
The Messenger



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

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Website: westlakechurchofchrist.org

Sunday: AM Bible Study – 9:30 a.m., AM Worship – 10:30 a.m., PM Worship – 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday: PM Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30.

Salvation by Experience

by James E. Cooper via The Casleton Companion

Several years ago I had a conversation with a man who, when he learned I was a preacher, wanted to relate his "salvation experience". He said he looked out his bedroom window one bright, moonlit night and saw in his garden a cross with blood on the center of it. The next morning, he investigated further and saw that it was a cabbage head with a ripe tomato right in the center. Since he could not explain how it got there, he took it as a miraculous "witness" to his salvation. Many have told a similar "experience" and based their hope of salvation on it.

Isn't it amazing that people can come up with such opinions; in spite of the fact that the New Testament contains no such cases of conversation? No, not one covert in the New Testament ever based his hope of salvation on an "experience" of this nature. While miraculous events did accompany a few of them, they were not for the purpose of convincing the sinner that he had been converted and was not accepted by God.

A miracle occurred on the day of Pentecost, but not upon the audience. The miracle occurred upon the apostles and enabled them to "speak as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Those converted heard the apostles' preaching, believed and were commanded to "repent and be baptized" for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Philip "preached Christ" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5) and his message was "confirmed" (Mark 16:20) by "the signs which he did" (Acts 8:6). But the Samaritans received no 'experience of salvation'. The Bible says "when they believed Philip's preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

Miracles accompanied the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, but the eunuch never knew anything about them. An angel told Philip to go to the Jerusalem-Gaza road, and when he arrived, the Spirit told him to "join the chariot" in which the eunuch was riding. But Philip "preached Jesus" to the man (Acts 8:25), and when they came to a certain water the eunuch wanted to be baptized (Acts 8:36). He was baptized upon a confession of his faith, not upon the relation of his experience. In the Bible, men heard the gospel, believed in Christ, repented of sins and were baptized.

What Are You Waiting For?

Many of us live as if we're waiting for our lives to begin. "When I finish college in four years the doors will really start to open for me; I can then get on with my life." "When I get that promotion things will really start to happen in my life; I will then do all those things I've been wanting to do." "When I retire I won't be tied down with work and things will really be different; I'll really be living then." WHEN. We always seem to be waiting for WHEN to come. Then we learn that WHEN has been here all the time. We just didn't know what to look for!

Fathers are waiting for that day WHEN things become less hectic and demanding so they can spend time with and really get to know their sons. But WHEN never comes and the sons are soon grown and gone, the years of knowing them are past. Mothers are waiting for that day WHEN the pace slows down so they can be more attentive to their daughters. But WHEN never comes, time passes, and the daughters grow up, get married and begin busy lives of their own. Friends intend to enjoy one another WHEN they can find the time. But WHEN never comes, the time is never spent, and the pain of a neglected friend is felt. The following is a poem by Charles Hanson Towne that summarizes these thoughts concerning "WHEN":

*Around the corner I have a friend, in this great city that has no end;
Yet days go by, and weeks rush on, and before I know it a year is gone,
And I never see my friend's face, for life is a swift and terrible race.
He knows I like him just as well as in the days I rang his bell,
We were younger then, and we are busy, tired men;
Tired with playing a foolish game, tired with trying to make a name.
"Tomorrow," I say, "I will call on Jim,
Just to show that I'm thinking of him."
But tomorrow comes, and tomorrow goes, and the distance between us
Grows and grows, around the corner, yet miles away.
"Here's a telegram sir, Jim died today."
And that's what we get, and deserve in the end - -
Around the corner, a vanished friend.*

Husbands and wives plan to be more understanding WHEN the pressure from jobs, kids and finances isn't so great. People plan to give up bad habits WHEN they get older. Many plan to take a more active role in the work of the Lord, WHEN they're finished attending to other pursuits. The intentions are all good, but WHEN are we going to live as if we understand that WHEN is NOW! This is life, this is the time in which the work of living our lives as Christians must be done; not tomorrow, not next week, not next year. Today is the time!

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." - James 5:16