The Christian Courier



Send all correspondence to 9914 Arkansas St. Bellflower, CA 90706

JULY/AUGUST 1993
****

"HEART CONDITION"

In the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, he writes these words. "That he (God) would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened in might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith that ye being rooted and grounded in love." Eph. 3:16-17.

Indeed without a doubt one of the most remarkable doctrines that divine scriptures offers to us as Christians is that the Son of the Living God will actually enter in and settle down in the HEART of human man. We can also read in John's gospel "Jesus answered and said unto him if a man love me he will keep my words and my father will love him and WE will come unto him and make our ABODE with him." John 14:23.

The Lord Jesus created an awesome relationship for us with God through his redemptive work on the cross. No other religion known to mankind refers to the Creator of all that is created as their Father. Not even the Isrealites have such a precious relationship that Christians do. At a great price were we placed as adopted children to God - what a glorious calling "christian".

Jesus tried to prepare his disciples HEARTS before he left the world. It all seemed too impossible for them to comprehend until the day of Penticost. The Spirit of the living Christ was given to the church that day- now the disciples knew more about what Jesus was talking about there that day than all the years before while they were with Jesus. They knew now that the Lord Jesus did not dwell in Herod's temple in Jerusalem or any other building made with hands, now through the Holy Spirit Jesus would dwell in human hearts. What higher calling can a person have than to turn to Christ and serve him with a sincere heart.

In Matthew 19:3-8 "the Pharisees also came unto him tempting him saying unto him 'is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?' and he answered and said for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let no man put asunder. They said unto him why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away? he sayeth unto them Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

After the great reconciling of man back to God through Jesus' brutal death on the cross we do not want to be guilty of separating ourselves from God with a hardened heart, it is important that we have an open heart to grow close to God.

Notice how God places the marriage between man and woman in a higher relationship than even man's own father and mother (for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh - Matt. 19:5). How painful it must be to try and get two pieces from one piece that God has joined together as one and when the two are torn apart as with anything else, neither is whole, each part has some of the other part left in it. Man has placed his marriage to his wife second to many things - jobs, money, cars, sports, kids, parents, etc. divorce seems to be all too easy of a way to get out of our problems. Now days children are even divorcing their parents, where will it all end? Paul writes to the Christians at Ephasus "husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." Eph. 5:22. As Christians, we all know how important the atoning death of

Christ was for our salvation. How fortunate we are that divorce was not an option for the Lord Jesus. Please note how the Levitical priesthood, the holy members of God's chosen nation, were to act concerning marriage- "they shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God." Lev. 21:7.

This is indeed a convicting verse when we stop and consider what the apostle Peter wrote to us "but ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood a holy nation a peculiar people that ye shall show forth the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9.

The Levites were the only ones that could go into the holy place and the most holy place which was closer to God than the rest of the nation of Israel could get. When we come into the most holy not made with hand through the intersession of the Lord Jesus, we indeed are a chosen generation. Let us not displace our position with God by a hard and callous heart. As James writes "draw nigh tc God and he will draw nigh to you cleans your hands ye sinners and purify your hearts ye doubleminded." James 4:8.

The Lord Jesus has given us the highest calling from God ever known to mankind. There is no question that a heart with the wrong motives could send a person into everlasting torture as John's gospel reads "and supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." John 13:2. We do need to examine our heart; is it a place where satan dwells or where Christ rules? An evil heart can kill us as Jesus tells us "for out the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." Matt. 15:9.

When we first come to obey the Gospel of Christ we are told how to live our lives in order to live according to the teaching of the Bible. But as we grow in grace and knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus, when in our HEARTS do the I have to's become the I want to's? Do we ever come to the place on the narrow way when we come completely free in Christ to willingly obey and serve him acceptably.

When we read scriptures does our heart burn with conviction as did the two on their way to Emmaus after the Lord Jesus' teaching (Luke 24:32). Or when we are doing

something wrong in our lives and read it or are taught it, are our hearts pricked? "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:36-37. It is a sad thing when a heart gets to the point where it is fire proof and cannot have lasting gospel truths burned into it. Or they are so calloused that the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, can no longer prick or pierce them and have a resting place there.

Paul speaks of the heart condition that it is so important for christians to have in his second epistle to the Corinthians "do we begin to commend ourselves? or need we as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." 2 Cor. 3:1-3. I wonder, does Christ still write on the hearts of men and women? By the transformation of their lives he will and can if the heart is not hardened.

The Hebrew writer tells us "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurances of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10:22. Peter also speaks "but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. 3:4.

What simple things God wants from us, a pure heart that is soft and pliable and can still be formed by the Lord Jesus' gentle touch. May I call to everyone's memory the teaching of the Lord in his majestic sermon on the mount "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. 6:21. Indeed, where is our treasure?

From Keizer, OR
Chuck Garner

BARON, OKLAHOMA

Greetings from the Baron ccngregation. We are all doing fairly well. We are holding our own - not growing much in number but hope in love and in knowledge of God. But, it seems like I am a slow learner.

We enjoy visitors; anyone coming this way will certainly be welcome to visit and worship with us. We have 3 regular speakers, Bro. Jack Warford, Bro. Bob Eldridge, and myself. Also Bro. Gene Barrett, David Brown and Dale Wilson give lessons occasionally and they do a good job. We meet each Wednesday night and have singing, fellowship and Bible study. All seem to enjoy it very much.

It's good to read about other congregations in the Courier and to know others are earnestly contending for the faith. Rev. 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." What a happy crowd that will be!

Written with brotherly love
to all for the Baron congregation,
James Brown
Rt. 2 Box 101
Westville, OK 74965
(918) 778-3240

P.S. Our box no. is not 68 anymore, it is 101

****

GOSHEN, ARKANSAS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It has been far too long since we have written to the Courier. We have had some sickness here at Goshen. Sister Maysel Buchanan had a stroke back in May, but with God's help, she has been able to come to services since missing two Sundays. Also, Sister Letha Ferguson has been diagnosed to have cancer above her right eye and possibly on her neck. They both need our prayers. Prayer is a wonderful took that God has given to us to use. Much too much we forget about it. The rest of us seem to be fine.

It seems we get smaller in attendance every Sunday, but as Jesus said "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20).

I've taken up enough space so I will close. God bless each of you and we hope to see you soon.

Your brother in Christ,
Paul N. Auslam, Jr.

****

DUNCAN, OKLAHOMA

Bro. Jerry McCay of the Lorenzo, Texas congregation held us a week-end meeting June 18-20. Bro. Jerry is a very good speaker and gave four very uplifting lessons. We really enjoy these gospel meetings. They seem to strengthen us all. We had very good attendance with a full house for the Saturday night and Sunday services. The singing is always very uplifting and enjoyable when you have a big crowd like this. We want to thank all the visitors who came from far and near to attend our meeting. Bro. David and Sis. Sheila McCay and their daughters, and Sis. Reba White and her grandson, Josh, attended from the Lorenzo congregation. We had a very big group of visitors from the Randlett congregation and also had several visitors from the Ringold congregation.

Our Sunday morning services are at 10:30 and we meet at 6:30 on Sunday night. If you live in the area or are just passing through, we'd love to have you stop in and visit with us.

Don Lewis for the
Valley View Church of Christ

****

SAN PABLO, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It has been awhile since we have sent any news from San Pablo congregation. We are all doing fine. Bro. Jack Cooper has had problems with his eyes and is going back to the doctor July 7th for more tests. We pray that they don't get any worse. We know that he thanks everyone for their prayers. Bro. Homer Bryant found that he is diabetic and is

trying to control it with diet. He is also thankful for your prayers. Homer's son, Rick Bryant, in Crescent Lake, OR is diabetic also and has had to have an operation on his back. A cyst had grown quite large and had to be removed. His sugar count was 450, he also had high blood pressure and he had an irregular heart beat. And here is how God answers prayers - within 6 days, his sugar count was 140, his blood pressure was normal, and all other symptoms were normal. The doctor could not believe it. Rick told him that God had done the healing, and the doctor had to agree. And most certainly Rick thanks everyone for your continued prayer for him. God certainly does answer fast sometimes. From critical to completely normal in just 6 days is the way God takes care of his own. And I know many more can attest to that.

We all send our love to the brethren, wherever they are. Keep the faith, and keep striving for righteousness, for this is well pleasing to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christian love,
San Pablo, CA congregation

****

KEIZER, OREGON

It's a Boy! It's official folks; the Garner's, Chuck and Dana, are the proud new parents of a happy, healthy baby boy. Chuck and Dana have decided to name the baby after Chuck's father - CHARLES ROBERT GARNER, born May 17, 1993, 8 lbs. 5 oz. All fingers and toes accounted for and I must say he's the spitting image of his father. We here in the Keizer congregation are all very happy for Chuck and Dana. The Lord has truly blessed them with a fine son.

We recently enjoyed a visit from two of Bro. J.L. Jared's brothers - Chuck and J.D. Our Bible talk was very enlightening as it always is when talking with one of the Jareds. Also, Tom and Charlene Broadway were here from Rogue River, Oregon. These Brethren are very knowledgable, the lessons that they shared with us were truly inspiring, not only to the point of provoking a deeper realm of thought, but deeper realization of our unity and love for one another. These men are a fine example of what Christ has asked us to imitate, Him. We will miss their company and the true meaning of fellowship that these Brothers and Sisters provide, not to mention the food.

We announced the new arrival and return to the fold of J.L.'s granddaughter, Lana, we are sorry to report that she will be returning to Indiana to live with her Uncle Chuck. She made a fine addition to our congregation, she will be missed. I would ask that prayers be offered in her behalf that she would remain faithful and not stumble among the blocks that satan has placed before her.

Well, that all the good or bad news that we have to report so we'll close for now. May the peace and grace of God be with all that are faithful.

In Christian love,
Brother Robert De La Cruz

P.S. Someone once said that you never know what you have until you lose it, well I say how can you truly understand what it is that you have without Jesus Christ in your life?

****

CHESTERTON, INDIANA

Fellow Christians:

When shopping, we appraise merchandise by the price tag. The price tag helps in making the decision to buy or not to buy. When searching for salvation, we don't appraise the Church by a price tag because it has already been paid. Paul told the Ephesians in Acts 20:28 that Christ "purchased His church with his own blood." Paul also told the Galatians in chapter 5:1 the "Christ hath made us free." Does this mean, since we have been bought, there is no more work to be done? On the contrary, our labors begin when we obey and are baptized. Christ said in John 12:26 "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Serving consists of following His word from cover to cover. The price paid is indicative of the importance of the church to Christ and God.

We were pleased to have recent visitors at Chesterton. Brother and Sisters James and Beulah Vanderpool, and Howard and Leola Taylor. We enjoyed two fine lessons when they were here.

Christian love to all,
Charles Jared