

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

July 2014

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Timothy 1:2). Faith is a critical element in our Christian experience. Jesus said, “...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). I pray that you and I will be among those in whom Christ finds His faith.

The Faith of Christ in Action

by Lynnford Beachy

The Bible says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). We are justified by faith, but not just any faith. The Bible later clarifies, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16). Here we learn that we are justified “by the faith of Jesus Christ.”

The Bible tells us several times that we are to have “the faith of Christ” (Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:22; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:22; Revelation 14:12). This is different than our own faith. This faith comes as a result of having the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. Paul wrote, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Galatians 5:22). This faith that comes by receiving the Spirit is “the faith of Christ.”

The Bible says that in Jesus Christ “...we have boldness and access with

confidence by the faith of him” (Ephesians 3:12). When we have the faith of Jesus Christ we have boldness to approach the Lord with confidence. This is something we cannot do with our own faith. We need to have the faith of Jesus Christ. But what does it mean to have the faith of Christ. What type of faith did He have? If He didn’t have any faith, then it does no good to have His faith.

In our quest to find the answers to these questions, let us start with a biblical definition of faith. We can do this by examining what Jesus called “great faith.”

What is Faith?

“When Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith

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unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 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. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Matthew 8:5-13).

Here Jesus described faith in a practical way. He said that the Roman military officer had great faith, even greater than anyone in Israel. What did this man do that caused Jesus to make such a startling expression? The centurion wanted something done, and he wanted Jesus to do it. When Jesus offered to come to his house and do it, the centurion refused, asking Him to “speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Here is the key to understanding faith. The centurion asked him simply to “speak the word only” to accomplish what he wanted. The centurion was content with Jesus speaking the word only without any other evidence that what he wanted would be done. Jesus called this “great faith.” So faith is depending upon the word of God only to do what that word says.

Paul prayed that he would “...be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:9, 10). Here we learn of three things to which the faith of Christ is connected, “His suffering,” “His death,” and “His resurrection.” Jesus had faith to endure every temptation throughout His life, yet these things required the most faith to endure. I would like to look at these things, and how His faith was manifested in these areas. They are critical in understanding the faith of Christ, and the benefits we can have from this amazing gift.

The Emotional Struggle

The extreme anguish Christ experienced at the cross is described in Psalm 88. David, prophesying of Christ’s experience, wrote, “I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength” (Psalm 88:4). Christ was counted with them that go down into the pit. Isaiah portrayed a similar account in chapter 53 of his book. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah wrote, “He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

Continuing in Psalm 88, we read, “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves” (Psalm 88:6, 7).

Christ suffered the worst death that anyone has ever, or will ever, suffer. Others have suffered equally or even greater if we limit His suffering to His physical pain alone. Christ's death was the worst because His relationship with His Father was closer than anyone has ever experienced. Therefore, the loss of that relationship caused Him the greatest anguish that anyone could ever suffer. As He realized His Father's displeasure, fearing that His separation would be eternal, it literally broke His heart. Jesus said through the Psalmist, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels" (Psalm 22:14). "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psalm 69:20). When His side was pierced, water and blood flowed out (John 19:33, 34). This indicated that the Son of God died of a broken heart, not from the torture or the nails in His hands and feet.

Christ experienced suffering much greater than just the physical pain He endured. Suffering so great that He would have died even if the Roman soldiers had not beaten Him and hanged Him on a cross. Just before the soldiers came to take Him captive, Jesus pleaded with His Father the third time, "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:42-44). I believe that if an angel had not come to

strengthen Him, He would have died right there in the garden under the load of our sins. His agony was so great that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. This only takes place under extreme stress. It is very obvious that the real sufferings of Christ were much deeper than the physical pain inflicted upon Him by the Roman soldiers.

Jesus exercised great faith in His Father when He chose to continue through His agony to save us rather than seeking to save Himself. He pleaded with His Father three times to remove his suffering, but always ended with, "...not my will, but thine, be done."

In the Garden of Gethsemane

Christ ate His last supper with His disciples and, afterward, "they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch" (Mark 14:32-34).

When Christ entered the Garden of Gethsemane He began, for the first time, to be "sore amazed," literally meaning: "to be struck with terror" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). Something happened to Christ that terrified Him. We also read that He was "very heavy," literally meaning: "to be in distress of mind, (to be sated to loathing)" (*Strong's Greek Dictionary*). To be "sated to loathing" means to satisfy the appetite or a desire so fully as to cause a sudden violent hostility or disgust of feelings, to the point of abhorring them. (See *Grolier's New Webster's Dictionary* on "sated.")

For the first time in Christ's life, He was flooded with terror, and filled with feelings that were disgusting to Him. What were those feelings? The Bible says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The sin (along with the guilt) of the whole world was placed upon the Son of God. The result of sin is explained by Isaiah, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Whenever a person sins against God, it causes a separation between himself and God. The awareness of this separation is often accompanied by the feeling of guilt. Just think of the most guilty, dirty feeling you have ever had, and multiply that billions upon billions of times, and you will have some idea of the guilt Christ was experiencing in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had always done those things that please His Father. He said, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). Jesus Christ delighted to do the will of His Father, and He knew that His Father was pleased with Him. He had never sinned against God, not even in thought, so He did not know what it was like to feel His Father's displeasure and the awful feeling of guilt and shame.

All this changed when He entered the Garden of Gethsemane. When my sins and your sins were placed upon Him, and He stood before God as if He had done the wicked things you and I have done, then for the first time that perfect peace between Him and His Father was broken up. He staggered under the weight of our sins. He left His disciples

and, no longer able to stand, "He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:35, 36). Three times He pleaded with His Father to take this experience away from Him.

The Son of God entered into an experience that even He did not foresee completely. Just a few hours earlier He told His disciples, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). He said, I know you will all leave me tonight. I know that I will be forsaken of my friends, but that's alright, because my Father will be with me. He will not leave me alone.

But, when He entered into the Garden of Gethsemane, and the sins of the whole world were placed upon Him something took place that He had not fully understood. He had just told His disciples that His Father would not leave Him alone, but now He began to feel a separation from His Father, so great that He faltered under its weight.

Did Jesus Know All Things?

Some may say, "Wait a minute, Jesus couldn't have been surprised by anything because when He was here He knew all things." But that is not what the Bible says. This idea is part of the obstacle placed in people's way, by Satan, to hide God's love. (For thorough studies on the truth about God, please contact us and request the books entitled, *God's Love on Trial*,

Understanding the Personality of God, and Answering Objections.)

When Jesus was here He said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father [only]" (Mark 13:32; compare with Matthew 24:36). The Bible also says, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). It is impossible to increase in wisdom when you already have it all. When Jesus came to this earth, He was limited by the human body prepared for Him, and He had to learn things just as you and I must. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). He only knew what He had learned by the normal process of life, and what His Father had miraculously revealed to Him. It is true that Jesus knew the thoughts of others at times, but this was no sign that He knew all things, for Peter, Joseph, Elisha, Daniel, etc., all had the thoughts of others revealed to them by God. (See Acts 5:1-4; 2 Kings 5:25-27; Daniel 2:28-30.)

When the sins of the whole world were placed upon Him, Jesus was truly entering the unknown. It is one thing to say, "I know I am going to die," but it is another thing to experience it. I can tell you I am going to die, but I cannot tell you what it is like. The same was true with Christ. There was an element that caught Him by surprise. He told His disciples that His Father would be with Him throughout this experience, but when He entered the Garden of Gethsemane He began to feel like His Father withdrew His presence. The separation grew worse until at Calvary He finally cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(Matthew 27:46). The prophecy in Psalm 88 portrays Christ saying, "Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?" (Psalms 88:14). Truly He has "trodden the winepress alone" (Isaiah 63:3).

The separation was so awful that He pleaded with His Father to spare Him from this dreadful hour, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me" (Luke 22:42). He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death" (Hebrews 5:7).

Here we see the faith of Christ in action. To go through this immense struggle He needed to rely upon His Father completely. His faith was tested to the extreme, and He came through victorious. Praise God!

Was Jesus All Powerful?

Some will say, "Wait a minute, Jesus Christ was all powerful when He was here, so He did not have to rely upon His Father for help." Here again is the stamp of Satan specifically designed to keep us from knowing God's love. When He was here, Jesus said "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). All the miracles performed by Christ during His earthly ministry were done by the power of His Father through the ministration of the angels. Every great miracle that Jesus performed, was performed in a similar manner by His disciples, or by prophets in the Old Testament, including walking on water and raising the dead. (See Matthew 14:29; 1 Kings 17:22; Acts 20:9, 10). This is no sign that they had all power, but a sign that God was with them as He was with Jesus. Peter said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and

with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38; see also Matthew 12:28). Jesus said, “The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:10).

As Christ was struggling under the weight of sin, pleading with His Father to save Him from death, He made the conscious decision that if it meant He must die for eternity so you and I can live with God forever, then He was willing to do it. He decided that He would rather die for eternity than live without us. That is an amazing amount of love. Some have been willing to give their own temporal lives to save others, but very few would be willing to give up their eternal life for another.

Yet, there is another man who was willing to die forever rather than live without his companions. His name was Moses. He pleaded with God for the children of Israel, saying, “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:32). Moses was referring to the book of life. He was saying, if you cannot forgive them, and give them eternal life, then I don’t want eternal life either. Jesus Christ made the same decision, yet the blood of the spotless, divine Son of God had the ability to actually save us from death. He laid down His eternal life for us. (See John 10:15). That is why the 144,000 will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They too will love “not their lives [souls] unto the death” (Revelation 15:3; 12:11).

At any moment the Son of God could have cried to His Father to deliver Him, but He continued, knowing that some would be saved. When a group of soldiers came out to capture Christ, Peter began to

fight for Him, but Christ rebuked him saying, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). Notice that Christ did not say He had the power to deliver Himself, but that He could petition His Father for deliverance, which was His only avenue of escape. Yet, He was determined never to give up, even if it meant He would not live again. He had decided to surrender His will to His Father, saying, “Not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36). The Son of God was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). Finally, as He died upon the cross, right after He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46), He yielded up His eternal life into the hands of His Father, saying, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). He was saying, “Father, I am giving my eternal life into your hands. If you wish to raise me from the dead, or if you choose to leave me in the grave for eternity, I am leaving that in your hands.”

Imagine the faith that was needed to make that decision! He was certain that God’s plan for His life was better than any other option. By faith alone He hoped to be resurrected. Keep in mind that His faith is freely given to us to be exercised when we are in danger.

Was Jesus Immortal?

“Wait a minute!” says the objector, “The Son of God was so exalted that He could not die or cease to exist.” Some claim that since the Father cannot die, then His Son cannot die either, but the Bible says there is only One Person who cannot die under any circumstances, and He is God, the Father. The Bible says

that when Jesus appears, "...he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate [Sovereign, or supreme ruler], the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:14-16). This can be none other than God, the Father, for He is the One whom "No man hath seen at any time" (John 1:18). The Father is the one "who only hath immortality." Yet, we know that we will "put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53), and Jesus Christ is "alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18).

When the Bible says the Father "only hath immortality" it must mean immortality in an absolute and unlimited sense. The Father is the only One who cannot die under any circumstances. Jesus Christ was made subject to death, and "died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Man can die; "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Angels can die; "everlasting fire," is "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). This fire is so hot, it will devour them. God said to Satan, "I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.... and never shalt thou be any more" (Ezekiel 28:18, 19). So it is certainly true that God, the Father, is the only Person who cannot die under any circumstances. This excludes His Son, who tasted "death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). We are compelled by this verse to conclude that Jesus Christ was not immortal when He was here. In fact, the primary reason for Him becoming a human was so that He could die for our sins. The Son of God

suffered a real death for our sins. (See Isaiah 53:6 and 1 John 2:2.). It was not pretend, it was not an act, it was real.

By faith Jesus yielded up His eternal life to save fallen mankind. He trusted His Father to do what is best for everyone in the universe. Even if it meant Christ would remain dead for eternity, He had faith in His Father to do what is right.

The Complete Death of Christ

There are some who claim that Christ came down from heaven, inhabited a human body, and that when it came time to die only the human body died while the divine being who came down from heaven remained alive. With this view we would have to conclude that there was only a human sacrifice made for our redemption. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was, no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal, if humanity only died, the sacrifice was only human. It is contrary to Scripture to say that only half of Christ died. If Christ only pretended to die when He was here, it takes away the necessity of Him becoming a man, for He "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Hebrews 2:9). If He was planning to pretend to die, He could have done that without becoming a man. He would also need no faith to accomplish such a mockery. The faith of Christ would not be much benefit to us if He did not need to exercise it while He was here.

In the first chapter of Hebrews Paul portrays Christ as being highly exalted, the one who was begotten in the express image of His Father's person. Then, in Hebrews chapter two, Paul

explains the necessity of Christ becoming a man. He emphasized this point in several ways. In verse nine of this chapter he explains, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Paul explains the importance of Christ becoming a man, made a little lower than the angels, so that He could die; not so that a human body could die, but so that the divine Son of God could die.

The fact that Christ did die is also emphasized in the following verses: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation [Greek: emptied Himself], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:5-9). The same identical Being who was in the form of God in verse six, died in verse eight. Jesus Christ Himself made it very clear to John that He was dead. Jesus said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18). Jesus Christ truly "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

In Isaiah 53 we read the following account: "...it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,...

he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:10-12). According to the Scripture, the soul of Christ died; the soul of Christ was made the offering for sin. The soul of a person constitutes the entire being. If a soul dies, the entire being is dead. The soul is more than just the body. Jesus said, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). (For a thorough study on death and hell, contact us and request the studies, *What Happens After Death* and *God's Love Revealed in Hell*.)

This shows that it was more than just His body that died for us on the cross. Everything that comprised the life and intelligence of the Son of God died on the cross. When He yielded up His eternal life to His Father, He had no outward assurance of being resurrected. By faith alone He rested in hope that He would be resurrected from the dead.

The Spirit of Christ inspired David to write concerning Christ's death, "I am shut up, and I cannot come forth" (Psalm 88:8). Christ was shut up in the tomb, and He could not come forth. The Bible says more than thirty times that God, the Father, raised Christ from the dead. (Acts 2:24, 30, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:23, 30, 33, 34, 37; 17:31; 26:8; Romans 4:24, 25; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:2.)

Paul emphasized, in Ephesians 1:19, 20, that "the exceeding greatness" of the Father's "mighty power" was

demonstrated “when he raised” Christ “from the dead.” If Christ had actually raised Himself from the dead, as some people believe, then Paul’s words could not have been true. It would not have been the Father’s power, but the power of Christ which would have been demonstrated.

Christ did not raise Himself from the dead or else He would not have been dead to begin with, and His words could not have been true, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30). When the Son of God was asleep in the tomb, He was as the rest of the dead who “know not anything” and whose thoughts have “perished” (Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 146:4).

Of Christ we read, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Hebrews 5:7). Who was Christ praying to with strong crying and tears? Was He praying to Himself? Absolutely not! He was exercising faith and praying to His Father, the only One “that was able to save him from death.”

It would have been a mockery for Christ to have cried out to His Father to save Him from death, if all the while He was immortal and able to save Himself from death. Christ died completely, friends, and He relied upon His Father to resurrect Him. He said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46), indicating His complete dependence upon His Father to save Him out of death, and His faith to entrust His eternal life into the hands of His Father.

Conclusion

How does all of this relate to the faith of Christ? We receive the faith of Christ

when He gives us His Spirit, yet, we benefit from that gift according to what we believe. Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). Satan has put obstacles in our way to prevent us from obtaining the faith of Christ. Three of those obstacles are the teachings that Jesus Christ was “all knowing,” “all powerful,” and “immortal” when He was on earth. Any one of these teachings is sufficient to block the path for us to receive the blessings of the faith of Christ, for any of them would eliminate the need for Christ to have faith at all.

If Christ knew everything when He was here, He would not have needed faith to face any of the challenges that confronted Him. In fact, He could not have been tempted at all. If Christ was all powerful, then He would not need to exercise faith in any higher power to give Him the victory. If He was immortal then He would never have been in jeopardy and would need no faith to endure hardship.

The Bible says, “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1, 2). Jesus Christ was the pioneer, and founder of our faith. With His faith we can endure the troublous times of intense trial when it seems as if God has forsaken us.

Friends, when we see the fearful risk to which Jesus exposed Himself when He became a human, it enables us to see the reality of His faith. He made Himself vulnerable, yielded everything

to His Father, and suffered the most extreme anguish and trial of faith that anyone can ever endure. When we recognize this, it gives us hope, and a tangible connection to the Christ who knows how to help us when we are tempted. The Bible says of Christ, “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [help] them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

You and I need all the help we can get in this present evil world. Do not let Satan trick you into thinking that the faith of Jesus is a meaningless set of words that cannot benefit you. Jesus exercised great faith in His temptations and struggles on this

earth. He had to rely completely upon His Father to give him the victories He needed to overcome this world. Friends, you need this faith too. You need the faith of Christ to overcome. Ask Him to live in your heart, believe that He does what He promises, and you will experience the blessings He so longs to impart to you. Rejoice and make use of all that God has to offer you as His child. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6). And “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Galatians 5:22). Enjoy His faith! »

Central America Missionary Report

by Lynnford Beachy

In April 2014 I received a call from my brother, Oscar, asking if I could travel with him to Nicaragua to minister to some brethren who requested to have evangelistic meetings and baptisms. We contacted some other brothers in Costa Rica, who also requested to have meetings there.

On June 10, Brother Oscar, myself, and Brother Ramon and his family boarded an airplane to fly to Costa Rica. We had a wonderful flight and had some very interesting experiences along the way that enabled me to share books with six people at the airport or on the airplane. One young man on the airplane wanted a book, so I gave him our small booklet, *Christ in You*. I was very tired, so I slept on the plane. When I awoke, he excitedly told me that he had read the whole book and enjoyed it very much. I gave him another one, *Understanding the Personality of God*. He said he

would read that one also. I invited him to come to our meetings in Costa Rica and offered to send him *Present Truth* every month. He was very interested in this and planned to attend the meetings and requested our monthly newsletter.

We were greeted at the airport by some dear brothers, Federico, Clayto, and Pedro. The Lord touched the hearts of the brethren to put us up in a hotel close to where they rented a very nice meeting hall. We were scheduled to have meetings each evening that were open to the public. My theme was based on my book, *Understanding the Personality of God*, which covered the love of God in giving His Son—the biblical teaching about the only true God, the Holy Spirit, and the amazing sacrifice of Christ. We opened the meetings up for questions and answers as well, one of my favorite parts of the study.

It was thrilling to meet such dedicated brothers and sisters who arranged the meetings so well. Several people came from the community and their local groups. There was a good turnout. The meetings went very well, and were recorded on DVD for those who would like a copy. The meetings were spoken in English and translated into Spanish by my wonderful brothers, Oscar and Ramon. Some of the meetings were broadcast over the Internet live for people to see around the world.

On Sabbath we went to a farm in the country for Sabbath services and baptisms. There were about one hundred people in attendance. My first topic focused on the importance of truly allowing Christ to dwell in our hearts, and how that is manifested in loving others. We saw that all the knowledge in the world is useless if it does not transform the way we treat others. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

After a time of testimonies I gave my second presentation on how the gift of the Holy Spirit enables both God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ to live in our hearts. We focused on the wonderful benefits of this gift. In the afternoon, two souls dedicated themselves to the Lord in baptism. We then had a question and answer session that was filled with some wonderful insights into God’s love.

On Sunday we participated in a cooking class for the community, after which I was asked to dedicate a new house of prayer for them.

Our Last Night in Costa Rica

On Sunday evening, June 15, we returned to the hostel at about 6:30pm. I

felt impressed to spend some time with some of the residents at the hostel. There were three men, Kam, Louis, Theo, and a woman named Margot playing pool. I went over to talk with them. We talked about their interesting travels. Theo, Louis and Margot live in France, and had come to the United States to drive through Central America all the way to Panama. They showed me some pictures of their trip. We started telling stories of our lives. I told them my conversion testimony about how the Lord delivered me from a nearly two-month long acid trip when I asked Jesus to live in my heart. I read to them the Bible verses that changed my life. God promised, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26).

When I was finished with my story, Margot said, “I have a lot of questions about your story. Couldn’t your experience have happened just because your mind wanted to be free from the acid, and had nothing to do with God?” I came to find out that all of them had a difficult time believing in the existence of God, except for Kam, whose experiences in life had convinced him of the reality of God. I told Margot that it could be a possibility except for the fact that my prolonged acid trip was removed when I asked Jesus into my heart.

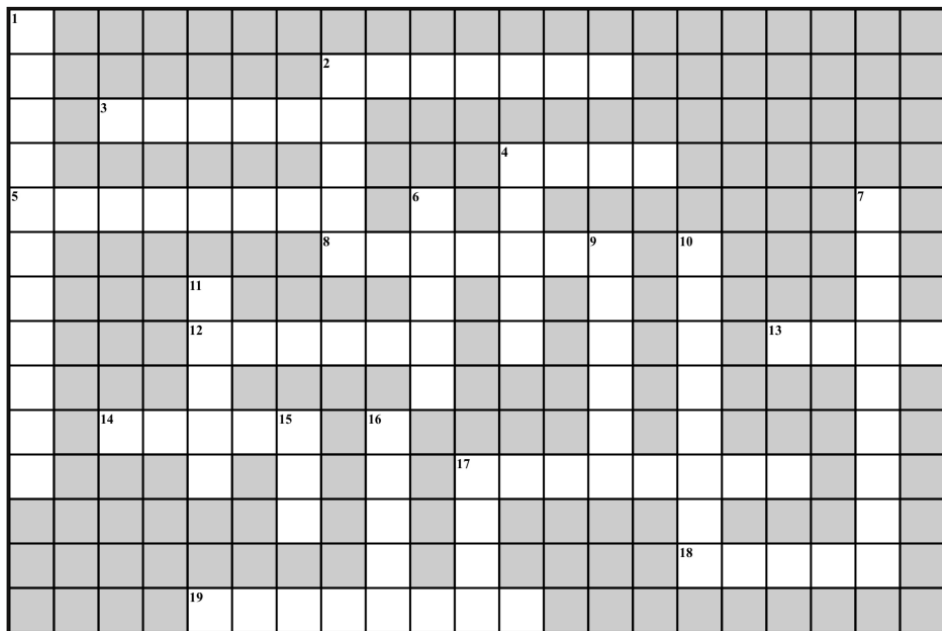
She told me that the mind is a powerful thing and that if you want something bad enough, and believe a

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Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of studies written by my children. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

Light - by Rebekah Beachy



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue.

- "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was ____; and God divided the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:3, 4—**4 Across**
- "And God made two ____ lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." Genesis 1:16—**4 Down**
- "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them ____; to go by day and night." Exodus 13:21—**6 Down**
- "In him was ____; and the ____ was the light of men." John 1:4 (1 word)—**17 Down**
- "That was the true Light, which ____ every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9—**17 Across**
- "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the ____; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12—**14 Across**
- "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were

evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his _____ should be improved." John 3:19, 20—**2 Down**

➤ "But all things that are _____ are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Ephesians 5:13—**5 Across**

➤ "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as _____ of light." Ephesians 5:8—**19 Across**

➤ "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what _____ hath light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14—**7 Down**

➤ "And no marvel; for _____ himself is transformed into an angel of light." 2 Corinthians 11:14—**18 Across**

➤ "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the _____: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." 1 Thessalonians 5:5—**15 Down**

➤ "Who only hath _____, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:16—**1 Down**

➤ "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the _____ arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19 (2 words)—**2 Across**

➤ Loveth" He that _____ his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." 1 John 2:10—**12 Across**

➤ "He that saith he is in the light, and

_____ his brother, is in darkness even until now." 1 John 2:9—**9 Down**

➤ "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now _____." 1 John 2:8—**8 Across**

➤ "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the _____ of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7—**16 Down**

➤ "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no _____ at all." 1 John 1:5—**10 Down**

➤ "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the _____ is the light thereof." Revelation 21:23—**13 Across**

➤ "Having the _____ of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Revelation 21:11—**11 Down**

➤ "And there shall be no night there; and they need no _____, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 22:5—**3 Across**

Note: If you or your children would like to participate in preparing Cross-word Bible studies, send us a Bible study and we may be able to include it in upcoming issues of *Present Truth*.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

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remedy is going to work, it can happen without the existence of God. I explained that I had wanted very badly to get off of the acid before, and I tried some medicine from a doctor who told me that the medicine would help counteract the acid. I trusted the doctor and wanted to be free from acid very badly, but the medicine did nothing good for me, instead it caused my vision to become terribly blurred. That was the only effect I noticed from the medicine. I explained also that I have never had a flashback from the acid since Christ removed it twenty-three years ago. I am certain that God performed a miracle to remove that from me.

Theo asked, “Is God all powerful?” “Yes,” I replied. “Then why doesn’t God remove all the suffering in the world and cause everyone to be good?” Theo countered. I told him that this is one of my favorite questions, and told him that there is a verse in the Bible that explains this. They were all eager to hear what the Bible says about this, so I opened the Bible with them, and for the next two hours we had a Bible study on many topics. They were full of questions, but Margot expressed that they rarely have the opportunity to ask someone about the Bible who can explain it from the Bible.

The first verse I shared with them is Nahum 1:9, which says, “What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.” I explained that this is God’s promise that sin with all its sorrow and pain, will not rise up the second time. After God is completely finished removing sin from the universe, it will never come back. God has to be very careful in the way He deals

with sin, otherwise there would be a possibility that sin would arise again.

Free Will

Theo asked, “Why did God create people with the possibility of sinning even the first time? Wouldn’t the world be much better if everyone only did what is right?” I explained that God had the option of creating people who could not possibly choose to sin, but then He could not have meaningful interaction with them. For example, if I made a robot that was forced to only do what I programmed it to do, could I be satisfied if it continually said, “I love you, I love you, I love you”? A forced obedience is not truly obedience. For someone to actually be good, there must be the ability to choose to be bad. Otherwise it is force. God does not operate on that principle. He never forces anyone, and He created us with a free will to choose either to serve Him or not.

The Bible says, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). God wants us all to choose life and good.

I read to them what the Bible says about where sin started. The Bible talks about Satan, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; ... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom

by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more” (Ezekiel 28:13-19).

We saw that God created Satan as a perfect exalted angel but he became proud of his own abilities and corrupted his wisdom. We also read, “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9). We saw that there was a battle over God’s character of love, and that Satan convinced a large number of God’s angels to join him in his rebellion.

We then read how sin started in this earth with Adam and Eve. “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye

touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:1-6).

Satan tricked Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, which transformed her into a condition that is not good to be perpetuated forever. We read, “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:22-24).

Margot asked why God would not let Adam and Eve eat of the tree of life anymore. I explained that if he allowed this in a sinful condition, it would cause sin to last forever, and God didn’t want that to happen. She asked if Adam would ever be able to eat of the tree of life. I assured her that everyone has the opportunity to turn to God and accept His salvation, which will cause them to be worthy of eating of the tree of life again. We read, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right

to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

Margot brought up the story of the prodigal son who went and spent all his money, then returned to his father who gladly accepted him (Luke 15:11-32). She asked, “If God is so good, will he forgive everyone?” I read to her the following verses: “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). Jesus said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Jesus gladly accepts anyone who will come to Him for life.

Margot remembered that the prodigal son came back to his father, so those who come to God will be gladly accepted. I told her about the verse that says, “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10), and also, “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17).

I also read to them where God said, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11). I explained, “If this hotel was on fire, would it be kind for someone to come in and warn us to get out, or would it be better to leave us alone?” God loves us and wants us to live, so he explains the dangers of continuing a sinful life-style.

They asked how people who do not know about Christ could do good. I read, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,...” (Romans 2:13-15). We saw that anyone who does good does so as a result of God writing His law in their hearts.

I read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:1-9). Jesus is the one Who sheds His light upon everyone who enters this world.

By this time another gentlemen, named Matt, had begun studying with us. He was completely opposed to the idea that there is a God, and he said, “All of the problems in the world with killing and stealing are because people do not have enough of what they want or need. If God is all powerful why doesn’t He just give everybody

everything they need then they would not do evil things?" I pointed out that the Bible says, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity" (Ecclesiastes 5:10). If everyone had all the riches they could desire, it would not remove crime from the world. Sin is embedded in our natures and cannot be removed by the increase of wealth. The richest people on earth are some of the most miserable. I quoted Solomon who wrote, "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8, 9).

Matt asked me, "Why did you come to Costa Rica?" I answered, "I came to encourage people and help them to see how they can have a better life." He asked, "If a Buddhist who does not know about God but lives a life that shows the law written in his heart, then why would you want to tell him about Jesus, since your goal is to get them to live a good life. If they are already living that good life, then why would you bother them with more information?" I replied, "That depends upon your definition of 'good.' Jesus said in Matthew 19:17, 'There is none good but one, that is, God:...' I would still want to share Jesus Christ with them because with the knowledge of the Bible your life can be so much better than without."

A Personal Testimony

I told them a story about an amazing thing that happened to me by knowing

what is written in the Bible. I explained that I had been experiencing a difficulty in my life that agitated me greatly, and I continually nagged about it to my wife. I explained that one morning I woke up early in the morning with three verses linked together in my mind that changed my life. I read to them the first verse, which says, "Love suffers long and is kind;..." (1 Corinthians 13:4 NKJV). I commented, "I got the suffering long part down, but I was not kind about it. I recognized that I did not have this love."

The next verse was, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). I saw that this love comes by receiving the Spirit of God. The next verse was, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

I explained that all of these verses were linked together in my mind as a chain. I saw immediately what I needed. I got out of bed and read these verses for myself, then prayed to God and asked Him to give me His Spirit, which is specifically manifested in the love that suffers long and is kind. Immediately a peace came over me. I went back to bed, and when I awoke the next morning my life was completely changed in this area. I no longer felt upset or hurt, and I no longer felt a need to nag.

I read to them, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath

given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:2-4). I shared with them that there are thousands of promises like this in the Bible that can dramatically change your life. I would surely want to share these blessings with others.

They all agreed that if this is something that can help live a life of kindness and love, that it is a good thing. They were happy for me that it was able to change my life. They, in general, were still not convinced that God is real, but they could see a value in the Bible that they had never seen before. Margot exclaimed, "I am going to have to read the Bible again. I have never heard it explained that way before."

By then it was getting late, so we went to bed. The next morning I saw Margot and Louis again before we had to leave for Nicaragua. They were very

happy to see me again, and said that they really enjoyed the talk last night and wanted to exchange email addresses. Margot said, "I have so many questions, I could have talked for hours and hours. I will have to continue our conversation by email." I told them about our monthly newsletter, *Present Truth*, and asked if they would like to receive it by email. They both heartily agreed and looked forward to getting it. I told them that I would write an article about our experience and send it to them. They were thrilled. It was sad to say goodbye to them, but I had to make it to the bus in time for our trip to Nicaragua.

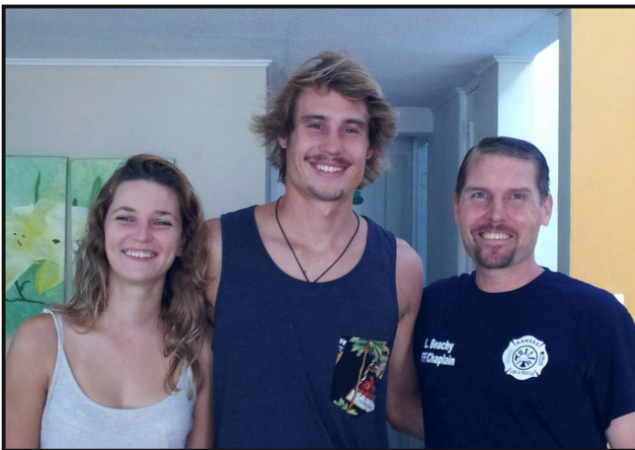
Please pray for all of these people, that the love of God will thrill their hearts as it has mine. I hope that we will be able to meet again sometime soon.

Nicaragua

We took an eight-hour bus trip from Costa Rica to Nicaragua, where we were greeted by a warm family and warm meal. We stayed in the home of Brother Jose. He and his family are wonderful hosts, and they have a large meeting area prepared in their backyard.

We were scheduled to have meetings each evening, with visits scheduled each day. The evening meetings were very similar to the ones presented in Costa Rica. The brethren were happy to hear the messages, and each night we answered some of their questions.

One of the highlights of our daytime visits



Margot, Louis, and Lynnford the morning after our study

was when we had a Bible study with a family on the love of God in giving His Son to die for our sins. Even though this should be basic knowledge, the family was excited to hear this and learn more about the reality of God's love. Afterwards we had a study with a lady who is a pastor, and who had some questions about the Sabbath. We had a study on what the Bible says about the Sabbath, as well as the old and new covenants. The pastor indicated that her church would begin worshiping on Sabbath. Please pray for these brethren.

On Sabbath we had about sixty people show up. After studying about the importance of having Christ live in us, twelve people dedicated their lives to the Lord in baptism. In the afternoon we opened the meeting up for questions, which was very enlightening for many.

Before leaving, we made plans to have a camp meeting in Nicaragua in January 2015. Plans are moving forward in this regard, so please pray for this. All of us who travelled from the United States are planning to return in January where we are hoping to have a large gathering from all over Central America. Please keep this in your prayers.

Conclusion

On Sunday we travelled back to Costa Rica for our return airplane

trip. We stayed in the same hostel where we had been before. Of the people I had studied with, Kam was the only one still there. He said that for several days all of them were talking about the study we had, and that it had a big impact in their lives. Praise God! Please keep these people in your prayers. God is working.

We were accompanied to the airport by some of our brethren from Costa Rica. It was hard to say goodbye, but we did so with the plans to return in six months. Please keep all of these dear brothers in your prayers. If you know anyone who may benefit from a camp meeting in Central America in January, please let them know. We will keep you informed about the dates and locations. Blessings! »

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Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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