

# 2005 Proclaimer

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2*  
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A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## **She Did What She Could**

*by Joe Fitch*

*"She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial" – Mk 14:8.* Is Jesus apologizing for poor or trivial service? No! Absolutely, not! Jesus is rather commending her.

*"What she could"* defines her best. You do not run faster than you **can** run, nor do you jump higher than you **can** jump. Deep concept, right? Well, it is true and practical in any case. Even in service to God, no one does better or more than he **can do**.

Require no more from yourself than "*what you can*" do. If you make such impossible demands, the sure result is depression ~ ulcers ~ guaranteed failure. Give up the superman complex! All demands beyond "*can do*" tend to destroy hope, or to make you give up and quit. Be kind and tolerant toward yourself, at least while your "*can do*" grows.

Expect from others no more than "*what they can*" do. If you do, disappointment is a sure result, plus esteeming them very poorly. A church is illustrated as a human body, "*For in fact the body is not one member but many*" **1 Cor 12:14**. A hand does what a hand "*can do*," but no more. A hand fails ... **cont'd**.

miserably if it is required to see, because it simply **cannot do that job**. No one expects sight from a hand. Likewise, a new convert is surely not spiritually mature; he is a babe. He may pray in worldly or denominational terms, but that is his only vocabulary. It is all he "**can do**" at this point. Lessons on "*don't say that*" is not a real solution or a quick fix. Spiritual growth and understanding are his needs for the moment. Such growth gradually transforms his "*can do*," and you will begin to notice it in his prayers. A new convert also exhibits worldly attitudes and values. They are neither an ideal nor a good spirit, but at his point of development, it is what he "**can do**." He knows only the bare basics of being a Christian. Time, teaching, and training changes his "*can do*," and with it, changes his whole view of life. A Jewish convert like Paul brings his Jewish heritage with him. He may have both excellent faith and good character from day one. However, even doing the "*best he can*," it will take time to leave behind things that really need to be discarded. Expect of brethren what they "*can do*;" rejoice when they do it. Be longsuffering when they slip. Remember, they are putting up with you also, as you both grow in "*can do*" and "*actual do*."

The Lord approved her at what she could do. God never expected more than anyone could do, and He still doesn't. The Lord is just. He is fair. Where did God command the impossible? The Lord's parable of talents adapts expectation to the "*can do*" of each man: "*And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability.*" **Matt 25:15**. At accounting time, performance beyond his "*can do*" was

expected of no one. The five and two talent men each received an identical blessing: "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*" **vss 21, 23** Each fulfilled his ability to perform. The one talent man was not rejected for failure to produce five talents, nor for having little ability, and not even for having little money. One talent was all his master gave him. His lord sharply condemned him because he did not "*do what he could*" with what he had.

*"I am so disappointed in myself. I try and try, but I just never measure up."* Join the crowd! But get over the gloom! Cheer up! Our greatest recommendation to God is for each of us to T R Y to do our very best in His service! Saints doing what they can – **yet still short of ideal** – trustingly rely on God's grace, and receive it! God never promised mercy and grace to those not trying; yet his grace is more than abundant to those doing what they can in service to him. God's growing children – doing what they can – are surely acceptable. God's grace takes care of all their deficiency, great or small.

God does demand that everyone do what he can, and all that he can. That is a big order! *What you can* is no excuse to just do nothing to not try to sit and expect God to do everything. "*What I can*" is far different than that whining excuse, "*I just can't*" – which realistically translates as "*I don't want to.*" Remember, "*you did it not*" was the epitaph of eternal doom to those on the left hand – **Matt 25:45**. Likely more brethren will be banished eternally because "*they did it not*" than because they did gross evil or taught doctrinal heresy.

The Lord did not forget her, and even said, *"What this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her"*

**Mark 14:9.** Neither will the Lord *"forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name"* –

**Heb 6:10** – even if your *"can do"* is not all that impressive. When you can offer *"only a cup of cold water"* –

**Matt10:42.** *"or maybe a kind word"* – *"or a shoulder to lean on"* when Satan attacks, still doing what you can is noticed and approved by God.

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### JOAN RIDGE

Our deepest sympathy and compassion go out to Bernie Shadman, and her family, over the loss of her mother, Joan Ridge, this past week.

Mrs. Ridge had been severely ill.

Please pray for the family and do things to be a source of strength and encouragement to them in this time of extreme sorrow.

A memorial service will be held at Mt. Vernon Memorial park (on Greenback) at 12:00 noon on Thursday, the 15<sup>th</sup>. Internment will follow the service.

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*May the God of Peace and Comfort be with us all in times of turmoil and trouble in our lives, and may we share these burdens with one another to the strengthening of our souls and for our continued faithfulness in His KINGDOM.*

## THE SICK AMONG US

Carly Cain (Placerville)

Helen Gray

Margaret Holcomb

Chuck House

Catherine Kay (Escalon)

Kizer children

Jean McCarty

Millie McCreary (moved to Mesa, AZ)

Jeffry Pennant

Kaye Pennant

Irma Rapier

LaurieAnn Reagan

Jacob Robertson

Taylor Romine (test results coming)

Oliver Sasse (Brush Prairie)

Rena Schultz

Bernie Shadman & family

Geneva Shelton

Ken Sterling

Ola Thornburg

Nancy Valine

Bill Westphal

Donna Williams (Carol's Sis)

Ellie Williams

Gordon & Glenda Wilson

Maxine Wilson

### TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Rick Rittenhouse

Gordon Wilson

### IN THE MILITARY

Michael Mendez

Aaron Robertson

Trent Walsh

The 5<sup>th</sup> Friday night singing scheduled in Vacaville for Dec 30<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled. Please remember to not go – but to plan to go on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006

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IN CARMICHAEL at 5:00 PM today:  
Lesson 11: The "Joseph Principle"  
of STEWARDSHIP

## IS THE SEED STILL IN THE BARN?

Haggai 2:15-19

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Haggai's mission was to revive the energies of the Hebrew people rebuild God's temple.
  - 1. The project wearied them because of external persecution and internal apathy.
  - 2. God refused to bless them with great harvests, but they weren't realizing it yet.
- B. It seems that Haggai is speaking in the month of November, so the seed was not still in the barn.
- C. Seed has become the subject of parables and personifies the word, and Christ himself.

### I. THE SEED

#### A. Incorruptible Seed: 1 Pet 1:22-25

- 1. When we are born again of water and the Spirit, we are recreated through incorruptible seed that is immortal and does not lose its vitality with the passage of time.
- 2. And for 2000 years the gospel age of Jesus Christ has persisted as dying sinners have been brought to newness of life through that word of the Lord.

#### B. The Seed is the Word of God in its preaching and those applications in parables demonstrating its power when we have a proper understanding of His Will.

- 1. One can scarcely mention seed without thinking of the ways that Jesus used it in his parables, especially in Matthew 13
- 2. When the seed comes out of the barn and is broadcast upon the hearts of sinners, it finds some hearts to be welcome environments, while most reject the seed.
- 3. If, however, the seed never leaves the barn, it'll never be planted in good hearts!

#### C. Christ The Seed

- 1. There is another, even deeper sense, in which Jesus Christ himself is the true seed: Gal 3:15-16
- 2. Moreover, the "seed of Abraham" expands at this point to include, not Jews by birth, but all Christians who are born again: Gal 3:26-29

### II. THE SEED IS STILL IN THE BARN ~ IF:

#### A. It Is NOT IMPLANTED Into My Heart!

- 1. God asked in Haggai's day, "*Is the seed still in the barn?*" God promised great blessings *if they would return to Him!*
- 2. A much more precious seed has been provided to us, in James 1:21-22

#### B. I'm NOT SOWING IT In Other Fields!

- 1. The seed comes out of the barn only as we share it with the hearts around us: Gal 6:7-10
- 2. The most valuable good that you can ever do to your neighbor, your relatives or even your enemy is to find some way of scattering gospel seed in their hearts.

#### C. I'm NOT CARRYING THE SEED In My Heart and In My Life

- 1. You can't sow the seed unless you have it with you; we're leaving it in the barn!
- 2. Is there some point at which we become ashamed of our faith, afraid to admit it for fear that unbelievers, academics or sectarians will look down on us?

#### D. I've ALSO BEEN SOWING TARES

- 1. Perhaps saddest of all, we leave the seed in the barn if we are really busy sowing tares ourselves: Eph 4:17-21
- 2. It disturbs me to see people doing self-destructive things, then act outraged when self-sown tares have taken root and littered their lives with despair. Col 3:5-11

### CONCLUSION:

- A. A lot of young men who were raised on farms went, as soon as they could, into the cities for gainful employment, to establish homes, and to raise their children.
- B. After years, many wanted the simpler ways of life those farms had provided.
  - 1. *You have to take care of everything when it's due!*
  - 2. Ground to be prepared; seed planted; harvest gathered. And seed can't be left in barn!
- C. Some of us may get involved in secular activities and get away from serving the Lord.
  - 1. We must be **SURER THAN EVER BEFORE** that NOW, we're not leaving the seed in the barn!