

Today's Sermons

Morning: Prophecy of the Kingdom
 Evening: Characteristics of God

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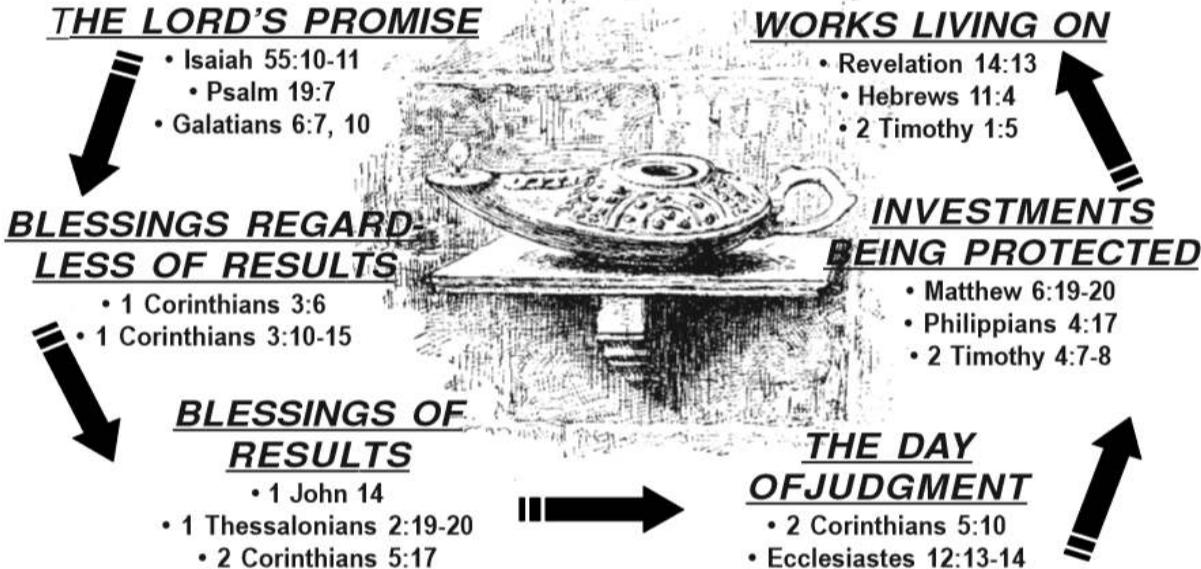
FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	41
Sunday AM Worship	53
Sunday PM Worship	29
Wed. Bible Study	31
Offering	\$1568

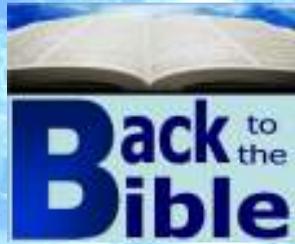
Love's Labor is Never Lost

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

This is made possible by:



WE NEED TO ABOUND IN THE WORK OF THE LORD



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Times of Services:

Sunday
 Bible Study:... 10:00am
 AM Worship:...11:00am
 PM Worship:...6:00pm
 2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
 Sunday:.....7:30am
 "Back to the Bible"
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

WHY DOES GOD LET IT HAPPEN?

by Bill Jackson

It has long been acknowledged that the problem of suffering is that which atheists and infidels use as their "proof" that God does not exist. Just a few weeks ago, one of our national newscasts had a segment dealing with tragedies and catastrophic illness or accidents as being the reason why some have given up their belief in God. Some on that program, said that dealing with such unpleasantness caused them to cease to believe in God. Their wonder was, "Why did God let this happen?"

The basis of this is highly selfish on man's part, for it says this: "I only believe in God if He performs according to my expectations." In the Old Testament, Naaman was on the verge of rejecting the healing God had for him because of his own expectations as to how God would act (2 Kings 5:11,12). What kind of audacity is this that puts man in the position of being the creature that replies to the Creator, and refuses to believe unless the Creator performs to the whim and fancy of man? Does the creature thus reply to the Creator (Romans 9:20)?

There are a few considerations in this general area:

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(1) Man was made a creature of free will action. This means that man has the freedom to do wrong, if he chooses. It means, then, that he can be guided by evil motives and even make a move against me or my family; he can bring great hurt and sorrow to me, if he so desires. It is not that God is guiding him; rather he is not letting God guide him and that's why his sinfulness has touched me. The drunken driver runs over and kills a little child. It happens because we have freedom of will.

(2) Men can suffer because they violate the natural laws God has made. They may do this intentionally, or they may do this accidental. In either case, the hurt and sorrow can be brought upon men because of it. A man working 150 feet in the air can make an error of judgment and fall to his death. It was not that God caused it to be, but through accidental circumstance, a natural law of God was breached and sorrow is the result.

(3) Men can suffer because they violate man-made laws, brought into being within the will of God. We think now of civil powers, ordained of God (Romans 13), and in violation of these one might well suffer heavy penalty, even to be put to death. There is hurt to him, and hurt to his family. Why did God let it happen? Again, God did not cause it; man has freedom of will and can use it to his own hurt, and hurt to those around him.

(4) Men can suffer simply due to the imperfection in this world, brought to such a state because of sin. The whole of creation has been given life, and some of that, having good purpose in some cases, can have an evil product when it touches a man. Hence, the matter of disease, infection, illness.

There are those circumstances of an accidental nature that happen when natural laws react in an unusual fashion. That is one price we pay in living in a sinful world, and a world made so by man's misbehavior!

In sum, an imperfect world is a reality. God uses it as a training ground, suiting man for eternity with Him. Rather than giving up faith in seeing imperfection, we should be thankful that some suffering is in the world. If it were not, then Christ would not have suffered for us, and then where would we be?

Again, we say, man proves his own basic selfishness when he overlooks the world made so by his own sin, overlooks purposes that can be served in man facing suffering in this life, overlooks the price to be paid in having freedom of will, overlooks what is involved in living by God's natural laws, and then declares, "I will not believe in God unless He acts as I want Him to!"

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"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds"
(Francis Bacon).

THE SECRET TO CHURCH GROWTH

by B. J. Clarke

The secret to church growth is really no secret. It is plainly revealed within the pages of God's Word. You don't have to travel hundreds of miles to a soul-winning workshop to unlock the secret of church growth. You don't have to travel to the bookstore to purchase the latest volume written to reveal the mystery of church growth. Just travel over to the bookcase, pull down your copy of the sacred writings, open it to the New Testament and start reading.

Read of the life and ministry of Jesus. Read of how Jesus preached peace and went about doing good (John 16:33; Acts 10:38). Read of how He demonstrated His love for the lost (Mark 10:21; John 15:13). Read of how He spoke the truth in love without ever compromising (Mat. 15:3-14). Read of the Jerusalem church and their common love for Christ and one another (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). Read of how the first century Christians went every- where preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).

Read of the tremendous sacrifices endured by the Apostle Paul so that the cause of Christ might be advanced (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Note the duties and qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13). Read the epistles to understand God's will for each member of the Lord's body. After you've read and read and read some more, read Revelation 1:3 to learn that just reading is not enough. We must read and then live out that which we have read.

What is the secret to church growth? When preachers speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering (2 Tim. 4:2), the church will grow. When elders shepherd the flock properly under the direction of the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1- 3), the church will grow. When deacons serve well, the church will grow (1 Tim. 3:13; Acts 6:1-7). When each member seeks to live like Christ and to love like Christ, the church will grow. Simply put, the church will grow when every part of the body does its share (Eph. 4:16). This is God's plan and it will not fail!

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"And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Nov 4 – Men's Business Meeting (Budget Meeting) & Ladies' Bible Class
- Nov 11 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship
- Nov 25 – Song Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell