

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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August 18, 2024

### ***“An Opportune Time”***

By George Parsley

At the end of Jesus being tempted we read, *“And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.”* (Luke 4:13).

Robertson explains it this way, *“Until a good opportunity should return, the language means. We are thus to infer that the devil returned to his attack from time to time. In the Garden of Gethsemane he tempted Jesus more severely than here. He was here trying to thwart the purpose of Jesus to go on with his Messianic plans, to trip him at the start. The devil attacked Jesus by the aid of Peter (Mark 8:33), through the Pharisees (John 8:40.), besides Gethsemane (Luke 22:53).*

Just as the devil sought opportunity with Jesus so he does with us. We may defeat him one time but he will return when he thinks he can get us in another situation we may face.

As Peter said, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”* (1 Peter 5:8-9).

He will attack when we least expect him to pounce. He roams around like a lion, he doesn't make himself know. He hides in the bushes or chaos and waits for a weak point and then pounces. For this reason we must remain sober and vigilant when afflictions and trials come in life.

The devil hides in the afflictions that we face. He crouches at the door of opportunity. As God told Cain, *“If you do well, will you not be accepted? “And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”* (Genesis 4:7).

The devil sought opportunity in Cain's rebuke from God. He does the same with us. When we are rebuked by the word of God then the devil will seek opportunity to pounce on our stubborn will and desire. The devil does not continually attack us, but he will leave us for a time and then return in some tragedy or affliction that we are facing. The devil entered Judas because of his greed (Luke 22:3). And he got Peter on doctrine and the will of God (Matthew 16:21-23).

The devil will also use people as the opportunity to get us. Paul wrote, *“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough”* (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

And he goes on to say, *“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”* (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Any time is an opportune time. Any person is an opportune person. Any affliction is an opportune affliction for the devil to return and tempt us. His influence and temptation is not far from any of us, and just like the lion, he will use any cover he can to hide in.

# "SANCTUARY CHURCHES"

By Al Diestelkamp

A relatively new phenomenon in our nation is the emergence of what are known as "sanctuary cities" in which people who have committed certain federal crimes are immune to deportation. Needless to say, this has created great controversy among the citizens of our nation. Unfortunately, a similar problem exists among our brethren regarding corrective church discipline.

Corrective discipline is neglected in many congregations. We ought to ask ourselves how it happens that churches that are known for going "by the Book" are able to ignore the command to "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). We might be tempted to blame it on influence from the permissive attitude in our current culture that values "tolerance" over truth. While that may make matters worse, the problem has been around far too long for that to be the real answer. I suspect one of the main deterrents to corrective church discipline lies with the fact that almost everyone has close family members or friends who have become unfaithful and many are unwilling to obey the apostle's command to "not keep company" with them (i.e., 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

If my suspicion is accurate we should be reminded of what Jesus said about familial relations taking priority over Him: *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."* (Matthew 10:37).

Another deterrent to church discipline is the unpleasant nature of it. Even the scriptures testify that *"no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous..."* (Hebrews 12:11a). This truth is in the context of respecting the discipline of the Lord, illustrated by discipline fathers administer to their children (vv.5-10). The lack of joy is not only for the one receiving discipline, but also for the ones administering it. However, whether it is the Lord's discipline, a father's discipline, or church discipline, *"nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."* (v.11b).

Even if a congregation is faithful in disciplining one who continues in sin, he is likely to simply seek out another congregation who will accept him with no questions asked. This diminishes the effectiveness of the chastening. Of course, a congregation has an obligation to determine whether any previous withdrawal was justified, but too often no effort is made in that regard. The need and desire for greater numbers causes many brethren to adopt the "I know nothing" approach. Some express the fear that any inquiry would be a violation of local autonomy, while others simply don't believe in corrective church discipline except in extreme situations.

Though no congregation would likely admit they have become a "sanctuary church," there is no doubt that there are churches that are known for harboring those from whom other brethren have had to withdraw themselves. Sometimes they are even willing to accept some about whom we are commanded to *"deliver unto Satan"* (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

The existence of "sanctuary churches" has made it possible for backsliding members of faithful churches to employ a clever scheme to avoid any effective corrective discipline. What they do is let it be known that they have "placed membership" with another congregation and shortly thereafter just quit attending, knowing the "sanctuary church" will do nothing.

Signs in front of our meeting places often include the inviting words, "Everyone Welcome." It is true that we should welcome everyone to hear the word proclaimed, but that does not mean that we should accept everyone into fellowship with us in our work for the Lord.

When Saul of Tarsus tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem the disciples rejected him until Barnabas vouched for him (Acts 9:26-28). Later in life, as the apostle Paul, his reputation was such that he needed no "letters of commendation," like some others (2 Corinthians 3:1). These examples make it clear that the early church recognized the right and need for a local congregation to control who will be part of its fellowship.

Often when brethren move from one community to another we already know of their faith and can accept them without any question, but when they are not known to us we would do well to make sure they are true disciples and have the endorsement of faithful brethren from whence they came. We should especially be wary of those who leave a congregation near to where they live in favor of a church that is more distant lest we harbor ones who are avoiding responsibility or simply evading corrective discipline.

**Those Who Need Our Prayers & Encouragement:**

Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, & Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Jamie Jones, Mary Ann Holley, LuAnne Parrish, Billy Grisham, Burt Ward, Wesley Trimble, Anita Harris, Fred Johnson, Bill Hall, Carla & George Hutto, Nathan Cox, Angela Warren (Lisa Busby's friend who has cancer), B.J. Graves, Danny Cottrell, and Chandler McCain (Cancer).

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Carson Cox  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "Satan's Challenges To The Faith Of A New Convert"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Jerry Kennemur  
Hebrews  
**Author:** Daniel H. King, Sr  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #66, Question #14

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Paul Busby  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Doug George  
**Scripture Reading:** Galatians 2:20  
**Song Leader:** Tim Harris Sr.  
**Lord's Supper:** Fred Johnson  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "What Is The Christian Life Pt. 2"  
**Closing Prayer:** Lee Busby

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**August 21, 2024**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Brian Meade  
**Workbook:** The Minor Prophets  
**Author:** By Marc Gibson  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page 53, Question #1  
**Invitation:** Carson Cox  
**Song Leader:** Paul Busby  
**Closing Prayer:** Blake Briggs

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# **“Satan’s Challenges To The Faith Of A New Convert”**

Lesson Text: **1 Thessalonians 3:1-5.**

## **I. Family Pressure To Leave The Faith.**

- The Family May Be Strongly Opposed To The Conversion To Christ.
- Jesus Knew This Would Happen- **Matthew 10:34-36.**
- But If Someone Gives In To Such Pressure- **Matthew 10:37-39.**
  - Pressure To Disown/Have Nothing To Do With The New Christian.
  - Take Them Out Of Their Will And Inheritance.
  - Mock And Belittle Their Faith Constantly.
- Why Would They Treat Them This Way?
  - They Believe Differently Than They Do Now.
  - They Feel The New Christian Has Gone Against The Family Way.
  - They Feel Condemned By The Christian Doing Right- **Hebrews 11:7; John 3:19-20.**
- But We Must Listen To Jesus- **Matthew 10:21-23.**

## **II. Satan’s Power To Discourage.**

- In Satan’s Tool Box— His Greatest Tool Is Discouragement!
- What Discouragement Can Do:
  1. Weakens Our Faith. 2. Stops Our Zeal For God. 3. Destroys Our Resolve To Do Right.
- Causes Of Discouragement:
  - Unreal Expectations— Think It Will Be Very Easy...
  - Difficulties In The Way- **Mark 4:3-8; 4:14-17. 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4.**
  - Weariness- **Hebrews 12:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 3:13.**
- What To Do When We Are Discouraged?
  - Consider What Jesus Endured For Us- **Hebrews 12:3.**
  - Talk With Brothers And Sisters In Christ- **Acts 16:40; Romans 1:10-12.**
  - Pray About It- **Hebrews 5:7.**

## **III. Lack Of Purpose And Direction.**

- **Matthew 28:19-20,** We Are To Baptize And Teach Them How To Live....
- New Converts Need Knowledge And Training In Christ’s Ways.
- This Involves The Whole Church Taking An Active Part In Helping & Encouraging!
- **Titus 2:1-8.** Older Christians Must Be Good Examples & Teach The New Convert!
- **1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18;** But When There’s A Lack Of Growing—There’s A Danger!
- **2 Peter 1:4-11.**

## **IV. Worldliness Overtakes Them Again.**

- We Must Fill Our Lives With The New Life In Christ- **Matthew 12:43-45.**
- Peer Pressure May Be Effective- **1 Corinthians 15:33; Romans 12:2.**
- Revival Of Past Sins- **Acts 8:9-13; 18-24.** Simon’s Old Way! **2 Peter 2:20-22.**
- Danger Of Falling Away- **Hebrews 3:12-15; 2 Timothy 4:10.**

## **“What Is The Christian Life?” Pt. 2**

Lesson Text: **Galatians 2:20.**

### **I. The Christian Life Is About Faith, Hope, & Love.**

- **Colossians 1:1-5.**
- Gospel Produces Faith (**Romans 10:17**) — Faith Produces Hope— And Love.
- **Colossians 1:6-8; 1 Peter 1:20-22; Hebrews 6:10-12.**
- We Live By Faith- **Romans 1:16-17.**
- “*For We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight.*” **2 Corinthians 5:7.**
- **1 Corinthians 13:7-13.**

### **II. The Christian Life Is About Running To Reach The Prize.**

- **Hebrews 12:1-2.** “*The Race That Is Set Before Us....*”
- **1 Corinthians 9:24-27.**
- **Philippians 3:12-15; Luke 13:24.**
- **2 Timothy 4:6-8; Revelation 2:9-11.**
- How Are We Running?

### **III. The Christian Life Is About Devoted Worship To God.**

- **Acts 2:41-42 (NASB); vs. 45-46; Luke 24:50-53.** How Luke’s Gospel Ends!
- We Are Preparing For Eternity— By Worshipping God Now!
- Heaven Is A Place Of Worship! **Revelation 4:8-11.**
- **Hebrews 12:22-28.**

### **IV. The Christian Life Is About Loving Obedience To Jesus.**

- **1 John 4:19; 1 John 5:1-3**— Parallel In Principal To **John 10:27-28.**
- When Jesus Commands Us To Do Anything, He Does It For Our Salvation!
  - Repentance- **Luke 13:3; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 3:19.**
  - **Mark 10:21-22.** Jesus loved Him; He Also Wanted His Love Above All Things!
- **John 21:15-19.**