

Milk & Honey

Vol. XXX May 2016 No. 5

Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Amazing Sensitivity Of Christ

Bob Gessner

So often the world thinks of a “holy man” as one who segregates himself from the affairs of men and has a very stoic appearance in the midst of the often emotional climate around him. This is certainly a very unrealistic and false viewpoint. The life of the Lord Jesus, the only One who was truly holy, completely contradicts this notion. He never reacted to people or circumstances because He knew beforehand what they were thinking or what was going to happen. On the other hand, He often responded with deep feelings, displaying the innermost depths of His sensitivity toward those around Him.

1. **His Compassion.** “And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean” (Mk. 1:41). Often, those who spend much time in the midst of sickness and suffering, learn to surround themselves with a shell so that they are not affected by what they see. Many who work in the midst of terminal patients sometimes become cold and indifferent to their suffering in order to survive he daily exposure to this routine. Christ not only saw the suffering around Him, but He understood, as no one else was able, the awful consequences of sin and disease. Yet He never became cold or indifferent toward those sufferers that He saw. In the verse above, His pity reaches out to a leper, who in those days was generally forsaken by the masses. In compassion He reached forth and touched “the untouchable.” It was probably the first human touch this man had experienced in a long, long time.

On another occasion, after spending time in a desert place for privacy, He was mobbed by a multitude of suffering people. Rather than being annoyed, He was moved with compassion toward them (Mk. 6:34). On yet another occasion, as He departed from Jericho, two blind men cried out to Him. Jesus again was moved with compassion and touched their eyes (Mt. 20:34).

These are recorded events. It is beyond our ability to understand how much pity poured out of His heart, every step of His way on this sin-cursed earth. This same Jesus, living in heaven, is still moved with compassion when we cry out for His mercy and His help (Heb. 4:16).

2. **His Love.** “Then Jesus beholding him loved him....” (Mk. 10:21). Every human being by nature is capable of loving someone other than himself. Generally, our love is contaminated with the selfish elements that make up so much of our response to others. The Lord Jesus expressed His love to others in a manner that would only be capable of One who possessed the divine nature. He loved the rich young man in the verse above, even though He knew that because of his riches, he was going to reject Him and walk away from Him. He loves us all first, even though many never respond to that love (1 Jn. 4:19).

He loved His disciples to the end even though they had disappointed Him on many occasions and He fully knew that they were going to forsake Him at the time of His trial and execution (Jn. 13:1). He loves us without receiving anything in return.

The sincerity and purity of His love was also demonstrated when Lazarus was sick. Much of human love, as demonstrated in our present society, exhibits shallowness in the midst of adversity. The Lord Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus (Jn. 11:5). Even though He had the power to cure Lazarus of his illness, He allowed Him to die. His love extended beyond the immediate present and its comforts. He was more concerned about their future welfare and He knew this depended on their inner ability to comprehend His victory over death. Divine love permits present adversity to prepare us for the future. Real love always has in mind the future welfare of the recipient (Rom. 8:35).

3. **His Anger.** “And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts...” (Mk. 3:5) It almost seems disrespectful or irreverent to speak of the Lord Jesus as being angry. We too often think of anger in the sinful sense of a feeling of extreme indignation toward someone because they insulted us, rejected our counsel, or injured us in some way. Yet the word, anger, is used over 200 times in the Old Testament and many of these references refer to the anger of God. In fact, it tells us that He is angry with the wicked every day (Ps. 7:11). The Lord Jesus never became angry because He was maltreated by unjust men (1 Pet. 2:23). He became angry when religious leaders hardened their hearts against the truth and power of God. He became angry when they sought, in the hardness of their hearts, to distort the truth and the glory of God. On two

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occasions, both near the beginning and end of His ministry, He drove the money changers out of the temple (Jn. 2:15; Mk. 11:15). Indifference or acquiescence to the deliberate abuse of God's Word is not a sign of godliness but rather of weakness. It requires courage and fortitude to stand up against those who seek to discredit God's Word and His glory. Christ often stood alone against the angry mob of religious leaders.

4. His Joy. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit..." (Lk. 10:21) The rejoicing expressed in this verse was in His spirit which is the seat of real joy. It never tells us in the Gospels that Jesus laughed or even smiled. This is not to suggest that He did not smile, but He was never characterized as One who went about laughing and joking. Levity and joking do not harmonize with the character of the "Man of sorrows" who was acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). As He stood in the presence of those who were grieving at the grave of Lazarus, even though He knew that Lazarus would be raised from the dead, he stood by the mourners and wept with them (Jn. 11:35). There is a vast difference between inward joy and outward levity. Depending on the feelings of those around us, jesting can often be cruel and disturbing. The inner joy of the Spirit is inside the believer and is not necessarily expressed outwardly in a jovial manner. A closer examination of our verse above, shows us that the Lord's joy was expressed by thanksgiving for that which God was doing according to His own delight and pleasure. Thus joy is really the opposite of a murmuring and complaining attitude. It is rather a wholesome thankfulness for all that God is doing in my life and in the life of others. It is expressed by a positive attitude of service to God and to others. It is evidenced by a quiet acceptance of disappointment and adversity. Paul and Silas were not filled with laughter when they were in the stocks in the inner prison at Philippi. Neither did they moan nor complain. Their inner joy was expressed by praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25).

5. His Amazement. "And He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mk. 6:6). "When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Mt. 8:10). It is hard for us to imagine that the One who brought the world into being could possibly marvel about anything that happened down here. In the above verses there were two attitudes displayed that caused Him to wonder or marvel: the unbelief of those who had seen His miracles and the faith of one Gentile who believed He had the power to do anything He wanted. It is astounding to realize that we can be so full of unbelief that He is filled with amazement or wonder. To His own disciples He had to say: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I

suffer you?" (Mt. 17:17) We fail to realize the terrible effect on Him that our unbelief often brings. On the other hand, what a thrill to realize that great faith causes Him to marvel. In the midst of all the unbelief and complaining of our day, there are cries that go up to Him that bring delight to Him. They are shouts of great faith that reach out to the One who is willing and able to do great things for those who believe. What does our life bring forth for Him? Does He marvel at our unbelief or does He marvel at our great faith in Him? "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away...And NOW I exhort you to be of good cheer; ... for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:22-25). *

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The Perfect Assembly

Steve Hulshizer

If we only read the opening verses of the letter to the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2), we would no doubt come to the conclusion that the assembly was perfect.

The Lord commends them for their *works*. This was an active assembly. He speaks of their *labor*. They were not only active, but working to the point of exhaustion.

He also commends their *patience*. Often when we work hard, we quit early. Not so with the assembly at Ephesus. They were active, laboring, and they were not quitters.

He knew of their sensitivity to evil and they faithful administration of discipline. He knew of their knowledge of the Word and how they tried man making false claims, and found them to be liars.

However, despite the many things for which they could be commended, the discerning eyes of the Lord sensed a serious problem, they had "left their first love." They had fallen into a busy routine, and perhaps like Martha, had placed service above worship.

An important lesson to be learned is that an assembly can be busy and have the outward appearance of success, and yet its heart can be failing. It isn't that we do not love Him any longer, but He no longer *captivates* the heart. Instead He *competes* with other things, even His work, for our affection and devotion. Nowhere may this be more evident than at the Lord's Supper, where silence, which has its place, often manifests itself for an inordinate amount of time. *

Living on the Edge

Steve Hulshizer

Reprinted from first issue - May-June 1986

Eutychus is certainly not a name that is often thought of when names are being considered for a new son. Neither is he an individual that is often discussed at the mid-week Bible study. There are no books written of his life, and seldom do we hear a sermon concerning him.

We only read of this young man in one verse of Scripture. In Act 20:9 we read, "And there sat in a window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." In the following verse we are told that Paul embraced him and he was revived.

While this brief incident is the only mention of Eutychus in Scripture, there is a very important and practical truth that is illustrated by this story.

In order to learn this truth we might begin by asking ourselves the question, "Why did Eutychus fall from the window?" Our immediate answer would be, "Because he fell asleep." More often than not, when this story is considered the blame is placed on the preacher. He was sleepy and Paul's "long preaching" caused him to sink into deep sleep and he fell.

It is not uncommon today among the saints to hear comments such as; the message was too long, the message was boring, the message was irrelevant, etc. Unfortunately in some cases that may be a problem. However, I doubt whether the Apostle Paul was boring, or that the message was irrelevant. The blame for Eutychus' fall could not be placed on the preacher.

In reality the reason he fell from the window was not because he fell asleep, nor because of Paul's preaching. He fell from the window because he was sitting on the edge! If he had not been sitting on the window edge he would not have fallen from it. It was his position that led to his "downfall." If he had been seated among the saints his sleep would not have caused the fall.

From this simple story we can see why saints "fall" back into the world. Many times it is because they are living on the edge! Too often believers will attempt to live as close as possible to the world without being a part of it. They attempt to walk a fine line between Christianity and the world. In this position, it only takes a little sleep and one finds himself falling right back into the world.

How close are you walking to the world? Is it your practice as a Christian to get as close to the world as possible without being spotted (James 1:27)? Is your music like the world's, but with different labels? Do you attend the same

movie theaters as they would, but only go to the movies that "aren't bad"? Do you dress like the world, but just a little less revealing or suggestive? Are your priorities similar to those of the world? Does your career take priority over Biblical principles? Are your friends also those who live near the edge of the world (Prov. 13:20)? Is your attendance at the assembly similar to the world's attendance at "church"? Do you read worldly magazines? Is your language "close" to the world's? Do you laugh at the world's off-colored jokes? Is your "thinking" like that of the unsaved world? Are the world's standards your standards (James 4:4)?

One of the easiest ways of determining if you are living on the edge of the world is to consider this question. "On what basis do you determine if you should go to a certain place, do a certain activity, or listen to certain music, etc.?" If you find yourself saying, "There is nothing wrong with this," then you are most likely walking very close to, if not in the world.

In Philippians 1:9-10 we read Paul's prayer for the saints. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

Paul prayed that the saints' love would grow in knowledge and discernment. Love that overflows these two boundaries can be as harmful as a river that overflows its banks. His desire is that they "approve," test and go in for, those things that are excellent, or "better." (1 Thess. 5:21) All of this is in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ (Day of Christ), at which each saint will need to give an account for the deeds done in the body. (2 Cor. 5:10)

As believers we should be "testing" things in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and going in for those things which are "better." Our test is not, "Is there anything wrong with this?" Our test should be, "Is this the best?" Is this the best book I can read? Is this movie the best thing I can watch? Is this the best place to go? Is this better for me than being at the assembly? Is this the best friend with respect to my spiritual growth? Is this the best bathing suit to wear? Is this the best language I can use? It is not only a question of whether the Lord will be "displeased," but whether He will be "pleased." (1 Thess 4:1b) If we evaluate our activities from this perspective we will find ourselves moving further away from the edge.

It may be helpful to distinguish between "worldliness" and "sin." A sin, as we know, is an act that is contrary to the will of God. On the other hand, worldliness could be defined as an attitude toward the things of the world (Phil. 3:19; 1 John 2:15). The Lord not only wants the believer to be righteous, but also to be "holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). We are

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A non-profit ministry of
Spread The Word, Inc., 2400 Admire Springs Dr.
Dover, PA 17315



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May 2016

30 Years Ago

The year was 1986. Do you remember anything about that year? Probably not, unless it was of personal importance. Here are a few little known or little remembered facts of the time. The year was declared the International Year of Peace by the United Nations. Microsoft Corporation held its initial public offering of stock shares. The New York Mets won the World Series. Spain and Portugal entered the common market. The Statue of Liberty's was 100 years old. One gallon of gas was 89 cents. A Ford Mustang cost \$7,452. The average income per year was \$22,400. And in May the first issue of *Milk&Honey* was published.

Two copies along with a sign up sheet were sent to each assembly listed in the address book. Slowly the mailing list grew until approximately 5,600 copies are currently sent out monthly, mostly in the U.S. and Canada, but also to over 25 other countries. Others receive it electronically.

In following years small booklets for use in prison work and Gospel tracts followed. Today many of these are still provided free of charge and used by individuals, various ministries, and local fellowships. The York Bible study was started later in January, 1989 and continues on today. Later STW began to distribute designated gifts to commended workers in the U.S. and Canada.

Despite sharply rising postage costs over the years the Lord has shown Himself faithful. Without the use of envelopes or requesting funds the Lord has met our needs through many saints contributing various amounts.

We thank the Lord for the thrill it has been to see Him supply and direct. How long the paper will go on is in the Lord's hands. Hopefully it will end with His coming! *

Editor

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to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Our thinking is not to be "conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Rom. 12:2).

Going back to the story of Eutychus we can see that living on the edge is very dangerous. One need not slip very far to suffer great harm. Scripture over and over again exhorts the saints to be awake and alert. Those who are often "sleepy" live on the edge. Those who are alert and aware of the danger "approve things that are better."

How close are you to the edge? *

York Bible Study Program May 2016

Date	Topic	Teacher
May 14	2 Thessalonians 10 AM - 3PM Lunch served	Craig Shakarji

Shepherding Conference

September 22-24

Greenwood Hills Bible Conference

Mark your calendar

Register at GreenwoodHills.net

Milk & Honey Information

There is no charge for Milk & Honey. It, like all ministries of Spread The Word, is supported entirely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. All gifts are tax deductible.

Publisher: **Spread The Word, Inc.**

2400 Admire Springs Dr.
Dover, PA 17315

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Web/Contact www.FoodForSaints.com

Circulation 5,600/month