

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2010

COMPASSION

Jesus' ministry, when studied closely, was one of compassion and caring, especially for those who were overlooked by those who should be caring for them. The selection of disciples was from a base of common men who would become great men of compassion and caring as seen in their lives in the formation of the church. Their lives reflected the compassionate life and ministry of their Master. With that said, our lives should contain compassion for others because of the indwelling Christ. I am convinced that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are activated and operate when we feel for others as Jesus did. Jesus said that it is easy to say, "Be filled" instead of providing the filling. We as Christians continually search for answers to enhance our spiritual growth. I am firmly convinced that compassion for others is one of the answers. Jesus also said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Caring with compassion is something that we all can give.

Pastor George Ferrington

THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF A TRANSFORMED MIND

"Putting the Will of God on Display"

THE FIRE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

It's important for us to realize that sometimes fear masquerades as wisdom. In order to help us understand this statement, we need to go back to the story Pastor Bill Johnson told about the boy with the broken arm in the rear of the church. Bill Johnson said: "*When I saw that boy's broken arm, my mind was flooded with fear instead of being flooded with the testimony of miracles I'd seen with my own eyes. It may have looked like wisdom to everybody else when I called the doctor, but God knew and I knew it was fear masquerading as wisdom.*"

This man of God had lost his "Christ consciousness" and it was caused by the fact that he had lost his awareness of his history with seeing miracles. The simple truth of this is, it's easy for you and I to be "Christ minded" when things are going well. We can witness many miracles such as healings and salvation of many souls, and have great worship experiences, but then when we go home and adversity hits, our mind becomes full of negative thoughts that throw us into turmoil. This adversity is the *fire of circumstance* that expands the evil leaven that is always trying to influence the Christian's mind.

God understands fire of circumstance with its power to expand the leaven in our minds. He works with our thought patterns as revealed in Malachi 3:2, "**For He is like a refiner's fire,**" and in 4:1 we read, "**For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven.**" What is the great prophet talking about? It is a series of events that God allows that will draw certain influences to

the surface in our lives where we can see them plainly and learn to deal with them.

FIRST RESPONSE

I'm going to make a statement and I want to see how it's going to grab you: "My first response to adversity is to have faith toward God." When a soldier is engaged in warfare, how important is "first response?" The quicker we go on the offensive, the quicker the enemy is stopped. The believer's opportunity is to learn not to take too much time in responding to the enemy, and not to be moved by his strength. Anytime we let ourselves get troubled, provoked or anxious we can be assured that our "first response" time is delayed. We should be wondering, why am I so worried and bogged down by the pressure of the enemy, when the truth of the matter is, Jesus Christ bought me with a price, and freely gave me all good things including His authority and power to use? Let me answer that question. It is because our minds are so full of the leaven of Herod and of the Pharisees that we cannot think right. This leaven has worked its way into our soul, and the "fire of circumstances" causes the leaven to rise, thus driving our thoughts away from Christ. The difference between Herod's or the Pharisee's leaven and the Kingdom of Heaven leaven is that even though God's leaven is also enlarged by the "fire of circumstances", that enlargement produces only positive thoughts and emotions, never negative ones. We are not moved, but strengthened for the good fight of faith. When our minds become the "mind of Christ" our thoughts bring about "Kingdom Influence." This influence will lead us and others to miracles, and we will allow our thinking to cause those miracles to have full influence on us, changing the way we think and act.

In next month's article, we will answer the age old question, Where do storms come from? Storms that appear in our lives, like miracles, can present terrific challenges and opportunities for us to grow, but first we must determine what kind of storm we are in and where it came from. Until then, may the God of Israel bless and keep you and yours.

Gene R. Brown, Associate Pastor

WHAT A YEAR

This past year, 2009, has been quite a year. We have our first black president, a historical event; we have an economy that is quite shaky at best; we have car manufacturers being financed by the government; we have banks being bailed out by government; we have a war going on in two fronts, Iraq and Afghanistan; we have movements to remove any reference the Christianity from our public events and non-private lives; and we are seeing our freedoms eroded faster than at any time in U. S. history.

Next year, 2010, we can expect more of the same, but with increased intensity. Satan is moving faster and faster to accomplish his desires; if only he realized that his desires only brings him closer to his inevitable end. I know this is no great revelation; what I see coming is a time of great concern for those who are not operating in faith in and with our Lord Jesus Christ.

No! I am not a doomsday prophet; the Bible is the GOOD NEWS! It tells us we have hope because of Jesus Christ; it tells us we can pray and be assured we will receive what we request; it tells us God will prepare a table for us in the midst of our enemies. It tells us we don't have to fear, especially the future. Didn't God's Word tell us that He takes care of the birds of the air; and He will take better care of us, His children!

The Word of God tells us to “only believe”; to have faith the size of a mustard seed; to speak to the mountains and they SHALL move; thru Christ ALL things are possible.

The Bible, through the first chapter of Acts is the shadow and starting in the second chapter of Acts we see the reality. Hebrews tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This could have just as easily, or perhaps better, been interpreted to say that faith is the reality of things.....

Belief is the shadow and faith is the reality. Belief is the picture we create of what we desire; it is a shadow of the real. What is a shadow? It is a picture expression of what is real; think about when the sun shines on something, how it casts a shadow or image of that object, or we could say a picture of the image. The object itself is very real. So what do we have? A shadow (belief) of reality or the reality (faith) of a shadow. Belief and faith cannot be used interchangeably, as some would suggest. We must have a picture of what we desire, and then our faith in combination with God’s faith makes what we believe into a reality.

In the coming year what we believe is going to be more important than ever; please remember that what we say is a representation of what we believe in our hearts. It is imperative that we believe that God will provide for us; that He will provide money, food, work, transportation, safety, and peace. We should begin today building a picture in our minds and hearts of God’s provision; and we also begin having faith that these are reality in our lives. We can’t depend on the pastor and elders to believe for us; although they will. It has been the mission of Christian Fellowship to teach all that come through the doors how to believe and have faith for themselves. There may, and probably will, come a time when they will be believing for themselves as well as for the congregation.

I strongly encourage you to begin today believing for the outcome you desire and then applying the faith of God that is inside you as a believer to make your shadow a reality. Now doesn’t that take the pressure off you to make something happen? It is God’s faith you are activating! So go ahead, believe for the impossible; poverty is no match for God’s faith, sickness and disease is no match for God’s faith, the devil is no match for God’s faith. Now, go out and activate your faith. Verbalize your desires and watch for the results! God is good, all the time!

May your faith grow beyond your wildest expectations in 2010 and may the peace and blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ be yours.

Your servant, Ray Jennings

BLESSED IS THE MAN

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (James 1:12) I am convinced that God does not bring trials, tribulations or testings upon us, but that He “allows” them in order for our faith to be tested. We know from reading our Bible, that there are levels of faith; such as “great faith” or “little faith” describing characters of the Bible. We are admonished by the Word to allow our faith to grow by believing and receiving all that God has promised us, whether it is visible or not. **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”** (Hebrews 11:1) As our faith becomes stronger, our resolve to serve and trust the Lord will overcome the world’s influence in our lives. The result is the manifestation of God’s Word and His promises in our lives. The Father has not withheld any

good thing from His children; it is all in store for us when we prepare ourselves to receive it.

“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” (Romans 4:8) In referring to King David, the Apostle Paul is repeating a statement by David that rings totally true to us today. If only we could realize the wealth of God’s blessings to His children. We have not, because we ask not. God has already done it all, including forgiving us for our sins. It is our own guilt for our sins that separates us from the Father. It is our own selfishness and greed that burdens us down. His will is for us to rise above the weakness of the flesh. God knows our weak condition, and He has allowed for it. If only we would realize that the Blood of Jesus, shed on the Cross of Calvary, and sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, is sufficient, completing all that needs to be done. The flesh does not understand and will not accept this sacrifice, and wars for its own brand of immortality, by the ways of the world.

Job was a righteous man, upright and holy before the Lord. He prayed and he worshiped God; but he worried about his children. Satan demanded that God allow him to test Job, to see if he truly would worship God under trials and testings. God removed the hedge of protection and allowed Satan to test Job. You remember that Job lost everything, his children were killed, his possessions were stolen or destroyed, most of his friends abandoned him or ridiculed him, his wife told him to curse God and die, and his health failed him. Yet, still he would not curse God or accuse God. Through it all, he remained true to God, though at times he wished he were dead. We find in Job 42:10, the final resolve of God, **“And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.”** Job is an example of the grace of God, even in the midst of trials, testings and persecutions. Why did God allow Satan to try Job? Why do bad things happen to good people? Who can know the purposes and plans of God? Ours is not to understand all the ways of God; we are to trust Him in all things, knowing that He has already fulfilled His plan for us.

All of us could share times and events in which God delivered us from a test or trial. Perhaps it was not as dramatic as Job or David, or even Jesus as He was tested in the wilderness. But His power to deliver us is an ever present promise that can not fail. We have holy angels to watch over us and to bless us and to keep us. They respond to our faith and respect of God’s Word. I have attached “blessing” scriptures to go along with our study today. I encourage you to read these and meditate upon them in the power of the Holy Spirit. May you be blessed!!!

Mike Woods

Christian Fellowship
994 Willie Hill Road
Gilbert, La. 71336

**MAY YOU BE BLESSED
OF THE LORD OUR GOD
AND FILLED WILL ALL
HIS GOODNESS IN 2010**