

Feature Article

Questions About Repentance, by Ricky Kurth	5
Articles	
The Circle of Hope, by Dave Stewart	13
Quench Not the Spirit, by Kevin Sadler	17
Departments	
"Grace" Preaching	4
A Friend in Seed Is God's Friend Indeed	12
Question Box	23
Roku and Apple TV Information	24
News and Announcements	

This month's cover features the Split Rock Lighthouse located in Silver Bay, Minnesota.

The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to *evangelize* the lost, to *educate* the saved in "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), to *energize* the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

Legend has it that Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be our national symbol. While this may or may not be true, we may seriously have to consider adopting the turkey

as the symbol of *Berean Bible Society*. For many years now, a large flock of turkeys has inhabited the grounds of BBS. They are often seen strutting around our building and are a constant source of discussion among the staff. Each

year, we watch a flock grow from chicks (or *poults*) to jakes and jennies to toms and hens. Pastor Kurth enjoys taking photographs of our turkeys, like the ones you see in this article.

There have been many times when we are sitting at our desks, working diligently, only to have a turkey pop its head up at a window, curiously looking inside the building. Our mailroom manager, Pastor Aaron Harris, typically parks in the rear of the building near the mailroom to load up the orders and mail to take to the post office. The turkeys took a liking to his black car for a while and to seeing their reflection in it. As a result, and much to Aaron's dismay, they started pecking his car and jumping on its hood, sending him quickly outside to scare them off.





Unlike these flocks, which have a safe home at BBS, November is a rough month for turkeys in general! Later this month, we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day with family and friends around a hearty meal, giving thanks to the Lord for His many blessings. When we at BBS think of things for which to be thankful to the Lord, we are mindful of the fact that this ministry is, as Pastor Stam used to put it, "A work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends."

The way we work at BBS is affected by knowing that our daily employment is the result of those who give sacrificially to the Lord's work. It moves us to put forth a strong effort and creates in us a desire not to waste time and to produce quality work for the Lord. We would not have a place to work and be used of the Lord here without those who financially support this ministry. Therefore, speaking for myself and all the staff, we say to our contributors, "Thank you." We are thankful you understand the importance of this ministry in making known "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery."

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Kevin Sadler, President



No minister of Christ who is a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1-4) would, during this age and dispensation of grace, preach water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, as did John the Baptist. Nor would such a minister preach for today Acts 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized..for the remission of sins." No Bible-taught evangelist led by the Holy Spirit would tell a sinner seeking eternal life to keep the commandments and sell his property, as Christ on earth told the man in Luke 18:18-26. Nor should he or any other Christian preacher tell the people to sell all their houses and lots and personal property and place the proceeds in the hands of the preacher, as was done in Acts 2:44,45 and 4:34,35. No "grace" messenger of the Lord is told to raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, preach "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and journey without cash, as Christ instructed His apostles in Matthew 10:5-9.

"Grace" messengers know the difference between Matthew 6:15, 18:23-25, and Ephesians 4:32, forgiving a fellow-man as the condition for God's forgiveness and forgiving in the Name of Christ because we are already forgiven by God for Christ's sake. No "grace" messenger today expects angelic visitations, miraculous jail-deliverances, supernatural demonstrations and visions, physical healings, and speaking with tongues, such as were experienced and practiced by God's people during the "Acts" period. As we compare Matthew 5:9 with Colossians 1:20, we see the difference between the human peacemakers and the Divine Peacemaker.

The Pauline truth, or Christ's truth given to and through Paul, concerning "the dispensation of the grace of God" and "God's eternal purpose in Christ" is the cure for almost every ill and -ism with which the Church of God is afflicted. This final truth given to complete the Word of God (Col. 1:24-26) and recorded in Paul's prison epistles is the death blow to all cults and -isms.



PASTOR RICKY **KURTH**Berean Searchlight Editor

Two friends bumped into one another at Walmart one afternoon. As soon as Bob saw his friend, he said to him, "Hey Jim, how come you are going around telling everyone in town that I'm an idiot?" To which his friend replied, "Oh, I'm sorry, Bob. I didn't know it was a secret!"

Well, Jim might have *said* that he was sorry, but it sure didn't sound like he planned to repent and *stop* telling everyone that Bob was an idiot, did it?

Speaking of which, our subject in this chapter is *repentance*, and the questions that people ask *about* repentance. And we begin with a question that people have about *God* and repentance, a question that frequently arises when people read what Samuel said in 1 Samuel 15:29:

"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent."

Now the Strength of Israel is *God*, of course. That's why our King James translators capitalized

"Strength" here. And the question that people have about God and repentance comes when they compare this verse to something Moses wrote in one of the earliest chapters of God's Word:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth...And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created...for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5-7).

Moses then went on to describe how God wiped out the entire population of the earth with a flood, sparing only Noah and his family. But if God "is not a man, that He should repent," how come those verses say He repented that He had made man?

The Part That Puzzles

Probably the reason that this puzzles people is that most people think that the word "repent" means to feel guilty about something you've done and determine

that you are not going to do it any more. But do you really think God felt guilty about creating mankind? He had nothing to feel guilty about, for He hadn't done anything wrong. They're the ones who had done something wrong. And you know that God didn't determine not to do it any more, for right after He destroyed mankind He started all over again with Noah, creating a new race of people through him and his family. So that can't be the meaning of the word repent here.

Did you know that that's not the meaning of the word repent *anywhere* in Scripture? To feel guilty about what you've done and determine not to do it any more is just a definition that *religion* came up with. Newer dictionaries do list it as one of the definitions of the word, but my *old* dictionary says that that particular definition of *repent* is only found in "theology"—which is just a nice word for religion!

The first definition for repent in my old dictionary is to feel pain or sorrow for something you've done. And you know that's what God meant when He said that it repented Him that He had created man, for Moses went on to say "it grieved Him at His heart." Did you notice that Moses didn't actually say that the Lord repented? He wrote that "it repented the Lord" that He made man; that is, it grieved Him.

By the way, sin *still* grieves God at His heart, even if you are saved. If it didn't, Paul would not have had to write,

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed

unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

"The day of redemption" is a reference to the Rapture, when God will redeem your body (Rom. 8:23) just as He redeemed your soul when you first believed (Eph. 1:7). Just because you're safely sealed unto the Rapture doesn't give you a license to sin and grieve God's Spirit. You've heard the saying, "Don't bite the hand that feeds ya?" Well, for believers, our mantra should be, "Don't grieve the Spirit that seals ya!"



We see this same definition of the word *repent* the next time we read about God repenting:

"Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me..." (1 Sam. 15:10,11).

Here again, the traditional meaning of the word repent ascribed to it by religion just won't work. God had nothing to feel guilty about. Saul's the one who had sinned, not God. And we know that God didn't determine not to do it any more, for He made David king a short time later. No, the word repent here has the same meaning it did back in Genesis 6.

It *pained* God that He had made Saul king. He felt *grieved* that He had done it, because of how Saul had acted.

All right, now that we know the kind of repenting that God will do, let's figure out the kind He won't do—the kind in which our text says the Strength of Israel won't engage.

God Won't Repent of...

If you know your Bible, you know that the king of Moab hired a prophet named Balaam to curse Israel, and you probably remember how the prophet replied to the king:

"God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:19,20).

Here we see the kind of repentance in which God will *not* engage. And that is, once He says He is going to do something, *He won't repent of it*. So here the word *repent* means the same thing it often does in Scripture: *to change your mind*. There are things that God says He will *never* change His mind about, and one of them is His determination to bless Israel, as Balaam declared.

By the way, that should make you feel pretty good about your salvation, for God has *also* determined to bless *you* with an eternity of everlasting life in heaven. That's something *else* He won't repent of!

And you know that's true because there's something *else* God says He won't change His mind about, something the Father said about the Son:

"The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec... they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:21-25).

The "priests" mentioned here were the Old Testament priests in Israel who couldn't be priests forever, naturally, for eventually they died. But God determined that the Lord Jesus Christ would be a priest forever, so when He died, God raised Him from the dead so that He could be a priest forever. And God says that this is something He will not repent of. It's something He will never change His mind about.

And that should make *you* feel pretty good, for your apostle Paul wrote,

"...Christ...also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).

With an Intercessor like that, you need never worry about your salvation!

Hold On!

But if the kind of repentance in which God will not engage is the changing-your-mind kind, you may be thinking, "Wait a minute, Pastor! Weren't there times when God *did* change His mind and repent?" If so, you may be thinking

of an example like the one we read about in Jonah 3:1-10:

"...the word of the Lord came unto Jonah...saying...go unto Nineveh...and preach...Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God...And God saw... that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not."

Now you have to admit, it sure *seems* like God changed His mind here. But what if I told you that this is actually an example of God *not* changing His mind? You'd probably think that I'm old and senile and a few french fries short of a Happy Meal. But take a look at what God said through His prophet in Jeremiah 18:7,8:

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom...to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

When it came to wicked nations, God's policy was always the same. If He vowed to destroy a wicked nation, but that nation repented first, then *He* would repent and not judge it as He planned. That was His policy. So when the Ninevites repented of their sins, *God didn't repent of His policy*. He didn't judge them like He planned to do, for He is not a man that He should repent of His policies. Now would you like fries with that crow you're eating, for I have plenty to spare!

Okay, now you know the answer to the question of why the Bible says God will never repent, but then records times when He

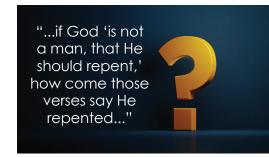
did repent. And all of that information will help you understand the answer to another question I'm frequently asked about repentance. And that is, "Do we have to repent to be saved?" The reason I'm frequently asked about this is that repentance was definitely a part of what God's people in Israel had to do to be saved.

Repentance and Salvation

If you know your Bible, you know that when the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, He was "a minister of the circumcision" (Rom. 15:8). That's why He said, "...I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). And speaking to those lost sheep, He said,

"...the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Now if we apply religion's definition of "repentance" to the Lord's words here, it is easy to think that Hebrews who lived under the kingdom program had to feel guilty about their sins and determine they weren't going to sin any more to be saved. And that would have been a real problem for them, as you can imagine.



And the problem gets worse when Christians think the Lord

was talking to us when He spoke those words, and that we have to feel guilty about our sins and determine not to sin any more to be saved. And the problem gets even worse when Christians read what the Lord told the Jews to preach after they were saved. He made it clear "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24:47).

Beloved, if you think the Lord was talking to *us* when He spoke those words, and you too are confused about the meaning of the word *repent*, you're going to think that that's the gospel that we should preach among the nations, that of, "Feel guilty about your sins and don't sin any more."

The problem with a gospel like that is: If you have to determine not to sin any more to be saved, what happens the first time you sin after you are saved? You're most likely going to think, "Maybe I'm not saved after all." A gospel like that isn't gospel at all! The word "gospel" means good news, and that doesn't sound like good news to me.

No, when the Lord told the Jews they had to repent to be saved, He was simply telling them they had to change their minds. And the thing they had to change their minds about is the same thing men must always change their mind about to be saved.

"What's that?" you ask? Well, the Lord told a parable that explained how Hebrews were saved back in His day:

"...He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous... The Pharisee...prayed...God... I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers... I fast...I give tithes...And the publican...smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner...this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Luke 18:9-14).

The thing that the Jews had to repent of to be saved was the thinking that they were righteous enough to be saved by their own good works and didn't need God to save them! That's something you have to change your mind about to be saved in *any* dispensation.



If you're not saved, God wants you to stop thinking you're good enough to go to heaven, and start thinking Christ died to make you good enough to go to heaven (2 Cor. 5:21). God wants you to stop thinking that you have to promise you won't sin any more to be saved, and simply rest in what the Lord Jesus Christ did to pay for your sins on the cross of Calvary.

What's Paul Say About Repentance?

Now all of this helps us answer the final question I'm frequently asked about repentance: "Why does *the Apostle Paul* talk about

repentance?" That's a question I usually hear from grace believers, of course, who know that Paul is our apostle (Rom. 11:13; 15:16). And the reason they ask about this is that they know that under the Lord's ministry to the people of Israel repentance was tied to water baptism.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach *the baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).

If a Jew wanted to get saved, he had to *prove* he had repented by getting baptized. Remember, salvation for the people of Israel was always by faith *plus works*. If it weren't, it wouldn't make much sense for Paul to have written that salvation is now "by grace... *no more* of works" (Rom. 11:6).¹ Works like circumcision, animal sacrifices, and observing the sabbath and Israel's seven feasts were all required for salvation in Old Testament times.



Then as we come to the New Testament, God gave them *something else* that they had to do to be saved. They had to *get baptized*

with water. They had to be baptized to prove they had repented, to prove they had changed their mind about thinking they were good enough to be saved by their own good works, and to prove that they were "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

And we know that didn't change at Pentecost, for on that historic feast day, Peter proclaimed the same message that John the Baptist had set forth, saying,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38).

Now that is *highly* significant, for as you may know, many Christians believe and teach that Pentecost was the beginning of "the church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22,23), the church of this dispensation, the Body of Christ. But if the church of today began at Pentecost, then the gospel message that Peter heralded that day is the same message that we should preach—the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

But we know that Peter was preaching to *Jews* that day, just as John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ had done before him, for Peter said as much earlier in his message:

"Peter....said...Ye men of Judaea...be this known unto you...Ye men of Israel, hear these words...let all the house of Israel know...Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:14,22,36,38).

^{1.} For more information about how men in other dispensations were saved by faith plus works, see the author's book, *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, Pages 46-65.

As you can see, Peter wasn't talking to *you* when he said that men had to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. *Paul's* the one who wrote,

"...I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles..." (Rom. 11:13).

And the apostle Paul never *once* says to repent and be baptized to be saved. In fact, he thanked God he had baptized so few people before learning that, as he said, "Christ sent me *not* to baptize" (1 Cor. 1:14-17). If water baptism was *still* required for

salvation, that would have been like thanking God that he had led so few people to the Lord! Water baptism is definitely *not* part of God's program for the present dispensation of grace.²

Pauline Repentance

But that doesn't mean that men don't need to repent to be saved in this present age. We know this to be so, for Paul tells us in...

(To be continued in Pastor Kurth's upcoming book, More Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions.)

2. For more information about water baptism, see the author's book, *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, Pages 139-191.





Slinger, WI 53086

Friends

A FRIEND IN SEED IS GOD'S FRIEND INDEED

"It seemed good to me...to write unto thee...most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3).

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus..." (Acts 1:1).

As you can see, both the Book of Luke and the Book of Acts were written by Luke to a man named Theophilus. We're not really sure who Theophilus was, since the Bible only mentions him in these two references. But all names have meanings, and in the Bible, the meaning of names often has spiritual significance. Of course, Pastor Harland Shriver used to joke that Theophilus got his name when he was born, and his father said, "That's the-awful-est looking kid I've ever seen!"

The name Theophilus actually means "Friend of God." That's significant, for in the Bible, only "Abraham...was called the friend of God" (James 2:23 cf. 2 Chron. 20:7). So when Luke wrote his gospel to a man named Theophilus, that's one of the many ways God tells us that Luke's gospel is written to Jews, the *seed* of Abraham, the friend of God.

Now I know that that's not what most Christians believe. Most Christians think that Luke was written *for us*, members of the Body of Christ, living in the dispensation of grace. But the Book of Luke describes the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, and Paul tells us that "Jesus Christ was a minister *of the circumcision...*" (Rom. 15:8). So the Gospel of Luke is written *to* and *for* and *about* the Jews.

But if the Book of Acts is *also* written to Theophilus, that tells you that *it too* was written with the Jews in mind. That's important to remember, for most Christians believe that the first two chapters of Acts are *not* a continuation of what had come before, but the start of something new. They believe it was the beginning of "the church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22,23).

But if Luke says that his *first* treatise was about "all that Jesus *began* to do and teach" the Jews (Acts 1:1), then this *second* treatise must be about all that the Lord *continued* to do and teach the Jews—*through the twelve apostles*. It is only after the Lord's friends in the house of Israel stoned Stephen, showing that they refused to repent of wounding Him in the house of His friends (cf. Zech. 13:6), that Luke records how God *interrupted* His ministry to Israel by saving Paul and sending him to the Gentiles.

That means that *Paul's conversion* marks the beginning of the church of today, not Pentecost! And that means that the specific information you need to live your Christian life is found in his epistles.

—Pastor Kurth

The Circle of DAVE STEWART Contributing Writer

"...we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed..." (Rom. 5:2-5).

As Christians, when we ask someone, "Will you go to heaven when you die?" the answer we often receive is an almost compulsory, "Boy, I sure hope so." This is the world's idea of hope. "I wish it would happen." "I'd prefer it to happen." But when the Bible speaks of hope it is never a "maybe, maybe not" proposition. When the Bible speaks of hope, it speaks with certainty.

According to the passage above, hope maketh not ashamed. The idea here is not that we shouldn't be embarrassed about having hope. Rather, the thought is that when we have true, scriptural hope, our expectations will never go unrealized. When we anchor our trust in the promises of the Word of truth, rightly divided, we will never find ourselves saying, "God, I trusted You to do this for me and You let me down." By rightly dividing His Word, we are able to rest in the absolute assurance that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. But in our passage, Paul gives us even more. In Romans chapter 5, Paul reveals God's formula for building, strengthening, and solidifying in our lives this essential Christian virtue called hope.

Notice the passage begins with our "hope of the glory of God." This is what Paul terms as our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) and refers to the long awaited appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, our being caught up together in the clouds to ever be with Him (1 Thes. 4:17), and finally to share with Him in glory (Rom. 8:17). This is where the circle of hope begins; we hope in His glory.

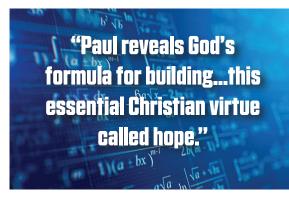
Paul goes on to say that we not only hope in the glory of God, "but we glory in tribulations also." Now here, to assume that these two things are unrelated would be a critical mistake. In fact, it is our very hope in the glory of God which enables us to glory in the trials of

this life. We mentioned Romans 8:17 a moment ago relating to God's promise that we will one day share in His glory. The very next verse (Rom. 8:18) goes on to say,

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The reason we are able to "glory" in our tribulations is that those very sufferings work in our lives toward our eternal glory. Because we hope in the glory, we glory in tribulation.

Now we shouldn't get the idea from this that suffering is somehow meritorious in and of itself. It is not simply the fact that we suffer which works for our glory, for everyone suffers. But the suffering of a believer softens our hearts, enabling us to have empathy with the sufferings of others. And not only to empathize, but then to tell them how God comforted us



in the same suffering, and to comfort them by our own experience in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:3-6).

Our apostle states this truth in very simple but powerful terms.

"So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:12).

Our suffering enables us to bring life to others, which in turn works toward the glory which shall be revealed in us. What does it mean for you and me to follow Paul as he followed Christ but to adopt this very heart for ourselves. Death works in me so life can work in you. This is the heart of Jesus Christ.

Next Paul says that tribulation works patience. Every trial we endure works to strengthen us for the next. When we were children, the problems in our lives seemed enormous, insurmountable. Now we look back and smile at our own inexperience and even long for the days when life was so simple. But we forget that it took those "simple" problems to build us into the mature beings we are today. And the sufferings of today are doing the very same work, building us for our own tomorrow, our eternal tomorrow. Tribulation teaches us patience, and patience enables us to grow in time while we wait for eternity.

Then, Paul says, once we have learned that the tribulations of today are only building us into the mature and faithful saints we are called to be, our new-found patience goes to work building experience, the experience of life, and of God Himself, into our souls. Now there is a word in the Bible for the experience we gain in the light of the knowledge of God; it's called, Wisdom.

Wisdom is the place where suffering finally meets experience. It's not an especially happy place, or even a joyful place. But it is a glorious place. It is, very literally, a place of glory. It's the place in which our Lord Himself delighted when He endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb.12:2) for the joy of heavenly glory that was set before Him. Our Lord did not merely rejoice in tribulation, He GLORIED in tribulation. Why? Because He hoped in the glory of God. And His hope made not ashamed, for He is, at this moment, set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Most of the trials we endure in this world are short lived. We enter, we go through, we come out the other side. As we learn to approach each new difficulty with patience, that pattern becomes clearer and clearer to us. Then, at some point, we no longer need to see the other side to know it's there. We have gained the experience to know that we need only to wait for it.

Because we hope in the glory of God, we are enabled to glory in our tribulations. As we not only endure, but even rejoice in this brief but troublesome time, we learn the great virtue of patience. Then patience brings the knowing calm of experience. And what does experience bring according to our passage? Hope! And hope maketh not ashamed.

So now we're back to where we started. We hope in our coming glory, therefore we glory in tribulation, for tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience takes us right back to hope. So we see the pattern: hope, glory, tribulation, patience, experience, hope. Say it with me, "Hope, Glory, Tribulation, Patience, Experience, Hope." Rolls off the tongue like a mouthful of peanut butter, I know, but this is precisely how God builds hope upon hope into our daily lives. It's no wonder our apostle, who labored and suffered more than all the others (2 Cor. 11:23-27), could say,

"For our LIGHT AFFLICTION, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Hope in the glory. Glory in tribulation. Tribulation works patience. Patience works experience. Experience works hope. Then repeat. This is the formula for this age of grace. Everything we are given, everything we need to prepare us for that glorious world to come, can be summed up in this, faith, hope, charity (1 Cor. 13:13). Now the greatest of these is charity, it's true, but we are saved by faith (Rom. 3:30), and we are saved by hope (Rom. 8:24). Charity endures forever, and by faith we are saved from our sins. But by hope we are saved each and every day of our Christian lives. Hope is that which brings the eternal to bear on the temporal. Hope is how we live our eternal lives now.

Trials and tribulations may move the novice to despise God's circle of hope as he searches in vain for an easier way. But those of us with the wisdom of experience can glory in every light affliction this world may bring, knowing by our hope that tribulation only works toward a glory not worthy to be compared.





"The story has been told of a do-it-yourselfer who went into a hardware store early one morning and asked for a saw. The salesman took a chain saw from the shelf and commented that it was their 'newest model, with the latest in technology, guaranteed to cut ten cords of firewood a day.' The customer thought that sounded pretty good, so he bought it on the spot.

"The next day the customer returned, looking somewhat exhausted. 'Something must be wrong with this saw,' he moaned. 'I worked as hard as I could and only managed to cut three cords of wood. I used to do four with my old-fashioned saw.' Looking confused, the salesman said, 'Here, let me try it out back on some wood we keep there.' They went to the woodpile, the salesman pulled the cord, and as the motor went *Vvvrooommm*, the customer leaped back and exclaimed, 'What's that noise?'

"The customer trying to saw wood without the power of the saw to help him is very much like the believer who attempts to live the Christian life without the daily empowerment of the Spirit."¹

The Apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, instructs the Church, the Body of Christ, to "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19). Believers can hinder the Spirit's empowerment and working in their lives. God, however, wants the Spirit's strength to flow in and through us freely. There are a number of practical steps we can take to heed this command.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT'S FIRE

"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19).

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit indwells each believer in Christ: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

The word "quench" means to extinguish, stifle, and suppress, as one would extinguish a fire. It furthers our understanding to know that the Greek word

translated as "quench" in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 is also used in Matthew 25:8 where, in a parable, the Lord said, "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." "Gone out" is translated from the same Greek word (sbennumi) as "quench."

The Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as fire in Scripture. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to Israel, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." (Acts 2:3-4).

Paul's instruction for the Body of Christ is not to extinguish the Spirit's fire or stifle His work in this dispensation of grace. Paul would not have commanded this of the Church if the Holy Spirit could not be quenched. Thus, we learn that it is possible for us to suppress the Spirit's working and influence in our lives.



There were some spiritual firefighters in Thessalonica guilty of extinguishing the Spirit's fire in their lives. Paul, however, did not want the Church to be spiritually smoldering; he wanted the Body of Christ to allow the Holy Spirit to create a fire and a zeal in them for the things of God.

The Holy Spirit is a fire within us to refine our faith and character, to soften our hearts to submit to God, and to sensitize us to the spiritual needs of others. He heats up our passion to serve God, to live for eternal things, and to tell others about the gospel of grace and the Word of God. And as we fan the flames of faith and dependence in the Lord, we will experience the Spirit's active power in our lives.

QUENCH NOT THE *HOLY* SPIRIT

Obviously, the Holy Spirit is *holy*. Under grace, the *Holy* Spirit's ministry in us is about moving us in the direction of everincreasing holiness. Two times in 1 Thessalonians, Paul expresses God's desire for holiness in our lives.

"To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in *holiness...*" (1 Thes. 3:13).

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto *holiness*" (1 Thes. 4:7).

The biblical definition of holiness is primarily about being set apart or separate. In Christ, we are holy (Eph. 1:4), we are set apart from sin and set apart to God, belonging completely to Him. The Holy Spirit desires to work out this position in Christ practically in our daily lives. The Spirit wants us to live as one who belongs completely to God.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit works in us to set us apart to God by cultivating a growing relationship with Him. Being holy, the Spirit's ministry is about separating believers from sinful habits and preoccupation with self, the temporal, and the world, and gently, but powerfully, drawing us into godly habits and preoccupation with the Lord, serving others, and eternal, heavenly things. And the *Holy* Spirit moves us toward a *holy* life by His *Holy* Word.

QUENCH NOT THE GOAL OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit's ministry is a work of grace. It is a humble work in which He lifts up God the Son. The ultimate goal of the Spirit's work in us is the Lord Jesus Christ. By the Spirit, Paul wrote to the Philippians,

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

The high calling of God we press toward by the Holy Spirit is to know Christ and be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:10). The Spirit's ministry is always giving glory to Christ. In the upper room, the Lord told His disciples, "...when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth...He shall glorify Me..." (John 16:13-14). The Holy Spirit points us to Christ. He wants us to see and know the One Who is the Goal of our spiritual progress.

The Holy Spirit ministers to move us from where we are to someplace else and someplace better, which is being more like the Savior. We "are changed into the same image [of Christ] from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Think about Abraham, the father of the Jews and the father of faith. God appeared to Abraham (still called Abram at that time) in Ur of the Chaldees and called him to get out of his country and to leave his family to go to a land that God would show him (Gen. 12:1). Abraham responded with faith and courage, and he left home and family to follow God into unknown territory in Canaan. Abraham is an example of one going from where one is to someplace else based entirely on faith in the Word of God. And God rewarded Abraham's faith with blessing.

This is how transformation takes place in our lives today as well. By faith in God and obeying His Word, the Holy Spirit takes us from where we are to someplace better: to know Christ and to be more like Him. As it was with Abraham, it takes courage to go to the unknown. We get comfortable where we are in life with our attitudes and behaviors. But by courageously allowing the Spirit to do His work in us, God will reward our faith with the blessing of being more like His Son and having a richer personal relationship with Him.

HOW TO "QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT"

Submission to God's Word

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10).

One way we can smother the Holy Spirit's influence is with a

November 2019

blanket of stubbornness. Again, the Holy Spirit works in us by grace. He does not and will not force us to do God's will. He works through our faith and submission to God. The believer has the choice to listen and obey God's Word—or not. We can stubbornly dig in our heels and be satisfied with where we are in our Christian lives.

"When an old farmer was asked about his spiritual well being, he described his Christian experience by saying, 'Well, I'm not making much progress, but I'm well-established!' One spring when he was hauling some logs, his wagon wheels sank down to the axles in mud. He tried everything he could, but he couldn't remove the wagon from the mud. Defeated, he sat atop the logs, viewing the distressing situation. Soon a neighbor who had always felt uncomfortable with the farmer's wornout testimony came along and greeted him, 'Well, brother, I see you're not making much progress, but you must be content because vou're well-established!"2



We can stifle the work of the Holy Spirit by being content as we are and refusing to make progress. In order to "quench not the Spirit," we need to humble ourselves, yield our wills, and allow God to mold us. Stubbornness has been demonstrated well by the person who said, "I'm not stubborn. My way is just better!" Our ways are not better than God's ways and His wisdom (Isa. 55:8-9). When we follow God's higher ways as revealed in His Word, rightly divided, we discover the blessings and joy of submission to God.

Opening God's Word

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13).

The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture. As Peter wrote in his second epistle, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). The Spirit is the Author *and* the Teacher of the Word. He illumines and opens its meaning to us, and more specifically its meaning to our lives (1 Cor. 2:9-14; Eph. 1:17-18).

The way the Spirit changes us into Christ's image is through the Word of God. By the Word, He renews our thinking and transforms our lives (Eph. 4:23-24). It's well put that "When the child of God looks into the Word of God and sees the glory of God, he is transfigured by the Spirit of God into the very image of God."

One very practical way we can "quench not the Spirit" is by opening the Bible and spending time reading it. By letting the Word

of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16), the Spirit's fire burns hotter and brighter in us.

Trusting God's Word

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13).

The Holy Spirit is quenched when one treats the Bible as a strictly academic exercise. It is possible to spend time with the Bible and know it well, but not allow its truths to transform.

Paul wrote the Corinthians that "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1). We can extinguish the Spirit's fire by being puffed up and proud in our we read. When we trust the Lord and His Word, and allow the truths of Scripture to touch and change our hearts, the God of hope fills us with His joy and peace, and we "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Rightly Dividing God's Word

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

By failing to rightly divide the Word, and attempting to live by promises made to Israel under her prophetic program, we can quench the Spirit. The Spirit works by His Word according to how God is working *today*.



"When the child of God looks into the word of God and sees the glory of God, he is transfigured by the Spirit of God into the very image of God."

intellectual knowledge of God's Word. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The Spirit produces the fruit of God's love in us when we properly apply the Word to our lives. For those who do not allow its truths to change them, however, knowledge can result in carnal pride. And the Spirit is quenched by pride.

We are each called to walk by faith by trusting God's Word. It isn't just strictly Bible reading that unlocks the power of the Holy Spirit; it is *believing* what

Today, we are under grace, not under the law (Rom. 6:14). We are not Israel; we are the Body of Christ. The revelation of the mystery made known to the Apostle Paul reveals God's will for the Church, the Body of Christ, and how it is to function and serve within this current dispensation of grace. As we apply this grace instruction (Romans through Philemon) by faith, the Spirit's power will be released in our lives. If we try to live by the law, Old Testament prophetic promises, Tribulation and Kingdom instruction for

Israel (Matthew through John and Hebrews through Revelation), or by the way the Spirit worked in the past through signs, miracles, tongues, and healings, we will quench the Spirit today.

Making Time for God's Word

"I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

We can douse the Holy Spirit's fire by busyness. "Christians worldwide are simply becoming too busy for God, a...five-year study revealed. In data collected from over 20,000 Christians with ages ranging from 15 to 88 across 139 countries, The Obstacles to Growth Survey found that...About 6 in 10 Christians say that it's 'often' or 'always' true that 'the busyness of life gets in the way of developing my relationship with God.'...'The accelerated pace and activity level of the modern day distracts us from God and separates us from the abundant, joyful, victorious life He desires for us,' said [Dr. Michael] Zigarelli. While the study does not explain why Christians are so busy and distracted, Zigarelli described the problem among Christians as 'a vicious cycle' prompted by cultural conformity."4

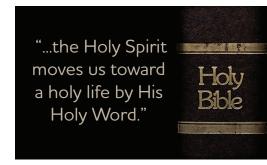
We need to take charge of our spiritual lives. We quench the Spirit when we allow no time for God because of a busy lifestyle. We should not find time but, with Job's heart, prioritize time for God to speak to us by His Word, that "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). We do so, not as

a legalistic discipline, but because we know the Lord only wants what is best for us and that He cares deeply about our attitudes, character, and the direction of our lives. We do so because the Lord wants us to know Him, and knowing Him is something in which to glory (Jer. 9:23-24).

Praying Faithfully

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." (Eph. 6:18).

The strength of the Christian life is dependence on God. Prayer is about expressed dependence. There is never a moment in the life of a believer when we don't need the Lord. This is why Scripture challenges us to pray always and to pray in everything (Phil. 4:6; Psa. 62:8). We "quench not the Spirit" when we faithfully take everything directly to the Lord in prayer, and we rely on His power and wisdom.



Paul prayed for the Ephesians that God would grant them "to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16). God is our strength (Psa. 18:2). The way we are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man is by nearness to God. When

we do not stifle the Spirit's fire, and allow Him to draw us closer in our relationship with our Savior, we will "be strengthened with might...in the inner man."

May we "quench not the Spirit" by submitting our hearts to God, opening, trusting, and rightly dividing the Word, making time for God, and praying faithfully, so that we allow the Spirit's fire to give us a zeal for the things of God, lead us

into greater holiness, and conform us to the image of Christ.

- 1. Michael P. Green, 1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), p. 320.
- 2. Ken Sapp, "Well Established," Creative Youth Ideas, accessed October 6, 2019, http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/devotional/wellestablished/.
- 3. Warren Wiersbe, "Moses—The Glory of Service (Part 2)," 2006, accessed October 6, 2019, http://eridan.websrvcs.com/templates/!print/details.asp?id=35585&PG=resources&CID=17591.
- 4. Audrey Barrick, "Survey: Christians Worldwide Too Busy for God," The Christian Post, July 30, 2007, https://www.christianpost.com/news/survey-christians-worldwide-too-busy-for-God.html.

Question Box

"What is the name that 'the whole family in heaven and earth is named' after in Ephesians 3:15?"

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15).

The previous verse (v. 14) provides us with the answer to this question. The name is "our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians teaches the precious, magnificent truth of believers being "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6,13). The moment we trust the gospel of salvation, we are placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. As members of His Body, we are united with Christ and His name. In our Savior's exaltation, He is "Far above...every name that is named" (Eph. 1:21). And we are one with Him, joined to His life eternal, resurrection power, seated position, and exalted name (1:17-23).

Paul wrote that the "whole family in heaven and earth" is named after Christ. The "whole family" is the entire family of *God*. In this epistle, Paul taught about the blessing of believing Gentiles under grace being "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (2:19). We have been born by the Spirit into "the household," or the family, "of God."

"Heaven and earth" are the two places you can currently find the *whole* family of God. Part of the family is already home in heaven, and the rest of the family is here on earth, representing Christ to this world as His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). We are all one in Christ; we belong completely to Him, and we are one with His name: "our Lord Jesus Christ." —Pastor Kevin Sadler

STEPS TO GETTING MORE BBS ON ROKU



Press the **Home** button on your Roku remote.



Scroll up or down and select Streaming Channels to open the Channel Store. Scroll down and select **Search Channels** then type in "Berean Bible".



The channel is **FREE** so after tapping **OK** on the channel, you simply select Add Channel to install the channel on your Roku device.



If you have set up a PIN number on your Roku account, you will be asked to provide the PIN before downloading. If you have NOT set up a pin, skip this step.



After adding the Berean Bible Society Channel, it will be in the list of channels under **Home** on the main screen. Scroll down, it will have been added to the bottom of the list of channels.

STEPS TO GETTING MORE BBS ON



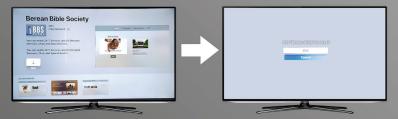
1 Launch the **App Store** app from your Home screen.



Move over to the **Search** tab on the end and type in "Berean Bible".



Click on the BBS Network app icon, then click the **Get** button to download the app for free. Then click the **Get** button on the next page to confirm download.



To launch it, go back to the **Home** screen and swipe up, down, left, or right on the touchpad until you reach the BBS Network app.

Click on the app to launch it.





From California:

"I recently came across your program on Spectrum cable channel 32. I did enjoy the message, and I am interested in learning more about your ministry."

From Michigan:

"We love *Transformed By Grace*, and believe it is a really effective way to reach the saved and unsaved... Keep up the good work, Pastor Kevin."

From Maine:

"I sure do love how you preach, brother!"

From Wyoming:

"I am increasing my monthly contribution so that you can use the extra \$25 for your TV programs."

From Ohio:

"I use your website, the *Searchlight*, and many books I've purchased from you over the years as resources in my own study. Fortunately, now I am teaching an adult Sunday School class covering the ministry of Paul at a Baptist church that is not sound on proper division...I am getting a tremendous response, almost all positive which is not what I expected. So I need your prayers." (You got 'em! –Ed.).

From Facebook:

"'Standing Ovation' for today's *Two Minutes* by John Fredericksen! I shared and pray several of my friends read it and something 'clicks.'"

From Washington:

"I saw an issue of your magazine at *Dallas Theological Seminary Library* and I want to subscribe!"

From Wyoming:

"I praise God for the insights He gives you. Two great OT applications in *Two Minutes With the Bible* in two days! I have been greatly admonished and encouraged by your teaching on Jonah and on the Pillar. So often the 'laborers' are not themselves encouraged by being told of the fruit of their labors—with thanksgiving! I certainly do not want that to be the case between us."

From Facebook:

"Amen! Pastor Stam's [Two Minutes] commentaries are timeless!"

From our Inbox:

"Thank you, BBS, for today's Bible reading ('Are You Sure?' by C. R. Stam). I just added it to my Facebook wall." (Thanks for helping us get the message out! –Ed.).

From Washington:

"First, let me say how very much I continue to enjoy the *Searchlight*. Not only are the articles informative and impact my life, but I also always find Scripture and topics that result in thorough Bible studies!"

From Nigeria:

"Thanks for making rich resources available online. They have been useful for Bible studies in our church."

From Texas:

"I have many of your books and pamphlets and appreciate so much your ministry...Do you have a tract or pamphlet that gives Scripture to lead people to Christ? I want to lead them the way Paul did and not use Scripture from the prophecy program which does not pertain to this dispensation of grace." (Yes! We have many gospel tracts and booklets! –Ed.).

From our Inbox:

"I have a couple of questions and requests I'm hoping you will be able to help me with. I'm finally getting to the point in my understanding of grace doctrine that I really want to start serving our Lord, speaking the truth in love, to other faithful men, who will be able to teach others as well."

From Illinois:

"I've been reading your devotional magazine for years now, and I am appalled at the impunity with which you attack historical Christianity, and as a result, your doctrinal errors. Your short-sighted view of Christianity puts you at odds with the Lord Jesus Christ and His orthodox church...You have so many doctrinal errors that it is not worth bothering, especially when you are stiffnecked and don't want to learn."

From Wisconsin:

"We watched your lesson on 1 Corinthians 13:1 (recorded April 2nd: speaking in tongues) in Bible study tonight! Thank you, thank you! From all of us! We were bedraggled on our own, but you clarified the sign gifts so well, it was relieving to see why they are not meant for us today, as Paul sincerely pointed out."

From Facebook:

"Thank you for taking the time to answer my question. I was confused, but since reading your reply and considering the Scripture, I understand baptism much better!"

From Facebook:

"You have no idea how much meaty word is in your response to me—that has opened my eyes to things I just didn't get before. I am MOST grateful!"

From our Inbox:

"I want to thank you for always getting back to me. Thanks to you and a few others, I have grown in the knowledge of God's truth."

From Wisconsin:

"I plan on attending this conference in Lancaster. I am hoping that I can purchase seven of Pastor Kurth's book *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*. I am planning on giving them to the people who are in my Bible study class. Truly looking forward to attending." (We always have a literature display at our conferences. –Ed.).

From Ohio:

"Thank you so much for the *Berean Searchlight* you send for our home Bible study every week. We are a mixture of diverse religions who are growing with God's marvelous grace message."

From Minnesota:

"I work with seeds, and your ministry has continually planted seeds that grow in my soul...Thank you for your ministry of grace. I need it most raising my children on loan from God."

Be a Berean

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

—Acts 17:11



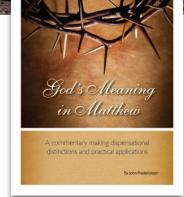
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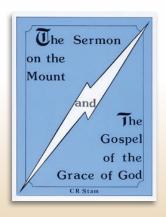
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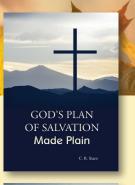
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THANKSGIVING

At Thanksgiving we see people meeting needs of others by serving meals or donating to food pantries. Yet, the greatest need of all is salvation. Now is the time to give these booklets and gospel tracts to those who need the Savior.

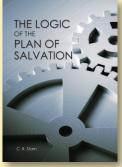
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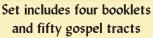














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Gospel tracts by Paul M. Sadler

Special Prices End December 31, 2019

News and Announcements

Now is the time to order early for Christmas! If you are thinking of following Pastor Stam's advice to *use* the holiday to share grace literature with others, the time to order is in November. If you wait until next month, the heavy volume of orders that we receive in December makes it harder to promise on-time delivery. If you'd like to share the grace message with someone who doesn't live in your area, Pastor Aaron Harris (who heads up our mailroom) will be happy to ship your order directly to your friend or loved one, saving you the trouble and expense of reshipping your gift. He'll even enclose a note explaining that the box may have come from us, but the love behind it came as a gift from you.

Don't Forget About Our BBS Network Channel! The gospel of grace is made known 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on our BBS Network Channel. On pages 24,25 of this issue, you can find instructions as to how to download our channel on your Roku and Apple TV devices. If you don't have



Roku or Apple TV, you can also view our channel through the "Watch Online" tab on our BBS website. The BBS Network includes Pastor Kevin Sadler's messages from our *Transformed By Grace* TV program, as well as sermons by pastors Ricky Kurth, John Fredericksen, Ken Lawson and Jeff Seekins.

Midwest Pastoral Opportunity: Grace Gospel Fellowship of Bensenville, Illinois, is searching for a new spiritual leader. This assembly grew out of Pastor Jim Kirkwood's tremendous daily radio ministry over some of Chicago's largest stations, after which Jim's son John Kirkwood faithfully carried the torch at GGF for many years. Now that he's answered the call to a ministry in Arizona, the church's leaders are waiting to hear from you! If you're a pastor who would like to be a part of what God is doing in the suburbs of Chicago, just touch base with Denise Cat at Finance @ GraceBeliever.com.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Arizona Bible Conference, March 20-22, Phoenix, AZ Mississippi Bible Conference, March 20-22, Tupelo, MS Ohio Bible Conference, April 24-26, Ashtabula, OH Footsteps of Paul Greece Tour, September 16-26, 2020



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"Tell them about Christ before they slip away into a Christless eternity where all hope is lost."

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