
◆ THE EDIFIER ◆

Volume 18

CHURCH of GOD 7th DAY - AUSTRALIA

NOVEMBER 2012



The Ninety and the Nine

By David Kidd

How many baptized believers do you know who have turned away from Christ? It's likely that if you have been in the church for a decade or so you would have noticed a significant percentage do so. This is not just a modern day phenomenon. It has always happened. The Apostle James was very concerned about it in James 5:19-20 where he wrote:

Brethren, if any among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

We see that to wander from the truth is potentially a very serious thing to do, because if the wanderer is not turned around 'death' is the consequence. Since all die, whether they have wandered from the truth or not, this must be speaking of an eternal death. The wanderer is like a straying sheep which must be found, for if the lost sheep is not found, that

sheep is doomed!

There are many reasons why a Christian might stray. Jesus, in the parable of the sower gives several, including persecution, tribulation, cares of the world, and deceiving riches. Christians are warned by the apostle Peter that Satan goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He'll use any method he can devise to see us fall from grace. That's why Paul in Ephesians chapter six exhorts us to put on the whole armour of God, and that's why Peter warns and instructs us to be sober and vigilant and to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith (1 Peter 5:8-9). However, many Christians are not steadfast and do stray into dangerous territory.

Hope for the wanderer

The latter part of James 5:19 shows there is still hope for the poor wanderer though 'if someone turns him back' – perhaps one of his brothers or sisters in Christ; maybe you or I. Jesus, in Luke 15:4 said:

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it.

Not only can the wanderer be turned back to Christ by one of us, but Jesus points the finger at the man who would undoubtedly rescue a straying animal, but who would not go after the sinner to bring him back. What man of you, He says, wouldn't be diligent in restoring the sheep? Who among you wouldn't search until they found the sheep even if it means having to compromise the safety of the other sheep by leaving them alone in the wilderness? What man of you wouldn't rejoice when the lost sinner is found - only a person who doesn't care; only a person who doesn't love their brethren. Such a one, even if he has faith to remove mountains, or if he gives all his goods to feed the poor,

A magazine dedicated to uplifting and transforming peoples lives through the uncompromised word of God.

will receive no reward from God, because he lacks love.

(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Jesus also said, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" This statement gives us great insight into the value of the poor wanderer's soul. His or her soul is worth more than us owning or ruling the whole world. So, who among us would not seek to turn back the one who has wandered from the truth?

Before considering how the wanderer might be turned back it would do us well just to reflect for a short moment on who we know right now who is wandering from the truth, or may be in the sad, sad process of turning from Christ. Maybe one of those who come to your mind is the very person God wants you to pursue. Maybe they respect you more than any other person. Maybe you are the only one they will listen to.

Turning them back

There are several things we need to remember if we are to be used by God to turn the straying brother or sister around. Discernment is needed. We need to ask God to reveal to us what their stumbling blocks are. We need to show them we really do have the love of God in our hearts for them. We need to be careful we don't criticize or reproach them behind their backs or harshly to their face. At the same time we mustn't be afraid to humbly show them their error at the appropriate time. This poor wanderer might not have gone completely into the world. They might have come under the deception of some false teacher. In

this case we are going to need to know our scriptures or to get help from someone who does. Most importantly, we will need to be in prayer constantly for them and for God to work through us or someone else to bring about their restoration.

A noble work

Verse 20 of James 5 says:

Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.



Opinions differ over whether the 'him' in this verse is the restorer or the wanderer. I prefer the former, but it doesn't really matter. James wants us all to remember what a great and noble thing it is to turn a sinner from the error of his or her way. Whilst Jesus' parable of the lost sheep was not strictly dealing with straying believers, but rather sinners in general, Jesus did stress what a wonderful thing it was for the one who searched and searched and found the lost sheep:

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

Again I encourage you to apply this practically. Remember that one straying person who has come into your mind and who you have that special connection with. Seek after them with all your heart. There could be great rejoicing.

Covering a multitude of sins

Finally, James tells us that the one who turns a sinner back will cover a multitude of sins. This is referring to the sins of the poor wanderer, not the sins of the restorer. We can't go around bringing sinners back and expecting this to result in pardon for our own sins. It doesn't work that way. Only true repentance will cover our own sins through the blood of Christ. However, the sins of the *repentant* wanderer will be pardoned. Their sins will once again be hid in Christ. Not only that, many of their future sins will be prevented and the terrible influence they might have had on others as an apostate will be averted.

Conclusion

Brethren, if you allow God to use you in this noble way, to turn someone back to the truth, you not only save a soul from death, you not only cover a multitude of sins, but you also bring great rejoicing in heaven, and joy to God:

I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:7

David Kidd

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Proverbs 16 : 7 NKJV

“You won’t get away with that!” shouted Max when he saw me throwing his pornographic photos into the river.

I had pulled them off the wall of “his” office on the old Devonport wharf before starting time at eight o’clock. A bunch of wharfies were watching and laughing, and word soon spread: “Ernie is throwing Max’s dirty pictures into the drink!” That’s what they called the river, and that was their description of pornography in those days.

Max had raced off and come back with the harbourmaster, who took one look into the tiny wharf shed office and then said to Max: “If Ernie has to use this office for the day, he can have it as he wants it. You may decorate it when it’s your turn to use it again.”

On the Tasmanian waterfront, the harbourmaster has the final say in all matters, and his verdict is law. Max went off to his job on another section of the wharf, and later some wharfies said to me: “Max hates you for what you did,” and, “Ernie, you’ve got an enemy for life.”

Those two comments made me think, and after work, when I returned to my home not far from the Burnie wharf – about 30 miles from Devonport – I remembered what Jesus told His

disciples: “when you pray, go into your own room, shut the door and pray to your Father privately” (Matthew 6:6), and some more of His words, “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who are cursing you, pray about those who are insulting you” (Luke 6:27-28). God knows what goes on everywhere at any time, but I told Him about Max anyway. It was my way of dropping everything into His lap, because Jesus told us to do just that when He said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened and I will give you rest!” (Matthew 11:28)



Max didn’t like working in Burnie, and whenever possible the Burnie clerks let him go home early. The Devonport clerks would do the same for us occasionally when we were working in their port. It was just one of those unwritten rules of mateship on the waterfront.

But then, something unusual happened. For three months in a row, I was allocated the job on the “Mary Hollyman”, a small freighter that traded between Melbourne and Devonport twice a week. Work would start at eight o’clock in the morning, and the ship normally sailed around midday. Max and I would do the work while the ship was in port, but after twelve o’clock only one clerk would do the remaining clerical work for the day.

Normally, Max and I would have taken turns on the afternoon work, but Max insisted that I leave it to him after midday every time. “You go and see your mother”, he would say, no matter what I said.

My mother was living in a unit about a mile from the East Devonport wharf. I never found out how Max knew where my mother lived, and I couldn’t work out why “my enemy for life” was so adamant that I go and see her on both afternoons every week.

As I got the “Mary Hollyman” job week after week, the clerks in Burnie began asking questions of Jock, the allocatur, who allotted all jobs on the waterfront by a roster system: “How come Ernie gets the job in East Devonport all the time?”. Jock showed them the roster, and sure enough my

number, 477, fell on it every week.

The majority of Australians would immediately say, “Sheer coincidence!” Despite the fact that sort of thing had never happened before, and until my retirement years later it never happened again.

For me, it was anything but coincidence. It was a golden opportunity to spend a few hours with my mother, just the two of us and no one else around, something that in all my 50-plus years we had never had before. No, not even in my childhood. My mother had always been busy though she never went out to work since the time I was born. Among her many qualities and skills was that of a great dressmaker, and she could go to a fashion house and take on an order for hundreds of pieces of the popular apparel of the season and deliver them on time. Wherever we happened to be living – and we moved many times – my mum was running a mini factory, if you like, with seamstresses taking home and returning piece work all day, and she often designing and cutting at night. Certainly, you might say she was a lucky mum, because I was a quiet preschooler who liked nothing better than some brown paper bags ironed flat and a few colour pencils, and I would draw and sketch all day, as long as I got something to eat in between. If my mum had worked like that in America or Australia all those years, she would have been a millionaire. But we lived in Central Europe where hard work was



not well rewarded.

Now my mum was 81 and in retirement, living in a neat little unit on one of the most peaceful and unhurried islands on earth. Any of her family or the brethren could get her to Sabbath services about a ten minute drive away every week. She often said she had everything she might have ever dreamed of, and she never complained about bouts of ill health. Now she said she had the additional blessing of spending extra time with her only surviving son and time to tell me things she had never talked about before, like family history from way back, things I had never heard her talk about, how God had fitted bits and pieces together all her life for her eventual calling in her sixties.

If you want to count the hours we spent together in those three months before she died, they added up to well over 100.

Coincidence? There had been no doubt whatsoever in our minds that our loving God had engineered the roster at the allocator’s office plus the unprecedented goodwill of “my enemy for life” in order to give us all those precious hours together.

Can the Lord make your enemy to be at peace with you? He sure can. He did it for me, and He does it for anyone who asks, and for all we know He will do it for just about everybody when He comes back to earth again. We have a lot of peace and harmony among people to look forward to.

Ernie Klassek

Editor : Ernie Klassek worked on the Tasmanian waterfront for 32 years.



The tragedy of
life is not
unanswered
prayer, but
unoffered prayer.



Gospel Lite

The word 'lite' or 'light', is a well known concept, especially among consumers who relate it to food and drink.

'Lite Beer', is easier to drink because of the low alcohol and some say more enjoyable because they can drink more. Others believe that there is a health benefit in drinking lite beer beverages, because of the lower calories contained in them.

Many are convinced that the label 'lite' on food products ensures that what they are eating has less fat, sugar and calories, which will keep them healthier in the long run.

Gospel Lite

I believe the same understanding has crept into Christianity when it comes to the Gospel. 'Gospel Lite' is not available in stores, but freely available in churches today. It's a feel good attitude which doesn't interfere with their lifestyle and allows them to continue to do what they please.

'Gospel Lite' is well accepted by many Christians because it does have the message of Jesus' sacrifice, eternal salvation and the love of God in it. It is a very comfortable message and easy to live with, but the only problem with this limited message is, it does not challenge us to commit our entire life to Christ for the Gospel sake.

Full Strength Gospel

I personally believe that you will only find in the Bible the 'Full Strength Gospel'. It goes way beyond the saving aspect of the gospel. It has power to motivate the believer into committing, serving and bearing witness of the love of God through Christ Jesus. The gospel encourages the believer to walk the way of obedience.



For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

(1 Thessalonians 1 : 5)

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, (Philippians 1 : 27)

Many Christians with good intentions believe that we should share the 'Gospel Lite' version with others until the hearers are ready to upgrade to the 'Full Strength Gospel'. But I cannot find any indication where the Apostle Paul dumbed down, diluted or compromised the Gospel for the hearer's sake.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, (2 Timothy 1 : 8)

The 'Full Strength Gospel' produces a commitment to Christ that the world does not understand and a type of people consumed with passion for the ways of God and the love of others.

Phil Kordahi



Law of God: A Blessing to The People Of God

Many Christians shudder at the very mention of the law, especially those who have been captured by legalism in the past and others who consider law to be something that kills - a burden that Christians do not want to bear.

The Apostle Paul held law in high esteem; he considered it valid, relevant, good - and worthy of obedience.

*" I delight in God's law
according to the inward man"*
Romans 7 : 22

*Please send for this free
booklet and it will help you
find a clearer understanding
of law and grace.*



SPECIAL PLACES

***When you need a special place to go
Look for a place where nature is allowed to grow.
From here it is where you can find
A place to rest a troubled mind.***

***God has provided many such places for us
For He knew this world would be so hard to adjust.
When each new day produces more and more stress.
We must give ourselves the opportunity to rest.***

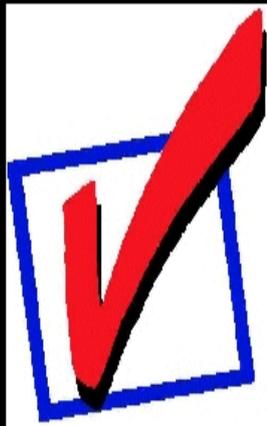
***We have to leave the crowds and maddening pace
And seek out a quiet place.
From here we can see the world God has created
And in its truth and beauty become illuminated.***

***God shares with His people everything He has done
He longs for each of us to be called His son.
From the peace and beauty He has created throughout
this land
We should realize we too are a part of His Divine Plan.***

***Of all things God has caused to physically manifest
He does truly love man the very best.***

Robert Breaux





Daily Checklist for a *Happy Christian*

- ✓ Don't let little things disturb you.
- ✓ Face each day knowing "Jesus does all things well."
- ✓ Give all your cares to Jesus.
He heals - He guards - He guides - He saves completely!
- ✓ Stop worrying! Do good, and then let the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit give the results in your life.
- ✓ Remember -- what you think is "impossible", to God, is nothing more than a passing breeze.
- ✓ Trust Jesus that everything will be okay.
For it's better to trust, than to doubt and miss a blessing.
- ✓ Do not do God's work for Him.
He convicts; He convinces; He will be the Judge.
- ✓ Look for the good in everyone, and don't find fault.
- ✓ Live so that all who meet you, meet Jesus.
- ✓ Know that Jesus is with you and nothing else matters!

Ken Pilcher, Jr. © All Rights Reserved/www.faithclub.org



Will God Punish the Wicked Forever?

In spite of the utter incongruity of it, many Christians believe that a person who dies without Jesus Christ goes to hell at the moment of death to suffer eternally in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. This drastic doctrine may offer incentive for a few sinners to seek the Lord, but it has probably turned more people away from God and our Lord Jesus Christ than it has attracted.

The real issue about this doctrine is not how it impacts those who hear it, but whether it accurately reflects Holy Scripture. In this tract we will examine verses often used to support the doctrine of an everlasting hell, hopefully showing that they fail to prove it.

Please Send For The
Free Booklet

Produced & distributed by
Church of God 7th Day
G.P.O. Box 2440
ADELAIDE S.A. 5001.
www.cog7aus.com