

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 .

May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Editor's Notes

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By Who's Authority?

*Jim Miller
Gray, Maine*

The best a Jew could do in Old Testament times was to put a band aid on his sins and live as right as he could in the hope and knowledge of a coming Savior. Today we are so loved that we live in a time when that Savior has already come and our sins can be completely forgiven by the one who shed His blood on the cross to save us.

There are still rules that must be followed however and just as the Jew of the Old Testament they must be followed and kept. There have always been those who would not follow anything other than their own lusts and beliefs preferring to exercise their free will in a manner that suits and serves themselves. The Christian however, seeks to do the will of the Creator knowing that the price is far too high for any selfish motive they may have.

That is the crux of free will it enables man to choose what he wants and the Christian knows this and is willing to bend his/her will to that of God's. There are many who claim to follow the principles of God's word who choose not to obey it in its simplicity but rather to do something then try to justify it afterward. It is really a simple matter of authority.

Jesus made clear He had all the authority when he spoke in Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. He then went on to command his apostles and disciples to go into all the world preaching and teaching by His authority Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

It becomes clear that to teach all to observe those things He commanded was the only authority he gave to His apostles and to us today. When we go beyond what is taught we are endangering not just our souls but those whom we teach. These God inspired men recorded for us the very will of God that we might be saved. It

doesn't take a scholar to understand what was taught and recorded, if those of the first century could understand so can we. This is a plain fact that seems to have been forgotten today.

The only apostle I know of who would even remotely be considered a scholar would have been Paul and yet he even preached the plain simple Gospel. Today it seems unless you have a fancy piece of paper or a bunch of extra letters behind your name one isn't truly considered educated enough to teach that simple doctrine given to man some two thousand years ago. Some think because there is a PHD at the end of a fellows name that he all of a sudden has more authority than the man who has simply studied the word on his own. Nothing could be farther from the truth however.

Folks I and many other preachers are just plain men with the desire to spread Gods word using only the same authority given by the Lord. Our desire is to teach you that to be saved, you must bend your will to that of Gods. We do not come to you speaking all manner of smooth talk allowing sin to go unchallenged. Beware those who come to you saying we have found something new. Beware those who would speak only loving words that sooth your mind and deceive you through their own vanity. Beware those who by their own authority bring in denominational and ungodly practices.

If you do not study for yourself as you have been instructed these men will come in and reek havoc among you as they have all along. Before you allow something in your life or in your assembly study the scriptures to be sure you have the proper authority. Follow the old saying I have come to live by and that is if in doubt do without. Please I beg of you stop allowing these deceivers in among you for they will surly lead you to hell.

Please seek the authority of God before doing anything. Do not start a practice and then try to justify it. Above all if these men and their damnable doctrines have already crept in among you put them out and go back to doing bible things in bible ways under the authority of God. Your souls depend upon it!

Till Next We Meet
God Bless



This is a new website created to expose the Compromised/liberal teaching institutions that claim affiliation with the church. The following is from our home page and you will find a link to the site at the end.

The Shipwreck of Colleges and Schools of Preaching

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).

Why and how did compromise and/or liberalism come to dominate the preaching schools and colleges of today? This Site is dedicated to trying to answer these questions while showing that (1) compromise and liberalism have already destroyed the “Big Gun” Colleges and (2) the way that compromise is having a devastating effect on our smaller schools of preaching. These smaller schools, begun by congregations to replace the colleges that went off headlong into error, are now teetering on the edge because of their compromises.

There was a time when men who were sound in the faith taught younger men in the church how to preach and teach. We believe this should still be the norm. However, as sadly seen in these institutions today, this is no longer the case. Most people in the congregations have been dumbed down to the point that they believe that unless a preacher has a piece of paper stating he has been trained formally, he is unable or unfit to preach. Read the rest on our site.

[Click Here](#) to visit our site.

Liberalism to the “Max”

Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

Introduction

One man, perhaps more than any other of whom I am aware, is the quintessential liberal among those who are trying to destroy the church. He epitomizes the finished product of the elitist liberal theology that has stolen the hearts of so many. If one would know exactly where the deadly liberalism of our time leads when consistently followed to its tragic ultimate, he need look no further than this apostate—**Max Lucado**.

My quotations and criticisms are aimed at his apostasy, not at him; I have no personal animosity toward Lucado whatsoever. I sincerely desire (and am praying) that he may repent lest he perish. However, I cannot love the Lord and His Truth without absolutely despising (and exposing) Lucado’s outrageous doctrine and practice. Verily, he represents all of the worst in matters of doctrine and practice among those still claiming membership in the church.

He has occupied the pulpit of the Oak Hills “Church of Christ” in San Antonio, Texas, since 1988. This church, leaning leftward before he arrived, gave Lucado free rein, which he has used to the fullest. He was eventually instrumental in dispensing with *Church of Christ* as part of the church’s name. It has for a few years simply been the “Oak Hills Church,” which has been a step in the direction of integrity, if nothing else. This religious organization has not been a church of Christ in any Scriptural sense of the term for many years.

Through his “touchy-feely” books and his interdenominational doctrine and behavior he reigns as the darling of both the change agents in the church and of the denominations. As I set forth the several areas of his apostasy, I ask the reader to bear in mind that he is the darling and honored alumnus of

Abilene Christian University.

Fellowship

Liberals constantly seek a wider fellowship, embracing those who have never obeyed the Gospel. Lucado has taken this emphasis to a new level by extending fellowship to all sorts of denominational churches for several years. Any faithful Gospel preacher would welcome the invitation to preach the Truth to a denominational church. Many of us have done so. However, when Lucado visits them he “brothers” them, calls their preachers by their denominational titles (i.e., “Rev.,” “Father,” et al.), sings with their organs, and generally bids them “Godspeed,” in spite of many Scriptural warnings to the contrary (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9–11; et al.). He and Buckner Fanning (Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio) “traded pulpits” several years ago, which event they proclaimed “Unity Day.” Lucado explained: “This is a gesture of unity, a statement of acceptance.... Whenever I see a man call God ‘Father,’ I see a brother.”

In his book, *In the Grip of Grace*, Lucado “builds” a mythical “ship,” which he christened *Fellowship*. Its passenger manifest includes Calvinists, charismatics, people who engage in various unauthorized worship practices—apparently anyone who professes belief in Christ. He alleges Christ to be the captain and Heaven the destination of the whole motley crew. They all boarded on “the gangplank of...grace.” What is his solution to the problem of divergent doctrines and practices among the passengers? “The answer to their arguments? Acceptance. The first step to unity? Acceptance. No agreement? Acceptance.”

As his proof-text, he offers Romans 14:1, which deals only with optional matters, recklessly (and inexcusably) ripping it from its context and application. Only two chapters later, Paul ordered us to “mark” and “turn away from” heretics who beguile others by “smooth and fair speech” (16:17–18). I can see why Lucado would want to forget these verses—if he ever read them. They precisely describe him and how faithful saints must treat him!

Had Lucado been making up the passenger list, Noah’s ark would have included many more than the eight souls of the patriarch’s family! Moses summarized the great difference between Lucado and Noah: “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). Liberalism ultimately leads to Lucado’s doctrine of indiscriminate fellowship, little more

than thinly veiled universalism.

The Church

Lucado's fellowship errors reflect his concept of the church. His fellowship/church model is not new, but it is too new to be true. It is the old denominational model of the "universal church," often depicted by the figure of a circle encompassing all of the denominations. Lucado prefers a ship to a circle to express his anti-Scriptural concept that "the church" is the sum of all of the denominations. He has perhaps voiced his confused view of the church more blatantly than his fellow change agents.

A 1989 newspaper feature story reported Lucado as referring to "the church of Christ denomination." Upon being questioned, he denied saying those words, but to what purpose? Both his words and his deeds amply testify that he thus perceives the Lord's church. At the 1997 Washington, D.C., Promise Keepers rally he included the church with the denominations, challenging all to repent of their sectarianism and cease their jealousy and competition with each other.

In the 1999 CSPAN telecast of the National Prayer Breakfast, Lucado stated: "Some think that following Jesus is attending a certain church...." Yes, and one of those Who thus thinks is Jesus Himself! He is the head of His one church, which is His bride (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23-25, 29, 32). If He has promised to save any who are outside of His church since He built it, He failed to include that information in His New Testament. The saved are added to it as they are saved (Acts 2:47), He will deliver it up to the Father in the end (1 Cor. 15:24) because He is its Savior (Eph. 5:23). If the Bible can be trusted, one must be in the church of Christ to be saved.

The church Jesus built is not a denomination and does not include any denominations. It is not even a fourth step-cousin-in-law once-removed to any of the denominations. The entire denominational concept and structure are the works of men, not of the Son of God. Lucado seems unable to conceive of the church except in sectarian terms. To him every believer must be a member of some denomination. He is not content to hold this doctrine himself, but seems bent on corrupting as many members and congregations as possible with his heresy. Liberalism ultimately leads to Lucado's denominational view of the

church.

Worship

One's view of the church directly effects his concept of worship. When one forfeits Bible doctrine concerning the church's nature, why not concerning its worship also? Lucado is consistent—he rejects the Bible on both subjects. As mentioned earlier, he sings spiritual songs with instruments in the denominational churches he visits. From his Oak Hills Pulpit a few years ago, he revealed his “convictions”:

Many of you know that I have no trouble whatsoever with using instruments in worship.... I love our acappella singing, but I really have trouble saying that if anybody wants to use an instrument in worship it's wrong.

A few years ago Lucado and Oak Hills produced a CD, titled, “Opening Windows.” It is touted as a “worship experience” with Lucado and the “music ministry of Oak Hills Church,...recorded live at Max's home church.” It features a “sixty-member choir, a praise team, and band on [a] personal journey through prayer, praise, and worship.” Such complete rejection of one element of Scriptural worship is tantamount to rejecting all of them. Liberalism ultimately leads to Lucado's abandonment of Scriptural worship.

The Plan of Salvation

Lucado has not even spared the plan of salvation in his assault on the Truth. He does so **implicitly** every time he extends fellowship and hope to those who have not obeyed the Gospel (2 The. 1:7–9). Faith-only and grace-only advocates are on his “Fellowship,” allegedly “sailing” firth to Heaven.

He has also **explicitly** cast aside the Gospel Truth on this subject. Never mind what Paul, Peter, or John wrote, or the very Savior Himself stated. Lucado apparently knows more about the plan conceived in eternity than them all (1 Cor. 2:6–10; Eph. 3:9–11; 1 Pet. 1:18–20)! In a 1996 “Upwards” radio program sermon (KJAK, Lubbock, TX) he extended the following invitation:

Just call Him “Father,”... And your Father will respond. Why don't you do that?... [The announcer then offers a “free” booklet to all who send a

donation and reintroduces Lucado: [Announcer:] Now, Max Lucado returns with a special word for those who received the gift of salvation just moments ago in prayer. [Lucado:] I'd like to give you a word about the next step or two. I want to encourage you to find a church. I want to encourage you to be baptized.... But I don't want you to do any of that so that you will be saved. I want you to do all of that because you are saved....

In a recent "Easter" booklet, *He Did This Just for You*, Lucado gives his "plan of salvation" as follows:

Admit your need. **Agree** with His work. **Accept** His gift. Go to God in prayer and tell Him, "I am a sinner in need of grace. I believe that Jesus died for me on the cross. I accept your offer of salvation." It's a simple prayer with eternal results.

No Baptist could have stated Baptist doctrine better. In both quotations one sees the old denominational "sinner's prayer" for which there is not even half a scintilla of Scriptural support! As with all denominationalists, Lucado completely surrenders the Truth about the relationship of baptism to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

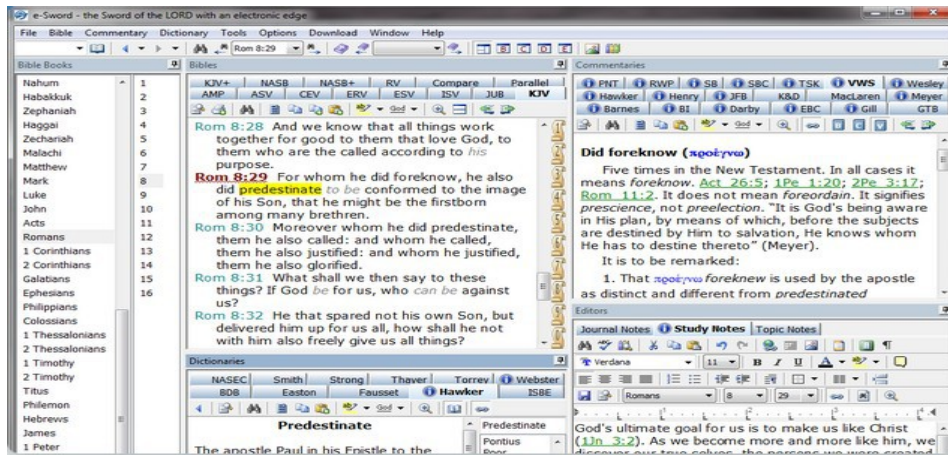
Lucado surely knows the clear New Testament connection between baptism, the blood of Christ, and forgiveness of sins: (1) If only the blood of Christ can wash sins away (Rev. 1:5), and (2) if one's sins are washed away in the act of baptism—not before (Acts 22:16), then (3) the Lord made baptism the act in which His blood washes away one's sins (Rom. 6:3). No baptism—no blood; no blood—no forgiveness. no forgiveness—no salvation! It is that simple. Liberalism ultimately leads to Lucado's abandonment of the Lord's plan of salvation.

[Note: The foregoing is an excerpt from my MS, "A Half-Century of Church History—How We Got Where We Are," in which I summarize many of the liberal forces and personages that have produced the rampant apostasy among the Lord's people, beginning in the late 1960s. The full MS may be accessed on my Website, *The Scripturecache*, at the following link: http://thescripturecache.com/?page_id=70.]



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Errors On The Afterlife

*Jerry C. Brewer
Elk City, Okla.*

“Happy Birthday in Heaven my sweet Daddy. I like to think that mama has made you a pineapple upside down cake, you and Dave are playing Dominoes, then finishing the night pickin' the guitar and playin' fiddle. I'm a little jealous. I love you and miss you, but thank you for a beautiful life, and I'll be celebrating yours today.”

When a loved one dies, there are a great many unscriptural statements and downright errors that are expressed which manifest Biblical ignorance, such as the above quote taken from a friend's Face Book page. These amount to a lot of wishful thinking on the part of those making them, but have no basis in God's word. There is absolutely nothing any person on earth can know about the hereafter, except as it is revealed in the Bible. Here are some of those erroneous statements:

“Daddy (or Mama) Has Gone To Heaven”

While we all want to think the best for our loved ones, this is false, according to the Bible. When one dies, he goes neither to eternal heaven nor eternal hell. That is the thrust of Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus, in which He pulled back the misty veil to give us a brief glimpse of man's existence after death.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth

Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31).

When one dies he goes to "hades" which is the unseen realm of disembodied spirits. The word "hell" in this passage is the Greek word hades and should have been translated as that. The place of eternal torment is referred to in the New Testament with the Greek word "gehenna." The rich man and Lazarus were both in Hades, but the rich man was in "torments" and Lazarus was in "Abraham's bosom" and neither could cross to the other side. There is no second chance after death. "Abraham's bosom" is the term the Jews used for "paradise" and is where Jesus went upon His death (Luke 23:42-43). When Jesus was resurrected, his spirit returned from hades to His physical body and when He ascended to heaven His physical body was changed to a spiritual one, as ours shall after we return from hades at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51-52 cf 1 John 3:2). The only person who ever ascended to heaven after death is Jesus Christ, and that was only after he rested in Abraham's bosom (paradise) and was raised from the dead, as all men shall be at the last day (John 5:28-29). Even if Mama or Daddy is in Abraham's bosom, they are not in heaven.

"Grandpa Is Watching Over Us From Heaven"

First, this statement is wishful thinking, at best, and downright error, at worst. "Grandpa" isn't in heaven. He's in hades awaiting the resurrection and final

judgment, as noted above. In the second place, have you considered what you are saying when you make that statement? What does it take for a being from heaven to be aware of all occurrences on earth? It takes omniscience. To say “Grandpa is looking down on us” ascribes omniscience to “Grandpa”. Only God is omniscient and “Grandpa” Is not God.

The dead have no knowledge of what happens on earth. They are conscious, as were Lazarus and the rich man, but their knowledge of earthly things is gone. Solomon wrote, *“For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is under the sun”* (Eccl. 9:5-6).

Notice the phrase, “under the sun.” What does “under the sun” mean? That phrase refers to the things of this life, those things done on the earth, and Solomon employs that phrase 27 times in the book of Ecclesiastes. His thesis in that book is the vanity, or emptiness, of all things of this life, and when he says, the dead have no “portion forever in anything that is under the sun,” he means the dead, though still conscious in hades, have no knowledge of earthly matters, nor do they any longer possess things on earth. They are as unaware of earthly activities as you are unaware of what takes place in your house when you go shopping.

“I Bet Daddy’s Up In Heaven Hunting Deer”

This is one of the more foolish statements that has no basis in the Bible. Those who say such things obviously view heaven as some sort of glorified “resort.” Jesus emphatically taught that all earthly relationships and activities will cease after death. Matthew records a question the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, or spirits, put to Jesus, and His answer to them.. They posed a question in a hypothetical story which they thought would create a dilemma for the Lord. They said a woman married a man who died, and his brother took her for his wife, as the Law of Moses commanded. In their story, *“the man had six brothers and they all died, leaving her to the next, until they had all died. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had*

her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22:27-30).

Marital relationships will end with this life. There will be no marrying in heaven. That includes all other relationships as well. Heaven is not a place where earthly activities will simply be extended. How could “Daddy” hunt deer in heaven, when no animals will be in heaven? Animals were not created living souls in God’s image, as man was. God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 1:26; 2:7). He did not create animals in His image. The spirit of man goes upward when his body returns to the ground and the live essence (the spirits) of animals goes downward. *“Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Eccl. 3:21).*

Every earthly relationship on earth ceases at death, which includes activities associated with those relationships. Neither Paradise nor Heaven will be a “Glorified Resort/Fishing-Hunting Lodge/Golf Course” or any other recreational activity in which we engage in this earthly life “under the sun”.

Heaven is a place of glory that the mind of man cannot grasp. Even the description we have of it is figurative, using things known to man in this life, but those things are not literal—the street of pure gold (Rev. 21:21, the *“pure river of the water of life” (Rev. 22:1-2)*). All of the descriptions of heaven are couched in terms the mind of man can grasp, because so long as we live in the flesh, we cannot fully understand the glories, the spiritual nature, and the eternal wonder of that home of the soul. We simply trust Him who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) to do what He has promised for the faithful.

When a loved one dies, let us not speculate about earthly things and say things that have no basis in the Bible. When ebon darkness washes over the soul at the death of one we love, let us simply humble ourselves before God, *“casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).*

*“Does Jesus care when I’ve said goodbye
To the dearest on earth to me?”*

*When my sad heart aches til it nearly breaks,
Is it aught to Him, does He see?
O, yes, He cares, I know He cares.
His heart is touched with my grief.
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary
I know my Savior cares.”*



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“GOD HEARETH NOT SINNERS” John 9:31

Part 1

Michael Hatcher
Pensacola, Florida

INTRODUCTION

The disciples come to Jesus with a simple, yet not so simple request. “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). They had seen the importance that Jesus had placed on prayer in His life. He was often found in prayer, and especially at any major event in His life. When Jesus was baptized He prayed (Luke 3:21); before choosing His apostles (Luke 6:12-13) He spent the whole night in prayer; at the transfiguration (Luke 9:29) He was praying; He prayed when He raised Lazarus from the dead (Luke 11:41). Jesus is often found in prayer just before his death: in connection with His death upon the cross He was found in prayer (John 12:20-28); in the very shadow of the cross He prayed for Himself, His disciples, and all believers (John 17); He prayed in behalf of Peter (Luke 22:31-34); when He instituted His Supper (Mat. 26:26-29); and His three fervent prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-45). Upon the cross His first words were a prayer (Luke 23:34); still upon the cross (Mat. 27:46); and at the end of the ordeal (Luke 23:46). Prayer characterized His life. Thus, the disciples request, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

One of the great privileges of being a Christian is that we have the same right of prayer as Jesus had available to Him. While it possibly is not something we take advantage of as we should, it is still a wonderful gift which God has given unto us. L. O. Sanderson stated it correctly in the words of the song: *Pray All The Time* when he wrote, “The world has lost the right of prayer, And saints have failed to pray; What loss sustained beyond repair! How blind of heart are they!”

PRAYER’S POWER

James explicitly states the power which prayer possesses when he writes, “Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be

healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16). The idea behind *availeth* is that it has power, is able, or can do its intended purpose. Then Inspiration adds that it avails **much**, not just a little. One way God informs us of the power of prayer is by examples He gives us.

James gives us the example of **Elijah**. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (Jam. 5:17-18). Elijah (*Elias*) was the same (*like passions*) as we are. Notice the great power of prayer in his life. He prayed for it not to rain, and it did not rain for a period of three and a half years. He then prayed for rain, and it rained. One important point in this is that there was no miracle involved in all of this. Everything which happened was purely natural. There was great power in Elijah’s prayer, even as there is in the prayers of any righteous man today, in exactly the same way as Elijah’s—through the providential working of God.

Abraham and Abimelech the king of Gerar would testify to the power of prayer. When Abraham dwells in Gerar, he withholds vital information from Abimelech concerning Sarah, his wife; only saying she was his sister. The failure to inform Abimelech concerning their marital status was wrong, causing Abimelech to take Sarah to be his wife. However, God intervened in this prior to Abimelech coming near her, and his actions were done in the innocency of his heart. God tells Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham. We then find the power of pray. “Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine” (Gen. 20:7). Because of the power of a righteous man’s pray, Abimelech would not die, however failure to pray would have resulted in Abimelech’s death. Prayer possessed preeminent power.

Space forbids us to discuss all the different men and women of faith who prayed to God and the wonderful power which prayer brings. However, consider and study on your own the power of prayer in the lives of **David** as he records God’s deliverance because of his prayers in 2 Samuel 22:1-7, along with other times. God spared the rebellious Israelites destruction in the wilderness because of the prayers of Moses (Exo. 32; Num. 14). Think of **Samson** and when he was sore athirst and prayed; God provided water for him (Jud. 15:18-19). Also at the end of his life, he prays for strength and receives it (Jud. 16:28-30). Look at the power of prayer in the life of **Hannah**, who prayed for a man-child and God provided (1 Sam 1). Or consider **Daniel**, who because of prayer was cast into a

den of lions, but God shut the lion's mouth (Dan. 6). And certainly **Jesus** is our perfect example in this area as He is in all areas of life. Often Jesus prayed and the Father heard and answered His prayers. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 11:41-42). While there are many other examples these are sufficient to show the power of prayer in the lives of the faithful. However, let us consider a few of the ways prayer is powerful.

Prayer gives **strength and comfort**. Even an atheist prays in times of trouble for the comfort that it will bring. It was said that there are no atheists in foxholes and that everyone prayed in them. The reason is simple, the comfort and strength that prayer brings. What greater comfort and strength could one have than the opportunity to take everything to God in prayer. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Knowing He cares for us, brings great comfort and strengthens us against whatever may come.

Closely associated with the previous is that prayer will **bring peace** to ones life. Paul writes, "Be careful for nothing [In nothing be anxious—ASV]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phi. 4:6-7). We all have difficulties in life, but in prayer we have the right to take those problems to our God. Then we can let God take care of them knowing He cares for us. The result is that we do not have to be anxious or troubled with cares.

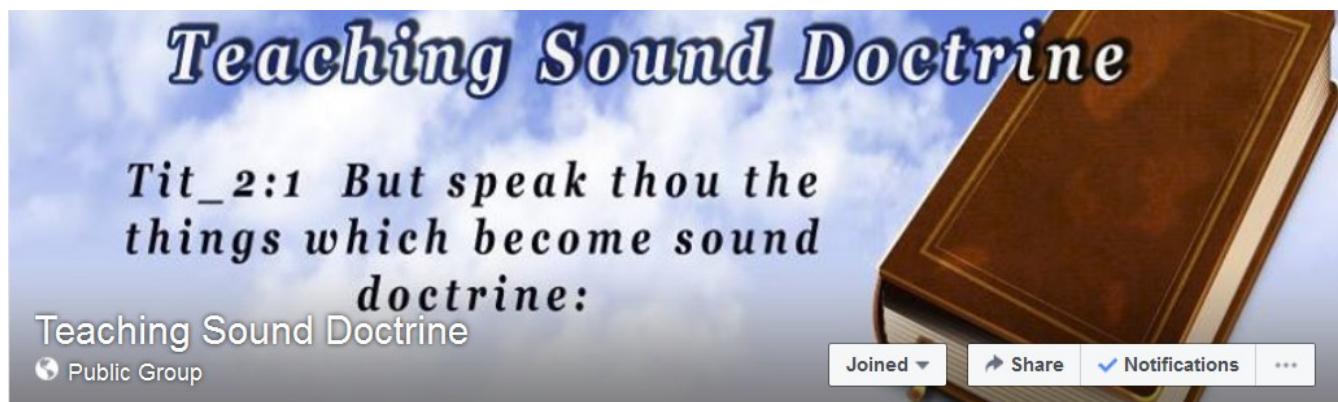
Prayer will **stop sin**, even as sin will stop prayer. When the faithful pray, part of that prayer will be concerning sin. They will be confessing sin within their life. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Notice also the emphasis Jesus placed on this in the example prayer he gave. "Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven....And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Mat. 6:9-13). The very fact that we are praying these sentiments will help us to stop sin in our lives. Our minds will be centered on living as God wills, and ending sin in our lives. However, when we decide to live in rebellion to God's will, we will stop praying.

Prayer will **bring us closer to God and things spiritual**. Again, like the preceding, when we pray our minds are brought into harmony with God and spiritual matters. This not only serves the purpose of bringing us closer to God and spiritual matters when we pray, but also will do this for our entire life.

Prayer will **alter what would be**. What a marvelous thought, that our prayers will effect the God of heaven to such an extent, that He through providential means will change what would be. We observe this with Moses' praying for the rebellious Israelites. God had determined to destroy them, however through Moses' prayers, God spared them. It is also observed in Elijah's prayer that it not rain and it did not rain; then his prayer for rain and it rained. The God of the universe hears the prayers of the faithful. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come" (Psa. 65:2).

However, there are some whom God will not hear. The man healed of blindness said the words of our title: "Now we know that **God heareth not sinners**: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). What a sad situation: that the God of heaven will not hear the sinner's prayer. However, some do not accept what the blind man said. We will spend the rest of this chapter proving the truth of what the blind man who had been healed stated.

We will continue this study next month



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Tit_2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

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