



# The Fact and The Faith

*Understanding the gospel  
of Jesus Christ*

Message by: Leroy Surface

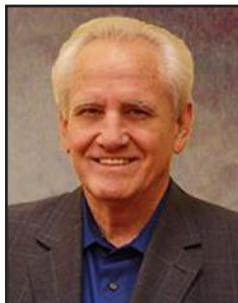
## Opposing Points of View

On one hand we have the epistles of the apostles Paul, John, and Peter. We have the prophecies of the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ hundreds and even thousands of years before He came into the world, each of them telling some part of the purpose of His coming. We even have the word spoken by the angel Gabriel defining what the Messiah the Prince would accomplish at his coming. These all speak with resounding clarity telling us that Christ came to destroy the devil and his works, make an end of sin in the believer, and birth a people filled with everlasting righteousness.

On the other hand we have a religious philosophy that has been developed over the last nineteen-hundred years. It tells us of a salvation that changes nothing, a righteousness that only God can see, and “saints” who are sinners just like the unbelievers of this world. Yet most of our modern religious leaders choose to stand with the purveyors of philosophy rather than with the apostles and prophets as recorded in the scriptures.

Who among them will agree with Paul, who says, *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* Romans 6:22. Which

religious leader will stand up and say “...a child of God is not a sinner, because Christ has made us free?” Who will agree with John, who says, *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him”* I John 3:5-6. What



**Leroy Surface**



**Keith Surface**

spiritual teacher will say of those who *“abide in Christ,”* that they *“do not sin,”* or of those who continue in sin, *“they have not seen Him, and they do not know him?”* This is what the apostle John said; we seek to say only the same, nothing more, nothing less.

# The Fact and The Faith

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**Galatians 2:15-16:** “*We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 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.*”

I will begin by pointing out the difference between the two small words, “*in*” and “*of*.” The word of God is very clear, especially if you are reading the “*King James Version*” of the Bible, that we are saved by “*the faith of Jesus Christ*.” The reason we have faith *in* Jesus Christ is so we can be saved by “*the faith of Christ*,” and not by the works of the Law. That is exactly what Paul said; “*...we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.*” I will seek to be brief this morning and preach a message in outline form, and do it in about thirty minutes time, if you can believe God for such a miracle. The thought on my heart for this closing service of our Spring Campmeeting is very simple. It is just four points, “**The Fact, the Faith, the Fact, and Our Advantage.**”

## I. The Fact

**I Corinthians 15:3-8:** “*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins*

*according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

Our faith, which is “*the faith of Christ*” is based upon a fact. I John 5:4 says, “*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*” The term “*our faith*” does not speak of our ability to “*believe*,” but it speaks of “*the faith*” which is of Christ, and has already “*overcome the world*.” The “*faith of Christ*” is based upon a fact; and that “*fact*” is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those three things are not our faith; they are facts. It doesn't require faith to believe Jesus Christ was nailed to a cross and crucified. Even an atheist can know the “*fact*” of the crucifixion of Jesus through the secular histories of those like Josephus, and others of his day. It is not necessary to have faith to know there was a man named Jesus who lived two thousand years ago, which many believed to be the Son of God. It doesn't require faith to know he was condemned to death by crucifixion, and died a bloody death on a cross. Even an atheist can believe those things, because they are facts. Consider the fact that he was buried: who can question the fact that if the man died, he was also buried? It is an established fact that Jesus Christ died on a cross and was buried. Now we consider the resurrection. Some would tell us the resurrection is a matter of faith, when in fact it is not. It is a fact that Jesus rose again the third day. There were over five hundred witnesses who saw Jesus after His resurrection. Consider the mass of the evidence. Over five hundred men, women, and children saw him, heard him, walked with him, talked with him from the third day until the fortieth day after he died on the cross. He gave them many “*infallible proofs* Acts 1:1-3” that he was the same one they had seen nailed to the cross to die before their eyes. Consider the fact of the nail scars in his hands, and the wound in his side. Consider Thomas, who had said,

*“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe”* John 20:25. Thomas saw those nail scarred hands and believed.

Consider the two Roman soldiers, given charge of the tomb to watch it, who fainted as dead men at the sight of the resurrection. Far more than enough evidence of the resurrection is given to prove it in any honest court of law. The death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are facts of history. These are the facts our faith is based upon.

## **II. The Faith**

**Romans 6:6:** “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him...”*

If the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the facts our faith is based upon, then what is the faith? Paul said, “*Our old man is crucified with him.*” This is where faith comes in. If there had been a photographer at Calvary they could have taken a picture and proven for all time that Jesus was crucified on a cross, but you could not have found me or you in that picture. A camera could not record the complete picture, because Paul said our old man was nailed to the cross with Christ. That is “*the faith.*” The faith that saves, the faith that justifies, and the faith that makes men free from sin is simply “*Our old man is crucified with Him.*” The word “*with*” comes from the Greek word “*sun,*” which means “*in union with*” Him. When they nailed Jesus Christ to that wooden cross, they nailed my old man of sin to the same cross. I can’t go to the history books and find any reference to it. Josephus never mentioned my old man being crucified that day, but I can go back to the prophets and see where they prophesied of it. The prophet Hosea said, “*After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight*” Hosea 6:2. This is a prophecy of our resurrection with Jesus Christ. Hundreds of years before Christ, the Spirit of God revealed through the prophet that He would “*raise us up, and we would*

*live in His sight.*" This is certainly a matter of faith, because there is no way to go back in history and prove that these things literally happened. There is proof, however, that these things are true, but before you have the "*proof* of it, you will first have the "*faith*" of it. You will first believe on Jesus Christ, that He was crucified, that He was buried, and that He was raised again the third day. Paul said, "*If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*" Romans 10:9. Paul is also the one who reveals the "*faith of Christ,*" that not only did the Son of God suffer, die, and rise again the third day, but my old man, and your old man was with Him.

Jesus died for all. That little three letter word "*all*" is the biggest of all words. If Jesus died for all, then billions of souls are encompassed in the little three-letter word "*all.*" Consider the following passage:

*"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"*  
*Romans 3:21-22*

The "*righteousness of God*" which was accomplished at Calvary, is "*unto all.*" Jesus died for every one of the billions of souls on earth. His righteousness is unto all; no one is left out. No one is so vile, so evil, that Jesus did not die for them. It is all-inclusive; no one is left out. Paul said this wonderful righteousness is "*unto all, and upon all them that believe.*" Can you comprehend that Jesus died in vain for those who do not believe? Everything He suffered was in vain for those who do not believe.

The question is asked in Romans 3:3, "*For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*" No! Unbelief does not change anything about either the "*fact*" or the "*faith*" of the gospel. If I believe, according to the gospel, that my old man is crucified with Christ and someone

says, “*I don't believe that,*” their unbelief doesn't change anything. Brother Nestegard said someone told him they didn't believe anyone could walk in the victory he preaches. He told them, “*I'm not going to give my victory up whether you believe or not. I refuse to surrender my victory just because you don't believe!*” The unbelief of an unbeliever doesn't change anything.

When I was a young person in school we were taught that it is scientifically impossible for a bumblebee to fly, but I noticed the bumblebees just kept on flying. They said his body was too big for his wings, but the bumblebee just kept on flying. What the scientists with all the wisdom of this world thought about it didn't change anything. If the gospel says my old man is crucified with Christ, then I am going to believe it. If it says in the next verse “*For he that is dead* (crucified with Christ) *is freed from sin*” Romans 6:7, then I am going to enjoy it, because that is my faith.

Do you want to know what “*my faith*” is? It is the “*faith of Christ*” by which Paul says I am justified Galatians 2:16. The “*faith of Christ*” is not only that He died, because Jesus could have died, have been buried, and raised again the third day, and the whole world could still die and go to hell. His death and resurrection could be totally without effect because of mankind's unbelief.

There are millions today who “*confess with their mouths, and believe in their hearts,*” and continue in sin just as they did before. They believe a “*perverted gospel*” which says they can continue in sin all the days of their life, and go to heaven when they die because of the “*grace of God*” and the “*blood covering.*” They know nothing at all about the blood of Jesus. They understand nothing about grace whatsoever, and they certainly know nothing about this “*glorious liberty*” of the sons of God, which is a glorious liberty from the enticements of the world, and the enticements of sin, because their old man is crucified with Christ.

The “*faith of Christ*” reveals that we are not only “*crucified with Christ,*” but we are also “*buried (in union) with Christ.*” The

gospel says we “*put off the old man.*” Our old man was put in the tomb with Jesus. When they put the body of Jesus in a tomb, they took my old man and put him in that tomb with Him. This is the “*faith of Christ.*” We rejoice in the “*empty tomb,*” but I rejoice because it is not an empty tomb. My old man is still there. I’ve been there. I was in Jerusalem, and they took us to the “*garden tomb.*” Our guide said, “*The most wonderful thing about this tomb is that it is empty.*”

It is such a wonderful thing to know it is empty because Jesus rose from the dead, but according to my faith, it is not empty. My old man of sin is still in that tomb. The “*old man*” of millions of men and women who have believed the truth throughout the centuries is still in the tomb. I’m talking about the old “*Adam;*” that “*old man of the flesh;*” he is buried with Christ, and a “*new man*” is quickened with Christ. Peter says God “...*hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” <sup>1</sup>Peter 1:4. Do you know what this means? It means that when God raised Jesus from the dead, He “*quickened*” a new creation, and He quickened me, a new man. It happened when God raised Jesus from the dead. Paul said, “*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ...*” Ephesians 2:4. This also is the “*faith of Christ.*”

It is a “*fact*” that God raised Jesus from the dead, and over five hundred witnesses could testify to that fact. Some say they must have “*faith*” to believe Jesus arose from the dead, but no, it is a fact. It takes no faith to believe it, because it is a “*fact.*” Do you believe the towers fell on 9-11? Why do you believe it? Were you there? Did you see it? There were many eyewitnesses, and we believe their report. We saw it and heard it on the news. We know the towers were there, and now they are gone. It does not require faith to believe a fact. Over five hundred eyewitnesses establish the fact of Jesus’ resurrection, but my faith is, I was made alive with Him. This is what Paul called the “*faith of Christ.*” It is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Someone says, “...but the ‘good news’ is that Jesus died and arose from the dead.” Why? Lazarus died, was buried, and rose again, but it didn’t do anything for me. They said Sister Shalandra from Donaldsonville died and the doctors massaged her heart and brought her back from the dead. I rejoice for Sister Shalandra, but what happened to her didn’t do anything for me. When Jesus died, was buried, and raised again, it did something for me, because I know my old man died, and was buried, and I am “born again” through resurrection (in union) with Him. That is the faith of the gospel, and it has become “my faith.”

### III. The Fact

**Romans 6:11:** “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

I said I would minister about “**The Fact, the Faith, the Fact, and Our Advantage.**” The first fact is absolute. It is a proven event in the history of mankind that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead. The “*faith*” is based upon that first “*fact*.” The second “*fact*” of this message is the reality of those who have the “*faith*,” which is based on the first “*fact*.” We will start in the sixth verse of the sixth chapter of Romans. “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead...*” This “*death*” does not speak of the death of our physical body; instead, it speaks of crucifixion with Christ, and when you accept the death of your old man by faith, it becomes your reality, “*...he that is dead is freed from sin.*” The scripture continues, “*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*” Praise God! To those who are crucified with Christ and risen with Him; death has no more dominion over them. I did not say we would not lay this mortal body down one day. God doesn’t count that to be death.

Remember the words of Jesus to Mary and Martha the day He raised Lazarus from the dead; “*he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*” John 11:25-26. Death has no more dominion over those who are quickened with Christ. They are free from the gravitational pull of sin and the ungodly culture of the world around them. Those things are not “*life*,” they are “*death*.” We have passed from death unto life in Jesus Christ.

Paul continues in the tenth verse, “*For in that he died, he died unto sin once...*” How many times did Jesus die unto sin? Once! ...Only once! “*...but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*” How many times did God raise Him from the dead? Once! ...Only once. The eleventh verse continues to say, “*Likewise (in that same manner) reckon ye also yourselves...*” The word “*also*” means that you not only know Jesus is dead unto sin and alive unto God, but that you *also*, are dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus “*died unto sin once,*” and you *also* died unto sin once when your old man was crucified in union with Christ. “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed...*” It is in this word “*indeed*” that we find the second “*fact*” of the gospel. I have heard many preachers who can preach the gospel from Romans 6:1-10 as truly and powerfully as anyone I have heard except for one thing; at the end of their message they always give a “*disclaimer.*” They preach that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin is destroyed, and that we are no longer slaves to sin, bringing the example of Christ being crucified and raised again, and our identity with Him. Then they close their sermon by saying, “*...but that is only the way God sees us, because in this real world, we are still sinners, and we always will be, etc.*” They preach everything Christ did for us in death and resurrection as being nothing more than an imaginary “*position,*” while they urge the people to strive all the days of their life to “*experience*” that “*position.*” “*Of course,*” they say, “*we know that in this life you will never experience it.*”

I was taught, early in my life, to “strive every day for perfection,” while also being told we “can never reach it in this life.” Such teachings turn the realities of Romans 6:11 into a mere “dead confession.” They “call things which are not as though they were,” which only God can successfully do Romans 4:17. They may confess daily, “*I am dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,*” but they miss that word “indeed,” which means “in fact.” They tell you to make the same confession and at the same time they say to you, “*in reality we are not dead unto sin, and we are not alive unto God, but will struggle with sin and fail as long as we are in this world.*” For all who believe such, Jesus died in vain.

It is the word “indeed” that cinches the truth and the power of the gospel, because it comes from a Greek word that means “in fact.” “Likewise (in the same manner in which Jesus died unto sin once, and in which He liveth unto God), “*likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed (in fact) unto sin...*” Don’t say, “*That’s my confession,*” because the gospel says it is our “fact.” We who are crucified and quickened with Christ are “*dead in fact unto sin, and alive in fact unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” All this is a “fact” because of the “faith.” Can you understand what I am saying? The fact is that Christ died; the faith of the gospel is that I died with Him. When “*the faith of Christ*” becomes my faith, it also becomes my fact, as the apostle Paul personalized it in Galatians 2:20, “*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*” Paul was dealing in facts.

## No Boasting

**Romans 3:27:** “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

My reckoning must be a “fact” which has become a fact because of “*the faith.*” The fact is, Jesus died; the faith is that I died, but because I believe the gospel that reckons it to be so, it is a fact, and I don’t struggle with sin, I don’t struggle with the world, and

to say such a thing is not a boast. I will assure you, it is not a boast; because if you knew this preacher over forty years ago, you would know how many months he fasted for crucifixion, and for sanctification. I would set aside a month at a time and say, “*I'm fasting for sanctification,*” or, “*I'm fasting to crucify my old man.*” I've got news for anyone who wants to know, “*you can't get it that way.*” In the years 1969 and 1970 I fasted more days in the year than I ate, most of it for sanctification and crucifixion, and yet, I never attained it. I read where Paul said, “*I am crucified with Christ.*” I said, “*Paul must have been the most egotistical man I have ever heard of. I know he didn't fast as much as I have, and I'm not crucified; how dare he say he is crucified.*” This is exactly what I thought about Paul in those days. I didn't know the gospel.

I did not know the truth, that when Jesus died for me, He was my proxy. If I would only believe upon Him, whatever they did to Him, they did to me, that is, to my old man. They nailed my old man to the cross; they whipped my old man with thirty nine stripes; they pulled that crown of thorns down into the brow of my old man...listen to me...they nailed my old man of sin to that cross, they took him down and put him in that tomb, but when Jesus came up out of the tomb, He came up “*without sin unto salvation.*” Sin is still in the tomb...I said, “*My sin is still in the tomb...my old man is still in the tomb.*” God quickened me, a new creation in Christ Jesus, and when that is my “*faith,*” it becomes my reality, that is, my “*fact of life.*” If I lose “*that faith,*” I will not have that “*fact.*” If I am “*moved away from the hope of the gospel*” Colossians 1:21-23 which is Jesus Christ, sin will revive, and I will be tempted with the vilest of things just like the worst of sinners, but as long I cling to Him... It's like God told the congregation of Israel at Horeb, “*Obey my voice, and keep my covenant;*” this is my covenant, and I'm going to “*cling to it.*” This is my faith, and because it is my faith, it is my reality; and it is my fact of life.

## IV. Our Advantage

**Romans 3:1:** “*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*”

There are five basic questions in the first nine verses of this chapter. The first question is, “*What advantage then hath the Jew?*” The last question is in the ninth verse, “*What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*” Remember the “*advantage*” of the Jew. They had the “*oracles of God*” for over fifteen hundred years, yet they were no better than the heathen. These questions are related to us by Paul after His revelation of Christ-crucified, but I truly believe they were questions which had to be answered before Jesus went to the cross. It was the judgment of God as He judged the nation He had chosen, set His love upon, and revealed Himself to at Mount Horeb. God introduced Himself to the children of Israel at Horeb, saying, “*I am the God that brought thee up out of Egypt,*” and gave them a promise, “*If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my peculiar treasure, my kingdom of priests, and my holy nation.*” He took them for the apple of His eye. He gave them His oracles, speaking to them in an audible voice from Horeb, the burning mountain. They had the Law of Moses, the Wisdom of Solomon, the psalms of David, and the message of the prophets, but with all these “*advantages*,” there was no difference between them and the heathen nations around them. That is why Jesus went to the cross.

When the scripture says “*There is none righteous, no not one*” Romans 3:10, it establishes the reason for Calvary. If there had been even one person found with the “*righteousness of God,*” that person would have been saved and all the rest would have been destroyed, because, if there was one righteous person, everyone could have been righteous without “*Christ-crucified.*” There was none righteous, and in the judgment of God, because they were

unrighteous because of one man's (Adam's) sin, God determined there had to be a second man if there was to be righteousness. God gave His Son to be that "*second man*." This reveals the "*righteousness of God*," which is "*Christ-crucified*." I've preached these five questions in the past, and asked the church, "*What is your advantage*." Some have answered, *I was born in free America, to Christian parents, raised in Sunday school, taught and disciplined by godly parents,*" which is a lot of advantage, but it is no more advantage than the Jew had, and it did nothing for them. Do you know what our advantage is? "*Our old man is crucified with Christ*." Oh what an advantage we have! The Jews could not, by the "*commands*" of Moses, make themselves truly different from the heathen nations. Even if they kept six hundred and twelve commandments of Moses, there was a six hundred and thirteenth commandment, which said "*Thou shall love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*," and there was not a person among them who could keep it. It was only those who "*chose God*" that could in any way please God.

Jesus came and suffered the cross; He nailed my old man to His cross, and by this, what an advantage we have. The Old Testament Jew struggled and struggled to keep the last of the Ten Commandments and the first of six hundred and thirteen. The last of the Ten Commandments is "*Thou shall not covet*." Man may stop committing adultery, he may stop stealing, and lying, and killing, but he can't stop coveting these things unless his old man is on the cross of Christ. Oh, listen to me. I can wear my clothes just like Moses said. If "*wash and wear*" clothing is a sin (according to Moses' law), I can wear cotton. I like it better anyway; I'll just be wrinkled. I can eat only the clean foods of Moses' law if that is what it takes to please God. I can leave the bacon, catfish, and shrimp alone if my soul's salvation depends upon it, that's no problem, goodbye bacon. It's when it comes down to loving God with "*all my heart, all my soul and with all my might*," that we discover the problem. There is not a person who has ever lived on this planet who can obey the "*first and*

*great*" commandment unless their "*old man is nailed to the cross.*" The apostle John tells us, "*We love Him, because He first loved us.*" We have the advantage.

When I look out and see a church world that is just like the world, whose sins are the same as those in the world, and they are in the church in the same percentages as in the world; I say, for that church world, "*Jesus died in vain.*" Why? Because they "*believe the fact,*" but they don't have the "*faith*" that says, "*my old man is nailed to His cross, and I'm made free from sin to serve the living God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Furthermore, I am made a partaker of the divine nature.* As I '*abide in Him,*' *I do by nature those things which please Him.*" Jesus said, "*I do always those things that please the Father.*" How did He do it? Was it by law, or by nature? It was by nature! He pleased His Father by nature...by newness of life...a new creation...a new man. What an advantage. You may tell of how the devil roars, and wars against the people of God. He does, but "*We have the advantage!*"

**Hebrews 2:14:** "*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*"

Jesus totally stripped the devil of all power or ability to do anything against any person who is abiding in Christ. He paralyzed him, and rendered him entirely helpless before a child of God. Notice, it was through "*death*" that Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death. Oh what an advantage we have! Paul told the church, "*God shall bruise Satan under thy feet shortly*" ...what an advantage! You may be in a fiery trial; you may be "*in heaviness through manifold temptations,*" but as Peter went on to say, "*In believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" Every circumstance in the world may be going against you, but "*we have the advantage.*" We have the advantage, because our enemy is already defeated.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation it was at Calvary that a voice was heard in heaven, saying, “*Now is come salvation, and the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ.*” It was there that Satan was cast down from heaven unto earth. He came down in great wrath for one reason... “*Because he knoweth he hath but a short time.*” Satan has known he is defeated ever since the precious blood of the Son of God was shed. It is that same “*blood*” by which we overcome Satan. What an advantage we have! Our advantage is over sin, Satan, and the world. Paul said, “*I will not glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*” Oh, what an advantage we have. We can seek God and He will pour out of His Spirit upon us. His presence will be with us. When the camp of Israel rejected God, and turned their backs to Him to worship a calf of gold, Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it in the wilderness, far off from the camp. From that day, every man that sought God went into the wilderness to the tabernacle to seek Him. Moses sought God, saying, “*O LORD, show me thy glory. I may be one man, and the multitudes may have rejected you, but God, show me thy glory.*” God answered Moses; “*There is a place by me...*” It was an invitation to Moses to “*come on up, and you will see my glory.*” God is saying to you who will believe, “*There is a place by me. Come on up*”

**Editor's Note:** This message was first published in "Behold the Lamb" in 1999. We believe it is needed today even more than it was at that time.

# Unbelieving Believers!

*Message by; Leroy Surface*

## Introduction

**Isaiah 53:1:** "*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*"

**Acts 13:40-41:** "*Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*"

"*How many believe John 3:16?*" Almost every hand in the building went up, along with many who shouted "*Amen.*" "*How many believe Hebrews 13:12?*" One amen, and two or three hands went up. "*Why don't you believe Hebrews 13:12,*" I asked? "*We don't know what it is,*" someone answered. "*It's the word of God,*" I responded. Suddenly almost everyone in the service understood what was being said. This is a scenario that has taken place almost identically in several meetings I have preached in the past year, and it points to a fact that is increasingly true in our churches today. Many Christians do not know if they believe the Bible or not. Most Christians will readily tell you that they believe every word in the Bible. What many of them really mean is that they believe it if it fits the tradition they have been taught in their particular religious background. Many Christians totally ignore large portions of the New Testament, especially the letters of Paul, simply because they don't understand them. Some, on the other hand simply refuse to believe anything that is in conflict with their ability to "*reason.*" Because of this, many in the church are weak, sinful, and condemned. Paul said the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to

*“everyone that believeth...”* Romans 1:16. Let’s consider in this message what we believe, and what many “*believers*” refuse to believe.

## Unbelieving Believers

**John 8:31-36:** *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

Jesus was speaking here, to “*believers*” of His day. They professed to “*believe on Him*,” but they did not believe His words. They lived in denial. They were in bondage to SIN, yet they were angered when Jesus told them “*...the truth shall make you free.*” In anger, they cried out, “*We be Abraham’s seed, we were never in bondage to any man.*” Jesus continued, “*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant* (the slave) *of SIN...If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*” There is no condemnation in the words of Jesus, only a promise to make them free indeed from **sin**. These “*believers*” continued to argue and deny everything Jesus said until they finally “*...took up stones to cast at Him*” John 8:59. They were not believers at all; they were “*unbelieving believers.*”

The American “*church*” is filled with “*unbelieving believers*.” Sixty percent of the American public professes to be “*Christian believers*,” while ninety-one percent in the same poll admit to lying on a daily basis. Many of America’s most famous religious leaders don’t believe that sin matters. They number themselves with those who inquired of the apostle Paul, “*Shall we continue in SIN that grace may abound?*” Not wanting to know the truth about sin they deny Paul’s answer, “**God forbid! How shall we,**

***that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*** Romans 6:1-2. Notice that Paul's answer does not indicate that we "should not sin," but rather, "we who are dead to sin cannot continue in sin." This statement is based on numerous gospel facts he gives in this same chapter, which the believer will "know," but the "unbelieving believer" will not confess.

## **Knowing the Truth**

**Romans 6:3:** "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?*"

Everyone who is "in Christ" came in through His death. We were baptized into His death, not by "water," but by "faith" we have died with Christ. When He died unto sin Romans 6:10, we died unto sin, for the believer is dead with Christ. "***Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world...***" Colossians 2:20.

**Romans 6:6-7:** "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*"

The believer knows his old man is crucified with Christ, because crucifixion is not the goal of the believer, but the experience. We were crucified on the same cross, at the same time, "in union with" Jesus Christ. Who can believe such a thing? Certainly not the "unbelieving believer."

The purpose of crucifixion is: "...*that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Notice that I have underlined the words "might" and "should." A simple check in your Strong's concordance will confirm that there are no Greek words used for "might" or "should" in the New Testament. They are always **added** by the translators or revisers to some other Greek word. They are what I call "*possibility words*" which are never found in the Gospel. The Gospel is always absolute; "steadfast," and "sure." It is never a "maybe" message. Understanding this, we **are** crucified with Christ, "...*that the body of sin...BE destroyed, that henceforth we...NOT*

*serve sin.*" Without the "might" and the "should" the language does not flow as well, but we see the positive truth which Paul was teaching as he concludes, saying, "***For he that is dead is freed from sin***" Romans 6:7.

## Understanding the Believable!

**John 3:16:** "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

This is good news, a precious promise of God. Every believer believes this scripture. It has been called the "golden text" of the Bible. There are few, however, who understand it.

To understand John 3:16 we must see its connection with two previous verses: "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life*" John 3:14-15. These words were spoken by Jesus before He went to the cross. *That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish* is contingent upon Jesus hanging on a cross in the same manner that Moses "hung" the serpent on a pole in the wilderness. If the Son of God did not hang on a cross everyone would perish, but thank God, Jesus did go to the cross.

Even though verses **John 3:16-21** are printed in red in most Bibles, *Jesus did not speak those words*. They are, instead, the words of the Apostle John, written many years after Jesus hung on the cross. When John said "***For God so loved the world,***" he was not only telling HOW MUCH God loved, but also HOW God loved the world. "***For God SO LOVED***" in John 3:16 is irreversible connected to "***EVEN SO must the Son of man be lifted up***" in John 3:14. "***That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish....***" is the conclusion of both statements. It is not how much He loves us, but what He did in our behalf that saves us. "*But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* Romans 5:8."

***“That whosoever believeth in Him...”*** confirms that full salvation is received by believing and not by any other effort or work on our part. Simply believing that Jesus is the Son of God, however, does not save. ***“Believing in Him”*** relates to our believing the purpose of the sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus had said ***“...even so MUST the Son of man be lifted up....”*** But why “must” it be the cross?

## The Purpose of the Cross

A close friend asked me why we preach the cross so much; ***“After all,”*** he said, ***“the cross was just a ‘murder weapon.”*** He reasoned that if a gang captured one of his sons and murdered him with a pistol, he would surely not lift up the pistol, and preach about it. He continued, saying if relatives and friends of the family glorified the pistol that had killed his son, he would think it to be a horrible thing. Surely, he concluded, this must be the way God feels when we preach about the cross.

I carefully considered my answer. We do not preach the cross only because the Son of God died on it. If that was all that happened, it would indeed be a horrible thing; but that was not all that happened. It was on that cross that **our old man** died; it was on that cross, that **the body of SIN** was destroyed Romans 6:6; that **Satan was defeated** Hebrews 2:14; that **principalities and powers** were spoiled Colossians 2:15; and it was to that cross that **religious ordinance and ceremony** were nailed Colossians 2:14.

Again, hear the words of the Apostle Paul concerning the cross, ***“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”*** Galatians 6:14; ***“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed...”*** Romans 6:6; ***“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross...”*** Colossians 1:20; ***“...that He might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross...”*** Ephesians 2:16; ***“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to***

**His cross**" Colossians 2:14; "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*" 1Corinthians 1:18; Romans 1:16.

## Sanctification; The Purpose of the Blood

**Hebrews 13:12:** "*Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.*"

Again, this is wonderful good news from the word of God, **but do we believe it?** Every news reporter knows there are six questions that must be answered in every report if it is to be complete. These questions are "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "When?", "Why?", and "How?" The apostle Paul answers five of these six questions in this single verse. I know of no other verse in the Bible that is so complete in telling what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is. Let's examine each of these six questions and find the answer the apostle gives.

1. Who?      "*Jesus Christ*"
2. What?      He "*suffered*" and died on the cross.
3. Where?      "*Outside the gate*" of Jerusalem.
4. When?      The only question not answered in this verse.
5. Why?      "*That He might sanctify the people.*"
6. How?      "*With His own blood.*"

Do we really believe the purpose of the suffering and death of the Son of God was to "*take away sin,*" and "*make the people holy,*" and that He did it "*with His own blood?*" Do we dare believe the purpose of the shed blood of Jesus Christ is to sanctify those who believe? That is exactly what the Bible says in very absolute terms, but it only works for those who believe it. After all, that is what a believer is.

## **Believing the Unbelievable**

Several years ago the Lord spoke to me by His Spirit. He instructed me to never make an excuse for anything His word (the Bible) says. Little did I know the impact this would have on many things I had believed for most of my life. I could no longer ignore scriptures simply because I didn't understand them. I realized that God's word is true whether I understand it or not, or even whether I believe it or not. I made a determination to believe the scripture regardless of my understanding, and I even began to preach some things I did not understand just because God had said them in His word. I settled it in my heart that the Bible is the word of God, forever settled in Heaven, and far beyond the intellectual grasp of any person, man or woman. If I waited until I understood it, I would never believe it, but I found that when I believed it simply because God said it, understanding came and my entire life and experience was instantly transformed by the knowledge of the truth John 8:32.

**I John 3:9:** “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*”

Who can believe this scripture? “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...*” This is impossible for the natural mind to believe. I struggled with it for years. My intellect denied it and my experience told me it was not so. Numerous teachers told me that the word “*commit*” in this text really meant “*practice*,” but a simple study of the word in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance revealed that the word “*commit*” (Greek word ‘poieo’) spoke of “*a single act.*” If the apostle had meant to say “*practice*,” he would have used the Greek word “*prasso.*”

The last part of this verse continues, “*...he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” Almost everyone “*knows by their experience*” that this scripture cannot be true. “*Experience*” says we sin even though we are born again. I was living proof of that fact. I had been born again years before, but there came a time in which I

was backslidden and living in sin, and “slave to sin.” There was no way that I could believe that the “*born again*” could not sin. After being forgiven and restored to God I preached harder against sins than ever before. I could comprehend that the born again person “*should not sin*,” but the scriptural teaching that they “*could not sin*” was beyond me. It was about this time that the Spirit of the Lord reproved me sharply, and told me not to “*make excuses*” for what His word says.

The Word of God is truth whether we understand it or not. It is truth whether we believe it or not. Truth is not known by experience, but only by God’s Word. If our experience is contrary to the Word, it is our experience that is a lie. Our experience does not establish the truth, but believing the truth will establish a true experience. I decided to believe the truth; in this case, “***Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.***” I still didn’t understand it, but I believed it. It was my experience that had been a lie. If everything I saw in the church around me denied it, yet God is truth, as Paul said, “***...let God be true, but every man a liar***” Romans 3:4.

## No Sin in Christ

**I John 3:5-6:** “*And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not:*”

This text makes **three powerful points** which we will consider separately.

**1. “And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins.”** John the Baptist had introduced Jesus to Israel with these words, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away THE SIN of the world.*” Jesus was manifested to take away both “*...THE SIN of the world,*” and “*...our sins.*”

“*The sin of the world*” speaks of “*the sin*” that entered into the world through Adam’s transgression. “***Wherefore, as by one***

***man sin entered into the world, and death by sin...***" Romans 5:12. The sin entered the heart of Adam, Eve, and all their descendants is nothing more or less than the "*nature of the serpent*" who became "*the god of this world*" when Adam disobeyed God. "*The sin*" that entered the heart and nature of mankind is the cruel taskmaster that holds the people in bondage to Satan. Sin is lord over the sinner. It is often called "*our fallen nature*," or "*the sin nature*." By the scriptures we know that Jesus is "***the lamb of God which taketh away THE SIN of the world.***" When He was offered on the cross as a "...*lamb without blemish and without spot...*" I Peter 1:19, Jesus totally destroyed "sin" for the believer. "***For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh***" Romans 8:3. Jesus both condemned and destroyed "*sin in the flesh*." He "*took away*" that cruel taskmaster called SIN out of the heart of every believer and nailed it to His cross.

The last part of Romans 5:12 says "***...and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.***" After sin and death entered through Adam's transgression the scripture says that ...***all have sinned.*** Everyone who has been born into this world is a sinner, both by nature and by action. Death is upon all humanity both by inheritance (through Adam's transgression) and by reward (the wages of our sin is death). By the scriptures we know that Jesus was manifested to "***...take away our sins....***" I John 3:5. Thank God, we are forgiven for sins we committed, and freed from the taskmaster that caused us commit them.

**2. "...and in Him is no sin."** It is amazing to me that many modern day "*faith teachers*," teach that Jesus could have sinned while He was on earth. We know by the scriptures that whosoever is born of God "***...cannot sin because they are born of God***" I John 3:9. Surely this must apply to God's only begotten Son. It was not in the realm of possibility that Jesus could have sinned or failed any test whatsoever while on earth. When John says "*in Him is no sin*," he is not only telling us that Jesus did not

sin, but that He could not sin because there was **no sin in Him**. Sin comes from the nature of sin that is in the heart of every unregenerate person. Sin begets sin. If there is no sin in the heart there can be no sin in the action of the individual. In Christ there is **no sin**.

**3. “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.”** Jesus Christ is the dwelling place of the child of God. Seventy six times the Bible uses the term “*in Christ*.” Hundreds of times phrases such as “*in whom*,” “*in Him*,” “*wherein*,” etc. are used referring to Christ. Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God. And “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*” II Corinthians 5:17. God the Father “...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places **in Christ**” Ephesians 1:3; “...He hath chosen us **IN Him**....” 1:4; “...He hath made us accepted **IN the beloved**” 1:6; “**IN WHOM** we have redemption through His blood...” 1:7; “**IN WHOM** also we have obtained an inheritance...” 1:11; “**For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him**” II Corinthians 5:21. It is obvious that it is “*in Him*,” that is, “*in Christ*” that we “*live, and move, and have our being*” Acts 17:28. Many have said that it is ONLY “*in Him*” that we are righteous. This is very true, but it is also true that “*in Christ*” is the only dwelling place of the child of God. “*If any man be “in Christ,” he is a new creature*” II Corinthians 5:17, but if any man is not “*in Christ*” he’s not even saved.

It is an obvious truth that “**Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not**,” because “**In Him is no SIN.**” Further, it becomes obvious that “**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for His (God’s) seed (God’s children) remaineth (abide) in Him (in God); and he cannot sin, BECAUSE he is born of God.**” The “*unbelieving believer*” will wrestle with this and seek to deny it, but freedom from sin and righteousness in Christ will never be their experience until they acknowledge the truth of these scriptures. Only those who believe the truth of God’s word, will know the truth, and rest in the righteousness that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

# How Little of God Can We Get?

Message by: Keith Surface

What I am about to say may shock most people the first time they hear it, but if we really consider it, the truth of it becomes apparent. What is it that I am speaking of? It is that to multitudes in the church the term “*saved*” means “*the minimum experience*” or the “*minimum amount of God*” that a person needs in order to “*get to heaven.*” “**Not me!**” you might say. Maybe not, but don’t be too quick to decide. Do you have a child or other loved one who had a religious experience sometimes in the past but is not presently living for God? How do you think they really stand with God? If you answer honestly, you might say “*Well, I know they are not where they should be with God, but I believe they are saved.*” The translation is, “*I believe they have at least the minimum experience or amount of God it takes to get them to Heaven.*” Even believers, if their walk has degenerated into a dead form, often tell themselves, “*Well, at least I’m saved.*” In almost every group in Christianity, the word “*saved*” has come to speak of the minimal Christian experience or requirement.

## Salvation without a Savior

There seems to be a disconnect in the minds of many people between salvation and the Savior. Salvation is viewed as a possession, a privilege, or a prize that God will only let them have if they come to Jesus. Now that they have received this possession, what real need do they have for the Savior? The result is that many people live their lives as though they can ignore Him, have no love for Him, and no necessity to serve Him. The

attitude seems to be that they have salvation, so they no longer need the savior.

All I have to do to illustrate this point is ask how many have ever been to the funeral of someone who went Hell? The truth is that we all have. It's just that at the time of their departure we grab hold of some minimal standard to announce their arrival at the pearly gates. They may have lived their lives scoffing at or avoiding a real relationship with Jesus Christ, but surely that is not what really matters now. We remember when they were baptized. They confessed Jesus as Lord many years ago. Sometimes they referred to the man upstairs. They let someone pray for them on their death bed. Somehow we “*know*” they must be saved. We know they didn’t have much, but surely they had the minimum that God requires. Will such a person have boldness in the Day of Judgment to say, “*O Mighty God, I know I don't have much of you, but I just did not want any more than I really needed?*”

## So Great a Salvation

I am not writing this as one who claims not to believe that there is a “*minimum*,” or entrance into salvation. The apostle Paul seems to give that “*minimum*” in his words to the Corinthian church; “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” II Corinthians 5:17. Anything short of a new creature is not a child of God and anything that comes short of producing a new creature is not salvation. To the Galatians Paul said, “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*” Galatians 6:15. You can go through any form or formula, make any confession, and endure any ritual, believing that you are fulfilling scripture, but if it has not produced a new creature it has not brought you salvation. The words “*saved*” and “*salvation*” both speak of rescue or deliverance. The Apostles called it “*so great a salvation.*” In it we are rescued and delivered from sin, from the power of darkness, from this present evil

world, from carnality, etc. and we are lifted up in victory with every enemy defeated through Christ Jesus. It is to our shame that instead of embracing such a full salvation we instead seek to find "*what is the minimum we can receive*" and still get to Heaven. When did God become "*the God of the minimum?*"

## Stopping Points

I am a preacher of the cross. I fully believe and preach that Jesus went to the cross to crucify our old man and in so doing He destroyed the body of sin so we would never again be slaves to sin. The scripture does not teach that a child of God is also a sinner. There have always been sinners in the church house, but never in Christ. John says, "*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him*" <sup>1</sup> John 3:6. I believe in freedom from sin! These things I believe and preach. But sometime back I began to be troubled about what I saw in some who also believed in this wonderful freedom through Christ Jesus. They were not sinful. They were not unclean. But I began to perceive that for some the cross had become a stopping point. I have always preached that the cross and the freedom it brings is the starting point in Christ, so I was confused by what I saw. It shocked me to realize that "*the minimum*" I preached had also become "*the end*" for many.

Many years ago I noted that some ministries were built completely around repentance. These are usually good ministries, ever urging the people to repent. I noted, however, that repentance seemed to be the goal and the end. As long as the ministry preached repentance, the people seemed to do well, but there never was an answer for sin other than to repent if you sin; repent because you might sin; and repent because you probably have not repented enough. I saw the fallacy in that and understood that Paul preached both repentance and faith <sup>Acts 20:21</sup>. Repentance without believing the gospel which delivers the believer out of sin is just an endless religious exercise. To another group, holiness is the heavenly calling. Their battle cry is

*“Holiness, without which no man shall see God.”* In this group also you find some very wonderful and dedicated people. But multitudes spend their entire experience striving for holiness, yet many of them never see God. To them holiness becomes the end, the goal, even the prize. Maybe I thought myself wiser than such. I had seen the power of the cross. It gave deliverance and freedom to the penitent. It gave holiness that was a natural fruit of being freed from sin and joined to Christ. Paul confirms this saying, *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* Romans 6:22, yet even in the glory of the cross, I saw that people found a stopping point. They had reached their “minimum” and their minimum became a place to stop, and go no further.

I could speak of many other things that have become an end. In the full gospel movements, even among those who still preach the true baptism with the Holy Ghost, this baptism often becomes a stopping point. We seek and seek until the baptism with the Holy Ghost comes, and then we sit down, thinking that we have reached a goal. So often we do not know that what we received was not an end, but a beginning; an entrance; a pledge sent from God to lift us up into the riches of Christ. Too often the shout, the dance, and the emotion of a Pentecostal service become the stopping point for those who have received the Spirit of God. We must understand; everything of God is a beginning. Nothing He has prepared for His people is an end. We are the ones who turn His beginnings into an end. It does not matter where the stopping point is, or if it is mine or yours, any stopping point in Christ is also a dying point.

## Call to Glory

**II Thessalonians 2:13-14:** *“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he*

*called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* “

It is from the verse above that God reminded me that He has no stopping point. Paul wrote, “*Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” God has never been the God of the minimum. He has never called a sinner just to repentance. From the moment a sinner first hears the gospel or feels the touch of God, they are being called to sit with Christ in heavenly places and partake of His glory. God is calling them to a life of miracles. He wants them to experience the riches of His grace. He wants to manifest Himself through them unto the world. I have heard all my life that God is calling people *to* repentance, but the truth is, God is calling people *through* repentance. He is calling them *through* faith. He is calling them *through* the cross. He is calling them *through* the baptism with the Holy Ghost. He is ever calling men and women to come and partake of the glory of His Son, Jesus Christ. The call is the same for sinner and saint alike. I can tell the vilest of sinners that God is calling them to His glory. Yes, there are many things He calls them through, but there is just one “*hope of the calling.*” It is the invitation to sit with Jesus in heavenly places and partake of His glory. There will be repentance and faith. There will be the death of the cross in union with Christ. There will be deliverance and holiness. And there will most certainly be the baptism with the Holy Ghost. None of these are an end, however, because God has no stopping points.

As both a dad and a pastor, I have observed that some parents think the best way to not be disappointed in their children is to never expect anything of them. “*Expect nothing so you will never be disappointed in what you get.*” The truth is that if a parent expects nothing of their children, they will always be disappointed. I have seen this same thinking take hold in the houses of worship. Our preachers spend much effort to assure us that God expects nothing from His children. Decades ago when I first came to the Lord, I would hear a teacher on the radio who

could teach gospel truths in a way that would make you want to shout with joy. I was always saddened though, that he would always end his messages by reassuring the people that these things had nothing to do with their salvation. They had confessed Jesus. They could never lose their salvation. They were “*alright.*” I called this his “*disclaimer.*” I knew even as a young believer, that most of those who followed that ministry would never go on to anything more than his “*minimum.*” He could preach glory, but as long as he reinforced the minimum, that was where the people would stay...and die (if they were ever alive). Almost thirty years later I see the same thing everywhere I turn. Every glory of Christ is preached with a disclaimer. “*This is what God has set before you, but it is OK if you never possess it.*” Some proclaim the reality of “*Christ in you,*” but if that is not your experience, then your dry confession of faith will do just fine. A large ministry prides itself in the message of freedom by the cross, but never fails to reassure the people that everyone struggles with sin, even the Apostle Paul. Others preach the great need for the baptism with the Holy Ghost, but always make sure the people know that it is “*optional.*” The glory is preached to get the people to shout and the minimum is preached to keep them in the building. So why should we be surprised that multitudes in the church “*camp out*” as far from God as they think they can safely be and still make Heaven?

We must once again hear the call of the Savior who sits in the heavens inviting whosoever will to come and sit with Him in glory. Tear down our “*ends*” and our “*stopping points.*” Throw away our disclaimers. We are called to a walk in freedom, holiness, victory, and glory. We must abandon our search for the “*minimum amount of God that is needed*” and begin to “*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*” Colossians 3:1. We will never see a glorious church if we never see a church that hears the call to glory. He has called us by the gospel “*...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!*”

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