



Volume XXXIX
June 19, 2023

“...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.” Matthew 13:47

Number 3

ONCE—Gospel Christianity is not a matter of following a set of rules. In fact, the gospel is not about what we do but rather about what Christ has already done. There’s an old story about a man who fell down a well. When he called out for help a passerby, hearing his cries, leaned over the well and asked him what he wanted. The man said he wanted to get out. The passerby thought for a moment and finally took out some paper and wrote something on it and dropped it down into the well. When the man picked it up, he read “Ten Rules on How to Keep Out of Wells”. Religion is like that. It tells us that we must do something to get out of the well we’ve fallen into. However, that is NOT the Gospel. The Gospel tells us of a Saviour who has appeared ONCE to put away the deep well of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ONCE, only ONCE. Hebrews 9:26, *“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”*

Jesus was and is unique. No one had been like Him in the past, no one can match Him in the present and no one will surpass Him in the future. There were priests and prophets back in the Old Testament yet none of them could bring salvation to their people. But the ultimate priest, Christ Jesus, appeared ONCE and saved us by His doing, dying and rising again.

There is no one like Him; no church, no priest and no bishop can make a sacrifice for our sins. Why? Because Jesus appeared ONCE to put away sin (literally abolish sin). The hymn writer put it this way:

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.
But Christ, the heav’nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

His putting away of our sins happened ONCE. The scriptures are clear, only a blood sacrifice can put away sin; Hebrews 9:22, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”* --MM

KNOT TODAY—Occasionally I get the time to go throw my cast net around the river here in Bon Secour or down the South beach. This is not only a pleasure for me, but also provides for me the food of Heaven (of course fish). Recently while passing Nelson Boatyard I noticed a beautiful fiberglass yacht. Whoa! If only I was “financially fit”! A moment of lust flooded this old fisherman but was brought under control by the new man inside. My attention then was shifted to the name. The name brought a bit of humor and gave the answer to my fleshly desires. KNOT TODAY was

boldly staring at me as I passed by the stern. Well, so be it. I at least can look and admire.

How about that name—KNOT TODAY? I’ve faced those words now for over sixty years. As a child I foolishly asked for things and heard my parents say, “Knot today”. On campus at William Carey College, I looked into the eyes of a beautiful woman and proposed marriage. Again, “Knot today”. (I did get her though in 1963.) Lying in a hospital bed in Anchorage, Alaska, I asked the doctor if I could go home. Again, “Knot today”.

Are we going to be able to leave the dock to begin our fishing trip off the Louisiana coast? Knot today. At a time when funds were so limited, I was asked by my children if we could buy a cola. Knot today! (A budget was a must.)

I remember sitting in a church service in 1963 and hearing a message that stirred me to the heart. The subject was, “Where will you spend eternity?” The man of God made it so clear. My answer was, “I really don’t know.” The messenger continued to ask if anyone in doubt desired to know for sure about his or her eternal destiny. I certainly wanted to know that heaven was my home, but something inside said, “Knot today!” Paul preached to a man named Felix in Acts 24. His response was like mine— *“Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”* Mistake! I have seen the same in the faces of people when the truth is presented to them. How dangerous it is to refuse the urging of the Holy Spirit when He knocks at your heart! The Bible is so clear about the subject, *“...Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”* Hebrews 4:7b. *“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* 2 Corinthians 6:2. For salvation the day is **today** and the time is **now**! What about surrendering to the call of God and following where God’s finger points? Do I hear the old adage again, KNOT TODAY?

--AWM (2010)

THE KNOTS PRAYER

Dear God: Please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart and my life; remove the have nots, the can nots, and the do nots that I have in my mind. Erase the will nots, may nots, might nots that may find a home in my heart. Release me from the could nots, would nots, and should nots that obstruct my life.

Amen

FINISHED FOR US—Did you know that all Christ did was done for us?

He was born for us (Isaiah 9:6).

He was delivered for our offenses (Romans 4:25).

He was wounded and bruised for us (Isaiah 53:5).

He was made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

He died for us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

He will come again for us (John 14:1-3).

HOW IMPORTANT IS A GOSPEL TRACT?

1. It can go where you cannot go.
 2. It needs no public hall, tent or building.
 3. It asks no gift in return.
 4. It takes no notice of opposition.
 5. It is never overcome by fear.
 6. It is never discouraged; never tired.
 7. It is never angry, but always pleads.
 8. It never strays from the message.
 9. It is faithful; it preaches as long as it lives.
 10. It is the easiest way to approach a lost sinner.
- Start passing out Gospel Tracts today. God uses the printed Word!

SLEEPING WHILE THE SHIP SINKS—“*So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not*” (Jonah 1:6). There are interesting comparisons between Jonah and Jesus. Both slept in a boat. Both were buried for three days and three nights. Both came back from that burial to preach deliverance.

There are also many contrasts. Jesus cared; Jonah didn't. Jesus calmed the wind and sea with His power; Jonah calmed it with his death. Jesus obeyed the Lord; Jonah didn't.

Just as Jonah ran from the Lord's presence hoping the Ninevites would die, so he ignored the plight of the sailors, unconcerned that they were going to die. I see disobedient Christians in this story. I see me in this story. I see us when we are asleep while the world perishes. I see Jonah and I am disgusted, but I see me and I am disgusted. May God wake us up to the plight of the world around us so that we take the gospel to them. —TS

“...WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS...”—“*...that even the wind and the sea obey him?*” (Mark 4:41). The disciples were exhausted. They had tried everything and yet their boat was continuing to sink. Then they turned to Jesus and called on Him for help. He instantly calmed the raging storm, and the mariners were stunned at His authority and majesty. Mark 4:41 poses a great question—what manner of man is this man Jesus? Let's call some witnesses to testify on His behalf.

Let's first ask Isaiah. “Isaiah, you are one of the greatest prophets; what do you say about Jesus?” And Isaiah replies, “He is *the mighty God*” (Isaiah 9:6).

Let's ask Micah. “Micah, do you have anything to say about the Lord Christ?” And Micah replies, “His *goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*” (Micah 5:2).

Now let's ask the apostle John. John says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...*” (John 1:1, 14).

John the Baptist testifies, “*...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

What about you Thomas? Thomas replies, “He is *my Lord and My God*” (John 20:28). Let's call more witnesses. Here is Pilate, who says, “*...I find no fault in this man*” (Luke 23:4). And Pilate's wife says, “He is a

just man” (Matthew 27:19). Next the Centurion says, “*...Certainly this was a righteous man*” (Luke 23:47). He is followed by the thief on the cross who says, “*...this man hath done nothing amiss*” (Luke 23:41).

Even the traitor Judas says, “*...I have betrayed the innocent blood...*” (Matthew 27:4).

Jesus was sinless, impeccable, wonderful!

What say you about Jesus?

--MM

PREPARING FOR JULY 4—In his Farewell Address, President Reagan admonished us by remarking on his pride in the great resurgence of patriotism during his time in office. However he warned that this new patriotism “won't count for much and it won't last unless it is grounded in thoughtfulness and knowledge.” He continued, “Our spirit is back, but we haven't reinstitutionalized it. We've got to do a better job of getting across that America is freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of enterprise. And freedom is special and rare. It is fragile; it needs protection.”

We've got to teach history based not on what's in fashion, but what's important—why the Pilgrims came here, who Jimmy Doolittle was, and what those 30 seconds over Tokyo meant. I'm warning of an eradication of the American memory that could result, ultimately, in an erosion of the American spirit. Let's start with some basics—more attention to American history and a greater emphasis on civic ritual. And let me offer lesson number one about America. All great change in America begins at the dinner table. So, tomorrow night in the kitchen I hope the talking begins. And children, if your parents haven't been teaching you what it means to be an American, let them know and nail them on it. That would be a very American thing to do. —KM

FISHY QUESTION—What does a ship have and doesn't need, but can't get underway without it? (Hint—it's not on the ship.) The answer to the April edition question was Proverbs 27:9, “*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart...*”. Send your answer!

FISHY HUMOR AND GOOD THOUGHTS

Adult—a person who stops growing from both ends but continues in the middle.

Dust—mud with the juice out.

Mosquito—an insect that makes flies look good.

Toothache—the pain that could drive you to extraction.

Tomorrow—the greatest labor-saving device.

Sign on fence—Salesmen welcome. Dog food is expensive.

Garbage truck sign—We have what it takes to take what you've got.

Laugh every day; it's like inner jogging.

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

Dear God: I have a problem---it's me!

There is no key to happiness—the door is always open.

Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted.

As a child of God, prayer is calling home every day.

The most important things in your home are the people.