

The Gospel Message

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WHY WE NEED CHRIST

Roy Loney

Man is a very intelligent being, but his intelligence and wisdom are greatly limited. That limitation is indicated by the fact that very often he does not realize his greatest needs, I am sure that heaven's greatest grief is the fact that the average person has little consciousness of his need of God. And the greatest task of all God's servants is to bring to human consciousness man's great need of Christ. The average man feels that his own capabilities and wisdom are sufficient to meet all of life's emergencies; and yet man is undoubtedly an unhappy being. Like the troubled sea which cannot rest, man is a restless and disturbed soul. The Alcoholic is one who is totally unable to resist the urge to drink of the cup that brings misery and ruins his life. It is only when he is persuaded to accept the belief that there is a higher power that will give him strength to resist this terrible craving, that he is able to resist his craving and become a sober man. The suicide leaping from a bridge to the cold waters below does so in the conviction that life is unbearable and meaningless. He would not take such a rash step if he could be persuaded to accept the guidance of that divine Friend whose wise guidance can direct us safely over the tempestuous ways of life.

Modern nations have reached the highest scale of living the human race has ever known, yet they are in a frantic race of wax armaments of unbelievable destructive power, and a third World war would lead to a holocaust of destruction too great for the human mind to contemplate. Educated, intelligent man seems bent on self-destruction. Mental institutions are filled to overflowing with the feeble-minded who find modern life just too hard for them. Thousands of individuals can find no peace of mind except through tranquilizing drugs which will eventually destroy them. All of this and much more we could reveal is impressive proof that man is not sufficient for his own needs. Man needs Christ! Why is this so? We will cite three reasons.

1. Man came from Christ. He is the product of God's wisdom, power and love. For this reason, he always will be dependent on God and Christ for his physical, mental and moral wellbeing. The prophet once asked, "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"—Malachi 2:10. God through Christ made man in his own image, after his own likeness, and therefore, man cannot live a truly normal life except in close relationship with Christ, his Creator. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being"—Acts 17:28. As the newborn babe is utterly dependent on its mother, even so man is dependent on God for all of Life's blessings. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights"—James 1:17. Therefore, man is dependent on God for all that is needed to make life pleasant, happy, and meaningful. Even as man physically is adapted only to this earth and could not live on any other planet except by artificial means, even so man -spiritually and mentally is adapted to a life that is lived in communion with God. It is only when man's nature is warped by sin, that man will live independent of God. The very nature of man's being requires a companionship with that divine Being who brought him into existence.

2nd. Man needs Christ because he is separated from God through sin. The universal condemnation is; "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your sins have separated between you and your God, and your iniquities have hid his face that he will not hear"—Isaiah 59:1-3. The prodigal son found no real happiness in that far land of dissipation—(Luke 15:11-20). It was

only when he returned home, humbled and penitent, that he found happiness through his father's compassion and forgiveness: even so, we cannot find true happiness while astray from God. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"—Isaiah 57:20, 21. It is, only when a man's heart is surrendered to the will of God that he can know that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." Truly a man's need is great when he must go down into death's dark valley, "having no hope, and without God in the world"—Ephesians 2:12. Facing only the prospect of "a grave in the dark" can give man little, if any, incentive to live a life of usefulness and dignity. Christ has made this most definite and beautiful promise; "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14:27. The serenity of a "life hid with Christ in God" is something that is denied to every unconverted heart. Only he who calmed the raging waves of storm-tossed Galilee, can bring peace to a heart that is tossed to and fro on the tempestuous sea of life.

3rd. Man needs Christ because, eventually, he must return to God. One of the most solemn statements of the Bible is: "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment"—Hebrews 9:27. Several great truths are revealed in that inspired statement. Man's existence in this world is strictly limited. Death is the lot of all. When man sinned in Eden, God's decree was, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"—Genesis 3:19. But death does not end man's existence. He does not go down "to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust." He sleeps only to awaken again to appear before his Creator. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 Corinthians 5:10. Man alone of all of God's creatures, was given sufficient intelligence to be held accountable for his conduct. Our thoughts, our words, and all of our deeds will come before the judgment of Almighty God, "for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."—Ecclesiastes 12:14. A record of each individual life is carefully kept in the great book of God's memory, and on that solemn day of accounts, it will be revealed, and each one will be judged according to their works—Revelation 20:12. From this judgment, there is no escape, for no one can evade the responsibility for the life that has been lived.

A confirmed infidel once spoke of seeing the star of hope in the night of death; but God's inspired revelation offers no hope of mercy and grace to a soul that has squandered his life by living independent of the will of his Creator. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that --soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"—Galatians 6:7, 8. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, but where there has been no repentance for a life wasted in the service of Satan, there can be no claim on the mercy and grace of a stern, but just God. Only in and through Christ can the future be made bright with the hope of eternal happiness. Paul affirms that Christ Jesus is our hope—1 Timothy 1:1, for he is "the way, the truth, and the life, and none can come to God except through him"—John 14:6. The time is soon coming when the little candle flame which men call life, will flicker, and go out in that cold night wind that blows toward the eternal shore. Only when your life is entrusted to Christ can you hope to walk without fear through it to the judgment bar of God. **YOU NEED CHRIST!**

What Shall It Profit You?

Richard Riggins

Jesus warned against choosing the wrong goal in life. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—Mark 8:38. No matter how great our material success in life might be in achieving possessions, power, honor, and prestige; it will be of no benefit to us if our life is not pleasing to God. God is pleased when we are obedient in all things, not when we disobey and disregard him—Matthew 7:21-23. Even as a good income does not create love and a beautiful home does not make a beautiful character, even so true riches are not found in material possessions but are instead the fruits of a Christian life. Jesus said. . . "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."— Luke 12:15.

God created all things through Christ Jesus (John 1:1-3) and by his power that creation continues to, exist. All things belong to God. If we spend our lives trying to grab all we can in material things, we try to accumulate that which in the true sense can never be ours and which we must leave behind at the grave. We cannot take it with us; it is left to others.

In seeking God's physical blessings, man forgets the one from whom they derive. Men are like selfish children who argue and fight over their parents' gifts but have not the slightest feeling of gratitude to the parents for them. Often we are so busy in our own planning that we have no time to spare for the God who has given us everything. Our gratitude for his goodness should cause us to turn to God and honor him; but to the shame of mankind the heart of man holds little appreciation for God. As it is written: ". . . not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"—Romans 2:4. When we use all of God's blessings but are not even grateful, when these blessings do not move us to love and obey God; then we have truly failed in life. Possessions in themselves are not wrong but they should never be our goal in life. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matthew 6:33.

Man was not created to remain on earth but God created man that he might inherit eternal life—Titus 1:2; Matthew 25:34. Our life here is a time in which we are to prepare to meet our God. Since the only purpose in life is to so live that we please God, we can understand how useless and senseless a life will be if that life is not lived in Christ Jesus. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life—John 5:11-12. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 14:6.

Parents who make every effort to provide their children with adequate food, clothing, and educational opportunities, lavishing love and affection on them, still fail their children completely if they do not provide them with a Christian example. They fail in that area of child training which is of supreme importance, the care of the soul for which our Lord died. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ephesians 6:4. Many children grow up with little or no knowledge of Christ and God because their parents were too busy to bother about the one who gives them life and breath, and who holds out to them the hope of life everlasting. Strangely enough, many parents spend all of their care on the child's body which must die and none on his spirit which must live in eternity.

Young people in planning their life must remember that if their life is not consecrated to God, they will fail in life's only purpose. Man is created for God and for God only. We must not live unto ourselves but "to the one who died for us and rose again that we might live in him."—II Corinthians 5:15. Christ died to save our souls from everlasting condemnation: He did not die to help us to live the good life here. We must make preparation for the Day of Judgment for no shall escape it. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—II Corinthians 5:10. We could miss many of the conveniences in this life and still have everything if we have so lived that we please God; but

though the whole world should ring with our praises and all of life's pleasures be ours, we shall have gained nothing if we lose our own soul.

Why Do We Believe? F. Wilford Landes

The vast majority of the readers of this article are believers in both God and Jesus as His son, the Christ.

But do you know why you believe? We can believe in God through the evidences of the world about us. David, the king of ancient Israel, phrased it this way: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." (Psalms 19: 1). We only need to quietly and seriously examine the works of "nature" about us, to be made to realize that there must be a master craftsman, to fit and establish the natural works of the universe.

Why do you believe in Jesus as the Christ? Not by the works of nature, nor by the records of secular historians. History may strengthen our faith, but will not produce faith in Jesus as the son of God. Where must we go for such faith? The apostle John is of help to us, listen to him: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written. that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30-31) The signs and evidences recorded in the gospel of John, in addition to the testimony of the three other gospel records, is the foundation of belief.

What signs do we have recorded? Luke 8:40-55, recounts to us of the healing of a woman badly afflicted with a hemorrhage, and the raising from the dead of Jairus daughter. Each of the gospel writers tell of the feeding of a great multitude with only a "handful" of fishes and bread. (John 6:1-14; Matthew 14:13-21 etc) These miracles were for the purpose of establishing the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. That he showed compassion is readily granted, but that was not the primary purpose. (How different from "faith-healers" of today.)

Not the least of the signs of Jesus is the raising from the dead of Lazarus, who had been dead four

days. (John 11) Who, but the most warped of individuals, could have failed to acknowledge that God truly had in Jesus a man of great power, and accept the word of that man, that he was the son of God.

As we read the sermon on the mount. - (Matthew 5, 6, and 7) we are made to realize that here is the essence of peace, harmony and tranquility in this world. If only men would sincerely accept the truths and wisdom of this record, we could dwell peacefully in this world. The teachings of Jesus are "signs" unto us that he is the son of God.

As concluding evidence the biographers of Jesus, tell of his resurrection. Let me ask you to read again the writings of John, chapters 20 and 21. Note the discovery of the resurrection by Mary Magdalene (20: 1). The thorough examination of the tomb by Peter and "the other disciple" (John). (20:3-10) Consider carefully the appearance of Jesus to the Apostle Thomas, his doubt and acceptance. Note the promise of Jesus as he speaks to Thomas (v. 29), "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen. and yet believed."

"These are written that ye might believe." This is our source of faith in Christ as our Saviour. Do you lack faith in Him? Read the gospel accounts. Are you weak in your service to Him? Read these writings. Are your doubtings hindering your acceptance of his terms of obedience? Read the biographies of Jesus. Listen to Marks' record of the final commission of Jesus to his apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he

that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16) The gospel is the story of Jesus, and to believe is to accept Him as God's son.

The Power of the Gospel

Wm. J. Hensley

Without a doubt, those who read this article will acknowledge that the Gospel of Christ has great power--power to bring salvation. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation"—Romans 1:16.

However, of the many who realize that power to save, but few will think of the power of unity as a part of man's salvation. It is this look at the gospel power that is found to be of great interest.

Before Jesus died outside of Jerusalem those who believed in God were divided not alone among the sects of the Jews but even among the Gentiles who were (not in agreement with the Jews,) there were those who acknowledged God. In the prayer of Jesus in John 17th chapter, we see the theme of unity. Certainly, Christ prayed for the unity of both Jew and Gentile, as well as for the oneness: that comes in the life that turns from sin. Of course, all of this unity is found in Christ. See Galatians 3:28. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Not alone were men actually made free from sin by obedience to the gospel teaching, but they were brought into a state of unity with one another. This is clearly understood when we see the unity first at Jerusalem at Pentecost, and; also as the city was filled with the doctrine of Christ. In Acts 2:42 it is stated that there was unity of action among the baptized believers: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and in fellowship, and breaking of bread and in prayers." Then in Acts 4:32 it is revealed that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." This same teaching brought men and women, Jew and Greek, bond and free into Christ and thus into one body. The power of the gospel made this unity possible. No other power could do this.

The interesting factor in this consideration is to be found in the very simplistic teaching used to bring this about. All human complex endeavors would have failed to save man from sin, and from disunion as well. In our present age, we need more emphasis placed upon this simple proclamation of the inspired word of God. By preaching this gospel, we will lead many to Christ. By a constant announcing of the gospel, unity of believers can also be realized. We do not omit the Christian life as an example of the applied gospel, but we add this to the words to be spoken publicly and privately. Upon this basis alone can true salvation be realized as well as the unity of all believers.

The Love of the Truth

Roy Loney

The very first sin committed on earth was a result of believing the devil's lie in preference to accepting God's truth. God had told Adam and Eve that eating of the forbidden fruit would bring death, but the serpent contradicted God, and with his smooth, deceptive words beguiled the woman, and she fell into his snare. Soon Adam was also involved into Satan's trap, and this brought death and all of its sorrows into the world. Genesis 3:17. No human tongue or pen could accurately portray the awful results of this foolish and senseless deed... "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men for all have sinned."—Romans 5:12. Since that time the conflict between truth and error has never ceased.

Jesus taught that Satan was "the father of lies." "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it"—John 8:44. Every untruth that has degraded a character and deceived a trusting heart has Satan back of it. He has only one purpose that actuates him; that is to humiliate God and destroy man. His deceptive and evil work never ends; but the saddest thing to consider in connection with the devil's work is the fact that his lies are seldom coarse or crude. He is a polished liar! Paul said that Satan has the power to transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers are transformed into ministers of righteousness—II Corinthians 11:14, 15. This is why Paul realized the wisdom of always being aware of Satan's "devices"—II Corinthians 2:11. Only a knowledge of Satan's devices can protect one against error. A mind that is held in the thrall of deception can never know the wonderful joys of freedom, or have the full assurance of faith. Besides all this, we need to face the stern fact that no error can ever lead a soul into salvation. Jesus once declared. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—John 8:32, and in so stating he revealed the only power that can free man from the bondage of sin and Satan. How important it is that all men should recognize and understand this truth. The way to freedom and salvation is the way of truth.

But just here we are confronted with another question. When Jesus stood before Pilate, he stated that he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth. Pilate rather contemptuously asked, "What is truth?" In John 17:17 Jesus gives us the clear answer. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." We have in the New Testament the revealed will of God, which "is able to make one wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—II Timothy 3:15. Paul declares that "God cannot lie" (Titus 1:2) which being true, we must accept his word as absolute truth. Anything that is diverse from or contradicts God's word, must be rejected as falsehood. Hence, it follows that if man would be saved, he is saved by acceptance of the truth of God's word. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him; and the word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"—John 12:48. This makes it imperative that man should diligently study the word of God to know what the Lord requires of him. He who truly values his immortal soul, will be satisfied with nothing less than the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Paul speaks of many who shall perish "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved."—II Thessalonians 2:10. Love for the truth must exist in the heart, before the heart will search for truth. Therefore, if one is concerned as to his eternal future, nothing but the truth will satisfy him; and he will go to the sole source of religious truth to ascertain what the divine Father requires of him.

Life is short, and death is certain, heaven will be beautiful and hell terrible. God loves man while Satan hates and despises him, ever seeking his destruction. The above indisputable facts should provide the motive to arouse man to desire to know the truth. No one will arrive at heaven's gate by accident or chance. Jesus said to the Jews, "ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go, ye cannot come"—John 8:21. The greatest quest a man can make is the quest for a knowledge of God's purposes for him; and, therefore, there should not be the slightest hesitation in putting his belief to a test to learn if he is building on the rock or on the shifting, unstable sand. When the deeply religious, but greatly deceived Saul of Tarsus, met the Lord on the Damascus road, the earnest, passionate prayer that came from his humbled, penitent heart was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do"—Acts 9:6, and that same

prayer should arise from every sincere heart who truly wishes to serve God in humble reverence and godly fear. Saul followed his conscience and it led him to become "the chief of sinners"—I Timothy 1:15, others followed their conscience and it led them to become murderers of God's servants—John 16:2. There is only one source of knowledge of the divine will—the word of God; and in it God speaks to every heart revealing the way to heaven. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"—Matthew 7:21. The eternal safety of every eternity bound soul depends on its humble, sincere effort to learn the truth and then to obey the truth in all of its divine requirement.

Christ predicted that false prophets and false Christs would arise whose power of deception would be so great that even the very elect would be in danger—Matthew 24:24. Peter said that as there had been false prophets among the people, even so there would be false teachers who would bring in damnable heresies—II Peter 2:1; and in view of these inspired declarations, how important it is that we all diligently study God's word lest we be led away by our own destruction. We earnestly urge upon all of our readers the necessity of learning God's revealed will that we might "be wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"—II Timothy 3:15.

THE BIBLE

Compiled by A. W. Harvey (deceased)

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the travelers' map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and carefully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and will be forever remembered. It involves the highest responsibility, gives the greatest reward to its laborers, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command thee, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you"—Deuteronomy 4:2. "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee and thou shalt be found a liar"—Proverbs 30:5, 6. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."—Revelation 22:18-19.

WHO IS JESUS? Selected

Jesus Christ was born in the meanest of circumstances, but the air above was filled with the hallelujahs of the heavenly host. His lodging was a cattle pen, but a star drew distinguished visitants from afar to do Him homage. His birth was contrary to the laws of life; His death was contrary to the laws of death. No miracle is so inexplicable as His teaching and His life. He had no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for 5 thousand, and have bread and fish to spare. He walked on no beautiful carpets, but He trod on the waters, and they supported Him.

He had no veneration for old mistakes; no admiration for ancient forms. He loved the truth for truth's sake and for man's sake. He saw oppression on every hand; injustice everywhere; hypocrisy at the altar; tyranny on the throne; and with high and splendid courage He espoused the cause of the weak against the strong; of the enslaved against the titled few.

He commanded no wealth; He founded no schools; He organized no army; He wrote no books, and yet after 1,900 years He is the one central character of human history, the perpetual theme of all preaching, they pivot-around which the events of the age revolves, the only Regenerator of the human race.

Was it merely the son of Mary who crossed the world's horizon 1,900 years ago? Was it merely

human blood that was spilled on Calvary's hill for the redemption of sinners and which has worked such wonders in men and nations through out the centuries? His crucifixion was the crime of crimes, but no lower price than His infinite agony on the cross could have made possible our redemption. When He died few men mourned, but a black crepe was hung over the sun. Though men trembled not for their sins, yet the earth shook under the load!! All nature honored Him, sinners alone rejected Him. Sin never touched Him. Corruption could not claim His dust.

The name of Jesus sounds down the corridors of the centuries like tile music of all choirs, visible and

invisible pealed forth in one anthem. His name blossoms on the pages of history like the flowers of a thousand springtime blossoming in the narrow limits of one garden. What thinking man can keep from exclaiming: "My Lord, and my God!"

-Selected

News & Notes

Winford Lee was with the Speedway City (Indiana) January 15th. *** The Publisher was in Beloit, Kansas in two interesting services January 1st, and at Gardner, Kansas January 8th. Both congregations are moving along well. January 15th we started a weeks meeting at Martinsville, Indiana, and found some very consecrated workers there. One very interesting feature of the meeting was the attendance of numerous members from other congregations in that state. Bloomington, Bloomfield, Bicknell, and Speedway City. The 22nd was spent at New Castle, and Bro. L. C. Roberts was with us. The weather was very cold but the attendance and interest was very encouraging. Spent a night in the home of Paul Sommer in Indianapolis, and Allen Sommer, the editor of The American Christian Review, and his wife were there. We spent a pleasant evening discussing various things pertaining to the church. Then we went to Charleston, Ill., and spoke once, and then to Pana, and had a most pleasant visit with various members there in the home of Burl Price. One evening was a Question and Answer service and many pertinent questions were dealt with. Finally, we arrived at Wood River, Ill., where I spoke three times to very appreciative audiences. I was favorably impressed with those I was able to become acquainted with, and hope to be of service to them in the future.

Phillip Spencer and Gwen Potter, of the Stull, Kansas congregation were united in marriage January 14th. Wilford Landes performing the ceremony.

Wm. Hensley has been working with the Kirksville, Missouri congregation the first week of each month. *** C. R. Turner begins a months work with the La Verne, California congregation, and will then labor with various other churches in that state.