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Lifted Eyes, Guarded Hearts

Elder Michael Farr

Pastor of
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Acts 1:4-11 teaches us Jesus calls His people to a faith that waits, a testimony that goes, and a hope that looks up. With our "spiritual ears" we can hear in this passage a summons to Spirit-dependent ministry, Christ-centered unity and kingdom-influenced expectation that shapes everyday church life.

> *(4) And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; (5) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. (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." (9) Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (10) And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, (11) who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

1. **The Promise That Holds Us (vv.4-5)**

Jesus gathers His disciples and gives them a single, anchoring command: **wait**. The question isn't why they are waiting, but for what they are waiting. They aren't waiting for instructions, they aren't waiting on a strategy, or a newly-designed house of worship – but for **the promise of the Father**, the Holy Spirit.

The church hasn't been sustained through all these centuries by human ingenuity but by Spirit-given life. Christ didn't leave His people empty-handed; we are rooted in the living presence of God. In our fast-paced modern culture,

waiting is cast in an unfavorable light. However, waiting is not passive – it is worshipful dependence.

This is seen in the following: before we act, we pray. Before we speak, we listen. Before we plan, we seek the Spirit's wind to fill our sails. Ask yourself, "Where am I rushing ahead of the Spirit? Where is Christ inviting me to wait?"

2. The Mission That Sends (vv. 6-8)

The disciples ask about restoring the kingdom to Israel – an understandable question considering their cultural history, but a narrow one. Jesus widens their vision: "You shall be witnesses…to the ends of the earth."

This kingdom is not a political kingdom, nor a cultural kingdom, or a nostalgic return to what once was. It is a Spirit-empowered kingdom of testimony, stretching outward from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and beyond.

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?

An honest reading of Acts tells us it wasn't just ordained ministers spreading the gospel.

How do we view our churches – as museums of tradition or as gateways to God's kingdom? Our mission of testimony begins locally, but does not have to end locally. Where is the Spirit going to guide you? Will it be towards people unlike you, places unfamiliar to you or work uncomfortable to you? This is where we need to seek…

3. **The Hope That Lifts Us. (vv. 9 – 11)**

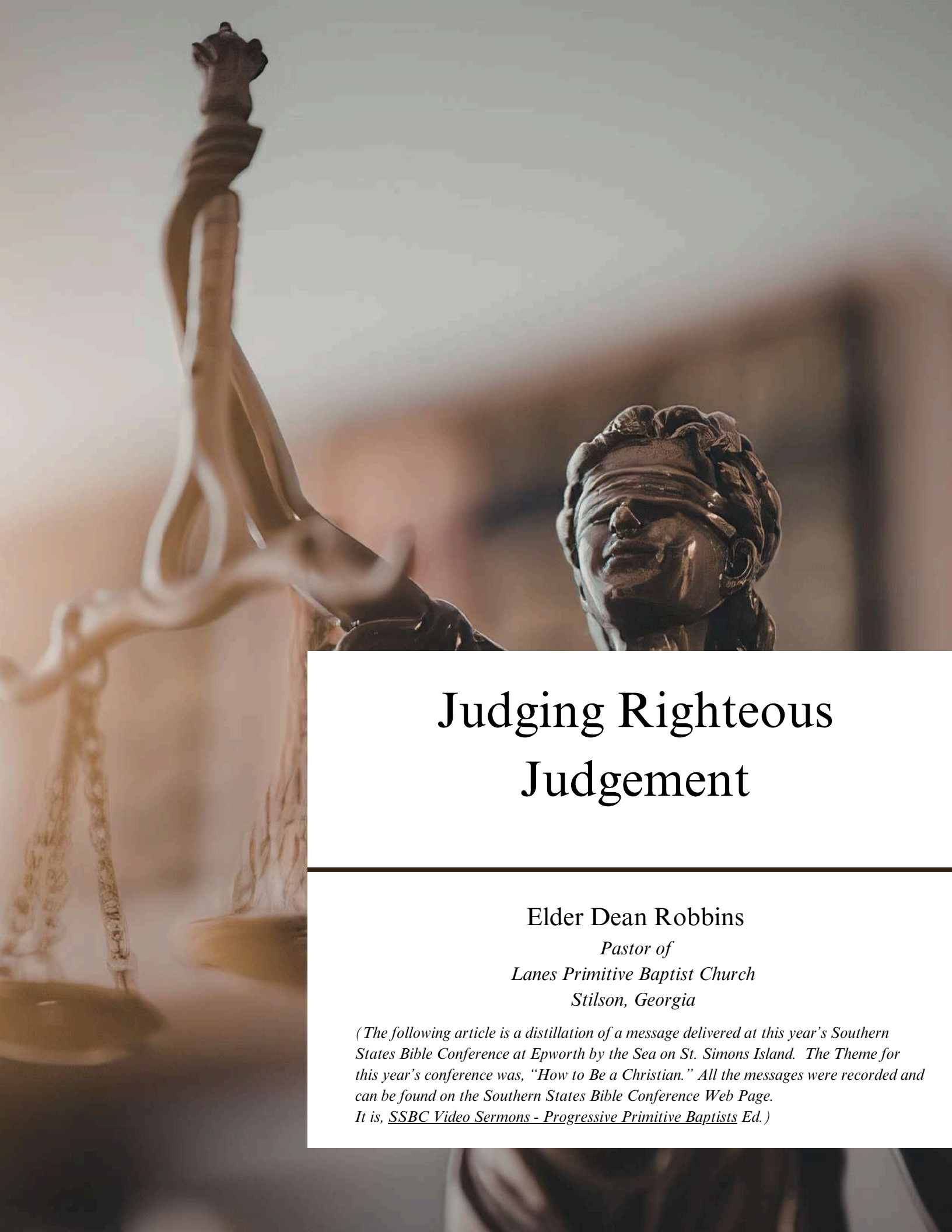
As Jesus ascends, the disciples stand staring at the sky—awed, confused, perhaps a little bit shocked. Two angels interrupt their contemplation: "Why do you stand gazing? This same Jesus…will so come in like manner."

Their message was simple: Don't get stuck staring, don't get lost in speculation, and most importantly don't forget the promise.

The Ascension isn't Jesus leaving us; it is Jesus reigning on our behalf! His return is not a threat, it is a hope that energizes our faithful living.

Our beliefs about death and end times are not the result of escapism – it means we are expectant! We live with lifted eyes and grounded hearts – working, testifying, loving and serving because Christ is coming again!

Hope is fuel for holiness. Christ's return motivates us to action, not withdrawal. The future belongs to Jesus, but that doesn't mean the present is hopeless. My maternal grandmother used to ask me, "What if it were today?" How would you live if you knew Jesus would return today?



Judging Righteous Judgement

Elder Dean Robbins
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(The following article is a distillation of a message delivered at this year's Southern States Bible Conference at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island. The Theme for this year's conference was, "How to Be a Christian." All the messages were recorded and can be found on the Southern States Bible Conference Web Page.
It is, SSBC Video Sermons - Progressive Primitive Baptists Ed.)

John 7:24

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

"How to Be a Christian" was the theme for this year's Southern States Bible Conference held at Epworth by the Sea Conference Center located on St. Simons Island, Ga. This theme presupposes there is an objective definition or description given as to how the Christian is to live their life. It should be apparent that such a description or definition would come from Jesus, the Christ of God. After all, Christians are followers of Jesus. So, Jesus, along the Apostles Jesus called and sent out in his name to teach what he commanded, and the word of God, containing the whole counsel of God, is the only authoritative source that can objectively reveal what it means to be a Christian.

Yet in this growing secular humanistic culture we live in that seeks to rebel against God's creative order and declare its own truth and define its own terms, this philosophy of subjective truth has found its way into the church. The result is that those who identify as being disciples of Jesus seek to define for themselves what it means to be a Christian. Many will follow this principle found in the old saying, "to each his own." This false belief system must be rejected. It has caused much conflict and division in the body of Christ. The ministry of the gospel has been negatively impacted because of such thinking. Only Jesus [and the Holy Scriptures] can declare how the Christian is to live out their life. So, in this article, we are asserting that Jesus said to be a Christian, one must judge with righteous judgment. For Jesus said in John chapter 7, in verse 24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (NKJV).

Two questions arise then regarding the Christian judging with righteous judgment. First, what does this mean and second, how is it done? What is righteous judgment and how does one judge righteously?

First, the fact that Jesus said to "judge with righteous judgment" rejects the assertion made by many that one is never to make judgments of others. How often have you heard, "you are not to judge others"? Often those who make this

assertion will even quote the words of Jesus found in his famous sermon recorded in Matthew's gospel in chapters five through seven. They will quote the words found in Matthew 7, verse 1 – "Judge not that you be not judged" (NKJV). But is Jesus prohibiting his followers from judging others? The answer is obviously no. In fact, Jesus is commanding his followers to make certain judgments regarding words spoken and behaviors observed. Just a few verses later, Jesus says this, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (7:6, NKJV). Here we see a judgment must be rendered as to when it becomes necessary to stop sharing the gospel (that which is holy) with unbelievers. Disciples of Jesus are commanded by Jesus to go 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…" (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV). However, there may come the time when giving that which holy to debased, hardened hearted sinners should come to an end. One must make that judgment.

Later Jesus speaks of judging others when it comes to false teachers. He said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits" (7:15, 16). So, it is obvious that we are to make judgments of others. We are, however, not permitted to judge others with a hypocritical spirit. That is the point being made with the "plank" and the "speck" analogy in verses two through five. Finding fault with others, while you have greater faults is not judging with righteous judgment.

There appears to be more said in the Scriptures in the way of making "unrighteous" judgments than by making righteous judgments. In the passage from John chapter 7, Jesus makes this declaration of making righteous judgments by first saying, "Do not judge according to appearance…" (John 7:23, NKJV). Here is the verse in its totality, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." The question is asked, "what does it mean to "judge according to appearance"? The answer lies in the preceding verses.

In the preceding verses we find Jesus being mocked by his own family members. His half-brothers are chiding him. They say to him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world" (John 7:3, 4, NKJV). The very next verse tells why they chided or ridiculed him. It was because of their unbelief. They grew up with him. Yet they did not believe he was the Messiah. They did not believe he was the incarnate God. What an interesting family dynamic that must have been in the years they lived together.

But these family members were judging Jesus using their own perceptions of him being just their brother. They were ignorant of who he really was, and in their ignorance, they were judging him by appearance.

John also mentions the time of year when Jesus makes this declaration of judging with righteous judgment. It was the time of year when there was this celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. In this celebration, the people were required by the law to remember God's leadership of their ancestors in the wilderness prior to their arrival to Canaan. They were to remember God's provision for them. Notably, his provision of water. In the latter part of this chapter, Jesus refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He tells the people in Jerusalem about his provision of "living water." There is the belief that he did this as the tradition of pouring out of water on the steps of the Temple took place. This pouring of water commemorated the pouring of the water out from the rock, whereby the people's thirst was satisfied.

There were a number of miracles the people celebrated during this sacred feast. Yet, the brothers of Jesus mocked his doing of miracles and the religious leaders sought to put him to death because of the miracle he had recently performed on the Sabbath. This was the miracle of healing of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda recorded in John chapter 5. Notice these words of Jesus, "Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers),

and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?" (John 7:21-23, NKJV).

Jesus is rebuking the Jewish leaders for their hypocrisy. They will perform a circumcision on the Sabbath, yet condemn him for healing a man on the Sabbath. Again, here we have the example of judging by appearance. It is judging with a spirit of hypocrisy and with unbelief. There is the denial of truth. There is the embracing of that which is false. These are all indicative of judgement made by appearance.

This is what judging in an unrighteous way involves. This is how we are prohibited from judging. How then are we to judge with righteous judgment? Here is a brief list of how we judge virtuously as God would have us to judge:

- To judge with righteous judgment, one must submit to the law of Christ. (Note: this was a reference to Elder Scott Riner's Message on the "Law of Christ" given at the morning session on Tuesday. ED.) We must love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And we must love our neighbor as ourselves. We must be willing to bear one another's burdens. When we do these things, we are in a good place to be able to judge with righteous judgment.

- To judge with righteous judgment, one must make such judgments based upon objective truth and not with subjective truth… it is truth determined by the employing of godly wisdom with godly discernment. The example here is of James and John, the Sons of Thunder. They were wanting to call down fire from heaven upon that Samaritan village that rejected Jesus. How did Jesus respond to their request? He said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:55, 56, NKJV). Judging with righteous judgement is making judgments that are not based on feelings, or emotions, but on objective truth.

- Judging with righteous judgement is based upon facts and not on false information. It is not by hearsay or gossip.

- Judging with righteous judgments are judgments made based on the truth of God's word. For God's word is truth. Jesus said, in his prayer in John 17, verse 17, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (NKJV). Ignorance of God's word is the breeding ground for corrupt judging or judging by appearance.

- Judging with righteous judgment are judgments made with consistency. It not with inconsistence such as found in the example of the Pharisees who were critical of Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath while they would perform a circumcision on the Sabbath.

- When one judges with righteous judgment, they do so with a spirit of humility and not in a prideful spirit. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:3). If one is "pure in heart", they will judge with righteous judgment.

- When one judges with righteous judgment, they will have justice and goodness in mind and not self-righteous condemnation. Jesus chose to dine with sinners, with tax collectors and prostitutes over that of the self-righteous pharisees.

- When one judges with righteous judgment, they will judge seeking God's will. "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (John 7:17, NKJV).

- Finally, when one judges with righteous judgment, their motivation is to honor and bring glory to God.

In conclusion, two examples from the Bible illustrate these two contrasting positions on judging others. There are the example of Jonah and his judging by appearance and there is Jesus and his judging with righteous judgment.

Jonah was commissioned by God to go to the people of Nineveh to preach repentance. These were not only a pagan people, but also Israel's enemy. He was to preach to them for the purpose of bringing them to repentance so God would not destroy them. But Jonah did not want to do this, and so he went the opposite way to Nineveh. We know what the consequences of this decision he made. But why? Why did he not want to go to Nineveh?

He hated the people of Nineveh. There was prejudice. He was repulsed by the thought that God would spare these people. He knew that God was "gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Jonah 4:2). He feared God would spare them and he didn't want that. He judged them worthy of destruction based on their reputation as being a cruel and wicked people rather than seeing them as people made in God's image who could repent.

In his disdain for these people, He showed a hypocritical spirit, having a lack of self-judgment. Jonah had experienced God's mercy after his own disobedience by his being delivered from the belly of the fish. Yet he became angry when the same mercy was extended to Nineveh. It was grace for me, but not for thee. He wanted strict justice for others while enjoying grace and mercy for himself. This is an illustration of the "plank in your own eye" principle.

Instead of rejoicing in God's mercy that led to the repentance of the people of Nineveh, he instead became more angry, angry at God for showing mercy. Jonah still hoped for the destruction of the city.

Now there's the example of Jesus. Paul writes of Jesus being "in the form of God, [and] did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of

men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross"

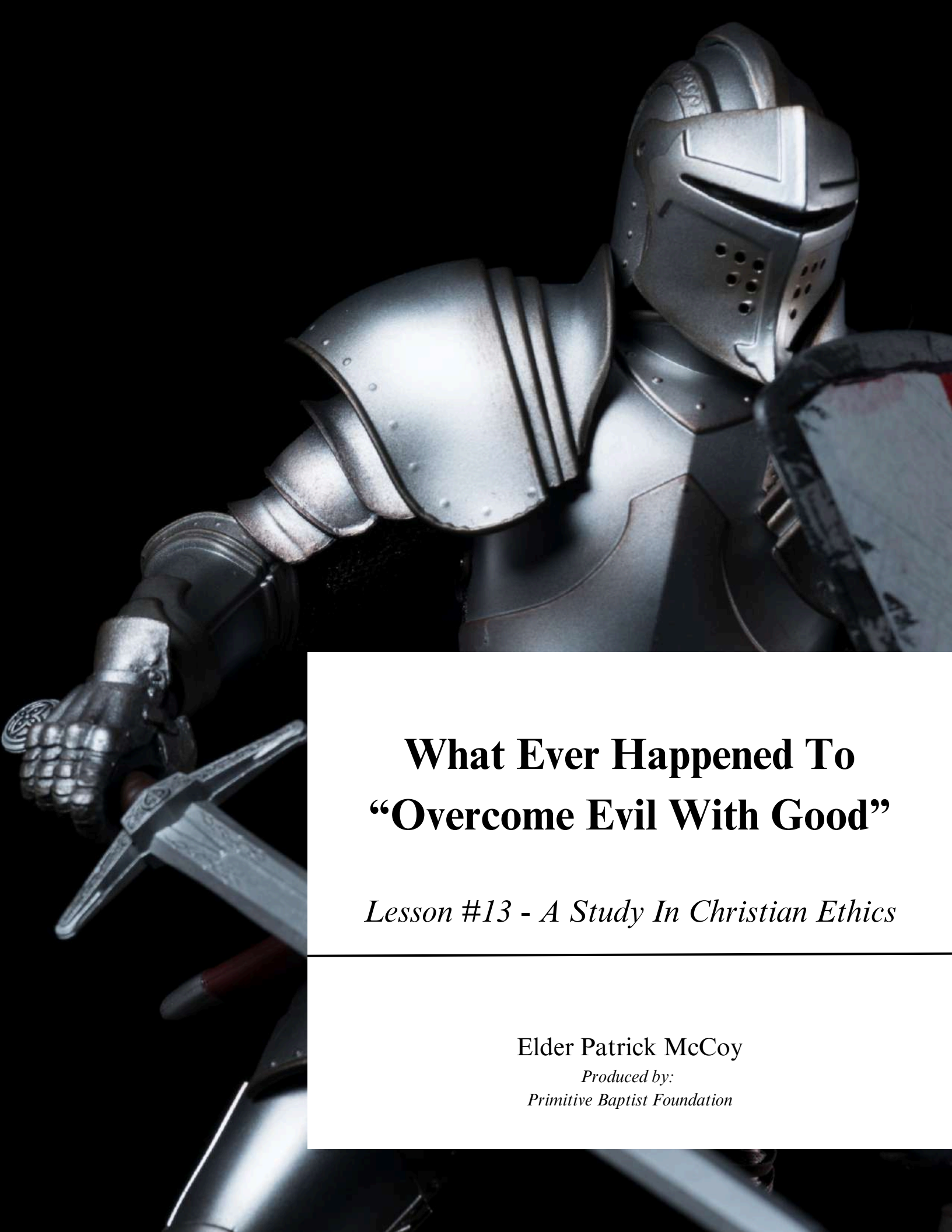
Philippians 2:6-8 (NKJV)

"Why? Why did Jesus do this? It was to save undeserving, rebellious sinners from being destroyed by God. Jesus was sent to save people from their sins."

He came to do this because of love. He chose to eat with tax collectors and prostitutes because he knew that those who were sick needed a physician. He touched lepers, preached to the demon possessed. His ministry was one of compassion.

Now, who do you want to be like? As the old hymn goes, "I want to be like Jesus." I don't want to be like Jonah.

To be a Christian Jesus says that we must judge with righteous judgement. He's the true authority in the matter. Let's obey him! Let us judge with righteous judgment.



What Ever Happened To "Overcome Evil With Good"

Lesson #13 - A Study In Christian Ethics

Elder Patrick McCoy

Produced by:
Primitive Baptist Foundation

Introduction

You don't have to look far to find evil. It is "couching (lying in ambush) at the door" (Genesis 4:7). It is all around us. Living in a fallen world, we are confronted on every side with the reality of evil – in our world, in our nation, in our city, in our neighborhood, in our family. How are we to respond to this evil around us?

Discussion:

1. What evils do you see everyday in your realm of influence?
2. What is your strategy for dealing with these evils?

Paul addressed that question in the twelfth chapter of his letter to the Romans. He presented both a defensive and an offensive strategy. Our analysis of this lesson scripture will include:

- A Defensive Strategy
- An Offensive Strategy
- The Problem
- The Recovery of a Biblical Idea
- The Protest
- Two Responses

A Defense Strategy

The defensive strategy is found in verse 2 and it is pretty much what we would expect Paul to say. "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." All around us there is evil, seeking to influence us to be like everyone else. Inside us is the Holy Spirit, seeking to influence us to be like Christ. So Paul's advice: neutralize the negative influence of your external culture with the positive influence of your internal culture.

That is the defensive strategy for living in a fallen world, a world in which evil is everywhere present. As we live by the Spirit, as we walk in the Spirit, as we are controlled by the Spirit, and as we are empowered through the Spirit within us, we will be able to resist the influence of evil around us.

Many Christians today have adopted this as their code for living in today's world. It is the defensive strategy which has motivated Christians to withdraw into their Christian communities and to isolate themselves from the world. It is the defensive strategy that has spawned Christian schools and, in more recent years, home schooling. It is an effective defensive strategy for living in today's world.

The down side of this defensive strategy, however, is that it is limited. It relates to only one side of the issue. Because we have been told by our Master to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), because Jesus told us we are to be salt which gives the world flavor and light which illuminates the world's darkness (Matthew 5:13-16), because the resurrected Lord declared to his disciples, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21), we cannot be content with simply isolating ourselves from the world and protecting ourselves from the world's influence.

At the same time we are keeping the world from shaping us, we are to influence the world. Living in a fallen world in which evil is ever present, we cannot just have a defensive strategy. We must also have an offensive strategy.

Discussion:
Is isolation the answer? Why or why not?

An Offensive Strategy

Paul presented an offensive strategy in the remainder of Romans 12. The culmination of this offensive strategy is found in verses 17-21.

In verse 17 Paul advised: "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Retaliation,

which is the desire to get even with someone, is the world's way. Instead of retaliation, Christians are to: "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (v. 17) and "Live peaceably with all men" (v. 18).

In verse 19, Paul admonished: "Avenge not yourselves." Revenge, which is the desire to get back at someone, is the world's way. Instead of revenge, Christians are to serve our enemies. "If your enemy is hungry, feed him," Paul says in verse 20, "if he is thirsty, give him something to drink" (v. 20).

The conclusion of Paul's advice, the summary of the offensive strategy presented by the apostle, is found in verse 21: "Overcome evil with good." "Do not be overcome by evil" (Romans 12:2). That's the defensive strategy. "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). That's the offensive strategy.

Discussion:
Looking at your list of evils in the world today, how would you deal with them according to v. 21

The Problem

Whereas we are comfortable with Paul's defensive strategy, we are often dissatisfied with his offensive strategy. OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD! That biblical admonition sounds strange to the ear of the American Christian living at the beginning of the twenty first century, because we have been presented a different strategy today. The primary offensive strategy in American evangelical Christianity today is to OVERCOME EVIL WITH FORCE, to attack evil.

We hear it from popular Christian spokesmen of our day as they use the language of warfare. In March, 1995, a debate erupted in the pages of Christianity Today between James Dobson on the one hand and John Woodbridge on the other. John Woodbridge wrote an article entitled, "Culture War Casualties: How Warfare Rhetoric is Hurting the Work of the Church," including James Dobson, among others, in his accusation. Dobson responded with an article entitled, "Why I use 'Fighting Words.'" In the article Dobson spoke of a great Civil War of values

raging in America today, of two great armies on opposing sides, and someday soon, he said a winner will emerge. And he wants Christians to be the winners. Dobson's conclusion: we must attack evil and destroy it before it destroys us.

What ever happened to “OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD”? The popular strategy in American evangelical Christianity today is to try to overcome evil with force, to attack evil. We hear it from popular Christian authors whose fiction books develop themes of warfare. In 1986, a novel written by Frank Peretti entitled The Present Darkness vaulted to the top of the religious best seller lists, eventually selling more than 2 million copies. Set in a small college town, the story is about a horrific war going on, not a battle between two human armies, but a battle going on between the demonic powers of darkness on the one side and the angelic hosts of light on the other.

Part of the reason for the popularity of the book is that readers sensed the author was giving a symbolic picture of what is happening in our country, and the challenge of the book is to join the battle against evil. Be constantly on guard. Demonic forces all around want to possess you. Stamp them out. Destroy them. That is Peretti's advice. What ever happened to “OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD”?

The popular strategy in American Christianity of trying to overcome evil with force is heard from the Christian right, partisans in the politics of polarization. In his 1991 book, The New World Order, Pat Robertson gave shape and form to the enemy against which we must fight and then laid out a strategy of attack that focused on developing a block of voters to support his agenda. He said, "We must rebuild ... America from the grassroots, precinct by precinct, city by city, and state by state." And the strategy is clear: we need to organize politically so we can crush evil. The time-honored principle of separation of church and state so the state can do what it is supposed to do – provide freedom – and the church can do what it is supposed to do – promote faith freely chosen – has been replaced by the political strategy of using the government to promote the

church – not just any church, but one particular understanding of the church – and its agenda.

We are confronted by the language of warfare by some Christian leaders, the themes of warfare in much religious fiction, and the politics of polarization in many Christian political action groups.

What ever happened to "OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD"?

Discussion:

1. How militant are we to be and how would you define militant?
2. What is the difference in "being combative" and "defending the faith"?

The Recover of a Biblical Idea

Is this an anachronistic idea that needs to be discarded or is it a timeless Christian truth that needs to be rediscovered?

I want to declare that overcoming evil with good is not an idea of the past but an idea for the NOW, the very idea pronounced by Paul in our text, the idea declared by Jesus himself in Matthew 5:38-42 and then demonstrated by Jesus on the cross, the idea repeatedly referred to in the New Testament in places like I Thessalonians 5:15 and I Corinthians 4:12-13 and I Peter 3:9.

We are to be peace makers, instead of peace breakers. We are to be distinctive instead of vindictive. We are to be dispensers of grace instead of moral judges. We are to "OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD"!

The Protest

I can hear the whispers – I know, because I said the same thing to myself as I developed this message – "This mamby pamby approach is not going to work

today. Doing good to those who do evil to us; refusing to get in there and fight against evil; it's not going to work. We need to take the tough position. We need to get out there and fight. We need to take our stand.

Two Responses

The first response is this: what is at stake is not what works but what is right, what is Christian. We are not told to stamp out evil. We are not commanded to win the battle. We are not told to come up with a strategy which will work. We are commissioned to tell the good news. We are called to be the light of the world. We are commanded to love as Christ loved us. We are enlisted to be distributors of grace, encouragers, burden bearers, peace makers. Whether or not this strategy will "work" is not the point. We need to overcome evil with good because that is the Christian thing to do.

Then there is a second response. As I thought about this biblical idea and the protest to it today, I came to the conclusion that overcoming evil with good is the only thing that will work. The only power which can transform evil into good is the transforming power of a redeeming love.

Do you see our Lord? He's in the Garden. With his disciples – eleven of them that is. He is praying. They are sleeping. Suddenly the garden of prayer is turned into a coliseum of confrontation. Judas, one of the twelve, arrives. With him is a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and elders of the people. They are there to arrest him and take him away. They will very soon put him to death. It is the classic confrontation between good and evil.

Defend yourself, Jesus. Use your omnipotent power. Call on the twelve legions of angels at your disposal. That's what we want to shout out to Jesus.

But instead, he does nothing. To Judas, the betrayer, Jesus says, "Friend, do what you came for." To the angry crowd, Jesus says, "I'll go with you." The ultimate good confronted by the epitome of evil, and Jesus ... does nothing.

Do you see him? He's on the cross now, hanging between two criminals. One of them rails at him. The people standing at the foot of the cross hurling insults at him, ridiculing him. "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" "This is the man who saved others. Hah! He can't even save himself!"

Do something Jesus! Come down from the cross and show them who you are. Zap them with your divine power. That's what we want him to do.

But instead, he does nothing. To one of the criminals he promises, "This day you will be with me in paradise." About the crowd, Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." The ultimate good confronted by the epitome of evil, and Jesus ... does nothing. Or does he?

There is another word from the cross. Do you remember? Jesus said, "It is finished." The ultimate good confronted by the epitome of evil, and Jesus won the battle. Jesus completed his assignment. He destroyed death. He overcame evil. He defeated the kingdom of Satan and established the kingdom of God. That is the meaning of that phrase. That's why he said, "It is finished." But did you notice? He won the battle, not with a sword but with a cross.

Do not be overcome with evil – yes. We must not forget that defensive strategy. But this is the higher level to which we must ascend as Christians today – overcome evil with good.

Discussion:
Coming to a conclusion, read and discuss Acts 5:29.

UPDATE: DISCIPLING MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

WWW.DISCIPLINGMINISTRIES.ORG

It is with great sadness that the Board of DMI announces the death of Nikita Malov, the son of Alexander (Sasha) Malov. Nikita served in the Ukrainian army as a drone operator on the frontlines in the Donbass region. Nikita was 27 years old. Please keep in your prayers the Malov family. It may take several months for Nikita's body to be brought back to the village where the Malov's live for burial.

Since the Russian invasion of February 2022, it is estimated that some 125,000 to 150,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died, been wounded, or are missing in action. In your prayers, please seek God's mercy and petition Him to bring this conflict to an end with Ukraine's freedom still intact.

A group including Pastors Pat McCoy, Kurt Bacon and Dean Robbins, along with nurses, Diane Simms and Donna Tuten will be traveling to the Ukraine beginning on September 14th. Diane and Donna will be participating in a medical clinic ministry that will be held at the church in Makariv. The pastors will be meeting with fellow Ukrainian pastors, including those who are being supported this year by DMI. Please pray for the safety of those traveling and that for God's blessings upon the work that will be done on this trip. The Ministry team will, Lord willing, return on September 22nd.

The Annual Meeting of the Supporting Churches of DMI will be held at the Statesboro Primitive Baptist Church on Saturday, October 10, 2026. At this meeting, the representatives from the supporting church will hear a report of activities for the past year. The representatives will also elect a portion of the Board for a two-year term. A report of the finances will also be given. Pastor Eugene Grinishin, one of the pastors being supported by DMI, will give the inspirational address via zoom.

Letters announcing the meeting, along with a proxy notice have been mailed. It is important that the proxy notices be returned by September 30th, even if the representatives plan to attend. Lunch will be served, so it is important to let Pat McCoy know if you will be attending in person. The meeting will begin at 10:00am. There will be opportunities to attend via Zoom. Priority will be given to elected church representatives. There is a limit of 100 who could attend by Zoom.

Please contact Elder McCoy if you would like to be included on the Zoom invitation. His email address is, pm4dmi@outlook.com.

If you are not familiar with this ministry and would like to support it, please go to our website for more information. It is www.disciplingministries.org. To those who have supported this ministry with prayers and financial support, thank you!

FALL 2027

ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

SEQUATCHIE VALLEY	Mountain View Church, Rainesville, AL August 13-15, 2026 Thu-Sat after 2nd Sunday *(Already Met)*
UPPER CANOOCHEE	Sardis Church, Kite, GA September 22, 2026 - 10:00 am Tuesday after 3rd Sunday
LOWER CANOOCHEE	Upper Lotts Creek Church, Portal, GA October 6, 2026 - 10:00 am Tuesday after 1st Sunday
BETHEL	Brunswick Church, Brunswick, GA October 13, 2026 - 10:00 am Tuesday after 2nd Sunday
BRUSHY CREEK	Union Church, Willacoochee, GA October 20, 2026 - 10:30 am Tuesday after 3rd Sunday
OCHLOCKNEE	Thomasville Church, Thomasville, GA October 28-29, 2026 - TBA

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.