

TEXT - Acts 19:13-16.

"Then certain of the Vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew and chief of the Priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded".

We read that the Apostle Paul went into a strange land and he came across a group of men who were espousing God, and he asked them had they received the Holy Ghost and they said that they had not even heard of the Holy Ghost, and they told him they were baptized by John to repentance and John baptized in the name of God the Father and Paul said unto them that they need to take that further and he then baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ, then laid hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost. Their baptism was now complete: it was done in sections: they were now baptised according to the commandment of God to His Apostles, to go forth into all the world baptizing them in the name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and they began to prophesy and speak in tongues that all could understand what they were saying in that land. The Apostle Paul was given great power to go about and heal the sick and to cast out the spirits so that the word of God could be blessed. We read of that incident where the sons of the chief of the priests, saw that they were all converting to this Christian faith. They saw their power slipping away and they then tried to cast out this evil spirit. They used the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and Paul, but there was no faith with their using of that name, they wished only to use that name for their own betterment and the evil spirits said Jesus we know and this Paul we know, but who are you who are taking these names and expressing that you have power; showing that the only power that can do this is the power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Faith in His power, the power of righteousness that we can take within our body and the man with that evil spirit tore into those people and stripped them naked and wounded them and they had to flee before the power of this spirit. It is the same with us. Unless we get the thing right, unless we get that preventative action in place, we too, through our faith, can order that evil spirit out of ourselves but without that faith many others will be destroyed through our non-belief and through trying to take that power upon ourselves.

We may well ask ourselves what is this now to do with us in our day of Grace, for we rarely at times, witness these evil spirits working within our midst. According to God's word, He sent forth the angel that said: Woe, woe, woe to the earth, for now God was going to allow to come into the earth what the people were desiring, they wished this evil so He was now to release unto them the means of this. We can read in the book of Revelation, where God allowed the depths to be opened and the smoke and brimstone comes out and Satan comes out of that place and is allowed to send his evil spirits within the world. Those evil spirits are like locusts the Scripture says and God put a condition on Satan, that he was not to harm those that were sealed with His Father's name in their forehead. They were not to harm the green grass of the earth, they were not to have destruction over the creation of God, but they could only go forth and exercise their evil power against mankind.

They went forth, it is recorded, as scorpions and they were shown as a description with their power was in the smoke that came from their mouth, their power was in the sting within their tail and they did not have the power to kill man, but they had the power to inflict upon man, great misery and for five months man would be tormented and would want to find death. We begin to see a picture building up within our minds of what we see happening in the world today as Satan's followers are moving through the world and inflicting drugs upon the people of this world. Smoke that comes through the mouth, stings that come into the tail and it does not kill people, but they are afflicted and they are tormented for months as this evil power, through these evil spirits, are working its way through the world. Anyone that has spoken to a person on rehabilitation, they will understand the meaning of this and they will recognize that this is being brought about by an evil spirit. For all of those people will tell the same story that they hear voices, voices enter into their mind and tell them to do all kinds of evil things and they cannot understand why others cannot hear these also.

We therefore see that it is a living thing that is happening and we read in the Scriptures that these are all servants of Satan being sent into the world to exercise and to show this power that Satan has. We have to be extremely careful. We are standing in a period of time where once again, these evil spirits will be seen everywhere in the world and we have to protect our homes, we have to protect our hearts, we have to protect our families. There is only one protection that we can place within our hearts, within our homes and within our families and that protection is the righteousness and the Word of God, the righteousness of Christ. Make our homes the first place of worship, make our homes for our children to understand that they need this protection in their lives. Do not become lax with attending service. Take upon ourselves this righteousness within our hearts to have this seal of God in our foreheads and we will have the armour within us that even the evil spirits will tremble. James 2: 19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." We are offered the fullness of God's blessing in the Apostle Blessing "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost." Let us accept it in faith.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

WORD OF LIFE

No. 26 -2016.

TEXT - James 2: 14-20.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hath faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

To believe that which we see is easy and natural. To believe what someone else has seen and told us is not so easily acceptable, unless we have full confidence in the person who tells us the story. Such a person we will believe when he gives us advice, be it business of any other matter. We will follow his advice and do it.

Christ said to Thomas "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed". The blind person puts his trust in him that can see. The Lord wants us to trust Him. *"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* Etc. Matt. 6:25. *"If I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"* Mal. 3: 10. *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"* Matt. 25:34. Before we can receive these promises, we must prove our trust and obedience to Him.

Did we seek His kingdom and righteousness? Are we obedient to His will? I was hungry, thirsty, naked and sick. Did we give?

It is easy to trust a friend and do him favours. Why is it so difficult to trust God and to prove this trust in deeds not only words? Is our faith as big as a mustard seed? Is our faith without works? Are our deeds according to Galatians 5: 19-22? Are our works of the flesh? Or are they the fruits of the Holy Ghost? Are our works proof of our love for God? Is our neighbourly love visible in our deeds? Do we keep all His Commandments or only those which accord with our own wisdom? If we are obedient in all things, we prove our trust in Him, then we are assured of His promises.

Let us fight the good fight and be victor over ourselves. Do we trust our own strength and distrust God? He warns in Jeremiah 17:5 *"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord"*.

How strong is our faith, our trust, obedience and submissiveness? Let us pray daily that our faith may be strengthened that we can acknowledge the fact that without Him we are nothing. We are dust and to dust shall we return. Where shall the soul be? Will our faith save us? Yes, for sure, if our deeds are according to God's will. He promised us, as sealed souls, that we shall inherit His kingdom, if we love Him and treasure His words. Were we disobedient to HIS commands, did we distrust Him, were we unfaithful? Then shall we hear the words "Go away I don't know you". Our works will judge us or make us free. The choice is given to everyone. It is an easy decision. We can be a victor over ourselves, despise evil and do that which is good. Give all honour to God, all we possess is through Him including His greatest blessing- Grace.

Late Apostle J. J. Joubert
South Africa.

TEXT - Ecclesiastes 9:4

"For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion."

King Solomon in our text, used these words in what we might describe in a crude way to highlight the greatness of God's blessing, life. Often we allow ourselves to be so depressed or overcome by the cares, worries, or activities of this world. Others, we say, tempt fate, and put this life at risk, but our text reminds us even if we, are in our mind at our lowest ebb, we are better off with life than if we had achieved great heights, had all the honour and glory of as the king of the jungle, a lion but were dead. Solomon correctly came to the conclusion that a living dog was better than the dead lion. The reason for this, was that where there is life, there is hope.

Now in our spiritual life, this also is very true, if we have been tempted and misled in life and been weak, and did things that make us an outcast to those around us, we then are seen by many in a very bad light or as dogs. Provided we still have that gift of life, in the sight of God we still have a hope. It is when we see ourselves for what we are that this hope can be turned to something better. If our proud mind prevents this, we could be throwing away a great opportunity. When we see ourselves for what we are, we then become humble and we are in a position then to turn to the Lord. We have the great example recorded in the Bible in Luke 23, of the two malefactors crucified with Christ, how the one could not see himself for what he was, and rebuked Christ and could not see that he was throwing away his chance, he was to become as our text says, a dead lion, and as such, throwaway his hope. The second man saw himself as he was, and while he had life, even though he was in the eyes of those around in his lowest form, declared to the first. *"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus. Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."* From this we see the three elements required to activate this hope while we have life. (1) We must see our short fallings and be prepared to acknowledge them as wrong. (2) We must turn to and recognize Christ as our Lord and Saviour. (3) We must ask him to remember us and cleanse us while we have life. We can only imagine the feeling of the malefactor as our Lord said to him. "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shall thou be with me in Paradise." If we are sincere in our confessions, we will experience also this feeling as a peace and will then know what Solomon was referring to in the word hope.

Let us always live each day in this hope and do not waste any day that the Lord allows us this precious gift of life. Or as Apostle Paul writes. "For me to live is Christ."

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT: Psalms 50: 14-15

"Offer unto God thanksgiving: and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

One of the most important aspects of Christian life is thanksgiving. In fact Christian life is incomplete without it. It was also ordained in the Old Testament as our text states. In Malachi 3: 10 we read *"Bring ye all the tithes into the store house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Thanksgiving is symbolic of God's love. Our hearts are filled with thankfulness when we read in Gospel of John 3: 16 *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Jesus Christ is the living example of God's love. Therefore He was always thankful to the Heavenly Father, and said *"Thy will be done."*

Thanksgiving inculcates the value of obedience to all the commandments of God. It is because every little thing that we have in our life is not our own. In 1 Timothy 6: 7 we read *"For we have brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."*

We should be thankful to God's Grace for the gift of life. How life is important for a person on the death bed. When his relatives and friends keep on running after doctors, medicines and blood, so that he may remain alive. We should be thankful for the Blessing of every moment of our life.

The blessings of our life are countless like happiness, peace, prosperity, wealth, health, wisdom and above all is the love of God. All these are wonderful gifts of God and they all flow from obedience to the commandments of God. As we draw near to God, He himself draws nearer and enriches us with manifold Blessings.

In the end we should not make comparison that God has given so much to others but not to us. We should always remember that God gives His blessings according to every ones needs.

Therefore we should always be thankful to God for everything that He has given us, for which we do not deserve. In every aspect of our life we enjoy His blessings through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is our comforter and companion until the end of life, when our Lord shall return. Therefore let us always offer our thanks in every act of our life.

Elder Earnest Riaz
Pakistan.

TEXT – 2 Corinthians 12: 1 – 5.

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.”

We see the apostle after a number of years was now bringing to light a revelation that had been given to him those years before. It is now in the world today that we often hear of people experiencing an after death sensation and a vision, and then they are brought back to life again. In the church members we hear of it. It was a new blessing that was to be given to the world. Previously there would have not been benefit in anyone seeing the after death experience as they made their way to hell the place of waiting to be judged but now there was a new hope for mankind. We find that this experience of the Apostle Paul, when we relate the time that he said it happened, and we relate his journey, and we go back to that period that he spoke of, and see the circumstances that prevailed at that time and what he was speaking about, and we find written in the Book of Acts Chapter 14 verses 8-20 on as follows: *“And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed. Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them. And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.”*

We see that the Apostle Paul was stoned to death. It is witnessed that they thought that he was dead. They took his body outside the city, and in that period he had a death-life experience, he was taken up to the third heaven and he witnessed and saw Paradise. He was also told and he also knew that no man could speak about this because it was beyond the comprehension of any words that any man could discuss on the beauty and the blessings that were in that place. God then brought him back to life as His disciples stood around him. Here was a man who was stoned to death and yet he just stood up and walked back in to the city. This experience came to him for a reason and that was to explain to the church the existence of Paradise and its beauty. We can read where the apostle resisted telling anyone for all of those years. He even said to the Lord that he was frightened that if he spoke of that the people would praise him and say that he was a god, as they had done on that day that it happened. He resisted three times. He said it was like a thorn in his side. Three times he was about to bring it out as a teaching, but then he stepped back because he did not want to be honoured for what he had seen. He said that he would prefer to be honoured in the persecutions that he was going through

and he confessed to the Lord. We know today how repentance must always be done. He confessed to the Lord that for three times he had fought this, now he was condemned. The Lord said to him - My grace is sufficient for thee and in weakness will you be made strong. We can see it is not only each and everyone of us, but it was a strong man of faith like Apostle Paul, and we can understand this experience. It had never happened in the world before and it has continued on today, where many can testify of when they were proclaimed leaving this life they saw glorious lights and glorious things before they were brought back. We must believe those in faith, as the Apostle Paul has taught us of this wonderful place of Paradise. We have also heard that it is a place of waiting, even though it is a place of blessing. It is a place of waiting where we have to wait until the Lord returns and brings those souls with Him to bring about the resurrection of the bodies so that they can be made whole. We must never doubt that the resurrection of the church will take place when our Lord returns.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT – Ephesians 6: 17.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Every day we must fight the good fight of faith. We will be victorious if we adroitly use the spiritual armor which the Lord provides for His own.

In our text the word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. Blessed is the one who makes good use of it. In Hebrew 4: 12 we read: *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and to the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* Hence the word of God must penetrate the heart of every child of God and work great blessing. We not only read about the word of God in the Holy Scripture, we can hear it in the activity of the Holy Spirit. And it is fulfilled upon us. Apostle Peter already wrote to the children of God: *“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1: 25). This must be accepted in Trust. Nahum 1:7 *“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”*

This is an ancient word but still very up to date. God's acts are determined through His righteousness and goodness. All people benefit by them, but only a minority recognize this (Matthew 5: 45) *“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”* Only His children can be fully aware of His goodness (Romans 11: 22) *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”* He is also a fortress, and a place of safety and security. This is the community of His son which was founded on the rock. (Psalms 18:2) *“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”* There is no trouble. Trouble is usually measured against earthly conditions. The biggest trouble, however is the affliction the soul can suffer, and the cause can lie in its distance from or separation from God. This will bring about illnesses like dissatisfaction and hopelessness. These can only be healed by the Lord through His word. It would be to the advantage of every soul to come to the house of the Lord with the plea; that His word washes over him like a healing stream.

Those that trust the Lord confess Him. *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven”* (Mathew 10:32). This is the Son of God performing something very decisive for us when He confesses us before the Father (1 John 2: 1). Therefore we should take the trouble and with joy confess Him before the people and be found following faithfully. In this way we make it easier for the Lord to represent us before God (Hebrews 9: 24) *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”*

Bishop Edwin Riaz
Canada.

TEXT – Jeremiah 18: 1 – 6.

“The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.”

Although this message was for the house of Israel at that time, it still has the same meaning for us all as we are all in the Lord's hand. There was recently a display at the art center featuring a new form of valuable art works called “Sea Glass” or “Beach Glass”. It is made up of varied bits of coloured glass and pieces of pottery that have been shattered after being discarded and regarded as having no use anymore. Their broken pieces end up in the ocean and begin a new journey. As it is relentlessly tossed about by the currents and tides, its jagged edge are ground down by the sand and waves and eventually are smoothed away and rounded off. The result is something beautiful. The jewel like “Sea Glass” has found new life and is treasured by collectors and artists.

In a similar way a broken life can be renewed by the love and grace of the Lord. Our text tells us that the prophet Jeremiah watched the potter at work. He noticed that if an object was not what was required he simply reshaped it. God explained that in His hands we are like clay and He has the power to shape us as He sees best.

We must remember and in faith and belief we are never too badly broken for God to reshape. He loves all, in spite of our past mistakes and is in a position to make all pleasant in His sight if we turn to the grace of Christ.

No doubt this text inspired the hymn sung by many in the world.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay;
Mould me and make me after Thy will
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT-Hebrews 12: 6.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

To be corrected is not always a pleasant experience. The time to get really worried though is if the Lord stops trying to correct us. The fact that He is still persevering with us proves that He loves us and perceives that His efforts will be worthwhile. Have you ever heard the proverb? 'You don't pick specks out of bad eggs!' Many years ago I was holding a brothers meeting when a Priest became annoyed with me because I tried to teach him a better working pattern. When he showed his annoyance, I asked him, "Do you not realize it is because I love you and believe in you that I bother to try to teach you a better way?" Then I told him that proverb about the eggs, he had to smile and the spell was broken. He was a good Priest and I knew it.

All these WOL I dictate to my faithful secretary, my wife, who writes them down and then types them. Afterwards the computer prints them out and I have to read them through very carefully with an eagle eye, looking for the smallest mistakes. Maybe a spelling error, a word missed out, a typing error, a comma that should have been a full stop etc. etc. In spite of all our meticulous proof reading, still the odd mistake slips through. Nobody is perfect.

If we are so careful over written matter how much more careful must we be with immortal souls. I remember many years ago I was in hospital for an operation on my left knee. Before I went into the operating theatre the nurse sealed a linen band around my left ankle with a label attached to it on which were written some details of the operation. I asked the nurse what she was doing. She told me we have to be very, very careful and prevent mistakes occurring, we do not want the surgeon to operate on the wrong leg!

It is relatively easy to say 'I am sorry,' after we made a mistake or had an accident but it can be a lot more difficult or even impossible to repair the damage. Ever tried repairing a smashed glass?

Our lives are a tuition process from beginning to end. We only learn slowly by observing, adapting our conduct accordingly and correcting our mistakes. When I drive my car I do not have to reinvent the automobile all over again, I benefit from the knowledge and skill invested in this machine already by countless thousands of people. God gave mankind a very great gift. The ability to pass knowledge one to the other by written, by language or other means. Small wonder it is often said, 'the pen is mightier than the sword.' This is probably the greatest intellectual gift we have which distinguishes us from all the rest of the animal creation. In addition to this God gave us an immortal soul.

When God tries to correct us by steering our life's course in the right direction, sometimes even permitting us to 'burn our fingers' this sometimes gives rise to a conflict of wills: between our own free will and the will of God. God did not make us automatons or robots, He wishes us to perceive the Wisdom of His way and yield of our own free will. Correction is an expression of God's grace and mercy.

Late Apostle Bill Erry
United Kingdom.