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Paul's Passions

By:

Elder Craig W. DeLoach

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the church in Rome is his most detailed exposition of the doctrines of the faith. As such, it can confidently be referred to as the apostle's Magnum Opus. In his introductory comments, Paul declares that he was called to be an apostle. He emphasizes his position as a slave of Jesus Christ and then surprises us (especially when we consider his history of persecuting the church) by stating that he was separated from his mother's womb to these purposes. The content of the letter, particularly as it has to do with justification, has impacted the belief system of many of its readers. Most notably Martin Luther, the great reformer, was converted in his understanding regarding works and justification. Luther learned that salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone. He no longer needed to lead the ascetic life of deprivation, endeavoring to establish his salvation by keeping the works of the law.

Paul's introduction is contained in the first seven verses of the letter. Once he has concluded those comments, the apostle writes passionately regarding three subjects: prayer, people, and the gospel. The textual area for these three subjects is found in Romans 1:8-17.

Paul's Passion for Prayer

Paul's passion for prayer is expressed in verses 8-10 as follows:

> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; *Making request*, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you (Emphases added).

The apostle understood the priority that should be given to thanking God. In this letter, that is the first thing the apostle does. Paul was an Old Testament scholar, and he knew that the Old Testament saints of God were always passionate in giving thanks to God. Psalm 106:1 is an excellent example: "Praise ye the LORD. *O give thanks unto the LORD*; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Emphasis added). In Psalm 136, the psalmist is utilizing Hebrew poetic parallelism in the first three verses. In this psalm, the writer is using what is known as synonymous parallelism. Synonymous parallelism is where the writer states a thing one way and then repeats it another way. Notice the way and the subject of the first three verses of Psalm 136,

> O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.

His point is obvious. Those who have experienced the mercy of God should be diligent in giving thanks. The author repeats this refrain with minor changes and then goes on to enumerate the mercies of God to His people. Such mercies should always prompt thanksgiving.

In this regard, God's people are fickle and undependable. In Chapter 17 of the Gospel of Luke, we become acquainted with Jesus' desire to receive thanksgiving for the mercy He bestowed upon ten lepers. The text notes that "it came to pass, as he [Jesus] entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off" (Luke 17:12, Brackets added). Immediately, the text states that "they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13). The lepers' petition was for mercy, and Jesus responded by cleansing them from their otherwise incurable condition. They were all cleansed of their leprosy, but only one returned to give thanks. The text states that

"when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks . . ." (Luke 17:15-16). I am certain all ten of these lepers were grateful for their cleansing, their healing. However, the response of Jesus, although pleased with the response of the one leper who returned to give Him thanks, reveals His disappointment in the nine when He said, "Were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17). The point made here is obvious, and the questions before us is "How often do we turn back and give thanks to our Creator for His tender mercies in our lives?" This strikes right at the heart of our gratefulness to our heavenly Father.

In his letter to the church at Rome, the apostle gave thanks for the saints in Rome saying, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). Paul always thanked God for those who had come to faith in Christ. Notice his comments in Philippians 1:3-4 where he thanks ". . . God upon every remembrance of you [the Philippian believers], Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Brackets added). Although it may seem unusual, we should follow Paul's example and, just as he did, give thanks for our fellowship in the gospel with likeminded saints and for their faith in Christ.

Paul passionately believed, not only in the necessity of prayer, but also in the power of prayer. He was not hesitant to petition the saints of God to pray for him. An outstanding example of that is found in 1 Thessalonians and again in 2 Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians, the apostle's petition is short and to the point. There he says simply "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25). In 2 Thessalonians, the apostle's petition is a passionate request for the saints' prayerful consideration for the success of his calling,

> Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

Consequently, he continually exhorted others to embrace prayer in their daily walk of faith. Notice his remarks to the church in Thessalonica: "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Paul's Passion for People

In examining these opening remarks of Paul, we are immediately confronted with his passion and desire to see the saints at Rome face to face. Notice his remarks in verses 10-13,

> Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often-times I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

This was part of Paul's prayer; that is, his petition to God that he might come to Rome by God's will. His passion to see them is revealed in verse 11 where the apostle says, "for I long to see you." That word "long" expresses an intense desire. That intense desire is not only to see them, but also to worship with them, to join in their assembly. Paul's desire should be the desire of every believer. Paul emphasizes the need for being established and comforted in his remarks. His point is obvious. These blessings can only happen through personal contact. We all need to be established

(strengthened) and comforted (exhorted) in our Christian walk. Believers are assaulted daily by the trials and tribulations of life. In the trying times of life, the fellowship of the saints strengthens and exhorts us to stand firm and understand the will of God in all things. Sadly, this is not the desire of our 21st century brethren. Many have become complacent about assembling together on the Lord's Day. Many have turned their back on the "organized church" and feel as though they can worship just as well at home while watching some televangelist on their smart television.

Scripture is not silent about this. The exhortation given in Hebrews chapter 10 expresses the importance of assembling together. There the writer states, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). The writer goes on to explain how this is accomplished. In verse 25, he remarks that believers should not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another . . ." This is essentially the point that Paul is making in his letter to the church at Rome. Believers help one another in a myriad of ways. In Romans, Paul was emphasizing that his wish was to "impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you . . ." (Romans 1:11-12). Paul uses the word "established," which carries the meaning of strengthening. He then speaks of the need to be "comforted," and here, he means encouraged. This is what believers do for one another.

Paul's Passion for the Gospel

In Romans 1:14-17, we are acquainted with Paul's passion for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In these verses, he says the following:

> I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

In the first instance, the apostle states that he is a debtor. I think it is important to point out that this is not some fiduciary obligation. He is not indebted to someone for a service done to him. The apostle's indebtedness is due to his calling (See Romans 1:1). When the apostle states in verse 14, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" he is speaking of those who are Gentiles. Paul was called by Christ to be the apostle to the Gentiles. In Acts 9, Christ speaks to Ananias stating, "Go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul was never restricted to whom he would preach the gospel. The previous verse affirms that calling.

When we move to verses 15 and 16, we notice Paul's aggressiveness regarding the presentation of the gospel of Christ. In verse 15, the apostle speaks of his "readiness" to preach. In verse 16, he states that he is not "ashamed" of the gospel of Christ. Why does he say this? It is because "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The importance of this statement is found in verse 17, where the apostle continues stating, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: . . ."

Paul was always ready to preach the gospel. His passion for the good news in Christ Jesus is an understatement, and his passion to preach was based upon his understanding of what the gospel accomplished. He goes on to state that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; . . ." (Verse 16). Paul states emphatically that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God (See verse 17). Immediately following that beautiful statement of the

power of God unto salvation, Paul turns his attention to the wrath of God in verse 18. From that point forward, the apostle describes the depressing subject of the depravity of all men. He continues this discourse for approximately two full chapters before he returns to the marvelous gospel of Christ.

In Romans chapter 3, following his description of the depravity of the human family, he turns from that depressing subject and, as if he cannot countenance that subject any longer, states in verses 21 and 22, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe . . ." The apostle then offers a marvelous treatise on the righteousness of God so necessary for salvation.

In Chapter 4, Paul brings forward two outstanding Old Testament figures for consideration. First, he speaks of Abraham who is the father of us all. About Abraham, Paul writes,

> What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness . . . But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Next, King David is brought forward. As we all know, David committed a terrible sin with Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite. Consequently, God, through Nathan the prophet, approached David with his sin. Immediately, the king repented.

Here in Romans, Paul records David's repentant attitude as follows:

> Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:5 -7).

Paul's passion for the gospel and its positive effect on those who are called by God is daunting. The apostle is not ashamed of the gospel because he knows that through his preaching, the elect of God "obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10).

Conclusion

After his converting experience on the Damascus Road, the apostle did not consult with any man. Rather, the gospel he preached was "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). Paul's passions were driven by his purpose: prayer, people, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing was going the keep the apostle from fulfilling his calling.

Defining Providence

By:

David Martin Lloyd-Jones

(1899-1981)

WHAT exactly do we mean by providence? I cannot think of a better definition or description than this: Providence is “that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end” (L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology). We shall consider the biblical proof for that statement later.

There are three elements in this idea of providence, and we must differentiate between them in thought as well as in practice, though, of course, the three tend to work together. You can look at the three aspects of providence from different angles.

The first is the aspect or the element of preservation: “that continuous agency of God by which He maintains in existence the things He has created, together with the properties and powers with which He has endowed them” (Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology). Now, this is most important. The Bible teaches that God preserves everything that He has made. It is a continuous work. Some have tried to say that this doctrine of preservation simply means that God does not destroy the work He once made, but that is not preservation. It means more than that. . . We will put it like this: everything that has been created by God has a real and permanent existence of its own, apart from the being of God, but that must never be taken to mean that it is self-existent, which belongs to God alone. If things were self-existent, they would not need God to keep going. That is the difference. God has created a thing, and He keeps it alive. He upholds all things, and they continue to exist as the result of a positive and continued exercise of His divine power.

Notice how Psalm 104 puts it in verses 28-30: “That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.” Now, God does not create these animals of the earth constantly. What He does is to keep life, to preserve what He has already created. Paul, of course, puts this exactly in Acts 17:28: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being.” He means the same thing in Colossians 1:17: “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” They are preserved, they are kept going by Him. It is stated still more strikingly in Hebrews 1:3: “upholding all things by the word of his power.” He has not only made them, He upholds them. There is nothing in the universe that would continue to go forward if God were not upholding it. We must never think, therefore, of the universe as something that God created and then allowed to work itself out—that is deism.

Second, there is the governmental aspect of providence. This means the continued activity of God whereby He rules all things to a definite end and object and does so to secure the accomplishment of His own divine purpose. “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice" (Psalm 97:1). He is the King of the universe. He is the Lord of lords. Everything is under His control: “His kingdom ruleth over all” (Psalm 103:19). “The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance” (Isaiah 40:15). That is the idea of government. Or take the mighty statement in Daniel 4:34-35: “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

The governmental aspect of the doctrine of the providence of God is of vital importance and runs through the Bible from the beginning to the end. “His purposes shall ripen fast, unfolding every hour,” says

William Cowper. There is an end to this creation, a purpose, an object. Everything is leading up to God's determined purpose for it.

The third aspect of providence that I must emphasize is what has generally been called the aspect of concurrence. It means "the cooperation of the divine power with all subordinate powers, according to the preestablished laws of their operation, causing them to act and to act precisely as they do" (Berkhof). If you like, it means the whole idea of the relationship of second causes to God's ordering of all things. The Bible teaching is that God works in and through the second causes that He has made. We are all clear, I take it, about secondary causes. We find, do we not, that everything that happens has a cause; certain things lead to certain other things. You see that right through the whole of nature. One thing produces another. Now, those are the second causes, and the biblical doctrine of providence teaches the existence of second causes. But it is very, very clear in its emphasis that the second causes do not operate automatically or independently. God works through them. They have their own operations, but God is over all these operations.

Now, it is important to emphasize this point because so many people today speak of the powers of nature as if they were something independent. But they are not. There are powers and laws in nature, but not apart from God. God is in direct relationship to them, uses them, orders them, and manipulates them; so, we hold the two ideas at one and the same time—the reality of secondary causes, but their depend- ence upon God and His control of them.

This is a mystery, of course. This is the difficult aspect of this doctrine—how can these things be true at one and the same time? But the Scriptures teach it. You will find it in Psalm 104:20-21 and 30. Amos 3:6 says, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" Matthew 5:45 tells us, "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." In other words, these things do not happen automatically as the result of the secondary causes or laws of nature. God is behind them. He is working in them and through them. He is not divorced from them.

So there, briefly, are the three aspects of providence. You can think of them like this: the idea of preservation makes us think of the being of everything that is. The idea of government tells us that this being is guided, and the doctrine of concurrence tells us about how the activity is guided. Being, guidance, and activity.

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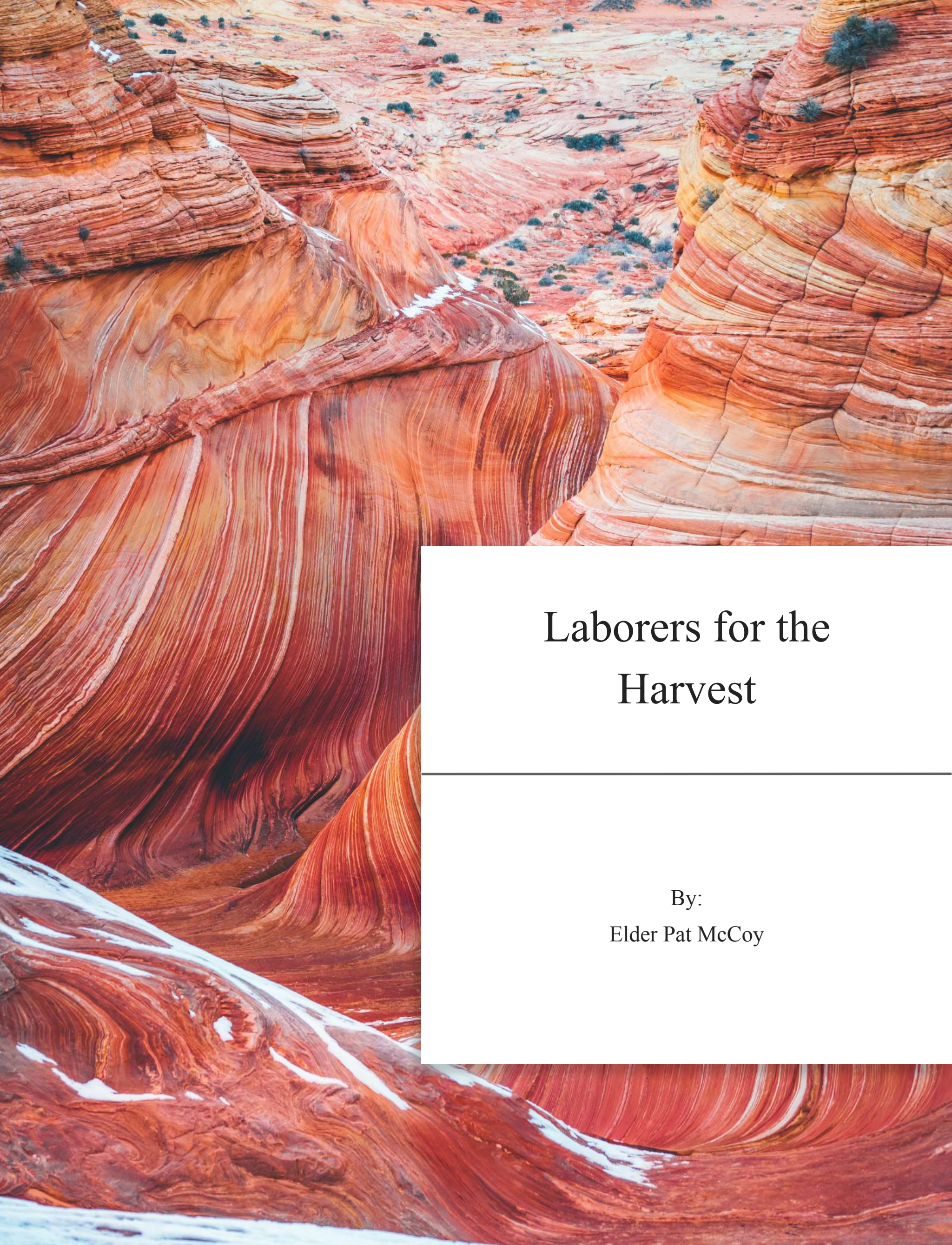

Laborers for the Harvest

By:
Elder Pat McCoy

Luke 10:2

Then He said to them, "The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

It is the time of the year that I begin work on the Church and Pastor Directory for 2024. As I do so I am faced with a reality that not many of us want to face. When I was ordained in 1967 there were 140 Churches, 126 Pastors, and 10 Licentiates. Today there are 84 Churches (27 without pastors), 73 Pastors (13 available for supply and five unavailable for supply), and 6 Licentiates. In just the past 10 years we have gone from 105 pastors to 73. I bring this to our attention because this is a serious position to be in.

S omewhere along the line we (Primitive Baptists) have dropped the ball, or I should say we have dropped the importance of disciples being laborers in the Kingdom of God. Some would say, well, the laborers are pastors. They were ordained to be the laborers in the church. If that is the case then we, disciples, have not been obeying Jesus' word in Luke 10:2. *Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.*" Because we certainly do not have enough laborers in the field. You remember at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said to His disciples, Matthew 28:19-20 "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Yes, this commission was given directly to the 11 Apostles. But the principle is given to them, and that principle was then handed down to all believers. Study the book of Acts after Jesus ascended into heaven. You note in Chapter 1 Jesus said to those same men, Act 1:8 "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" Acts 1:15 tells us that there were 120 gathered together on the Day of Pentecost. Three thousand were added to the church that day. You will see that in the first few chapters the disciples stayed in Jerusalem. Not until persecution by Saul begins, do we see the people scattering. Acts 8:1-4 *Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time, a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Notice who was scattering throughout Judea and Samaria. V. 1 and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Disciples scattered, but not the Apostles. They remained in Jerusalem.*

Who are the disciples today? The same people who were disciples in Jesus' day. Acts 11:26 *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.* ***And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch***. Today we identify as Christians and not disciples. But according to scripture those who are the followers of Christ, those who believe He is God, as well as the Son of God, and believe that He died for the sin of the world, are Christians and Disciples.

In I Peter 1:1, Peter is writing to disciples described this way in "*elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*" Then in chapter 2 Peter identifies them as "Living Stones" and a "Holy People". In verse 9, Peter then

tells these elect people who are Living stones and Holy People that they are called by God and are to proclaim the praises of Him who called them out of darkness. 9 "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*" A priesthood who are called to proclaim praise to Jesus Christ. Believers therefore are to be witnesses in this world.

That being said, I don't believe the laborers in Luke 10:2 are narrowed down to only the Apostles, but rather it was other believers identified as disciples. On the same note, in our day, it is not only pastors who are to go out. Who were these seventy-two disciples that Jesus sent out to the harvest? They were not "ordained" or at least I do not find anywhere in scripture where they were ordained. They were baptized believers, and Jesus is sending them out to every city where He was about to go (v. 1). They were going ahead of Him. They were, like John the Baptist, preparing the way of the Lord. How does that work today? It works the very same way. They were to go to the houses in the city and first of all say, "Peace to this house." If the Lord of Peace was there, they would be welcomed. Read v. 5-7, and note they were to go in, visit, take what is offered to them. But they were not to go from house to house. So, what did they do?

Jesus is speaking to his disciples as He sends them out to preach. He is sending out His followers to teach others what He has taught them. The "harvest" is the opportunity to change people's lives, from being self-centered to being worshipers of God. Jesus is not just calling for students; He wants emissaries who will invite others into a relationship with Him. The harvest language here is language that we see all throughout scripture, and particularly in Jesus' teachings as relating to judgment and salvation.

As Jesus prepares these seventy-two disciples to heal and preach that the kingdom of God has come, He tells them to **pray for even more messengers**. John the Baptist's work was true, but only a preparation. Despite having gone from one— Jesus— to twelve, to more than seventy, the kingdom message needs even more couriers. Like their food, shelter, and clothing, only God can provide partners for the mission (Luke 10:4– 7) *Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. 5 But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house*.

Many will reject their message, but the message needs to get out to those who will hear and understand (Luke 10:13– 15 "*Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sack- cloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. (Romans 10:14) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

As Israel was largely a nation of farmers, Jesus often used parables that referenced to plants and crops. The most well-known is the parable of the Sower, where Jesus compared the gospel to seed and the hearts of the hearers to different soils (Luke 8:4–8). Other agriculture-driven parables in Luke include the tree and its fruit (Luke 6:43–45), the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6–9), the mustard seed (Luke 13:18–20), and the wicked vine dressers (Luke 20:9–18).

Jesus' metaphor here reflects the nature of harvest. Crops are ready for harvest at specific times. At that time, extra workers are needed. Jesus' short earthly ministry was nearing its end, and messengers

were needed to encourage people to respond. We experience this today; when a natural disaster or other tragedy occurs, people are often more open to the gospel. Believers need to be ready to give hope when people are ready to receive it.

Matthew 9:37–38 parallels this verse but in a section that gives an overall summary of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. "*Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into* ***His harvest****." We never need to forget that it is "his harvest.*" We are laborers in the field today just as those disciples were laborers in the scriptures.

When the disciples began to obey and go out as Jesus had commanded, see what happened. Acts 1: 120 met together. Acts 2: 3000 convicted by Peter's sermon. By the end of the chapter, God added to the church daily. Acts 4: the number was about 5,000. Acts 5: more and more men and women believed and were added to the church. Acts 9: the church multiplied in number. Acts 13: the church now begins to spread, and the Word of the Lord was being preached throughout the entire region. Acts 16: so the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. Acts 19: the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Note that specific numbers are given in Acts 1, 2, and 4. It is not until after the disciples scattered in Chapter 8 and after the conversion of Saul in chapter 9 that there are no numbers given. Chapter 9 says, the number multiplied. From then on as the Apostle Paul and others traveled throughout the world, the church spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Do we believe in the whole counsel of God? Do we believe 2 Timothy 3:16-17? *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.* If we do, then we must believe that God wants His disciples today to "go and make disciples." He wants us to go and prepare the way as those 72 disciples were to go to the cities and prepare the way for the Lord.

We need to be praying for God to send laborers into the harvest. We need to pray for God to open hearts in men and call them to be pastors. That is a fact; however, we also need to be praying for God to burden the hearts of men and women, called by God, redeemed by Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, to go into their homes, their communities, among friends and strangers to show Christ Jesus in their lives. They need to not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and declare that there is One Savior, One Redeemer, One hope found only in Jesus.

God help us all to be faithful followers, faithful disciples of Jesus and be His witnesses in this dark world.

Obituaries

DEAL, Jimmie R. –
December 8, 1941 to August 7, 2023.
Lake Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, Patterson, GA

PIERSON, Betty Zellner Watson –
June 12, 1936 to July 2, 2023.
Culloden Primitive Baptist Church, Culloden, Georgia.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

In accord with the historical position of the Primitive Baptists, the editors of the Banner Herald subscribe to the scriptural principles stated in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. The following is an abbreviated statement upon that confession.

- We Believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, inspired and inerrant, and the only rule of faith and practice.

- We Believe in the only true and living God. That there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three agree in one, are coequal, coeternal, and coexistent.

- We Believe in the total depravity of the entire human family; that is, sin pollutes man's faculties; his heart, mind, and will - and he is unable to recover himself from his lost and ruined estate.

- We Believe in particular, eternal, and unconditional election, the effectual calling of the elect, and the final perseverance of the saints.

- We Believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the only Savior and Redeemer, and that Salvation is by His grace alone.

- We Believe that believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ. We Believe the only baptism taught and recognized in the Bible is immersion.

- We Believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of our Lord's death and should be regularly observed in the church. We Believe that the washing of the saint's feet is an example of humility and service to be observed by the church.

- We Believe that no minister has the right to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper but such as are called by God and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.

- We Believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust; that the just shall be raised, changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, to dwell in heaven forever, soul and body reunited; and, that the unjust shall be raised, soul, and body reunited, and consigned to punishment in hell forever.