



# The Sharon Star

## Discipleship And The Cross

By David Luff

*Taken from a tape:*

I have to confess to you that this is a new experience for me, speaking to Elders and Deacons. I have to admit it is a bit intimidating. I thought of a story I heard Bro. Billy Graham tell at the Kansas City crusade this past week or so. He said that there was a man who lived in Pennsylvania who endured the Jonestown flood. He spent the last years of his life touring and telling people about the horrendous Jonestown flood and he was quite an expert on it. He died; the Lord took him home and when he got to heaven St. Peter asked him, "What would you like to do while you're here." And he said, "Well, I've spent a good deal of time speaking on the subject of the great Jonestown flood." Then he said, "I wouldn't mind speaking to people up here about it." Well St. Peter said, "That would be fine, but I need to warn you, Noah is in the audience."

So that's a little bit the way I feel. Bro. Paterson called me several weeks ago and said that the topic for this session would be *Practical Christian Living*. As I thought about that, I thought, "That's a wonderful topic." It's something that we all should be interested in. Now I got to thinking: what is it about the teachings of our Lord that aren't practical? *Everything* that comes from the mouth of our Lord can be applied in a practical way.

The name of my topic, if you would give it a title, would be *Discipleship and the Cross*. I'm amazed at the way that the ministering that has already come forth, has been so close to the things that the Lord has been putting on my heart. At first you get a little nervous, but then

after a while it begins to sink in that there is a confirmation about the things that the Holy Spirit wants to do and to say to us in this particular hour. You will hear some things that you have already heard before, but to repeat some of these things is okay.

If you want to turn to the Gospel of Luke, we're going to read three scriptures there and then one in the Gospel of Matthew. The first is Luke 9:23 and it says, "And He said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Then next is Luke 14:25-27: "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said to them, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'" Luke 14:33: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." And in Matthew 16:25: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." In that first scripture that we read, it's a very interesting thing that Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Not one time, not twice, not ten times, not a hundred or a thousand, but every single day, if we are to be a disciple. And a disciple is what? A disciple is one who follows closely in the footsteps of another. If we are to be His disciples, then we must take up the cross daily and follow Him. The taking up of the cross daily speaks to us of a progressive thing. A thing that has to be done over and over

and over and over again. The next scripture that I thought was interesting were the scriptures in Luke 14:25-27. The picture that I get here as I visualize this, is that Jesus, at the height of his ministry, has a tremendous following of people. Perhaps because he fed them with the loaves and the fishes. Perhaps it was the good news being spoken to the poor. Perhaps it was the perceived promise of deliverance from the oppression of the Roman Empire. I don't know what all, maybe all of the above, but there was a tremendous following of people. In the natural, if it were us, we would look at that and we would probably say, "Isn't that a tremendous thing. We must be doing everything right to have these multitudes following us." Today in Christendom that is the indication of a successful ministry: if you have a following of great multitudes. But listen to what Jesus did when he saw the multitudes following Him in these great numbers. He turned to them and it was just like he was saying, "You know, we've got lots of folks here, but you need to understand something. If you really want to be my disciple, then, relative of your affection for me, it's almost got to be like hatred for wife and children and mother and father and brothers and sisters." A very differentiating statement. Jesus was obviously not interested in great numbers. He was not interested in just attracting huge multitudes, but he was interested in those who truly intended and wanted to follow him. I'll bet you there were a lot of people who dropped off after that. He also said that to be his disciple we had to be willing to forsake everything that we

have. A lot of times we think we're willing to do that, but everyday we come up against something that he may ask us to give up and it seems hard to do. He even goes on the clincher and says, "...whosoever will save his life will lose it. But whosoever is willing to lose his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25)

Our assembly in Kingsport is very small. It's always been very small. It's been larger then it is now but it is small. There was a little church that started in the County high school. It's about two miles from our home. It wasn't very long before they were too big for the high school building so they bought property and built a huge building. It wasn't long after that they got so big they had to build another, even bigger building in behind that one. This is a congregation that is attractive based on: come as you are, refreshments, bands, worship leaders, all of these things. (And I understand why they do these things.) They have tremendous congregation. They have to have multiple services on Sunday and they also have one on Saturday night. Recently we got a mailing - a little card that was sent out by the church - it just went to all the people in the local area. It was titled:

*Ten Reasons To Attend Our Saturday Night Worship Service.* The first reason was, and I can't remember them all, but it went like this: *the alarm clock is bad and the pillow feels good.* That was addressing Sunday morning. The other thing was: *there's no cover charge for the band.* The third thing was: *the children are already dressed* and there was something about reruns on Saturday night TV not being very good or whatever it was. As my wife and I looked at that card we both were hit with the same thing: the Lord's name was not mentioned one time. Not one time. I thought about these scriptures and I wondered what would happen if you sent out a mailing with these four scriptures on there and said, "We would invite you to come to our service because we're going to encourage you to lose your life for the sake of Jesus." We won't have to have too big a building to house the people that would come. I know that it's a little bit comical but it's a serious thing. Now I do understand. I know why they're doing it, but this is the secularization of the church. It is not what God has called us to. Bro. Merv Sundbo has talked to us a number of times and he mentioned it

again this morning that God has called us to be faithful to the calling that we have.

One of our Elders, Jim Griffith, just celebrated his ninetieth birthday. He has decided that he is past driving. So I go and pick him up on Sunday mornings and bring him to church. On the way I have to go by this church that I just talked to you about. There's a deputy out there directing traffic because there's so much traffic. I go by there and I asked the Lord, "Lord, why is that? We've been here meeting for thirty-some years and we're just real small." You know what the Lord said to me? He didn't say anything to me. He didn't answer that question but that is because I know the answer. I know the answer. It's not about numbers; it's about being faithful to the calling. God is going to have numbers. There's going to be a tremendous ingathering at the appropriate time, but right now God is doing something very special in His people. He wants to infuse the very life of His Son unto us. We'll want to say a bit more about that a little bit later, but I want to get back to this issue again and talk a little bit more about taking up the cross of Jesus Christ.

Bro. Merv Sundbo had been impressed lately with the completeness of what God has accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus. I remember hearing our Brother Herrick Holt speaking years ago and it's in the book of his writings. I remember it very clearly and I'm sure you do too. He said, "God is completely satisfied with the cross." I thought I understood that at the time, but the more I study and look into these things I realize I really didn't know. I'm sure I still do not fully understand everything that is encompassed in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's a tremendous thing. I would like to talk a little bit about those things. Let's turn to the third chapter of Romans, beginning with the twenty-third verse. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" The most basic thing that God has accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ is that we have been separated from our sins. If you look at the first few chapters of the book of Romans, Paul is talking about God's dealing with our

sins. S-I-N-S - plural. When you first came - if you can remember back when you first came to the Lord Jesus - and committed your life to him and were, as it is said, you were saved. The thing that we're most conscious of is our individual sins. The Spirit brings to our remembrance all the things that we have done that we are sorry for. The Spirit convicts us of these sins, makes us aware of them and we want to be forgiven of these sins. The blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross is what washes our individual sins. That is the first thing, it seems like to me, that is accomplished through the cross of Christ. I read somewhere that the blood, although it does a tremendous thing for us, is in a way primarily for the purpose of God. God looks on the blood when He looks at us. What He sees is the blood. When the Israelites were told what to do to prepare the Passover feast and what to do, where was the blood applied? To the doorpost. What side of the doorpost? The outside. For who to see it? For the angel of God - for God Himself to see that blood - that was what the blood was for. What were the people doing inside? They were partaking of what? They were partaking of the lamb. That's what they were eating. So that blood that was shed by Jesus Christ completely separates us from our sins. The scripture says that our sins are separated from us as far as what? As far as the East is from the West. As far as you can get. As far as the East is from the West. That is a tremendous thing that God has provided for us. Praise the Lord! Many people will stop at that point. They're glad that their sins are forgiven. Every time that they commit a sin, they can go back and claim that blood. Those sins are separated. You can't say enough about what a tremendous blessing that is, but it's not all that God has for us. You know, some people may feel that God created man so that man could sin and He could turn around and redeem him. But redemption is just a part of the process to get us back onto the track that God intended for man to be on in the first place. God has a tremendous thing in mind for man to do, which we'll talk about later. We got knocked off course and God had a plan to get us back on course but not just to stop at that point. Now, not only are we separated from our sins, the individual sins, but as we move on in the book of Romans, in through the sixth chapter, we're introduced to another concept. If

we go to verses 6-7: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Notice here that sin is not plural here. It’s not individual sins anymore; it’s this sin nature in general that He deals with. What we have to also see in this is that this is a past event. In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ: ...” It is a done deal. I was included on the cross with Jesus Christ; crucified with him. Then he says, “...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Think about what’s happening here. One of the things that I like, and I’ll probably mention it more than once; one thing I love about the gospel is that whenever death is mentioned resurrection is coupled with it. That is what is so wonderful. We cannot just stop at the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. That would get us perhaps separated from our sins, but it’s the resurrection life that we identify with that lets us overcome by our faith in Jesus Christ, this sin nature; the things that are causing these things to happen. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.” “As many of us as *were* baptized...(that’s past tense)...were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Now there are many terms that we hear in Christianity and our background. One of those things that I remember hearing growing up and I don’t know that it’s not true, but we hear about people going into the waters of baptism and having their sins washed away. I’m not to judge that and say that there isn’t any truth in that but I think it misses the major truth. The sins, our sins, were washed away when the blood was shed on the cross. That’s what washed the sins away. But what baptism does is it allows us to enter into the death of Jesus Christ and, Praise God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So that we can have within us that wonderful resurrection life and we identify with that. He goes on to say, “...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God...” (Romans 6:11) You know what reckoning is? It’s more of an

accounting term. In accounting I’m talking about like an accountant, in figuring numbers. He says, “...reckon ye also yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God...” Positionally, it’s true. It is a *fact* that we are dead to sin. Now you may say, “Well, I still struggle with this” or “I still struggle with that.” Well, that’s okay. We’re going to talk about that later. Positionally with God, when we have entered the waters of baptism by faith and been raised up, we are freed from that body of sin. We no longer have to sin anymore. That is a tremendous thing!

You’ve probably heard of stories where, some particular person or someone almost like a hermit, who lived in a very destitute state perhaps, got old, died in their home alone, and when people, or neighbours came in to clear out their belongings, they would find that this person had a tremendous sum of money stuffed in his or her mattress. Yet he lived as if he had absolutely nothing. As Christians we have to be careful; we can do the same thing. We have these blessings, we have these provisions in Christ, but until that revelation comes to our minds and we see it by the eyes of the Spirit, we can live and behave as if it isn’t true. It doesn’t mean it isn’t true, but we can live and behave and walk as if it isn’t true. But it is true and we need to apply ourselves to that and let the Holy Spirit truly reveal that to us.

Now, there is another thing that I think is interesting and has always sort of puzzled me through the years and that’s the seventh chapter of Romans. I’ve always wondered why would you have this seventh chapter in there after you had this wonderful sixth chapter of Romans? I just want to read a bit of that. I don’t claim to fully have all this linked together perfectly, but the Lord seems to be at least revealing some things. Beginning in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter of Romans. “For that which I do I allow not: for I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I

find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of Sin.” Have you ever stopped to think about what the law of sin is? What is a law? Something that is proven. One way of saying it is it’s the way things happen. That’s what a law is. That’s the way scientific laws were finally put down, as people watched the way things happened over and over and over again, and when it happened all the time that way, they became a law and they stated that law. We have all these physical and scientific laws that govern our universe. We didn’t make them up. They were there all the time we just put words around to define what they were. As we go into the eighth chapter of Romans, first of all, let’s review. The cross has provided for us separation from our sins and it has provided for our inclusion on the cross of Christ and resurrected with new life, the body of sin being dead. Yet, there’s still seems to be a law of sin that troubled the apostle Paul. He goes on in the wonderful eighth chapter of Romans and says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Now I have to confess something else. Something that has always troubled me is why it says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” I understand that, but then it says, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” I know we want to walk after the Spirit but why was that condemnation not taken care of when we accepted the shed blood of Jesus? I think there are a couple of ways of experiencing condemnation. One is that we may feel a condemnation from God before we are saved. But what happens often times is after we are saved, and we rejoice in the fact that our sins are forgiven, we then enter this period of frustration as to why we keep having trouble with things. We say we really ought to be free from that. Positionally we are free from that, but yet we still seem to struggle with certain things and that’s what the apostle Paul was saying here. Then there is said that

there is a law of sin that is working in his being. Now think about that. If we, for instance, have this trouble with getting our feelings hurt. If someone comes and says something, whether meaningly or unmeaningly, that we take as unkind and our response is that of indignation and resentment and we hold a grudge against that person, that's a sin. If multiple people from time to time come and say something to us that is unkind and we have the exact same response, then there is a law at work and that's the law of sin. And if it keeps going over and over and over we see the law of death at work in us. Our Brother Paul was struggling with that same thing. But then there is this provision of the cross. There's something else that God has provided for us through Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection. That is that there is another law that has come into being, which supersedes the law of sin and death and what is that? That's the law of what? The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Oh Hallelujah! God just keeps taking care of the issues as they come. We just keep peeling the layers off the onion and more and more truth keeps coming. Everything we can bring up that we have to deal with God has taken care of through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His resurrection power. There is a life of the Spirit now. If you think about the law of gravity, for instance, in Tennessee, if I drop this pen, what's going to happen? It's going to fall. What happens in the state of Washington? It does the same thing. What about Canada? Or India? It always falls, doesn't it? But what if when I drop the pen, my hand gets under it and I catch it? There's another law that actually supersedes the law of gravity. Think about these missiles that put these satellites into space. The law of gravity still works, doesn't it? It's still there, but how do these missiles get off the ground. Well, there's a law, something to the effect that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If you get enough action, force, thrust – if you will – from these missiles, they can overcome, neutralize the law of gravity and go above the law of gravity. They can go up, get outside to put these satellites into space. That's the way it is with the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. If we could ask the birds, which we can't but if we could we might say, "Well, how do you fly? Don't you know there's a law of gravity? Haven't you ever heard of Sir Isaac Newton?" They'd say, "We

don't know anything about Isaac Newton. We've never heard of him. We fly because it's the law of life in us to fly. That's why we fly." We can fly that way too. The law of the Spirit of Life is in us too and I think sometimes we try to over intellectualize it or we try to dissect it or whatever. If we believe the word of God and we do, then we have to believe it to the point that we can say, "I don't have to be governed by the law of sin and death in my life, that was taken care of on the cross." Does anybody have any trouble believing that their sins are forgiven? Does anybody have any trouble with that? Well, probably not. Maybe some do, but I doubt if anyone in this room has trouble believing that their sins are forgiven. Every one of these other provisions that have been made by God are just as real and just as truthful and have just the capacity and the power that the shed blood has to forgive us of our sins. We need to be able to yield that to the Holy Spirit. The other provision that we read about in the eighth chapter of Romans is that this can be done because that Spirit of Life comes within us because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. That's where it comes from. That's the reason it's a law. That's the reason that it works. The reason it becomes true is because the Spirit of Life dwells within us by virtue of the residency of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are separated from our sins, we are included with Christ on the cross, we have been resurrected through the waters of baptism, and now the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us and to enable us to live the life that God wants us to live. The reason for that is that God wants the essence of the life of Christ to keep growing up within us and to occupy a greater and greater and greater place in our lives.

I believe there is still another aspect of the cross that needs to be worked out in our lives. We still have this issue that we started with and that is where Jesus said to us if we are to be his disciples then we must take up his cross daily and follow him. We have heard many times that salvation is free. Thank God it is, but the Kingdom of God will cost us everything. The everything that God talks about is the flesh. I really was so encouraged to be reminded again this morning that nothing that God asks us to lay down, asks us to give up, asks us to leave aside, can in no way be compared to the glory that God has for us. I think about what God intends to do in the

restoring of the creation unto Himself. We use various examples of how.... I think Bro. Merv was talking about the example of being left in charge of the grocery store when his father was away. That is a wonderful example of what it's like. Sometimes I think we need to go ahead and think about and just look at the situation in our world today. We've got things happening that years ago we could hardly believe could ever happen. We can hardly believe what is happening to innocent civilians who are actually being manually beheaded and it being circulated on the Internet. If there ever was a time that the enemy seems to be showing himself for what he truly is, it's now. The other thing about it is, if it were not for the common Grace of God it would be even more widespread than it is today. It's only being held back to the extent that it is because of the Grace of God. For, an unregenerate man has no choice except to move in that direction. So when we think about this army, this body of Christ, we must realize how critical it's going to be that we, at the slightest direction of the Head, are ready to move. Even if you could imagine reaching a high level of maturity in Jesus Christ, can you imagine being responsible for getting this mess straightened out? There's only one way that that can be accomplished and that is through a many membered body. It cannot happen any other way. No matter how mature we become as individuals, even that is not sufficient until we learn how to flow together completely. Imagine trying to deal with these issues? These are the kinds of issues that we are going to have to deal with. We talk about the issues that we are dealing with in our house and I'm not saying that they're not challenging, but think about restoring the creation. Think about dealing with this deep-seeded sin and corruption and darkness in our world. That is going to be the responsibility of the body of Christ. When that Head speaks the slightest word, the body of Christ has got to go into action without question. There has got to be none of this, well I've thought it over and I don't really believe that's the best way to do it. We talked this morning - our Brother Andy mentioned it and then Eldon gave us an example at lunchtime - that there are many things that seem right to us now. I know you've experienced, and I have too, times that you know, even when you get together with the other elders, you know you've

got the right answer. Your job is to go into that meeting and convince them that you're right. When really what we need is to be going into that meeting having our minds open to listen to what God may be saying through somebody else. We can be right, as our Brother said, and we can still be wrong. Think about Peter for a moment. When Jesus told Peter that he was going to go to the cross, what did Peter do or say? I don't remember the exact words but he said, "Let it not be true. It can't be true. No, it'll not happen." And Jesus' response was, "Get behind me Satan." Now what do you think Peter was motivated by? I don't think he was motivated by what we think of as evil. I think he had a tremendous affection and love for the Lord Jesus. He just didn't want him to go. He said it cannot be but he was wrong. He was wrong. We can be wrong too. We have to have the mind of Christ because it's so different from our minds. We can mean well and can be motivated by the right things. I think about our political system. I think most of these politicians are motivated by reasonably good motives, but there are no answers there. It just won't work.

So to understand better what this business of bearing the cross is about, I'd like us to take a little detour back to the book of Genesis. In Genesis 1:26 it says, "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'" So what the Lord is telling us here is that He intended from the very beginning that man would have dominion over the earth, over everything in the earth and on the earth. Now we may think today that we have dominion over all the earth, but we don't have dominion over all the earth. We don't have that at this time. God has given us the ability to do many things, to control many things around us, but we don't have dominion over the earth in the way that God intended for us to have in the very beginning. In the second chapter of Genesis and the seventh verse it says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Adam was created a three-part being and our Brother ministered on that this morning. He was created spirit, soul and body. He had a spirit so that he could commune with

God who is spirit, he had a body so that he could interact with his physical surroundings, and he had a soul. That soul was so that he could have self-expression, a personality, various faculties, and most importantly, he would have the power of free choice. Just like God. In the image of God.

I Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I think that was well covered this morning, but just to add that for emphasis that we are a three-part being. Adam was created a three-part being; spirit, soul, and body and I think this scripture in Hebrews is just a confirmation of that. That the word of God is capable of discerning and cutting asunder between soul and spirit. So that's our make-up. Adam was perfect in that he was created by God and he had no imperfections at that point, but he was not yet perfected. God was not yet finished with Adam. God had a plan for mankind that went beyond man himself. The scripture says that God intended for man to have dominion over all the earth and everything in it and on it. God intended to secure all the rights that He had to the universe, that were rightfully His, through a race of man that would be filled by His life and directed and motivated by Him. That's what God intended to be; that God's very life would be resident within man. That's something I've always wondered about. I know in Isaiah 14:12 it speaks about Lucifer and God's judgement of Lucifer. And it says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" Now we know that some time in the course of creation that Lucifer was judged by God because he had this problem. He wanted to be, he demanded to have, equality with God. There was a phrase that got him into trouble and that phrase was, "I will." We have that problem sometimes, don't we? Even in our own selves. I will. That has to be dealt with. So with Satan occupying the earth, God intended that man in concert with God would bring the

downfall of Satan. We can think about that in general terms, but then we think about the things that are happening in our earth today, that's really what it comes down to. Those are the things that we're going to have to be dealing with. Right now the world is out there, nations are fighting wars against other nations, people are committing terrible atrocities one to another and these are awful things and the governments of the world have got to try to deal with these things. But what the church has got to be focusing on and dealing with are these principalities, and these powers and these forces of evil and darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. That's just as real. That is what is behind all these other things that are going on. That is what the church has got to be dealing with. God intends for that to happen. I'm going to bring a close to this session by reading this scripture from Romans 8:19-21: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He also said that if a grain of wheat doesn't go into the ground it remaineth alone, but if it goes into the ground and dies then it brings forth many other seeds. (In paraphrase.) That's another aspect of what Jesus' death on the cross has done for us. He is now, as he has come out of the grave in resurrected life, not just the only begotten Son but he is the first born among many brethren. The first born among many brethren. Now God is beginning to deal with these many brethren to bring them to the place where the life of Christ is completely manifested in us and can be lived out through us. We are separated from our sins, we have been crucified with Christ and resurrected from death with Christ, we have been filled with His Spirit so that the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death, it supersedes it and now God is working out that process which we talked about this morning. That process is in place to transform us day, by day, by day, by day, more and more into the image of Jesus Christ. Praise God. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for Your presence with us. We thank You Lord, for Your mercy and Your grace. Lord, we thank You that even though in the eyes of man it appears that the plan of God was frustrated for a time and yet, O God, Your provisions for not only getting us back on track, but to make us to fulfill the very purpose that You had from the very beginning. Lord, we're so thankful that because of what You have done, You have let us have a

share in it. It is hard for us to believe that You would condescend to allow us as mere mortals to participate in this wonderful plan of creation and yet that is the God that we serve. We thank You so much Lord, for including us in it. Lord, we pray that as we meditate on these things that it would cause us to have a willingness as we have never had before to commit ourselves unto You. To be willing to leave aside those things that would tie us down and keep our feet

planted on the ground, but give us wings, O God, in faith that we may soar into the heavenly realms with You. That we may see the beauty of these things and not be attracted by the shiny trinkets that are so tawdry and apart of this old world. Lord, we live in a time in which the world seems like never before, to need to see the body of Christ show forth the love of Christ. Father, we pray that You would enable us to do that. In Jesus name, Amen.

# Jesus Only With Themselves

*By Robert Oldridge*

The other day I was reading the account of the transfiguration. I have read it many times and been blessed by the account. This time it seemed to impress me even more.

You will recall how Jesus took three disciples with him to a high mountain apart by themselves, and he was transfigured before them. Also, Moses, who represented the period of the giving of the law, and Elijah, who represented the prophets, appeared. Peter, greatly moved by the scene made the mistake of putting Moses and Elijah on an equal plain with the Lord. People can do the same today, elevating various personalities that God has used, rather than exalting Christ. Isaiah declared that Christ alone should be exalted. The Epistles emphasize that even the sacred mystery, withheld from ages and generations, was now revealed and made clear and was simply this: "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory." (Col. 1:27). He had to speak very plainly, especially to the Galatians, saying; "Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). He declared that he was travailing in prayer until Christ would be formed in them. So today may we keep our eyes upon the Lord and let Him have His way in these temples of clay. It is a high and holy calling. In Colossians he declared we should be risen with Christ and even ascended with him. May that desire fill our hearts that we might arise with Him far above all principalities and powers, that even Satan will be placed under our feet as His word declares.

Jesus said when He had yielded His entire being into God's hands that "the

prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30). May we come to that fullness in Christ where the "enemy will have nothing in us." May self-interests and the paltry things of this world fade away and the Glory of the Lord fill these vessels of clay.

Jesus, in that wonderful prayer in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, prayed that the glory that He experienced with the Father would be in us and that we would experience that relationship, even as He and the Father are one. He also prayed they would be with Him where He was. He was not talking about the future only, but He was praying we would be with Him in the realm of the Spirit and partake of some of that Glory even now.

I have ministered from time to time on God's great Eternal plan and purpose and it is wonderful to know that much of the unfolding is taking place in the lives of His elect today. I'm so glad that we can begin to partake of His Kingdom even now, even before the millennial Glories begin to dawn over the horizons of the earth in which we live. I love the many quotations that God would bring to pass many of these wonderful manifestations of His glory even now. Let me quote a few. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13). Also verses 19-22. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom

ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Another passage in Eph. 3:5 says, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;" Also in verse 10: "To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." In Eph. 5:8 it says; "Now are ye light in the Lord" Of course there are many others which declare it has been done or is happening now, but I believe the above passages are sufficient to encourage us to enter in with all of our hearts even now.

I would like now to zero in more directly on the verse I have used as a title. I mentioned how Peter, at the moment, got carried away and seemed to put Moses and Elijah on the same level as Christ. But let us notice that Jesus did not remain alone, but it was Jesus only with themselves. From the beginning when God made man in His image and likeness, man was to rule over the Creation as a whole, but let us remember it was to be under God. For 6000 years man has tried to rule, but not in union and in harmony with his Creator and we see the results among the nations today. God has not changed His plan as is clearly portrayed in Hebrews chapter 2 verses 6-11. It says that he put all things in subjection under the feet of man and left nothing that was not put under him. He clarified the situation by saying that as of yet we don't see the full manifestation of man fulfilling his role, but we do see it under the feet of one man, ever the man Christ Jesus, who, rose triumphant over death, hell,

and the grave and could have taken the kingdom and ruled over the creation for the past two thousand years. But as we outlined, what He had in mind from the beginning is now ready to be manifest in a many membered body. The Bible speaks of them as the elect and this is clearly portrayed now in verse 10: "For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." This is none other than the manifestation of the sons of God, to deliver the groaning creation and the completion of His plan in all the earth. Again the scriptures declare that we are now the Sons of God, but the full manifestation is just in the offing. I trust that this truth is burning in the hearts of the readers of this article and we will just simply surrender all to our loving Lord. Just as in the time of Christ few were able

to really understand what He was teaching them, but He did say to the faithful few: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, that they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them," (Matt. 13:16-17) because their eyes were blinded by tradition rather than allowing the Spirit of God to give them the truth. Thank God He is revealing these things to us today, if we will only come humbly before Him and yield our all unto Him.

So let us today depart from the traditions of man and enter into that which can only come by divine Revelation. In the natural world there is a price to pay for things of value, so in the Spiritual realm there is a price to pay if we are going to enter into the Glories that God would reveal to us. I well remember

years ago when I spent time in ministering in the area of west Texas. I had spoken down this line and a brother concluded the service with this message in song and I quote:

"Have you counted the cost to walk this way? Have you paid the price to behold My face? For to behold the Living God means to walk away from yourself; to die to self, to leave yourself behind. To be empty, to be nothing. That Christ in you may be all in all."

The two requirements to be able to appropriate these realities are: death to self, and death to the world as, outlined in Gal. 2:20 and 6:14. The Bible speaks of three great enemies. They are the world, the flesh, and the Devil. We are will aware that Satan works through the other two. So let us place our lives fully in the hands of our wonderful Lord. Then it will be truly "Jesus only with themselves" (Mark 9:8).

**PRAYER & FASTING**

The Brethren have called for a week of Prayer and Fasting.

The date will be June 5-11, 2005.

This will give you ample time to prepare yourself for that period.

Bro. Frank Paterson wrote an article on Fasting in the March/April 2004 issue of the Sharon Star. Bro. Ewald Wanagas also wrote on Prayer and Fasting in the March/April 2002 issue.

It would be good for you to locate these "Stars" and review. The 2004 article can be read on line at [www.thesharonstar.org](http://www.thesharonstar.org).

**PARK VALLEY LABOUR DAY WEEKEND**

Starts Friday, Sept. 2, 2005 at 5:00 pm and ends Monday, Sept. 5, 2005 at 1:00 pm

Contact: Ragnar Aarrestad, Box 515, Debden, SK. S0J 0S0  
Phone: (306) 469-4962

**WINKLER LABOUR DAY WEEKEND CAMP**

Held at Winkler Bible Camp  
Starts Friday, Sept. 2 evening meal and ends after breakfast Monday, Sept. 5, 2005.

**RESERVATIONS ARE NECESSARY.**

Please contact: Bob Waldner  
Box 205, Altona, MB R0G 0B0  
(204) 324-5963

**MINDEN NEBRASKA MEETINGS**

September 23 - 25, 2005

For reservations contact Duane and Janice Olson  
Phone (306) 832-1712 or email: [mindenolsons@hotmail.com](mailto:mindenolsons@hotmail.com)  
Reservations no later than September 10th.

**HIDDEN ACRES FELLOWSHIP SHAKESPEARE, ONTARIO**

Friday, September 2 - 6:00 p.m. to September 5, 2005 - 1:00 p.m.

Please bring bedding, toilet articles, musical instruments, bibles, swimwear.

Cost will be: \$20 - 13 years of age & older;  
\$10 - 12 years of age & under; or \$50 per family.

Please send reservations to:

Garry Tyler, 360 Douglas Street, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 5R3  
or call (519) 271-7185 or

Kelvin Martin, 14 Dickens Place, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 7G1  
or call (519) 273-4581 or email: [garry.tyler@sympatico.ca](mailto:garry.tyler@sympatico.ca)

**NORTH CAROLINA CAMP MEETING**

July 24 - 30, 2005

Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, NC

Wake Forest University, site of the camp is located in Winston Salem, NC just off Silas Creek Parkway, and signs will direct travelers to the campus from any route entering the city. Easiest access to the Silas Creek Pkwy (NC 67) entrance is via Business I-40 Exit 2. From Bus I-40 follow it northward 3 miles, take the NC Hwy 67 exit and go straight at the first light (Reynolda Rd) directly into the Wake Forest Campus. As you come into the campus, turn right on Wake Forest Rd, then the second right on Gully Dr, turn left onto Wingate Rd and another left onto Gully Dr.

Luter Hall, site of camp registration will be on your left.

Check-in time begins at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 24. Meals will be served in the college dining hall beginning at 5:00 p.m on Sunday, July 24, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 p.m. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Saturday, July 30.

Buildings are air conditioned. Swimming pool and other recreational facilities are available.

**CHARGES FOR ROOM & BOARD:**

Age 0-3	No Charge
Age 4-6	\$60.00 per week or \$12.00 per day
Age 7-Adult	\$100.00 per week or \$20.00 per day

You may bring linens (single bed), towels & pillows, or these can be rented at \$8.50 per set.

Send reservations to:  
Global Missions@Regional Camp  
c/o Mrs. Anita Love

112 Queensbury Rd., Winston Salem, NC 27104

or call: Anita Love 336-765-9271  
or email <[aslove1@triad.rr.com](mailto:aslove1@triad.rr.com)>

Flight arrangements may be made to Greensboro, NC.

(GSO) For airport pickup call  
Dave Health at 336-841-0607  
or e-mail <[DDPACK@juno.com](mailto:DDPACK@juno.com)>

For those with Internet access:

For a more detailed map to the campus, go to <http://maps.google.com> and enter the address, 1834 Wake Forest Rd, Winston Salem, NC 27106

For a campus map and other directions go to <http://www.wfu.edu/visitors/directions.html>

## DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Camp North Battleford ..... July 3-10, 2005  
 North Carolina Summer Camp ..... July 24 - 30, 2005  
 Caribbean Camp, Trinidad ..... August 1-12, 2005  
 Pinelow Summer Family Camp ..... August 8-14, 2005  
 Young People's - Hidden Acres, ON ..... Sept. 2-5, 2005  
 Young People's - Park Valley, SK ..... Sept. 2-5, 2005  
 Family Camp - Winkler, MB ..... Sept. 2-5, 2005  
 Minden Meetings ..... Sept. 23, 24, 25, 2005  
 New York Camp ..... Oct. 21-23, 2005  
 Pinelow Fall Family Camp ..... Nov. 10-13, 2005

Non Profit  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Minden, NE 68959  
 Permit No. 40

## CALLED HOME

**Ferdinand  
 (Ferdie) Samuel  
 (Elder)  
 March 6, 2005  
 Questelles,  
 St. Vincent, WI**

## PINELOW SUMMER CAMP

North of Spokane  
**August 8-14, 2005**

From Spokane, North on Hwy 395  
 toward Coleville, past Loon Lake  
 3.1 miles or 5 km, turn east on  
 Deer Lake North Road 1.7 miles or  
 2-3/4 km to Pinelow Park.

**Adults: \$100,  
 Children 3-11: \$50,  
 Family Rates with children  
 up to 18 - \$285.  
 (Rates - US Funds)**

Send reservations to:  
 Daryl Martz  
 Ph. (604) 858-9009  
 Fax: (604) 795-5365  
 email: martz@shelbrook.com  
 (NO PETS)

*Campground registration starts at  
 4:00 pm, August 8, 2005*

Please be advised that our  
**CARIBBEAN CAMP**

will be held in Trinidad  
**DATE: Aug. 1 - 12, 2005**  
**CONTACT PERSON:**

**Crafton Lewis**  
 Holder's Terrance, Stanislaus St.  
 Success Village, Laventille  
 Trinidad, West Indies  
 Ph. 868-623-1141  
 Fax: 868-623-1684  
 email: craflew1@yahoo.com  
 or gospelofthekingdom@yahoo.com

## Pinelow Fall Camp Family Camp

**November 10-13, 2005**

\$60 US for adults, \$30 US for 3-11 yrs,  
 \$150 US per family  
 Contact: Daryl Martz  
 Fax (604) 795-5365

e-mail: martz@shelbrook.com

## New York/New Jersey Camp Meeting

**October 21 to 23, 2005**

Leibenzel Retreat Center,  
 Schooley's Mountain,  
 80 Pleasant Grove Road, New Jersey 07079

Please bring your own linens (single bed), towels & pillows, as these will not be available at the campground. A limited amount of linens can be rented for \$5/set for those travelling from further away.

Registration begins at 3:00 pm on Friday, October 21. Meals will be served in the dining hall, beginning at 5:30 pm on Friday, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 pm. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, October 23, 2005.

**Charges for your room & board:**  
 Under 3 years of age - no charge  
 Age 3-10 - \$20.00  
 Age 11 - Adult - \$60.00

For transportation contact  
 Cleveland Gajee at debgaj@aol.com  
 or Phone 201-486-5644

Please RSVP by October 13th to:  
 New York, New Jersey Camp  
 c/o Brad & Carrie Wensley  
 10 Penn Commons  
 Yaphank, NY 11980 or  
 Phone: 631-775-6030  
 or email: carriemw@optonline.net

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
**Sharon Children's Homes and Schools**  
 Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

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