



The Northpoint Lighthouse

Volume 5, Number 47
November 22, 2009

I will chum with you, suffer with you, laugh and play with you, and help you to be happy. In the future, all correction and discipline shall be exercised in wisdom and sweetened by love. I will bite my tongue when impatient criticism seeks utterance. I will keep saying over and over in my mind, "He is nothing but a mere child, and needs tender care." Yes, I shall be cheerful and good natured, and keep my home happy. I will be the father I should be and let you, my little son, be my sweet little child. In the past I have asked entirely too much of you. God bless and keep you, my sweet little son, and make me more like you! I now kiss your little fingers and forehead. Good night! Good night, little son!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

McClishes gone next Sunday...

Rick and Jerry will be preaching in Dub's absence

Let us pray for...

Rick & Sheila Beauchamp—his job hunt, mother

Magen Broking—In Missouri for military training

Waynette Davis, Sharon Harp—health problems

Lavonne McClish—macular degeneration and other health problems

Janice Parks—her health and family burdens

Rick Heimberger—cancer

Records you helped make last week...

Bible Class	9
Sunday AM Worship	13
Sunday PM Worship	12
Wednesday PM Bible Class/Worship	12
Contribution—11/15/09	\$395.00
Contribution average (2009)	\$340.53

Sermon broadcasts...

Both sermons each Sunday are broadcast via Internet, available at our Website, www.northpointcoc.com. The Sunday morning sermon begins at approximately 10:47 a.m., and Sunday afternoon at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Bible class teacher for November Sundays Darrell Broking

(Rick, Dub, and Jerry will teach on Wednesdays in Darrell's absence)

Chairman of Men's Meetings (October–December) Darrell Broking

Preacher, The Lighthouse editor Dub McClish

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Church of Christ**

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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

SERVICE

When Jesus reminded the apostles of His own service to others, He used it as an example of how they should serve (Mat. 20:27). He taught them that true greatness lay not in being served, but in serving (Luke 22:26). He taught the lesson of going the second mile (Mat. 5:41), of giving to others (Luke 6:38), and of treating others as we wish them to treat us (Mat. 7:12).

The devil has so much gained control of the hearts of men today that the words *servant* and *service* are all but forgotten. Most of our world seems to be centered on "I," "Me," "My," and "Mine." The merchant and his employees often appear indifferent to the customer anymore, causing the consumer to be treated as more of an inconvenience than an asset. The mood and climate of the day is one of rudeness, self-assertiveness, I-don't-care-about-anybody-else-ness, and what's-in-it-for-me-ism. We see it in politics, sports, and entertainment, as well as in business settings. It is a delightful surprise to find someone who will go even part of the first mile of service any more, and you may as well forget about the second mile! Jesus' words concerning the rich foolish farmer well fit the way many approach life nowadays: "Soul, . . . take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19).

Unfortunately, we see it all too often in the church as well. The famine of the serving spirit in the church has turned preachers and elders into beggars and members into murmurers and complainers. There are some congregations that have a high percentage of their members "involved" in some kind of activity, but all too often those activities relate far more to the flesh than to the spirit. Elders and preachers should not have to beg Christians to study, visit, try to convert others, give generously, attend Gospel meeting series and lectureships, and even assemble regularly for Bible classes and worship.

True servants do their duty to God and to one another for the joy of serving, without having to be begged. It is the non-servant spirit that causes us to place our own convenience, plans, and desires above the responsibilities Christ has placed upon us. It is this awful selfishness that produces those who must constantly be served and accommodated by others, but who never think of serving others. Such have forgotten Paul's injunction: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). One might also observe that in so acting, one also follows the example of the Lord.

Because of the deadly selfishness gripping our age, a growing number of Christians are demanding that things be done their way, or else. Of course, we must have this firm resolve about doing things the Lord's way. We dare not, however, confuse our personal scruples with God's will and force them upon others. The scribes and Pharisees were skilled at such, and Jesus laid bare their folly with His question: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" (Mat. 16:3). We see this trait in those who follow in the steps of Diotrephes in their determination to dominate every situation of which they are a part (3 John 9–11). They are the sort who will "rule or ruin" in a congregation over the color of the carpet, the number of songs before the sermon, the times of meeting, and other such earth-shattering issues. These neither serve Christ nor their fellow man, but their own carnal ambitions. Let us determine to live the life of service Christ taught us to live by both His words and deeds.

—Dub McClish
Denton, TX

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PROVIDENCE

The name of this Biblical concept comes from the account of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. When Abraham and Isaac went together to the place of sacrifice, Isaac asked a pertinent question: "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7, NKJV). Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (v. 8). Later, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, though he was in the very act of doing so. Abraham looked and saw "a ram caught in a thicket by its horns" (22:13). After offering it to the Lord, he named that place "Jehovah Jireh," meaning "The-Lord-Will-Provide" (v. 14).

God has always worked providentially in the lives of His people. At times He worked miraculously throughout the Old Testament; certainly miracles, signs, and wonders were in operation during the lifetimes of Jesus and His apostles. But God's providence has always been in operation whether or not miraculous manifestations were in evidence.

The question people often want to know is: "How does God work providentially?" Is such a question answerable? We might ask a number of questions about the ram Abraham espied. "Was it there when the patriarch and his son arrived, or did God miraculously put it there (create one on the spot or transport an already-existing ram to that location)?" "Could the animal have simply wandered there at the right time, or did God specifically guide it there?" These questions cannot be answered without more information, which God did not give us. Such is the wonder of providence. In eternity we may know precisely what was accomplished on our behalf at various times in our lives, but here we can only speculate. It is an exercise in foolishness to insist that anyone explain precisely how God operates in our best interests; God is far cleverer than men.

Christians must be open to the possibility that God is working providentially without being dogmatic. After King Ahasuerus issued the order, which was de-

signed to exterminate the Jews, Mordecai informed Esther that she needed to plead for her people (Est. 4:8). She balked at this request, because to approach the king meant putting her life on the line. Mordecai further implored her to act, assuring her that she and her father's house would not be above the coming destruction. Then he asked her a pointed question: "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14).

In other words, he wanted her to consider the possibility that she had reached the exalted state of beloved wife to the king for a reason. What other Jew had access to this powerful man? Who else with any credibility could perhaps alter the unjust decree that Haman, in his emotional wrath, had obtained from the king? Mordecai's observation means that we must be open to the possibility that we are where we are for a reason. He did not tell her with certainty, "That's the reason you're there. Do something." But it was an idea that merited consideration.

As to refraining from saying, I know that God providentially arranged this situation, even the inspired apostle Paul wrote to Philemon of his runaway slave Onesimus' conversion: "For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose" (v. 15). Paul did not insist he see it that way, but he wanted Philemon to consider that option.

How does God bring things about? Only He knows. That He does so is beyond dispute (Rom. 8:28; 1 Pet. 5:10). Mortals—even Christian mortals—are not privy to the workings of God. We do not need to know the means by which He provides. We need only to be open to the idea that we are where we are for a purpose—to do something constructive for the kingdom.

—Gary Summers
Winter Park, FL

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MY LITTLE SON

In an article that appeared in the October 13, 1955, *Gospel Advocate*, the late brother Gus Nichols confessed that one day he had been in a very ill temperament and overly critical of his son. After the boy went to bed, he reflected upon the fact that he had been an unreasonable and overbearing father that day. What follows are the last paragraphs of his article:

Son, it was not that I did not love you, but because I expected too much of youth. I was foolishly trying to put a man's head upon a boy's shoulders. True, you are not perfect, but you are as fine and good mannered as the best of children around us, and that in spite of the fact that your little heart has starved for love and appreciation. You did not deserve my treatment of you, my son. Even when you feared what the outcome might be, you rushed to kiss me goodnight.

Son, I have come to kneel at your bedside, choking with emotion, and in deep repentance! I know you could not understand these things if I were to say them to you in your waking hours. But I have come to make free and full confession, and I have prayed to God to strengthen me in my high resolve and purpose of heart. Tomorrow, I will be a real daddy.