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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,

One of the most treasured verses concerning the incarnation of our Lord and Savior is found in Matthew 1:20-21. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and proclaimed to him, **“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins”**. This wonderful verse declares all of the glorious core realities concerning “Who Jesus is; why Jesus came into this world; and what Jesus has accomplished on behalf of His bride”! When Adam and Eve believed the lie of the enemy and fell in the garden, the Kingdom of Sin and Death made an alien intrusion into this world. Brothers and sisters, ever since that tragic fall, there have been 2 powerful kingdoms that have operated on this earth. They are known as the Kingdom of Sin and the Kingdom of Grace. The Kingdom of Sin is a dark kingdom, for it has blinded the minds of its subjects to the glories of the Lord Jesus. This kingdom is also a dominating kingdom, be-



cause it binds its subjects in such a powerful way, that they are unable to free themselves. It is a deadly kingdom, because the wages earned result in eternal condemnation and spiritual death. The Bible tells us that there is no human force that can possibly conquer the terrible and tyrannical power of this master known as “SIN”. There is only ONE KING who is able to defeat the reign of sin. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ! This is the Christmas message! This is the glorious declaration found in Matthew 1:21! When the angel said to Joseph *“You shall call His name JESUS”*, he was declaring that you shall call Him “Jehovah God Who saves”!

HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE!

Are you aware that the very name of Jesus identifies Him with His people; for it perfectly expresses Who He is, as the Savior of sinners! He would have never been called Jesus, if He did not have a people that desperately needed to be saved. There would be no need for a Savior from sin, if there were no sinners to be saved. An amazing reality of grace is that the infinitely majestic God of the universe, Who lives above time and space, has stepped into time and space. Certainly friends, if God the Son has condescended to leave the glory of heaven and enter into this cesspool of depravity called the earth, then He must have come with some tremendous purpose. The remainder of the verse gives us that glorious purpose, **“FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE”**! In Acts 17:26, the Bible tells us that all of humanity is Jehovah’s people, by creation. The Old Testament also clearly informs us that God purposed to enter into a unique relationship with Israel, in which He would be their God and they would be Jehovah’s people, by covenant. The nation of Israel would be His chosen people, above all the people on the face of the earth. God gave them the Old Testament, with all of its symbols, sacrifices and types, to prepare them for the coming of Messiah. But tragically, the vast majority of the Jewish nation missed their time of visitation and rejected their Messiah. Oh, but friends, this peculiar people that is spoken of in Matthew 1:21 are a people who belong to Emmanuel, who have been bought at the highest price! They are called **HIS PEOPLE** (the people of Jesus). They are the bride of Christ, who will be redeemed from every tribe, tongue, nation and people group. They are called the church of Jesus Christ, which He purchased with His own blood.

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They comprise a number that no man can number, whose names are graven on the palms of His holy hands and written on His loving heart! These are His sheep, whom He has loved with an everlasting love. They comprise the “love gift” spoken of by the Lord Jesus in John 6:37-39. They are rebels, whom the Lord Jesus is going to conquer and transform into worshipers! And what is the mighty victory that Jesus is going to accomplish for them and in them? The victory is that **“He shall save His people FROM THEIR SIN”!**

Why was God the Son called Jesus? Oh friend, it is because His bride needed to be saved from their sin. Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. This is the reality of the true meaning of Christmas my friends. What an amazing truth this is! God was manifested in the flesh, to seek and to save those who were lost in their sins. Our Great High Priest lived a perfectly righteous life, as a substitute for sinners; and then, on the Pass-over, He was crucified as the Lamb of God, in our place and on our behalf! He bore our sins in His own body on that tree. He fully satisfied the just wrath of God that was fixed against His people. **GLORY TO THE LAMB!**

He redeems His People!
Once they were blind, but now they see!
Once they were bound, but now they are set free!
Once they serve the master of the Kingdom of Sin!
Now they love and serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

When the Lord Jesus saves one of HIS PEOPLE from their sins, He not only rescues them from the damning penalty of sin; but, He also redeems them from the dominating power of sin! He sets the captive free from the tyranny of sin; and transfers them into the Kingdom of Grace. Glory to His holy Name! He delivers us, by the force of His great love, from our worst enemy, which is this cruel and ruthless master known as “sin”! Friends, this is the message, the Good News, we get to share with others. My Lord has granted me the great joy and privilege to travel throughout this world and preach the truth that, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”



As Dianne and I approach the end of this year of ministry, we are absolutely overjoyed to report that many men and women have testified, that Jesus has saved them from their sins! We have witnessed an unusual amount of men giving testimony that the Lamb of God has delivered them from the terrible condemnation and the tyrannical captivity of their sins. It truly has been a year, in which we saw the manifest presence and power of the reality of Emmanuel, God with us! There are so many stories of testimonies of the converting grace of God in the lives of men and women, that we really do not have room to record them, but we will share a few!

THE SALVATION OF A NUMBER OF MEN!

I have had the joy of seeing a number of men testify of “salvation from their sins”, since the last newsletter. I think of a middle aged man who had been in the bondage of drugs; but who is now giving wonderful evidences of an authentic “saving” encounter with the Lord Jesus. He testified of God’s saving grace working in his heart on the 4th day of a outreach meeting, in which I was blessed to be the preacher. Over the last 6 weeks, I have had the personal blessing of pouring the Word of God into this new believer; and he is giving good evidence that Jesus has delivered him from the power and the penalty of sin. He has an insatiable appetite for the Word of God; a passion to pursue holiness; a supernatural love for the brethren; and a desire to testify to others about the glorious gospel! It has been so precious to see the birthmarks of the new birth on display before my eyes through this man’s life. I think of another man in his 30’s, which testified of salvation in that same outreach meeting. He sat under the “preaching of the Word of God” throughout the week. He had been under conviction of the Holy Spirit for 4 days. On the last day of the meeting at the conclusion of the sermon, he fell on his knees at the altar, crying out, “I am free! Jesus has set me free”! Praise the Lord! I was also given the precious joy of witnessing the Lord Jesus transform (continued)

another young man, from being a violent “skin-head”, into a man of humility of spirit and hunger to follow Jesus. It is absolutely amazing to see the radical conversion that has taken place in his life! He was so grateful to receive all of our workbooks and CD’S on some different issues of Christian growth. He testified that he is going to immediately begin with our workbook entitled, “The Biblical Path To An Effective Prayer Life”. I am also reminded of an e-mail that I recently received from a dear friend in the Lord, Walter Prescott in Gastonia, N.C. I have been blessed with many tremendous opportunities to preach the gospel at Industrial Electroplating Plant, which is owned and operated by his family. Walter wrote these words about one of his employees, **“Dennis Sherrill passed away Wednesday. The good news is that his testimony to his family was that He received the Lord Jesus, because of one of your messages at IEP. This was the wonderful testimony from his own mouth, before he died. Bro. Ed, thank you for being so faithful to go anywhere for the Lord. I saw Dennis change after you left; he gave his personal testimony to me, but it was also good to hear it from his family. Your trips to IEP have not been in vain.”** It is so tremendous to declare the glorious gospel; and then, stand back and see the salvation of God at work in the lives of men and women! God has been so gracious to give me many precious opportunities to preach the gospel in outreach meetings in AL, LA, MS and FL, since the last newsletter. We rejoice in Him, because we have seen the Lord Jesus doing His mighty work of “saving His people from their sins”.

LA STATE PENITENTIARY AT ANGOLA OUTREACH

I have just returned from Angola State Penitentiary in LA, where I had the precious privilege to preach the truths of the Gospel to a room packed with “lifers”. There are over 5,000 inmates in Angola; and 85% are serving life sentences. This prison was one of the most violent prisons in America for many decades. However, the Gospel has gone forth in power to transform the lives of many men. This has resulted in a spiritual and moral revolution in the entire climate of this prison. Now, there are three huge chapels in the middle of the prison grounds. There is even a Southern Baptist seminary on the campus of the prison, which is training prisoners for the purpose of sending them out as ‘missionaries and pastors’ into other prisons!

In recent years, this penitentiary has become more known for its revival and its seminary, than its previous reputation of violence. It has become the “poster child’ for demonstrating how the gospel of Jesus Christ can transform hardened criminals, and save them from the tyrannical power of sin! I was invited to preach a “two day meeting” at Angola by some precious friends, in conjunction with the Greater Baton Rouge Baptist Association. On Friday evening, I had the joy of preaching the Word of God to the believers at Camp “C” for two solid hours. At the end of my allotted time, the inmates were calling for more. They were all saying, with one accord, that they would be happy to listen all night. On the next day, a group of believers from the Baton Rouge area accompanied us to the prison for a special bi-annual outreach event. All of the inmate believers were allowed to invite 3 friends each, to a holiday meal with all of the trimmings, which was furnished by the Baptist association. Then I had the joy of preaching the Gospel to a “packed room”, which was standing room only! A number of men testified of the converting grace of Jesus in their hearts. As always, we pray that there will be fruit that remains. I believe that this is going to become an open door for a quarterly ministry in this prison; as well as an extended meeting in the future.

CHRIST-CENTERED EVANGELISM CONFERENCE IN FLORIDA

When I compiled the "Christ-Centered Evangelism" study for the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba, I never imagined that God would give me so many opportunities to teach this study in multiple nations, as well as a large number of churches in our own country. Recently I was blessed with another opportunity to teach this study at Fanning Springs Community Church in North Florida. Pastor David Jones shares his heart about the week. **"As Bro. Ed held up the 'plumb line' of God's Word and contrasted it with our message, our methods, and our motivations, we saw our need to be spiritually 'shimmed'. We thank God that, through His mercy, we have been given this opportunity. The Lord used you powerfully, to lovingly discipline us and bring us to repent of our drift into the realm of man's thinking, when it comes to sharing the Gospel. We have come to realize that we will look back on these meetings one day; and they will be remembered as a turning point in the life and ministry of our church. Thank you for following the call of God and living out what you believe."** Another dear brother from NC, who is teaching this study in his church, recently shared these words by e-mail, **"We have just completed the 'Christ-Centered Evangelism' series. We will begin it again, with a larger group, next semester which will begin after the Christmas holidays. The men in the study have been challenged. One of the men who went through the study is not a member of this church. He led his children through a sinner's prayer using the 'man-centered' program in the past; but He sees no signs of the fruit of conversion in their lives. When he heard about 'Christ-Centered Evangelism' he was compelled to sign up. He now testifies that he and the group are passionately praying for his sons; he is living out the 'aroma of Christ' before them; and he is making preparation to give them a 'Christ-Centered' message as soon as possible".**

THANK YOU

As we celebrate Christmas, our hearts are overflowing as we consider why He came. Oh what a Savior! Dear friends, we love to tell the story of Emmanuel, because He has opened our eyes and He has set us free from the penalty and power of sin. We know that He is the greatest gift of all. He has graciously poured out His mercy and His grace into our lives. We also thank Him for blessing us with friends and co-laborers in the faith, who also desire to share the Good News of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Your prayers, your financial gifts and words of encouragement have been vitally instrumental in sharing the good news to men and women on foreign fields, in churches, prisons, drug/alcohol rehab centers, and also in individual encounters along the way. Because of your faithfulness to support this ministry we have been able to go through the doors that the Lord has opened unto us, proclaiming His Word to others.

Dianne and I hope you will have a blessed and Merry Christmas as we celebrate Jesus' birth. We pray that you will have wonderful opportunities to enjoy family and friends during this special time of year. We of all people have reason to rejoice, for our Savior has come, and He has saved us from our sins.

We count it a joy and a privilege to be on mission together with you. Thank you for standing with us this year.

Ed & Dianne Lacy

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

December 12-17Nicaragua

December 30- Jan. 12Kenya

February 3- 11Cuba

February 26-29 Friendship
Baptist, Baton Rouge, LA