do that he has to change God. He challenges God's Word and claims, "The Bible isn't really the inspired Word of God." Or he underestimates Him. "God doesn't care. He isn't really concerned."

In Paul's day some men believed that the body was completely separate from God's concern. These men taught that you must worship God in the realm of the spirit, but you could do whatever you pleased with your body. Such a teaching changes the truth of God into a lie, just to accommodate the lusts of the flesh.

And worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator (1:25b). Men are doing the same thing today as in Paul's day. They're worshipping and serving the works of their own hands rather than the Creator of all things. Idolatry, one of the most common of all sins, is the obsession for the things made by men's hands. The idolater cannot rest until he possesses the object of his desire. For this cause God gave them up (1:26a).

Paul also tells us that God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another (1:26-27). Lesbianism and homosexuality follow whenever God gives up women and men to the things they desire. Don't tell me that God created a homosexual that way. That's changing the truth of God into a lie. Man becomes perverted because he doesn't want to retain God in his mind. He refuses to glorify God as God, and he seeks to make a god after himself. God gives him up to these vile affections, because he has rejected the truth of God within his own heart. But if a person will return and submit himself to the truth, Jesus will free him from that power and manner of life. He came to set the captive free! Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient [ought not to be done]; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful (1:28-31).

This passage shows the sad picture of society today. People have sought to rule God out of their consciences. So, God has given them up to these vile practices. These sins will manifest themselves whenever a society turns its back upon God and seeks independence from Him. Whoever rejects Jesus Christ will find himself going downhill fast, doing things he never dreamed of, and losing any scruples against doing them. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (1:32). Many people hold a prideful view of themselves, as the Pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men" (Luke 18:11). They feel smug because they're innocent of some of the grosser forms of sin. Yet, they go to a movie or watch a TV program as actors portray these vile things, and they actually enjoy or "have pleasure in them that do them." We need to take great care not to sow to our flesh in any way. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 549-553)

Chapel Flock ♦ PO Box 161102 ♦ Wichita, KS ♦ 67216 ♦ (316) 243-1438

(If you wish to be removed from the mailing list e-mail at: chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)