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STRIVING TO DO  
GOD'S WORK, GOD'S WAY, FOR GOD'S GLORY

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Listen to this precious promise, which was given through the psalmist in Psalm 91:1, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." In John 15, we also find a similar pledge, which is in the form of both a command and a promise, "Abide in Me, and I (will abide) in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the Vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." This royal mandate from the King of kings is to be obeyed unconditionally. Our Lord's ultimate priority for our lives is that we would bear much fruit, and thus glorify Him. However, the only means by which our lives will yield an abundance of spiritual productivity is by submitting to this holy obligation to "abide in Him". Furthermore,



the fact that this command is given to us in the 'present imperative tense' alerts us to the reality that this divine decree is to be observed in the 'ongoing practice of our lifestyle'! Brothers and sisters, personal obedience to the Savior's summons to "abide in Him" is the vital key which unlocks the door for "Christ-centered and God-glorifying" living!

In one sense, the word "abide" pictures the enduring reality of 'remaining in Christ', which is the evidence that an individual's conversion is authentic and not artificial. The supreme affirmation that a person is an authentic branch, in union with Jesus (and not a Judas branch which has been superficially and artificially attached to Jesus), is the spiritual proof that they remain in Christ; they stay in Christ; and they persevere in Christ! In other words, the abiding believer is the bona-fide believer! For the person who exhibits a 'non-abiding, temporary and transient faith in Jesus' is a Judas branch. You well recall that, 'for three consecutive years, Judas was able to put on the external appearance that he was the real thing'. However, the Lord Jesus well knew that Judas had never been implanted into a living union with Him. This pseudo disciple was the epitome of the tragic example of one who professes an external attachment to the Vine, but they are never truly implanted into union with Him! Judas' life was a life of wasted privilege and squandered opportunity. And what was the overwhelming evidence that exposed Judas' hypocritical and phony faith? He **did not** abide; he **did not** remain; he **did not** persevere! Consequently, when you arrive at John 15, the Lord Jesus was issuing a call to the remaining 11 disciples to "remain in Me; stay with Me; continue in Me"! He was imploring them to continue to hold fast to their profession, through the mountaintops **and** the valleys of their lives; and through the clear days **and** the storms of their coming ministry! Surely that is one meaning of the word "abide"!

And yet, in another sense, the word "abide" also paints a further picture on the canvas of the life a born again believer. For it depicts the personal pursuit of 'constant and conscious communion' with the Lord Jesus. For the Lord Jesus is not only a Savior to be trusted in and a King to be submitted to; He is also a royal residence for every true disciple to dwell in! The Vine is a precious abode, which is richly furnished with everything that you need for life, for godliness and for an abundant harvest of fruit! Accordingly, in light of the biblical reality that you have entered into a positional union with the Vine, our Lord is commanding you to 'steadfastly sojourn' in a purposeful and passionate communion of sweet intimacy with Him.

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The Lord Jesus is summoning each of us to maintain a heart attitude, which is personally anchored to the fire and freshness of a first-love intimacy with the Him. Oh brothers and sisters, our Lord has gone home to the Father to prepare a permanent dwelling place for each of us. However, until we exit this foreign land and make an abundant entrance into our everlasting homeland, our Master is invoking each of us to abide in a 'living connectivity of close and conscious intimacy with Him'; and to glory in all of the majesty of His kingly rule in our hearts and lives. Are you cultivating a daily communion with your Lord? Are you seeking to abide in an affectionate and intimate communion with Him, through daily contemplation on His word and the sweetness of prayer? You must not be guilty of being diverted by the carnal distractions of this temporary world. You must not allow anything or anyone to hinder you from pursuing conscious and continual communion with the Vine!

Oh brothers and sisters, may we not be content with only a superficial acquaintance with Him. May each of us abide in a daily communion of precious intimacy with Him. So that when you pass through the fiery furnace, the Son of man will be walking in the midst of the fires of adversity along with you. Furthermore, when you face the fierceness of spiritual warfare, the Captain of the army of the Lord of hosts will be leading you into battle. Moreover, when you are proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples, His unmistakable presence will be with you always! And finally, when you must walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you will fear no evil, for the Good Shepherd is with you. And why? For you have been dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. You have been abiding under the shadow of your Almighty Lord.

**A LOCAL CHURCH PURPOSEFULLY AND PASSIONATELY  
ON MISSION WITH GOD!**

By the year 2009, NOLA Baptist Church in Brookhaven, MS, appeared to be ready to close its doors. The Sunday morning congregation had gradually dwindled to only a small handful of attenders. However, our Lord was not finished with this country congregation. For in that very year, God called two precious disciples to pastor this local church, (Chris Sheppard and Keith Stovall). Over the following eight years, NOLA Baptist Church has continued to bear the ongoing fruit of a 'reignited local church'; both in its quantity and quality of fruit-bearing believers! The Lord Jesus has been adding to the church, such as should be saved. He has also been drawing many young couples and families to serve the Lord at NOLA. Friends, I am a personal witness of the living reality of the 'fire for evangelistic outreach' which has permeated this congregation. For these two precious pastors invited me to preach an outreach meeting during the last week of April. And to my utter amazement and joy, these brothers and sisters at NOLA Baptist filled the pews with unconverted friends, relatives, workmates and acquaintances for the Sunday morning service! If that wasn't incredible enough, the Sunday evening evangelistic outreach meeting was also absolutely filled to the brim, with even more folks! Not only did all of the church members return; also they brought a larger group of visitors. It has been a long time, since I have preached a 4-day crusade in which the believers courageously and consistently invited and brought unconverted sinners to hear the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the highlights of the week for me personally, was the tremendous privilege to witness to a young married man, (who had been attending the meeting), for nearly three hours in my hotel lobby! Brothers and sisters, I rejoice to testify to you that I have witnessed the rebirth of a church that had almost died! This country church is now "bearing much fruit" for the glory of the Lamb!

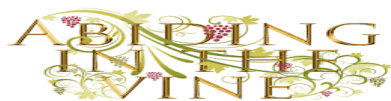
**"LO, I AM ABIDING WITH YOU ALWAYS  
AS YOU CARRY OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION!**

Even as I was writing this newsletter, I received a phone call from Bro. Jim Jordan, (the Director of The Mission of Hope here in Mobile, AL). He testified to me that one of the men, whom I had the joy of preaching to on the previous day, had publicly proclaimed his conversion to Christ. Bro. Jim had recently invited me to preach the two services on Sunday at the Mission of Hope. This is a Bible based program, which ministers to men who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. The Spirit of God was mightily manifesting His presence and awesome power' throughout both services.

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The approximately 60 men, who are presently in the program of the Mission of Hope, attended the 11 a.m. Gospel preaching. Then those men, plus a large number of their family members, attended the 2:30 p.m. service! The newly renovated sanctuary was literally packed with unconverted folks, who desperately need the Lord. Oh, precious friends, I am so thankful for the obvious 'abiding presence of the Comforter', who was energizing and enabling this needy preacher! God graced me to proclaim, "Christ and Him crucified", in both services. And the Spirit of the Living God visited us and accomplished what no man can do. He applied the "Gospel" in a demonstration of His miraculous and supernatural power! There is no greater joy in all of this world, than to preach the glorious Gospel to the ears of men; and then become a living witness to the miraculous power of the Gospel to transform lives! These two evangelistic outreach services were only one of the five precious opportunities that I have been given to preach the Word of God to those men since our last newsletter. Please continue to pray for the ongoing ministry at the Mission of Hope. Also, please pray for our men's class, (headed by Herb Fisher), who has the privilege of planting the Word of God in these men, every Wednesday night!

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation - Romans 1:16a



**I WILL ABIDE IN YOU;  
EVEN IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH!**

As many of you know, I have been facing major, ongoing gastrointestinal problems over the last two years. Once again, I was experiencing some complications, which was diagnosed as a "bacterial overgrowth in my small intestines". This is a common issue from the colostomy reversal surgery procedure, which I underwent last year. However, the doctor wanted me to have a colonoscopy to make certain that there were no other problems in the colon. Everything seemed to go well during the procedure. They removed three polyps, which were all benign. However, (two mornings later), I was awakened at 4 a.m. with the tremendous urge to go to the bathroom. I suddenly realized that I had passed a massive amount of blood! After a few more of those bathroom visits, in which I was bleeding profusely, I awakened Dianne and told her that we needed to go the emergency room. Later, that gastro doctor informed me that I was experiencing a medical phenomenon, which is called "post polypectomy bleeding". It happens to 1 out of every 2,000 patients who have the colonoscopy procedure. I continued to bleed alarming amounts of blood and large clots, (during at least 25 visits to a tiny portal toilet, which was in my emergency room cubical). Dianne and I found ourselves in the midst of a medical situation, in which we appeared to be surrounded with distressing incompetence and negligence! As the day passed by, my blood continued to pour out and the medical people around us seemed to exhibit a confusing lack of urgency, Dianne and I both began to consider the possibility that I could actually bleed to death, if this disinterested neglectfulness continued any further. I must say that it was a fierce spiritual battle for both of us to keep our focus firmly fixed on our Lord, when we appeared to be engulfed with such slipshod inattentiveness.

We had been in an emergency cubicle from 7 a.m. until about 7 p.m., when I experienced another large expulsion of blood and began to lose consciousness. The nurse and the physician's assistance pulled me back onto the bed, lowering my head while inverting my legs. They began to flood my body with liquids, as my blood pressure suddenly dropped to 61/49. I was in an extremely dangerous condition. And yet, even though I had lost the conscious ability to respond, there was an amazing spiritual reality, occurring within my inner being. Even though I could not physically respond to Dianne or anyone else, I could clearly hear everything that was happening in the room. I truthfully thought that this was going to be the time of my home going. Friends, I did not see a bright light! I did not hear an audible voice! However, a very familiar and precious passage came to my mind, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for YOU ARE WITH ME." Our gracious Good Shepherd was so wonderfully working in my heart, that I experienced no panic or anxiety. And even though my physical world was being externally shaken to its very core, our glorious Good Shepherd was filling my heart with His unexplainable and unspeakable joy. Instead of being overwhelmed with fear, my heart was being flooded with the precious reality of the supernatural love of Lord; and the all-satisfying peace of the Lord. (Continued on next page)

As a matter fact, I can testify that my heart was overwhelmed with the same sense of “the supernatural and sacrificial love of God for me”, which I first knew at my conversion 37 years earlier! As I lay there, unable to respond, I can truthfully say that the peace of God was guarding my heart in Christ Jesus! My inner being was overflowing with gratefulness to our God, for the precious peace of God and the amazing love of the Lord for a “hell-deserving” sinner like me.

Furthermore, as all of these heavenly blessings were occupying my mind, I know that my heart was being guided to begin to intercede for Dianne. For as of yet, two of our children, (who were coming in from out of town), had not arrived; and I did not want Dianne to be alone, if this was to be my graduation day into glory. So I began to pray for her, until I was able to consciously communicate again. Dear brothers and sisters, I must confess that I would be totally unable to respond in this manner, in and of myself. For before my conversion to Christ, I had a paralyzing fear of death! I can only give the glory to the Good Shepherd who has given us this precious promise, “abide in Me and I will abide in you”! He truly is our very present help in time of trouble. Even in the dark valley of adversity, He is faithful to be our refuge and strength. Dianne and I have walked through four fierce storms, in the past 22 months. But both of us can truly testify of the all-sufficient supply of the One who proclaimed, “I am the Vine”. He has been with us through every valley! Friends, this ordeal has left me weak. However, I am gaining strength daily and preparing for the works that the Lord has for me.

### **PREACHING AGAIN! PREPARING FOR INDIA!**

As I conclude this July newsletter, I am 12 days away from another foreign mission trip to Goa, India. I will once again have the privilege to teach the “Christ-centered Evangelism” study to a new group of “Indian pastors”. This is part of a Bible Institute, which is directed by our first pastor, Dr. Ron Herrod. Please pray for this blessed opportunity to plant these vital truths into the lives of those spiritual leaders; who will multiply them into the lives of many others. Also, please pray for my physical health, during this tremendous challenge. Obviously, my body is not in the best of condition. I will need our Lord’s all sufficient grace, in both the spiritual and the physical realm. There are other new opportunities of ministry, which are opening in the nation of India. I have recently received the news that the ‘Christ-centered Evangelism’ study has been translated into Orissa, (which would be the third language in India and the 10<sup>th</sup> language overall). However, with those open doors there are also many adversaries. The ruling party of Prime Minister Modi does not hide its agenda to drive out Christianity by the year 2025! There are 5 Indian states, which have already banned conversion to Christianity. Many acts of persecution are being perpetrated against believers! Please pray for the believers in India!

I had planned on completing the work on the Christ-centered Evangelism book during July. However, my illness has delayed that task a little longer, as well as having to reschedule a few meetings. Although, during my recuperation time, I was able to complete the workbook study for Kenya, entitled “The Life That Glorifies God”, (which is an exposition of John 15:1-8). It will soon be translated into Swahili, in preparation for the Kenya conference later this year. Dear friends, your intercessory prayers and your financial support are both an intricate part of the ministry that our Lord has graced to us. Our Good Shepherd not only blesses us with His ongoing presence; but He also promises to supply everything that we need to magnify Him, in the accomplishment of the Great Commission. However, our Lord supplies for these needs through His faithful followers, who continually express both “open hearts and open hands” to this ministry! Dianne and I want to say to you, from the depths of our hearts, “*Thank You*”. We know that so many of you have been praying for us and standing with us through these valleys of adversities. We are extremely grateful that He has placed you into our lives, as co-laborers with Christ. May each of us faithfully serve the One who graciously calls us to ‘abide in Him and He in us’. It is our joy to serve with you.



We love you in the Lord Jesus,

Ed Lacy