

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2023



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This month's cover features Raspberry Island Lighthouse in Wisconsin on Lake Superior.

The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply 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 transformation of the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Recently my wife, Valerie, and I were fortunate to be able to spend some long-overdue time with all of our grandkids. Relocations from the Midwest (where they all live) to Southwest Florida and now to Wisconsin have limited our ability to see them as frequently as we'd like.

During those precious days spent together, there were many wonderful memories created: little ones laughing and running throughout the house, learning which foods each child would not eat (and the ones they'd eat every day if given a chance), and of course, conversations about things that matter most to them, which usually revolved around playing. These visits remind us how blessed we are to spend time with them and, most importantly, have the opportunity to impact their lives.

During a recent message at church, I spoke about the importance of using biblical historical examples when teaching children. Many parents desire to teach their children the right things but struggle to find the right words that teach the lessons that will stay with them and guide them so they might make better decisions. We mustn't forget that the Scriptures are full of examples chosen *by God* for that purpose—"whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4).

Events like David's courage to stand for God when all others refused were written down for this purpose and shouldn't be reserved for Sunday school. When needing to teach a child about compassion, consider the example of Boaz towards Ruth; not seeking revenge, Joseph towards his brothers that sold him into slavery; pride, Nebuchadnezzar is one of many good examples. Or when a child needs an example of how to respond to correction, consider David's response to Nathan.

The lessons from these men and women were written because they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man [and child] of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). My advice, if you have a "cheat sheet" of passwords written down or your favorite recipes saved somewhere, consider how much more useful a list of character lessons from the Bible would be to have around and ready to pull out when needed.

During their recent visit, one of our granddaughters followed me into my office, climbed up on my chair, and began flipping through the pages of my Bible, probably not knowing the treasure trove of wisdom it contained. But that's what parents and grandparents get to explain.



By His Grace,
Pastor Don Hosfeld

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?



What do you expect out of life? What do you expect the world to be like? Are you constantly frustrated and agitated at what you see going on around you? If the world is not living up to our expectations, then what is the problem? Is the problem the world and others? Or is the problem that our expectations are wrong?

The first question to ask ourselves is whether our expectations are based on God's Word or our corrupt culture. The world says to expect people to be good and for life to be trouble-free. And many churches which improperly try to apply Israel's kingdom promises to us today say that if only we had enough faith our life would be marked by prosperity and health. But our experience, and more importantly, a proper understanding of the Scriptures, say otherwise.

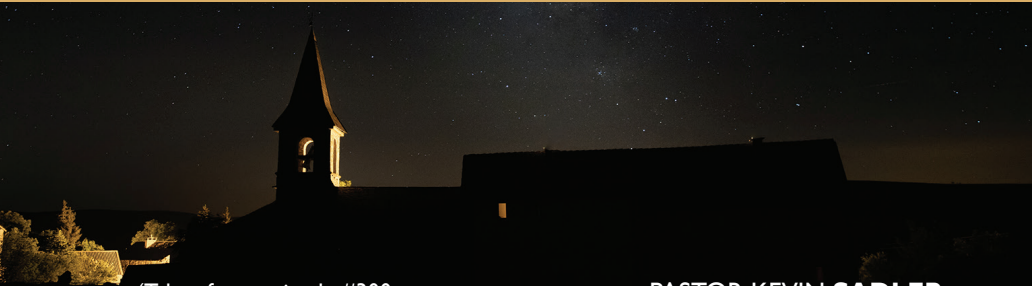
Rather than living in a world that is good and getting better, the Apostle Paul tells us that it is bad and getting worse (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:16; 2 Tim. 3:1-5,13)! Instead of expecting only sunshine and roses, we are told to expect suffering in this life (Job 5:7; Rom. 8:17-18; Phil. 1:29).

If we have wrong expectations, we may become angry or depressed when they are not met. But if we have proper biblical expectations, we will have the proper perspective when it comes to living in this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). When we see people behaving badly and the world going rapidly downhill, we do not despair because it is what the Scriptures tell us to expect. We know that this world is ruled "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). When we see corrupt and incompetent government, we do not despair because we know that this world is not our home and that our true citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). We have peace of mind because we know that our hope is in heaven (Col. 1:5). We have confidence and assurance because God has promised to deliver us from this evil world into his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18; Titus 2:13).

Only by a proper understanding of God's plan for the ages and our current position in the dispensation of grace will our expectations for life be consistent and in keeping with reality.

—Pastor David Havard

Eutychus



(Taken from episode #300
of *Transformed by Grace*)

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
Berean Bible Society President

William Webber tells the following story: “I was pastor of a small church in a rural community. Wilbur and his wife, Leah, attended every Sunday morning. Wilbur was a farmer, and whenever he came into the house from the field and sat down, he would fall asleep.

“It was such a habit that when he came into church and sat in the pew, he would also fall asleep. I discovered that some of the members of the church were taking bets to see how long I could keep Wilbur awake on Sunday mornings.

“Wilbur’s wife was embarrassed by his behavior, especially when he began to snore. She tried everything to keep her sleepy spouse awake. She complained to him that she was getting calluses on her elbow from poking him in the ribs in a futile attempt to keep him alert.

“One day, while shopping in the grocery store, she saw a small

bottle of Limburger cheese. Leah bought it and dropped it in her purse. The next Sunday morning, I had just started the sermon when Wilbur began to nod.

“When I finished the first point in my three-point sermon, I could see I was losing him. As I started the third point, Wilbur began to snore. Quietly, Leah opened her purse, took out the bottle of Limburger cheese and held it under her husband’s nose.

“It worked. Wilbur sat up straight and, in a voice that could be heard all over the church, said, ‘Leah, will you please keep your feet on your own side of the bed!’”¹

It can be dangerous and risky to fall asleep in church. The young man, Eutychus, in Acts 20 learned that the hard way too.

A SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them

to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

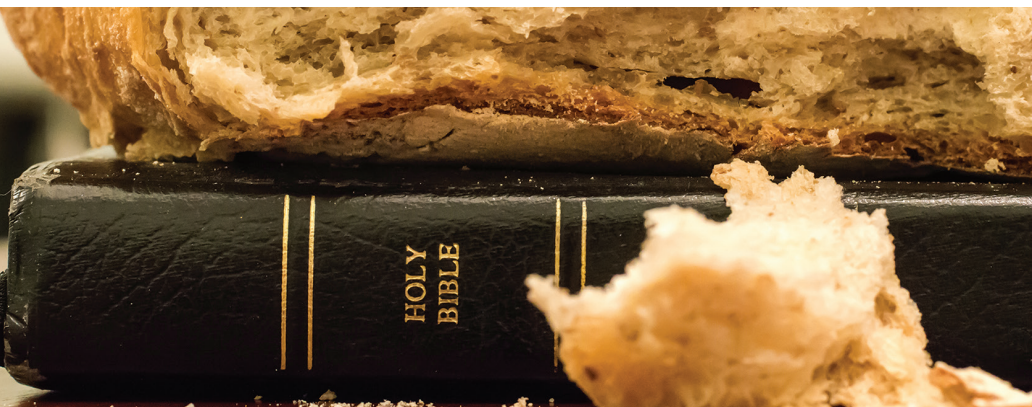
“And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together” (Acts 20:6-8).

The setting of this account is during the latter part of Paul’s third apostolic journey. Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem with a collection for the poor saints there (Rom. 15:25-26). The apostle had intended to sail straight to Syria from Corinth, but because of a plot by Paul’s enemies to harm him, Paul took a different route, and went the long way through Macedonia (Acts 20:3).

Along with several faithful men (Acts 20:4), Paul then traveled to Philippi, where he met up again with Luke. Most of Paul’s traveling companions then sailed ahead of him from Macedonia to Troas on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea in northwest Asia Minor (Acts 20:5). Later Paul and Luke also sailed there. Arriving at Troas, Paul spent a week ministering in the city (Acts 20:6).

Then, “upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them” (Acts 20:7). The breaking of bread does not necessarily mean that they partook of the Lord’s Supper as described in 1 Corinthians 11:23-24. It just means that they dined together. In Acts 2:46, we read of the Kingdom church after Pentecost doing the same, “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and *breaking bread* from house to house” (cf. Luke 24:30,35). Paul was departing Troas the next day, and the breaking of bread at this Sunday evening service was a time of fellowship and a farewell meal for the apostle and his companions.

The congregation at Troas had distinguished visitors present this night as they broke bread. From verse 4 we learn that there was a Gentile friend from Berea, named “Sopater,” and two brothers in Christ from Thessalonica, “Aristarchus and Secundus,” along with another saint from Derbe named “Gaius,” and two other believers from the province of Asia Minor, “Tychicus and Trophimus.” Also present was Paul’s son in the faith, Timothy, and the beloved physician, Luke.



In the course of the meeting, “Paul preached unto them.” They were all fed physical bread, and then Paul gave them spiritual bread and nourishment from the Word of God. This reminds us how the Word is to be the centerpiece when believers gather together. The Word of God is of primary importance to the Church. It is the Word that convicts the unbelieving of their need for Christ and equips and encourages the saints. And by the Word, the Spirit guides and teaches the Church and leads us into greater maturity in Christ.



Paul began preaching at this Sunday evening service, and he continued to preach *for a long time*—until midnight (Acts 20:7). Because Paul was leaving them the next day, possibly never to return to Troas, there was much encouragement, exhortation, instruction, and warning to be given to these dear saints.

In verse 8, Luke provided eyewitness detail that “there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.” These lamps likely were filled with oil and had wicks that flickered and smoked.

Many of these lamps flamed in that crowded upper chamber. The “many lights” testify to the



boldness of this meeting. This gathering of believers was not held in secret. The upper room in this home was lit up and it shone brightly. Those in Troas knew some important event was going on as this group met.

However, when you put many people together in an upper room with many lamps burning, we naturally believe that the house would have been warm, stuffy, and smoky too. That is important to remember as we consider the reasons Eutychus fell asleep.

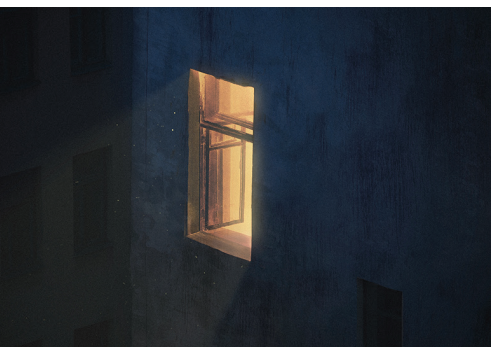
DROPPING OUT OF PAUL'S CLASS

“And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

“And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him” (Acts 20:9-10).

With that upper chamber being warm and smoky from the numerous lamps, a young man named Eutychus found his way to

a window to stay cool and to take in the fresh, night air.



“As Paul was long preaching,” Eutychus was listening, but after a while he fell “into a deep sleep.” The description of Eutychus “being fallen into a deep sleep” portrays him as being *gradually* overcome by sleep in spite of his best efforts to stay awake. It’s easy to picture Eutychus getting drowsy, beginning to nod, shaking himself awake, trying not to sleep, nodding again, and waking momentarily. But then unable to fend off sleep any longer, it got the best of him and, eventually, “he sunk down with sleep.”

When you think about it though, Eutychus had a full stomach, he was in a warm room with a cool breeze in his face, and the hour was late; it was midnight. That is a triple whammy! And so, like Cain who “went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod” (Gen. 4:16), Eutychus entered the land of nod.

Then Eutychus dropped out of Paul’s class—literally! Falling into that deep, sound sleep on that open windowsill, Eutychus slumped and then plummeted out of the window, falling to

the ground below. It was a fall of three stories. The shocking event and the sound of Eutychus’s body hitting the ground suddenly stopped the meeting, and the stunned believers rushed down the stairs and gathered around Eutychus’s body.

Dr. Luke (Col. 4:14), the inspired physician who wrote the account and saw the event, pronounced him “dead” (Acts 20:9) on the spot. We see also that Luke declared him “alive” (v. 12) after Paul raised him from the dead. When Luke wrote that Eutychus was “taken up dead” this means that when they picked up his body, it was a corpse. The fall from the third-story window had been fatal.

In verse 10, we learn that Paul went down from the upper chamber and fell on Eutychus’s dead body. Paul was full of tenderness toward the young man, and we see that by the way Paul embraced his lifeless body.

Then Paul told the troubled group gathered around to not be alarmed or troubled because “his [Eutychus’s] life is in him.” When Paul fell on him and embraced him, God’s power, which is much stronger than death, restored Eutychus’s life. And Eutychus was, at that moment, alive again, raised from the dead and fully healed from his fall. Thus, the crowd did not need to be troubled any longer.

The name, Eutychus, means fortunate. It was *fortunate* for him that Paul was the preacher that night, and that Eutychus fell out of a three-story-high window

in the presence of a man of God who, through the power and goodness of God, had the ability as a true apostle to bring him back to life!

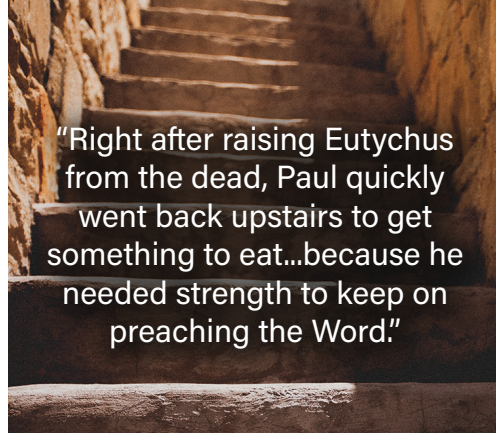
BACK TO SUNDAY MEETING

“When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

“And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted” (Acts 20:11-12).

Verse 11 shows us how intent Paul was on teaching this group of believers. Little emphasis is placed on this outstanding miracle. Right after raising Eutychus from the dead, Paul quickly went back upstairs to get something to eat. He ate something because he needed strength to keep on preaching the Word. It was as though Paul glanced at his watch and said to the group, “Oh man, we lost 20 minutes of teaching time. Let’s go upstairs and get something to eat quick, because I have more I need to teach you about Christ and God’s grace before I leave.”

Paul and Luke give this miracle *second place* to the preaching of the Word of God. Although the miraculous sign gifts of the Acts period were still being manifested, miracles would not sustain people’s faith. But the truth of the Word of God can and does sustain faith. Thus, the preaching of the Word was Paul’s foremost priority. A miracle, even one as outstanding as raising the dead, was secondary to the Word.

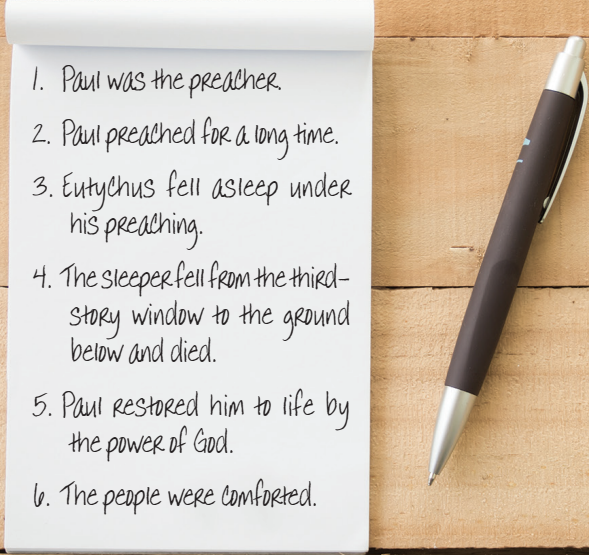


After this short break, Paul ended up teaching the rest of the night. Luke stated that Paul “talked a long while, even till break of day” (v. 11). We can imagine though that Paul had everyone’s undivided attention at that point, and no one got sleepy after the miracle! After an all-night meeting, never to be forgotten, at the break of day, the apostle bade farewell to the believers in Troas and departed to continue his journey to Jerusalem.

Verse 12 tells us that Eutychus, the fortunate young man, departed as well and was brought home alive. The group of believers and Eutychus’s friends and family were “not a little comforted”; they were all *greatly* comforted that he returned home that morning and that they did not need to be planning a funeral. If anyone doubted the authenticity of Paul as an apostle of God (2 Cor. 12:12), they needed only to talk to the young man in Troas who fell asleep in church.

PRACTICAL TRUTH AND IMPORTANT SYMBOLISM

There is practical truth to be found in this account. For

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1. Paul was the preacher.
 2. Paul preached for a long time.
 3. Eutychus fell asleep under his preaching.
 4. The sleeper fell from the third-story window to the ground below and died.
 5. Paul restored him to life by the power of God.
 6. The people were comforted.

instance, we learn from Eutychus that a wide-open window is not a good place to sit when hearing the preaching of the Word. Falling asleep in that window led to his falling to his death. This window can portray a window of divided attention, a window of compromise, or a window of exploring and looking at the world. All these things can lead a believer to becoming spiritually slumberous and falling asleep spiritually.

Thus, Eutychus is a great example of Ephesians 5:14: "...Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The believer can be lulled to sleep by the world and have a dulled, dead Christian experience. But God would have us wake up (1 Thes. 5:6) and yield our lives to Christ, being awake and sensitive to spiritual realities and to the importance of living for eternal things (Col. 3:1,2).

We can glean this practical truth from this passage, but there is even further symbolic

significance to this episode. Note these six important facts about this account: 1) Paul was the preacher; 2) Paul preached for a long time; 3) Eutychus fell asleep under his preaching; 4) The sleeper fell from the third-story window to the ground below and died; 5) Paul restored him to life by the power of God; 6) The people were comforted.

Stop and think about Paul and his epistles, and how those letters, by the Spirit, continue to preach the truth to us, the Church. Then think about how long Paul has been preaching truth to the Church. Paul has been preaching for *a long time*, even longer than Moses did. Moses and the law were in effect and preached to Israel for about 1500 years, whereas Paul has been preaching the truths of grace for nearly 2000 years so far in this dispensation of grace. Paul has been "long preaching" during the darkness of this evil age (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:16). And Paul is *still*

preaching as this dispensation continues to this moment.

There are two things that are emblematic of Paul's preaching in this account: "bread" and "many lights." Under grace, the Church receives its spiritual bread and nourishment from the preaching of Paul in his epistles. Through Paul and the message revealed to him by the risen, exalted Christ, believers today are "*nourished* up in the words of faith and of good doctrine"(1 Tim. 4:6).

When believers come to see the distinctive message of Paul for us today, they'll often state how it explains so many difficult passages, opens up their understanding of Scripture, and solves so many problems. Many believers describe this experience of coming to an understanding of God's program of grace for today as *the light went on* (Eph. 1:18). "The preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16:25) results in illumination by the Spirit and "many lights" for the Church.

The Church is "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation [generation]" (Phil. 2:15). But by sitting under the preaching of

Paul and living out his teaching, we can "shine as lights in the world," like the upper chamber of that house did that Sunday night in Troas.

The group that was present in that house in Troas was a picture of the Church, the Body of Christ. It was primarily made up of Gentiles, but also one who was ethnically half Jew and half Gentile (Timothy), and at least one who was fully Jewish (Paul). But these brethren were "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" and one in Him (Gal. 3:26-28), with "no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. 10:12). And Eutychus, a "young man," portrays the "one new man" (Eph. 2:15) of "the Church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22-23).

Each of us Gentiles under grace are like this Gentile named Eutychus. We are *fortunate*. We are blessed that God, in His mercy, chose to have a program with the nations (Rom. 11:30) by which we have been saved by the grace of God and lifted high in Christ. And like all those believers were in an upper chamber in the *third loft*, so we have been

"...sitting under the preaching of Paul and living out his teaching we can 'shine as lights in the world,' like that bright house did that Sunday night in Troas."



seated in Christ in the *third heaven* (2 Cor. 12:2; Eph. 1:20; 2:6; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1).

However, sitting under Paul's preaching, much of the Church, like Eutychus, gradually became drowsy and fell asleep, into a deep sleep, until it stopped listening to Paul. And gradually, not all at once, but one after another, portions of the Church nodded and lost hold of the distinctive apostleship and message of the Apostle Paul: not being under law but under grace, the pretribulational rapture of the Church, the difference between Israel and the Church, and even justification by faith alone.

By putting itself under the law, the Church *fell* from grace (Gal. 5:4) and from its enjoyment and understanding of all we have in Christ today. As a result, the life of the Church was gone, and the Church became a morgue for a long time in the Dark Ages.




However, when the Reformation came, it was *Pauline truth* that began getting recovered. The concepts of grace alone, “the just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17), “one body” (Eph. 4:4), and

the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13) of the Rapture were truths first revealed through Paul that were recovered. Then the distinctive ministry and message of Paul were again recognized in the 20th Century.

What we can see in the account of Eutychus is that it is Paul, the ministry and message of Paul, that gives *life* to the Church. It is when the grace of God as revealed through Paul *embraces* the Church that it finds its life and power in Christ. As it was God Who gave life to Eutychus through Paul, so it is God that gives life to the Church through Paul.

And the result will be as Acts 20:12 states, “And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” When the Church turns to the truth that Christ revealed to Paul for this dispensation, the Church, like Eutychus, will be alive, *and* it will result in not a little comfort.

There is *great comfort* to be found in this remarkable message: the comfort of salvation by grace through faith as a free gift, being sealed in Christ, being blessed with all spiritual blessings, having a seated position in Christ in the heavenlies, and to look for Christ's appearing to catch us away to glory to forever be with Him before the Tribulation ever begins. As Paul wrote of that blessed hope, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thes. 4:18). 

1. William Webber, “Sleeping Through The Sermon,” eDigg.com accessed September 1, 2023, jokes.edigg.com/Farmer/Sleeping_Through_The_Sermon.shtml.



PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Berean Searchlight Editor

Imagine for a moment that an unbeliever came up to you, knowing that you were a Christian, and asked, “What are some of the worst things you, a Christian, could do?” What would you put on that list? Murder, adultery, taking the Lord’s name in vain? All of these are likely to be on most, if not everyone’s, list, and deservedly so. However, there’s a sin that gets little attention but is so severe that Christ said the person who does it would be better off being killed in one of the most heinous ways imaginable than facing judgment for it. Do you know what that is?

“Then said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (Luke 17:1,2)

It would be easy to dismiss this warning from the Lord because

He is not speaking to us, the Body of Christ. And while it is true that *we* need never worry that *any* sin will remove our position in Christ and send us to face the Great White Throne Judgment, the fact remains that the message from this passage, and many others like it, serves as an important lesson about what God views as one of the most egregious things we can do.

The word “offenses” (v. 1) is the Greek word *skandalon* and is elsewhere rendered “stumblingblock” (cf. Rom. 11:9; 1 Cor. 1:23; Rev. 2:14). It means ‘snare,’ ‘a trap,’ ‘any impediment placed in the way and causing one to *stumble* or fall.’...It comes from the trigger of a trap on which bait is placed and, when touched by the animal, springs and causes it to close, causing entrapment. It’s always used to describe an enticement to conduct that could ruin the person in question.

Included amongst the Mosaic law given to Israel was the

command to not be a stumbling block. Leviticus 19:14 says, “Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD.” Did you notice the “but shalt fear thy God?” A clear warning from God, but to understand the significance of this warning and how seriously He views this issue, we would do well to recognize that phrase is only used twice in all of Scripture.¹

“For they are My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; *but shalt fear thy God*” (Lev. 25:42,43).

Are these issues related? Beyond simply being compassionate, why might God be concerned about His servants being treated with “rigour” (cruelty)? It’s because being cruel to someone or something is to *provoke* them. We all know “not to tease a dog, or it might bite you.” Or as Paul warns fathers, “provoke not your children to anger, *lest they be discouraged*” (Col. 3:21).

To understand why God told His new nation not to treat His servants with “rigour,” we should know that Exodus 1:13,14 says, “The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with *rigour*: And they made their lives *bitter* with hard bondage... wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.” The word translated as “bitter” is also translated as “provoke” (cf. Ex. 23:21), and to provoke means “to cause” or “to offend.”² Thus, both times

that God warns, “But shalt fear thy God,” He is warning not to be a *cause* or *offense*, a “stumbling-block” to His people.

The Fisherman or the Worm

The Scriptures provide us with many examples of stumbling blocks, and often, the Old Testament prophet Balaam is given as the classic example. After being led by Moses for forty years in the



wilderness, the Israelites found themselves in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River. The King of Moab, Balak, was “distressed” because he heard how the Israelites had conquered the Amorites. Afraid they were next, Balak sent messengers to bribe the non-Israelite prophet Balaam in hopes that he would curse the Israelites and, thereby, bless his military campaign against them. Balaam happily accepted their gifts, though thanks to God, things didn’t work out the way Balaam and Balak had hoped.

In his desire “for reward” (Jude v. 11), Balaam was willing to see others, namely the nation of Israel, suffer the consequences of sin. This reward was not for wealth alone but also power (cf. Num 22:17; 24:11)—something

mankind has always sought almost as much as wealth. The desire to gain power for themselves or those they support still leads many to take part in enticing others to sin, and we should be mindful not to take part in any way.

The truth is Balaam is not called a stumbling block anywhere in the Scriptures, nor is he described as one. Instead, we are told that he “taught Balak to *cast a stumblingblock* before the children of Israel” (Rev. 2:14). In reality, the stumbling block to Israel wasn’t Balaam or Balak. It was the women that Balaam told Balak to use to lure the men of Israel to sin against God.

After the Lord told Moses to “avenge the children of Israel” (Num. 31:2) for what had been done to them, Moses said, “Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, *these caused* the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD” (vv. 15,16).

Remember that an “offense” or stumbling block is the lure or baited hook, not the fisherman who throws it. It is that thing that entices. Christ’s words in Luke were not woe unto the stumbling blocks, but woe unto *through whom they come*. His words don’t remove the guilt of these women. They apparently knew exactly what they were doing, and as a result, all the women were destroyed along with the men unless they were found to have not been with a man, thus innocent of luring Israel to sin (cf. vv. 17,18).

It’s not a question of *if* there will be stumbling blocks placed in front of us; Christ confirmed there would be when He said, “It is impossible but that offences will come” (Luke 17:1). This is still true today. Our lives *will* have people and opportunities that can entice us to do that which God would not have us to do. The question is what we will do when offenses come and are we willing to take part in causing another to stumble. Will we, like Balaam and Balek, be so interested in getting what we want, even if it means luring and provoking others to sin?



In Romans 14:13, Paul says, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” If we are to live up to this, we must be able to correctly recognize what a stumbling block is. Too often, Christians focus on drinking alcohol near someone with a drinking problem or women dressed immodestly, but there is a great deal more of our actions to be considered if we are to avoid being or putting a stumbling block in front of another.



"A stumbling block is anything that hinders another from a relationship with God or directs another away from what is true or right according to God and His Word."



Sound Speech

"For in many things we offend all. If any man *offend* not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).

One of the most common ways in which man causes another to stumble is in what comes out of his mouth. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21). Sometimes, it's our words in anger that provoke another, and other times it is giving bad (unbiblical) advice or counsel. Remember that the first sin was the result of the first stumbling block, and that came from the *mouth* of Satan. That should illustrate the seriousness and the impact words can have on one another.

When describing Satan as "more subtil" (cunning) (Gen. 3:1), surely this conveys the manner in which he sought to create division between man and God. Satan didn't need to tell Adam and Eve to rebel against God or to worship him instead. All he needed to do was gently nudge them in a direction, and man's pride and lust did the rest.

His words were designed to cause doubt and question God's intentions and goodness. As if to say, "Was it possible that God, who had carefully designed this magnificent garden with fruit-bearing trees and placed them there for their enjoyment, would He actually withhold the fruit from them?" Suggesting either they were misunderstanding the situation or God Himself was being jealous and unkind.

He intended to either make them doubt the truth of the prohibition and convince them that eating from the forbidden tree would not be a sin or instill distrust and negative thoughts about God to distance their affection from Him.

Consider when Peter rebuked the Lord for saying that He would go to Jerusalem, be killed, and rise again (Matt. 16:2). Christ's response to him was "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an *offence* unto Me" (v. 23). Here again we have our word "offense." And this gets to the heart of any stumbling block. A stumbling block is something

that hinders another from a relationship with God or directs another away from what is true or right according to God and His Word.

Are we the channel in which God will reach another, or the excuse for people to feel justified in rejecting God? Do our actions and words instill faith in God and His Word or drive people from it? Neither Satan's nor Peter's words were according to truth, and where would both lead? We might say Peter's heart was in the right place, but this does not excuse or make his words right; it demonstrates the danger of emotions.



Paul said, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of *edifying*, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). If our words are not building up, what are they doing? In our relationships (marriages, families, friendships, coworkers, social media), do our words "minister grace" or stimulate strife? Do our words push our spouses or others toward truth, toward peace, toward God, or toward walking in the flesh?

Sound Doctrine

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

One of the reasons that the *Searchlight* dedicates so much time and space to doctrine is because another common but overlooked stumbling block is the teaching of false doctrine. The world contains a lot of false teachers, and they can be very persuasive, especially those who use the Bible. Many true Christians who earnestly love the Lord have fallen victim to teachers using Scripture out of context and who fail to rightly divide.

Some behave as though they have a right to interpret Scripture in ways that fit *their* idea of what is right, and by doing so, they fail to recognize that the authority is the Scripture upon us, not us upon the Scripture. We must never forget that these are God's words, and there is a huge distinction between being persuaded in our own mind (Rom. 14:5) and trying to conform the Word to what's in our mind.

That Christians today openly reject what God has said about parenting, politics, and many other issues is a serious cause for alarm. It's remarkable to consider how much time the Apostle Paul devotes to warning us about the need to hold fast to "sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13) and "sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9).


So often, we find that people today preach secular philosophy in place of the Word of God. Allowing feelings to be the judge on matters of what's true or,

to some degree, thinking that what the Bible says is outdated. Preferring instead to listen to or suggest people follow modern thinking. Much like Peter, words to this effect may be well-meaning, but they are wrong, nonetheless, and cause others to stumble.

Maybe they are unaware or forgetting Paul's warning about this very thing: "Preach *the word*; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort **with** all longsuffering and **doctrine**. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:2,3).

Like with most things, we have a choice: we can either edify (build up) one another or hinder one another. In every interaction, we are either a stumbling block or a building block. Regardless of your age or sphere of influence, you will make a difference each and every day in the lives of those around you.

I like how one author put it: "Whether we are conscious of

it or not, the life of each of us, whether we are rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, is exercising some influence upon others. It is not necessary that we should know another in order to exercise an influence upon him. Thousands of men are influenced by persons whom they never saw. The faithful sabbath-school [Sunday School] teacher may leaven [excite] with gospel truth young minds that may yet control the destinies of a nation. Young women, by the power of their own Christian character, may change for the better the muddy current of many a godless life. The great matter is for every one of us to live near to God, to cultivate a Christ-like character, and then our life is sure to be a blessing."³ 

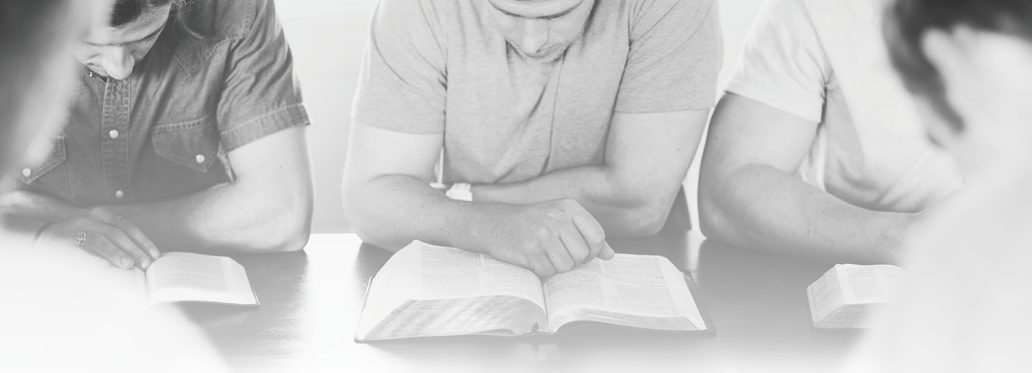
1. Similar phrases, "but *thou* shalt fear thy God" (Lev. 25:17), concern oppressing one another, and "but fear thy God" (Lev. 25:36), taking usury (interest) from a brother, agree with this conclusion. Five times in total, "fear thy God" is found.

2. <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/provoke>.

3. https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/irwin/the_influence_of_our_lives_upon_others.htm.

"Are we the channel in which God will reach another, or the excuse for people to feel justified in rejecting God?"





SPOUSE *to* SPOUSE

At the wedding in Cana, we learn in John 2:2 that “Jesus was called...to the marriage.” This needs to be the case for every marriage!

If the Christian marriage is to glorify God and be a blessing to us and others, it needs to be built on the bedrock of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The real secret of true happiness in marriage is not diplomacy, strategy, or methods, but rather union with Christ.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:12 we learn that it is “the Lord” Who makes us “to increase and abound in love one toward another.” As we draw closer to Christ in our personal relationship with Him, the knowledge of Him and His selfless love (Eph. 5:1-2) will move us to grow and abound in love. And hearts filled with Christ’s love will never be far apart.

Ironically, the home and our marriages are often the place we think of last when putting our faith into practice, when it should be first. For example, the believer is called to love his neighbor (Gal. 5:14). Our minds immediately go to all others—anyone and everyone—when we think of loving our neighbor. But our spouse is our nearest neighbor, and therefore, our spouse should be our deepest love.

Our faith needs to literally come *home* with us. The barometer of our walk with the Lord is how we relate to others, and home is the place we most often relate with others. Thus, especially with our spouses, by the power of the Spirit, may we

“Put on...bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:12-14).

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

“A good marriage isn’t something you find; it’s something you make and you have to keep on making it.”

—Gary Thomas



Comforted of God

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor. 1:3,4).

It wasn't that long ago that I remember seeing what seemed to be a never-ending supply of television commercials advertising psychic hotlines. As I sat there trying to watch Larry, Curly, and Mo, it seemed like more often I was watching Dionne Warwick tell me I should be calling some 1-900 number for the Psychic Friends Network.

The world has always sought to know the future. Did you know that Pliny the Elder, the 1st Century Roman author, describes the use of the crystal ball by soothsayers in his day? Man wants to know the future, and for good reason. In a society filled with uncertainty and turmoil, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. We see conflicts and tensions rising, ideologies clashing, and we live in a world surrounded by division.

However, as believers, we possess a profound assurance that enables us to face the future without fear. Armed with the Word of God *rightly divided*, we know how the future unfolds. The Word of God serves as our comfort, illuminating the path ahead and providing insight into how events will unfold. If the “Last Days” interest you, just make sure to pay attention to *which* last days are about us.

—Pastor Don Hosfeld

Chart taken from *Transformed by Grace* Episode #186
“Two Last Days” by Pastor Kevin Sadler



Israel



Grace



Israel

The “Last Days” of Israel

The “Last Days” of the
Dispensation of Grace

The “Last Days” of Israel

Pentecost
(Acts 2:16-21)

“This is that”

Signs, Times, & Seasons

Pouring out of the Spirit

Temporarily interrupted...

1 Timothy 4:1-3

2 Timothy 3:1-12

“Perilous times shall come”

Trends

Rapture of the Body of Christ
(1 Thes. 4:13-18).

...Last days resume

(Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 30; Zech. 14;
Matt. 24; Revelation)

Signs, Times, & Seasons

Tribulation/Second Coming

Millennial Kingdom



Generational Reconciliation: *Maturing the Body of Christ*

PASTOR JOEL SANDERS
Guest Writer

I can hear it now, mainly because I have heard it many times and in many churches, “I wish the older generation would accept technology,” “I wish the younger generation would accept the hymns,” “I just don’t understand their generation,” “We’ll let them do their thing, and we will do our thing.” I believe God planned for generational differences. It is evident in Scripture that generational differences are needed to progress the mission of God. Many leaders acknowledge the need to tackle an issue such as this, but either lack the resources and/or the knowledge to accomplish it. From choosing the type of music that will be used in the worship service, to understanding the need or purpose of technology, to having differences in evangelistic techniques, these generational issues have left many churches divided with no clear path of reconciliation.

One thing is certain, God is not a divided God. He is a God of order, and He functions in an orderly fashion whether we understand His ways or not. Apostle Paul states concerning this characteristic of God, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). For extra assurance on this matter, Paul writes to the saints in Corinth, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Simply put, God does not need man’s approval to function in His structure and order yet requires decency and order for those who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Where does that put us in regard to practical application? How can those separated by one, two, or even three generations interact with one another? For those in the younger generations, you might wonder how you can relate to those whom you feel are “outdated” in their practices, traditions, and beliefs. You may think, “Why should I sing these archaic hymns when there is modern music that touches my heart?” For those of the older generations, you may be wondering how

you can relate to someone who is heavily involved in the technological age (phones, tablets, video games, etc.). You might even think to yourself, “I wish they would go outside and play because that’s what I did when I was a kid,” or “Why change something that is not broken?”

The simple fact is that every generation believes that they have the best way of living, worshiping, playing outside, thinking, etc. What if I were to tell you that generational biases are secular at their core? Let’s see what the Scripture says for a moment. In Romans, Paul writes, “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That

ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:5-7).

Let me be clear here; I am not advocating for “acceptance” as the world teaches it today. In the secular, worldly sphere, acceptance would have us accept each other based on our sin nature, not on our likeness in Christ Jesus. Apostle Paul, on the other hand, pleads with us to accept one another in love and specifically in Christ.

Imagine, if you will, God looking upon His saved creation and hearing excuses as to why one generation has failed to reach out to another generation. “Sorry God, I simply don’t understand them.” “Sorry God, my comforts are too important.” What a challenge for us today.

The truth is that the Christian life can be uncomfortable at times. We are called to step outside of our comfort zones, outside of our traditions, and outside of our routines. This can be done without compromising our faith and our convictions. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12).

For many years, foreign missionaries have left the comforts of their home countries and entered the world of overseas ministry. American missionaries leave the comforts of the familiar, the contentment of being near family, and the ease and luxuries of the American way of life and head into the unfamiliar and the uncomfortable. Upon arriving in a foreign country, missionaries have to immerse themselves in a new culture. To act otherwise can lead to a stalling mission and sometimes even being an insult.

In a similar manner, each generation has developed their own culture. Each generation is able to develop their own culture because



times are always changing. Music, haircuts, clothes, technology (phones, video games, cars), home life (playing outside vs. playing inside, riding bicycles vs. playing with RC cars, etc.), receiving the news (newspaper vs. social media), and even simple preferences change (paper bulletins vs. digital bulletins). Similar to the missionaries that become familiar with the foreign cultures in which they live, we are to become familiar with the different generational cultures of today. Just as missionaries are told not to “Americanize” foreign cultures, we should not “self-generationalize” other generational cultures.

The question for me became, what practices can I implement that would aid in joining together the generations that would not offend the older generations and that would excite the younger generations? So who is to blame for this division? Everyone, for all people in every generation are sinful, and all are without excuse. However, we do know that there are sound Biblical principles that show the older generation teaching and training up the younger generations (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:7; Prov. 1:1-35; 22:6; Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:1-15; 3 John 1:4; and the examples of Moses to Joshua, King David to Solomon, and Paul to Timothy/Titus, etc.).

Last year, *Community Bible Church* in Tipp City, Ohio, began a program called “Passing the Torch” in an effort to aid this generational issue within our church. The idea was to build from Paul’s powerful message in 2 Timothy, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), combined with his later message in chapter 4:1-2. Every youth from ages 7 to 18 was paired with an older individual. The mentor became the life mentor (if allowed) of the youth and remained as long as he or she desired.

What started as a program targeting the youth quickly sprouted excitement in our older generations (25 and older). We began the program by hosting quarterly events where both the mentor and the mentee would come together and accomplish a task(s) together. We hosted an event with different games geared toward teamwork. We put on a chili competition where each mentor/mentee team created a chili and competed with all the others. We played a survivor game where each team had to solve hard puzzles and/or tasks.

As the program began to grow, the mentors began to come to me to tell me how much the youth had impacted their lives. Some have taken it to the next level and have taken their mentee out (with their parent’s approval) for coffee, or a movie, just to spend time with them. Some purchase little gifts for them and remind them that they are loved



and are being prayed for. They write notes to them during the school year to encourage them. Some have attended sporting events. And nearly all of them have told me how much they have learned about the younger generation.

To flip it around for a moment, the younger generation has begun to seek out their mentors on Sundays and throughout the week. They call them. They go up to them to check in on them. They talk about and plan upcoming Passing the Torch events together. They, too, have communicated to me the joys of having a mentor.

I have found that the way to understand other generations and bridge this seemingly endless gap is to immerse ourselves in another generational culture. We are not to become them but to get to know them and their interests. If we remain judgmental and self-tradition-focused (speaking of all generations), what will ever be learned? How will we ever build on another's foundation if we fail to understand their heart and their culture (1 Cor. 3:10)? However, if we come alongside them, work with them, get to know them, love them, teach them, guide them, respect them, and honor them, imagine what would be produced? If we do these things, how would it impact our own lives?

I urge you to think about the consequences of keeping the generations separated within your local church. I urge you to think about ways you can reach out to the unfamiliar and to the uncomfortable. "If it is possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). I believe we can do this with our many generations in the Body of Christ!



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Question Box

“What is penance? Is it addressed in Scripture, and does it have a place in the life of a person in the Body of Christ?”

The word penance is only found in two versions of the Bible: the NLT, a thought-for-thought translation, and the NAB, a Catholic version.

While some define penance as merely a “*voluntary* self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong,” in reality, penance is directed by a priest and more accurately defined as a “punishment and work to *atone* for sin.” Thus, making it a *work* designed to *obtain forgiveness* for sin and to provide reconciliation with God. This meaning is confirmed by the statements and actions of those who practice it.

According to Catholic doctrine, the “sacrament of Penance is, for those who have fallen after baptism, *necessary unto salvation*”¹ and is “granted through the priest’s absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to *satisfy* for the same.”² Furthermore, they claim “penance is the removal of the one obstacle that keeps the soul away from God.”² None of these agree with Scripture.

According to Romans, members of the Body of Christ are “justified *freely* by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through *faith* in His blood” (3:24,25). “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh *not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness” (4:4,5). “Therefore being justified by *faith*, we *have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by *faith* into this grace wherein we stand” (5:1,2).

Penance is neither Scriptural nor glorifying to God and has no place in the life of a believer. For those of us that believe that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, we are “in Christ”; no obstacle exists between us, and nothing can separate us from Him (cf. Rom. 8:37-39). For those who have not believed, no work of man can secure that relationship.

—Pastor Don Hosfeld

1. <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/trent/fourteenth-session.htm>.

2. <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/penance>.

BBS Letter Excerpts



From Minnesota:

"I have been watching the TV series [*Transformed by Grace*] for quite some time. Pastor Sadler has drawn me close to his theology, and I will continue to be a servant of Christ."

From YouTube:

"Thanks, Pastor Kevin Sadler, for all the teaching of God's Word. It helps me a lot with the spiritual needs of my life as a missionary here in Myanmar. It is one source of my encouragement every day."

From Ohio:

"Thank you for the monthly *Searchlight*, books, and other material you produce. It has been a blessing. Please use this donation for the *Grace Study Bible* project."

From Illinois:

"Thank you to Jessica Sadler for the 'Woman to Woman' article in the December 2022 *Berean Searchlight*. I found it thought-provoking and helpful."

From Texas:

"Thank you, Pastor Sadler, for your wonderful teaching. I learn so much each week from you. God bless everyone at *Transformed by Grace*."

From Washington:

"Pastor Kevin makes the Bible so clear. We need, need, need him to continue preaching, whatever we have to do to keep him on the air." (Your gift helps, thank you! –Ed.)

From New York:

"I was really stressed out, but after watching Pastor Kevin, I'm not as stressed. He's fun."

From North Dakota:

"Thank you very much for the program *Transformed by Grace* and also the *Berean Searchlight*. We absolutely love how the Lord is using your ministry in our lives and the lives of others. The graphics that you use on your program are awesome! There is an 'unsung hero' behind all of that work! It is appreciated....Well done, thy good and faithful servants!"

From Colorado:

"Extremely grateful for *Transformed by Grace*. He's staving off apostasy with the correct gospel. I wish we had him as our pastor."

From Arizona:

"Thank you for your teaching on CTN (*Christian Television Network*)."

From Florida:

"Thank you for this DVD series [*The Seven Saying's of the Cross*]. Please accept this donation to keep 'teaching the Word' so clearly on CTN-TV, Clearwater, Florida."

From Facebook:

"I really like the name [*Berean Bible Society*]. The Bible says that the Bereans always analyze the receiving message before rejecting or accepting it."

From Oklahoma:

"Thank you for the wonderful tribute to our beloved Les Feldick; what a great man of God. He was my mentor...and how I found the *Berean Bible Society*. I am so thankful for both."

From Georgia:

"Where have you guys been all my life? I just found you this year, and I'm so excited. I found your ministry from watching *Transformed by Grace* which follows Les Feldick. You and Les are like step-in-step, left and right, walking toward the Truth of the Bible."

From North Carolina:

"This is a little token to help Brother Kevin on the air. I want to see Jesus first of all, then Brother Paul, when I get to heaven. God bless my brothers and sisters in Christ."

From our Inbox:

"One day, a believer told me that he liked talking to me because I always looked toward God for positions in doctrine. I always wanted to get it right rather than to be right. I wanted to thank you and tell you that I am happy that since the day I met your ministry, I've learned that when you take a position, you take the position that you know God stands for....Thank you for such a wonderful presentation of the truth of the living God."

From Alabama:

"Praying for y'all and thankful for your service. We are third generation grace believers!" (And should the Lord tarry, we hope many more generations will follow. -Ed!)

From our Inbox:

"We just finished studying Pastor Kevin Sadler's *Key Words of Our Faith*. It is so good to be sanctified, but without the other seven words, it would not be complete. And Pastor Sadler covered all eight! Glory to God!"

From our Inbox:

"Thanks, Pastor Don, that gives me some direction. I want so badly to share what the Lord has shown me over the past couple of years without the risk of really confusing someone. The last thing I would want would be for a person to take two steps backward because of the truth I'm trying to share. I feel the Father is very pleased with the ministry and truth that you guys are sharing." (Feel free to email your questions anytime. -Ed!)

From Missouri:

"Thank you so much for emailing me [*Two Minutes With the Bible*] every day!"

From Florida:

"Please put our check toward the *Grace Study Bible*. We are very excited about the Bible."

From South Carolina:

"We continue to enjoy the TV show [*Transformed by Grace*] and written materials. Keep looking up!"

From our Voicemail:

"I really appreciate Pastor Kevin's teachings. I finally understand the Bible better. It makes sense. Praise God! He's given me a hunger to want to learn more and more now that I understand it better...thank you so much."



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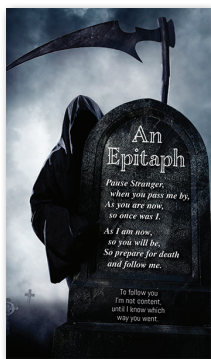
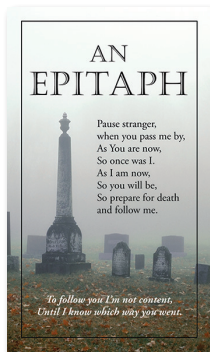
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Keep the Mail Coming: Here at BBS, we are very thankful for all the correspondence we receive, and we want to make sure that all your questions and words of encouragement arrive with no delay. Going forward, we ask that you utilize our street address instead of the PO Box when sending mail. We ask that all mail be sent to: Berean Bible Society, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., Germantown, WI, 53022-2429.

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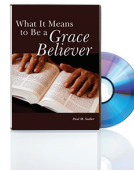
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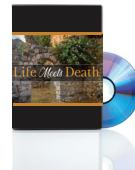
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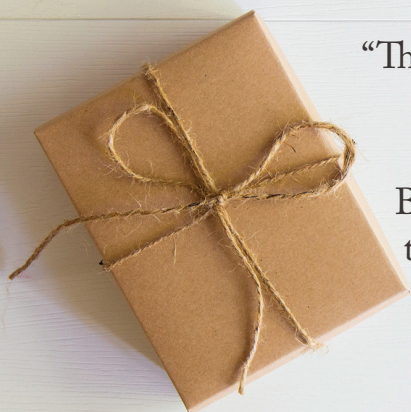
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about whom some say,
‘What gall!’

But Scripture makes known
through his message alone,
*salvation’s a free
gift to all!”*

—Unknown Author

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