THE SHINING LIGHT
Shining Forth in Truth for the Blind
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REFLECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES
By Smokey Nevins
God's Greatest Gift

Philippians 2:6-11. "Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

If there's any time of year where the subject of gifts comes up, it's during the Christmas season. Little children drop lots of hints to their parents about those things they would love to discover under the tree Christmas morning. Usually, a child has one particular thing they want more than anything else. If they could only have that particular toy, dress, or video game, they would be content. Let's face it, those of us who are adults like presents too and we are pretty good at dropping hints.

God has given us a gift that surpasses any earthly gift. His gift is the Lord Jesus Christ. In His unsurpassable and incomprehensible love, Jesus Christ took on human flesh in the virgin birth, lived a sinless life, and offered Himself as the final and perfect sacrifice for sin through His death on the cross.

To grasp the significance of God's gift to sinful mankind, it is important that we not forget just who this Jesus who was born in the city of Bethlehem really is. Jesus Christ is none less than God. The Bible teaches that there is one God who exists in three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is what Christians refer to as the Trinity. The mystery of the Trinity is beyond our ability to comprehend, but it is clearly the teaching of Scripture. Consider these words from the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 1:1-4. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they."

Thus, the Jesus who walked on this earth is God Almighty. No wonder He taught with such authority that those who heard Him marveled. No wonder He was able to give sight to the blind, heal the sick, and even raise the dead. No wonder He demonstrated compassion and love beyond any other.

Yet, the Jesus who walked on the earth was also fully man. Just like us, Christ became hungry and experienced fatigue. He experienced joy, sadness, and even righteous anger. However, the difference between Jesus and any other man is that He lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to the will of God. Thus, His death on the cross fully and completely satisfied God's just punishment for sin. He died as a perfect substitute for all who would trust Him. Eighteenth century bible commentator Matthew Henry makes the following observation about the Christ's life and perfect death as our sinless Savior.

"One would think that the Lord Jesus, if he would be a man, should have been a prince, and appeared in splendor. But quite the contrary: He took upon him the form of a servant. He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, meanness, poverty, and disgrace; he had nowhere to lay his head, lived upon alms, was a man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief, did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men.

This was the humiliation of his life. But the lowest step of his humiliation was his dying the death of the cross. He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. He not only suffered, but was actually and voluntarily obedient; he obeyed the law which he brought himself under as Mediator, and by which he was obliged to die."

God's greatest gift to man is Himself in the person of Christ. Friend, if you've not yet trusted Christ as your Lord, God, and Savior, do so today. Seek His forgiveness for your sins of unbelief and disobedience and trust Him alone as the only way to God. Follow Him as your Master and you will know joy and peace that you've not known before.

If you already have a relationship with Christ, enjoy Him more. Find more of Him in His word, depend upon Him more fully, and pray that God will enable you to see how vast and immeasurable Christ's love is for you. Serve Him with all your heart and proclaim Him to a world so desperately lost.

May we all be reminded afresh of the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ? May this prayer from the apostle Paul always be ours as well.

Ephesians: 14-21. " For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

MINISTRY UPDATES

The Lord blessed in our 30th Annual Board of Directors meeting on October 21 at the home of Barbara Keathley and the office of Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind. Here is a list of what we discussed.

1. We chose a new board member this year, Smokey Nevins from Sacramento, California.
2. We are continuing the library of cassette tapes, CD's, and digital cartridges.
3. We now have our Bible correspondence courses in Braille, large print, and by e-mail.
4. We have signed a contract to offer a Bible memory program copyrighted by the Navigators, NavPress, in Braille.
5. We plan to attend the conference for the blind this year in Louisville, Kentucky in July.
6. Forest Hills Baptist Church in Titusville, Florida, is still conducting the Bible study for the blind in Rockledge, Florida.
7. We are working on getting our web-site updated and expanded. It is glfb.org

We will have updated news on all these things in later newsletters.

PRAISES

We are pleased to have a blind man again active in our ministry. This is an answer to our prayers. Smokey Nevins was born blind and understands more of what the visually impaired need. As you may recall, he is the one who wrote his testimony in the last newsletter. He and His wife, Patty, have 9 children and one son-in-law. Robbie is 26; Lucy is 24 and is married to Jeff Pressnell; Andy is 23; Daniel is 21; Lila is 19; Amy is 17; Steven is 14; Emma is 11; and Timothy is 9. His full-time work is with the state of California where he works with food stamp regulations and policies. He attends church and is a lay elder in River City Grace Church. He sometimes preaches and teaches because he has a passion to serve God. He is excited about helping us develop new resources and services to assist those who are blind, and obtain more books and sermons to expand our library.

NEW ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY

Thanks to the kindness and sacrifice of others, we've acquired some additional items for your reading pleasure. Pastor Mark Dever of Capitol Hill Baptist church has been reading the sermons of puritan preacher Richard Sibbes to the congregation he pastors in Washington D.C. Pastor Dever has graciously allowed Gospel Light to distribute his readings to those who access our library. Pastor Dever is a superb reader and you will find these readings both encouraging and convicting. Gospel Light extends its thanks to pastor Dever for his kindness in making these readings available to us. We can send you the readings on a cartridge which is read using a digital talking book player which you can receive at no cost from your local talking book library. If you are unable to acquire a player, contact us and we will help you locate the talking book library nearest you. For those of you who use the internet you can find these readings at the following web site: http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/audio/category/sibbes/ We also have these readings on cassette tape and CD.

In addition, we now have a copy of Thomas Watson's book, The Christian on the Mount, on cassettes. It was carefully read by Lucy Pressnell, daughter of Smokey Nevins. This book is devoted to the topic of meditation on the word of God and the primary text for the book is Psalm 1, verse 2 which depicts the godly man as one who is devoted to meditating on Scripture. Here's the text of the psalm in the New American Standard version.

Psalm1. "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish."

LETTERS

This is a letter from a man in Florida who has been one of our students for about 35 years using both Braille and tapes, "Thank you so much for sending to me your new NSL cartridge catalog. In addition to returning the catalog for re-distribution, I am enclosing a list of sermons and books that I would like to borrow from your library. I am looking forward to receiving these cartridges. Thank you for your attention to this announcement, and I am looking forward to receiving these sermons and books at my Florida residence during the next few months. May God's blessings be upon you all. J. B."

FREE OFFER

We are offering 2 Christmas messages recorded by Rev. Bill Keathley, the founder and past director of Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind. The titles are, "True Christmas Story" and Wrapping of God's Christmas Gift." Just let us know if you would like these. They are available on both digital and cassette tape.

FROM THE EDITOR

As you have noticed we have changed the format of this newsletter to be more like a magazine. Tell us how you like it. Have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year, and remember to put Jesus Christ first. Your editor, Barbara Keathley

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