

2006 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" -Isa.61:1-2

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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August 6th, 2006

Daily Devotional

Hebrews 2:1-4

by John Duvall

There are many religious people who claim that God performs miracles through them. Turn on the television and you may find some man or woman touching some "sick" person on the head and saying, "*Be healed!*" And at just that point, the crowd begins to clap wildly while many people cry out, "*Praise God! Praise God!*" while the "healed" person falls backwards into the hands of the attendants. However, how real are these "miracles"? Do these "miracles" fit the purpose of miracles seen during the early days of the church?

The only way to answer the question of whether or not a "miracle" is real is to do a careful study of every "miracle." For instance, have medical verification of the existence of the cancer before the cancer victim goes to be healed. Then show the world the medical verification of the cancer being healed. Let a person with a clearly visible disease be healed. For instance, take a celebrity known by much of the world to be blind and let him be healed. That would be simple. Going to the local hospital and healing everyone present in the name of Jesus Christ would also get the attention of unbelievers as well. However, you and I both know that "miracles" of today do not operate in this fashion. Often times the "healing services" are very controlled as to who can be healed.

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Not just anyone can get in line to be healed by the visiting faith healer. Try it some time. Take a friend that you have known for years to be ill or afflicted to a "healing service" and insist that they be healed. See what happens.

What purposes did miracles serve in the early days of the church? The Bible clearly reveals this answer for us. Mark records the following in Mark 16:19-20: "19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

Miracles of the New Testament were performed to confirm what the apostles and teachers were teaching.

In the beginning of the church, the New Testament in written form as we have it today had not yet been compiled. Much of the early teaching relied upon men inspired by the Holy Spirit. Then, as the various writers penned their letters and books, men would copy these writings and distribute them among believers. Instead of telling the people to "turn in your Bibles to" a given passage for verification, the apostles would show God's approval of the teaching with miracles.

Since we have the New Testament in written form today, there is no longer any need for modern day confirmation of what is taught. The Bible serves as confirmation itself with its records of miracles.

Here is **Hebrews 2:1-4** presented for your consideration.

- 1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.
- 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,
- 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,
- 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Pardoned!

David A. Sargent

Alexander H. Stephens served as Vice President of the Confederacy. He was a cripple, and died shortly after becoming the governor of Georgia . When it became known that he was soon to die, that the physicians had no hope of prolonging his life, the great men of state crowded his bedroom and besought him to sign important documents. But Stephens waved them away and called for his private secretary and told him to bring out of his desk an old, faded paper. The secretary found it. It was the petition of an old humble woman back in the hills seeking the pardon of her sinful son in the penitentiary.

With the great state officials begging Stephens to lay it aside and take up weightier matters, he replied: "No. I am going to sign this. The great matters of state will take care of themselves." And, being propped on his pillow, Governor Stephens took the yellow, faded appeal of the heart-broken mother who had no other intercessor at the governor's mansion. He dipped the

pen in the ink, and across the appeal he wrote "**PARDONED.**" Underneath he scrawled his name, "Alexander H. Stephens, Governor." Then he dropped back upon his pillow -- dead. *

Likewise, almost 2,000 years ago, high on the hill called Golgotha, the Son of God was dying...

All the sins of the world were upon Him. At His side a thief and murderer, an outcast, was also hung on a cross. The thief cried out, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). From the lips of Jesus came words of forgiveness and assurance: "Assuredly I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise " (Luke 23:43).

The man judged unfit to live with men was made suitable by the Savior's pardon to live forever with Jesus!

"For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and sin makes us unfit to live forever with Jesus. Yet, because of His great love for us, Jesus has offered pardon to us through His sacrificial death on the cross as payment for our sins.

We accept this pardon through our obedient faith: believing in Him (Acts 16:30-31), repenting of sin (Acts 17:30-31), confessing Him before men (Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized (immersed) in His name for the forgiveness (the pardon) of our sins. As long as we remain faithful to Him, His blood will continue to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

When our sins declared US unfit to live, JESUS – through His death – has offered pardon and life.

Will YOU accept His pardon through your obedient faith?

THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Julie Agee
Doris Allsup (Irma's sister)
Marie Anderson
Frank & Tina Ayers
Dorothy Bailey (eye surgery)
Bob Curtin
Robert Erickson
Lucille Erickson
Mary Ferguson (Terry's sister)
Minnie Fox (Washington)
Betty Gardner (Loomis)
Helen Gray
Margaret Holcomb
Chuck House
Catherine Kay (Escalon)
Jean McCarty
Jeffrey Pennant
Kaye Pennant
Wendell Rapier
Berniece Raven
Sven Raven
LaurieAnn Reagan
Rosa Reagan (Bremerton)
Caleb & Jacob Robertson
Taylor Romine
Tom & Boots Royston (Folsom)
Billie Rush (Troy's grandmother)
Bill & Rena Schultz
Geneva Shelton
Shawna Shuck
Ola Thornburg
Nancy Valine
Donna Williams (Carol's Sis)
Ellie Williams
Gordon & Glenda Wilson
Maxine Wilson
David Wilson

TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Rick Rittenhouse
Aaron Robertson
David Lovett

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson
David Lovett
Michael Mendez
Aaron Robertson

HE WOULD NOT GO IN

Luke 15:25-32

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The facts surrounding the elder brother's activities haven't been nearly so notorious as those of his prodigal brother, but they teach us a lesson that shouldn't be passed over lightly.
- B. It's obvious from the first part of the chapter of our text that the primary lessons Jesus taught are regarding the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees on one hand, and the self-condemning publicans and sinners on the other.

I. WHY DID THE ELDER BROTHER REFUSE TO GO IN?

- A. FIRST, may I suggest that part of it could be because he didn't have the right attitude toward his younger brother.
- B. SECOND, he surely didn't understand the love that a parent has for a child, whether good or bad, or the youngest or oldest!
- C. AND THIRD, he got his information and subsequent impressions of the situation from the WRONG SOURCE, and that helped him to JUMP TO A WRONG CONCLUSION!

II. OLDER BROTHER MISSED "FAMILY TOGETHERNESS" BY NOT GOING IN!

- A. He also missed refreshments, a change of raiment & rest from his labors. cf. Matt 11:28ff.
- B. The merriment over the safety of his brother was dampened because of a attitude!
 - 1. He was out of touch, jealous, offended, and miserable! Prov 23:7.
 - 2. The WRONG SPIRIT will cause one to do terrible things! Mark 14:10-11
- C. He missed a chance to make others joyful by his presence at their celebration.
 - 1. RULE # ONE: THE UNIVERSE DOESN'T ROTATE AROUND ONE PERSON!
 - 2. His absence was the one shadow which lay across the joyful occasion.
 - 3. Not thinking of what he could add to the party; more likely he perceived "poor me".

III. THE OLDER BROTHER'S TRUE STATUS

- A. One of the best ways to determine TRUE character is by "contrast"!
 - 1. If we're not a good illustration of Christianity, then we're a CONTRAST to Christianity.
 - 2. Most of us have heard: "*The darker the night, the brighter the stars will shine!*"
 - 3. The parable of the little ewe lamb in 2 Sam 12:1-7
- B. The Prodigal had deliberately erred and all knew (inc. himself) that he was a lost sinner!
 - 1. The Elder brother was in a good environment so few would know of his lost condition.
 - 2. There's NO INDICATION he was ever responsive to his father's appeals.
- C. There are some important lessons to be learned from this parable:
 - 1. Right Attitudes. Don't let others set your attitude/standard of right and wrong.
 - 2. Forgiveness. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath – no matter what!
 - 3. Talents and opportunities. Use what you HAVE to the glory of God – soon as you can!
 - 4. Cherish the value of repentance. It includes both a change of mind and of actions!

IN SUMMARY:

- A. **One of the greatest lessons illustrated in this parable is that of repentance.**
 - 1. The conduct of the prodigal son shows the doing of God's will for forgiveness.
 - 2. The elder brother shows how absence of repentance can cause a life to be wasted!
- B. **OUR BIG QUESTION: "WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?"**
 - 1. Do you need to change the way you're living? Any of the things you've been doing? Is there an errant attitude you've been exhibiting?
 - 2. We must yield ourselves to God by obedience to His Gospel: **F + R + C + B**