

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Volume 66, Number 4

Editor ~ Wade Stanley

Publisher ~ Doug Twaddell

April, 2024

Hidden Things

Louis Garbi

The saying goes, “Things aren’t always what they seem to be.” Ad agencies study the facets of human nature: what things attract and what maintains attention. This is because their clients want to make a sale. Often, the consumer is aware of being played but follows through, buying the product. Because marketing analysts are in demand, the tale of their success is told. It is all about presentation. It attracts the eye. Things are displayed to show the advantages, conveniences, and, perhaps most of all – why one should be proud to own or buy into such a thing. What is presented may fall short of what it really is, or it may exceed the purchaser’s expectations. This is the way of commerce.

When it comes to personal behavior, we learn to deflect, to polish, to make a presentation conveying or concealing information. We do these things to share, to teach, to cover guilt, to keep private affairs private, or to protect another’s dignity. We may be an open book on some things. However, there are many occasions in life when we should not be an open book. Unlike the marketplace, we are not commodities, and it is not about making a sale.

Some reasons for concealment are foolish, and some reasons are wise.

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden (1 Timothy 5:24-25).

The last part of verse twenty-five reveals that some good works will be revealed because God will glorify the things others have not seen. This indicates a particularly high quality of such works. Jesus taught about this, “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:1). Jesus’s conclusion for this was repeated: once for charitable deeds, once for pouring out our hearts in prayer (“your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly”). Not everything can be understood at face

value. What could be better than God giving praise for things that others did not see?

Let us contrast this with something else Jesus taught,

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

How can we glorify God when the best of our good works is concealed? Except for personal prayer, there is not much that is absolutely concealed. After all, many good works involve interaction with other people. What matters is the spirit by which our work is carried out. Again, as Jesus said, “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. . .” Are we out for attention, or is the work done quietly in the meekness of wisdom? This is where we apply the practice of not letting our left hand know what our right hand is doing. We even hide the awareness from ourselves of the good we may be doing. This means no standing before the mirror saying “atta boy!” Rather our spirits should reflect those at the King’s right hand,

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?” (Matthew 25:37-39).

There are times when hiding things from others is important. Deflection of the truth is not always deceitful. The apostle Paul had a situation in Corinth where he saw the need to conceal his motive for the good of the church. It is shown by this summary: “But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!” (2 Corinthians 12:16). This was Paul’s explanation for rejecting income from the Corinthians. He saw the weakness of some who might use this proffered support as a means of undermining him. Paul, in the beginning, did not reveal his underlying intent in this matter.

Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so

continued on the next page...

The Source

Kevin Crittenden

to me, for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void (**1 Corinthians 9:14-15**).

No one could say that he was in it for the money. His "cunning" had the desired outcome of being able to deflect slander.

*Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows! But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast (**2 Corinthians 11:7-12**).*

He set aside receiving financial support from Corinth to offset a potential problem. This type of discretion required temporarily hiding his intention that his sincere effort in the gospel would be effective.

A great work of hiding is to cover sin. "*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins*" (**Proverbs 10:12**). When Ham gossiped about his father's drunken condition, he was stirring up strife. Fortunately, Shem and Japheth showed love to their father, and covered him, not so much a looking at his shame (see **Genesis 9:20-23**). How shameful it is when we speak to one another about the weakness of a brother or sister's behavior. Are we providing a biblical narrative or are we showing that we have the inside track?

*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins (**James 5:19-20**).*

These are some of the hidden things which give glory to God. The works of meekness, humility, and discretion often deflect attention from self and cover for the sake of others. It is God's love through which His children glorify Him, and through which He will glorify His beloved.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows (**James 1:17**).*

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (**Psalm 150:6**).*

I have a confession to make. I'm the guy who feeds crows and squirrels early in the morning. I understand that some (perhaps many) of you may feel that I'm giving sustenance to the enemy, but I'll counter with the statement that ALL creatures are God's creatures. Unless, of course, the squirrels and crows tear up my garden, in which case they are obviously creatures sent by the OTHER team.

Now, crows have excellent vision – I haven't seen one bespectacled crow yet. So they sit on a telephone wire some distance away. And watch. And wait. As if in an Alfred Hitchcock movie. When I finally open the door and throw out peanuts, they immediately fly over.

For some time now, I've been operating under a kind of fantasy, a delusion if you will, namely that the squirrels, crows, and bluejays that I feed every morning recognize me and are joyous in my presence. When my front door opens, then, for them, THAT is the source of their daily blessing of food. They look no further than me. Why should they?

Perhaps you remember a similar scenario in the Bible when great numbers of people wandering in the desert were fed every morning when the doors of Heaven were opened, and manna rained down upon the earth. In the evening, there was an abundance of quail.

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days" (**Exodus 16:4-5**).*

Why did God do this?

*The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight, you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God'" (**Exodus 16:11-12**).*

Do we know this? Do we know where our blessings come from? Do we give God the Glory and Honor that are due Him? Do we have a humble heart filled with gratitude and lips filled with praise?

Too often, we behave like the crows and squirrels. We know where to find our daily resources. Enough for today's needs and the excess to bury for the coming lean times. For food, we go to the grocery store, where everything magically appears. For clothing, we go to any number of department stores. For almost anything you can think of, we go online. We call a delivery service, and food comes to us. How awesome is that? I think a certain Tishbite named Elijah used Doordash:

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook (1 Kings 17:6).

For many of us, Amazon represents the source of all material things. It is the floodgate that opens, releasing a cornucopia of products into our lives.

But Who is the "Hidden Figure" behind the door, not just the Amazon door, but ALL doors that open in our lives to provide blessings for us and our families? Isn't that Figure the One who desires a relationship with us? So let us no longer dissemble but cut out the middle man and go straight to the Source with our Praise and our Gratitude.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:25-34).

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him, all creatures here below

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

– Doxology, by Thomas Ken

~ 19130 Meiggs Ln. Cupertino, CA 95014
kcritt2@aol.com

Blessed Are the Dead

Alyssa Joy Twaddell fell asleep with Jesus on Friday, February 16, 2024. She was the first-born daughter of **Doug** and **Jill Twaddell** of Independence, MO. Alyssa was born in Manhattan, KS on September 29, 1990. She graduated from Beloit High School (Beloit, KS) and continued her education in Kansas City, MO pursuing a career in Early Childhood Education. Alyssa worked for the Lee's Summit school district in a before and after school program, KC Cubbies preschool, and the Goddard School. Alyssa was passionate about her faith, music, art, and teaching children. As a member of the **Lone Jack (MO) Church of Christ**, she enjoyed hosting Bible studies and prayer and praise events. She used her abilities to teach children's classes, write VBS songs and prepare educational activities for children and adults. She touched many lives and will be remembered for her contagious smile and her loving, giving heart.

Francis L Wendt, 86, Osawatomie, KS, passed away on February 28, 2024. Funeral services were held on March 9 with **Evangelist Rick Sparks** and **Brother Kevin Ferguson** officiating.

Francis was born December 23, 1937, to **Max Charles** and **Lucretia (Berkshire) Wendt**. He grew up in Spring Hill, Kansas. He graduated from Spring Hill High School. He attended the Kansas State Teachers College, now known as Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas, on a track scholarship.

He earned three college degrees and was a teacher for 31 years. His track teams were legendary and produced individual and team championships. After his retirement, the annual Osawatomie track & field meet was named the Francis Wendt Invitational Track Meet.

continued on the next page...



Please check your expiration date!

Continued from page 3: "Blessed are the Dead"

For almost 60 years, Francis and his family managed Wendt Farms. But for those who knew him well, more important than teaching and farming were his family and Christian faith.

Francis accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized in March 1957 by **Evangelist Glenn Ellis**. He often preached on Sunday mornings in the Kansas City metro area and eventually served the **Church of Christ, Gardner, KS** as a Deacon. In 1973, Francis led efforts to start a new congregation in Osawatomie, KS. This congregation remains today with Francis holding membership until his passing.

He is survived by his wife, **Bonnie (Hall) Wendt**, of the home, after 67 years of marriage, 5 sons, 10 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren, one sister and many other extended family members.

Special Meetings

2024 Meetings

- April 20-21.....Summersville, MO
- May 25-26.....Memorial Day, Smart Road, Greenwood, MO
- June 8-9.....Vandalia, IA
- June 17-20.....Shaver Lake, CA
- July 1-5.....Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO
- July 20-26.....Murray Road, Lee's Summit, MO
- August 31-September 1.....Pleasant Hill, IA
- September 29.....Braymer, MO
- October 4-6.....Fall Campout, Unionville, MO

The church in **Summersville, MO** is excited to announce a weekend meeting for April 20-21. The congregation invited several young men to deliver lessons over the course of the weekend. To find out more information, including the schedule for the weekend, please use your



phone or tablet camera to scan the QR code.

The **Smart Road Church of Christ** plans to hold a **Memorial Day Meeting** May 25-26. The service on May 25 will begin at 2 p.m., followed by a meal, and a second service in the evening. The Sunday morning service will begin at 9:30 a.m. followed by a meal and an afternoon service. For more information, please consult the flyer using the QR code.



The season for church meetings has arrived. Using the QR code, you can find a list of upcoming meetings including links to congregation website pages and meeting flyers at *The Gospel Message* website.



The Gospel Message

To renew a subscription, add a new subscription, inquire about a subscription, or cancel a subscription, please contact **your publisher**:

The Gospel Message, % Doug Twaddell, 1700 S. Ann Ct. Independence, MO 64057 twadsquad@earthlink.net

To renew on The Gospel Message website, use your phone or tablet camera to click the QR code to the left. The print version is available for \$10 per year. An email version is available for \$5 per year.



If you would like to announce baptisms, new members, deaths, or special meetings in **The Gospel Message**, please contact **your editor**:

Wade Stanley, 18078 State Highway 149, Unionville, MO 63565 wadestanley@gmail.com

If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this paper, please either contact **the author** of the article or **your editor**.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE (USPS:576-040) (ISSN:1054-7991) is published monthly for \$10 per year by **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 1700 S. Ann Ct., Independence, MO 64057. Periodicals Postage Paid at Independence, MO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 1700 S. Ann Ct., Independence, MO 64057