

## SHOWING OUR LOVE FOR OUR HEAVENLY FATHER THROUGH OBEDIENCE...

There is no doubt that God, Our Heavenly Father, loves us deeply. Everything that He has done has been for our benefit, indeed, our salvation. He has never forsaken the righteous, nor has He ever allowed the faithful to stand alone (Matthew 28:20). From before the foundation of the world we had been pre-determined to be a people who would take the message of salvation to others. This message would not be our message, but the message from God (His message) – which made it incorruptible and everlasting (I Peter 1:23). We, as the Lord's people, are blessed beyond measure.

What inherent responsibilities, then, do we, as this blessed number, have? What is expected of us? How shall we conduct ourselves in a world that, by-and-large, has little to no interest in God or eternal salvation. The Bible has consistently given us examples of His people being ridiculed, persecuted, and often killed. The Biblical accounts can range from Samson to Stephen (historians give us information on the apostles themselves). We are reminded that all who try to live in a God-authorized manner will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12).

We know this continues today because of the large number of people in some large countries (and even in our own country) that despise God altogether. They have been Communists, Fascists, Nazis, Socialists, or the European Enlightened, or followers of some party and its ideology. The world in every generation has always *seemed* more complicated than that which preceded it, but in the end there has been only a slight modification at best.

Times change, but human nature remains pretty much the same. The irony of that statement is in the fact that God does not change either (James 1:17). His expectations and commands for us have been the same since the church was established on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. These expectations are not very different from what was demanded in the Old Testament. Though we obviously do not live under the old covenant, we are still to be faithful to God and keep His commandments (John 14:15; 15:10).

This is done through obedience. The word means to submit to authority or reason; reverence for the source of a command; and to pay attention with resulting conformity to what has been advised or commanded. Obedience to God is the primary problem man has obstructing his way to salvation. Jesus tells us that our love for Him is manifested through our obedience to His will (“if you love me, keep My commandments”). This is not hard to do, according to the Lord (“and His commandments are not grievous” I John 5:3).

So we make our commitment not only to hear what He says to us, but also to do those things that are commanded (expected). By this our love not only becomes real, but quite tangible as well. We feel more complete and fulfilled as His children when we abide in His word. It strengthens us and builds us up in the most Holy faith.

What is more obvious now than ever is the need for others to fully understand the love of God, and how that love will transform their lives. People are always looking for solutions to problems. The larger obstacle in this case is that these very same people are not able to recognize that the main problem is that they live without a knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus as He is revealed to us in the scriptures. Many do believe they know Him, but only through what they have been told, not from what they have read. This is where we come in.

Johnny Oxendine  
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**BELVEDERE BEACON**  
“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)  
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535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574  
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES  
SUNDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 10:00 am.  
Morning Worship 11:00 am.  
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.  
WEDNESDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 7:00 p.m.  
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### “HERE’S HOW...”

A leaflet making the rounds purports to instruct us on the way to have “an eternal relationship with God.” The suggested four-point plan is as follows:

1. **Admit Your Sin**—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).
2. **Put Your Trust in Jesus Christ**—“God loves us so much that He gave us His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not die, but will have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
3. **Make Your Decision**—“If you confess with your mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord!’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9)
4. **Now Turn Away from Your Sin**—“Repent, then turn to God so that your sins will be forgiven” (Acts 3:19)

The four points were concluded with a suggested prayer: “I now believe that Christ died for me so God could forgive my sin. I have now received the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and with His strength I will turn from my sin.—Amen.” Bible believers can applaud the zeal and sincerity of the leaflet’s distributors. However, their suggested way to Heaven gives false hope in this life and will leave one sorely disappointed at The Judgment. Let us examine the leaflet’s plan:

1. If one does not admit he is a sinner, in need of God’s grace, he will never approach Him for salvation. So far, so good.
2. If one doesn’t believe in/trust Jesus as the Savior—the only One—he cannot be saved. Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). OK, so far.
3. One must confess with the mouth the faith that is in the heart. OK, but actually the point of “decision” is repentance.
4. One must also repent of his sins and turn to God to be saved. Here the leaflet comes up short, making no distinction between *repent* and *turn* and leaving the impression that forgiveness of sins is granted at the point of repentance.

#### Note the following:

*Repent* and *turn* in Acts 3:19 are different words with different meanings (unless the instructions are merely to repent and repent or turn and turn. *Repent* means to change one’s mind. *Turn* is a separate action meaning to change one’s life. This change must have a beginning point, which is the act of baptism (Rom. 6:4—“newness of life”). The same Peter who directed believers to “repent and be baptized” on Pentecost told them here to “repent and turn.” Did he preach different plans to different hearers? Absolutely not! Jesus has one plan of salvation for all, beginning in belief and concluding in (and not before) baptism (Mark 16:15–16).

Dub McClish, Denton, TX

Last weekend, the English golfer, Brian Davis showed that Golf is still a “gentleman’s game” despite the notoriety that Tiger Woods has brought to it. Davis was in a play-off with Jim Furyk to determine the winner in the Verizon Heritage Professional Golf Association tournament in Hilton Head, South Carolina .

This was the first time that Davis had been in a position to win a tournament. While aiming for the 18<sup>th</sup> green he hit the ball into a hazard. Rather than take a penalty drop that would have likely caused him to lose the play-off, he chose to play his shot out of the hazard. Following deliberation with his caddie, Davis played the ball and it landed about 30 feet from the hole. This would keep his hopes of winning alive.

However, what happened next is that showed Davis was a gentleman. He felt that something wasn’t right and he called a tournament official over and told him that, out of the corner of his eye, he thought he saw his club, almost imperceptibly, graze a reed in the hazard. The rule book states that neither a player or his club can touch a loose impediment. If he does, it is an automatic two-stroke penalty. The official reviews that tape in slow motion and confirmed Davis’ suspicion. Thus, by his honesty, since no one else had spotted it, he effectively gave himself a two-stroke penalty. This resulted in his losing the tournament and the more than \$400,000.00 in prize money.

Davis could have done what many do, and take the easy way out – after all no one else had seen it. Had he done so, he would have probably won the tournament and all of that money.

However, he didn’t. He did the right thing, the courageous thing, admitting his mistake and his responsibility even though it dashed his hopes of winning the tournament. Are we willing to admit our mistakes and our sins before God? If we want God to forgive us, we must be willing to confess our sins. John writes to Christians: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:7). We need to remember that, even though no one saw what Davis did, God did. God sees and knows when we sin against Him. Thus, if we are to receive His forgiveness, we must repent. Are you willing to “report” yourself when no one else has seen you, knowing that God has seen you? Let us have the courage to *“confess our sins”* that we might be forgiven.

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron’s sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Israel Butler has received the “Unsung Hero” award from University of South Carolina at Aiken for his work on the student paper and other activities. Congratulations Israel.

Donna Wilkes was not well and unable to be out Sunday.

Nolan Aaron had out patient eye surgery on Thursday and is doing well.

There will be a pot luck today following the morning services. Plan to stay and eat together.

### .....Wonderful Grace.....

I don’t fear the day before me  
For I know He won’t ignore me  
No matter what temptations I may face;  
Though the devil may assail me,  
I know He will never fail me  
For I’m covered by His Wonderful Grace!

Though my eyes be red and teary,  
And my body frail and weary,  
Still I know He’s prepared for me a Place;  
And I will not be diverted,  
For my soul has been converted  
And I’m covered by His Wonderful Grace!

If today I go to meet Him  
I am well prepared to greet Him,  
For I know He’s prepared for me a Place;  
My bags are packed, I’m good to go,  
As death I face it’s good to know  
That I’m covered by His Wonderful Grace!

.....H. L. Gradowith.....

(A new poem from Tim Smith under his pseudonym. It’s good to see him writing again although his health is still not good, keep him in your prayers. – K.J.C.)