

MY STORY, AND SOME THINGS I BELIEVE AND TEACH

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Personal Background.

I was saved in February, 1985 by reading a King James paperback New Testament that I found in a garbage can. Having some time on my hands, I started reading this book, wondering why it was discarded. At the time, I did not realize it was a New Testament. My attention was drawn especially to the Epistle to the Romans because of what I knew about history. I thought this was teaching on the Roman Empire, but after a short amount of reading I soon realized this was a very special book.

By chapter ten, I was kneeling and asking forgiveness of my God and Savior. I was twenty-five years old. I had lived a life mainly as a loner. I had traveled, went to various schools, being pretty much on my own since fifteen years of age. I had joined the Marine Corps a week after turning seventeen and lived that lifestyle for a few years.

Shortly after Jesus saved me I was moved by the Holy Ghost to stop swearing, speaking filthy things (jokes and the like), and to stop the consumption of women, tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Most people who knew me saw the dramatic change, but not many responded to my testimony of salvation and the power of the gospel. I did witness to many who knew the old me, but my relationship with these people did not last very long. Soon, I was associating instead with a few other believers.

My conversion happened in Los Angeles. Because of the open-mindedness of the people in this state and their liberal tendencies, people tolerated weirdness (such as a born-again believer) without serious reaction, and the believers I knew were not “fundamental” by any means. They, too, were liberal and open-minded; being evangelicals mostly. Because of these new associations I did learn some basics of Christianity. There were discussions of Calvinism (some believed that), charismatic gifts (some believed that), and other things. The “sanctification of the brethren” would not be something one would notice. Immodest dress, consumption of alcohol (and drugs), anger, threatening, and the like, were not uncommon among these believers. I do not doubt the salvation of these folks – I just believe they were not being trained in the right way.

I visited a few “churches” and even visited Grace Community Church a few times because a friend encouraged me to go. I listened from time-to-time to John MacArthur’s very popular radio program, and other religious programs. It was a long drive to that church (1 - 2 hours), so I did not attend but a few times. At the time I did not understand anything about faithful church attendance. As I continued to read the New Testament I understood the commandments and examples of baptism, and I asked someone at Grace Community Church to baptize me, which he did. (This was not scriptural baptism, however, but more on this later). What is interesting to note at this time, is that the man who immersed me did not know me at all, and that immersion in no way made me part of that church. Membership was not a factor in baptism. The night I was immersed there were about a dozen other candidates – people just lined up for it. There was no questioning or discipleship that I noticed. Although hundreds were at that service, I think I had only one friend attend.

Next Steps.

At that time I worked at Mattel Toys, which was a long commute from my home in La Puente. I met a man at work and we commuted together. He was a believer, and we lived only a few miles apart. He invited me to his church, though he rarely attended. That church was a small Southern Baptist church – Maple Grove Baptist Church.

I attended that church and was generous in my giving. (I gave as God had led, and though I did know about tithing I was probably giving more than the tithe.) The church people were nice; however I did not have close friends there. The people seemed to me to be involved in their own lives. To this day I cannot remember any person from that church that I even talked to very much. The preaching was weak and not always true. As I look back I do not remember any moving of God in me while there. My relationship with Christian friends – what we now call

“fellowship” – was pretty much non-existent. I do not remember being provoked by teaching or human relationships to change my life. I grew in sanctification regardless, because God’s Spirit moved on me. I was taught by God as I read my Bible. I was accepted as a member of Maple Grove but was not baptized – the pastor accepted my evangelical immersion ☹. I attended regularly and even brought visitors.

There were other “churches” I visited during my first year a new creature. They varied radically. In short, I did not sense in any of these that this was where God wanted me. As I think back I remember attending an evangelical church, four Baptist churches (one where H. L. Hymers was pastor, another was a large moderate church, one really liberal, and Maple Grove), a Jewish church, a Universalist church ☹, a charismatic church, and Gene Scott’s Faith Center. There are probably others but that was over twenty-five years ago, so I do not have full recollection.

Move to Rhode Island.

In the summer of 1986 I moved to Rhode Island where I took employment at Hasbro, Inc. I did not know anyone there. For a while I lived in a hotel room, and then I moved to a house and lived alone. I will say that I had progressed in my Christian walk to the point where I was well-behaved, led a clean life, was somewhat evangelistic. My relationship with God was very good, and I tried to serve him from my limited understanding.

Arriving in Rhode Island I looked for a church to attend. Neither knowing the area nor much about denominations, I visited First Baptist Church of Pawtucket. Although this church was by no means a bible-preaching church – the pastor wore robes and had very strange messages – I chose it because of my previous experience in attending a Baptist Church. I knew enough of the Bible to know I was not charismatic, and the evangelical movement did not really move me in a right way. Now, it seemed, even some Baptists were pretty off-base.

One thing profitable from visiting First Baptist (I think I went there twice) was that I met a friendly couple. They were kind, helpful, and charismatic; but they attended First Baptist Church (for what reason I cannot remember, but it seemed a contradiction to me). They understood right away that I was dissatisfied with the church (probably because I was saved!). They compelled me to visit a Pentecostal church close by, and in spite of my resistance, I agreed to go once. Once was enough. Some woman interrupted the preaching with a tambourine so I could not hear. Frankly, I did not sense the power of God in that place.

During the short relationship with this couple (I cannot remember their names), the husband mentioned a few times that I would probably like “Mark’s church.” The wife was against it, but by God’s grace they told me where the church met.

The Light Dawns.

I experienced God’s faithfulness in my fellowship with him. Work was fine, but I did not associate much with the folks there. I was consecrated to God as a young man as much as I could be. I was not discouraged or frustrated in my search for a church – I knew God would provide. Although I knew what I did *not* want by experience, I could not put into words what I was looking for. But I knew God was still working.

My first visit to Colonial Baptist Church was a tremendous blessing. The church met in a nursery school using metal folding chairs. The primary colors of the wall and furniture seemed so different than most sanctuaries. Even with Charlie Brown on the wall and toys all around us, the power of God was here. The pastor, Mark Jacobs, had started the church about 10 years previously. After 10 years, there were about 6 people on a Wednesday night – the pastor, his wife and daughter, another young man, and a couple of students from a college (not counting the “Peanuts” gang). Pawtucket is an interesting place.

This service was the first time I heard true Spirit-led Bible preaching! I immediately knew this was the right place for me. I informed the pastor after the service that I planned to be a part of this church. He had heard such things before from other people and, not knowing me, did not put a lot of stock in those words.

From that point forward I was faithful to every service. I was excited to be in church. I gave my tithes and offerings. I set up the church for services as we had to put all the stuff away after every service. I was faithful on visitation and other church functions. Colonial Baptist Church was a great blessing.

I was scripturally baptized on New Year' Eve 1986, approximately 4 months after arriving in Rhode Island, and almost two years after I was saved.. There was snow on the ground and no heat for the baptismal water.

By this time the pastor had showed me the right way of baptism (he did not accept my evangelical immersion ☺), the truth on the King James, and about the church that Jesus built. Mark Jacobs had been trained at Massillon Baptist Temple, ordained there, and sent out by a church in RI (Ocean State Baptist Church). Bro. Jacobs ended up returning to Ohio, and he pastored a church there at this time.

Call to Preach.

About a year later I surrendered to the preaching ministry. I was in good fellowship with the Father, and I was willing to do anything for the Lord – except one small thing. Seeing the trials of my pastor and the struggles he lived with, I would have done *anything* for Lord – *but* be a pastor. But that was what the Lord wanted. I resisted for a few months, but eventually submitted the call. My pastor was in total agreement. I know now that pastors many times see things before the people do. It is called discernment.

Marriage and Move.

Having surrendered to the ministry I knew I needed to be the husband of one wife. I sought my pastor's counsel on this. Through the Lord's leading I met my lovely wife Suzanne. We were married December 1987. She has been a dear help, a friend, a great mother and Christian since the day I met here.

Seeking for a place to attend school, God showed us that we were to move to Louisiana. We did so in the summer of 1998, and we joined Baptist Tabernacle – the same place where I attended Louisiana Baptist Seminary. I remember my pastor there, J. G. Tharpe, saying that I asked him so many questions before joining, that he thought he was joining my church. I was ordained and sent out of that church in spring, 1991, when I accepted the call to Rhode Island. We started Historic Baptist Church in May, 1991. I have been here by God's grace since that time.

During the few years in Louisiana, besides faithful attendance, visitation, and attending school; I worked 40 hour weeks at Poulan/Weed Eater. We had three kids, a house and a work to do. I was a church staff member, and the bus director and junior church pastor, until we moved the busses to a different work; then I taught an adult Sunday school. We did the bus visitation on Saturdays, drove the bus on Sundays, taught the bus kids, and then helped start mission churches in the afternoon. We attended most special meeting held by sister churches. I think you could say we were busy, but that looks like the easy life compared to what we do today.

We had three children in Shreveport and the Lord gave us six more while in Rhode Island. I was hoping for twelve and at least one set of twins, but so far God has not granted me the twins. My wife miscarried three times, so we may have the twelve (Genesis 2:7). We shall know when we are present with the Lord.

Historic Baptist Church.

We moved back to Rhode Island in March, 1991. That was the last place we thought God would move us to. We organized the church in May as a mission church from Baptist Tabernacle. We baptized a few so that we could organize rightly. We had about eight folks. Twenty years later we have about 30 - 40 on Wednesday nights. We have had attendance and membership up and down over the twenty years. However, the validation for the work here is not based on numbers, but on God's call and the church's authority. We are here to please God and do the work the way he commands.

God is good all the time. I have been a partaker of his goodness. God has led me in paths that opened my understanding to many things. I am one who cares more what God thinks than what man thinks. God has led me to good men and good schools. He has faithfully directed my life. I am happy God chose to use me.

As it stands now I have a scriptural baptism from a solid church administered by a preacher from Massillon Baptist Temple. I was trained mainly by this man. He is and was a faithful preacher of the Bible. I was ordained by Baptist Tabernacle and graduated the seminary there.

By God's grace we have started a few churches. We have trained a many people. We have ordained a few men. I have been taught by J. G. Tharpe – a man with 17 doctorates (I have only 3 doctorates) and 50 years pastoral experience. I was ordained and sent out by Baptist Tabernacle, when “Mr. Baptist” of Louisiana was pastor. My Baptist pedigree and Baptist foundation is beyond any reproach. I know what I believe, and why, and how to show it from the Bible. We go to the testimony of God and many wise men can stand aside – yeah, let God be true, but every man a liar. We are Landmarkists, we are successionists. We are independent Baptists. Why, because, contrary to what men say, *that is what the Bible teaches*. There are many who scorn these things, and you will notice a lot of men writing in their defense, but not with much scripture. The Bible is plain: John was sent, Jesus was sent, the apostles were sent, Barnabas was sent, and Paul was sent. Paul commanded Titus to ordain elders in every city of Crete. Baptism in the New Testament was administered by sent men with authority to do so. Those who bristle at the mention of authority probably do so because they lack it. But we who have it, teach it rightly – and pass it on by the grace of God. We follow the New Testament pattern, and do not make excuses why it cannot be done. We are not the first, and we are not the last – we are just a link in that unbroken chain of succession☺.

Iron Sharpeneth Iron.

At this point I want to document my relationship with three men who were instrumental in my Christian call. We all have saints who have helped us. Usually, we do not understand the full impact until later in life. Allow me to elaborate on these three:

Mark A. Jacobs, Pastor

Pastor Jacobs was called to preach in his early teens. He has been probably the most faithful and sanctified man I have even known. His lips never touched tobacco, alcohol, or a woman who was not his wife, daughter, or mother. He graduated from Massillon Baptist Temple's Bible College in the 1970's. He was trained under Bruce Cummons, and went to his school. Brother Jacobs knew all about the KJV, church planting, and fundamental Baptist teachings. He has been as straight an arrow as any man I ever met. He studied hours each week for his messages, went door-to-door multiple times a week, preached “machine-gun style,” and worked very hard. Mark has a lot of patience.

Mark started Colonial Baptist Church as a mission out of Ocean State Baptist Church around 1976 (I am not sure of the exact date). He faithfully pastored that church until the early 90's when he moved back to Massillon to pastor the church from which he came. Bro. Mark told me how he loved that church, and the only reason he would ever leave is if his church in Ohio wanted him to take it over. That is what happened.

It was at Colonial Baptist Church that I was baptized, called to preach, trained in church planting, taught the Baptist Way, educated about the KJV, soul-winning, etc. We used that church's Constitution and By-Laws as the basis for Historic Baptist Church. We used to joke about “Mark the perfect man...” There was a lot of truth in that.

Because of Pastor Jacob's faithfulness I am what I am today. Had he not worked in Rhode Island at the very time I arrived I doubt I would be in the ministry today. Through Bro. Jacobs God showed me the ministry in Rhode Island.

James “Jimmy” Gid Tharpe, “Mr. Baptist” (1930 – 2008)

Pastor Tharpe was referred to “Mr. Baptist of Louisiana.” Many called him “Bro. Jimmy.” I usually referred to him as Pastor Tharpe.

Those who knew this man never forgot him. He has a style that I had never seen before or after. At first, I was a little uncomfortable around him because of his persona, charisma, attractiveness, friendliness, humor, wisdom, wit and transparency. One thing about Bro. Tharpe – and there are many – is that he could preach “the bark of a tree.” The windows rattled when he raised his voice. I remember one message he preached on Mother’s Day to all the ladies in their nice outfits. He preached how they were lazy if they did not cook for their family. I remember him at a conference on the TR hugging his HUGE King James Bible and yelling at the top of his voice, “Don’t ever take away my King James Bible!”

Born in the small town of Sibley, Louisiana; he moved to Missionary Baptist Tabernacle in Shreveport in 1956, where he pastored 47 years until he died. It grieved him so much when he left his first church to pastor Baptist Tabernacle that he never wanted to repeat the action. Although originally ABA, he became an independent Baptist. He used to say, “I am Baptist by *conviction*, and independent by *eviction*.” He was pretty much asked to leave the ABA for his independent spirit.

I remember how the church there bought Pastor Tharpe a new Lincoln Continental every two years on his church anniversary. He drove mostly as he did not like to fly – He would remark how Jesus said, “*Lo, I am with you always....*” One anniversary Sunday after just being presented with a brand new car, I was to ride with him to a special meeting. I was trying to finish my cup of coffee before getting in his new car, as I did not want to chance damaging the interior. When prompted you get in, I responded that it would only be a second until I finished my coffee. I remember his response: “Get on in, Bro, Nash – I won’t own a car you can drink coffee in!” I have often used that comment when other people say to me a similar thing.

Bro. Tharpe had distilled his remaining life’s desire to work for the Lord into three areas: Training preachers, starting churches, and publishing scriptures. I took those as my purpose also. It is on our church sign. Our church was the 51st mission out of Baptist Tabernacle. Bro. Tharpe had a goal of 100. I think he made that goal.

Donald McLeod Fraser (1926 – 2003) Bowie, TX. Visionary for B.P.S.

Don M. Fraser was a very influential man who had a lot of impact in the last half of the 20th century. Bro. Tharpe contended that there will be more souls in heaven as a result of D. M. Fraser’s efforts, than from anyone else’s in these last decades. Literally, tens of thousands *tons* of scriptures have been distributed worldwide because of this man’s teaching and efforts. It would do well for a student to research the works of this man. Time and space does not permit me to do his history justice. Many can tell of his work in B.P.S. (Bearing Precious Seed or Baptist Publishing Scripture). I would expect most printing churches today are in the work as a result of this man’s efforts.

Bro. Fraser was a missionary out of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth. His father was also a missionary out of that church when J. Frank Norris was pastor. Bro. Fraser’s work was based in Bowie, TX. He was a faithful servant of God and a loving husband until the day he left this earth. During his life work he used typewriters and hand-writing for the multitude of papers and letters he wrote. His day was before computers were so widespread.

I first met Don Fraser at Baptist Tabernacle. He and Pastor Tharpe wanted me to get involved in the scripture work. This is one of the best things to enter my life. Pastor Tharpe had asked Don Fraser to develop scriptural curricula for Baptist Christian University International back in the early 1970’s. After nearly thirty years of work, and tons of scriptures, Bro. Fraser turned over the complete program. He had struggled toward the end as he knew he was missing something. At last he understood, and completed the package. He turned over the program to Pastor Tharpe in 1989, saying his work was done and he had fulfilled his commitment to Pastor Tharpe. He was now going to concentrate on caring for his wife, who was not doing well physically. I was in the pastor’s office at that time, and Bro. Tharpe, when handed the finished curricula by Don Fraser, handed it to me, without even setting it down. He asked me if I would be willing to take the work over. Of course I agreed. I was trained to obey those that have the rule.

From that time I made several visits to Bowie so that Bro. Fraser could help me understand better what the program was. To be candid, many things he said I did not fully understand. I was confused as he talked way over my head. Thankfully, I wrote what he said so I could use it for future reference. I typed the notes and gave a copy to my pastor, with my intentions. They were approved.

As I grew older I better understand the things Don Fraser spoke of. He had a lot of wisdom and understanding.

When I moved to Rhode Island I tried to keep in touch with Don, but he was pretty much occupied with his wife. At one point he sent me boxes of all that he had in relation to B.P.S. He told me that I “had it all.”

I have not been as effective as Don Fraser has. He was a giant, I am barely a grasshopper. What I have done though, is try to teach and preserve the curricula since I received it. For twenty-some years I have been teaching the curricula and have found it is a great work. Don Fraser realized our success as servants of the Most High is based mainly on our obedience to and teaching of “Love Commandment Doctrine.”

SOME THINGS I BELIEVE AND TEACH

As God brought me along, he exposed me to many things. I see the guiding hand of God and his wisdom in steering me through the paths I have trod. There is no way I could have or would have planned my journey as it has turned out. I know that it is in no wise over. I am thankful for where I am and I look forward to the places God will take me.

In the ministry, one hears a variety of thoughts. Because of my experience with various religious ideas, I purposed to “prove all things” by the Bible before accepting any of them as absolutely true. I found myself not readily accepting as true what men said unless it was thoroughly taught in the scriptures. In addition, I do not automatically discount something just because it was not widely accepted. I try to honestly consider the things that good men say.

I found myself to be somewhat as an anomaly – not many men go to the law and testimony before following what a man says. Many will blindly follow a man because of his personality.

I see this as a fault in a lot of good men – following blindly what some man said simply he quoted a few verses, or said it with a lot of enthusiasm, or because they had a lot of respect for the man. In contrast, I have seen men scorn an idea simply because they *think* they know better (their mind is made up already). Well, a man is just a man. Let God be true, but every man a liar. When I am judged for what I have taught in my life, it is not going to be for things I simply accepted as true from some preacher – it will be because the Lord himself showed it to be true by the scriptures. I purpose to go by *his word* in all things, lightly considering what other men *say*. Let not this be interpreted to discount human teachers – they are most necessary, and it is God’s method (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8). I am simply saying to check out things for yourself to prove whether they are true or not. To err is human.

You see, any *man* can teach any *thing* from the Bible. He simply has to *emphasize* the verses that speak to his purpose, and *ignore* the balancing verses. I once preached a message illustrating this point – how we should drink wine, marry strange women, divorce at liberty, kill, lie, steal, etc. – all using scripture to support my contentions.

Some are confused by the differences of Bible “interpretations” from one religious group to another. To me, it is rarely an issue of “interpretation” – in mainly an issue of “emphasis.” Charismatics emphasize spiritual gifts; Romanists emphasize tradition over the scriptures; Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Calvinists emphasize other writings above the Bible. So what do Baptists emphasize? I have seen that vary from “running busses” to standards of dress. For me, I want to emphasize *what Jesus emphasized* – and so I stay with the New Testament for my rule of faith and practice. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He received sinners, and ate with them. He would leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness to search for that lost sheep. He taught that loving God and your neighbour are the greatest commandments. He glorified the Father, was a servant to the end, and preached the word

of God. He was not a religious hypocrite and cared not what they thought – he just wanted to see all people repent and be saved.

So, different people emphasize different things in their ministry. Baptists in general agree on the major things, but also graciously disagree on some details. As one man said, if you get ten Baptists in a room, you will have a dozen opinions. Baptists are independent, fundamental, and narrow-minded by nature. If they were not so, they would be evangelicals, liberals, or modernists. Many times they think they know it all and think anyone who disagrees is wrong. They have an opinion and make sure it is known. They even find scripture to back it up.

At the same time, we need to realize anyone can argue anything. Students of debate know that they can “take either side” in a debate. If a man wants to be contrary, he can find scripture (however misapplied) to contradict. So, if I preach a man should not kill, someone can quote “an eye for an eye.” And if I say, vengeance belongs to the Lord, someone else can say, God has established the powers that be to execute judgment. And if I say that certain should be judged harshly, another can say that we ought to have mercy. But in the end, there is a truth to be found and embraced.

My hope is that the reader will simply read and consider what I say.

The list that follows will somewhere contradict what a reader believes. I do not believe there are two men that agree fully in all things. We can agree on certain things, and we can disagree on others: but I do not want to be disagreeable, contentious, insulting, condescending, and the like. I write these things for myself mainly, and then for my family and the church the Lord allows me to pastor.

Since I expect every reader will find something he disagrees with, allow me to say this sweetly: write your own paper and put it out there, and let others comment. I answer to my Saviour, not you, dear reader. But my hope is that some will at least consider what I have written and be challenged to prove what they believe or disprove me.

As one *learns* truth in life, he *will* change and grow. If a reader has already attained and has no room to learn or grow, then he has no use for what I have written. But what I have written, besides a simple statement, contains also a “cut to the chase” argument that I think cannot be gainsaid. Some things are admittedly hard to prove, but when compared to the alternatives, I think they shine forth as the best position. So, if you disagree, please use scripture to overcome my conclusions, and let’s not attack each other. I am no tough guy, but I am not fully sanctified either

Here are some notable things I believe and teach:

Prove *all* things.

Number one on my list is a real peeve of mine. I find so many that believe this or that because they follow a man or read a book. One can learn something from every person he meets; but don’t make the man infallible – I mean, there are even Catholics who challenge the “infallible” Pope on certain things.

I have seen some Baptists follow a man or school more obsequiously than a *moony* follows Rev. Moon. Some peoples would line up for the Kool-Aid if their man said to do so. Where this comes from, I do not know. I believe God gave me a brain and a Book, and then holds me personally responsible for what I do and teach.

I tell people: “Eat the meat, spit out the bones, and *DON’T DRINK THE KOOLAID!*”

Every believer should have a little invisible yellow “warning light” that blinks when he hears something he has not proved out for himself through private study and prayer – not because a man showed him x, y, and z with Bible verses. JW’s to Catholics do that. Take the whole counsel of God and try to argue all sides. Think “CAUTION,” “CAUTION,” “CAUTION,” when things, however popular, are stated as fact. What a man believes affects his life.

One learns more by listening than talking. If you are sure, then stand for the truth – hold fast that which is good. As you listen to the other side, you can try to understand how some people view things. You will learn how to better show the way.

If I were to ask you, to what school you would send your kids or young preachers; what would your answer be? Your answer would tell me a lot. It would tell me who you follow. If you were to ask me that question, I would say it is their own local church where they ought to be taught – the pillar and ground of the truth.

Think for yourselves. Learn the proper way to study. Ask a lot of questions. Seek God for understanding.

There is Only *One* Perfect Bible in English – The King James Version.

This truth is hard to prove to a scorner. Many of us have learned the internal, external, and historical reasons why the KJV and the Majority or Received Text is the right text. Some of us may have realistically researched such things like the various revisions and corrections to the editions, how Erasmus was a Catholic, that the Masorites came along late in history, and that process by which God preserved his inspired word was accomplished through imperfect men. All this may add weight to one side or other of the argument as to how perfect our Bible is. Some have realized the truth, and know the KJV *is* the word of God. Others must appeal to men's intellect to find the word of God. Just remember, "the world by wisdom knew not God."

If you are honest, you would agree you only can have one of three opinions:

- 1 The KJV *is* the inspired, infallible, and perfect word of God for the English-speaking people. That it needs no revision or changing – just more study and reproduction. Every word is pure. It is perfect *as it is*.
- 2 The KJV *is not* the word of God, that it was written by men for one of many purposes.
- 3 The KJV *contains* the word of God, either his thoughts and ideas, or a mixture of good and bad translations. It is one of many translations, and as it faithfully translates the manuscripts it can be considered the word of God (of course, we shall need some man to point out where these places are, and are not). A few who hold to this position would also think other religions have their holy books, too; and they all are trying to reveal God's word in their own way.

There is one way an honest person can find the truth. And just as God made Dagon bow before his ark, God will make any false god bow before his word – he has magnified his word above all his name.

Take the KJV and whatever other book or version and set them side-by-side. Pray God through the Holy Ghost shows you which he would have you to believe (John 16:13). Read the verses as listed in our verse comparison chart. If you are truly saved, the Spirit will guide you unto all truth. (If you are lost, the most important thing is that you receive Jesus Christ.)

To the man who is a textual critic, your agenda blinds you. All I can say is that you are putting some man over the Bible rather than the other way around. Your authority as to what the Bible should read is based on words told you or read, and not you trusting the words God put down in a Book.

For those who say that no Bible is perfect, you are speaking contrary to what God has said – for every word of God is pure (Proverbs 30:5, 6).

The Salvation of Souls.

The most important duty we have in this life is to the Saviour Jesus Christ: first, to make sure we ourselves are truly born again, then to make sure our family is, then to reach out to those around us.

The Saviour came to seek and to save that which was lost. He asked what a man would give in exchange for his soul. He asked what profit it would be if a man gained the whole world and lost his soul.

Jesus carefully showed us how all heaven rejoices when a sinner repents. We see the value of a man's soul in that Jesus suffered a very terrible death in order to save a person from the destruction of hell. That is how important souls are to God.

However, one cannot use the work of soul-winning to justify not living a holy life or staying out of church. Neither can one use his evangelistic accomplishments to defend not following the New Testament in doctrine and faith. We must have both good doctrine and evangelistic work. This is what Paul told Timothy.

In respect to the gospel of salvation, it is defined as the death, burial and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). A person is saved when he believes the gospel and confesses Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-13). Repentance is the change of heart from believing one thing to believing on Jesus (the truth), and turning from idols to the living God. When someone truly believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, they have in fact *repented*.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, but godly sorrow alone does not save. Many repent (or are sorry) they got caught and are reaping for their sin; but this repentance, if not directed to believing on the Saviour for the forgiveness of sins, will not save the soul.

Pastor Tharpe said that every ministry of the church should have as its purpose the redemption of souls. Every message we preach should never assume every hearer is saved, and always show the way to salvation. Prove your own salvation. The devil causes some who are saved to think they are lost, and some who are lost to think they are saved. People need to be reminded often of how they lived and thought were before they knew Jesus Christ.

The Church is *Only* a Local Assembly, *Not* Universal or Invisible.

It amazes me sometime how people have latched onto this erroneous idea – that when they got saved they were made members of some universal or invisible church. There is no verse in scripture that says that.

A church is no more invisible than a synagogue is invisible, or a congress is invisible or an association is invisible. A church is no more universal than water is universal, than a rock is universal, or a piece of bread is universal.

The word *church* means “universal” or “invisible,” no more than the word *baptize* means to “sprinkle” or “pour.” But that is usually not enough for some.

Do this: read each passage in the New Testament that mentions the word *church*. It is plain the Bible speaks of a local assembly.

Do this: read what *the Founder* of the church said, both in Matthew (the first places) and in Revelation (the last places). Jesus shows us it is a local assembly.

Some say because the church is *Christ's body*, it makes it invisible or universal. That is a curious argument. Jesus, speaking of his body, when he said “destroy this temple,” was not speaking about an invisible or universal body. When he talked about “this is my body” when he gave bread to the disciples at the last supper, he was not talking about invisible or universal bread. But now, all of a sudden, when someone reads that the church is *his* body, they *leap* to a conclusion – *without any scriptural foundation* – that this is a universal, invisible body.

The scripture we find to define what he meant is found in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians. He is the head of the church, even as the husband is the head of the wife. The head shows authority, ownership, and creator. Jesus said, I will build *MY* church (Matthew 16:18) – and the church is *HIS* body. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband... (1 Corinthians 7:4). The church, *which is the bride of Christ*, is betrothed to him, and belongs to him. He purchased it with his own blood.

Some say the church was started at Pentecost – but the New Testament says Jesus built it between Matthew 16 and Matthew 18. He *added* to it in Acts 2.

Some say the church is likened the kingdom of God – but no scripture says that! If anything, it is likened to the kingdom of heaven (read Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 completely) – but to do that will throw some men’s theology on its head. But it is true, none the less.

Some say the church cannot be a local body because it disappeared somewhere in the last two thousand years – but Jesus said the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus promised to be with the church he started “even unto the end of the world.”

Some say, there is no “*unbroken chain*” of churches from Jerusalem to the present. Well, when I see there was a Siamese cat in ancient Egypt and one today, do I say there is no unbroken chain of that Siamese breed? One would think that to be ridiculous.

Some say, prove it. Well I may be able to trace a certain animal’s breed back a few hundred years – *and identify a group of people zealous to keep the breed’s purity* – but just because I can’t supply a document here and there, that doesn’t prove there was no continuation. Similarly with the churches through history, I find a group of people zealous to maintain the proper line, and I see in the New Testament the only way churches were started, what they looked like, and how they operated; I conclude the line is there regardless if I can trace it. But, if one does proper research, he will find some people *have* traced the Baptists all the way back to Jerusalem. One should do his homework before he opines!

Show me in the New Testament (not writings of men) how the churches were started. Show me where one was started from nothing – you will not find it. What you do find is Romans 10:15 – And how shall they preach, except they be sent? You find Acts 13:1-4 where Barnabas and Saul are sent forth by Holy Ghost *and* the church.

Here is a simple concept: Show me a church started like the New Testament teaches, with the doctrine the New Testament teaches; and I will see a New Testament church. Show me something else, and I cannot say it is a New Testament church.

John Clarke Started a Baptist Church *Before* Roger Williams did.

John Clarke established a community based on religious reasons when he purchased Newport Island (then called Aquidneck) on March 7, 1638.

This is what he wrote in the Portsmouth Compact (the document is still available):

The 7th day of the first month (March) 1638.
We whose names are underwritten do hereby solemnly
in the presence of Jehovah incorporate ourselves
into a Bodie Politick and as He shall help, will submit
our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord
Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
and to all those perfect and most absolute laws
of His given in His Holy Word of truth, to be
guided and judged thereby.

Exod: 24. 3.4.
2 Chron: 11. 3.
2 Kings: 11.17.

See the images below of this Historical Document:

2nd Page 7th Day of 1638 + 17th Nov 1638.

We whose names are vnderwritten do give solemnly
in the presence of God our selves
into a Bodie Politick and shall agree with sub
mit our persons lives and estates unto our Lord
Jesus Christ the King of Kings & Lords of Lords
and to all his perfect & most absolute lawes
of his given us in his holy word of truth, to be
guides & Judges here.

1638-24-3-4
26-11-3
2-11-17

2nd Page 7th Day of 1638 + 17th Nov 1638.

We whose names are vnderwritten do give solemnly
in the presence of God our selves
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guides & Judges here.

1638-24-3-4
26-11-3
2-11-17

- William Coddington
- John Clarke
- William Hutchinson
- John Gorton
- William Gismuth
- Samuel Willcox
- John Norton
- John Benson
- Edward Southwick
- Thomas Saultage
- William Dyer
- William Brewster
- Philip Blinman
- John Walker
- Richard Carter
- William Brewster
- Edward Southwick
- Demery Bull
- Randall Hondloa
- John Clarke
- John Gorton
- John Benson
- John Walker

PORTSMOUTH COMPACT, MARCH 7, 1638

It is well known and agreed upon that John Clarke was a Baptist even before he left England.

In a sermon made by Rev. John Callender in 1739, he stated the reasons for planting the Aquidneck Colony (emphasis added):

We must remark that this Colony (Rhode Island) was a settlement and plantation for religion and conscience sake. The first planters of this Colony, and Island, fled not from religion, order or good government, but to have liberty to worship God and enjoy their own opinions and beliefs. We find that religion and conscience began the Colony. The posterity of a people, who were guided to this happy Island, as a safe retreat from the stormy winds, as a place of freedom to practice every branch of religion in. Our fathers established a mutual liberty of conscience. *** Liberty of conscience was never more fully enjoyed than here. *** His memory (Dr. John Clarke's) is deserving of lasting honor for his efforts towards establishing the first government in the world, which gave to all equal civil and religious liberty. He was the original proprietor of the settlement on the Island and one of its ablest legislators. No character in New England is of purer fame than John Clarke.

It is obvious to any historian on the subject that the Baptist John Clarke and his group desired to worship God freely. How likely is it that John Clarke and his fellows worshipped God as a called out assembly shortly after settling in Aquidneck?

Roger Williams, although a man with many good qualities and a believer in thought liberty, was immersed at Providence by Ezekiel Holliman in *late* 1638 (at the earliest) or early 1639. It is hard to know exactly when he was immersed as he kept few records. But we have documents of Governor Winthrop who wrote that Holliman, who arrived late in 1638, "baptized" Williams. (Incidentally, the church bell at Providence Baptist has inscribed a constitution date of 1639.) See the history book pages below:

ROGER WILLIAMS.

165

times, Mrs. Hutchinson.* We may, not unreasonably, suppose, that Mr. Williams, on further study of the Scriptures, and finding that several of the colonists had embraced Baptist principles, was himself convinced, that he had not been baptized. He accordingly resolved to obey the Saviour's command, and unite in a church, with such persons as might be willing to join him.

A difficulty now presented itself. They had been educated in the Episcopal church, and were accustomed to regard the clergy with respect, as the only legal administrators of the Christian ordinances. Mr. Williams himself seems to have strongly felt this difficulty; and his scruples on this point, probably, had some effect on his subsequent conduct. He had not himself been immersed, and it seemed a reasonable conclusion, that he could not, with propriety, baptize his brethren, till he had received baptism. There was no other minister in New-England, who would have baptized him, if he had made an application, and his banishment from Massachusetts had been suspended.

The most obvious expedient, in their circumstances, was adopted. Mr. Ezekiel Holliman† was selected to baptize Mr. Williams, who then baptized the administrator and ten others.‡ This event occurred in March, 1638-9. Thus was founded the first Baptist church in America, and the

* Winthrop, vol. i. p. 293. Under date of March, 1638-9, he says: "At Providence, things grew still worse; for a sister of Mrs. Hutchinson, the wife of one Scott, being infected with anabaptistry, and going last year to live at Providence, Mr. Williams was taken (or rather emboldened) by her to make open profession thereof, and accordingly was re-baptized by one Holliman, a poor man, late of Salem. Then Mr. Williams re-baptized him and some ten more. They also denied the baptizing of infants, and would have no magistrates."

† Governor Winthrop (vol. i. p. 293) calls Mr. Holliman "a poor man," which Hubbard, (338) in copying, alters to a "mean fellow." But Mr. Benedict says, that he was a man of "gifts and piety," and that he was chosen an assistant to Mr. Williams. Backus says, "after the year 1650, I find him more than once a Deputy from the town of Warwick in the General Court."—Vol. i. p. 106.

‡ The first twelve members are named by Benedict, (vol. i. p. 473.) Roger Williams, Ezekiel Holliman, William Arnold, William Harris, Stukely Westcott, John Green, Richard Waterman, Thomas James, Robert Cole, William Carpenter, Francis Weston, and Thomas Olney.

15

seem, from any objection to them in themselves, but on the ground that they were too frequent. Verin's conduct was treated as an infringement of freedom of conscience, and he was disfranchised.¹ Winthrop adds that some of the congregation at Providence would have gone further, and wished to divorce Verin's wife and assign her to some other man who should use her better.

The difficulty with Verin may have made the settlers feel the need of some definite ecclesiastical organization.

Formation of a Baptist Church. About the end of 1638 there seems to have been an influx of Baptists from Massachusetts to Providence. Prominent among them were one Ezekiel Holyman and Mrs. Scott, a sister-in-law of Mrs. Hutchinson. They confirmed any leaning which Williams already had towards Baptist, or, as they were then called, Anabaptist tenets. He was formally baptized by Holyman, and then administered the same rite in turn to Holyman and ten others.² This has been generally looked on as the establishment of the first Baptist Church in America.

Winthrop tells of these proceedings, not indeed with explicit condemnation, but with an undertone of contempt, and adds that Williams and those who thought

Now, both these events are agreed upon by both sides: John Clarke established the colony in March 1638, and Roger Williams was baptized late 1638 or early 1639. The purpose of Roger Williams' move to Providence was not for religious liberty, or even to establish a colony, much less a church. (In fact, some able historians question whether Roger Williams started that church at all – the Providence church being started with Wickenden, Brown, Olney and company in 1652. Brown University was founded there, "because it was the home lot of Chad Brown, the first minister of the Baptist Church.") In his own words, Roger Williams wrote:

My soul's desire was to do the natives good, and to that end to have their language (which I afterwards printed) and therefore desired not to be troubled with English company. (Roger Williams, Nov. 17, 1677.)

Additionally, Thomas Bicknell wrote:

In religious concerns and conscience freedom, the realm of Mr. Williams' accepted supremacy, much could be said, little will be. Roger Williams came to Providence an ordained minister of the Orthodox Congregational faith. In 1639, he was immersed by Ezekiel Holliman, a lay member of the Baptist order from Salem, and united with eleven other Baptists, in the formation of a church. Three or four months later, questioning the validity of his baptism by a lay-man rather than a

priest, he withdrew from the Baptists and became, as he styled himself a “Seeker,” for the rest of his life. As a “Seeker” he was amenable to no sect, outside the pale of all, and, having no accepted standard of belief, could not reasonably criticize others. “In Roger Williams, independency had, in 1639, become Seekerism, the *ne plus ultra* of religious individualism.” (Richman). Little account appears of Mr. Williams as a religious teacher, after 1640. There is no valid ground for claiming Mr. Williams as the founder of the First Baptist Church of Providence or of his being its first minister. Judas Iscariot was a disciple of Jesus for about three years but he has never been called one of the founders of the Christian church. Mr. Williams renounced his baptism after an experience of four months with men of little knowledge in church or state, and then styles himself a “Seeker” and is claimed as the founder of that sect in England. It is a travesty of history to call Mr. Williams a Baptist, when he did not pass the probationary stage for membership. From 1644 to 1652, he seems to have dwelt at his trading house at Narragansett, as a neighbor of Richard Smith and the Narragansett tribe of Indians.

It is difficult to discover Mr. Williams’ attitude as to conscience freedom at Providence for we find no declaration from him by lip or pen as to the matter. We find the terms “liberty of conscience,” and “distressed consciences” in the writings of that day, but these terms are too “vague, ambiguous” and fugitive to command serious attention, except to call attention to what seems to have been Mr. Williams’ personal attitude as to the matter of conscience freedom. In his early life, Mr. Williams made the individual conscience superior to the community conscience. When such a notion prevails, there can be no law, no courts, no magistracy, as was the case in Providence from 1636 to 1651, and even later. It was the period of anarchy, when every man was free to act without legal or civic restraint. (Thomas W. Bicknell, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke.*)

Now, here are the two logical options and their conclusions:

- 1 If one takes a fundamental stand, and says a church must be started with baptized disciples, or a man sent with authority; then we can conclude Williams had no authority to baptize, being an Episcopal priest. John Clarke, in contrast, came over as a Baptist, and settled with Baptists. So regardless of when Roger Williams organized anything, it wasn’t a New Testament church. And, regardless of when John Clarke organized a church, it was done properly – a man, already a baptized Baptist, who associated with the Baptists of Holland before coming to the new world. This would be our position. It is obvious John Clarke started a New Testament church and Roger Williams did not.
- 2 Now, if we shall grant to our more liberal brethren, that anyone congregating that “believes” certain Baptist fundamentals can be called a church (and we do this for arguments sake only); can anyone deny that some of the group in Newport assembled as a called out assembly – a church? I mean, from the tone of John Clarke’s writings, can anyone suggest this “Bodie Politick,” who submitted themselves to Jesus Christ, did not gather at least one Sunday in the year 1638 to worship the Lord and hear preaching? How unreasonable the argument would be, with a liberal definition of what a church is, that some in this group in Newport did not form a church. Anyone who contends that these men (read their backgrounds) who moved to Rhode Island – because they supported the concept of “a free church in a free state” – would wait for over a year to organize a church, and not immediately engage in church worship; is speaking, I think, in willful ignorance. In fact, C. E. Barrows, writing of Clarke, said, “In March, 1638, he with his friends settled on this island. While almost continuously busy in laying the foundations of the future commonwealth, we find that he at once made religious service a permanent duty.”

I like what Thomas W. Bicknell wrote in his book, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke*:

Dr. Clarke’s convictions as to the rights of the individual conscience in religious concerns were clear and well established. He was also clear and strong as to full liberty in civil affairs. For these

reasons he at once allied himself with the Hutchinson party on his arrival in Boston, and therefore was refused a residence and disarmed, with others, by the order of the General Court.

We here note one of those remarkable events in history where there is a conjunction of the man and the hour. The Bay Colony has drawn the sharp line of division and dismemberment and has proceeded to discipline the offending citizens, not in harmony with the Theocracy. Deacons Coggeshall and Aspinwall of the First Church, recently elected representatives of the General Court, are expelled from the Legislature, for their religious opinions. Coddington is defeated as Assistant for the same reason, — an office he has held since 1630. Governor Harry Vane, a strong supporter of Mrs. Hutchinson, has gone down to defeat before the clerical party of the colony and has left Boston for the home land, never to return. A religious war is on. A civil war is feared and the homes of the people are invaded by the Act of Disarmament. Such experiences as these were soul-trying to the people of Boston, especially to those who composed the party of protest. Exile stares the Hutchinson party in the face. Homes, just built, must be given up. Property sacrificed. Business interests destroyed. Family and social ties must be surrendered. A new wilderness must be invaded. Savage hospitality again be invoked. New foundations must be laid which shall give security to property, life, liberty, civil and spiritual. The exodus period is at hand. Who shall be the leader of God's chosen flock from the bondage of the Bay Colony?

The man is at hand. It is Dr. John Clarke, fresh from the clerical and medical studies of the liberal University of Leyden, and thoroughly inoculated with the spirit of Democracy of the Baptists of Holland. He is in his twenty-ninth year, — a strong, stalwart fellow, — over six feet in height, magnetic, — enthusiastic, — having a judicial mind, — a calm temper, — a bold and resolute will. He arrives in Boston when the town is stirred as never before or since, in a contest for the emancipation of the soul of man from the chains of a spiritual bondage. A freeman himself, he at once casts in his lot with advocates and disciples of a liberal Democracy, and at once is chosen their new leader and proposes the formation of a new state in a new land, free from the galling bonds of their present conditions, in the Bay Colony. On the shoulders of such a leader, at such a juncture, is the chief responsibility placed of seeking a place of refuge and rest for a people whose hearts were set on civil and soul freedom.

In the same book, Mr. Bicknell writes (with my emphasis):

It does not appear that any denominational differences had arisen, nor do the records show any but the most cordial relations existing among the settlers of the Island before and after the formation of the new town, Newport. It is well known, however, that Dr. John Clarke was an ordained minister of the Baptist faith, and that in the year 1644, the First Baptist Church was organized at Newport, with Dr. Clarke as its minister. It is a matter of more than passing note that Dr. Clarke conducted public worship for both the Congregational and Baptist elements on Aquidneck from 1638 to 1644, with the interval of a few months, when Mr. Robert Lenthal taught a public school at Newport and conducted religious services at the Newport Congregational meeting house. As a meeting house was built at Portsmouth for public worship in 1638, Rev. John Callender in his "Century Sermon" wrote,

"there is no reason to think that persons of their zeal (Portsmouth and Newport) should immediately fall into a total neglect of a social worship."

As the Baptists were a despised and persecuted sect in England and in Massachusetts Bay Colony, we have here a fine illustration of the Catholic, tolerant spirit of the Aquidneck founders, not only in following Dr. John Clarke in civil leadership, but in adopting him and his teachings in spiritual leadership. It was no ordinary Puritan congregation to which Dr. Clarke ministered, for, at the double Sunday services, there sat in the pews, William Coddington, Judge, Anne Hutchinson, reformer, Deacons Coggeshall and Aspinwall, the Brentons, Bulls, Eastons, and, not least, his own

brothers, Joseph and Thomas Clarke, who joined him in organizing a Baptist Church at Newport. Here certainly was Simon-pure religious freedom, in a community taught at Boston by the broad-minded, liberal Anne Hutchinson.

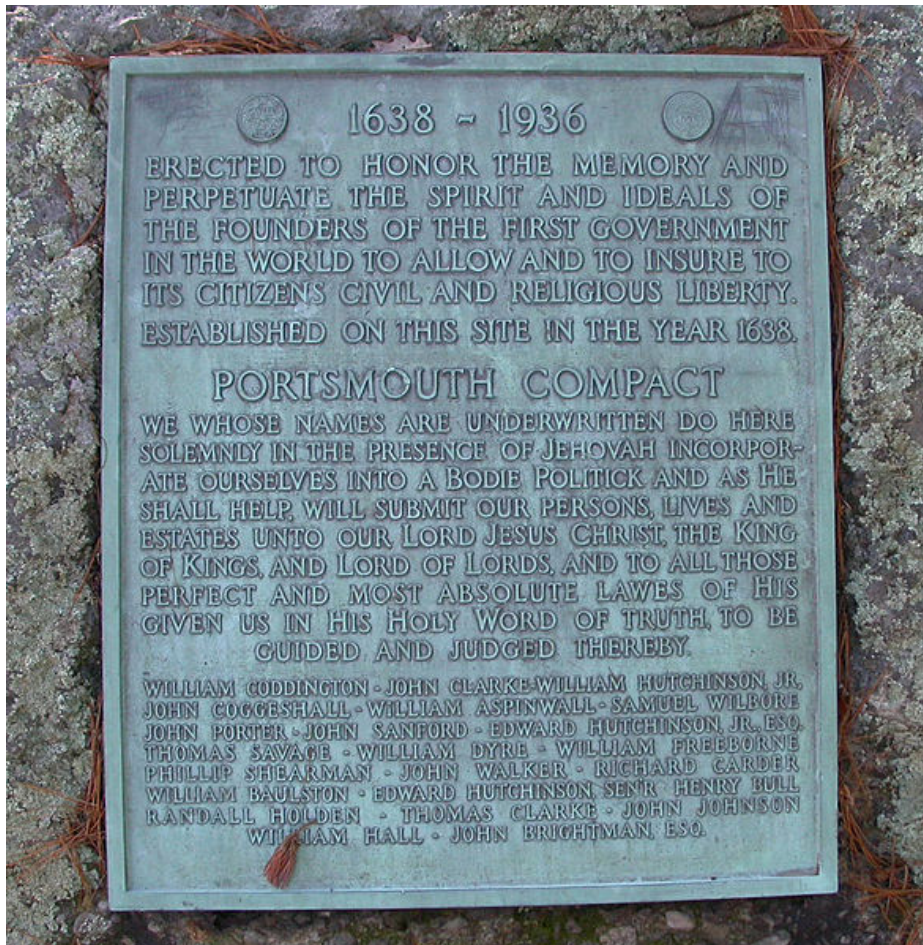
Although the writer mentions the formation of the First Baptist Church in 1644, only the people there at the time know the circumstances for this date. It could be because a Baptist building was built, or it could be the church wrote its charter, or – more likely – since 1644 was when they renamed the colony from Aquidneck to Rhode Island, that they renamed the church (or, it could be for other reasons). The author *does* mention that John Clarke conducted public worship from 1638 to 1644. My contention is these Baptists who assembled themselves for worship did indeed constitute a Baptist Church, if one goes by the same standards that define Roger Williams' group.

So either way, it is plain *the First Baptist Church in America* was not started by Roger Williams. John Clarke's work preceded Mr. Williams' work by at least six months, and more likely a year (if we allow that Mr. Williams did organize a church). Now, I should like to believe the Newport church was the *very* first Baptist church in America, but since there were Baptists scattered all over New England at this time, who but our Saviour can be sure. Although we have no complete records, only God knows who was actually first. I simply contend Roger Williams "church" was not the first, as John Clarke's work preceded it. And I think I proved it easily.

And for a final word in respect to Roger Williams and the church in Providence, S. Adlam, in his book *The First Church in Providence*, wrote in 1850:

Callender in 1738 says, "The most ancient inhabitants now alive, some of them above eighty years old, who personally knew Mr. Williams, and were well acquainted with many of the original settlers, never heard that Mr. Williams formed the Baptist Church there, but always understood that Mr. Brown, Mr. Wickenden, Mr. Dexter, Mr. Olney, Mr. Tillinghast, etc., were the first founders of that church."

Thank God for John Clarke: Through the grace of God, his Portsmouth Compact constituted the first government in human history to allow its citizens religious liberty.



If you are going to be a Baptist – Be a Baptist!

I am a Baptist by personal conviction based on study, by choices I have made to unite with the Baptists, and mostly because of God’s leading. I was neither born a Baptist nor rocked in a Baptist cradle. I was not led to salvation by Baptists. I am Baptist by the grace of God.

I am also a Baptist preacher. And, although we use the name “Baptist,” we are the first to say baptism doesn’t save. We preach the gospel of salvation first and foremost. We hold to the New Testament as our *only* rule for faith and practice. We prominently raise the Baptist flag and stand by it. We know what we believe and why. We are independent, fundamental, pre-millennial, KJV, soul-winning, sin-hating, hell-preaching, devil-hating, sold-out-for-God BAPTISTS! This may be the reason there are more than a few that don’t like Baptists – they are too hard-headed they say.

Listen, I am what I am by the grace of God. I am not going to try to hide it or water it down. We are not evangelical – we are Baptist. I am not non-denominational – I am Baptist. We are not a *Bible Church* – We are Baptist! We are not a *Christian Church* – we are Baptist. I am not trying to fit in – I am Baptist. I am not here to be loved or accepted. We are not here to start “faith” works, or “grace” works, or “Bible works,” or “Christian works” – we are here to start “Baptist” churches and “Baptist” works, with “Baptist” in the name. We don’t start Bible Institutes or Christian Schools – we start Baptist Seminaries and Baptist Academies. If you a Baptist, show

your colors and quit trying to hide who you are. Be zealous, and not lukewarm. Be fully persuaded, not double-minded. Don't halt between two opinions – choose ye this day.

Pastor Tharpe spoke of the time Lester Roloff came to visit him to discuss the Christian children's homes in Corpus Christie. Brother Tharpe instructed him to make sure to put the works under a local church work. Bro. Roloff stated he would put the homes under Peoples Church – Bro. Tharpe said, NO! – make it Peoples *Baptist* Church!

There were several ministries under Baptist Tabernacle church authority – Baptist Christian Academy, Baptist Christian University, Baptist Christian College, Louisiana Baptist Seminary, Baptist Boys Home, etc. Get the picture?

Somebody will say that the churches in the New Testament used no such name. That is true, but neither did they use the names of non-Baptist works that other people are using. You will find no “community” works, no “Bible” groups, no “non- or inter-denominational” churches either.

I will admit the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch – but this is what *others* called them, not their denomination or church name. Similarly, that is how we got the name “Baptist.”

The name *Baptist* is a shortening of the name *Anabaptist* – a name of derision used by the enemies of these churches that scripturally baptized (their opponents said re-baptized) those coming to them from other denominations. And for this they were despised, rejected and made to submit to all kinds of inhuman torture and abuse. (Think about that the next time someone with an irregular immersion seeks to join your church.) This was a name imposed upon them – but they called themselves other names. In time, we adopted the name Baptist. It is badge of honor and bloodshed – the name of untold multitudes who were martyred for Jesus Christ. It represented people who would not compromise their principles, who were not ashamed of the Lord and his word, who did right when it was not popular, and would not unite with the government or state-sponsored religion. They are people whom the Lord is not ashamed to call brethren.

Now, interestingly enough, you will find a “Baptist” in the New Testament. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. Jesus said that born of women there was none greater. To that man came Jesus to be baptized. John said, “He came to bear witness of that Light.” Now, if Jesus went to John the Baptist to be baptized; what does that make Jesus? Asking this question may upset a few people, so I will say it plainly – Jesus Christ is *a Baptist*. Jesus built his church with baptized disciples of John, and Jesus and his disciples baptized the same as John (John 4), and he commanded in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), that we are to baptize in his name. And that, my friends, is that *scriptural baptism* that we preach and execute.

Ordinance of the Church – Closed Communion.

At Historic Baptist Church we practice “closed communion.” That means, it is only for members of our church (in good standing) and we ask those who are not members (and those who desire not to partake) to leave the sanctuary towards the end of the service. This is so folks who are partaking can judge themselves, repent, and partake *worthily*. I usually preach a message of the subject of self-examination, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and always give a time to come to the altar before we partake.

Secondly, we have a communion service about once a year. We do not want it to be so common that it loses its importance. At the same time, we want to be faithful. The Bible says, “As often,” meaning to me, whenever you do it. It does not mandate a regular time, although I have heard of some churches observing the Lord's Supper only at the Passover time. That is when our Saviour had it, so I cannot argue against that. I understand as I read that it is up to the church to decide the timing, doing this in remembrance of Jesus Christ, showing his death till he comes.

The Bible is clear that communion is when “the church” comes together. This ordinance is for the church, not visitors. Other denominations may allow “open communion,” meaning anyone who claims to be a Christian (and

sometimes, baptized) can partake, but we do not. In cases when I find myself with another group doing this (and it is rare), I decline to partake. Why? Because this is an ordinance for the church a person is a member of.

Some say “close communion” is acceptable (as opposed to “closed”) – meaning non-partaking members and visitors can be present as the others partake. Now, I find no commandment as to whether this is allowed or proscribed, but I do see how our Lord Jesus held the last supper. He did not invite onlookers. Secondly, I would feel uncomfortable asking certain members to repent before visitors and non-partakers. Since the communion service is a solemn time, we want to take it seriously.

Ordinance of the Church – Scriptural Baptism.

There are substantial differences between “Believer’s Baptism” and “Scriptural Baptism” (sometimes called regular baptism). A few of my brethren allow simply *believer’s* baptism, which means as long as the candidate was saved when immersed; the church will accept it as valid baptism. They do not enquire for the sake of authenticity, who was the administrator, and in what manner they were immersed. However, in their own administration of it, they execute it rightly. That is, if someone comes to them for scriptural baptism, they will perform it rightly – they do not send that person to whomever they want to get it done.

Imagine this scenario: A man comes to the pastor of an independent Baptist church. The man was led to the Lord by this pastor, or gives credible evidence that he is saved. The pastor explains the commandment Jesus gave the church to baptize said believers. The man agrees and asks the pastor how he should go about to fulfill this step of obedience. *The pastor then sends the man to the evangelical group down the way (or to his brother, or to his friend) to be immersed by them, explaining that once he is immersed, he can return and become a member!* How ridiculous this would be. The answer as to why this scenario should not be done, is the same answer as to why we do not accept immersions from other than Baptist churches.

One must understand there are differences in how religious groups immerse. Some do it to wash away sins (Campbellites). Some do it for the dead (Mormons). Some do it in a forward motion, some dip three times, and some simply immerse in the “name of the Lord” (I ask, which Lord?). Some have administrators that have not *been* baptized, and some simply immerse themselves (called auto-baptism). Some administrators will immerse a believer, but will also sprinkle, pour, or perform infant-baptism. Should *any* administrator’s immersion be accepted as valid? Whether the administrator is a child, a drunk, a woman, a Satanist, or an atheist? I mean, where should we draw the line, if any? Well, thank God the Bible draws the line clearly.

There is a principle that “with the commandment comes the authority.” When Jesus commanded the eleven in Matthew 28 to “baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” he was conferring upon them the authority to do so. “All power is given unto me, go ye therefore...” Now, one must ask, to whom did he give this commission? There is only one of three options for us (pick one):

1. He gave the commission only to the eleven and no others. When they left this earth, the commission ended with them. (Now this option does not fit with other scriptures, because the Book of Acts shows others baptizing, like Philip, Ananias, and Paul.)
2. He gave the commission to all and anyone who chooses to do it. So, all people and everyone, regardless of religious position, sex, age, spiritual condition, etc.; has the authority to carry out the commission. (This is as obvious ludicrous statement, but you would be surprised how many men in practice accept this as true.)
3. He gave the commission to a particular or select group of persons, and they only have the authority.

The only correct option is 3. And if I can get a person to accept that, then the only two tasks are these:

1. One must then conclude that persons in the select group *have* the authority, and those outside of the group *do not*. Those in the group have *valid* baptism, and those outside the group have *invalid* (or alien, irregular,

unscriptural) baptism. A true New Testament church is authorized to accept immersions from those authorized, and should not accept immersions from those not authorized.

2. The last task is to simply define what group is authorized. I contend it is the New Testament Church (and administered through the leadership she selects) – not just any group or person who claims to be that.

You see, when a church accepts immersion as valid from another group, that church is stating that the immersion comes from a group with *equal authority* to baptize. Accepting an immersion from a Pentecostal group shows that church considers that group equal to them in authority. (It is interesting to note that Catholics accept *Baptist* baptism!) And, as one man said, if they are equal, then let's join with them. In fact, why be a Baptist at all if they are equal to us? Let's just support them.

Scriptural Baptism requires four elements:

1. A scriptural candidate – one who professes faith in Jesus Christ.
2. A scriptural mode – immersion in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
3. A scriptural administrator – a person authorized by a true New Testament (we say “Baptist”) church. This is usually persons who have been ordained, but not exclusively.
4. A scriptural action – in obedience to the word of God – not for salvation, washing of sins, receiving the Holy Ghost, etc. Baptism adds the candidate to the church, as his first step his discipleship – Matthew 28:18-20.

Baptism is an early step in discipleship – which means, the candidate is submitting himself to the church for teaching. Someone who rejects the fundamental doctrine of scriptural baptism has already shown he is a scorner, so why should he be submissive to other teachings? And why would a pastor want this person in the church if he is not receptive to the teaching?

No Calvinism.

As one studies the five tenets of Calvinism (T-U-L-I-P) he will find that none of them are supported by the Bible as truth, when the Bible is studied based on the commandments of God. The commandments outweigh all else and are the bases for understanding any teaching or example (Isaiah 28). Let's look at a few things:

Although man is depraved, he is not beyond a freewill repentance unto salvation. Otherwise, God would not command *all men everywhere to repent*. Read Acts 17:30, 31.

We are *all* favored by God through Jesus Christ, not just a select group (Romans 3:23; 5:8; 10:9, 10). If Jesus died for all, then all were dead.

Jesus' atonement is sufficient for all men to be saved, not just a select group (Romans 10:13). Jesus is the propitiation for all our sins, including the whole world (I John 2:2).

God's grace can be resisted by man's will (John 5:40), and it is every day.

True believers are predestinated to be conformed to Christ, not to salvation (Romans 8:29). We are predestinated unto adoption by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). Notice it reads, “by Jesus Christ” – the One who died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

Believers persevere by the grace of God, not their own power (I John 5:4). But those who fail are not necessarily lost (II Peter 1).

Calvinists, in addition to perverting the gospel (Galatians 1), also have an unscriptural view of eschatology and the miracles of God.

From Genesis to Revelation, we read how man – God’s creation – was created with a *free will* to either obey or disobey the Creator. How could anyone who has read the Bible ever suppose otherwise?

Love Commandment Doctrine.

One of the most helpful teachings I received in my Christian walk is this commandment that Jesus gave us – to love one another. Love covereth the multitude of sins. Charity never faileth. Love fulfills the law. It is the bond of perfectness. Only by experience can one understand how great the infallibility of love is.

We all know people who offend, annoy, or hurt us. The world teaches us to “return the favor.” However, Jesus told us to love our enemies. Every person can tell of a time when he was mistreated. That is the way this world is, but we are not to render evil for evil. As we are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, we have to love all people, brothers and enemies. Jesus was full of grace and truth and forgave those who crucified him.

I have a little rule: When I have a problem in the church, or family or anywhere; I pour love on the situation. It does not always solve the problem, but it sure makes me and a few others feel better. Coals of fire represent the “boomerang” effect – when someone tries to do evil and it backfires. Someone tries to roll a stone on someone, but the stone rolls back on him. This is called reaping what is sown. This law of sowing and reaping works with all things, though – especially loving others.

We know that some people need to change the way they deal with people. The way to help them change is to love them – not hurt them.

At this point I should like to add that James chapter 2 tells us not to have the faith with respect of persons. The Epistle to the Romans says God has no respect of persons – he loves every person regardless of their outward appearance. Regardless of the clothes (vile raiment or gay clothing), Jesus died for all, for all have sinned. All heaven rejoices when one sinner repents (Luke 15). And that prodigal when he came home, smelled like hogs, had filthy clothing, probably looked unkempt and sickly, he had no shoes or anything of value – but the Father ran to meet him and commanded a robe be put on him, and shoes to be put on his feet, and a ring on his finger – for he was a child of the Father. He was lost and is now found, he was dead and is now alive!

The problem is, some churches don’t like “visitors” with vile raiment. They are afraid the “nice people” won’t want to come if they see some misfits in the church. They are in fact, respecters of person, and judges of evil thought. James said clearly if you have respect of persons you sin. Some are more concerned with the outside than the inside. But when I read about my Saviour in Luke 15, he received sinners. He ate with them. And he was condemned by the religious folks for doing it.

So, here is the choice – be like Jesus or the Pharisees. And, truth be told, every person is a sinner and need the physician (Romans 3:23). Just some people think they are more worthy than others.

No Holy Days.

It seems every religion has its holy days (holidays) to commemorate some event or gain some grace from the one they worship.

The Jews had many holy days given them in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. Jews observe seven festival Sabbaths, in addition to weekly Sabbaths, and various feasts and dedications. My being a Gentile, I do not have an in-depth knowledge of exactly how they observe these holy days, but I know and I am glad I am not bound to. As I read in Acts 15, when certain Jews wanted to impose circumcision and the Mosaic Law on the Gentiles; the church

in Jerusalem came to the conclusion that the Gentiles need only do four things (see Acts 15:20, 29), and the observing of an holy day was not mentioned. In fact, nowhere in the New Testament does it teach us to observe any day as special.

Paul wrote in Colossians 2:16-17:

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

The Jews had a festival calendar based on counting moons. Imagine if we had to keep these Sabbaths, feasts and days:

Abib (ripe grain harvest) in March.

First moon of year sunset through sunset, the first day of the first moon, in Spring of the new year.

Pesach (Memorial of Passover Lamb) in April.

14th day at evening of first moon. The following day is a preparation for the annual Sabbath (on the 15th day) of the first moon.

Matsah (Unleavened Bread) in April.

Rest day on the first and seventh day. 15th day of first moon (full moon). For seven days, all Israel is to abstain from leavened bread.

Shabuoth (Weeks) 50th day (Rest Day) in May.

Sunset through sunset, calculated from the weekly Sabbath during Matsah, counting seven Sabbaths to the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, being the 50th day.

Yom Teruah (Rest Day) in September.

First day of seventh moon, sunset through sunset.

Yom Kaphar (Rest Day) in September.

10th day of seventh moon, sunset through sunset (Day of Covering)

Sukkoth (Rest Day) in September to October

15th day of seventh moon, sunset through sunset (tents or booths)

Sukkoth Closing day of festival (Rest Day) in October.

22nd day of seventh moon (Last Great Day), sunset through sunset.

Chanukah in December

An eight-day national commemoration of deliverance from the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC, mentioned in John 10:22 as the feast of dedication. Sunset through sunset.

You see, although saved Jews are permitted to keep or not keep these feasts; Gentiles are definitely not *compelled* to keep these feasts. Not only that, but we are not to let any man judge us in this – we are not to observe these to be accepted. Now, Paul said they are a shadow of things to come, which means they picture Jesus Christ and his coming. We know there is profit in studying these things, but we are not bound to observe them as part of the law. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but once Christ is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster.

No child of God is not bound to observe these holy days, moons, and Sabbaths.

Then Rome comes along and says that “Sun-day” is the Christian Sabbath, and I ought to observe that as a holy day. (No scripture, of course.) Then, a bunch of Baptists adopt this idea and preach to people how holy “Sun-day” is. “Sun-day” worship is a mark of Rome. There is no scripture compelling me to worship on that day, or any other. In fact, the disciples gathered every and any day. And when Paul preached in the synagogues on the Sabbath, he did so because he knew Jews would be there.

Some would say that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. That is true, but there is no commandment to assemble on that day or make it a holy day. One would say the disciples assembled on that day (Acts 20:27). True, but read the passage and tell me how that is a commandment to me? That passage is a narrative tracking the movements of the Apostle Paul, telling us on what day he met with the disciples. I would expect they assembled on many days of the week.

But some would say that “Sun-day” is the *Lord’s Day* (borrowing this idea from Rome). I would give \$100 to someone showing me in the scriptures where “Sun-day” is the Lord’s Day. That is an assumption without scriptural foundation.

Some say, we believe we should keep the Ten Commandments. What about keeping the Sabbath day holy? The truth is, they believe we should keep *nine* of the ten. They are cherry-picking what laws and commandment to impose on their people. *I won’t let some Pharisee bind a burden on my back.* The truth of the New Testament is that we are under Christ, not under the Law of Moses. We have New Testament Laws to follow (Matthew 23:18-20). Let’s get busy doing those!

I have no problem worshipping on “Sun-day” or “Saturn-day” or any other day (we do). Just don’t make it a holy day, a day of rest, or Sabbath wherein I am compelled to do something. I have seen the Jews and how they behave on their Sabbaths. I have read how they condemned the perfect Lord Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. I am not impressed positively.

We *are* commanded to not forsake the assembling of our selves together, but remember: the New Testament does not specify which days.

About Hell.

The Old Testament mentions hell, so it was not a new subject when Jesus taught on the subject. The Old Testament gives some ideas about hell – it is below, there are sorrows, it enlarged itself, etc. But our Saviour really gave us insight to this place.

When God came to us in the flesh, he emphasized the terribleness of hell and the importance of avoiding it. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. The purpose, power, and blessing of the Gospel are to save us from eternal damnation.

In John 3 Jesus shows us that the Son came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Those who believe are not condemned. Those who do not believe are condemned already. To many Baptist preachers this is didactic. The understanding is that we preach the gospel to people who are already condemned – not to condemn them further or threaten them, but so they have a way of escape. We are preaching a gospel of salvation, not condemnation. I know many have this understanding, but there are a few who imagine their purpose is to condemn sinners.

Brethren, sinners are *already* condemned. They do what comes naturally, and we are not here to reform people but to show them the light of Jesus, so that they might *believe*. Preaching against sin is mainly for God’s people, not the lost. A rehabilitated drunk is still on his way to hell. Without being a *new creature* and the having power of the indwelling Holy Ghost, a lost man is dead in trespasses and sins. John said in John 20:31: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his

name.” Then, in I John 2:1, he said: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not....” Notice salvation comes before sanctification, as without the Holy Ghost there is no point.

My Saviour, when he walked on the earth, said this so plainly in John 3:17:

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Jesus was easily entreated of everyone. He even had mercy on devils. He forgave the ones who crucified him. A bruised reed he did break, and smoking flax he did not quench. He was full of grace and truth. He is so kind, and gentle, and pure, and precious, and holy, and lovely. He is not desirous that any should perish. The purpose for his incarnation is so that he could bear our sins and become a ransom for us. Let’s not forget that.

Hell is real and we ought to preach about it. But we should preach salvation from it, with a sincere desire to see people accept the Saviour. Yes, God hates sin, and that is why he sent Jesus – to save us from sin.

The Coming of the Lord.

I wish every preacher would do the due diligence to study this great event out for himself. I mean, let’s not just read books and listen to what people say, but really study this truth. This event is the next great appearing of our Lord, and it comes with devastating effects. It is the climax of God’s plan. It is the blessed hope of the believer. And I am stunned with how most preachers just know a handful of verses that are convenient enough to preach with.

I have heard many a good preacher use a verse to prove something on this subject, and the verse did not say what he said, sometimes it was a complete contradiction. I hear a brother use that verse about two in a bed and one taken, to say it was the rapture. I heard another brother say it was about sodomites.

Now, we have no doubts at all that Jesus Christ will return with all his glory, but what *exactly* has God revealed to us in the scriptures about the details. Not only that, but our Saviour gave seven messages to churches in Revelation chapters two and three that we need to heed carefully.

I challenge every preacher to study, and do the following (and don’t just think you know, read carefully and make the necessary notes):

- 1 Try to take everything you *think* you already know about the coming of the Lord, and put them temporarily on the side. These pre-conceived ideas can sway proper exegesis.
- 2 Pray and seek God for his enlightenment on this important subject. Be prepared to believe what God says.
- 3 Read each of the four gospels *in order* paying special attention to teaching on the Lord’s coming. Jesus spoke many times in the gospels and repeated things over and over. Read every applicable passage carefully.

Get a large sheet of paper and draw a timeline noting every event the Lord mentions in the order he sets. Do not rely on pamphlets or books or charts made by other men (like Larkin and Darby) – make the chart yourself!

- 4 Now, read through the epistles in order and mark on your paper the events as mentioned. Jesus gave many milestones, events, number of days, and key words that parallel each other so that calibrating the relationship of each event is sure.
- 5 Make special emphasis for certain words referred to in the particular study, such as:

- Wars, and rumors of wars
- Earthquakes
- Signs in heaven
- Elect
- Angels
- Archangel – that is Michael for those who do not know.
- Trumps and trumpets
- Abomination of desolation
- Son of man coming
- Harvest
- Firstfruits
- Gather, gathering
- The phrase “caught up” – used three times in the New Testament
- Cloud and clouds
- Eagles, fowls
- Withhold, hinder, let
- Bride
- Redemption
- First resurrection
- Second death
- Death, hell, and the lake of fire
- Heaven, New Jerusalem
- Look at the timing in Revelation and Daniel in respect to number of days and times.

6 Now read the Revelation and place the events revealed there in order matching the common events Jesus mentioned in the gospels and the other passages in the epistles.

7 Take special care to do extra study on particular things that do not appear to line up smoothly (there are not any, but if you have something out of order, or you try to force an event in the wrong place, things do not line up).

Now, I have done all this many times, and our church knows what the Bible teaches on this subject. I am not going to give out the crib notes as the personal study is most important. I am prepared to discuss this in depth with any person who has done what I have listed above. I have proposed questions to others in respect to difficult passages and found that they could not answer – not because the Bible is not clear, but the individual was more concerned with propagating a system of eschatology that did not line up with the scriptures.

I will supply some hints: the Bible teaches that these things are to happen:

- Jesus will return in person (John 14)
- Before that, there will be false christs, power, signs, lying wonders, and deception.
- The dead are raised *first*, and we who are saved are “caught up.” This occurs at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:52), or the trump of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- The 144,000 are the firstfruits unto God (Revelation 14:4)
- We should be a kind of firstfruits (James 1:18)
- Many will be deceived. In respect to the coming of the Lord and our gathering together (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4):

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

- We will rule with Christ a thousand years while Satan is bound. This is the first resurrection
- Eternity with Jesus is in New Jerusalem (not heaven). Eternity without Jesus is in the Lake of Fire.

But I do not want to do your work for you, for if you are not willing to do the study yourself, God will not show you – there are no shortcuts. And lest someone think he knows already, I challenge him to *show* not only every event, but the timing of each event in the proper order. And please don not assume you know what I believe – I intentionally left out my views so that the reader would be provoked to study them out for himself. I would prefer people go by what God says rather than what some man said or wrote.

Hate the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

Read Revelation 2:6, 15. Deeds progress to doctrines.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for their desires to make their own selves better than others, or position themselves above others (Matthew 23). They sought for the glory of men rather than of God.

The New Testament instructs us to esteem others better than ourselves. Jesus said that the greatest among you shall be the servant. In contrast, the Pharisees sought the upper seats, blew a trumpet when they gave, for a pretense made long prayers, disfigured their faces when fasting, looked down on sinners, and overall were concerned with receiving praise and honor. They propagated traditions of men, making void the commandments of God. They bound heavy burdens on people and did not lift a finger to help. They did their works to be seen of men. They wanted the esteem of men, and to be greeted with respect, and to be called Rabbi. They piped off in the marketplace desiring to see people dance or mourn.

And, although the New Testament shows us that we should esteem, love, and honor those who rule (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Timothy 5:17); leaders need to be careful not to be lords, but ensamples for the flock to follow (1 Peter 5:1-3). We, too, need to know that all have sinned, and no man is perfect.

Nicolaitanism is in direct contravention to 1 Peter 5:3 – not being lords over God’s heritage.

I have seen too many churches where pastors ridicule the flock, or force upon them ridiculous rules and standards, demanding respect, honor, and obedience. They follow and esteem other men, and expect the same from their followers. (These are the ones I do not trust as far as I can throw them!) Allow me to enlighten you: we are all sinners saved by grace. We all put our pants on the same way. Nobody is better than anybody else – we are all esteemed members in the body, where an eye or a hand. We should not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons. I am impressed with Jesus Christ – but I know what men are made of.

How about being conformed to Jesus Christ, our Chief Shepherd? How about by love serving one another?

Here is a caution for church folks who find themselves in an oppressive church environment: beware lest you also become like the Nicolaitans. How do you know? Well, a man takes care of the church as he rules his house. How does the man treat his wife? Paul said that husbands are to love their wives as Jesus loved the church.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. We use our liberty to serve one another. We are not in a popularity contest to see who can get the biggest picture in a Baptist magazine. We are supposed to condescend to men of low estate.

Young Adults are NOT too Young to Serve God.

Many churches position only older folks in places of service. Doing this gives the impression that the church is only for old folks.

Young adults (we try not to use “teenagers” as that classifies them into a separate group) will sit back and do nothing as long as the older folks do it all. Consequently, no one should not complain if the youth get distracted, bored, or don’t desire to participate.

We have used young people at our church for a while. Our song leader is in his teens, the music director, audio person, singers, musicians, offering takers, and some preachers, range in age from 6 to 23. We are training young people to carry on the work. They learn quickly, gain experience, increase in confidence, know they can serve God and develop a desire to do it.

In contrast, as a simple preliminary analysis of our churches throughout the world; gauge the spirit in the church in comparison to the age of the song leader. I think you will see that the older the song leader, the deader the service. I do not know why this is. The songs could be the same, the order identical, the same preacher; but a younger man on the platform leading the music gives a freshness, peace, and pleasantness to the service. I notice the difference immediately.

One thing I know: music sets the tone of the service. Most young people who are serving God are not jaded – they haven’t learned to be sour and cantankerous. They have a positive attitude. Youth with good manners is generally attractive.

When I read the Bible I think of young people like Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, Ester, Daniel, John Mark, Timothy, and Titus; and how God used them in a great way.

We are here to encourage the next generation in the things of the Lord, to train the replacement troops, to bless our children so they will be more blessed than we are.

I know that some would say that they are not seasoned enough to do the work. Well, two comments come to mind: How will they get seasoned or not allowed to learn by doing? Secondly, remember the how the Lord had a lot of grace with those servants when they were learning and making tons of mistakes. We should have the same forbearance and longsuffering as they learn. People will rise to high expectations. No one rises to low expectations.

And for a final note on this subject, we should treat young children as real people. To have a dismissive attitude toward them, or not give them proper attention to look them in the eyes, talk to them directly in a loving way, listen to what they have to say, and encourage them in the Lord; will one day backfire when they will not choose to talk or listen to the older generation. That little child who tries to tell you something is a soul for whom Jesus died. He received them and commanded us not to hinder them or cause them to stumble. Adults beware! Take the time to notice the little ones and be a friend.

Preachers Ought to Learn a Trade.

Most brethren think and expect the church to fully support them in the ministry. This is a good thing. This idea is reinforced by missionaries on deputation (fancy name, but not in the Bible). The New Testament says in 1 Corinthians 9:14:

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

There is no doubt that the preacher who sows spiritual things should reap the carnal things.

Paul said he had the power to forebear working (1 Corinthians 9:6), but did not use this power. A study of the New Testament activity shows offerings were used for the relief of the poor saints. I do not read where the monies collected were used to send missionaries or support pastors.

That said, I conclude that if a church is able, it should support its pastor. In addition, every pastor should take a portion of the offerings for his living in order not to break the commandment of the New Testament. Some pastors think it noble to refrain from using part of the money collected for their own use. This is a bad precedent. How can God bless his servant through the church then?

In addition to this precept, Paul worked so that he could support himself and his fellow laborers. Peter said we are to be ensamples to the flock. Paul said if any would not work, he should not eat. Paul could say this and not be hypocritical.

There are many churches that are so small that there is not enough income to support a pastor's family rightly – I should know – I had up to nine children during decades of ministry. Although our church is made of hard workers, generous people, and low expenses; God led me to work in world to make up the needed difference in income. Children have a bad habit – they like to eat.

Here are some positive results of a preacher working:

- The pastor is a good example to others, and will be thought of as lazy or in the ministry for filthy lucre.
- The pastor makes the gospel of no charge.
- The pastor's glorying is not made void.
- The pastor brings added tithes and offerings into the storehouse.
- The pastor can do "his own business."
- The pastor understands by experience what his flock has to endure in the world. He has greater compassion based on actual experience.
- The pastor will be more likely to stay out of trouble if he has work to do. Being too idle is not good. (Yes, and I know the response of those who say how busy they are in full-time ministry. I think the church should follow them around for a week to really see how busy they are. But most church people are busy to do that – making a living.)
- The pastor is a good example to his children, and can provide rightly for them. (A man's responsibility to provide for his house is more important than his call to the ministry.)
- The pastor will have greater influence and interaction with people.
- The pastor will have greater respect from those who know him.
- The pastor will have to rise early (or work late) and bear the yoke of labor, building a disciplined, enduring life.
- The pastor follows the example of the Apostle Paul, who did great things for the Lord, but at the same time was not chargeable to others. (This is a good answer for those who say a working pastor cannot do as much as one who doesn't. How did that work for the Apostle Paul?)
- The pastor learns to be self-sufficient in some things. He is not a helpless wimp who needs someone to do everything for him.
- The pastor can preach with great liberty because his income is not reliant upon some member's good favor. (I knew a good man who started a church where a member and benefactor of the church was wealthy. When this rich man got offended and withdrew his support, the church had to close. Thank God the preacher did not waver, but he still had to move.)
- The pastor with a trade can survive financially in almost any situation. His profession allows him to go anywhere quickly without the need to raise support.
- In some cases, the pastor can provide for his retirement and children's inheritance through his work.

- If the preacher creates a prosperous business, he can provide more for those in need.

Now, I have been on both sides. I have ministered with no one to answer to and had a lot of time to visit, study, prepare, run errands, pray, etc. I could rise at any time, go anywhere, do anything; without having to punch a clock. And, I will admit I was busy all the time in the Lord's work. I could make visits, travel to meetings, and spend time with the family, etc.; with little conflicts of time. I could take my time preparing for service. There is no doubt we can all appreciate this situation.

Then I decided to withhold not good to whom it was due, when it was in the power of my hands to do it.

Now, I have to rise early, work in a place with someone I report to. I have to structure my time. I get tired but still preach. I have great compassion on my brethren. I live well and I am a good example – as all men are who work and minister. No one thinks I am lazy and no one doubts my purpose in the ministry. My preaching is better, my report is better, my abilities are improved, my financial situation is improved, and my children have a good example and work likewise. I do not have lazy children, and they all serve God and work.

Be Who You Are.

One man said, that if a preacher is not himself in the pulpit, then nobody is in the pulpit. He is not there, and the man he is trying to be isn't there.

I would take this a step further, saying, one should be who he really is at all times. He should be comfortable in his own person. We have no need to impress anybody. There is no benefit to hypocrisy. Being transparent means people know who you are and can either like you or not. A man trying to be something he is not will eventually show his hypocrisy. Being real and a good example (pattern to follow) is what God is looking for.

This is not to say one should not try to improve himself. We all should be in the life-long work of self-improvement. We "press toward the mark." We change as we learn.

What I am talking about is transparency, honesty, sincerity, having unfeigned love.

Which of the preachers in the New Testament tried to put on a show or be something he was not? Which one tried to convince people he was super-spiritual or perfect in his service? Who claimed to be without fault (except for our Lord)? Who tried to hide things as he was overly concerned with what people thought?

By the grace of God we are who we are. We should not have people think of us above what they see us to be. We are to be good examples – and of God put you into leadership, he knows you can lead.

We should not be afraid to confess our faults – when we do things that are stupid or when we are wrong. We should be ready to ask for forgiveness if we offend. We should be able to say, "I love you," to people we know. We should be relaxed around people and not be so anxious to impress people. Let's leave that to the Pharisees and Nicolaitans. Seek to please God and not man.

Stay where you are till God Moves You. Pastors should take a Stand.

A rather distasteful experience in my Christian life was actually seeing the abundant church-hopping of church members (including pastors).

First, if a man is called to a church, he should endure there regardless of the troubles until God moves him. I do not doubt God will move a man as he sees fit, or if the church does not treat him well; but too often preachers move thinking the "grass is greener" somewhere else. When in Louisiana, I could hardly keep track of where some men were serving. At least at the church I was a member of, the pastor was there over 40 years. This was his second church. He stated how leaving his first church was so difficult that he never wanted to repeat the experience.

Some men have not this attachment to their flock.

Before a man leaves a church he ought to make sure it is God's will. He ought to leave the church in good condition – not because of a problem. He ought to make sure a good man is replacing his position, one he recommends and supports. No flock should be left shepherd-less, even for a week. I knew a man who said he got “itchy feet” after a year or two and had to move on. I should like to see that in the New Testament. As kings and priests, we are positioned where God wants us. We should always put God's will before our own.

Then, any church who accepts a new pastor ought to do the due diligence to make sure he is leaving his current ministry on good terms. We all have heard the horror stories of men leaving a church after they were caught at something, but were still able to secure another pastorate at an unsuspecting church.

Secondly, church members are just as bad in their moving from church to church. How many brethren “*move their letter*” simply because they didn't like something that occurred at their church? My position is, that every pastor ought to investigate the reasons for moving membership, and discuss this with the member's current pastor. Before ever accepting them into the flock, they ought to get the current pastor's blessing and comments.

Additionally, every pastor ought to contact the pastor of a sister church when one of her members attends his service instead of their own (special meetings excepted). When I greet the visitors who I know belong somewhere else, I ask how their pastor is doing (by name) and mention to them that I will have to say hello. You would be surprised how many of these visitors do not return. If they express any idea of looking for a new church, I respond saying how we could never receive anyone without their pastor's blessing. That culls the unwanted sheep to very few.

Some pastors don't do this. Some pastors encourage the people to return. Some probably think they are better pastors anyway and they are doing these members a favor. Whatever happens, I shall not be accused of stealing anyone's sheep, and I sure will not let some carnal church member into my flock just for numbers. And as much as I can, I want to maintain a good relationship with the pastors of sister churches. I do not want a member to cause any discord among brethren.

Not only that, but the reasons why people hop churches are usually not healthy ones. And since a pastor is responsible for the sanctification of his flock, continuing a practice of receiving other church's members indiscriminately can likely cause more problems than otherwise should occur. And for what reasons should these members be accepted? To increase the offerings? The numbers? For the self-esteem of the pastor? For revenge? None of these are good reasons.

Read the book of Philemon and try to understand the importance of duty.

Each church is a body, and each member is baptized into that body by the Spirit – God setting each member into it as it has pleased him. God knows that each member has a purpose – to edify the body withal. But if the hand says it is not of the body, should another pastor help to amputate it and graft it onto a healthy body that already has two hands? When people do such things they create monsters.

Have a Joyful, Excited, Positive, Zealous Personality.

God is an encourager, not a discourager. Every believer should be an encourager, not a discourager. Be like the two Israeli spies that brought a good report. These things are attractive to people and pleasing to God.

We should remember Romans 8:28 anytime there is the situation that would cause grief. Showing thankfulness is the first thing to do when something happens that isn't pleasant. This shows one indeed believes that God will make things a blessing. *There is no “bad news” when one loves God.* A person's perception makes all the difference. As one man said, one person has a baby and says it is a gift of God; another disposes the baby in a dumpster – it is correct and incorrect perception.

When one is thankful for a particular trouble, he is then properly positioned to allow God to direct his paths and make the thing to be a blessing. We all want God to direct our paths and to work mightily in our lives. God does this through trials. When we are obedient and thankful, we will see God work and make the way plain. God will bless and meet the needs. If we murmur and complain, we become blind to God's purpose and direction, and we will simply wonder aimlessly in our own pity, adding insult to injury.

Having a happy, positive, and zealous conversation is not only what God requires, but it is attractive and edifying to those who are exposed to it. It shows one is living the victorious Christian life. In contrast, a negative, critical, and defeated spirit repels people; and really does no one any good.

Spend a Lot of Time with Your Family.

There is an incorrect opinion that the ministry comes before the family. Jesus never said that. Jesus said if someone loves a person more than him, he is not worthy of him. He said to seek first the kingdom of God. A believer's relationship with Jesus Christ is most important. However, the commandments and callings are two different things.

Obligation to the commandments precede the obedience to our calling. The commandment to love God and our neighbor are first and foremost. Then, if a man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel. An infidel does not make a good minister.

Or, as another man said, if you lose your family, you lose your ministry. True. If a man knows not how to rule his house, how can he take care of the church?

Consequently, my advice is, as much as is practical, that a man include his wife and family in all things spiritual and non-spiritual. Too many times I see man at a meeting and no wife or kids. Once or twice is understandable – but if as a pattern, I should sense something wrong. Generally speaking, my family not only accompanies me on most visits, but they are anxious to go with me. In fact, as they grow older, not only do they provoke one another to go to meetings, but they want me to go. Our church service and ministry is a family thing. It is not *my* ministry – it is *our* ministry.

As a rule, I would take at least one night a week for “family night.” Often that ended up going to a revival or special meeting, but not always. I should think there is no one in my immediate family who would say they feel neglected in the preacher's ministry. And I know this is not often the case in most families.

I do not want any of my children or wife to resent the work of the Lord. On the contrary: I want them to love it as I do – even more so. Involving them in the work is the way to have them learn to love it. I can't preach it to them from the outside, pressing it upon them. They have to see and love it for what it is. Their service to Jesus Christ has to be a “want to,” not simply a “have to.”

Some people speak of the family altar or having devotions. We call it prayer and Bible time (*devotions* are what Paul said the pagan Ephesians had on Mar's Hill). We have a lot of enjoyment during this time. It is not tedious. It is always a blessing. Children need to understand the application of scripture in their own lives, not just be given a set of rules.

Religious Tolerance and Allowing Freedom of Conscience.

At one point in our nation's history certain religious groups were persecuted severely – Baptists and Quakers especially. But in the “*Little Baptist State*” of Rhode Island (Portsmouth and Newport) religious liberty was guaranteed (for the first time in world history) and flourished.

Today, we still have all kinds of people with different kinds of faith. Our duty as New Testament Christians is to preach the gospel to them, praying for their salvation. After they are saved, we are to baptize them and teach them

to observe all the commandments of Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus commanded in the Great Commission (Matthew 28). We are not to follow after other religious groups to persecute or outlaw them. We oppose them by preaching the truth. Read how Paul preached on Mar's Hill. Baptists do not force conversions to Jesus Christ or the Baptist Way. We preach with tears.

We have all found, however, that most people will not follow the Bible way. Even many who profess faith in Jesus Christ will not be faithful to a fundamental Baptist church.

So, what should our response be toward these? We tolerate and love them, just as Jesus commanded. We do not have to join with them in their *para-church* efforts. We do not have to be partaker of their sins. We do not have to agree with them. But we should not be unkind to them – we should love them and encourage them in the right way.

They said of Jesus, that a bruised reed he did not break and a smoking flax he did not quench. Baptists should be like our Saviour – full of grace and truth. Too often we have a lot of truth, but not much grace.

We who are fundamental Baptists know exactly why we are who we are. Keep in mind, though, that other people do not have the same understanding. Many of them think of us only what they have heard, or maybe they had a bad experience in a Baptist church at some time. The devil is clever in that he uses the name *Baptist* in respect to very liberal works and, at the same time, overly critical, unsavory works. We know it is never justified to judge all by the few. Generalizations or “painting with a broad brush,” is not an accurate way to judge, but people do it regardless. We are all guilty of doing the same at some point. I am glad Jesus deals with us on an individual basis, with mercy, gentleness, and grace.

Knowing the greatest commandments are to love God and our neighbor, we can put this into practice when dealing with different-minded people. We will show our faith by our works. “Growing old gracefully” has been a desire of mine for many years. My tendency (and common among people) is to be cantankerous, critical, unkind, intolerant, prejudiced, and impatient. But these attitudes are not conducive to showing the love of Christ. (Neither are these healthy attitudes for the soul and mind.) We have a greater influence with people when we lead in strength with a graceful spirit. One man said that people want to know how much you care before they care how much you know.

We all wish people would just do right, but if that were the case, there would be no need for our work as pastors and teachers.

Be like Jesus and love people where they are. Whenever possible, try to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord as though they were children.

Preach with Your Whole Heart

In being zealous, passion is that quality people notice and follow. As one man said, if the people fall asleep when the preacher is preaching – wake up the preacher! Preachers should be excited, enthusiastic, sold-out servants of the Most High.

People want to follow someone who is confident in what he does. As a preacher, we are to proclaim the word of God. We do not appeal to the intellect only. We also appeal to the heart, soul and spirit. How much someone really believes what he says is manifested in how he says it. We have to show we really believe it if we are to expect the same from others.

I want to preach with my whole heart. To do this, I try to think of a few things:

- 1 That my Jesus is sitting right there, listening to my words, and saying, “Amen!” every time I preach something good and right about my Saviour. I know Jesus is there, but I consciously look and acknowledge his presence. I preach for him alone.

2 That my preaching is being delivered to people who do not know what I know, and have not experienced what I have experienced. I try not to take for granted they feel and understand as I do. My work is to communicate to them to the best of my ability that which God has shown me. I imagine I am preaching to people who will be hearing what I say for the first time. I try to keep the preaching as simple and practical as possible.

3 I remember back to when I was lost and how Jesus reached down and saved me. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock! He established my goings. He has put praise in my mouth. The salvation of my soul is so wonderful I cannot but help to be emotional and excited. Thinking on this also influences my preaching so that the gospel of salvation is front and center.

4 That I need not hold my tongue for any man. My words are only restrained by that which is convenient to Christ. If I offend, I pray it is because of the word of God (sadly, there are times this is not the case). I preach without respect of persons. Preaching is done with the ultimate purpose of edifying and encouraging the brethren. I do not believe Bible messages are meant to berate or condemn the people only. That is only a means to reprove them so that you can move them to exhortation – preach the word, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

I am not impressed by men, and I do not seek to impress men. We are brethren. We are family. I am transparent to a fault, but people know and think of me no more that what they see and hear.

5 That I may be preaching my last message. I am mindful that these people may go off into eternity, or the Lord may come, or my tongue be silenced.

6 That I preach what God has shown me to preach. One can preach any part of the word of God, but I strive to study until I am overwhelmed with a wonderful revelation. It is this revelation that I preach on. And it is easy to get excited about something like this. A preacher cannot get others excited about something until he is excited about it. Sometimes when I look upon old message outlines they seem so dull and hard to preach (now). But I know when God gave me the message it was hot and powerful. It was the right message for the right time.

This is why it is hard for me to preach from my old outlines as well as from other people's outlines, even though they are very well done. As preachers, we can and should be able to preach from *any* text or on *any* subject, at *any* time; but when given the liberty to preach as God leads, I make sure the word is in my heart as a fire.

7 That I keep moving. I cannot simply stand behind some pulpit and deliver a homily. I need to move, to run, to shout, to climb, to pound, to wave, to do whatever to provoke myself to keep the attention of the people and to make the message as real to them as possible. This is not an act, but you need to put forth effort to show excitement, and not be so reserved people's mind shut down. Things like illustrations, repetition, drama, physical expression; move people who otherwise would not focus on the word. Enthusiastic bodily movement is reflective of great excitement of soul and mind.

No doubt some would say this is showmanship. I say, it is the difference between a good message and a great and moving message in the hearts of the hearers. The people who attend our church come to hear the word of God. They come to have their minds and hearts lifted. They come to hear from God. I want them to remember, to be blessed, to understand, to be moved, to love the Saviour more. My work is done in sincerity and truth – not in fakery or hypocrisy.

I instruct preachers to not be afraid to lift up their voice when preaching. Some, I have noticed, are too reserved, or afraid to holler, or move, or cry, or laugh, or sing, or praise the Lord Jesus. Whatever is left out is not giving the whole of your soul to the preaching of the word.

8 That I make the word of God plain and simple. I want to pound a certain truth or set of truths into application. I do need to go deep, I just need to make it as real as I can – for that is the power of the word!

As one man said, we preach the word of God until it becomes *real and alive* in the minds of the hearers – until it lifts off the page and stands straight up, and grows to be a giant spike of God’s truth. At that point we take the hammer of God’s word and *pound it into the hearts* of the hearers so if forever has a home.

9 That I concentrate on the Saviour. Although I preach from every place in the Bible, I try to take the message straight to our Saviour’s words and deeds – the Great Sacrifice being the chief focus. All should end at the Gospel. Every message is to magnify the blessed Saviour, whom the Father glorifies and in whom he Father is well pleased. I try not to stray to far from the cross. Search the scriptures – for in them ye think ye have eternal life. And they are they that speak of Jesus!

When I end my life I do not want to regret my insufficient preaching from the Gospels. I heard an old-timer preacher say he regretted not preaching out of the Gospels more than he did. He said he wished he had preached from the Gospels more. I can say without hesitation that any doctrine you want to preach on, you can find an example from Jesus in the Gospel. Do not overlook that. To me, the Gospels are the heart of the Bible, the Old Testament is the introduction, and the balance of the New Testament was written as the inspired commentary on those Gospels.

10 That I preach on what people should *do* – the true definition of doctrine. I try to provoke them unto love and good works. Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. I am not only to teach, but I am to *preach!*

It is not too important to me what people say or think of me after I am gone. But I should like for my Saviour to say well done. That is enough. He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. By his grace I shall endure until the end.

Don’t Be an Island.

I am always leery of men who hide themselves, or put on airs, or don’t think brethren are good enough to fellowship with. Too many times I have seen men like this fail in the ministry. Iron Sharpneth iron. We have to learn to love one another and show we are disciples of Christ.

Anti-social behavior is not healthy. Men have to force themselves to learn to be friendly, conversant, helpful, tolerance, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; and such like things.

I know it is easy to have the Elijah complex – that I am the only one. But God has many others. We need to look for the good in people. We need to love in spite of who they are.

Now, one thing I do not like is that fakey, political, overly-friendly manipulation some people think they get away with. I am not talking about that. I am talking about sincere friendship and help.

Pride is something that will hinder one’s growth and maturity in the Lord. I believe at the root of non-fellowship is pride or having an overly critical spirit, of which we all can be guilty.

I recommend attending places one is invited and to be as friendly as possible. Enjoy what is edifying and ignore what is not. If someone in particular is annoying, commit to expressing love toward that person. Soon, a person will grow and realize he has overcome. Intentionally avoiding a person simply because of petty things is not having the victory. In fact, it is just the opposite.

Follow the Holy Ghost in Liberty.

One thing Don Fraser made abundantly clear is that no man is ready for separated service until he has learned to follow the Holy Ghost in liberty. That is what God desires and expects for his workers.

Anyone who is called to the ministry should have to grow to that level before being sent out.

Galatians 5:13 says, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." So, see the difference here: in liberty you are to love and serve others. Liberty is not so a person can do whatever he pleases in the flesh, but be led by God in the things of God.

Consequently, I have strived at our church to teach people to operate in love and liberty. I do not have to have a rigid set of rules or program for services. People like structure and rules – the Israelites told Moses to talk to God, and then whatever Moses told them to do they would do. But that is the carnal man's way. Most people really do not want to seek after God, as they do not want to be personally responsible before God. They would rather be given a set of "dos and don'ts" to master, then live their lives thinking they have fulfilled God's will. That is one reason why the major religions are the major religions.

I constantly reinforce the teaching that a person has to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ – and not just for salvation, but in everything. Seek God's will through his word and prayer and Holy Ghost leading (Romans 12:1-3).

Enjoy the Days God Gives You.

Your life is a gift of God – live accordingly. Life has its struggles and challenges we all know, but with Jesus we are to make the best of it. Count your blessings, rejoice in the Lord: don't get to where life feels like a suffering, enduring, trudging chore – find something to enjoy. Paul and Silas were singing praises to God in the Philippian jail house. They found reasons to rejoice. Paul was determined to finish his course with joy (Acts 20). Too many people live their lives as though it is a burden, and everything makes them unhappy. They show no joy in their lives and get worse as they get older.

It seems the happiest people have a lot *not* to be happy about; and a lot of unhappy people have a lot *to be* happy about. Some people just can't be pleased.

Not only does being a happy person please God, but it also is attractive to others. We have a blessed hope in this life and we need to project that in our relationships before others. I personally do not want to spend too much time with people who discourage me, complain and murmur, have a defeated outlook in life, or are just plain cantankerous or angry. Life is too short to let people ruin your spirit. And just as iron can sharpen, it can also dull your edge. We have all been in that situation where someone just had to be critical – and that person usually has not even attempted to do what you have done. No one ever raised a statue to a critic.

I will give you an example: My two daughters spent a week, a lot of their own money, days driving and hotel time; to go to Delaware to record a song CD. Wanting it to be a blessing to a lot of people, they fasted for the week before and worked eight hours a day to record this CD. It involved many retakes and patience.

In the end, the CD was a very big success. After distributing over an hundred CD's to people who know them and who do not, we got many positive responses. One can really sense the power of God and the good spirit in these songs. It was a huge blessing for me, the family, the church, and for our friends, and strangers. Many people requested duplicates.

Out of nearly two hundred CD's distributed to people we know, only one old man – who is not a happy camper – had to comment that he did not like one of the songs (the one in Spanish, which is one of my favorites – the Via Dolorosa). Not only is he critical of his church, the music they play, the way they conduct it, and the songs they

choose; he expands his criticism to this wonderful CD (that was distributed free, incidentally). That is the way unhappy people are.

My response to my daughters is this: Ignore what the man says. Do not take it seriously. Do not let him ruin your spirit. You did a great job – everybody knows it. This person who just had to say something negative, never even recorded a CD. He would probably not have gone to the trouble or expense. He has no idea the work and time involved. He did not even have to pay for it.

And I will add: any person who would not be sensitive to what these young ladies put forth, does not warrant the receipt of the next CD. And that next CD will come by God's grace, and maybe with my sons singing on it.

You see, that is what happens to you when you are not happy: you miss out on a lot of blessings, and people categorize you and tend to leave you to yourself. The opposite applies also. We have so many young people call to come to our house just to hang around with the kids. There is nothing to do but talk and laugh. But they love the positive happy and Godly spirit. They are attracted to our house and want to be there as often as they can. I think if we allowed it and had the room, we would have 100 young people living there.

I shall give another piece of advice: Lay off reading the newspaper and watching the news. The prince and the power of the air waves knows that bad news sells. Panic sells. Fear sells. Disasters sell. He will exaggerate the negative in the world until a person thinks that is all there is. Some people seem to always be "waiting for the other shoe to drop." They are negative and fearfully minded (lack of faith). I find that people in general do not have a positive outlook on life. They find little good in life. Consequently, we *all* have to put forth effort to increase our faith. Romans 8:28 is still in the Bible. There is no bad news to those who love God. What other people think is bad news is actually an opportunity for us to see God work. And being thankful for all things causes us to see the good purpose God has for us in circumstances that others deem bad.

I want to receive the kingdom of God as a little child – a child who gets excited about little things. A child who is easy to please. I know I am a Gentile dog, but I want to be a like a puppy and keep my tail wagging when I am with my master.

In my life, I want to see folks saved. I want so be at my kid's weddings. I want to enjoy my children and their children. I want to enjoy the wife the Lord gave me. I want to enjoy the ministry and my years at our church. I want to obey Philippians 4:8.

Learn to Laugh – people like it.

Many people underestimate the power and influence of laughter. All things in moderation and with proper timing of course, laughing shows you are a real person, that you are friendly, that people can relax around you. It also proves you are off the psychotropic meds. (I have noticed many who are on psychotropic drugs lack the ability to laugh. You are "doing good" if you can get a smile from some people.)

There is nothing like laughter to "break the ice." Listen, except for when there is a great tragedy, there is no event that can't be improved with a little humor. I remember Pastor Tharpe, when he kicked off the yearly graduation services at the university. We had thousands in attendance. Being held in May, and in Louisiana, it was hot. Black robes and mortar boards do not tend to be cool. Waiting in line outdoors was for many a tedious and long task. Waiting for one's graduate to ascend the platform was usually a long wait, seeing there were hundreds of them. Often the air conditioners would freeze due to being overworked. So by the time the event started people were not in the best of spirits.

Pastor Tharpe would be given a very short introductory, and would always start off this way (I heard it many times, and it always got a laugh): "Welcome, and greetings from lovely Louisiana – home of jambalaya, crawfish pie, and file' gumbo – and...*armadillo on the half shell.*" That was all it took. The place roared. And that is all he said that was intended to be humorous. From then on people relaxed and enjoyed the service.

Psalm 126 seems appropriate:

- 1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.
- 3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.
- 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.
- 5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
- 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Avoid Doctors as much as Possible.

I am still amazed at the number of people who turn doctors into gods and do whatever “the good doctor” recommends – even to the point of damaging their organs or cutting of the flesh. They put more infallibility in a doctor than the pope. The words of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, are acceptable, but only until the doctor says contrary. Some run to the doctor for the slightest thing. Although many ask prayer for healing, you find their real faith is in the human physician.

I have a lot of saying I made up – here is one: Don’t hang around medical doctors if you want to remain healthy. Back in the days of Jesus people were healed by the Saviour himself. God was magnified in healing. Today, healing is still available from the Saviour through prayer and sanctification.

One should realize first, that God *generally* wants a person to prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospers (3 John 2). God wants the soul to prosper first, then the body.

Secondly, God’s people are sickly because of partaking unworthily of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:30): For this cause many are weak and **sickly** among you, and many sleep. If a child of God does not judge himself, he will be judged.

Thirdly, God’s mercy brings healing, but mainly so we can serve him (Philippians 2:6):

- 25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.
- 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.
- 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Fourthly, Paul was allowed a thorn in the flesh so that he would not be exalted above measure, and have the grace and power of God realized in his life. He actually gloried in his infirmities.

God commands the sick to call for the elders of the church in the Epistle of James. God wants to heal and have healthy children (just as you do), but we know there are exceptions – God will get glory from some people’s sickness. We also know some sickness is self-inflicted from poor behavior or bad habits (smoking, drinking alcohol, drugs, surfeiting, and sugar addiction come to mind). Some sickness keeps us in the right state of mind. Some sickness actually helps the body get stronger. Some ailments are for our learning. For whatever reason, God will sometimes not heal someone.

But, overall, God wants us healthy the same as you want your kids healthy. God wants us prospering the same as you want your kids prospering. Only if this health and prosperity is not used to honor God might he take it away.

Most doctors know very little about nutrition. They mainly learn how to treat symptoms with chemical drugs. These drugs do more harm than good. In contrast, God has given herbs and oils that have virtually no negative side effects, and work much better (and actually heal in some cases) than pharmaceuticals. These chemical drugs are called “sorceries” in the book of Revelation.

Most people do not know about the MIB – Medical Information Bureau – which is a giant database that records every doctor visit, prescription, test result, etc. Insurance companies and other organizations have access to this database and can determine your personal physical and mental condition with a click of a computer mouse. The world system uses this information to make important decisions that affect you.

It is well known that there are a number of cancer cures already available to people. These treatments have had many success stories and a proven track record. However, the cancer industry operates on so much money, that there is no motivation for them to find or use a low-cost cure. It is just the opposite. They make enormous amounts of money from treatment and “research.” They provoke people to give billions in order to “find a cure,” while in the meantime amputating children’s limbs or sterilizing young ladies – all in the name of “health.” Their cancer “treatments” kill and maim people. At the same time they demonize groups that practice wholesome, effective cures and detoxification programs.

A short list that I am aware of, of alternate, non-harmful cancer treatments that have a proven track record of curing people is this: Gershon Therapy, Hallelujah Diet, Rife Frequency, certain herbs, spices and oils. But all of these are secondary to prayer and seeking God for light as to how to deal with one’s sickness.

God designed the human body to withstand a lot of attacks from disease. The immune system is the key to healthy living. What we eat and do affects the immune system. Most people do not realize that the best defense against disease, and the best treatment for a disease, is to boost the immune system. This allows God’s method for optimum health.

Clean living has a great influence on good health. Since the wages of sin is death, in time, every unconfessed and unforsaken sin will eventually take its toll on the human body. Lust and pride affect the heart. Sexual sins can cause sexual diseases. Gluttony and drunkenness will affect the mind, heart digestive system, and liver. Sorcery (pharmaceuticals) affects the mind, heart, lungs, kidneys, and liver. The Bible speaks against surfeiting, gluttony, drunkenness, excess, etc.; and teaches moderation, fasting, cleanliness, etc.

Now, no one would discount the help that doctors and hospitals supply in cases of *emergency*. These have saved many lives. Hospitals are necessary places. But at the same time, how many infections (MRSA, etc.) from hospitals have caused death? I personally know of many. Many go into a hospital for a small thing and end up dead.

One of the greatest tragedies and satanic attack is the effort made to inject “vaccines” into otherwise healthy human bodies. Untold millions have suffered cancer, mercury poisoning, sterilization, autism, nerve damage, palsies, etc., as a result of vaccination programs. One reaps what he sows.

Overall, one should take responsibility for his own health – first before God, then in wisdom.

Conclusion.

We all know by experience that life is short. Only one life, soon it will pass; only what is done for Christ will last. Our life is even a vapor. God is good all the time. Our duty is to fear God and keep his commandments. As we live our lives it is very important we touch people’s lives for Jesus Christ. The influence and work in this life has as its main purpose to minister to people; to love the unlovely; to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; to hold fast till he comes.

My hope is that we will be shining lights for Jesus Christ.

NSD 10/03/11