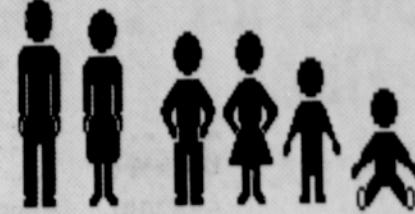




RELIGION

Strengthen Your Faith Through Prayer And Regular Church Worship

Scripture of the Week
St. John: Chapter 17



Living In A Storm

by Mattie Ann Callier-Spears

In today's world, everybody has an overall sense of "fright". These times seem to be harder than any other times, already experienced. We have "Designing Women", "Free Sex", "Open Relationships" [whatever that means], "Swinging Singles", "Marriage Contracts" and many others.

Recently, I had the opportunity to assist in the preparations of not one wedding but, two. The two couples were as different as night and day. Their values and views on life were decidedly different. One couple had not allowed themselves to become intimate with one another before their wedding. On the other hand, the other couple was living together. The first thing that you want to ask is--"Which one will last?"

Our young children are involved in their schools, during the week. The children in elementary, middle and high school are faced, on a daily basis, with decisions that we, as adults, are unable to handle. Peer pressure can be a terrible thing; especially when the peers are involved in drugs, crime, and sex.

I wanted my daughter to be a little girl for as long as she was a little girl. Now, mind you, I don't mean I didn't want her to grow up. Children have forgotten how to be children. They don't know how to have fun. Pure unadulterated fun. Where are the parents? What are the values of the parents? Whether than attacking the child, at school or at church, find out who the parents are and what their lifestyle is like. What is the dialogue that is used everyday between the parent and the child?

Do you know what your child is wearing? Is there a dress code in the schools? Do you know what is in your child's bedroom--

in your house? Does this sound old-fashioned? Many of the old-fashioned methods are hurriedly being recalled due to the overwhelming discord that the present day concepts are causing. Many times, we cut off our noses to spite our faces. When, no matter what your intentions may be, your face is still hanging out there for all to see.

Storms! Storms! Storms! We don't have to live in any of these storms, of life. There are many, many more; for instance, joblessness, divorce, abuse, adultery, poverty, sickness--just to name a few.

How must we handle these storms in our lives? First of all, we must be firmly anchored in the Lord. We can't just take on Christianity for a fortnight. And, then, after the calm of the storm, we just continue on as if nothing ever took place. Wrong! Wrong! If you just sit down for a hot second and think, you will find that many of the problems, in our lives could have been avoided by us. If we had known who to go to... or who to call... or what to say... or what to do; maybe, just maybe none of this would have happened. Bingo! You got it! On the G.I. Joe cartoon, a saying that they use frequently is... "Knowing is half the battle."

Some of us are running around here like a chicken with its neck chopped off, aimless and without a plan of any kind.

Many have found the answer in a relationship with their children, their mates, with their neighbors and with themselves by having a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ. When we have apparently insoluble problems, where do we turn? This is a much-asked question.

The psalmist says, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land,

and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm 37:3 Yes! "Trust in the Lord." Each day has its burdens, its cares and perplexities; and when we meet how ready we are to talk of our difficulties and trials. So many borrowed troubles intrude, so many fears are indulged, such a weight of anxiety is expressed, that one might suppose we had no pitying, loving Saviour ready to hear all our requests and to be to us a present help in every time of need.

If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing. Humility should be cultivated and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness and make us big-hearted and generous.

Jesus Christ truly experienced sorrow and was acquainted with grief. But, though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. He did not take out His pain on others. He did not go around hurting the ones He loved. His humility and peaceful serenity was known and felt by all who came in contact with Him. His heart was a well-spring of life, and wherever He went He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness.

Christ Jesus was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or remorseful. The lives of those who imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility. Levity will be repressed; there will be no boisterous words or rude jesting; but the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives peace like a river. It does not restrain cheerfulness nor cloud the sunny, smiling face. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to minister to the storms in our lives. When His love is allowed to reign in our hearts, we shall follow His example.

The storms, in our lives, are oft times "reaping what we've sown." We need to discern the nature or the cause of the storm so that we can implement a plan for a speedy exit. Christ told us "... in this world we shall have tribulation." But, just because we exist in this world, we do not have to take part in the corrupt practices of the world.

When the storms of life are raging, know that Christ is standing right by you. Giving you a helping hand. Whispering to you "Don't be discouraged for I have already overcome this world."

Young people and adults! Be of good cheer!

Insight from The Word

by Michael Lindsey, Dean of North Portland Bible College

Abiding in the Vine

The Sunday School lesson for March 4 in the uniform series will be John 15:1-17.

I know many of you who read my column are really active in your local churches, teaching Sunday School, ushering, serving on various missions, brotherhoods and other boards. There's a lot of activity going on in your church, and they really need you to help hold it all together. Right?

And sometimes (maybe often) you get pretty worn out doing all those good things for the Lord. You feel the stress of serving Jesus, not the joy. The feeling of drudgery overwhelms the sense of satisfaction. Have you ever reached that point? I know I have. Then read today's Scripture passage for your own blessing--not to preach to someone else, okay?

A good way to experience the allegory of the vine and the branches is to put yourself in the position of a branch. Maybe you can just lean back in an easy chair and pretend to be a branch of the big grape vine. I know this sounds crazy--but isn't that exactly what the Lord is telling us? "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:1, 5, NIV).

Good. Now you are a good branch, aren't you? So you want to bear nice big grapes, in big bunches, and do your part for the vine. Are you starting to feel the pressure to produce? Don't! The vine is full of life, and the sap is flowing from the roots right up the vine and into all the branches. Everything you need to produce fruit--water, minerals, nutrients--is given to you naturally, through the connection with the vine. Not only that, but that sap makes you feel really good, too. Like you belong to Someone wonderful, who loves you no matter how well you do, who knows what you need before you even ask. The life of the vine has become your life, too. "He that abides in me, and I in him, brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing" (15:5).

Isn't that better? The Lord doesn't put conditions on his love for his people, any more than the vine feeds life into only the best branches. But sometimes you and I (remember, we're branches) need a little trimming and cleaning. I'm not talking about dieting or personal hygiene. We all have some personal habits or faults that make it hard to receive the life flowing from the vine. Maybe we're growing too long, getting into other branches' business, sprouting too many leaves, spreading ourselves too thin. Maybe we're falling down

into the dirt, not getting enough light, even getting walked on. Do you feel like you can't help it? That's okay.

You see, the Gardener ("husbandman") comes by regularly to see how we're doing (15:1). He wants us to bear much fruit, too; and he knows just what it will take--a lot better than we can ever know. Sometimes he has to trim back some wild growth, or lift you up and put you on a new trellis. Sometimes he has to lift you out of the dirt and cleanse you, so you can respond naturally to the light and start bearing fruit (15:2). It does hurt to get trimmed, doesn't it? And getting lifted out of the dirt can put you in a position that feels pretty uncomfortable at first. I guess we'll just have to trust that the Gardener knows what he's doing; in fact, I know we can! And we'll be better off for it in the long run, I'm sure.

We need to listen to the Vine; he'll tell us how to hang on to him. We shouldn't be surprised, that he doesn't tell us to strain really hard, or to meet the statewide grape quota. (How could a branch strain, anyway?) He does tell us to abide in his love (15:9), and to do that we need to obey (keep) his commands (15:10). But then the main command he's interested in is this: love the other branches! (15:12, 17).

This can be difficult, because the other branches also have problems with wild growth and dirty leaves. They even get in your way sometimes, right? But if we keep on loving the Vine, and as a result we learn to accept and love the other branches, we will not have to worry about drying up and getting thrown away (15:6). The Vine tells us to do this for our own good, so that our joy might be complete (15:11). That's good enough for me.

We just have one more little matter to attend to: bearing fruit! If you don't work hard all the time, will you ever bear any fruit? Sure you will! But you have to bear fruit the way the Vine tells you to. He says, "Ask the Father in my name, and he will give you the fruit you desire" (see 15:7). And if you do it his way--through prayer--then the fruit of your labors will last and ripen and become sweet (15:16). Some of the fruit will result in the production of new branches in the Vine. Some of the fruit will be a beautiful appearance, a good reflection on the Vine--what people call "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23).

By the way, who gets to pick the fruit? Who is glorified by a good harvest? Why, the Gardener, of course! (John 15:8) That is the greatest cause for joy to me.

You must admit, Jesus really knows how to tell a story. Enjoy the vision, there in your easy chair, a few minutes more, okay? I know I will.

Who Will Catch My Tears

by Mr. Eric Churchwell

When I cry,
Who will catch my tears
So hurt am I
From my childish fears
Save me from myself
And my heart that lies
Who will catch my tears
When they hear my cries?
Stopped by fate,
Chosen in war
Who will catch my tears,
When my eyes grow sore?
With no regret,
Yet still remorse
Who will catch my tears?
Not me, of course
Send me a satchel,
One that is pure
To carry my tears,
For time they must endure.

"A dedicated poem for Lattie McGee & Cornelius Abraham" torture and murder in Chicago--child abuse how long must it continue in this world. So much pain ever single day--even at home in Portland, Oregon. Some reported, some hot, but death cannot be called back, it is always the final chapter.

II Chronicles 7:14

"If my people, which are called by name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

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World Day of Prayer Service
March 2, 1990
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Rev. Aaron Hamlin, Pastor
For information contact Chaplain John Parker, 284-7563.

BIBLE QUIZ BOOK

According to Paul's advice, Timothy should stop drinking water and "use a little wine." Why?

When three visitors came to Abraham at Mamre, to tell him that Sarah would bear him a child, Abraham was properly hospitable. After he invited them into his tent, what did he give them to eat and drink?

- A. lamb and wine
- B. lamb, milk, and cakes
- C. cakes, dressed calf, butter, and milk
- D. kid, sweet cakes, and frozen milk

Of their twins, Rebekah preferred Jacob, but Isaac favored Esau, "because he did eat of his _____."

It wasn't just pottage that Jacob gave Esau after they reached an agreement over the birthright; he also served him _____.

- A. bread
- B. grapes and figs
- C. meat
- D. milk

What did Joseph's brothers eat after they threw him into the pit?

The Lord commanded the Israelites to make the Passover sacrifice and feast on roast lamb, unleavened bread, and _____.

This Old Testament edible was described as being "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." What was it?

What food did God send the Israelites in such great abundance that they ate themselves sick?

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10:45 A.M. - WORSHIP SERVICE
6:30 P.M. - WORSHIP SERVICE

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Psalm 34:3

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Rev. Wendell H. Wallace
Senior Pastor