

If the denominations, which make no attempt to practice New Testament Christianity, have come to denounce this type of emphasis for its complete lack of spiritual content, it is indeed strange how churches of Christ, who are supposed to be set for the defense of the Gospel, can justify such spiritually empty messages. The preachers who go around with this type of message betray a total lack of conception of the meaning of New Testament Christianity. Elders who allow this sort of thing are either ignorant of the Bible or unable to withstand the pressure of a generation of “super-salesmen” preachers. In both cases, it is a disgrace to the cause of New Testament Christianity.

If the central theme of the Gospel is not *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*, as Paul delivered it in Corinth (1 Cor. 2:2), then, in the words of the lamented Foy E. Wallace, Sr., “We have been reading the wrong book.”

—Earl West, deceased

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Let us pray for...

- Mike Mallett** – fighting lymphoma (faithful brother in Evant, TX)  
**Don Henderson** – pacemaker surgery Tuesday (Sheri Woodall’s Dad, Jeff’s Granddad)  
**Ken Chumbley** – fighting cancer and other physical problems (Gospel preacher)  
**Janice Ruffner** – severe blood clots (Sherry Gleaton’s mother)  
**Ann Henderson** – cancer (Sheri Woodall’s aunt)  
**Brian Ritter** – rare autoimmune disease (son of Rick Ritter, Gospel preacher)  
**Tim Smith** – chronic physical problems from auto injuries (Gospel preacher)  
**Richie Aidoo** – Joshua Aidoo’s 8-year-old son (seizures)  
**Samuel Bagsangi** – Gospel preacher in Philippines we help support  
**Joshua Aidoo** – Gospel preacher in Ghana we help support

### Records you helped make last week...

Bible Classes	15
Sunday AM Worship	15
Sunday PM Worship	15
Wednesday PM Bible Class/Worship	16
Contribution	\$666.20
Contribution average (2014)	\$851.01

### Internet Sermon broadcasts...

Both sermons each Sunday are broadcast, beginning at approximately 10:45–10:50 a.m. and 1:12–1:15 p.m., via Internet through our Website, [www.northpointcoc.com](http://www.northpointcoc.com).

### Assignments...

Bible class teacher for August	Jerry Smith
Chairman of Men’s Meetings (July–September)	Jerry Smith
Preacher, <i>The Lighthouse</i> editor	Dub McClish



# The Northpoint Lighthouse

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## Humbly Serve

**N**ear the end of his first epistle, Peter wrote the following significant exhortation:

Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (1 Pet. 5:5–6).

James also quotes this statement of God’s attitude toward pride and humility (Jam. 4:6), which was first stated by Solomon (Pro. 3:34). If brethren could universally learn – and heed – this prescription, it would prevent most conflicts and problems among the saints, other than those that must come when Truth rises against impenitent error.

The thrust of Peter’s words encompasses two principal concepts: “humility” and “service.” We are to **serve** one another **humbly**. Humility is not for mere occasional or seldom use, but for constant wear as our “girding” (“clothing,” KJV). The “girding” may refer to the girdle or belt which was the sign of a slave. Peter may have even been reflecting on that occasion of more than 30 years earlier, when the Lord of mankind literally became the servant of the apostles as He humbly “girded” Himself with a towel and washed their feet (John 13:4–6). The whole point of that object lesson was to teach His apostles exactly what Peter here exhorted all saints to do: **humbly serve** one another.

The motivation of their humble service related to God’s attitude toward such unselfish behavior. Those who are proud (and thus can never serve, but must always be served) displease God; He opposes and resists such. However, those who are humble bask in the favor or grace of God. Since this is God’s attitude toward pride and humility, respectively, Peter enjoined all to humble themselves “under the mighty hand of God.”

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**Sunday**  
 Bible Class 9:30 AM  
 Worship 10:30 AM  
 Worship 1:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
 B.C./Worship 7:00 PM

The apostle here depicted God as possessing a “hand” such as men possess. The hand is that member of the body with which we most frequently act and accomplish our tasks. It is simply transferred to God in a figure (i.e., an anthropomorphism) as that means by which He exercises His Divine power and strength to bless or curse. The “mighty hand” of God will cast down the proud, but the same “migh-ty hand” will exalt those who humbly serve others.

Although we **may** see those who humbly serve others (and the Christ) reap rich rewards on this earth, neither this – nor any other – inspired passage promises such immediate exaltation. Neither does Peter hint that the exaltation of the humble servant relates to protection from physical suffering or persecution nor that it involves great wealth, fame, or authority. The exaltation promised is the **true** exaltation in the home of the soul around God’s throne. There and then He will bestow “the crown of glory that fadeth not away” (v.4), and He will bequeath the inheritance of “eternal glory” (10).

Let us not grow impatient, even under suffering, for God will exalt us “in due time” (v. 6). God does things according to His calendar: “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9).

Dub McClish  
Denton, TX

## Road to Freedom?

**R**obin Williams’ suicide (8/11/14) caused quite a stir and outpouring of sympathy. Many lamented the loss of such a genius. His penchant for crudeness aside, he was certainly a talented and creative comic and actor. And his longstanding celebrity and perpetual good humor made his suicide all the more shocking. One can understand that, at times like this, people would try to put the best spin on things, to try to find comfort and make sense out of an evidently senseless event. However, not all the comfort and sense-making has been truly comforting or sensible, because it has not been true.

For example, consider the following, posted on Internet social media by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (commonly known as “The Academy,” the group known for the Academy Awards/Oscars): “Genie, you’re free.”

This post was widely viewed and “favorited” by hundreds of thousands. The post derives from the film, *Aladdin*, in which Robin Williams performed the voice of the Genie. At the conclusion of the film, Aladdin has a wish to make, and instead of wishing something for himself, he wishes for the Genie to be free, thus liberating the Genie from his centuries-old bondage to a lamp and its owner. By applying the emancipative utterance, “Genie, you’re free,” to Williams’ suicide, the implication is that suicide provided Williams the desired release from his struggles with addiction and depression.

This is an irresponsible suggestion. Others could easily, but falsely reason, “If suicide made Robin Williams free from his problems, why can’t it make me free

from mine?” “Copycat suicide” is a well-documented phenomenon. As Christine Moutier, chief medical officer for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said, “Suicide should never be presented as an option. That’s a formula for potential contagion.”

And suicide is not a viable option – not ever. It can never lead to freedom. Self-murder is still murder, and as such, brings condemnation (Gal. 5:21). It mocks God’s right to give and take human life (Ecc. 12:7; Jam. 4:14). Suicide is surrender, and is a coward’s way out. It is selfish, in that it gives no consideration to loved ones left behind, who will have to endure the remainder of their lives haunted by the nightmare their loved one left behind. Or suicide can be so selfish that it **does** give consideration to loved ones left behind, deliberately calculated to inflict the greatest degree of pain possible upon them.

This is not to suggest that those contemplating suicide are not facing significant problems. This is not to suggest that some people are not in serious need of help, because they are. And we should be on the lookout for warning signs, ready to provide gentle encouragement to those so desperately in need of compassion. But suicide should never be held up as praiseworthy, or as a road to freedom. That is a destination to which suicide can never bring anyone.

– Lee Moses  
Union City, TN

## Back to Basics

**W**hatever happened to the old-fashioned idea that the church exists to preach the Gospel and that the purpose of the Gospel is to save souls? Judging from some of the bulletins we see and some announcements we are asked to make, some churches of Christ today appear to have gone over to the YMCA.

We are all for families knowing how to make money, and we are equally happy to see people make a success out of their lives, but churches of Christ should be concerned to preach in today’s world the same Gospel that was delivered in primitive times – to save souls from sin. Using that Gospel as a guideline, they ought to teach people how to grow spiritually and be prepared for heaven.

The church today is in serious danger of falling victim to a materialistic “gospel” – how to make money, how to get rich, how to be successful in business, in social life, in school, et cetera. One of the surest signs that we are more interested in material values than in spiritual ones is when lectures on such themes, because of their novelty, are more attractive than the message of a redeeming Savior.

One of the denominational journals we get had a recent lead article titled, “The Disease of the Health and Wealth Gospel,” and the editors were deploring the popularity of a so-called “gospel” that tells us the way to be either “healthy or wealthy.”