

**CHESED**

By Danny Tunnell

The Greek word “agape” speaks of the highest form of love, God’s love, and the Hebrew word “shalom” means peace.

“Chesed” is a lesser known Hebrew word. Pronounced “heseh” as the “c” is silent. It is often translated in the Bible as “mercy” or “kindness.”

Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul. (1 Samuel 18:3.) Jonathan, the prince in line for the throne took off his robe and gave it to this shepherd boy, David. And he took off his weapons and gave them to David. (1 Samuel 18:4.)

This covenant between David and Jonathan was not a passing thing. In 2 Samuel 9, David has a strong desire to show kindness (chesed) to anyone left in Saul’s house. David had a great desire to give, just as God had a great desire to give His only begotten Son, His unique Son. (John 3:16.) David wanted to show “chesed” to the house

of Saul, just as God showed “chesed” to the whole world.

David learned that Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. (2 Samuel 9:6.) He was able to show him great kindness (chesed). (2 Samuel 9:13.)

God’s mercy or chesed is mentioned throughout the Bible. In Psalm 136, it is mentioned 26 times in 26 verses. His chesed endures forever!

In Matthew 15:22, a Syrophenician woman cried out to Jesus, “Son of David have mercy (chesed) on me!” In some way, this lady from a heathen background knew that Jesus was the Messiah. She called Him “the Son of David.” She also knew about chesed, His mercy, and Jesus healed her daughter. (Matthew 15:21-28.)

Blind Bartimaeus asked for mercy too. (Mark 10:46-48.) He knew Jesus would do chesed for him. (Mark 10:49-52.)

Often we read passages such as 2 John, verse 3, and say, “That’s just the way John said, ‘Howdy!’ It was only a simple greeting.” But it is far more than a simple greeting when he said, “Grace be with you, and mercy, and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” John was speaking about God’s grace, God’s mercy (chesed), and God’s peace.

The good news is God’s mercy, His undeserved “chesed” never runs out for the true believer. His compassion never fails, and His mercies are new every morning, and He always remains faithful! (Lamentations 3:22,23.) Praise the Lord! Glory to God!

— Miami, OK

**SELFLESS CHRISTIANITY**

By Mark Lindley

True Christianity is selfless. The term selfless means “having no concern for self; unselfish.” The Scriptures teach that selfishness will prevent one from being a follower of Christ. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24.)

Practicing self-denial is not easy. The general, human tendency is to be more concerned about pleasing ourselves than pleasing the Lord and others. However, Paul exhorts, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” (Romans 15:1,2.)

Christianity is built upon the sacrifice of selfless Savior who was more concerned about others than himself. Was it not his selflessness

that inspired him to come to this world of sin and suffering and to die on the cross? One old, religious hymn suggests: “He could have called ten-thousand angels, but he died alone for you and me.” The Bible teaches that Jesus “humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8.) No greater example of selflessness could be given than the one Jesus gave when he allowed sinful men to nail him to the cross.

Selfishness and Christianity simply do not belong together. Selfishness goes against fundamental principles of Christianity and shows a lack of spiritual maturity. Children have to be taught to share their toys and control themselves when they do not get their way. In other words, children must be taught to develop selflessness. The same is true for children of God, for

Christians. Those who desire to follow Christ must work to overcome a self-centered attitude and learn to be more concerned about pleasing the Lord and serving others, rather than pleasing self.

We can demonstrate selflessness by giving to God the time it takes to worship and serve him, instead of claiming we are just “too busy.” Husbands and wives need to be selfless in their marital relationships, always considering the needs and feelings of their mates, instead of thinking only of self. So many problems which arise in the church would be solved if all members would resolve to do what is best for the church instead of what is best for self.

Indeed . . . true Christianity is selfless.

— Ripley, MS

**Old Paths**

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

**Christ: Our Fountain Of Youth**

By Joe Slater

Almost nothing in history supports the legend that Spanish conquistador Ponce de Leon searched for the “Fountain of Youth.” (Don’t tell the tourists in Florida, though!) It’s definitely true, however, that various people all over the world have sought (and even claimed to have found) water that restores youth. We human beings just don’t like the idea of aging and dying. We’re downright desperate for some way to avoid it!

Jesus told Martha, the sister of Lazarus, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*” (John 11:25-26.)

What? Believers don’t die? Wait a minute – we’ve seen any number of believers die. How can Jesus say this?

Look at the entire passage! The Lord wasn’t saying believers won’t die physically. He said even if they do, they will live (because He is the resurrection and the life). But faithful believers won’t die eternally (the “second death” as in Revelation 20:14).

But in the meanwhile, Christ blesses us with perpetual youth! No, not in the bodily sense – once again, think beyond the physical. The aged Paul knew full well that death awaited him, yet he wrote, “*We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*” (2 Corinthians 4:16.)

No, God hasn’t given us H2O that will restore our youth. He has given us something infinitely better: spiritual life in Christ here and now, and the confident hope of living with Him and all the redeemed of all ages in Heaven forever.

Are you drinking from the fountain of youth?

— Justin, TX

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:50-55.)

**THE WISE CHOICE**

By Milton Smith

For all accountable adults, there exist two households upon earth. One belongs to Jesus Christ and the other belongs to Satan. Those who do the will of God belong to His household, but those who obey Satan belong to his. But who would dare “obey” Satan? In a very real way, those who refuse to obey God are obeying Satan. When a person knows what God expects of him but chooses rather to ignore such instructions, he is actually choosing to follow Jesus’ adversary. The Bible often emphasizes this fact.

When Eve chose to rebel against God’s clear instructions regarding the famous tree, whom did she choose to follow? When Judas made the decision to betray his Lord, who was behind that decision? John 13:27 tells us that Satan actually “entered” into Judas. But what does this mean? Obviously, Satan found a quick entrance into this man’s corrupt heart and took full advantage of it. When Ananias and his wife Sapphira chose to lie to the church, who do you suppose was behind this evil decision? Acts 5:3 tells us that Peter told Ananias that it was Satan who had “filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.” When Simon the sorcerer offered money to the apostles in an attempt to purchase the ability to give the Holy Spirit to others, Peter said to him: “Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money . . . your heart is not right in the sight of God, for I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” In other words, he was under the influence of the dark side. When Jesus said to Peter, “get behind me Satan,” it seems obvious that He knew who was influencing Peter’s words. (Matthew 16:23.)

It is easy for a person to know which household he belongs to simply by observing whom he chooses to follow. All faithful Christians are heirs with Christ. His riches become our riches and His joy becomes our joy. In the same manner, His character should become our character. But to follow Satan is to develop his characteristics. To secure eternal life we must remain faithful to the Lord. Those who reject eternal life are choosing to remain faithful to Satan. The promise of eternal hope belongs only to those who make the personal choice to remain faithful members of Jesus’ household. To those who make this wise choice, the death of the physical body is merely the beginning of life eternal.

— Tulsa, OK

## OF DOGS AND CHRISTIANS

By Dalton Key

I once had a good friend. He didn't drink alcohol, and so had never been involved in any alcohol-related crimes or embarrassments. He never sought to destroy his mind through the use of illicit drugs. I never once heard my friend gossip. He never told a single lie. His time wasn't wasted in night clubs, casinos, or questionable establishments. I can't recall ever hearing him speak with profanity or vulgarity. And not once did he ever cheat a soul in business.

Many people would call my friend a "good Christian."

But you need to know that I have been describing my dog, Patches!

We need to learn what being a Christian is all about; that being a Christian involves more than merely not doing evil. Being a Christian concerns actually doing good, fully submitting to Christ and living by faith.

Christ taught, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23.) Complete and total submission to Christ is essential if we would be called by His name. Like the brethren of Smyrna, all of us in Christ are expected to "be faithful until death." (Revelation 2:10.)

The world holds many good and honest souls who are not maliciously engaged in the blackest of evils. Many of these good, moral citizens are our neighbors, our friends, our relatives. They may, in some cases, be more moral than some of the church's more nominal members.

But they should not, by virtue of their upstanding lifestyles, be confused with "good Christians." They may refrain from wrong; they may even be involved in promoting much that is right. But outside of Christ they cannot be considered Christians.

Not until one comes to Christ and obeys the gospel is one a Christian. No one can live a pure enough life to save himself, and there is still no other name to save us but the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12.)

Remember, there is a world of difference between your dog and a "good Christian."

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-16.)

## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . .

### "BE NOT WEARY"

By Dalton Key

Most lazy people will blame the world, the weather, society, their friends, their circumstances, and sometimes even their God before laying the blame where it belongs - squarely in the lap of their own laziness! And for many sluggish souls, laziness has become no less than an art form. As Kin Hubbard once put it, "Some folks can keep so busy doing nothing that they seem indispensable."

Yes, it's too often true. Dodging work and responsibility in general can become a tiresome, life-long occupation requiring more thought and effort than would have been required by just rolling up the sleeves and doing something constructive in the first place. Keeping busy at doing nothing can be exhausting!

Jesus described this kind of man in His parable of the talents. The servant entrusted with one talent took the time, the planning and the effort to dig a hole and bury his talent rather than do anything to increase its value. He is labeled as "wicked and slothful." (Matthew 25:26.) He could have invested the talent. At the very least, he could have put it to work earning interest. Instead, he went to work digging a hole.

I wonder if the one-talent man ever complained to others of his lord's unfairness, of his lack of equal opportunity, or about what he may have considered as questionable, foolhardy methods carried out by his fellow servants? I wonder if he ever came to realize that he failed because of his own laziness; that if he had worked half as hard working as he worked to get out of working he might have actually accomplished something?

If this man was like so many others like him, I doubt he ever got the point.

And too often the problem shows up at church. What of business meetings which find us doing nothing but discussing business of past business meetings during which we never got around to the the Lord's business? What of our time and hard work expended in analyzing charts, graphs and statistics; poring over polls, surveys, and questionnaires, efforts which often actually keep us from going out and doing what we know should be done? We've hidden behind bureaucracies, budgets and buildings long enough, blaming our lack of growth on everything from poverty to lack of persecution, from the devil to demographics, while the real problem rests with us and our own slothfulness. Too many of us have come to see things as did the lazy slug who observed, "I love work; it fascinates me; I can sit and look at it for hours."

"Be not weary in well doing." (2 Thessalonians 3:13.)



## PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE

By Richard Dent

person was his brother, Peter.

2. In the second story, Jesus was preaching to about 5,000 men. Jesus wanted to feed them when they got hungry. Philip complained that there was no food available to feed such a crowd. Someone found a boy with five loaves of bread and two fishes. Guess who that person was? It was Andrew. (John 6:5-13.)

3. In the third story, some Greeks (Gentiles) came to see Jesus. We don't know why they came to see him nor did his disciples know either. When they asked to see Jesus, Philip didn't know what to do. He went to Andrew and said, "These Gentiles want to see Jesus." Andrew did not have to wonder what to do. He and Philip brought the matter to Jesus. (John 12:20-22.)

In all three of these stories Andrew did something important - he took people to meet Jesus. First, he took his brother; next, he took a young boy; and

lastly, he took some strangers.

You know what is interesting about all of this? Andrew never became one of the prominent apostles. He didn't seem to care about that! Second fiddle is OK.

— Liberal, KS

"But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'" (Matthew 20:25-28.)

## A PIANO IN WORSHIP?

By Bobby Key

I sing praises unto thee." (Hebrews 2:12.)

I know of no act of worship acceptable to God unless the Bible authorizes that act to be done. Christians are told to sing. I know of no passage of Scripture in the New Testament that talks about mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship. Therefore, I can have no faith on this subject. " whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23.)

Since when did God allow the majority in a congregation to determine the kind of worship that pleases Him? When did He ever give elders the authority to legislate concerning the type of music to be used in New Testament worship?

The only way we can know what pleases God in the New Testament age is by reading what God has revealed in the New Testament. It is never wise to speak where God has not spoken. - Deceased

"Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men." (Proverbs 25:6.)

A conductor for an orchestra was once asked what the hardest position was to fill. His answer was "second fiddle." It is not a position where one is exalted by self or by others. It serves to assist the first chair fiddler.

Do you know any second fiddle people?

The Bible tells us about a fellow who was content to play the role of second fiddle. His name was Andrew. He was a follower of John the Baptist, but when John said, "Look, behold the Lamb of God," off went Andrew in search of Him. There are three stories where we see Andrew playing second fiddle. Here they are:

1. John 1:35-42 shows us that Andrew was so excited about finding Jesus that he ran to tell someone. That

A preacher of some renown was asked, "May a church use a piano in its worship service and be pleasing to the Lord?" He replied, "I do not know; it would depend on the feeling of the majority of the members and the decision of the elders."

This answer is completely out of harmony with the doctrine of the New Covenant. Enoch had this testimony that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5.) This man walked with God, and he did so by faith. In order for one to please God today, he must walk by faith. (2 Corinthians 5:7.) Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17.) Thus, to please God, one must walk in faithful obedience to the word of God.

The word of God teaches Christians to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.) Quoting from the 22nd Psalm, the author of Hebrews says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will

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