

SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT

The apostle Paul was not one to worry about social status or financial stability. To the Philippians he wrote, *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"* (Philippians 4:11). Modern society has most certainly not learned what Paul had. Most people are constantly striving not only to "keep up with the Joneses," but to *surpass* the Joneses in their "standard of living" — materially, that is. It seems that virtually *no one* is physically content. However, *spiritual contentment* can be found everywhere one looks. There are a number of different ways this contentment is seen.

"I believe I'm fine, so don't waste your time."

Very few people today believe that they are lost. Recent polls taken reveal that while most people in the United States believe in heaven, they do not believe in hell. The designation "lost soul" no longer refers to one condemned to hell, but to one simply going through a period of uncertainty. Even religiously active people generally believe that there are "many roads to heaven," although the Bible conclusively teaches that there is only one (Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12). With such a state of affairs, it is difficult to express to a person the importance of securing the welfare of his soul. Even though a person may be lost, others have told him that he is certain to go to heaven. Such a person will generally want to remain comfortable, rather than be urged to make drastic changes in his life.

"I'm outwardly whole, but devoid of soul."

Some have obeyed the Gospel in years past and continue to attend worship services regularly. However, this is the full extent of their spiritual activity. They have no prayer life outside of the worship assembly; they have no time spent in Bible reading or study other than the prescribed times the church meets for this purpose; and they do not put into practice Biblical principles of living. Their motivation is not to please God; but to show respect to godly parents, to maintain friendships, or such like.

"I've done sufficient, to do more is not efficient."

There are some who feel that they have done their duty in times past. They may have previously been very involved in the work of the church, but now feel that it is the responsibility of younger Christians to accomplish. Some even quit attending services altogether, arrogantly determining that they have "done enough" for a lifetime of service to the Lord. This is practical "once saved, always saved" doctrine. The apostle Paul said, *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:13-14). There is probably not a Christian living today whose devotion to the Lord could be compared to Paul, yet he had not yet *"attained unto the resurrection of the dead,"* nor unto perfection (3:11-12). Yet he continued to strive that he might attain these things.

"No matter whether all else seems to fall apart, I do the will of God from the heart."

There is a sense of spiritual contentment that can be genuinely achieved. *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:6-7). One who does not focus on the physical things, which can never satisfy, but on the spiritual, can find contentment in both (2 Corinthians 4:18-5:1). When one is committed to fulfilling the will of God, he no longer has any need for worry: *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (2 Cor. 5:1).

Lee Moses
Mammoth Spring, AR

BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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Can I Go to Heaven?

Heaven is that "prepared place for a prepared people." We can read of the beauty of heaven in Revelation 21:10-22:5. We should all want to go there, but often times we see people who want to do as little as possible and get into that beautiful city. Taking into consideration what many try to do, let us ask the following questions:

CAN I GO TO HEAVEN on one service a week? NO! Not if I am able to attend more but choose not to. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*" (Heb. 10:25).

CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and love the things of the world? NO! John wrote, "Love not the world...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and not work for the Lord? NO! Listen to the words of James, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jam. 2:17, 26).

CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and live any way I choose? NO! We must live "faithful unto death" if we expect to receive a crown of life (Rev. 2:10). We must live our life as instructed in Titus 2:12: "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and not be obedient to the Lord's plan of salvation? NO! We must hear the word (Rom. 10:17); we must believe that Word (John 8:32); we must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3); we must confess Christ as our Lord (Mat. 10:32); and we must be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is only by obedience that **We Can Go to Heaven!**

Danny Box, Deceased

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

Recently in traffic court, a man who received an expensive parking ticket for illegal parking testified that a uniformed policeman had given his OK for the man to park there. The judge asked the man if he would recognize the officer if he ever saw him again. The man replied that he would. The

judge then said, "Good. When you see the officer again, tell him he owes you \$57.00."

The point: Just because an authority figure offers a judgment about a matter has no bearing on whether it is true or false - right or wrong. Truth is truth! It is independent of opinion, polls, and presentation.

In His book *Up from Slavery*, Booker T. Washington explained that during the period following the Civil War, many people became teachers thinking it would be an easy way to make a living. One such fellow went from village to village teaching for a while and receiving pay for it. As he entered one town, the people asked if he taught that the earth is round or flat. He replied that he was prepared to teach either way...based on the preference of a majority of his patrons!

Truth is NOT determined by survey, despite our modern attempts to make it so. Ultimate truth is found in GOD ALONE! God has revealed the truth in his Word (Jn. 17:17).

The TRUTH is...We have a SIN problem! *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). *"The wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23).

The TRUTH is...We CANNOT solve our sin problem with good works! Trying to be a person of good moral character is commendable, but insufficient to erase the stain of sin from our lives. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

The TRUTH is... God LOVES us despite our sin! *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8).

The TRUTH is ... We MUST accept God's offer of salvation on His own terms to be saved from the penalty for sin! We will enter eternity without God and without hope unless we have responded to Him on His terms! (Jn. 3:36).

HIS TERMS: We accept His offer through **faith** (Acts 16:31), **repentance** (Acts 17:30-31), **confess of Christ** (cp. Matt. 10:32), and **baptism** (Immersion) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). We continue to be cleansed from our sins as we **continue to walk** in the light of God's Word (1 Jn. 1:7).

Are YOU still under SIN'S control and penalty? Will you not accept the truth TODAY and come to Him on His terms?

*David B. Smith
Calhoun, GA*

Brethren, in this article, the writer refers to a story that Booker T. Washington told about the teacher who was willing to teach that the earth was flat or round - dependent upon what his "patrons" wanted. I remember a number of years ago being told by an eldership where I was working that another preacher they had spoken with about the work, had been asked what he taught on the topic of marriage, divorce and remarriage. His response had been, "I'll preach it whatever way you want me too." That eldership realized at that point that the preacher was NOT for them! This preacher was willing to teach whatever his "patrons" (i.e. the elders) wanted him to preach - and NOT the truth! God's truth is NOT for sale! Sadly, there are brethren, elders and preachers that think that it is and not just on the matter of marriage divorce and remarriage.

Ken Chumbley

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

October 1 through 5 will be the dates of our Gospel Meeting. We will be using preachers from the general area. The theme will be "Our Perfect God".

Let us continue to keep in our prayers Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Kathy Treadway's mother, Lanny Niver's father, Tim Arnold's father.

Keep Odie McLemore's brother in your prayers, he is not doing well.

Ted Rush, preacher at Mauldin, SC continues to recuperate from heart surgery.

Sister Grimsley is out of town visiting with her son. Rachel Fitpatrick is also out of town.

Kimberly Wilson's address - P.O. Box 15744, Statesboro, GA 30460.

There will be a potluck dinner following morning services on August 27. Plan to stay and eat.

LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST RADIO PROGRAM

1050 AM -- WFAM

Sundays 8.00 a.m. to 8.30 a.m

Preach the Word

What is to be the means of reaching sinners and bringing them to salvation today? This is a question of great importance, perhaps (due to the common practices of the day) of greater importance now than ever before so far as church history is concerned. What must happen to a man/woman before conversion can take place?

We see many appealing to the emotions of men and women in an effort to *convert* them, telling death-bed stories, tugging on their heartstrings, crying, and trying to induce the same from the hearer, etc., but do such tactics convert? Such things often move people to walk down aisles and confess sins or be immersed, but does that equal conversion? If a man hears a sad story and professes a commitment to the Lord as a result of the emotion of the moment, is he converted to the Lord? I would suggest to you that he is not. While the emotions play a role in our conversion, there must be the change of mind that will demonstrate itself in the change of life present also. This change of mind does not come about as a result of hearing about dear old uncle Bill and his heartfelt conversation with his wayward son on his deathbed—it comes about as a result of considering the testimony of the New Testament writers, accepting it, and committing oneself to the life that must be lived by the Christian.

I have heard preachers who were most able speakers appeal to no more than the emotions, and I have seen droves of people walk down the aisle following the speech—but all too often I have also witnessed those people falling away from their commitment as soon as the heated emotions of the moment cooled. Why is this? It is because the people were not converted to Christ, they were but emotionally moved.

When I consider the story of the Cross etc., emotions follow. When I consider the duties enjoined on Christians, emotions follow. When I consider Heaven/Hell, emotions follow. In fact, sufficient emotions follow to motivate me to action. Such is as it should be. We should appeal to the facts of the Scriptures and fully present them and make them the basis of our argument and appeal and then such emotions as follow will (most likely) be the proper ones. In doing this we give the hearers the proper basis for their faith (cf., Rom. 10:17) and, at least, point them in the proper direction from the start.

May we be careful to offer the sinner before his/her conversion exactly what will be needed to maintain his/her faith following conversion. The Word saved them in the First Century, and if we are to be saved in the Twenty-First, it will be by the same Word.

*Tim Smith
Webb, AL*