

IV. Charles Gordon McPhee: Peace Maker & Educator

Written on: August 30, 2022

A. Peace Maker:

(1) In 1930, G. G. McPhee was invited to return to Carman, Manitoba. The congregation there looked to his leadership to overcome their troubled state that had afflicted them since the last years of the second term of the Carman Bible School, 1921-1927. The school had been reactivated at the urging of H. A. Rogers who saw the value of the first session, from 1899-1902, and the need for Christian education in western Canada. He encouraged H. L. Richardson to take on the task of directing the school. Howard Lipscomb Richardson had grown up in Meaford, where his father was an elder. (The wife of H. L. Richardson was the widowed Goldie Lawson, sister to



Gordon and Grace return from Texas
to Ontario

Grace (Tallman) McPhee.) Richardson had both studied and taught at Beamsville Bible School. Then in 1918, Richardson opened a commercial school in Little Current, Manitoulin Island. This was a Bible school in disguise, for all students were required to take a class in Bible along with their commercial studies. The school was described as a success. The Carman school of the twenties attracted such students as Alonzo Rogers, Wilford Orr, J. C. Bailey, Bethel Vine, and George Johnson. However, Richardson was drawn to the teachings and practices of the *Disciples of Christ* in western Canada. He left Carman and the Carman school in November, 1926, to join the Disciples movement. The school closed after one more year. But the congregation in Carman remained troubled and divided. They then turned to C. G. McPhee.

McPhee related, (in a 1977 interview), "I spent two months, and got them back together again. They have remained together since, even though reduced."

(2) Later in 1930, Gordon McPhee moved to St. Catharines (to a new home in nearby Port Dalhousie; and later to the city at 4 Trapnell Ave.) to work with congregations in the Peninsula. Relations at the time were strained

between the congregations in Beamsville and St. Catharines, and between the two congregations in St. Catharines, Raymond and Beecher, and Niagara and Manning. McPhee was able shortly to bring harmony between Beamsville and St. Catharines.

The Niagara Street congregation had been formed in 1928 by members from the Raymond and Beecher congregation who saw the need for a second congregation in the growing city. There was estrangement existing between the two congregations. Some in the Raymond Street church viewed the move as divisive. One person described the move as a “swarming.” O. E. Tallman, who had preached for the Raymond and Manning congregation during the twenties, however, encouraged the move, and became the group’s evangelist. McPhee knew the importance of reconciliation and worked for peace between these groups.

Two events occurred that deeply impacted both McPhees and the St. Catharines churches. On November 5, 1930, O. E. Tallman, age 48, died suddenly. Then, on January 19, 1931, Gordon’s son, Ralph, age five years, four months, died, also suddenly, of pneumonia.

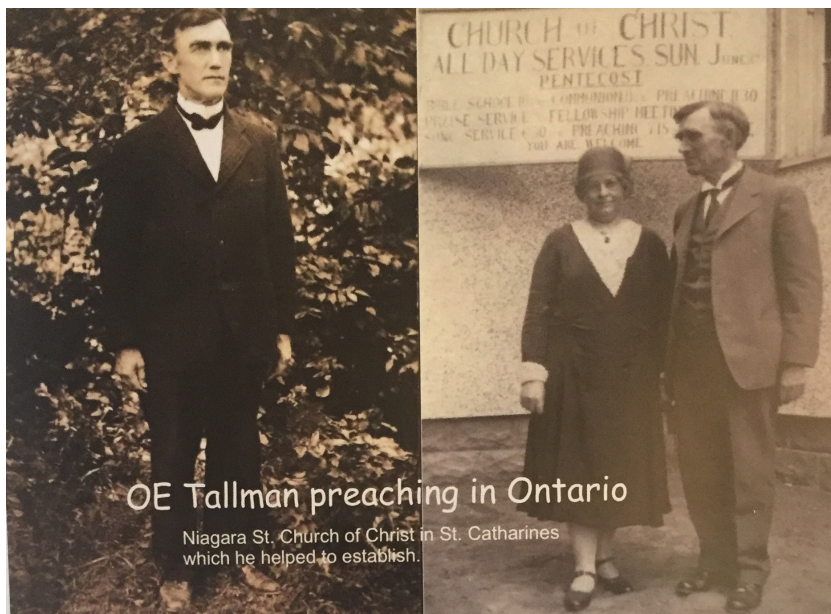
O. E. had experienced an appendicitis attack, in 1909 or 1910 in Nova Scotia. A similar attack in 1930 hospitalized him for nine days, when he suddenly died, age 48.

Ozro Ellis Tallman, died Nov. 5, 1930, age 48

His picture and eulogy appeared in *The Christian Monthly Review*, written by C. G. McPhee.”

Gordon wrote a moving eulogy that was published the next month in the *Christian Monthly Review*: “I first met Brother Tallman in 1909. He came to West Gore, Nova Scotia, and joined his brother Ora H. Tallman in the opening of the Maritime Bible and Literary College. For six years he taught and preached in his earnest

and characteristic manner, where he accomplished much good. I for one can say that those years of study and association will always be cherished. There my character was shaped. What I am today, I owe in a large degree to the sacrifice, patience, and exhortation of Brother Tallman and his co-laborers, who now mourn their loss.”





Ralph with his father

C. G. said of the loss of his son' "It was the greatest blow I have ever suffered. He was a very bright, intelligent boy." Gordon remembered Ralph saying, "I am going to preach, sing, play golf, and hunt for bears!" (Years later, he wrote in a sermon note, about a Biblical sorrowful loss, and he inserted "...and Ralph.")

Pic. 3b "O.E. and Mabel Tallman, Niagara and Manning, St Catharines."

Charles Wesley Petch, preaching at Charlton Station in northern Ontario, was invited to mediate between the two congregations and McPhee. In 1932, word of reconciliation came. C. G. wrote a letter (Sept 30, 1932) to O. H. Tallman, Cookeville, TN., reporting the development: "Troubles over." He noted that the division was because of personal matters rather than doctrinal. A leading member of the Niagara St. congregation, wrote a letter of apology; a similar statement was signed by a number at Raymond Street, and peace was secured.

Reported in the Oct. 1932, issue of The Bible Student, "The Churches in St. Catharines have arranged to have a Fall meeting on Oct.16. Both churches in the city are co-operating."

(3) Then in May, 1936, C. G. McPhee returned to work with the Beamsville congregation. (This began a nine year stay with the brethren in that town. It was in the Depression. McPhee took another drop in his support, to \$18.00 per week. Yet, he was able to purchase the house, of the "Gibson Estate," on King St., next to the Knox United Church; "offer of purchase, \$950.") The congregation he served was the "Brick" group. There were two congregations in Beamsville at the time, both meeting on Queen St., one-half block apart. They were not in fellowship, and had not been for 26 years, cf. the 1910 split. McPhee had experienced the devastation this had caused, both in Beamsville and in the province. He stated, "The effect has been felt from one end of Canada to the other."

The "June Meeting" was scheduled that year for Beamsville, June 20, 1938. Claude Witty, of Detroit, was to address the gathering. He would remain a week or so, working on the reunification of the brethren. In the meantime, McPhee had prepared a statement of reconciliation, to which he had secured the signatures of all the members of the "Brick" congregation. He presented this document to the "Block" group (also named "Cement," and by now, the "Frame," as the congregation had sold their building and were meeting in the frame building next door). McPhee and Witty had worked two weeks, securing signatures of all the "Block" group except two or three, and Witty went

home. Then on Sunday evening, June 28, all but two or three, “the group moved to worship with their brethren up the street!” The healing took “a great deal of work and prayer by Godly men, the patience and labour of brethren, and the special efforts of Claude Witty,” according to McPhee. Later, McPhee admitted that he made little headway in the community during his nine-year stint at Beamsville. “The damage had been done.”

Later that summer, July 1, 1938, Gordon was present in Meaford to remember the congregation’s 90 years, 1848-1938. Alex Stewart, of Toronto, spoke in the morning, W. F. Cox of Hamilton, in the afternoon, and C. G. McPhee, in the evening. This was followed by a three-week meeting by McPhee.

These nine years in Beamsville found him at his peak of energy. He would preach in the morning at Beamsville, go to St. Catharines and preach a radio sermon at the CKTB station in the early afternoon, go in the later afternoon to either the 30 Mountain gathering (west of Beamsville), or to Rosedene (east of Beamville,) both on the Escarpment, preach at the evening service at Beamsville, and if Tintern had an 8:30 p.m. service, sometimes preach there too! And he reported that this schedule did not phase him!

B. Educator:

Charles Gordon G. McPhee had an important role in the formation and early years of both Omagh Bible School and Great Lakes Christian College. That McPhee was both energized and prepared for these roles in his formative years as a student at the Maritime Bible and Literary College, West Gore, Nova Scotia, 1909-1915, goes without saying.

McPhee was influential in shaping the terms of Omagh’s Incorporation in 1943. Through his insistence, board members were to be members of Churches of Christ, recognizing that church music was a cappella only. The debate lasted past midnight.

In 1945, the first summer that Omagh Bible School used the ten-acre facility next to the 16 Mile Creek for its activities, McPhee directed the program. The property had been gifted to OBS by the Johnstone family, cf. William B. Johnstone, who had begun the activities in 1936 that led to this accomplishment. The campus had been completed under the direction of Jardine McKerlie, Toronto. The boys’ dormitory, built in 1943, and located in the field opposite the farm house, had been moved to its new location and converted into the dining hall/activities center; the kitchen, dormitories, and “bunkies” were added. The staff-house, McKerlie Hall, was added in 1947. McPhee, in 1945, was 53 years old. He would serve in the post of “principal” for fifteen summers.

Omagh’s four weeks of Bible teaching in 1947, July 3-31, included seven teachers per session, with three groups of students, ages 10-12, 13-15, 16+. In 1948, the teachers were: C. G. McPhee, Geo. M. Johnson, Bruce Merritt, T. J. Mitchell, John Whitfield, and William Bryson.

Dr. George S. Benson, president of Harding College, Searcy, Ark., visited Ontario, March, 1947. He toured the Omagh campus, with the OBS board, in snow! Then, he held meetings on Saturday and Sunday in Toronto. He noted: “30 Ontario young

people are presently in American Christian colleges. How do we insure that Canadians return to Canada for evangelism?" On Monday, Benson was the guest speaker at the Omagh Bible School's annual meeting, held that year in Beamsville, with George M. Johnson, chairman. Benson recommended that OBS become a winter school, a junior college!

What Benson could not see was the Omagh's students were becoming younger—its special work would be a summer camp, much in keeping with the founder's vision. In the meantime, and in keeping with Benson's vision, serious interest in Christian education on the college level in Ontario was stirring in the province. Within three years, 1950, Great Lakes Christian College, to be located in Beamsville, received its Letters Patent.

McPhee serving in Meaford at the time, received two visitors from Beamsville, Carol Tinlin and Hermon Mason. They wanted him to become a director on the board of the new Great Lakes Christian College. McPhee said: "I was willing to do that. I had talked about it and helped some. I think there was something else behind it all, why they came up there. I came down to the first Directors meeting and was appointed the President of the school. Had I known what was going to take place, I might not have appeared on the scene. But nevertheless, we started—with nothing. It was a long, hard

job to get things started. It started with a number of teachers, and went forward. I left it in the fall of 1954 and moved to St. Catharines."



"Special event held in the formal dining room of the Gibson estate, prior to the College's opening, Sept. 1, 1952. (left to right) Art Walker, ?, C. G. McPhee, Donald McKenzie, playing the zither (that he had built)

While serving as president of the yet to be opened Great Lakes

Christian College, McPhee and his wife, Grace, left on his first fund raising trip, in early 1952. At this time McPhee was still "located" at Meaford and he had ongoing duties to fulfill before they left: preaching, arrangements for a wedding, pre-recording of radio sermons in Owen Sound, a funeral, plus a couple of trips to Beamsville where preparations for opening were ongoing under Bruce Merritt's direction. Then on the road: to Birmingham, staying with W. G. Tallman. Meeting at Clawson in the evening, some support. Meeting that night at Birmingham, some support received. On to Toledo, visited members. Drove hard to Indianapolis for overnight. On to St. Louis and through to Oklahoma City. Then on to Tulsa where he spoke to a full house at 15th & Drexal where support and promises were received. Visits next day in the city receiving gifts and promises. Then an all-day trip to Abilene, Texas. At the college (ACC) the next

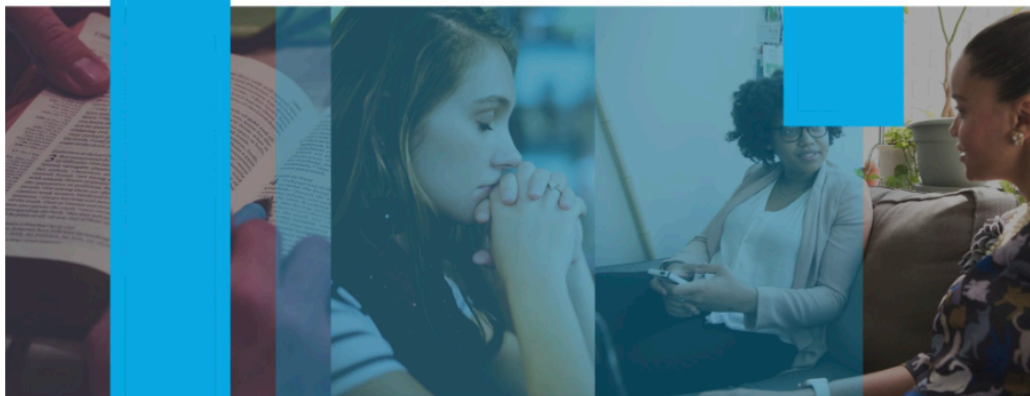
day for the Bible Lectures, where he had opportunity to address briefly a crowd of 1,200. Met a number of students, including "Jeff Ellis." "Time passed quickly and gave insight into the work and future prospects." On to Fort Worth and Dallas for several contacts, and then home.

In his 1977 memoirs, C. G. said, "Today you enjoy the services of Great Lakes Christian College. Each one had a contributing part. Some at great sacrifice. But it all grew from the Nashville Bible School. And I will always stand behind of Great Lakes Christian College because of its fruit. It has turned out a lot of teachers, a lot of preachers, a lot of business men, and has been instrumental in helping many of the churches in Ontario."

For over two decades, McPhee was front and center in Christian education in Ontario!

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Nathan Brown has been preaching and teaching since he was 15 years old and brings forth insightful and powerful lessons from God's Word. Nathan earned his BA and MA from Faulkner University and his PhD from McMaster University.



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First Principles – By C.G. McPhee

Written on: July 28, 2022

Article by: admin

This article was first published in the May issue of the Gospel Herald in 1954. We are republishing it here in co-ordination with our special series on brother McPhee, written by Geoff Ellis’.

Salvation is for men lost in sin, and is the ‘most precious pearl within, ‘the reach of men. God was not willing that any should perish, hence He sent His Son into the world that whosoever believes on Him should have everlasting life. :The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation unto all men. “



Conditional Salvation

Salvation is conditional; else it would be universal and all men would be saved and none lost. The Bible teaches that it is conditional. “ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (II Thess 2:6-9)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Mt 7:21) As surely as these Scriptures are true, salvation is not universal.

- The Bible teaches that salvation is not the portion of the wicked, for “...the ungodly shall perish.”
- Salvation is not for the unbelieving, for “he ,that does not believe, shall be condemned”.
- Salvation is not for ‘ the impenitent, for “unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.”
- Salvation is not for the disobedient, for “blessed are they that do His commandments, ·that they may have a right to the tree of life.”

Christ, being the Saviour, has the right to dictate the terms of salvation. It is, therefore imperative that we determine the conditions of salvation and where they are found. ‘

Salvation in Christ.

If salvation from sin is found in Christ, it is vital that we know how to get in Christ. It is not a question as to what I think or you think, but what the Lord has said. In Mk. 16:15-16 he said *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

If the unbeliever is condemned in sin, he does not have salvation through Christ until he believes in Christ. If the sinner cannot get into Christ in his unbelief, the inference is that Man gets into Christ through faith.

- “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18)
- “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them. (John 3:36)

The sinner is saved by faith in Christ, but nowhere does the Bible teach that we are saved by “faith only”. Jesus also said, ‘unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish’ (Luke 13:3)

Salvation cannot be found everywhere. It is found in Christ and in the name of Christ. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to

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mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). If salvation is found in the name of the Lord and there are a hundred organizations and names outside of the Lord, do the scriptures promise us salvation in them? Salvation is in the Lord, and we need not look elsewhere to find it.

Baptized into Christ:

Here is the way that one apostle states the whole matter.

“We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom 6:2b-6)

Christ died for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead to die no more. Likewise, the sinner dies to the love and practice of sins, is buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk with Christ in newness of life. The bible plainly states that “ all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death”. (Rm 6:3). The word ‘into’ is a preposition that denotes motion – from without to within, or out of one state into another. The sinner is outside of Christ but is baptized into Christ. Before a person is baptized into Christ where there is salvation, he is out of Christ in condemnation. There are no degrees in salvation; for you are either *in* or *out* of Christ, just as you are either married or unmarried, you are either a saint or a sinner, lost or saved.

The whole question turns on your reverence for divine authority and your faith in the Son of God.
“ So in Christ Jesus you

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are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal 3:26-27). Baptism brings the sinner who has died to sin into a new relationship in Christ. Baptism therefore stands between the sinner and the death of Christ; it stands between the sinner and the blood of Christ; it stands between the sinner and the merits and benefits of the atoning death of Christ. Having been buried with Christ into death, he is made free from sin, “just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rm 6:4).

Look at this question from another angle. The Holy Spirit said “...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col 2:12). In baptism, God performs an operation. In a physical operation, the doctor does the cutting. In baptism, God cuts off our sins. The power of God that raised Christ from the dead, is the power that raised the sinner from his death to sin unto a life of righteousness in the kingdom of God.



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Is Personal Self Defence Morally Right? (Part 3)

Written on: July 28, 2022

Article by: Kevin Cleary

This final part of our discussion, will serve largely as an addendum to the previous articles. We move on from the question of whether self defence is ever morally right, to consider the expedience of exercising that right. The scriptures call us to give up some of our rights in the interests of others and especially when they may result in irreversible outcomes. How to act and what to do when faced with physical danger is perhaps best determined in advance as circumstances of the moment may 'run out the clock' before we are able to decide. With that in mind we want to consider some tools that can help us maintain our Christian character when under stress. This could be a situation where self defence is required however it may be a car accident major or minor. It could be an injured child. It could even been extreme grief or stress as a result of illness or loss.

What then are some of the things that we ought to take into account when thinking ahead?

1. Human life is given by God who has placed the highest possible value upon it and brought it under his protection.
2. Acting as God's agents, Christians ought to prioritize the well being of others, and most importantly their eternal salvation.
3. Training ourselves to remain in control of our emotions and actions may prove to be invaluable.

With regard to this last point, it is worth considering what happens to our mental and physical state when under severe stress – as when a physical threat may need to be met with physical force to defend ourselves or others.

Even professionals find it hard to maintain self-control when facing danger. When training first responders, I always talk about how the body responds to stress and especially to fear and trauma. So let's touch on that. Most of us have at least heard about the 'fight – flight' response and have in fact experienced it. To that I would add one further "F" – for 'freeze'. Anyone who has caught a prey animal off guard has seen it. It is the classic 'deer in the headlights' response. In some animals it's so powerful that they are at least initially unable to move. People do the same thing. Shock, alarm, stress or fear all trigger this response which we are calling fight, flight or freeze.

Diving a bit deeper; when you shocked or alarmed the amygdala, the part of the brain that senses danger immediately triggers a chain reaction, setting off an alarm system in your body. This prompts your adrenal glands to release a surge of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These stress hormones increase your activation

levels and increase heart rate, elevate your blood pressure and boost energy supplies. Breathing becomes shallow and quick. Blood is diverted to the muscles and major organs, muscles become stronger and tighter in preparation for action, pupils dilate (to take in threats in our environment), you sweat and you stop digesting food (not essential to immediate survival). In this state of heightened arousal you are likely to experience certain physiological phenomenon (McLeod, 2010).

These include:

- **Auditory exclusion:** not hearing all relevant sounds/noises.
- **Perceptual narrowing** (tunnel vision): tendency for perceptual field to shrink putting focus on most dangerous item or person.
- **Time distortion:** can either make events appear to slow down or speed up, (how often have you heard someone describing a traumatic event say time seemed to slow down or it was over in a flash).
- **Awareness lapse:** certain portions of the event are not recalled because our brain is focused on possible danger and may not process all information in the environment.
- **Loss of fine motor skills:** loss of dexterity or skills involving refined use of small muscle control (I can remember when I responded to my first structure fire I was unable to properly buckle my helmet).
- **Hyper-vigilance:** heightened state of alertness which will often last longer than the initial event. Given this reaction it is easy to see how someone may do or say the wrong thing in a highly dangerous situation.

What we want to be able to do is move our locus of control



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from our amygdala, to our frontal cortex. This part of our brain is responsible for logic and reason. It takes a certain amount of time to do this. The amount of time it takes is not something we are fully able to control. Some people will naturally be able to make the switch faster than others. Those who can do it very quickly are often high-level athletes and or members of elite military units. All the same, it has been shown that through training and stress management practices, it is possible to reduce the time it takes your brain to make the switch from amygdala to frontal cortex. For our purposes we care about this as a means of maintaining Christian virtue through the exercise of self-control.

The circumstances outlined above pertain to 'spur-of-the-moment' events which while they can be prepared may never occur. Dangers that may be reasonably foreseen are also more likely to occur and may be dealt with on a daily basis. These may cause ongoing stress and the Bible has some things to say about why these exist and how we might handle them.

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Danger may come at us from human sources, driven by envy, greed and even hatred. The Devil tempted Cain not only to hate Abel but to rid himself of his brother once and for all. As love is of God, hatred is from the Devil I John 3:12-13. Knowing this, we ought not be surprised when those belonging to Satan, hate those who belong to God. The apostle John reminds us of this because we are in fact surprised by the level of hatred directed at the people of God. Though we are repeatedly warned in scripture, we continue to entertain the mistaken notion that if we try to do good and to be good that good things will happen. John says that this is faulty reasoning, by reminding us of one of the earliest examples of someone who tried to be

faithful and what they got for it, was dead. Jesus himself warns us, “in the world you will have trouble.” Therefore, one way to manage difficult situations better, is to better anticipate and prepare for them.

I often see people become frustrated when things do not go according to plan nor do people respond as we had hoped. The Bible provides a dose of realism that helps us to deal with the world (and the Church). Then, when something bad happens we can say that Jesus warned us and showed us how to persist, how to endure and how to overcome.

The Bible helps us to manage our expectations. It does that when we spend time in it and time with our Heavenly Father in prayer. Together, these keep us joined to “the vine” and connected so that we may be spiritually successful and joyful (John 15:1-11).

The introspection and self reflection, facilitated by prayer and study can change us as we draw closer to God. This closeness to our Heavenly Father prepares us to respond to the challenges of life. It also provides a constant reminder of what we value and to whom we belong. God hears our prayers and blesses us according to His will.

God does not lose track – but sometimes we do. Keeping a journal of what we pray for, our innermost thoughts and feelings and what it is that we are studying in the Bible, helps us to recall where we have been and where it is that God is taking us. This can be a significant and effective exercise in what is often called ‘cognitive behavioural therapy’. It is both good and healthy to take stock of ourselves throughout the day...to say a prayer and to assess our mental, spiritual and emotional well being, confident that God is always with us.

Maintaining an awareness of where we are, what we are doing and what it is that is going on around us is a practice known as grounding. Grounding is an effective way of reducing stress and avoiding panic. And should panic arise, it helps to slow your breathing by counting four seconds while breathing in, holding it for four seconds, exhaling for four seconds, and holding for four seconds again. Repeat this four second pattern for a few repetitions. This can be done anywhere and will help to lower stress hormones. Reducing panic will help to return control to your frontal cortex – the reasoning part of your mind.

By remaining calm and acting reasonably we can maintain our Christian character at even the worst of times. This may be a time when we hope to avoid the need for physical violence all together. And when it cannot be avoided, we will be prepared with a measured response that values life and protects the innocent.

Some Conclusions:

- The scriptures provide for the use of force when life is in danger
- Christians are called to consider the eternal best interests of all involved.
- Learning to manage our response to stressful, dangerous or deeply troubling situations is an important part of maintaining Christian character.
- Insofar as it is up to us, we are to live at peace with all people.

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Hidden Treasure

Written on: July 28, 2022

Article by: Tim Johnson

I like watching *Antiques Roadshow*. One episode stands out in my mind, when an old lady brought in a small, fragile-looking table. The appraiser looked it over and became very excited because the table was worth a half-million dollars! Turns out it was genuine Chippendale, the queen of all furniture. It was a great moment for antique lovers.

There's a moment like that in the Bible. Jesus spoke of a man who found a treasure buried in a field (Matt.13:44). In those days there were no banks, and people hid their wealth in places where thieves couldn't find it. The man was thrilled to discover this long-lost buried treasure. But he had a problem: the owner of the field was the rightful owner of the treasure buried in it. So, the man sold everything that he had and bought the field, thus securing the treasure. Obviously, the treasure was of much greater worth than all his other possessions.

Jesus explained that the kingdom of heaven is like this man who found the treasure. When someone looks into the Bible and understands what the kingdom is, and goes out and finds it, he has discovered a treasure. I've met people who discovered it by simply encountering the church, not really intending to search for spiritual treasure. People with good hearts are often thrilled to find it and do everything possible to become part of it. It's like selling all you have to gain something wonderful.

The New Testament tells us about another man who found the treasure of the kingdom of heaven. His name was Paul. Later, he wrote a letter to some fellow believers and declared, about the Savior, "Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

The question is – have you found the treasure yet? And if you have, do you treat it as more valuable than all that you have?

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The Preacher: The Man and His Work

Written on: July 28, 2022

Article by: Dave Knutson

In the June issue, in an article entitled ‘Spiritual Leadership in the Church’ we touched briefly on the person and work of the ‘evangelist’ in the context of other leadership roles. This article expands somewhat upon the work that God calls evangelists to do. Geoff Ellis’ current series of articles about brother C.G. McPhee highlights the key role that men like him have played in the growth and spiritual health of congregations in Canada.

From time to time, every congregation finds itself in search of someone to work in this capacity. Such times may provide a healthy pause during which a church may re-evaluate where they are as a congregation and what they should be looking for in a preacher.

To help with that process, and with such selection, this article this article explores two things:

- What the Bible says about the work that an evangelist is called to do.
- And then secondly, the kind of man that an evangelist is to be and aspire to be.

One of the ‘speaking ministries’ that we find in scripture is that of the preacher or evangelist. Both the Synoptic gospels and the Book of Acts tell us that this was the main thing that Jesus spent his time doing. Evangelists in the church carry on that same work

In the New Testament, the verb form ‘to teach’ is more common than the noun – ‘teacher’. Here are the 3 places where the noun form occurs, and these are important since they specify this function as a distinct role or ‘office’ in the church.

1. The first is a reference to Philip in Acts 6.
 - He was one of the seven chosen to oversee the distribution of food
 - But he is also called ‘the evangelist’ (Acts 21:8).
 - He preached in Jerusalem and in Samaria.
 - He taught the Ethiopian eunuch and then preached throughout the coastal cities of Judea in Acts 8
2. The second reference is in Ephesians 4:11 which reads:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ

3. And then In 2nd Timothy 4:5 the apostle Paul exhorted Timothy

“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Timothy is also addressed in Paul’s letters as

- A minister (servant) (I Tim 4:6)
- The Lord’s servant (II Tim 2:24)
- A Man of God (I Tim 6:11)

These suggest facets of who the preacher is and what he must be in order to do the work of an evangelist. There was a special connection between the evangelist and the apostles in that much of their work was the same

Paul often described his ministry in terms of preaching the gospel.

- In Romans 1:15, I Cor 1:17, Gal. 1:8 Paul says that he evangelized
- In I Cor 1:23, Gal 2:2 and I Thess 2:9 he proclaimed the word

The apostles were appointed to their role by the Lord Jesus. Evangelists on the other hand were not appointed directly by the Lord, yet they shared the job of proclaiming the gospel. There is also no indication that like the prophets, they received their message directly from the Holy Spirit. It seems that they needed to learn, to study and apply themselves to scripture in a responsible way

The Work of an Evangelist

It almost seems redundant then to say that evangelists – evangelized, since the word itself means “one who preaches the gospel”. As a servant of Christ, the evangelist is a minister of the word.



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One of his responsibilities is to put the Lord's instructions before the brothers and sisters – as we find in I Tim 4:6. "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant (slave) of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following".

Timothy's first allegiance was to Jesus. He followed the Lord's instructions and shared these with others. In that sense he is a "Man of God" (I Tim 6:11). In the Old Testament this term referred to the prophets. (I Kings 13:1-32). Prophets were messengers from God, sent to teach God's word, and thereby calling God's people back to faithfulness

The writings of Paul indicate a number of different kinds of preaching and activities associated with it.

- Philip the evangelist worked in Samaria and along the coastal cities to preach the gospel and win converts to the faith (Acts 8:5-13)

He travelled and preached.

- Then he located in one place and continued to work. About 20 years after Acts 8:40 we find him and his family in Caesarea up that same coast. He was working as a 'located preacher' with the church at Caesarea

Other evangelists did the same things that Philip did. They won new members and they planted churches. They visited churches and if they found them deficient in doctrine or practice, they stayed to turn those congregations back to God. With new church plants, they worked to organize the church, having a hand in the appointment of elders.

Paul left Titus in Crete for that very purpose.

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you," Titus 1:5

Having said that, it appears that evangelists did more than just preach the gospel and plant new churches. As evangelists, Timothy and Titus were to 'strengthen' those already in the faith and to refute false teachings in well established congregations – even those with elders – as we see in I Tim 4:6

Included in these were

- Matters pertaining to worship (who does what) I Tim 2:1-15
- Church organization and leadership I Tim 3:1-13
- To warn of false teachings and apostasy I Tim 4:1-5

Like Timothy, Titus was also to teach that which was consistent with 'sound doctrine'. (2:1). This included instructions for different age groups of both genders and members of various levels of society (Tit 2:2-10)

One way that they strengthened the church was by refuting error'.

So Paul wrote this to Timothy

- As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines (I Tim 1:3) Note that this was a congregation with elders.

To Titus, Paul wrote

For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith...

Replacing false doctrine with the truth...was part of a preacher's job. We find this over and over again in the pastoral epistles – which tells us that it remains an important element of a preacher's work.

Paul said much the same to Timothy: I Tim 4:1-6, where he sums up saying:

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. You might also read: II Tim 2:24, 4:2 and Tit 2:1

So evangelists were engaged in edification and exhortation. They built people up by preaching the word. They stopped false doctrine by refuting it. They supported what they said by appealing to sound reasoning and to scripture. And they promoted the kind of change that God wanted.

Evangelists also had a duty to perpetuate the evangelistic work of the church. They did this at least in part by training others to carry on the work as Paul directed Timothy: “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (II Tim 2:2). Timothy was to find other like minded and perhaps like-gifted men and then provide biblical knowledge and skills training. These men in turn were to do the same.

In I Tim 4:13 Paul seems to sum up the public work of an evangelist: “Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching”

Preachers ought to engage in all of these activities

- Reading scripture with others ensures that the instruction that follows is Biblical in nature. The preacher must be a student of God's word. Timothy was diligent in his handling of scripture and consistent in its application. He was able to explain it to others in a way that made sense. That was important since an evangelist needs to convince others. This calls for logic and proper reasoning – so that the truth is known and the road to finding the truth can be travelled again and again. Part of a teacher's job is not just to supply content but to teach others to be good students of God's word.
- And then Timothy was to encourage. The gospel is basically good news and we need to hear it over and over. It is encouraging by nature, but is easily forgotten or drowned out by the cares and worries of life. It gets pushed to the back of our minds which is why the preacher is to make it front and centre again. An important part of the preacher's job is build us up.

All of this is demanding work and why God has provided for preachers to be supported and able to work full-time (I Cor 9:13-14). Such support is extended to elders who also engaged in teaching and preaching (I Tim 5:18). By providing financial support for the work of elders and evangelists God indicated that these were permanent roles and functions within the church.

- As we have seen, elders were to be appointed in all of the churches
- And preachers were to find and train others to carry on their work.

We serve now as they did then. We are God's agents on earth, and on a mission to bring other people to the one who can save them. Evangelism is necessary: essential to church life and the persistence of the church on earth. Those who lead must be fully engaged in it and set an example for others to follow

The Evangelist as a Man of God.

Given the kind of spiritual work that an evangelist is called to do, what sort of man ought he to be?

The apostle Paul wrote:

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (II Tim 2:24-26)

You'll notice that some of these qualifications are personal qualities and some are skill's oriented.

The list includes:

- The ability to teach
 - Not everyone is good at it.
 - Let me suggest that some should avoid it.
 - And as James warns in chapter 3 of his letter, no one should presume to teach without proper preparation (Jas 3:1-2)
- Kindness – this is a benevolent disposition that works for the good of others – one that always grants the benefit of the doubt.
- Patience:
 - It allows enough time for the message to get through
 - It gives people time to catch up and to catch on and to grow up if that's what's needed.
- Gentleness – a quality of tenderness in the handling of other's feelings –
 - As a tool in the hands of the evangelist, it finds a way to convey the truth without compromise in a way that is least offensive for the purpose of clarity and persuasion.
- And Paul says that the man of God ought not be quarrelsome.

- He must not be a person who loves a good ‘fight’ or goes looking to ‘pick a fight’. That is not his predisposition or demeanour.

In I Tim 6:3-10, the apostle Paul gives a long list of conduct to be avoided. Included in that list of things that the preacher must **not do**:

- He must not advocate a different doctrine than what the apostles taught.
- He must not get stuck on controversial subjects that cause division
- He must not do anything to give rise to envy, strife, the use of abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men
- And he must not desire to become rich, but content himself with the means that God puts at his disposal

Instead Paul says: “...flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness” (Vs 11). And to these Paul added the quality of ‘purity’ in I Tim 5:22. Notice the things in which Timothy was to serve as an example to the church – (I Tim 4:12)

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Perhaps we are more in danger today of despising age instead of youth. But, Timothy – and by extension, all preachers are to set an example in:

- Speech:
 - That is, what is said from the pulpit and how it is said
 - To set an example in day to day conversation as well as when teaching or explaining God’s word.
- Conduct
 - Including interaction with others, moral conduct, a healthy work ethic and overall Christian attitude.
- An example in love
 - The kind of love that pursues the best interests of others.
 - A love that is never conditioned upon the lovableness of others, but like the one described by Paul in I Cor 13
- An example in faith:
 - Both the content of what one believes and the degree of zeal with which it is held.
 - Timothy was to be a man who fully trusted God with his personal life, walking with God from day to day
 - A faithful Christian fully dispatching his duties as a preacher
- An example in purity
 - Blameless in moral conduct.

- Having his mind set upon spiritual values – and not upon physical or base desire.
- Living a life set apart for God.

Later again in that same chapter Paul added

Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. (vs 15-16)

Timothy was to be diligent about his duties as a preacher. They were to command his attention and he was to pursue them.

This then is the kind of man that a congregation ought to look for and the kind of work that the Lord wants him to do. The evangelist himself must aspire to these qualities in order to serve as an agent of the Lord among those who love the Lord.

Now perhaps more than ever in the recent history of the church in Canada, such men are needed. May each congregation and each body of elders do their best to raise up such men, equipping them to serve for the greater progress of the gospel.

Note: article adapted from a presentation made by the author at Sault Ste Marie.



Get Down to Worship
By Tim Alexander

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About the Author:

Tim Alexander is a life-long Christian with a love for languages. He reads his Bible with an eye for getting away from human-made traditions and discovering the pure will of God. He works for a non-profit Christian organization and has had the opportunity to travel and speak in churches around the world.

Tim and his wife live in Beamsville, Ontario, Canada.

The Longest Walk That You Will Ever Take

Written on: July 28, 2022

Article by: **Bob Sandiford**

Genesis 22:1-19 (NIV) Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied. ² Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you. ”

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you. ”

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son. ”

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided. ”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” ¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

God spoke to Abraham and gave him a very a specific command “Take your son, and offer him as a burnt offering.” This passage tells us right at the beginning that this was a test for Abraham – but *Abraham* did not know that. Everything about it was real and he had a lot of time to dwell on it, both before leaving the next morning and for the next three days on the way to Moriah.

What was he thinking? The Genesis account does not tell us, but the decision that he made is plain to see. He immediately obeyed God, travelling from Beersheba to an area near Jerusalem and perhaps to the very mountain on which the Temple was later built [2 Chron 3:1].

As the ‘crow flies’, this was about 60 or 70 kilometres. But the point is that he did not drag his feet or stop to think things over. Whether or not he slept well at night, the one thing that he did not do was to ‘second-guess’ God. God had already called him from his homeland to a place he had never been. God had kept His promise that he and Sarah would have a son – through whom the nations of the earth would be blessed. And God had protected him for many years in a foreign land making him visibly wealthy such that people around him were jealous.

A lesser man might have had doubts. He might have resented having to leave home and living for decades without an heir. He might have faltered in the face of family pressure or rebelled in the name of human decency. He might have taken this as a sign that God had turned against him and canceled the promises made so long ago. He might have done any or all of these, but he did not.

There was no question in Abraham’s mind that God was the one commanding the sacrifice of his son. There was no doubt about the source of his troubles or what it was that he was to do.

Often, when we face troubles, it is with less certainty about their source or clarity about the road ahead. We may ask why it is that God permits us suffer as we do. Why have the things that are happening in my life taken such a negative turn?

- Why do I have cancer?
- Why was my spouse unfaithful to me?
- Why have my children rejected me?
- Why did my friend betray a confidence?
- Why does my family reject me for choosing to follow God?
- Why am I being persecuted?
- Why, God? Why me? What do You want me to do?
- That doesn’t make sense to me – are You sure?

Since we believe in God and trust Him, our faith is put to the test. We may *even* wonder if God is there at all.

Let’s dig a bit more deeply into our story:

To start with, this is a very strange command. God commanded a human sacrifice when all that was known about God forbade the taking of innocent life. (Gen. 9:6) Sometime later God explicitly condemned human sacrifices to Molech. [ref: Lev 18:21, 20:2-5, Jer 32:35] Why then would God want Abraham to kill his son?

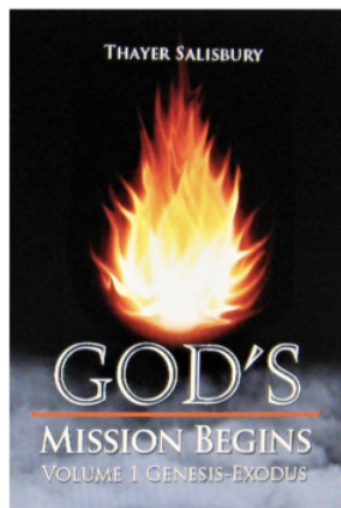
From God's point of view, He was testing Abraham. His intentions became clear when the altar was built and the knife was raised. From start to finish, this was all about the test. Abraham was being put to the test...and not God. It is God's right to test us...but we are never to do so with Him. His integrity is not in question nor is His resolve or power to keep His promises. But God's command forced Abraham to make a choice. He said in effect: take your son, your only son whom you love, through whom you hoped to have descendants, and subordinate all of that to your love for and fear of Me.

And in response, Abraham set out as soon possible. He headed straight for the place that God would show him. When the time came, Abraham and Isaac went on alone leaving the servants with their animals and supplies. Yet in parting, Abraham said to the two young men: "I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." "We" will return to you. This may seem a strange thing for Abraham to say, knowing that God had commanded him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. But we know from the book of Hebrews what Abraham had concluded.

Hebrews

11:17-19 (NIV) ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹ Abraham

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reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

The test was: does Abraham have enough faith in Me to obey Me by taking the life of his son? Does he believe that I will still fulfill My promises to Him that can only come to pass through Isaac?

- After all, God had twice promised to Abraham – that He would bless Abraham through his son Isaac – making Isaac the one through whom Abraham would have descendants.

Genesis 17:19 (NIV) ¹⁹ Then God said, "...your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Genesis 21:12 (NIV) ¹² But God said to [Abraham], "...it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

The choice then was to believe or not to believe, to obey or to disobey God. There was no middle ground – no way to obey short of offering his son Isaac. Isaac was still just a lad, unmarried and without descendants.

But Abraham did not try to rationalize his way out. He did not say:

- Since I know that God is a loving God, He would never seriously ask me to do this thing.
- That God is testing me to see how primitive or lofty my view of Him is. Only a legalist would insist on obeying God when His command is clearly in violation of all that is right and good.

Instead, Abraham resolved this contradiction by recognizing that God had already fulfilled many of His promises, and he believed that God would fulfill this one also. In fact, he thought that God would fulfill His promise by raising Isaac from the dead.

Abraham stepped out in faith. He did not do it blindly, nor did he abandon rational thinking. This was absolutely not an 'existential leap' from a meaningless present to an unknown future. Quite the opposite. It was exactly what Biblical faith must always be. Abraham trusted the God whom he knew was there. He heeded the God who had not been silent. He obeyed the God who always rewarded obedience, and in so doing, he charted a course for us all to follow. He looked beyond the land of promise to an eternal city whose builder and maker is God. Fortified by promises kept, he took hold of by faith – those promises yet to come.

Abraham's faith resulted in obedience. His was not faith in faith...but faith in almighty God and in His word. To which God responded by reaffirming His promises to Abraham.

Genesis 22:15-18 (NIV) ¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham ...¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your

descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

“Now I *know* that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” (22:12)

Two things push to the forefront in these verses.

- On the one hand, there is God who knows the future before it happens. Which means that He knew what Abraham would choose. Yet He responded to Abraham’s obedience saying “now I know”.
- On the other hand, each of us are participants in a real history that has not yet been written. Our choices – while known in advance by God – are nevertheless real and must first become concrete events in space and time. They do not actually exist until they come to pass. As an affirmation of the necessity of our choosing – God waited to say “Now I know”.

Abraham passed a test that he might also have failed and in so doing provided a ‘type’ for the sacrifice of God’s own Son (Heb 11:19)

It is clear then that God’s advance ‘*knowing*’ does not impinge upon or predetermine our ‘*doing*’. Each is real yet distinctly separate as causal realities. God has given us freedom of choice and honours our choices. Biblical faith is ours and not something imposed upon us from above. This was true for God’s own Son. The Father knew that Jesus would live a sinless life and would die upon the cross for our salvation. He predicted this and more in scriptures, all of which were fulfilled by Jesus. Yet Jesus still had to choose. He still had to obey and He still had to go to the cross. It was not finished until it was.

And so it was that Abraham really did pass God’s test. This passage in Genesis was recorded by God through Moses for *our* benefit – for teaching and training us in righteousness [ref: 2 Tim 3:16]. And while we are spectators to the life of Abraham, we are participants in the here and now.

God is not finished with us. Each of His commands tests our obedience. The question for us is: will we trust Him enough to obey Him?

Abraham showed us that:

- Trust in God is never misplaced.
- That obedience to God is always right – whether or not we understand why a thing has been commanded.
- That the commands of God are never in conflict with His promises.
- And that a life of faith leads to life in the presence of God where it is no longer needed.

Kitchener ON