

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of March 26, 2023 -

Sunday Morning Service	30
Sunday Evening Service	25
Wednesday Eve.,03/29/23 Service	22

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of March 26, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 775.36
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 5,150.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 03/26/23:	\$ 5,925.36

- Week of March 19, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,102.90
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 325.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 03/19/23:	\$ 1,427.90

- Week of March 12, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,727.07
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 170.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 03/12/23:	\$ 1,897.07

- Week of March 5, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 2,418.00
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 310.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 03/05/23:	\$ 2,728.00

- Week of February 26, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 4,788.44
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 560.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 02/26/23:	\$ 5,348.44

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



FOUNDATION PIERING FUND -

Amount Received, Week of 03/26/23:	\$ 5,150.00
Amount For Entire Project	\$13,600.00
50% Deposit Needed by 04/03/23	\$ 6,800.00
Amount currently on hand for Deposit	\$12,948.00
Amount Still Needed For Deposit:	\$ 0.0 !!!
Total Still Needed To Pay Off Entire Repair:	\$ 652.00

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing THEMSELVES of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. By mail - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. Drop it off - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. Online - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

**WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE!
YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!**

Church Directory

Todd W. White	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd	Pianists
Derek Quinnely	Greeter
Larry & Mary Byars	Outreach
LeAnna White	Custodian
GinaMarie Shufelt	Flowers
Seth White	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, David Smith, Derek Quinnely	Trustees

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XXIX

April 2, 2023

Number 13



FOLLOWING JESUS UNTO DEATH

by Dr. W. A. Criswell

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou was young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me" (John 21:18-22).

The twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John is an addendum. It is an appendix. It is added to the Gospel. The Gospel plainly reaches an incomparable and glorious climax in the twentieth chapter of the book. It stops there. It stops with that high and marvelous confession of doubting Thomas, who cries saying, *"My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28). And then John wrote a benedictory sentence:

"Many other the signs truly did Jesus . . . that are not written in this book. But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing you might have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

And that closes the book.

Now what happened apparently was this. As you know, John lived a whole generation after the martyrdom of Simon Peter. Simon was doubtless martyred sometime between, say, 66 and 67 AD. At 100 AD, this apostle was still living in Ephesus, John who wrote the Apocalypse [Revelation 1:1-4]. The Gospels, the three Gospels that we have, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Synoptic Gospels, leave Peter in a bad light. He is denying that he even knows the Lord, quailing before a little maid who says, "You are one of His disciples. You talk like Him." And Peter denying the Lord, going out and weeping bitterly [Matthew 26:69-75]. That's the way we leave Simon Peter in the Synoptic Gospels [Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62].

John writes a tribute to his old friend, Simon Peter, after he'd been dead for thirty or more years. And that tribute to Simon Peter is what you know here in the Bible as the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John [John 21:1-25]. And the story is like this - After the Lord was raised from the dead [Matthew 28:1-7], He appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem and asked them to meet Him at an appointed mountain in Galilee [Matthew 26:32, 28:16-20].

Now Simon Peter and the disciples - no great commission was given; they had no idea of the future grace, and age of this church - so, they were up there in Galilee waiting for that appointed rendezvous with the Lord. And while they were up there in Galilee waiting, Simon Peter said to the other six disciples who were there with him. *"I am going back to my old business. I am going back to the boats. I am going back to the sea. I am going back to the fish. I am going back to the old world. I used to make a living for my wife and my family, and I am going back to the old business"* [John 21:2-3]. Simon Peter was a natural leader of men and what he did, they all did. So, the other six disciples up there said. "Simon Peter, we will go with you." So they're back on the lake at the old boat, at the old nets, at the old business, at the old lake, at the old life [Matthew 4:18-22]. They're back as they were before [John 21:1-3].

Now toiling all night long catching nothing [John 21:3]; in the gray mist of the morning John and the disciples see an indistinct, shadowy figure on the shore [John 21:4]. And whoever that is calls to the men out there on the boat and says, *"Have you caught anything? Do you have any meat? Have you caught anything?"* And they called back, *"No"* [John 21:5]. And whoever that is on the shore says to them, *"Well, take your net and put on the other side of the boat, and you will catch."* And they lower the net on the other side, just from there to there, and catch a great draft of fish [John 21:6]. And when they do that, the disciple whom Jesus

(continued inside)

loved, John, says to Simon Peter, “Simon, you know who that is on the shore? That’s the Lord! That’s the Lord!” [John 21:7]. And Simon Peter, hearing that was the Lord, jumped into the sea and swam to the shore [John 21:7] - and the other disciples struggling with that big draft of fish [John 21:8].

Well, first of all, the Lord says to Simon Peter, “Bring up the catch” [John 21:10]. That’s the reason I know he was a big fisherman. Those six disciples were struggling with that catch of fish [John 21:8]; Simon Peter went down there and into the sea and pulled it up by himself [John 21:11]. And when they came up, there the Lord stood over a morning breakfast, all prepared—fish and bread [John 21:12-13]. And when they had dined, the Lord turns to Simon Peter:

“And saith to him, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these? And he says, Lord, You know that I love You. And He says, Feed My lambs (John 21:15).

He asked him a second time. And the second time Peter avows his devotion to the Lord.

And the Lord says, “Shepherd My flock” (John 21:16).

Then He says to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you really love Me?”

And Simon Peter, grieved because He asked the third time, said, “Lord, You know all about me. You know every thing, You know that I love You.” And the Lord said to him, “Feed My sheep—” [John 21:17] and then the prophecy—

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, truly, truly I tell you Simon that, When you were young, you dressed yourself and walked any where if you willed: but when you get older, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another will gird you, and carry you where you do not want to go. This signified He, this spake He signifying by what death he should glorify God—

That is, that Simon Peter was to die by the outstretched hands. He was to die by crucifixion. He was to be crucified—

And when He had spoken this, saying that was the death by which he should glorify God, He said to Simon, Follow Me. [John 21:18-19]

And the Greek of that is so emphatic: **“Follow thou Me” (John 21:19)**. And Peter following the Lord to crucifixion and unto death turns around and sees John following also [John 21:20]. And he says, “Lord, You asked me to follow You unto crucifixion and unto death, what about John? What about him?” [John 21:21]. And the Lord said to him, “*Simon, if I will that he never die, that he never suffer, that he never be crucified, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me*” [John 21:22]. So, John closes his addendum with the picture of Simon Peter faithfully following the Lord unto crucifixion and unto death [John 21:18-19]. What a tribute from one friend to another!

So the message, **Following Jesus Unto Death**. What is it to love the Lord supremely above all else in the world?

First of All, it Is a Giving Up. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **“Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these?” (John 21:15)**. When you read a quarterly or a commentary, practically all of them will say, **“The Lord is**

asking Simon Peter, ‘Simon, do you love Me more than these other disciples love Me?’” How could Simon answer a question like that? And would the Lord ask him a question like that? Now, in the Greek it is not ambiguous, not to me - the Lord asked Simon Peter, **“Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these?” (John 21:15)**. And, with a sweep of His hand, I can see the Lord gesturing to the whole creation.

Simon Peter had gone back to the old life, to the old nets, to the old boat, to the old sea, to the old business, to the old fish. He’d gone back to the old way of life before the Lord first called him. He’d gone back [John 21:2-3]. And now, the Lord is calling him the second time, **“Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these”** - the world all that’s in it? **“Simon, if you do, I am asking you to give it up. Give it up, and follow Me”** [John 21:19].

To love the Lord supremely is first and always a giving up. And there is no one who is a Christian and there is no one who ever follows the Lord but that shall know the truth of that avowal. To be a Christian and to follow Jesus and to love the Lord supremely is always a giving up. Sometimes it is a giving up of a small and inconsequential thing in our sight - some little habit, some little practice, some little compromise, but it destroys our witness for the Lord.

I remember in one of the churches I pastored there was a man who had a beautiful jewelry store. Upon a day, I was in the store just visiting, and he had on his hand a very large diamond. I remarked upon the beauty and the enormous size of that precious gem. He took it off like that and flung it on the counter and said, “It’s worthless. It’s worthless.” I said, “What? That beautiful diamond is worthless?” “Yes,” he said. “Pick it up. Look at it.” I picked it up and looked at it. It had coal specks all through it—worthless, practically worthless.

That’s the way with so many Christian lives. They have dark spots, coal spots, carbon spots in them. What otherwise could be a magnificent witness for the Lord is ruined by some little worldly practice. To love Jesus supremely is to give it up. Give it up. Give it up. **“But you don’t understand, pastor, this is all right for me. I’m not hurt by it.”** Maybe not, but your influence is; your Christian testimony is. If you love Jesus supremely, you will give it up. That is the first thing of following Jesus unto death. It is a giving up—sometimes small, inconsequential, worldly practices; sometimes some of the greatest, deepest, traumatic costs and experiences of human life. Give it up. Give it up. Give it up for Jesus’ sake.

Second: what is it to follow the Lord and to love Him supremely? **It is the acceptance of a responsibility**.

“Simon, lovest thou Me? Take care of My lambs. Simon, lovest thou Me? Shepherd My flock. Take care of My sheep” [John 21:15-17]. Always loving Jesus and following our Lord is the acceptance of a responsibility.

“But pastor, you don’t understand again. You mean, that I, big man as I am, I am to try to help with these little, these little children, these little lambs?” What’s the matter with a big strong man loving little children? Jesus did. Took them in His arms and

blessed them [Mark 10:16]. The mothers delighted in bringing their children to Him [Mark 10:13]. What’s the matter with a man being a superintendent of a nursery department? What’s the matter with a man working with our little children? That’s what it is to love Jesus supremely, the acceptance of a responsibility.

Jesus said that first, and in building a church always that is first. In building a Sunday school or any kind of an educational ministry, we ought to start with the little ones. I’ve never seen a little baby come to church in my life by itself. You get a baby and you’ve got a mama and a papa and a grandpa and a grandma and aunts and uncles and, oh, I don’t know how many people all around. If you interest yourself with a child, you interest the whole family in the Word and way and the will of God.

“Feed My lambs. Take care of My little ones and shepherd My sheep” (John 21:15-17).

All of us have some kind of a gift. Each one of us has a gift. My gift may be very menial and it may be very small, very much apparently inconsequential, insignificant; but we all have a gift. We all can do something. Maybe the most I can do is raise a window. Maybe the most I can do is sweep out a floor. Maybe the most I can do to be down here to stand on the street to show somebody where to park. Maybe stand out there and open the door, help a mother out of the car. All of us can do something. And what we can do, we ought to do. That’s what makes the house of God glorious.

There are great stones in the foundation down here that nobody will ever see. There are little nails up there in the top of that roof this nobody will ever see. But it takes that big stone in the earth and it takes that little nail up there in the roof - it takes all of the many parts to raise this structure that we call the sanctuary of God. So it does so in the house of the Lord, the temple of Christ. We all have a contribution to make. When we love Jesus supremely, we’re happy to make it. “Lovest thou Me? Feed My lambs. Take care of My sheep.” It is the acceptance of a responsibility [John 21:15-17].

Third: It Is Faithfulness Unto Death. Loving Jesus supremely, following the Lord:

“Verily, truly, I say unto you, When you were young, you girded yourself, you dressed yourself, and you walked anywhere that you chose: but when you will be older, there will come a time when someone else will gird you, and take you where you do not want to go. And you will die with the outstretched hands. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God” (John 21:18-19).

We glorify God in crucifixion. We glorify God in suffering. There is no way that a Christian glorifies God so brilliantly and so spiritually and so triumphantly as when he is in a great agony of suffering or brokenness of heart. My dear people, anybody can sing whenever things going your way. Even the infidel is happy when he’s got the world by the tail on a downhill pull. Anybody can be glad and up when everything with him and about him and in him and through him is all okay—everything’s fine.

But how do you do when the evil day comes? How do you do

when sorrow comes and when trouble comes? Then do you sing? Then do you glorify God? Do you? Do you? The Book says that we glorify God in our trouble and in our suffering and in our crucifixion. **“This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God” (John 21:19)**. It’s how you do in an evil day that determines the nature and the quality of your Christian faith, and the power and impact you have upon the world.

Let me show you: one time Satan and the Lord Jehovah got into an argument over a man down here in the world. The Lord said, **“See that fellow Job? See that man Job? See My servant Job? He is the best man in all the world. Look at him”** [Job 1:8].

And Satan said, “Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. He’s the best man in all the world? Well, no wonder! Look at the hedge You built around him [Job 1:10]. You have crowned him with every prosperity. Look at his flocks. Look at his herds. Look at his fields. Look at his cattle. Look at his family. Look at his house. The wealth You poured out upon him. No wonder he glorifies God.”

And the Lord said, “You think, and that’s what you’re saying, that Job serves Me for what he gets out of it, for purpose?”

“Yes!” says Satan. “He serves You for what he gets out of it. Take away what he has, and he will curse You to Your face” [Job 1:11]. God said, “Satan, you believe that?”

“Yes, Sir. Take away what he says and he’ll curse You to Your face.” So the Lord said, “Fine, just go down there and take everything that he has away. And I say he will still glorify My name” [Job 1:12].

So, Satan went down and he took everything that Job had away. Burned it up with fire, blew it away with the wind, struck it with lightning from the sky—even killed his children! [Job 1:13-19]. And old Job looked on the devastation as far as his eyes could see, and he said, **“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21)**.

And God said to Satan, **“See, is that not what I said? He is not serving Me for what he gets out of it. Look at Job, he is glorifying My name in great distress”** [Job 2:3].

And Satan says, “Yeah, yeah, but skin for skin—he’s still well, he’s still strong, he’s still in health. You let me touch him and he will curse You to Your face!” [Job 2:4-5].

“Oh,” says God to Satan, “You think Job is serving Me because I keep him well and strong?”

“Yes,” said Satan, “You let me touch him and he’ll curse You to Your face.”

God said to Satan, “You go down and touch him, only spare his life” [Job 2:6]. And Satan went down and he afflicted Job from the top of his head to the sole of his foot with boils [Job 2:7]. And it felt good to Job when even a dog would come and lick his sores [Luke 16:21].

You know what he did? He sat in an ash heap afflicted in agony [Job 2:8]., and he said, **“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15)**.

That’s the way to glorify God! You don’t glorify God when you’re singing songs and everything’s going your way. You don’t glorify when the whole world is yours and all that’s in it. You

glorify God when you praise His name and your heart’s broken. When you praise the name of God and you’re hurt. Every bone aches. You’re in distress. You’re sick. You’re down. Bless His name, glorifying God in suffering and in death!

Why, my brethren, I think the most obvious thing in the world is a little sentence that follows the story of the incarceration of Paul and Silas. It says that after they were beaten they were cruelly scourged by Roman rods. They were thrust in an inner dungeon. Their feet made fast in the stocks and their chains and manacles [Acts 16:23-24]. And at midnight, with the blood pouring down their beaten backs, the Book says, **“And they sang praises to God.”** And now, the obvious: **“And the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25).** No wonder the prisoners heard them! I’d have heard them too! You couldn’t help but hear that; beaten, in stocks, in chains, manacled in the midnight hour, with the blood pouring down their backs, singing songs of praise to God. That glorifies the Lord in our trouble, in our trial. That’s what it is following Jesus faithfully - loving Him supremely!

And last: it is not only a giving up, number one; it is not only the acceptance of a responsibility, number two; not only is it a faithfulness in sorrow and unto death; last, ***it is a personal accountability.***

“Then turning about he seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following . . . and said, Lord, You say I am to follow Thee unto crucifixion and unto death. Lord, what about John? What about him? And the Lord replied, Simon, if I will that he never suffer, that he never die, that he live until I come again, what is that to thee? Thou, you, follow you Me.” [John 21:20-22]

Following Jesus, loving Him supremely, faithfully, following unto death is last, a personal accountability [John 21:22].

There are times when, in a decision that I make, I take the whole church into confidence. There are times, in a decision that I make, I’ll take the deacons into confidence. There are times, in a decision that I make, that I take the circle of a family into confidence. There are times when my soul is alone and naked before God, and the decision is made before the Lord alone. A personal accountability: something just between God and me, a personal commitment and a personal decision.

I wonder if I could share this with you? In the years gone by, many, many years, there was the financial secretary, the administrator of a worldwide institution in the City of Dallas who came to me - a member of this church. And he said, “Pastor, God has called me to preach. And I must resign my place and follow the call of the Lord.”

I said to him, “Listen, you forget that. You forget that.”

I said, “First of all, you are accustomed to an affluent life, and the life of a minister for the most part is one of poverty. He has the lowest paid profession in America, and many times, the most difficult, the most difficult time. You forget that. You are the head of a great company and a great institution, and you have a wonderful salary and you’re accustomed to all the things that go with it.” And again, “You have married an affluent girl, a girl out of an affluent home, and she’s not accustomed to all the hardships

that come with a young preacher out in a beginning place. It won’t work. Now, you go back to your job and you forget that.” And he said, “All right.”

So he went back to his place. After about two or three months he came to me again. And he said, “God has called me to preach. And I cannot escape the call. I’m unhappy. I’m miserable. God wants me to be a preacher.”

And I talked to him again. I said, “You forget it”, and I went through all those things that I mentioned before. I said, “Now, you go back home and you go back to your job.”

And after about two or three months he came again. He said, “I am resigning my place, and I am giving my life to be a preacher, and I’m going to the seminary and prepare for the ministry.”

I said, “God help you. That’s the most terrible decision that I know that you could make, but God help you.” So he resigned his place, got everything in order, and went over there to the seminary.

After he’d been over there in the seminary a few months, late at night, there was a knock at the door at our parsonage. I went to the door, and there he stood. And he said, “Would you mind coming out here and sitting with me in the car?” So, I went out and sat with him in the car. He said, he said, “Pastor, I have this, I have the saddest thing to tell you.” He said, “My wife called me in and said, ‘Husband, I am not going to be a preacher’s wife. Now you go kiss that little baby in the cradle. Kiss that child goodbye, and you kiss these other two children we have goodbye. Because when you come back from school tomorrow, I am taking them with me and I’m going to my mother’s home - I am quitting you, and I’m not going to be a preacher’s wife.’”

Then he said, “When I came back from my classes today, this afternoon, she’s gone, the baby’s gone, and the two little girls are gone.”

I said, “Isn’t that exactly what I told you? Didn’t I tell you that you could not be a preacher? That she would not share that kind of a life? Didn’t I tell you to keep your place and your position, and forget about being a preacher? Didn’t I tell you that?”

He said, “Yes. I know.”

Well, I said, “Now you go into my house and pick up that phone, and you call that mother’s home, and you get that wife of yours on the phone, and you tell her that you have given up this idea of being a preacher. Tell her you’re going back into the business world, and you want her to come and to bring the children and start your life all over again.”

He said, “No. No. God has called me to preach. God has called me to preach.”

Well, I said, “How are you going to be a preacher? How are you going to be—how are you going to be called as pastor of a church? Who’s going to call a preacher and his children are orphaned and his wife has divorced him? Who’s going to call him to be a pastor of a church?”

He said, “Maybe God doesn’t want me to be the pastor of a

church.”

“Well,” I said, “What are you going to do?”

“Well,” he said, “I’ll just preach on the street corners, and I’ll preach in the jail, and I’ll preach in a country schoolhouse, and I’ll preach on the street. I’ll just preach wherever, anywhere, any time anybody will listen to me.”

I said, “Do you mean to tell me that without anybody calling you, without any hope of a church, without anything, you’re still going to be a preacher, losing your wife, losing your children?”

He said, “Yes. God has called me, and I’ve got to be a preacher.”

I said, “Well, let’s pray.” And I prayed for him, and saw him drive off back to the seminary. That was one of the saddest nights I ever experienced in my life, seeing that young fellow drive away. Back to the seminary to preach on the streets because he felt it was God’s call for him.

A few months passed; then, late at night, I went to the door, and there he stood again. He said, “Pastor, would you come out and sit with me in the car?”

I said, “I’d be glad to.” So, I went out and sat with him in the car.

He said to me, “Pastor, I received a telephone call from my wife living at her mother’s home, and this is what she said: She said, ‘Husband, it’s as though I had been in a tragic illness, as though I had been terribly sick. It is as though I had lost my mind and my perspective in my life.’ She said, ‘Husband, I have found myself, and I have found the will of the Lord. I have found my heart, and please, may I come back and bring my—our three children with me? And I’ll be your helper and your companion as you study for the ministry and as you be a preacher of the Gospel? May I come back?’” And he said to her, “O, Lord, how happy, welcome dear. Welcome.” And he said, “Tomorrow, tomorrow she’ll be back in our little apartment with the three children, and we’ll finish our work together as I prepare to be a minister of the Gospel.”

So he finished his work and got his degree at the seminary. And, upon a day, at one of our convocations of baptists in Texas, I met him again with his beautiful wife by his side. I said, “How are you doing? How are you faring, and where are you living?”

He said, “I am pastor of a county seat town in West Texas, and God is wonderfully blessing our ministry.”

It is a personal accountability; there are just some things between you and God, and they’re inescapable. You are born for yourself and nobody was born for you. You have to accept Christ for yourself, nobody can do it for you. Someday you have to die for yourself, there’s nobody who will die for you. And, someday you’ll be judged for yourself, nobody can be judged for you.

There is one great decision before God that you have to make for yourself: namely, ***what is God’s will for my life?***

If my father and mother are happy in it, glory! Thank Thee Lord! If they’re not, I still must follow after. If my wife is happy in it, God’s name be praised! If not, I still must follow after. If every friend I know and have is against it, if God calls me, it is

still my commitment to follow after unto death.

That’s what it is to love Jesus supremely.

“Follow Me unto death” (John 21:22).

And that is God’s appeal to your soul and your heart tonight. Does the Lord speak?

“Here I am, Master, listening.”

Does the Lord call?

“Here I am, Lord, answering with my life.”

Does He—does He say, “This is the way, walk in it” [Isaiah 30:21].

Then, *“Lord, here I am, help me, walking in it, confessing Thee as Saviour, I will* [Romans 10:8-13]; *being baptized according to His blessed Word, I will* [Matthew 28:19]; *being a fellow member of a church, I will; accepting some responsibility, some assignment that God may have for even me, yes, Lord, I will; and following Thee to old age and to death and forever, I will Lord.*

I have decided to follow Jesus.

No turning back.

No turning back.

The cross before me.

The world behind me.

No turning back.”

Will you? If you will, come and stand by me. Out of the balcony - you. In the press of people on this lower floor you, as God shall make the appeal to your heart and your soul, do it now, make it now, come now. On the first note of the first stanza, *“Here I am, pastor, I’m on the way.”*

While we stand and while we sing...

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

• ***THE ANTICHRIST AND THE MAHDI*** - The world, including the Muslim nations, will accept the Antichrist as a brilliant saviour.

The Muslims will possibly receive him as their long-awaited Hidden Imam. The following is an excerpt from the *London Telegraph*, January 14, 2006:

“As Iran rushes towards confrontation with the world over its nuclear programme, the question uppermost in the mind of western leaders is ‘What is moving its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad* to such recklessness?’ ... The most remarkable aspect of Mr. Ahmadinejad’s piety is his devotion to the Hidden Imam, the Messiah-like figure of Shia Islam, and the president’s belief that his government must prepare the country for his return. One of the first acts of Mr. Ahmadinejad’s government was to donate about £10 million to the Jamkaran mosque, a popular pilgrimage site where the pious come to drop messages to the Hidden Imam into a holy well.

All streams of Islam believe in a divine saviour, known as the Mahdi, who will appear at the End of Days. A common rumour--denied by the government but widely believed--is that Mr. Ahmadinejad and his cabinet have signed a ‘contract’

pledging themselves to work for the return of the Mahdi and sent it to Jamkaran.

Iran's dominant 'Twelver' sect believes this will be Mohammed ibn Hasan, regarded as the 12th Imam, or righteous descendant of the Prophet Mohammad. He is said to have gone into 'occlusion' in the ninth century, at the age of five. His return will be preceded by cosmic chaos, war and bloodshed. After a cataclysmic confrontation with evil and darkness, the Mahdi will lead the world to an era of universal peace.

This is similar to the Christian vision of the Apocalypse.

INDEED, THE HIDDEN IMAM IS EXPECTED TO RETURN IN THE COMPANY OF JESUS.

Mr. Ahmadinejad appears to believe that these events are close at hand and that ordinary mortals can influence the divine timetable. The prospect of such a man obtaining nuclear weapons is worrying.

The unspoken question is this: is Mr. Ahmadinejad now tempting a clash with the West because he feels safe in the belief of the imminent return of the Hidden Imam? Worse, might he be trying to provoke chaos in the hope of hastening his reappearance? Western officials [suspect] that Iran's president actually relishes a clash with the West in the conviction that it would rekindle the spirit of the Islamic revolution and--who knows--speed up the arrival of the Hidden Imam."

**Ahmadinejad was president of Iran from 2005-2013 and is still a member of the government. He is a major supporter of Iran's nuclear program, which is covertly designed to produce a nuclear bomb.*

☛ **RAINBOW JIHAD DECLARED ON CHRISTIANS, CONSERVATIVES** - In the wake of a demonic trans girl murdering six people at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee, what some are calling a "Rainbow Jihad against Christians" has been discovered.

Prominent LGBTQ groups and even powerful liberal politicians have been calling for violence against anyone who opposes their disgusting agenda. Just hours after the shooting, a high-ranking staffer in Arizona Governor Katie Hobb's administration named Josselyn Berry tweeted a GIF of an actress holding two revolvers with the caption, "*Us when we see transphobes.*"

Conservatives online were outraged and called for her immediate resignation. Surprisingly, in a world where liberals are never held accountable, this one was, and she resigned from her post. Although Ms. Berry was rightly punished for her despicable tweet, others face no consequences for openly calling for violence. A photo is being circulated on Twitter of Minnesota's Lieutenant Governor, Peggy Flanagan, wearing a shirt featuring a large knife and the words "*Protect Trans Kids.*" At the time of this writing, she has faced **no** consequences for what is obviously a call to violence against those who oppose the demonic trans agenda.

Perhaps the most apparent call for violence going unchecked is an advertisement for the "**Trans Day of Vengeance.**" It

appears to be organized by a group calling themselves the **Trans Radical Activist Network**, and they called for angry trans activists to assemble on the steps of the United States Supreme Court on April 1st. It is unclear what exactly their intentions are, but based on the rhetoric coming from the trans community as of late, one could assume they are planning to commit violence against their perceived enemies. (*NOTE: The demonstrations were called off due to the shooting at a Christian school in Nashville, 03/27/23*).

The poster for the "Trans Day of Vengeance" was all over Twitter, with the social media giant seemingly in no hurry to remove it given it's lauded by liberals, until the shooting at a Christian school in Nashville on 03/27/23 (if a conservative or a Christian shares the graphic in an attempt to criticize the growing violence in the trans movement, they are immediately suspended or banned from the platform).

Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Green, Conservative Journalist Sean Davis, and a host of others have all had their accounts locked for simply pointing out that stirring up mentally ill people by calling them to take vengeance probably isn't a great idea. This is the Rainbow Jihad. And followers of Christ who are opposed to children being injected with hormones and having their genitals mutilated are the prime target of these deviants. One can only assume that this is just the beginning.

The media and leftist politicians have created a class of alleged victims suffering from severe mental illness and perhaps demonic possession. Sadly, more violence is inevitable. We must pray for the Lord's protection on every Christian that is to be targeted during this Rainbow Jihad.

☛ **JOE BIDEN: 'TRANSGENDER AMERICANS SHAPE OUR NATION'S SOUL'** - Transgender Americans "shape our nation's soul," according to President Joe Biden, who made the assertion Thursday, March 29, 2023 as part of a White House **Proclamation on Transgender Day of Visibility**. The proclamation came mere days after a transgender shooter allegedly murdered six individuals at a Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee.

A proclamation from the Biden White House celebrates the "Transgender Day of Visibility," deeming transgender individuals the "bravest people" the president apparently knows.

They are people who "have too often had to put their jobs, relationships, and lives on the line just to be their true selves," the proclamation reads, deeming gender confused individuals as those who "shape" America's soul.

"Transgender Americans shape our Nation's soul — proudly serving in the military, curing deadly diseases, holding elected office, running thriving businesses, fighting for justice, raising families, and much more. As kids, they deserve what every child deserves: the chance to learn in safe and supportive schools, to develop meaningful friendships, and to live openly and honestly. As adults, they deserve the same rights enjoyed by every American, including equal access to health care, housing, and jobs and the chance to age with grace as senior citizens. But today, too many transgender Americans are still denied those rights and freedoms. A wave of discriminatory State

laws is targeting transgender youth, terrifying families and hurting kids who are not hurting anyone. **An epidemic of violence against transgender women and girls, in particular women and girls of color, has taken lives far too soon.** Last year's Club Q shooting in Colorado was another painful example of this kind of violence — a stain on the conscience of our Nation" (emphasis added).

Notably, the proclamation made no mention of the violence that occurred at the Christian school in Nashville on Monday, as the suspected shooter - a woman who believed she was a man - allegedly opened fire, murdering three children and three adults before police fatally shot her. Instead, Biden's proclamation only spoke of what it described as perceived "injustices" committed against transgender individuals.

"Meanwhile, we are also working to ease the tremendous strain that discrimination, bullying, and harassment can put on transgender children — more than half of whom seriously considered suicide in the last year," the proclamation continued, adding that the Department of Justice is "pushing back against extreme laws that seek to ban evidence-based gender-affirming health care."

"Gender-affirming care" is the left's way of pushing hormone therapy, puberty blockers, and surgeries – including but not limited to mastectomies and phalloplasties on those suffering from gender dysmorphia.

The proclamation continued:

"America is founded on the idea that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout their lives. We have never fully lived up to that, but we have never walked away from it either. Today, as we celebrate transgender people, we also celebrate every American's fundamental right to be themselves, bringing us closer to realizing America's full promise.

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 31, 2023, as Transgender Day of Visibility. I call upon all Americans to join us in lifting up the lives and voices of transgender people throughout our Nation and to work toward eliminating violence and discrimination against all transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary people."

The proclamation comes days after the massacre and the establishment media testing a new narrative on the shooting rampage, speculating that Hale - a woman who believed she was a man - was "rejected" by her Christian parents.

According to Metropolitan Nashville Police Chief John Drake, the suspected shooter left behind a manifesto. However, pro-transgender activists are seeking to keep it under wraps. The executive director of Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), Jordan Budd, for example, said, "It should not be published", seemingly ignoring the other details of the case.

ATTENTION ALL MEN! PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 2023 MEN'S ADVANCE



**Friday, April 28,
at 7:00 p.m.
and Saturday,
April 29,
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

The Men's Advance has been hosted by Bible Baptist Church of Stillwater for over ten years and is attended by men from all across the Midwest. The goal of the Men's Advance is to impact the lives of men spiritually to make a difference in their homes, churches, relationships and community.

The meeting runs on a two-day format, beginning this year at 7:00 P.M. on Friday, April 28, 2022 and concluding at approximately 3:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 29. Again this year, we will again meet at the Payne County Expo Center, just east of Stillwater. Meals are provided on-site to allow the men more time to fellowship with one another, and include a full smoked meat dinner Friday night, complete breakfast Saturday morning, and a great lunch Saturday afternoon. In addition to the Advance, a golf tournament is open to all attendees and precede the Advance earlier on Friday.

The service times and break-out sessions are the focus of the event. Here, the men are challenged to examine their lives in the light of God's Word. Both humorous and contemplative skits are interspersed to reinforce the truths presented. Special music provided by the Bible Baptist Church Men's Group and others adds to the wonderful congregational hymns, including the traditional "It Is Well With My Soul" finale.