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Courage When There Are No Answers

Steve Bundy

What's In Your Toolbox?

Dr. Randall McElwain

Break The Yolk....

Kalpana Daniel

The Greatest Treasure

Jolly Ann Thomas



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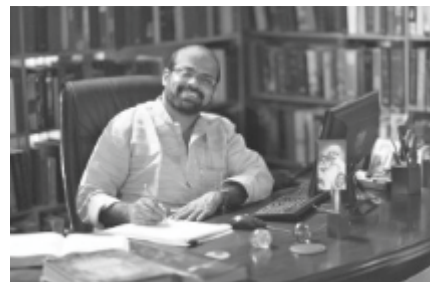
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"In

2Timothy 3:12

Editorial



*Dear precious brothers and sisters in Christ,
Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!*

Faith : How to overcome obstacles

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"

Faith for Christians is firm belief in God and having confidence that we can rely on him. Hebrews 11:1 says Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. As Christians we believe in Jesus' resurrection from the dead, which he has said is the plan of God the Father. We may have to face circumstances when we think God is not helping us. Though we have faith in God, we may lose our faith in him in our difficult times.

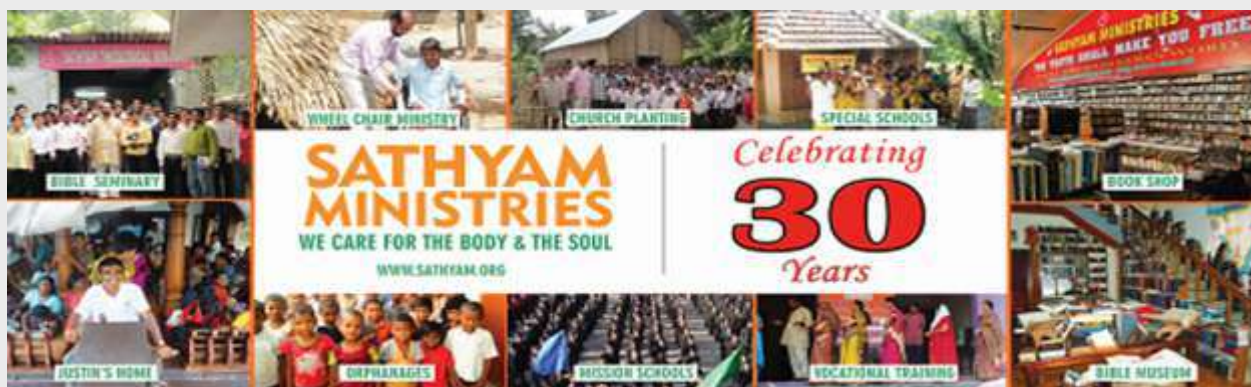
To a bible reader, it is then that our heart tells us that God is good. He certainly has a plan for us. Faithful Christians believe that God will act when we face adverse situations. Matthew 17:20 reminds us that nothing is impossible. With God our biggest trouble can be made to our biggest blessing. We need to call upon God's name and have faith in him. 1 Corinthians 16:13 tells us not to fear but be firm and faithful. Hebrews 11:11, Joshua 21:45, Jeremiah 1:12, Ezekiel 12:28, Luke 1:38 are verses that show us that God has fulfilled his promise.

We should understand that trusting Him with smaller problems builds our faith to believe Him for the harder situations in life. We need to constantly read God's words to keep our faith growing and strong. We read in Luke 17:5-10 that Jesus helps the apostles increase their faith by telling them the truth. He urges them to trust in the power of God, be his debtors and to be dependent on his grace.

Sathyam Ministries is committed to guiding God's people to increase their faith in our everlasting father and his holy Son by reading the word of God for it is said in Romans 10:17 "So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" We help them to do the word of God as said in James 1:22-24, it is required to do his works and test the word in the right way as it is said in Malachi 3:9-11

By reading his words we are able to overcome fear and trust in his love. Believe that God has a plan and pray often. When we listen to Him, have faith in Him and keep doing His work, we can be assured (John 11:25-26, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, 1 John 5:13) that God blesses us and gives us eternal life.

Dr. C. V. Vadavana
Founder & Chairman,
Sathyam Service Trust





Justin's Home

**SERVICES**

- Screening and identification
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- Parent and student counseling
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- Skill development programs
- Pro-vocational programs
- Printing technology
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- Facilitating and awaiting social benefit
- Facilitating the formation of self-help groups
- Parent training program

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SATHYAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE AN DISABILITY CENTER

A Ministry of Sathyam Service Trust,
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The Sathyam Research Institute and Disability Center, is the result of an immense need to uplift the disabled population in the Indian society. Sathyam Service Trust, a charitable society based in Kerala, India has been working in the field of Social Welfare and Charity for the past 25 years by shedding light to the downtrodden in society. Through its outreach programs it has mainly focused its activities in the area of disability preparing thousands of individuals to become independent.

The Director, Mrs. Marykutty Vadavana, of SRDC was initially burdened to do something for mentally challenged children because her second son Justin was born with a learning disability. After reading Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, she began to pray to God for opportunities to serve mentally challenged children. God answered her prayer and we were able to open Sathyam Nikethan - a disability center for mentally challenged children.

Justin's Home A school & home for differently-abled

It is an organisation working for the rehabilitation of mentally handicapped children. This centre provides services to children who are suffering from mental retardation, autism, down syndrome, cerebra palsy and learning disabilities.

OUR VISION

To empower the disabled population with the help of society

OUR MISSION

- To expose and develop the hidden skills and abilities in persons with disabilities
- To train and develop individual life skills
- To promote and direct employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- To remove social, cultural, and economic barriers that are associated with disabilities
- To implement a comprehensive, integrated program of research and training
- To develop rural community infrastructure in order to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities

**FUTURE PLANS**

Provide services to overcome physical barriers

Offer prosthetics (artificial limbs) and orthotics (devices to support and supplement weakened or abnormal joints) to remove barriers associated with physical disabilities.

Begin courses in community rehabilitation

Gain approval from RCI for conducting foundation courses in care-giving (6 month course) and DVR (MR)

Gain approval from MG University for conducting rehabilitation courses.

Develop vocational rehabilitation programs

Such as:

- Artificial limb manufacturing workshop
- Printing technology
- Umbrella making
- File making
- Envelope making



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Courage When There Are No Answers

CHAPTER 1

Steve Bundy



He will meet you at your point of need and provide the grace you need to be the husband and father you long to be. He has not abandoned you, nor punished you for some known or unknown sin. It doesn't seem like it now, but your family's future is bright and promising! God called you. God gave you Julie as your wife, and God gave you your daughter. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Unfortunately, bad things happen in life, and it sucks! No one can ever answer the "why my child?" question. Because of the fall of Man (so I believe), things go wrong— sometimes very wrong. And God allows suffering, but we must choose how we will respond. You, my friend, may walk through this fire, but you will not travel alone. Wow! That sounds so religious! You're probably thinking, "What garbage! Where is God in this? I just want a healthy daughter." I do understand! Yet I wish someone had come alongside of me when Caleb was born to reassure me of who I was as a man, a disciple of Christ, a husband, father, and leader—to say that it was going to be all right and that God was still pleased with me. No one did, and you know my journey. Your daughter may be perfectly fine, and Julie may carry her long enough for a healthy delivery! This is my prayer for you! But the prognosis at this time is not favorable, and I am not going to sugarcoat anything. Life for parents of children with special needs is difficult; for some more than others. I can't deny that not a day goes by that I do not wish Caleb were "normal." And some days I feel tremendous anger at God for Caleb's condition. That's right—anger. Some days my anger is really about myself and my pride. To say that having a child with a disability is inconvenient is an understatement—it is consuming in every possible way.

I must also admit, however, that no day goes by that I don't thank God for Caleb. I love him with a deep passion and his life has taught me more about living, laughing, crying, suffering, sin, and victory than any other person I've ever met. And every night I say a prayer over Caleb. I watch him sleeping in his bed and remind myself that God's love and grace are greater than I can ever imagine and the mystery of life and death are beyond my grasp. I am utterly and fully dependent on God. We don't need to discuss the sanctity of life, human dignity, purpose, and the meaning of life. Intuitively, you know your daughter needs a father who will fight for her to the end; one who believes her life is as valuable as any other, regardless of her disabilities and limitations. I'm sure you struggle to justify having an immediate C-section

with the understanding that the baby will likely not survive and go home to her Heavenly Father. You may think this would be better for her than living with the disabilities. Chances are your next child will be healthy, right? But it's not so easy. Your daughter is actually God's daughter. She is God's first and yours second. She is in his image first and yours second. Let that sink in. Everything you believe in and have stood for will be tested by the circumstance before you. Your daughter may be born with severe disabilities that will forever change your future, forever alter your view of what it means to have a family, take vacations, go for a walk, pay for ballet lessons, and all the stuff you dream for her. This can turn you upside down and inside out. Not only will you have to face the great disappointment of not receiving the child you expected, but you must face the challenges of her disabilities.

So, I write with no pretentious illusions. I offer no, "Oh, what a blessing from God. His grace will be sufficient. God chose you because he knew you were the right couple for a special needs child." Well-meaning people with no understanding of disabilities don't know how ridiculous that sounds to parents struggling to cope with their child's diagnosis. Still, we have many good days and joyful times with Caleb. Our family has developed deep, intimate relationships because of our journey with him. Melissa and I look at life and the world completely differently than before. Despite our shortcomings, we feel closer to God and to one another. Our ministry to others is deeper. We've suffered and can empathize with people in a greater way. God uses our brokenness, and I wouldn't change this. The way forward on this difficult journey is always uphill, but it's still forward. I love you, my friend, and am here for you! I'm praying for you. Steve John and Julie made the decision to have their baby delivered by C-section, giving their daughter her only chance for survival. The following days were filled with exhausting medical decisions and heart-wrenching choices made with no idea what the outcome might be—all done in an effort to give their daughter a future and a hope. Four days after her birth, their daughter went home to be with the Lord. It is during such times that the real questions begin, that a man's world seems to go upside down, that a man realizes what minimal control he has over life—his or that of his family. But it is also a priceless opportunity to see life, and ourselves, in a truer light.

(To be continued.....)



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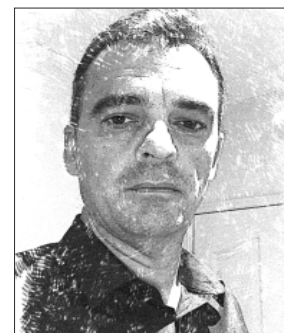
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LESSON 4

PURPOSE :

WHAT IS THE GRACE THAT FILLS THE HOLES?

Daniel Walker



KEY CONCEPTS: *An effective sermon will not only reveal the Fallen Condition Focus in the text but also reveal God's provision for that condition from the text.*

Introduction

Even though we have identified the **Fallen Condition Focus** from the text, our work is still not finished. Scripture tells us that God intends for every passage to equip us. We must now look for the equipping that the Holy Spirit applies to the original audience.

We have seen that the Fallen Condition Focus refers to “the human dilemma,” caused by the “broken nature” of human beings. But Chapell also demonstrates that this human dilemma “requires a divine solution, rescue or redemptive provision from God for God’s glory.” If the FCF can be likened to holes that ravage our human condition, “**the grace of the passage**” alerts us to the **provisions God has made to fill those holes**.³⁴ God is the hero of every story. As Sally Lloyd Jones says: “every story whispers his name.”³⁵ So, we must now look for God’s gospel provision in the text.

HOW GOD EQUIPS US

Harmon provide a definition of a gospel solution: the aspect(s) of the Gospel (i.e. the work of Jesus Christ) that are revealed (either explicitly or implicitly) in the text (the passage itself or the larger context) that provide the solution to the fallen condition³⁶

Eswine give us a list of possible aspects of the gospel solution:

1. Divine Armor:

In Ephesians 6:10–18, the apostle Paul lists God’s provided armor as truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer. Sometimes what God offers for substantial healing is an aspect of his armor to his people.

2. Divine Beatitude/Promise:

A beatitude is God’s declaration of what he considers blessed (Matthew 5). Similar are those promises that our Lord sometimes gives to his people. For example, our Lord’s provision, the grace he gives for those who will be persecuted for his name, involves a promise (Matt. 10:19–20).

3. Divine Wisdom/Fruit:

Paul identifies the fruit of God’s Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness,

and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). James speaks similarly using the term wisdom instead of fruit (James 3:13–18).

4. Divine Gift:

Sometimes God’s provision is a gift from his Spirit. The artists of the Old Testament or the gifts Christ gives in 1 Corinthians 12 are examples of this provision.

5. Divine Diaconate:

At times, the provision that God gives for our substantial healing is practical and mercy-oriented toward our physical needs. In Ruth 1:6, “The Lord had visited his people and given them food.”

6. Divine Miracle:

God often provided miracles as a provision for his people as signs in the context of his instruction. Miracles are not promises, but they do reveal the character of God toward particular aspects of fallenness.

7. Provision of Community:

Because our Lord calls us to follow him in the context of his other followers, the provision of others often indicates the grace he is providing for our lives. This is the apostle Paul’s point, for example, in 2 Corinthians 7:5–6. The God who comforts the downcast sometimes offers this comfort through the company of a trusted friend.

8. Divine Silence:

Paul’s thorn in the flesh is a provision of God’s grace in this regard (2 Cor. 12:9).

9. Divine Self:

Sometimes God’s provision is himself (John 3:16).³⁷

³⁴ Eswine, Zack. Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture (p. 50). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

³⁵ Sally Lloyd-Jones, The Jesus Story Book Bible

³⁶ Matthew S. Harmon,

http://bibtheo.blogspot.com/2010/06/application-pressing-text-uponheart_07.html

³⁷ Eswine, Zack. Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture (pp. 50-51). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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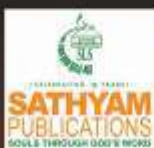
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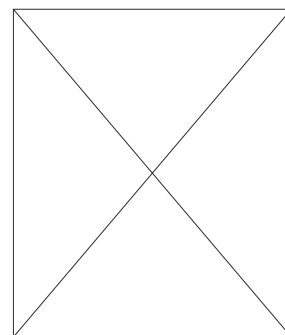


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Hand-Tailored Hardships

Joni Eareckson Tada



“No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 (The Message)

Have you ever looked at someone going through a tough time and thought, Boy, I'm glad that's not me. I could never handle that situation. Sure you have. I have, too. And I'll tell you someone else who thinks that: my friend Charlene. She was recently in the hospital, having temporarily lost control of her muscles. She had to be fed and had to wear an indwelling catheter. That meant no trips to the bathroom (she carried her bathroom with her) and lots of discomfort.

Charlene later told me, “Joni, I don't know how you do it. I'm glad you're the quadriplegic rather than me. I love my independence.”

I couldn't believe my ears. Charlene is blind and deaf. She was saying, “Hey, I can do the deaf-blind thing. But that's it; no quadriplegic stuff for me.”

Which just goes to show that God will never push you past your limit. He hand-tailors your trials. Don't think you can do the deaf-blind thing? The quadriplegic thing? Well, if you're neither deaf, blind, nor paralyzed, chances are you're right. And if by some quirk you lose your hearing or the ability to walk, God will then give you immediate grace to match your need. As Romans 11:33 says, “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and

knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” God knows—and he is the only one who knows—what you can bear.

No, God probably hasn't called you to be a quadriplegic, and you probably will never be blind and deaf. But he has called you to bear up under the burden he has placed on your shoulders. He thinks you can do it. Fact is, you can. And if you think you can't, take heart: that's when his grace shows up best.

Father God, enable me to bear up under my burden by your grace. Help me to remember that you have handpicked my circumstances to accomplish your purposes for my life. May I humbly submit to your choice for me.

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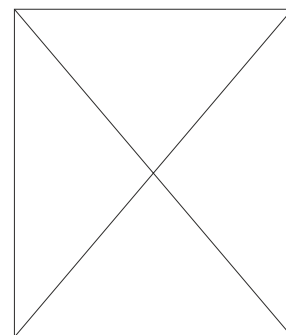
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What's in Your Toolbox?

Dr. Randall McElwain



Recently, I needed to move some tools that I have used for work – hammers, screwdrivers, wrenches, etc. When I laid out my tools, I had a surprise. I have two screwdrivers, but I have no adjustable wrench. I have no saw, but I have *four* hammers. If you need to hit something with a hammer, I can do it! But for any other jobs, I don't have the tools. I do not have a balanced collection of tools for work.

As I was moving my four hammers, I asked, “Is my set of tools for ministry so unbalanced?” I have known pastors who were great with a hammer, but they had no other tools. They could hammer, but they couldn't bring comfort. They could hammer, but they couldn't nurture spiritual growth. They had only one tool.

Jesus' ministry showed the value of a full toolbox. Never doubt - Jesus was great with a hammer. He could nail hypocritical Pharisees to the wall! After healing the invalid by the pool of Bethesda, Jesus says, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (Jn 5:14). “If you go back to your sin, something worse than sickness will happen to you. Shape up!”

But along with the hammer, Jesus knew how to use other tools. He could say to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more” (Jn 8:11). He could explain to Nicodemus what Ezekiel meant when he said we must be washed with water and with the Spirit (Ezek 36; Jn 3). He could confront the Samaritan woman with her sinful past and then comfort her with the promise of the Messiah (Jn 4).

To a dying thief, Jesus offered hope. To stubborn Pharisees, Jesus offered warnings. To a repentant Peter, Jesus offered forgiveness. To a doubting Thomas, Jesus offered evidence. Jesus knew that each job demands its own tool.

Paul understood this principle. He could reprimand backsliding Galatians or encourage discouraged Thessalonians. He could debate philosophers at Athens, expound Jewish scriptures at Antioch of Pisidia, or show the simple path of salvation for a jailer at Philippi.

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul calls on the church at Corinth to deal strongly with a man who was living in open

and unrepentant sin. In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul calls on the same church to restore a member who had fallen, but who was now repentant. Paul had more than one tool in his toolbox.

As I look back across my teaching and ministry, I realize that sometimes I've used only one tool. I've wanted to apply one solution to every problem. But in ministry, we need a range of tools. We need the sensitivity to ask not, “What is my favorite answer?” but “How does God want me to respond in this situation?”

Of course, each of us will have areas of weaknesses. None of us has the range of skills of an Apostle Paul. But if we want to be effective serving a variety of needs, we must work to strengthen those areas where we are weak.

Pastors, may I suggest that you do what I did as I cleaned out my shed. Take a day to evaluate your ministry toolbox:

Do I present the gospel clearly and simply to unbelievers?

Do I nurture young believers and help them grow in the faith?

Do I provide spiritual meat that encourages continuing growth in mature believers?

Do I confront sinful attitudes and actions in those for whom I am spiritually responsible?

Do I demonstrate Christlike love to those who are hurting?

Do I preach both comfort and judgment as needed?

If, like me, you find that you are missing some needed tools, ask God to help you develop in that area. Read books; seek help from fellow pastors; attend a pastor's conference; do what you can to develop a balanced ministry toolbox.

If all you own is a hammer, you can never fix a broken window. If all you own is a screwdriver, you can never drive a nail. As pastors, we need a variety of tools. What's in your toolbox? Think about it.







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Break the yolk...

Reference_ Isaiah 58: 1-14



Kalpana Daniel

The new year is replete with memories of the past year, and overflowing with resolutions on how to better our lives. There is an echo of health and fitness everywhere I turn. I feel the pressure to tone it down too, else I may not fit in. And amidst these fancy articles and advertisements, I chance upon a small testimony by Mother Teresa. She talks about a starving child she picked up from a street in Calcutta and offered her a loaf of bread. By the look in her eyes she understood that this child was hungry, however, she ate this loaf very slowly, crumb by crumb. When Mother asked her the reason, she replied, "I am afraid to eat faster. When I finish this piece, soon I will be hungry again." I couldn't contain my tears. Ridden with guilt, I lashed out my door and handed over some fruits and food packets to the workers in my apartment. Couple of days passed, and that guilt lessened. Then I came across this passage from Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25, overlaid with God calling out the injustice to the poor. As I write this article. I want to ponder on the reason and solution of what the Bible calls justice.

How far did God of the Bible go to identify with the poor. Son of a carpenter, He was homeless and died oppressed. Lynched, beaten, unrepresented, the God of the Bible chose to become a victim of an unjust system of this world. That's how far!

We often comment on the injustices of this world, and how if there is a God, how can He allow this to happen? Why doesn't He do something about it? Well, He did. He died on the Cross-the very epitome of injustice. And He asked us to serve the poor if we love Him. Not because we are to be ruled by guilt. Guilt can only produce religious acts as long as it lasts. Verse 6 literally means that if

my children have better resources than the world around them, then I am a part of that unjust system. It is not calling me to just loosen the yolk to a certain extent, as much as possible, it calls me to break it. It is my responsibility as a Christian to share what I have with all those who are deprived.

I may seek God with all my heart, fast, pray for hours, worship and yet, God says, in Matthew 25:40 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Biblical justice is not the same as social justice. It points us to interdependence. Our resources are not just ours, it must be shared with everyone in need. Plunge and donate everything you have if you really love Him as your Lord. This new year, take the lens of biblical justice and look at what was paid for you as a ransom. He shed the last drop of His precious blood to reunite us to the fabric of the heavenly realms. That's what it calls for. Go down to those places where the yolk is heavy and the need is surmounting. Give everything you have, your time, your money, our resources, your physical efforts, everything and then as Verse 14 says,

'then you will find your joy in the Lord,

and I will cause you to ride in triumph

on the heights of the land

and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

May loving Him be our calling in this year, and may we fulfill our calling for justice as the days unfold.

God bless you all!



The Greatest Treasure

Jolly Ann Thomas



As another year greets us with renewed hope in the promises of God for our lives, I am reminded to exalt the greatest treasure that God has given us. I am referring to nothing other than the Holy Bible, the written word of God.

How blessed are we, to live in an era of unlimited supply of Bibles, in languages and formats of our choice! The Bible holds the record of being the best-selling book ever, with over five billion copies sold, according to the Guinness World Records 1995. It is well known how this treasure was hidden from common man during the dark ages, so that the religious cum political church could keep its tight rein on the masses. Why would the rulers take painstaking efforts to keep just a mere book out of public reach? They surely would have been terrified by the power contained in the word of God that could set a man free (Luke 4:18)! It was no different from the time when Jesus walked the earth. The freedom He promised threatened the existence of the religious institution of that time, the Temple, whose authorities were afraid of losing their control over the Jews (John 2:13-19, Mark 7:13).

Why should the Bible be considered as the greatest treasure a person can possess? The same book not only provides answers to philosophical or spiritual questions in a man's heart but also contains wisdom to deal with the earthly problems in a man's life.

The Bible gives an authoritative account of man's beginning and lays out a hope-filled glorious eternity with God for those who choose Him. The book of Genesis gives a clear account of the origin of man and the origin of all species, introducing us to the Father of all Creation. It also provides a black and white account of how sin and death entered. We see this law of sin and death in operation in the world today. Alas! All the wise men of this world, including Charles Darwin, the father of evolution who authored 'On the Origin of Species', was not spared by this law! Before I was born-again, I used to wonder where "I" would be a thousand years from now. Science, which I was fascinated with from a very young age, did not have answers to these questions, which often took me through a frightening vortex of darkness. However, the day I heard the gospel that had definitive answers of a beginning and not an end but an eternity with Jesus, light flooded my soul! In my subsequent journey in Christ, I have been seeing God's faithfulness in action for earthly living, just as promised in the written word.

Are we going through narrow straits of poverty? Philippians 4:19 says that God will supply every need

according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Are we stressed out with responsibilities of everyday life? John 14:27 says that Jesus has given us His peace, unlike the peace of this world, so that our hearts should not be troubled or afraid. 1 Peter 5:7 asks us to cast all our anxiety on Him for He cares for us.

Are we suffering from sickness? 1 Peter 2:24 says that by His stripes we were healed.

Are we dejected that our parents did not care for us enough? Isaiah 49:15-16 says that God will not forsake us even if our own mothers would forget us and that He has engraved us on the palm of His hand.

Are we unsure about the next step to take in life? Psalm 119:105 notes that God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Isaiah 30:21 says that His voice will guide us from behind, whether to turn left or right.

Are we afraid of unforeseen dangers? In Psalm 91, our Father guarantees us absolute protection always, from all sorts of enemies and from all types of dangers.

Are we afraid that we might keep sinning? Psalm 119:11 offers a solution, which is to store and treasure the word in our hearts, so we might not sin against God.

Are we seeking discernment between soul and spirit matters? Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God is sharper than any double-edged sword and can divide between the soul and the spirit.

Are we afraid that our lives will end through death? John 3:16 says that if we believe in Jesus, we will never perish but have eternal life.

I want to conclude with a dream I had, where Jesus came walking towards me with a gift in his hands. When He placed it in my hands, I realized that it was the Holy Bible! He then put His index finger upon mine and took me through several encouraging scriptures. Every word His finger touched would light up with life and seemed to come out of the page. When I woke up, I could not recall all the verses but the Holy Spirit confirmed in my spirit that the key takeaway was that He has deposited in us everything we could ever need for life and complete devotion to God, by His divine power (2 Peter 1:3). Praise be to our Father God who has given us everything; everything we would ever need for successful and Godly lives on this earth, through the written word! The only thing required of us is that we invest our time and effort into unearthing the treasures within. Jesus said in Matthew 13:44, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field".

Great Christian Preachers Of All Time

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

Laborer of the Word



George Whitefield (1714-1770)

George Whitefield was one of the most original preachers in the history of the church. With a powerful and dramatic style, this Englishman has been called the greatest preacher since the Apostle Paul and the Demosthenes of the pulpit. His preaching in the US was a main cause of the Great Awakening. A master of imagination, metaphor, and drama, it is said that his delivery was like that of a great actor. He was a protégé of the Wesley's and Methodism, but moved away from their theology toward a more Calvinist position. His activities continued to the evening before his death. In response to the appeal of the people gathered on School Street, outside of the home of Parsons, he preached to them from the staircase, — "until the candle, which he still held, burned away, and went out in its socket."

Christian Hymn Writers

PHILIP DODDRIDGE



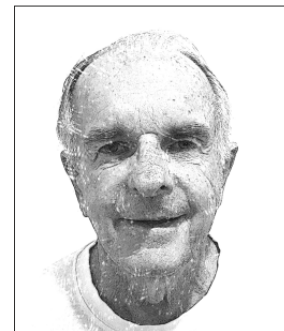
Philip Doddridge (June 26.1702)

Phillip was delivered as though stillborn after 18 children of his mother had died in infancy. Barely escaping death at birth, orphaned a few years later and frail in health much of his young life, Philip Doddridge's faith in God remained strong.

TALKING TRUTH

HOW TO PREPARE & PRESENT GOSPEL TALKS

Alan Bartlem



EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

MOTIVE

Obviously the man who allows his message to be governed by desire for fame, finance, honour, social standing or any other consideration other than his love for Christ and his passion for souls is unworthy of the name "preacher". His supreme passion must be to glorify God!

It would be good to remember the words inscribed on a tablet erected under the pulpit of "Old South" Presbyterian Church at Newbury Port, Massachusetts of the great preacher of many years ago, George Whitfield. It says he was "a soldier of the Cross, humble, devout, ardent – he put on the whole armour of God; preferring the honour of Christ to his own interest, repose, reputation and life." Thus it must be for all who will be mightily used of God.

To Paul the esteem of men was of little value. 1 Cor. 4:3 "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself."

Gal 1:10 "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."

1 Thess 2:4 "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."

The Lord Himself made Himself of no reputation. Phil 2:7 "but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men."

REGARDING THE STYLE of the Evangelist / Pastor's preaching. If there is any one rule it is be natural, be yourself, don't try and be somebody else. God wants to use you and not someone else in you. By all means study great preachers, learn all you can BUT be yourself and develop your own style. (learn the art of hanging around).

REGARDING PREPARATION

Again there can be no "best" rule. All men are different. Cultivate your own method. Personally, I believe that the fully written out message is best, but it is not to be read verbatim. Write it out, learn it off, and then that will give more liberty when preaching.

As a result, you will only need a cursory look at your notes from time to time as you preach. Also, the fully written out sermon has the advantage of possible memory "block"!

HOW LONG SHOULD A MESSAGE BE?

Someone has said, "as long as you can preach and hold your audience!" I guess it would be fair to say that for some and hour is too short and for some 5 minutes is too long.

But as a preacher you have know your audience and the environment in which you are preaching. There are many time constraints to be considered i.e. church service, evangelistic meeting, TV, radio. However, if you have something from God, something worth saying, then say it, its worth hearing.

EVANGELISTIC PREACHING MUST BE TWOFOLD IN AIM: SAINTS AND SINNERS!

Firstly, Eph. 4:11-13. "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;"

Note the preacher has a job of ministering to the saints, of seeking to perfect them in Christ and to edify the Body of Christ. Faithful evangelistic preaching quite often arouses God's people to their responsibilities and get them to do "the work of the ministry". Even the best Christians get lax and indifferent!

The Pastor/Evangelist has a very special ministry to the unsaved. As the great revivalist Charles Finney used to say, "The great end of preaching is to glorify God in the salvation of men."

He listed eight requirements for evangelistic preaching...

1. All preaching must be practical. 2. It must be direct. 3. It must address the needs of saints and sinners. 4. It must make the sinner feel his guilt and not let him think he is unfortunate. 5. It must make sinners realize their present obligation. 6. It must make sinners realize the need for repentance and that they must do it for themselves because neither God nor anyone else can do it for them. 7. All excuses of sinners should be annihilated. 8. Sinners should be made to feel the dangers of grieving the Spirit of God.

How tragic to think that many ministers would have to confess that in twenty or thirty years of preaching, they had never seen soul saved under that preaching.

(To be continued...)

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- By helping spread awareness about the cause among family members, peer groups, colleagues and other social networks.
- By volunteering your time at Sathya Ministries.
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Encouragement: When we feel nothing works

We are busy in our daily life and are doing well but at times we feel depressed. It can be silly or serious matter. During this time we may feel the need of encouragement from others. It is often seen that we are able to uplift our spirits and perform very well again when someone particularly our dear ones encourage us. It is very important for us to brighten up our spirits for good results. Encouraging phrases do have a powerful effect on our minds. It is worth understanding that in the early 1970s, scientist John Eccles found that just by speaking “positive verbs” out loud, our brain gets stimulated. Other researchers too found this as true and support his findings. They found that when we repeat positive phrases, our brain physically responds. So when we are feeling negative and weak, someone's encouragement can turn that to a positive and reviving feeling.

How can we encourage someone weak and are going to give up:

We are blessed with innumerable bible verses that God has given us to provide us comfort, strength and encouragement to cope with life's challenges every day.

Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, Psalm 37:23-24, Psalm 23: 5-6, Hebrews 10:24-25 are great enlightening verses for

individuals seeking personal encouragement. These verses will definitely make him strong to pull on and do his best.

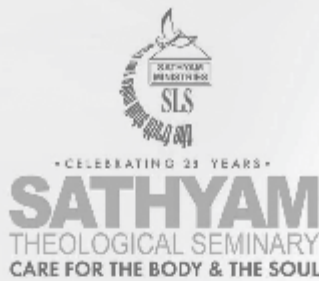
It is certain that God will always be with us to help us when there is a difficult or overwhelming task before us.

We read how God helped the people of Israel when they grumbled against Moses and Aaron for bread. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you.' The people of Israel ate the manna for forty years, till they came to a habitable land' (Exodus 16:2-4, 35)

And when we feel tired and are about to give up, God will help us to finish the good work we have started as he loves us.

When we read the book of Joshua (Deuteronomy 31, Joshua 1) we see how God asks Joshua to follow Moses. It is seen that Moses encouraged Joshua several times. After many years of travelling and after the death of Moses, Joshua was able to lead the people to enter the promised land.

Bible constantly urges us to move forward encouraging one another. Finally it is the Lord who blesses us all abundantly as he will not forget to reward his children who are faithful to him throughout their life.



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BANGALORE NEWS

Massive protest against proposed Christ statue near Bengaluru

Right wing organisations on Monday held a massive protest at Kanakapura where hundreds of people clad with saffron scarf holding saffron flags marched from Aiyappa swamy temple at Kanakapura to Tahsildar office, shouting slogans "Bharat Mata ki Jai" and "Jai Sri Ram." against the proposed 114-foot statue of Jesus Christ, allegedly at a government land, sponsored by local legislator and senior Congress leader DK Shivakumar who claimed that it would become the tallest monolithic statue of Jesus in the world. On December 25, Shivakumar had laid the foundation at a prayer meeting and handed over the title deed for the project. Shivakumar said BJP and other organisations want to target him for the sake of "political space" in Ramanagara district, which they do not have as of today.



BJP leader and former Minister C P Yogeshwar, who took part in the protest, accused Shivakumar of trying to instigate communal violence for his "politics." Hindutva ideologue and RSS functionary Kalladka Prabhakar Bhat said their agitation was not against Jesus Christ, but against the religious conversion in his name. Bhat said "we will fight against any activity against Hindu community if they continue." Revenue Minister R Ashoka said it is government gomala land (pasture land for community use), and had sought a report from the district administration. Police had made elaborate security arrangements to prevent untoward incidents.



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INDIA NEWS

Christians in India spend Christmas in jail - Jailed for Christmas Program

In Mathwad village, 31 miles from Alirajpur, police on Dec. 27 arrested pastor Ramesh Vaskale, along with two church members, on charges of fraudulent conversion.

The Christians were taking part in a Christmas program when area Hindus began to complain and informed the media. They also called members of two Hindu extremist groups -- the Hindu Yuva Janjati Sangathan and the Dharam Raksha Samiti -- who came and accused the Christians of converting villagers. Conversion is legal in India, but Madhya Pradesh's anti-conversion law prohibits conversion by force, fraud, allurement or inducement, terms used to make baseless accusations religious minorities.

The Hindus called police, who arrested the Christians and took them to the nearby Bakhatgarh police station. More than a dozen media outlets transmitted an interview with two Hindus alleging that the Christians urged them to join in the Christmas program and they asked them to touch a Bible and pressured them to promise to follow the God of the Bible.

A correspondent who followed up on the interview told Morning Star News that villagers who said they were pressured to convert had differing stories. "Every person who alleged that they were forced to convert had a completely different story, which does raise doubts over the authenticity of the allegations," said the correspondent, who requested anonymity for security reasons.

He added that the Alirajpur area is unsafe for reporters who try to balance reports with Christians' viewpoints. "If I try to interview the Christians, it can be life-threatening for me and very unsafe for my family," he said. "There is a lot of political pressure on the police, who are forced

to take action against the Christians despite knowing the truth."

At this writing the Christians were still in prison, though church leaders were making efforts to bail them out.

India is ranked 10th on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. The country was 31st in 2013, but its position has been worse each year since Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014.



WORLD NEWS

Christian hate preacher says why 'God' set fire to Australia

As bush fires continue to devastate Australia's southeast, a Christian hate preacher has claimed he knows why the nation has been set on fire.

Steven Anderson, known as America's most anti-gay pastor, said the destructive bushfires currently ravaging Australia are the "judgment of God" for "banning and deporting preachers of the Gospel".

In July last year, Australia joined 32 other countries around the world in banning Mr Anderson from entering its borders.

The preacher has been banned in all 26 of Europe's Schengen states, Botswana, Jamaica, Ireland, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Canada for his repeated hateful statements wishing death upon LGBTQ people.

Anderson took to his church's Facebook page, Faithful Word Baptist Church, to post images of the bushfires. The post reads: "Maybe if Australia weren't banning and deporting preachers of the Gospel, they wouldn't be under the judgement of God" above a link to a sermon titled "Natural Disasters as Judgement from God".

Other Facebook users commented on the post, blasting Anderson's hateful message.

"During this extraordinary disaster, we have witnessed far more humanity and Christianity on the ground and in the communities, than has been displayed in this post," one wrote. "The people on the ground, helping each other in whatever way they can, are showing more faith in humanity, than the original post showed in its construction."



Another wrote men like Anderson "are doing more damage than anyone around the world".

In the past, the leader of the Arizona church has praised the shooter who killed 49 people in 2016 at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando. Anderson called the victims "a bunch of disgusting perverts and paedophiles" and "disgusting homosexuals who the Bible says were worthy of death".

He has also encouraged his congregants to kill all homosexual people, saying it would be a "cure for AIDS", and has advocated for world governments to execute gay people.

Anderson was denied entry to Australia when trying to speak at the New Life Baptist Church with Pastor Kevin Sepulveda.



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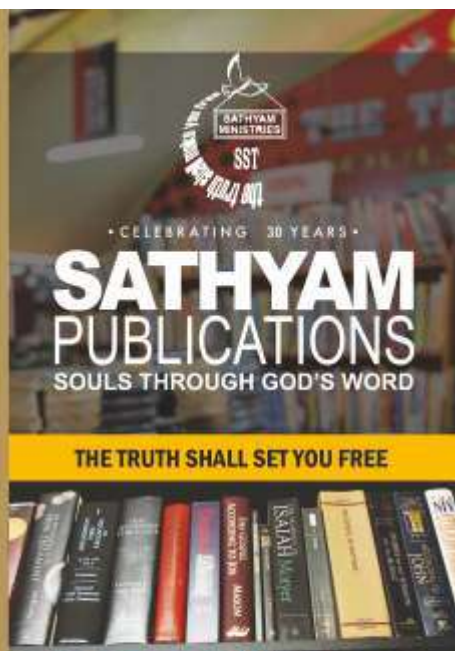
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